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Grafton Ave.: A Screenplay

Christopher Porazzo

Submitted in Partial Completion of the
Requirements for Departmental Honors in English

Bridgewater State University

May 14, 2014

Prof. Bruce Machart, Thesis Director
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GRAFTON AVE.

Written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-DAWN

A few steadfast citizens walk the streets. A seasoned street vendor tosses stacks of the Schenectady Gazettes in front of his stand. Close on the stack. The headline reads "CITY THAT LIGHTS THE WORLD BURNS BRIGHTER THANKS TO ALCO'S WAR EFFORTS." The rising sun's rays hit the buildings and cast shadows onto the streets.

A blue, 1940's Plymouth sedan cruises on screen and steams past the newsstand. It fades in and out of view as it crosses through the building's shadows.

The sedan eases to a halt at a stoplight. The Nott Memorial Hall sits in the background. Open iron gates and a sign reading "UNION COLLEGE" lie in the foreground, a city block ahead of the sedan. The light changes. The car accelerates, turning into the entrance.

EXT. ACADEMIC BUILDING-MORNING

Close on ivy covering the structure's brick facade. A slow pan to large, ionic columns framing a brown double door. The blue Plymouth pulls into a lot adjacent to the building.

INT. R.J. DODD'S OFFICE-MORNING

ROBERT JAMES "R.J." DODD, a handsome 35 year-old with grayish sideburns, hangs his tweed jacket on a coat rack, places his briefcase on the desk. Sunlight streams through the window, illuminating a type writer, the only visible object on the desk. Framed newspaper clippings hang on wall, remaining partly shrouded in shadow. Some titles are: "ILLEGAL CASINO EXPOSED" and "MAYOR'S TIES TO MOB REVEALED." Suddenly, JACK NEWELL, a 47 year-old spitfire with black parted hair, strolls into the office.

NEWELL

In early today, are we?

DODD

Don't get use to it, Jackie boy.

He lights a cigarette.

DODD (CONT'D)

I'm out of eggs

A beat.

Dodd shakes the match and smirks.

DODD (CONT'D)

And that cafeteria worker who looks like Ginger Rogers works the early shift.

NEWELL

Seems like the only thing you've got a nose for these days is pinching pennies and chasing dames.

DODD

What can I say? When your nose has been roughed up as many times as mine, you learn to stick it where it won't get cuffed.

NEWELL

Then I'd suggest keeping it in your classroom and away from the broads.

DODD

Where's the fun in that?

NEWELL

The fun is in still being able to eat breakfast here this time next September.

He kills the cigarette.

DODD

Why bring up my contract when I'm enjoying myself, Dr. Newell?

NEWELL

It's the only way I can keep you focused.

Newell points to the news clippings.

NEWELL (CONT'D)

What happened to this, Dodd?

Dodd taps his nose with his index finger.

DODD

Got cuffed one too many times.

Newell sighs in defeat, exits the office. Dodd opens a copy of the Schenectady Gazette and props his feet up on the desk. It is the headline from the opening scene.

INT. CLASSROOM-A FEW HOURS LATER

Students are scattered throughout the stadium-style seating. The pulled shades admit only slivers of light. A slow pan across to an eager brunette with peek-a-boo bangs and soft features. This is Christina MacGuffin. Dodd stands at a chalkboard.

DODD
Can anyone tell me one thing a good
journalist needs?

A beat.

DODD (CONT'D)
Anyone?

Most students do not react. Only MacGuffin raises her hand.

DODD (CONT'D)
Yes, Miss?

MACGUFFIN
MacGuffin.

DODD
Of course, Miss MacGuffin. Can you
tell the class what every good
journalist needs?

MACGUFFIN
A strong lead.

DODD
Wrong.

MACGUFFIN
What?

DODD
I said, "You're wrong."

MacGuffin scrunches her brow in disapproval. She holds her head up with her arm, exposing a charm bracelet.

Dodd turns around to write on the chalkboard. Close on his hand. He scrawls "A SHOVEL," underlining the words twice. He claps his hands and points to the word.

DODD (CONT'D)
This is something that every
aspiring journalist needs. You need
to dig deep.

MACGUFFIN

I don't understand, are we ditch diggers?

A few snickers from the class.

DODD

Well, sweetheart, it boils down to your intuition. What if that "strong lead" gives you misinformation? What then?

A beat.

Macguffin remains still.

DODD (CONT'D)

Exactly. If the information and your gut don't agree, go with your gut.

Dodd looks up at a clock on the wall.

DODD (CONT'D)

Alright, class dismissed. Make sure you get hold of a newspaper and analyze a story for Friday.

Students file out of the room without listening to Dodd. MacGuffin lags behind, clutching her notebook, waiting while Dodd erases the board.

Still facing the board.

DODD (CONT'D)

Yes?

MACGUFFIN

Was that necessary?

DODD

Was what necessary?

MACGUFFIN

Being so rude.

Dodd turns around.

DODD

As I recall, Miss MacGuffin, you struck first. And besides, I'm getting paid to teach you how to chase down a story, not to make you feel special.

MACGUFFIN

I'm not looking to feel special. I just don't like being embarrassed.

DODD

Journalists get cussed at, spat on, and swung at. If my lecture is going to make you red in the cheeks, I'd recommend marrying a Rockefeller.

MacGuffin is stunned. Close on her clenching the notebook tighter, creasing it. Her cross charm dangles.

Dodd drapes his jacket over his arm, and picks up his briefcase and hat. He tips it to MacGuffin.

DODD (CONT'D)

Enjoy your weekend.

INT. THE TAM.-DUSK

The dimly lit bar swirls with cigarette smoke. Worn leather bar stools and an old jukebox splash red in a room comprised of whites, blacks, blues, dark greens, and grays. Dodd sits quietly by himself at the edge of the bar. A cigarette smolders in an ashtray. Two grizzled, male PATRONS with rolled-up sleeves sit in a booth behind him.

PATRON 1

I'm telling you, if I put one more tank together, I'm getting in it and opening fire.

PATRON 2

Leave it to you to complain about helping blow Hitler to Siberia!

The bartender, CARL, a stocky 50-something with a snub-nose and beady eyes, walks up to Dodd.

CARL

What'll it be?

DODD

Whiskey, straight.

Carl scans Dodd's appearance.

CARL

Uh huh.

He pulls two fresh beers from the tap and delivers them to the two men.

CARL (CONT'D)
Here you go boys, on the house.

PATRON 1
Come on, Carl, I got the money.

PATRON 2
Yeah, I don't like getting hand-outs.

CARL
I'm not taking your hard-earned dough. Enjoy 'em, boys.

He wipes down their table, throws the rag over his shoulder.

Carl returns, splashes whiskey into a glass, slides the drink to Dodd.

DODD
Mine on the house, too?

CARL
I ain't running a charity, pal.

A beat.

DODD
I've been working hard too, Mac.

CARL
(sarcastically)
I bet.

DODD
Sure have. It's a job and a half looking at that ugly mug of yours.

CARL
What'd you say?

DODD
You heard me.

CARL
Hey, fellas.

The two male patrons rush over and stand between Dodd and Carl.

DODD
 Easy there, Abbott and Costello.
 I'm just trying to figure out why
 your buddy here has beef with me.

Dodd smooths his lapels.

CARL
 An office monkey like you has no
 right asking for a free drink. Get
 this jerk out of here boys. He
 ain't worth my time.

One patron places his hand on Dodd's shoulder. He shakes it off.

DODD
 I'm leaving. Tell me one thing
 though, Mac.

Carl stares at him.

DODD (CONT'D)
 Is your wife blind?

CARL
 That's it.

The now enraged Carl stumbles getting over the bar. Both patrons struggle to restrain him. Dodd adjusts his hat and exits.

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-NIGHT

The Proctor's Theater marquee glows, advertising a double feature for "THE PHILADELPHIA STORY" and "MR. DEEDS GOES TO TOWN." The bright exterior is book-ended in darkness.

Dodd's sedan motors in front of the theater. Slow pan with the sedan. It halts in front of an adjacent apartment building.

EXT. APARTMENT-NIGHT

Fire escapes clutter the brick facade. Interior lights shine from French-style windows. An American flag hangs limply on a pole.

The sedan stops in front of a broken street lamp.

INT. APARTMENT-NIGHT

The door lurches open. Dodd's silhouette stands in the doorway. A lit cigarette hangs from his mouth. He flicks a light switch, illuminating the living room.

We see a sparsely decorated space. A cheap brown couch and a small coffee table sit in the foreground.

A reading chair and an end table are next to the door. The small lamp casts beams onto scattered newspapers on the floor.

Dodd loosens his tie, tosses his jacket onto the chair.

INT. KITCHEN-NIGHT

Dodd opens the white icebox and removes mustard and sliced ham. He takes bread from the counter and prepares a sandwich.

INT. LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

Close on phonograph needle lowered on vinyl. The song "I'VE GOT A GAL IN KALAMAZOO" crescendos.

Dodd scans the small bar near the record player, grabbing a bottle of brandy and rocks glass.

He drops onto the couch, putting the drink next to his sandwich.

Dodd downs half the glass and almost immediately refills it.

Slow pan away from Dodd and zoom on the record player behind the couch.

The lyrics "AM I DREAMIN'? I CAN HEAR HER SCREAMIN'" echo.

INT. APARTMENT-A FEW HOURS LATER

The record player's needle skips, emitting a faint clicking.

Dodd lies motionless on the couch. The drained brandy bottle remains nearby.

INT. OFFICE-MORNING.

Dodd, with the same loosened tie, rubs his eyes. The sleeves of his wrinkled shirt rolled up, his hat tipped back. He takes a sip from a coffee cup.

He kicks his feet on the desk and closes his eyes.

A knock on the door.

A beat.

Newell opens the door. Dodd remains asleep, quietly snoring.

He stares at Dodd, and slams the door. Dodd springs from his chair, knocking over the cup, spilling his coffee.

Newell smiles.

NEWELL

Good morning, darling. Had a rough night, did we?

Dodd groans. He checks the stains on his shirt and shakes the coffee off his hands.

DODD

(caustically)

Thanks, Jackie. And not exactly. It was the morning that was rough.

NEWELL

What was her name?

DODD

Brandy.

He pulls a handkerchief from the drawer, wipes up the mess. Dodd puts his head on the desk.

NEWELL

What kind of message does it send to our students when their teacher smells like he slept in the gutter?

A beat.

NEWELL (CONT'D)

Well?

He pulls his head up.

DODD

Since when is this a seminary?

Newell chuckles.

NEWELL

No seminary would let you within ten feet of the entrance. Although it wouldn't hurt for you to act a little holier.

DODD

I'll get my collar bleached.

NEWELL

I meant compassion. One of your students was pretty fired up, yesterday. She said you chewed her out real good.

DODD

Let me guess, MacGuffin?

NEWELL

That's the one.

DODD

I'll start cleaning out my desk.

Newell edges closer to Dodd, sitting on the corner of his desk.

NEWELL

She's a smart girl, Dodd. Very ambitious.

DODD

Uh-huh.

NEWELL

I'm not asking you to marry her. Just ease up.

DODD

Alright, I'll work on it.

Newell grins.

NEWELL

I know you will, or else I'll be back.

He stands, exits, slamming the door.

Dodd taps the desk. He reclines, rests his feet on the desk, and pushes his hat over his eyes.

A long beat.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY-MORNING

Close on MacGuffin's hand and bracelet. She knocks on the door frame.

INT. DODD'S OFFICE-MORNING

MACGUFFIN (O.S.)
Professor Dodd?

Dodd lies in his relaxed state.

DODD
Who's asking?

MACGUFFIN
Christina MacGuffin

DODD
I'm out of the office.

A beat.

MacGuffin enters.

MACGUFFIN
Professor Dodd?

DODD
I'll be back on Monday.

MACGUFFIN
Professor Dodd, please! This is ridiculous.

Dodd whips upright.

DODD
(sarcastically)
Yes, sweetheart?

MacGuffin maintains her focus.

MACGUFFIN
I need to talk.

DODD

If you need notes from yesterday's lecture, you'll have to get them from someone else.

MACGUFFIN

You don't look like you're in any shape to be lecturing much. I think there's something shady going on at the railroad plant.

Dodd tries his coffee cup, comes up empty.

DODD

According to the papers, everything seems hunky dory. Government contract has them working around the clock.

MACGUFFIN

You'd think that. My father works days at the mill. Yesterday he and the other workers got out at noon.

DODD

Sounds like a good job. What else?

Dodd stares at her, motions with his hand for information. She opens the notebook.

MACGUFFIN

The paper said that mill is open from sunrise to sundown.

DODD

They could be spreading the workload around. You know, working guys in shifts.

MACGUFFIN

Even if they are, there would have to be twice as many workers for it all to add up.

He lights a cigarette.

DODD

What else you got?

MACGUFFIN

Nothing. I need to talk with someone there.

DODD
Have you tried your old man?

MACGUFFIN
Yes, but he never opens up about it. He just says what goes on at the mill doesn't concern girls.

DODD
What about another worker? How about the guy in charge?

MACGUFFIN
I guess that might work. When should I do it?

DODD
Christ, do you want my help or do you want me to do everything? Whenever you can get an interview. Skip class, I don't care.

MACGUFFIN
Of course you don't.

DODD
I'm sick of all this lip. I believe a thank you is in order.

MACGUFFIN
I'll thank you when I'm making headlines.

She exits.

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-DUSK

The setting sun gives way to darkness. Shadows creep in and cover the buildings.

Dodd walks down the street until he stops in front of the Proctor Theater.

The marquee beams with its latest showing "HIS GIRL FRIDAY" and "BRINGING UP BABY."

Dodd strides toward the ticket booth.

INT. THE PROCTOR THEATER-NIGHT

The sliver screen's glow highlights the mostly empty theater. Dodd sits alone in the middle of a row.

A handsome couple sits a few rows behind, staring intently at the screen.

Dodd removes a pint of rye from his coat pocket and takes a pull.

On screen, Walter Burns banter with Hildy Johnson. We hear Burns utter the phrase "a great newspaperman."

INT. THE PROCTOR THEATER- POV DODD.

Walter and Hildy walk off screen and the credits roll.

INT. THE PROCTOR THEATER-NIGHT

Dodd takes a long pull from the bottle. He stands to exit, is stopped by a passing USHER.

USHER

Sir, there's still one more picture.

DODD

I've seen the other one. Not my favorite. Grant is much better in His Girl Friday.

The usher winces and turns his head.

USHER

There's no alcohol allowed in here, sir.

DODD

Who said anything about alcohol? I'm talking pictures.

USHER

Come on, let's get you out of here.

The usher escorts Dodd up the aisle. Dodd staggers forward, stops at the couple.

DODD

(pointing to the screen)
Journalism isn't really like that.
It's romanticized.

He continues forward.

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-NIGHT

The double doors burst open.

There is little activity, only a few citizens on the sidewalk and cars passing by.

Dodd looks in both directions then makes his way down the sidewalk.

INT. JIMMY JAY'S-NIGHT

Patrons pack the bar. A cloud of cigarette smoke halos the room.

A gorgeous BLONDE, 30's with wavy curls, sips a drink, fingers an unlit cigarette in the other hand.

An inebriated Dodd meanders to the stool next to her.

DODD
Need a light?

BLONDE
No thanks. My boyfriend doesn't like me playing with other boys' lighters.

DODD
Of course he doesn't. Hopefully he's the non-confrontational type.

Dodd pulls out his lighter.

BLONDE
I wouldn't count on it. So I suggest you put that thing away, and get out of his seat.

DODD
That's too bad, pretty face like yours would go perfect in my story.

The blonde angles toward him.

BLONDE
Are you a writer?

DODD
More or less. I'm a newspaperman. My editor says I'm the best he's ever known.

BLONDE

What kind of stories do you write?

A fit, well-dressed man, 30's, enters. He slicks back his hair. This is the blonde's BOYFRIEND.

He rushes over, taps Dodd on the shoulder.

DODD

(turning to him)

Yes?

BOYFRIEND

You're in my seat, buddy. Scram.

Dodd motions to the bartender.

DODD

Say, is this seat reserved for anyone?

The bartender shakes his head. Dodd turns back to the boyfriend.

DODD (CONT'D)

It's not your seat.

BOYFRIEND

I'm not going to ask again. Get out of my seat, and stay away from my girl.

BLONDE

(to Dodd)

You better go.

Dodd puts his hand up, silencing her.

DODD

I'm just telling this nice lady what a successful writer I am. What do you do?

The boyfriend snatches Dodd by the lapels, pulls him closer.

BOYFRIEND

I make dopes like you regret getting out of bed.

Patrons stop, back away from the men. Bar workers move in to intervene.

BLONDE
We were just making conversation.

BOYFRIEND
(to Blonde)
Shut up. This doesn't concern you.

Dodd grips the boyfriend by the wrists.

DODD
It's all right. No need to get
uptight. I'll leave. C'mon
sweetheart, let's head back to my
place.

He winks at the blonde. The boyfriend winds up, punches Dodd square in the stomach. Dodd throws a left hook, knocking the boyfriend back. They exchange blows. Bar workers grab the two men, restraining them.

The boyfriend wrestles free, lands a punch on Dodd's jaw, knocking him unconscious.

The boyfriend snatches the blonde's wrist, pulls her out of the bar.

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-NIGHT

Long shot of two BARTENDERS carrying a limp Dodd outside of the bar. Street lamps cast feeble light in an otherwise dark setting.

The bartenders step into the light. One flags down a cab with his free hand.

A yellow Desoto Skyview edges to the curb.

The men toss Dodd into the backseat. One bartender pulls out his wallet and opens it.

To the cab driver.

BARTENDER
1430 Oak Hills Ave.

He pulls a bill out of Dodd's wallet, gives it to the driver, and tosses the wallet into the backseat.

The Skyview motors away.

INT. APARTMENT-MONDAY AT DAWN

Close on a newspaper date "FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1943."

A candlestick phone rings.

The paper lowers, revealing Dodd with a lump on his jaw and a bottle of whiskey close by. He eyes the receiver from the couch.

Dodd returns to the print. The phone rings two more times.

He snatches the receiver.

DODD

Hello?

He rubs his jaw, holds a rocks glass full of ice to it.

NEWELL (O.S.)

Dodd. We need to talk.

DODD

Jackie boy, do you know what time it is? I was sound asleep.

NEWELL (O.S.)

This is serious Dodd, there's been an accident.

DODD

Let me guess, Professor Cohen ate a ham sandwich again.

NEWELL (O.S.)

Christina MacGuffin was found dead this morning.

A beat.

He rises from the seat.

DODD

What?

NEWELL (O.S.)

I just got the call.

DODD

How'd it happen?

CUT TO:

EXT. AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY PLANT-DAWN

Two coroners wheel a stretcher, covered in a white sheet, into their wagon.

NEWELL (V.O.)
They don't have all the details,
yet. But, it looks like foul play.

They struggle to lift the stretcher. They accidentally drop the stretcher, forcing MacGuffin's pale hand from under the sheet. Water droplets cascade from her fingertips.

DODD (V.O.)
Do they have a suspect?

NEWELL (V.O.)
They have one guy in custody. Her
boyfriend, Peter Boucher.

DODD (V.O.)
Jesus Christ.

Close up on a boy, 20s, with blonde hair and an athletic build, running. His eyes wide with panic. This is PETER BOUCHER.

He stumbles near a row of ALCO trucks. Two police officers catch up to him. They tackle him into one of the vehicle's doors.

One burly officer bear hugs Boucher. The other, slimmer, officer removes his handcuffs. Boucher kicks him the stomach as he approaches, sending him to the ground. Boucher squirms violently.

Close on the bigger officer's arms squeezing tighter around Peter's slim frame. Boucher screams about his innocence.

BOUCHER
I didn't do anything wrong!

BURLY OFFICER
Cuff him, Gerry!

Gerry stands and draws his nightstick, cracks Boucher over the head, and cuffs him.

The two officers toss Boucher's limp body into the cruiser.

NEWELL (V.O.)
Naturally, we're cancelling all
classes until further notice.

A beat.

NEWELL (O.S.)
Dodd?

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT-DAWN

DODD
Yeah...yeah of course. Thanks for
letting me know.

He places the receiver down.

EXT. AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY PLANT-DAWN

The pink skyline coalesces with what's left of the twilight behind the factory. The light outlines the building's edges, which is otherwise completely dark.

INT. SEDAN-DAWN

Dodd stares out of the driver's side window across the street from the mill. Police barricades block him from pulling onto the property. He chews the tip of his thumbnail, exits.

EXT. AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY PLANT-DAWN

A long dirt path leads to the mill's brick exterior. To the side, a loading bay at the same row of trucks.

Dodd trails the path, scanning the surrounding.

He comes to a small pond adjacent to the mill. It is surrounded by more barricades and evidence markers. An empty cruiser parked nearby.

Dodd bends down, examines the placement of markers.

The phrase "Stop right there!" is heard off screen. Quick pan of an older, out of shape OFFICER, 40's, running toward the scene.

OFFICER

No unauthorized person beyond the blockade. Let me see some ID, right now.

Dodd reaches into his coat pocket. The officer's hand hovers over his holster. Dodd stops.

DODD

Easy, pal.

He slowly pulls out his wallet, and a cigarette case, lights up. He offers him the case.

DODD (CONT'D)

Smoke?

OFFICER

No.

Dodd snaps the case closed. The officer pulls a crumpled New York Times Press Badge from Dodd's wallet, examines it.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Jesus, you can't keep the press away from anything these days. Where is the line with you guys?

DODD

I'm not part of the press. I'm a professor over at Union. It was my student you found today.

The officer hands back his wallet.

OFFICER

My mistake. It's a sad story. I just can't stand those vultures. Always snooping around.

DODD

It's no picnic snooping around. Does it all add up to you?

OFFICER

This? Yeah sure. Crime of passion. It happens more than you'd know.

DODD

But why here?

OFFICER

Look, I can't think like a mad man. Anyway, Professor Dodd, you really can't be here.

DODD

I know, I'll leave.

OFFICER

No, you can't. I got strict orders to bring in anyone connected to this.

DODD

You don't think--

OFFICER

I'm not making any accusations, but trespassing on a crime scene ties you to it. At the very least you got a small fine to pay. Come on.

The officer grabs Dodd's arm, pulling him toward the cruiser. Dodd flicks the cigarette, acquiesces.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM- MORNING.

Dodd sits in a dim room with plywood walls, in front of a one-way mirror. A grated ceiling lamp glows, keeping him and the table top out of the shadows.

The same burly officer who arrested Peter enters. He rests down and leans over the table. Half his face is in shadow, half is illuminated.

DODD

Good morning, Officer.

BURLY OFFICER

Professor Dodd. Comfortable?

DODD

A few more lights might liven the place up.

BURLY OFFICER

I'm sure you have. What were you doing at the scene?

DODD

I couldn't believe it. It's a hard story to swallow.

BURLY OFFICER

A story you were looking make some headlines with?

DODD

Not a chance. I'm done scratching that itch.

BURLY OFFICER

Uh-huh. So you weren't looking to make a buck. Where were you last night?

DODD

At home enjoying a drink. Look if you're making an accusation, make it now.

BURLY OFFICER

No one's dragging you into anything. We're just trying to weed out the wrong people. What kind of drink?

DODD

Whiskey, with a splash of water for my health.

BURLY OFFICER

Sure, you've got to stay healthy. Anyone that can prove that?

DODD

Only Jack Daniels.

BURLY OFFICER

That's a pretty nasty bruise you got there.

He points to Dodd's jaw.

BURLY OFFICER (CONT'D)

Did Jack Daniels do that to you?

DODD

No but he provoked the guy who did.

BURLY OFFICER

What do you know about Christina MacGuffin?

DODD

She was a nice girl. Bright. A little bit sassy, but what broad isn't?

BURLY OFFICER

What about Peter Boucher?

DODD

Never met him.

BURLY OFFICER

Really? Because he mentioned you when we questioned him.

DODD

Like I said, I never met the kid.

BURLY OFFICER

Here's what I think: Peter's got a temper. Maybe Christina done Peter wrong, and he decides to make sure she doesn't do it again. He lures Christina to the mill. It's secluded and there's no one there after dark. She goes because she trusts him. Once he killed her, he makes it look like an accident by dropping her in the pond. Only thing is, Peter cracks under the guilt. He goes to you for help. You don't tell him what he wants to hear, and he slugs you real good. His guilt drives him back to scene, and it draws you there to see if you can cover for him.

Dodd blows out a plume of smoke.

DODD

Does anyone buy into these stories?

BURLY OFFICER

Do you know what the penalty is for being an accessory to murder?

DODD

I got no part in this.

BURLY OFFICER

Then explain how you ended up at the scene.

DODD

Christina was my student. I couldn't believe it happened. So I had to see for myself. And as for this lump on my jaw, I got this in a bar last night.

BURLY OFFICER

What bar?

DODD

I think it's called Jimmy Jay's. It's on the corner of 22nd and 34th. Call 'em up if you want.

A beat.

The officer returns.

BURLY OFFICER

So take me through this alleged barroom brawl.

DODD

I was sauced real good, and I was talking to some dame. A real beauty. Then WHAM, her boyfriend gave me one right in the kisser. Next thing I know, a cabbie is shaking me to get out of his car and I'm home.

BURLY OFFICER

Better men have been shot for less. You sure that's all that happened.

DODD

She was no Lana Turner. Believe me, I got all I deserved.

A knock on the door. The officer opens it. Faint whispers are heard. He turns back.

Dodd raises his eyebrows.

DODD (CONT'D)

Well?

BURLY OFFICER

You're a dame-stealing bastard.

DODD

My best alibi. Am I free to go?

BURLY OFFICER

Not yet. Pay your fine at the front desk.

INT. POLICE STATION HALLWAY-MORNING.

Dodd walks down the hallway. Morning sun shines through office windows, putting patches of sunlight on the floor.

He looks to his right, another interrogation room. The metal door muffles shouts.

Suddenly, DAVID GALITZ, a proper-looking, heavy set man in his 60's, with parted hair and circular wire frame glasses, rushes down the hallway.

GALITZ

Who is in charge here?

A young OFFICER rushes to Galitz's side.

OFFICER

Can I help you, sir?

GALITZ

Where is Peter Boucher?

OFFICER

He's being detained.

GALITZ

My client will not make any further comments. Take me to him at once, or I'll file a lawsuit against this entire precinct.

The officer's eyes widen.

OFFICER

Yes, sir.

He leads Galitz to the second interrogation room. He knocks on the door. It cracks open. The officer murmurs inside the room. It closes.

The door re-opens. An officer walks out holding an evidence box. Close on MacGuffin's notebook sandwiched against the side.

Through the open door, a hysterical Boucher weeps over a table. The overhead light illuminates him completely. Galitz rushes in, consoling the boy. The door closes.

Dodd turns, sees the box being dropped at the evidence locker. An older, balding police officer guards it. The burly officer drops the same evidence box off at the counter and walks off.

Dodd cuts over to the locker.

INT. EVIDENCE LOCKER COUNTER-DAY

The white, apathetic OFFICER, 60s, looks at Dodd from behind a dutch door. He pulls the box onto a desk behind the door.

OFFICER

Yes?

DODD

Someone stole my wallet about a week back. I was told they caught the guy. I'm here to pick it up.

OFFICER

Name?

DODD

Adrien Garcea.

OFFICER

Do you have any form of identification?

DODD

Yeah, they're in my wallet.

OFFICER

Hang on.

The officer turns toward a series of shelves, putting his back to Dodd. In an instant, Dodd leans over the counter and snatches the notebook. Close on him slipping it under his jacket, behind his back.

The officer returns.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

No such luck, Mr. Garcea.

Dodd feigns disgust.

DODD

Unbelievable. I tell you this city is going down the drain. Thanks for trying, Mac.

He storms off, stops at a bench by the exit, picks up an abandoned news paper.

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-NOON

Dodd thumbs through the newspaper. Just outside the entrance, a curvy Latina with her hair in a bun, ANITA MOREIRA, mid-20's, waits. She brushes a few stray hairs out of her eyes. She speaks with a slight accent.

DODD
You waiting for someone?

MOREIRA
My boss.

DODD
He going to be in there for a while?

MOREIRA
I hope not.

DODD
How about we grab a drink while you wait?

MOREIRA
He wouldn't like that. And isn't it a bit early?

Dodd hands her the paper.

DODD
Aren't you obedient. Have something to read at least.

She takes the paper. He smirks at her.

MORIERA
(curtly)
Thanks.

DODD
That offer for a drink still stands.

INT. DODD'S OFFICE-DAY

MacGuffin's notebook is laid out. He thumbs through it. Pages contain scribbles and incomplete thoughts. He turns to an earmarked page.

Close on cursive writing of date and time logs. Beneath the records, "THE SEAM" and what appears to be "GA." in rushed writing. It stops abruptly.

A knock.

Dodd whips open his desk drawer and tosses the book inside.

An aging, black janitor with salt-and-pepper hair enters, pushing a trash cart.

Dodd exhales.

JANITOR

Sorry, I didn't know anyone was in here.

DODD

The paperwork doesn't stop.

JANITOR

Mind if I empty your basket?

He nods. The janitor edges toward Dodd's desk and grabs the receptacle.

Dodd looks out the window. He plays with his lower lip in contemplation.

JANITOR (CONT'D)

I'm surprised you're here today. Whole campus is a ghost town. I guess we're both eating lunch alone.

The janitor chuckles.

DODD

Uh-huh. Just another day in paradise.

He empties Dodd's bin and returns it.

JANITOR

Good luck with that work.

He begins to exit. Dodd whips his head around.

DODD

Hey, wait a minute.

JANITOR

Sir?

DODD
Do you know what "GA" stands for?

A beat.

JANITOR
Georgia?

DODD
(sarcastically)
Thanks, Mac.

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-NOON

Dodd wanders aimlessly down the empty sidewalk, holding the notebook under his arm. Buildings block the sun, casting a long shadow along his path.

He crosses by a corner restaurant with a concrete front. Four, younger, working-class men, sit behind a glass window with "CALHOUN'S" painted on it.

Dodd opens the notebook, runs his finger down a page, then checks his wristwatch. He takes his wallet and checks its contents.

He enters.

INT. CALHOUN'S BAR-NOON

Slivers of light flow around the window's painted letters, adding a glow to the dim atmosphere. A bar hand unstacks chairs.

The men, WALTER, JAKE, ARCHIE, and MARLON, 20's-30's, sit in a booth sipping beers.

Dodd slides an empty stool to the edge of their table.

DODD
Mind if I join you?

The men glance at each other.

ARCHIE
There's plenty of other seats.

He thumbs to a booth behind them.

Dodd sits down.

DODD

I can't do that. My father always told me to never drink alone. So what's the topic of discussion? Dames? The ball game?

A beat.

MARLON

We're just--

Walter blocks Marlon with his arm.

WALTER

Do we know you?

DODD

Sorry about that. Manners are the one thing my father forgot. R.J. Dodd.

He extends his hand. No one takes it.

ARCHIE

What do you want?

DODD

I'm a journalist out in New York. I got a big story in the works. I'm looking for interviews.

He removes his wallet, takes a stub out. Close on the same New York Times press badge. He slides it onto the table.

WALTER

What are you doing in Schenectady?

Dodd lights up a smoke.

DODD

I'm traveling around the country talking with different people and how they're helping during the war effort. My editor is calling it "Heroes at Home." I know Schenectady is producing tanks. You know anyone who works at the railroad mill?

Jake leans toward Dodd.

JAKE

We work there.

Dodd feigns an enormous grin and slaps his forehead.

DODD
You don't say!?! That's fantastic.

He motions to the bar back.

DODD (CONT'D)
Mind sharing your story?

The bar back arrives.

DODD (CONT'D)
I'll have a beer, garcon. What can
I get you gentlemen?

WALTER
A beer.

MARLON
Make it three.

JAKE
Four.

Archie crosses his arms, leans back.

ARCHIE
Nothing for me.

Dodd slaps down the notebook, opens to a fresh page. He touches a pen tip to his tongue.

DODD
Before I start I need names of my
fine heroes.

WALTER
Walter Schlitz

JAKE
Jacob O'Malley

MARLON
Marlon Porazzo

DODD
Two R's?

MARLON
No, my father left the one at Ellis
Island.

The men laugh. Dodd points the pen at Archie.

DODD

And you?

ARCHIE

No comment.

MARLON

What's the matter, Archie? You afraid they'll put a shot of you under the lost dog section?

He elbows Archie.

ARCHIE

Shut up, Marlon.

JAKE

Cool it, Arch. What's wrong with you?

ARCHIE

It's him.

He points to Dodd, sniffs.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

Something just don't smell right about you, pal. You walk in here and start trying to buy my life story for a drink? How do I know you're not some Nazi in disguise?

Dodd remains silent.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

I can tell ya one thing, I'm not giving an information to Hitler's right hand over here. Beat it, pal.

His friends stare at Archie, then at Dodd.

Dodd runs his hand along his stubble.

DODD

My grandfather didn't flee the Czar so his grandkids could be called Jew haters. Listen, fellas, I'm just trying to do my job.

JAKE

He's got a point. You are asking a lot of questions.

WALTER

And Dodd doesn't sound Jewish.

DODD

Where did all this come from? It was changed. Ask Marlon's grandfather about that. I'm as American as Gary Cooper.

He puts the pen away.

DODD (CONT'D)

I came here to do my job, not take part in your little witch hunt.

Dodd gets up.

MARLON

Now hang on. We didn't mean it like that. You just can't be too careful these days.

DODD

Alright but any more of this third degree bologna and I'm done.

The bar hand delivers their drinks.

A beat.

DODD (CONT'D)

When does your day at the mill start.

MARLON

Well, I get in by about 7:30am and work with transmissions, primarily. I assemble them and then set them on the frame.

JAKE

I get it about the same time. Except I'm molding exhaust pipes and air shafts.

WALTER

Once Jake finishes his job, I set them on the engine. And that's about it.

DODD

What time do you finish?

JAKE
I'm done at about 12:30.

WALTER
Me too.

Dodd glances at Marlon.

DODD
You too?

Marlon nods.

DODD (CONT'D)
What about the hulls? Who builds those?

Archie slaps the table.

ARCHIE
There you go, snooping around, again. Listen, Mac, why do you need to know about those?

DODD
Easy fella. It's an interview.

He looks to the other men.

DODD (CONT'D)
How long does it take, start to finish, to make one tank?

JAKE
I'd say about four days give or take. We have to wait for the metal to get in.

DODD
Where do you get it?

MARLON
I couldn't tell you. You'd have to ask the foreman.

DODD
Who would that be?

MARLON
Fred Mason.

Close on the pen tip writing out "FRED MASON."

DODD

Is there anyway I can contact him?

JAKE

Not today. There was an accident at the mill. A worker's kid was found dead this morning. The whole things been shut down since.

DODD

That's terrible.

MARLON

It's a shame. It was Fred's idea to close up, too, out of respect. I heard he's going to give her father a year off with pay.

WALTER

You're kidding?

Dodd puts the notebook away, caps his pen. He pulls out his wallet, tosses a bill onto the table.

DODD

Thank you boys, it's been a pleasure.

JAKE

You don't need anything else?

DODD

I write like Hemingway. No frills.

Dodd exits. The four men stare confusedly.

INT. OFFICE-DAY

Dodd sits at the desk, gripping the telephone receiver with the open notebook in front.

DODD

Operator, can you get me the number for a Fred Mason?

A whirring noise follows.

A female voice picks up.

DODD (CONT'D)

What do you mean?

Murmurs.

DODD (CONT'D)
How can you go unlisted?

"I'm sorry, but" echoes, followed by incoherent murmurs. Dodd slams the receiver down.

A beat.

Newell enters.

DODD (CONT'D)
Jackie boy, they've all gone mad.

NEWELL
I should say so. You included.

DODD
What?

NEWELL
You're smarter than that, Dodd.
Trespassing on a crime scene? What
the hell were you thinking?

DODD
Who told you?

NEWELL
A little birdie in blue phoned the
president's office.

DODD
They like to chirp don't they?

NEWELL
Don't go blaming them, this is on
you now.

Dodd is silent.

NEWELL (CONT'D)
That could've ended very badly.

DODD
I paid the fine. I was cleared to
go. No harm done.

NEWELL
It doesn't matter what happened. If
word got out it would be a
nightmare for the school.

DODD
Word didn't get out. I learned my
lesson. No more snooping for me.

NEWELL
Good. Keep your nose clean from now
on. I'm not going to warn you
again.

Newell exits. Dodd picks up the phone, dials.

DODD
Yes, I'm looking for Peter Boucher.

EXT. ST. CHRISTOPHER'S HOSPITAL-NIGHT

A heavy rain falls. Scattered lights shine from the five
story building. The Plymouth pulls into a half-circle drive,
driving around a statue of St. Christopher. It parks. Dual
columns frame the entrance.

INT. ROOM 508 ST. CHRISTOPHER'S HOSPITAL-NIGHT

Boucher lies motionless in bed, wearing a robe, cloaked in a
blanket. His head is bandaged. Rain spatters a window
parallel to him. Half-drawn shades partially block the
storm's natural glow. Lightning flashes momentarily
illuminate the room.

Dodd edges toward Boucher, nudging his leg.

DODD
(whispering)
Hey.

A beat.

No reaction from Boucher.

DODD (CONT'D)
(louder)
Hey!

He nudges him again. Boucher awakens, jumps at the sight of
Dodd, pulls the blanket closer with one hand, showing his
other cuffed to the bed.

DODD (CONT'D)
Relax, kid.

BOUCHER
Who are you?

DODD
Easy. I'm Professor Dodd. The guy
you named in the police report?

BOUCHER
What?

DODD
When did you get transferred here?

BOUCHER
I think last night. They said I was
hysterical.

DODD
What did you say about me to the
cops?

BOUCHER
I just said Christina spoke with
you before she went to the mill.
I'm innocent.

DODD
Keep it down. I'm not making any
judgement.

BOUCHER
Why are they?

DODD
I couldn't tell you. Your fancy
lawyer doesn't help.

BOUCHER
I never met the guy. He came in and
just started coaching me.

DODD
What's his name?

BOUCHER
Galitz.

DODD
Did he say who hired him?

BOUCHER
No. I didn't think to ask. I was
just so happy to get out of that
interrogation room.

DODD
What was he telling you?

A small beat.

BOUCHER

He said not to talk about it with anyone else.

DODD

I'm not going to say anything.

BOUCHER

I can't.

DODD

Fine. Tell me where things ended between you and Christina.

BOUCHER

She called me in the morning of. She wanted me to meet her at the mill but wouldn't say why.

DODD

Did she seem alright?

BOUCHER

She was whispering, but something in her voice didn't sound right. When I got to the mill there were police everywhere.

DODD

If you didn't do anything, why did you run?

BOUCHER

Once I saw she was gone I just lost it. The last thing I remember is being dragged into an interrogation room. The police are making me out to be a monster.

DODD

Did you guys argue a lot?

BOUCHER

Every now and again. We just disagreed on little things. And they'd blow up.

DODD

But you never hit her?

BOUCHER

Of course not, I loved her!

Dodd peers behind the shade, letting light on his face.

BOUCHER (CONT'D)
I'm not the right guy.

Turning back to Boucher.

DODD
It's not my call to make. You said
Christina was going to the mill?

BOUCHER
She just said she was going to
interview someone. She was adamant
something strange was going on.

DODD
Did she say who?

BOUCHER
Fred Manson? Something like that.

Dodd stays silent.

DODD
Mason.

Boucher leans up.

BOUCHER
You don't think he had something to
do with it, do you?

DODD
I'm not making any assumptions,
yet. One more thing--

Murmurs crescendo outside the door. Dodd shoves Boucher down,
ducks behind the bed.

DODD (CONT'D)
(whispering)
Shut your eyes!

Boucher obeys. An officer peers his head in, shines a
flashlight around. The beam cuts through the shadow. A
woman's voice is heard, luring the officer away. He closes
the door.

DODD (CONT'D)
You're a good actor, kid. A regular
Cary Grant. Like I was saying, do
you know what "GA" stands for?

BOUCHER

No. I don't.

Dodd taps Boucher's mattress.

DODD

No one seems to. You keep quiet for now. I'll be back.

He slinks over to the door, opens it, looks out, exits.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR OF ST. CHRISTOPHER'S HOSPITAL-NIGHT

Dodd, bent over, rushes toward the door. The flirting officer looks in the direction, shines his light. Close on door cracked open.

INT. FOYER OF ST. CHRISTOPHER'S HOSPITAL-NIGHT.

Dodd walks briskly, tipping his cap to the nurse, exits.

INT. APARTMENT-NIGHT

He sits at this couch, hunched over the coffee table. A table lamp shines onto the notebook. Dodd outlines information. He sips a rocks glass.

EXT. STREET AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY PLANT-MORNING

The Plymouth eases up to the curb. Rising sun is blocked by nearby buildings, keeping the plant in shadow. Barricades are gone. Dodd exits.

INT. AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY PLANT-MORNING

Steel rafters accent an industrial setting. The warehouse buzzes with activity. Workers weld metal, illuminating dim stations, while others carry raw materials. Voices bark orders. Tank skeletons and scrap metal scattered throughout.

An office with frosted windows rests above. A metal staircase leads to it. Dodd goes up.

EXT. FRED MASON'S OFFICE-MORNING

A wood door with a large frosted panel. Painted on it is "FRED MASON" and "PLANT MANAGER" underneath. A voice converses behind. Dodd knocks.

VOICE (O.S.)
Hang on. Yeah?

Dodd enters, removes his cap.

INT. FRED MASON'S OFFICE-MORNING.

An oak desk sits in the middle of the room, a burgundy leather chair behind. A ceiling fan swirls cigarette smoke. The wall's poorly frosted window panes allow light intermittently.

Mason, a lanky 40 year old with parted brown hair, smokes a cigarette, walks in front of the desk, holding the phone base in one hand, balances the receiver on his shoulder. He shakes his closed, free hand. We hear a clicking sound. He motions Dodd in.

MASON
Yeah, well if the metal isn't here
by Friday, then it's your fault if
we all end up speaking German.

He slams the receiver, opens closed hand, revealing dice, puts them on table, untangles phone cord from his feet.

MASON (CONT'D)
Can I help you.

DODD
I hope so. The name's, R.J. Dodd.

Mason leans on his desk, turns, ashes his smoke.

MASON
Trespassing again, are we?

Dodd is silent.

MASON (CONT'D)
You wouldn't think it, but men can
gossip too.

DODD
I would have never guessed. And no.
I'm not one to dwell on the past.

Mason chuckles, holds die in between fingers, taps it on desk.

MASON
What is it then? My time is
valuable.

DODD
I wanted to talk to you about
Christina MacGuffin.

He stays poised.

MASON
What about her?

Dodd lights a cigarette.

DODD
I'm assuming you've heard the
unfortunate news, what with all the
loose lips around here.

MASON
I'd be deaf and dumb if I didn't.
The first thing I did when I heard
was go visit Robbie.

DODD
Robbie's her father?

Mason sits on the desk, leans forward.

MASON
Yeah. My heart goes out to the guy,
from what I hear she had a bright
future.

DODD
I know she did. A friend of hers
claims she was supposed to talk
with you the day before she died.

MASON
That's news to me.

Mason takes a big puff, exhales.

MASON (CONT'D)
What's his name? Peter?

DODD
You know him?

MASON
I hear he might be the culprit.

DODD
Well my hunch says the kid's clean.

MASON

You know the difference between hunches and understandings, Mr. Dodd? Hunches are half-baked.

Mason flicks his cigarette.

MASON (CONT'D)

If she was planning on talking to me, I'm the last one to know. Now, if you don't mind, I've got work to do.

DODD

Sure thing.

He points with his cap at the phone.

DODD (CONT'D)

I hope you get the steel shipped. I heard German is miserable to learn.

Dodd exits.

INT. AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY PLANT-MORNING

Dodd descends the steps, puts on his cap. Mason follows, leans against the balcony's railing, still clacking the dice in his hand. Walter, Marlon, Jake, and Archie stand, on break, talking below. Dodd rolls his shoulders, fixes his tie, walks past them.

DODD

Gentlemen.

ARCHIE

How's that story coming along, hot shot?

Dodd continues walking, looking ahead.

DODD

Beautifully, should be done sometime next month.

JAKE

I'll keep an eye out--

He exits. Mason whistles.

MASON

You know that guy?

INT. PHONE BOOTH-STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-NOON

Close on an open phone book. A finger runs down the "M" section, many names. Stop on "ROBERT AND ELLEN MACGUFFIN". The finger slides right, reveals the address "720 GRAFTON AVE."

Dodd tears the page, exits.

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-NOON

The Plymouth powers through the city streets, eases to a halt at four way intersection. Shadow masks the road behind. The signal changes, the car accelerates. Suddenly, a black Oldsmobile coupe rockets from behind, pacing the right side of the Plymouth.

INT. SEDAN-NOON

Dodd stares over at the car, confusedly. Close on shadowy figures up front. The driver jerks the wheel, bumping cars, pushing the Plymouth into the next lane. Dodd grips the wheel.

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-NOON

The Plymouth careens into the path of an oncoming truck. Horns blare, brakes squeal.

INT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-NOON

Close on Dodd's foot stomping the pedal, turning the wheel.

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-NOON

The Plymouth skirts through the truck's path, collides with the curb, denting the front bumper. The Oldsmobile darts off.

A male PEDESTRIAN runs over to Dodd.

PEDESTRIAN

You okay?

DODD

I'm fine. You see where that car went?

PEDESTRIAN

No. It took off like a bat out of hell. You want me to call the cops?

DODD

Forget it. Maybe I'll get lucky and see it wrapped around a telephone pole.

He throws the car in reverse, drives off.

INT. SEDAN-DAY

Beyond the windshield, 720 Grafton Ave, a two-family with peeling, yellow paint, grows bigger and nearer. It mirrors other homes in the working class area, but sits on a hill. The post-noon sun casts a long shadow on its entrance.

Dodd pulls to the curb, exits.

EXT. 720 GRAFTON AVE.-DAY

Dodd knocks on the door.

A beat.

A disheveled ROBERT MACGUFFIN, an able-bodied 40-something with a grayish horseshoe haircut, answers. His sullen, brown eyes scan Dodd. He speaks with unpolished diction.

ROBERT

Yes?

DODD

Mr. MacGuffin, my name is R.J. Dodd.

ROBERT

Christina's professor?

DODD

The same one.

A small beat.

ROBERT

She wasn't too fond of you.

DODD

Like I said, she was a smart girl.

Robert smirks, his glassy eyes exude pain.

DODD (CONT'D)
I'm sorry for your loss.

ROBERT
But, you didn't just come here to
offer your condolences.

DODD
I came here to find out what
happened.

MacGuffin braces his forearm on the door frame.

ROBERT
You can't just let me be?

Dodd is silent.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
I didn't think so. You ought to be
ashamed. My girl hasn't been gone
nearly two days and you all come
snooping around looking for an
interview.

Dodd cocks his head in contemplation.

DODD
Who else was here?

ROBERT
The police, reporters, you name it.

DODD
Fred Mason?

ROBERT
Sure, Freddie's been here.

DODD
I promise I'm not here to make a
buck. I'm looking for answers.

A beat.

ROBERT
Come in, I'd rather do this over a
drink.

Dodd enters.

INT. LIVING ROOM 720 GRAFTON AVE.-DAY

Slivers of natural light accent the modest decor. Narrow quarters keep the furniture close. Family photos line the walls.

Dodd sits on a couch behind a coffee table. Robert places a drink down, drops himself into an adjacent arm chair holding a glass.

DODD

Christina was a bright girl.

ROBERT

Please, Professor Dodd, cut the bull. I know you two had plenty some beef.

DODD

Almost enough to open a deli. But that's probably why she was so smart. She questioned everything.

ROBERT

She got that from her mother.

DODD

Being a spitfire is usually maternal. That must have made for a lot of interesting dinners.

ROBERT

Not exactly. Ellen left when Christina was six.

Dodd sips his drink.

DODD

I would've never known. A good wholesome girl like Christina seemed like she came from a loving family.

Robert leans forward in confrontation.

ROBERT

She did. You don't need two parents to have a loving family.

DODD

I didn't mean any disrespect.

ROBERT

Have you lost anyone?

DODD

No. But, I've interviewed plenty of people who have.

ROBERT

Christina said you used to be a hot shot reporter. Well you can't put how it feels into some measly column.

Robert takes a gulp.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Who did you write for?

DODD

The New York Times.

ROBERT

Fancy.

DODD

You could say that. I pushed subscriptions for them while I was in college, and started writing after I graduated.

ROBERT

Why did you leave?

A beat.

Dodd stares the ice in his glass.

DODD

The best way I can describe it is like digging for gold. You spend so much time sifting through garbage for something that might not even be there. Eventually start wondering if it's worth being so dirty all the time. I thought education would be something a little cleaner.

ROBERT

The mill is no picnic either.

DODD

I can imagine. Christina said you never spoke about it much.

ROBERT

There was nothing to talk about.
The less she knew, the better
chance she'd take her degree and
move on from that kind of life.

DODD

If it's any consolation, she had a
great future in journalism.

Robert chuckles, eyes still glassy.

ROBERT

Great, a professional liar.

DODD

What did you think of her
boyfriend?

ROBERT

Peter? I still can't believe he
could've done this.

DODD

How come? Word is they used to
fight a lot.

ROBERT

It was all verbal. But it never
lasted. I'd hear them argue one
night, then the next day she'd be
telling me how great they were
together.

DODD

So you don't think he would hurt
her?

ROBERT

I just don't know.

Robert leans forward, face in hands.

DODD

Easy. I didn't mean to get you
upset.

Robert slams the chair's arm.

ROBERT

I just want the son of a bitch who
did this to pay.

DODD

Just take a deep breath. Let's change topics. Tell me about Fred Mason.

ROBERT

He's a great friend and a boss. I owe him a lot.

DODD

He said he was hurting for you. And that he was gave you a hug when he found out.

ROBERT

He did. Mason even brought a lawyer here. Had me sign a form for compensation with the rest of the year off.

DODD

Can I took a look at those forms?

ROBERT

You're snooping around a good deal, pal.

DODD

I swear to whatever God you believe in. This stays between us. It's out of curiosity.

Robert stands, goes off screen. Dodd scans the room. Close on a photo of Christina in a graduation gown and a proud Robert standing adjacent in a mill uniform.

MacGuffin returns, with forms. Dodd unfolds the paper, a business card drops. Close on the eggshell white paper with black print. It reads "DAVID E. GALITZ."

DODD (CONT'D)

Galitz. Was this Mason's attorney?

ROBERT

Yeah. Real nice guy.

Dodd holds card in one hand, flicks it with the other.

DODD

Would you mind if I copy this information? I've got family members looking for legal counsel.

ROBERT
Makes no difference to me.

DODD
You got any paper?

MacGuffin pulls a pad of paper from behind the documents, gives a sheet to Dodd. He scrawls down the information.

DODD (CONT'D)
One last thing, did Christina and Mason ever meet?

ROBERT
Only once, when Christina was a little girl.

Robert pauses. His eyes water and he begins to weep. Dodd consoles him, puts his arm around him.

DODD
Easy there, Mac. I didn't mean to upset you.

ROBERT
It's just not fair.

DODD
We'll find the truth.

INT. BAR ROOM-DAY

Close on Dodd balancing a pay phone receiver on his shoulder. He holds the sheet of paper in one hand, dials with the other. Over his shoulder, customers are scattered throughout the dive. A few workers prepare for the dinner crowd.

A series of rings, a crackle, a female voice murmurs.

DODD
The name is Meyer Rothstein. I want to schedule a meeting with Mr. Galitz. It's a professional matter.

The voice responds.

DODD (CONT'D)
Would today be possible?

A retort.

DODD (CONT'D)

I'm sure he's very busy, but I
promise this will not be a waste of
time.

A small beat. Dodd holds on the line.

The voice returns.

DODD (CONT'D)

Yes, I can make it by then.

He pulls a pen from his breast pocket, scribbles the
information on a piece of paper, checks his wristwatch.

DODD (CONT'D)

Thank you.

He swiftly hangs up the receiver.

EXT. GALITZ LAW FIRM-DAY

The Plymouth slides parallel to the curb, stops a few feet
from the firm. The post-noon sun casts a large shadow
diagonally across its facade, covering half the building.

INT. SEDAN-DAY

Dodd stares intently at the building, pulls a white sheet
from the back seat, fashions a sling and pulls his right arm
through. He exits.

INT. GALITZ LAW FIRM-DAY

Dark polish on the furniture and wood floors accent a gloomy
office setting. Dodd walks by a row of pictures. Close on a
group of men in front of a beautiful country home shaking
hands. To the side, a small window glows with traces of
natural fluorescence. Anita Moreira sits behind her desk,
punches keys on her typewriter. She has a noticeable red mark
on her cheek. Behind her, a door with a large frosted
windowpane. On it, painted in gold letters, "DAVID E. GALITZ
ATTORNEY AT LAW."

DODD

So we meet again.

Moreira looks up, slightly stunned.

MOREIRA

Can I help you, Mister?

DODD
Rothstein. And you?

MOREIRA
Anita.

DODD
Did you wait long the other night,
Anita?

MOREIRA
A little bit. I'll check to see if
Mr. Galitz is ready for you.

She stands.

DODD
Now hold up. What about the offer
for a drink? You give that any more
thought.

MORIERA
I don't date clients.

DODD
Well hopefully I won't be a client
for too long. Mr. Galitz can take
care of my problem and get me a
nice settlement.

She tilts her head, confused.

MOREIRA
Let me see if he is ready.

She opens the door, closes it. She appears just as a shadowy
figure behind the glass.

A small beat.

She returns.

MOREIRA (CONT'D)
Mr. Galitz will see you now.

Dodd enters.

INT. GALITZ'S OFFICE-DAY

Galitz sits in a large leather chair. His white silk shirt is
stained with black ink just above the breast pocket.

He dabs it with a handkerchief, looks up at Dodd, struggles to stand as Dodd enters. He pockets the handkerchief, extends his hand, adjusts it to accommodate Dodd's "injury."

GALITZ

Mr. Rothstein, please have a seat.

DODD

Thank you.

He sits.

GALITZ

You look very familiar. Have we met before?

DODD

That depends, did you represent my ex-wife?

Both men laugh.

DODD (CONT'D)

That's a nasty stain you got there.

GALITZ

Oh yes. Clumsiness never mixes with white.

DODD

It runs in my family. Or trips, I should say.

Galitz chuckles, still looking down, dabbing at the stain.

GALITZ

Fortunately, it not me who's the clumsy one. It's my secretary.

Dodd struggles to light a smoke with his left hand, inhales, blows out a plume of smoke.

DODD

Thankfully she's got the face to make up for it. I thought she was Vivien Leigh until I heard her talk.

GALITZ

I'm not much for the movies. But her looks were a deciding factor in the hiring process.

Dodd fakes a hysterical laugh, slaps the desk. Galitz clears his throat.

GALITZ (CONT'D)

As much as I'd like to keep talking pretty women, I know you're here for something else.

DODD

Of course. Too much fun and you lawyers get disbarred. Anyway, I've got a situation that requires some legal help.

GALITZ

I see.

DODD

See, I was taken in by the local police about a week back. On bogus charges I might add. Something about public intoxication. Anyway, these dopes keep me in a cell for the entire night. No phone call, no legal counsel. When I asked to use the phone, I get a billy club to the side. Hence this.

He raises his arm in a sling.

DODD (CONT'D)

My golf game has been awful ever since.

Galitz's grimaces, leans forward in his chair, links his fingers, props his elbows on the desk.

GALITZ

I'm sorry, Mr. Rothstein, I believe there's been a mix up. Lawsuits aren't my area of legal operations.

DODD

What?

GALITZ

I specialize in real estate.

Dodd is silent.

A short beat.

GALITZ (CONT'D)
I'm sorry if there's been any
confusion.

Dodd stands, straightens his pants.

DODD
No. No. It's not your fault.

GALITZ
If you'd like, I can refer you to
one of my associates.

DODD
I'd appreciate that. Give me the
most cutthroat one you know.

Galitz pulls out a pad of paper, scrawls on it, and hands it
to Dodd.

GALITZ
Thomas O'Leary. He's an absolute
brute in the courtroom.

DODD
Thanks.

He stands. The men shake hands. Dodd exits.

INT. GALITZ LAW FIRM-DAY

Dodd closes the door. The clacking of a typewriter. Anita
sits at her desk, focusing on her work.

DODD
What were you doing at the police
station the other day?

MOREIRA
I told you, I was at work.

DODD
Well what's real estate got to do
with the police?

MOREIRA
I can't discuss work with clients.

Suddenly, Galitz emerges from his office, brow scrunched in
anger.

GALITZ
Anita, in my office.

Moreira tenses. Galitz sees Dodd, his expression changes.

GALITZ (CONT'D)
Still here, Mr. Rothstein?

Dodd looks at Moreira, back to Galitz.

DODD
I was just asking Anita to lunch. I
hope that's not a problem.

GALITZ
There's a great deal of work that
needs to be done.

DODD
It won't be more than half an hour.
You can sue me if I'm wrong.

Galitz is silent. He nods. Anita picks up a coat. The two
exit.

INT. RORY'S DINER-DAY

Dodd and Moreira sit across from each other in a booth,
silent, staring at respective cups of steaming coffee. It's
an empty diner. Moreira sits with her arms crossed, Dodd puts
his free hand around the cup.

DODD
Does Mr. Galitz practice any other
type of law?

MOREIRA
No. Just real-estate.

DODD
How long have you worked for Mr.
Galitz?

MOREIRA
About three years.

DODD
Sounds like you're a loyal
employee.

MOREIRA
I do my work.

DODD
Do you always show up on time?

MOREIRA

As long as the bus isn't late.

He leans back, sips his coffee.

DODD

When it is, is that when he slaps
you around?

Her gaze darts up.

MOREIRA

Of course not, why would you ask
that?

DODD

I'm a snoop. I wanted to know more
about that mark on your cheek. Not
to mention the fact you just about
freeze solid when he talks to you.

Moreira is silent.

DODD (CONT'D)

Does he do it a lot?

A beat.

Dodd stretches his free arm on the back of the booth.

DODD (CONT'D)

If my boss knocked me around, you
know what I'd do?

MOREIRA

He doesn't.

DODD

I'm not talking about you. I'm
talking about me.

He leans in.

DODD (CONT'D)

Anyway. I'd make him pay. I'm
talking literally pay--

MOREIRA

He's been very good to me.

DODD

Don't feed me that. He slaps you
around.

MOREIRA

Not always.

DODD

He makes you wait outside for
Christ sake. Even dogs get to go
inside.

Their conversation becomes louder. Diner workers stare, Dodd and Moreira look back. A blowsy WAITRESS with unkempt black hair meanders over.

WAITRESS

Is there a problem?

DODD

Sorry, doll. I burnt my tongue on
your coffee.

The waitress, unconvinced, looks to Anita.

WAITRESS

Is everything okay?

MOREIRA

Yes, it's fine.

DODD

I promise, no more outbursts.

WAITRESS

I'm holding you to that.

The waitress exits.

DODD

(whispering)

Tell me, doll, what's your goal? I
can tell you don't want to be
fetching coffee forever.

MOREIRA

I want to work in law.

DODD

You going to put the bad guys like
me away?

She unfolds her arms, reaches for the coffee, sips it.

MOREIRA

Maybe. Only after I get a male
secretary.

Dodd chuckles. She smiles.

MOREIRA (CONT'D)
It's not a joke.

DODD
I know it's not. I'm laughing
because I like it.

MOREIRA
Thank you, Mr. Rothstein.

DODD
Please call me Meyer.

MOREIRA
Anyway, if I lose my job I can't
save up for school.

DODD
Listen, kid, I like you. I don't
know what it is, but I do. You
heard of Union College?

Her eyes beam.

MOREIRA
Of course.

DODD
I've got connections over there. If
you promise to stop taking it on
the chin, I'll put in a good word
for you over there.

MOREIRA
But the money--

DODD
Don't worry about that.

MOREIRA
I'm confused, why are you doing
this.

DODD
I don't like the idea of a guy
smacking a girl.

MOREIRA
I know there's something else.

DODD
What makes you say that?

MOREIRA

Intuition. Plus your arm is moving
just fine.

Dodd smirks.

DODD

You are good.

He puts his smoke in between his lips, lets it hang. He pulls his arm out of the sling, waves his fingers to show full motion, takes out his wallet. Close on the New York Times press badge.

DODD (CONT'D)

I'm an investigative journalist at the Gazette. I got a lead your boss was up to something, so I wanted to do a little digging.

MOREIRA

So your name isn't Meyer Rothstein.

DODD

Nope. I pulled that out of a phone book.

MOREIRA

What's your real name?

DODD

R.J. Dodd.

He pulls out his wallet, shows his license. Flashes his press badge, puts it away.

MOREIRA

Do you really have connections over at Union?

DODD

I wouldn't lie about that.

MOREIRA

Just everything else.
So what do you need me to do?

DODD

I need you to be my eyes and ears.

MOREIRA

How?

Moreira examines the license.

DODD
I need answers.

MOREIRA
You weren't lying about your
friends at Union?

DODD
No. That's the trick to a good lie.
You always need to sprinkle some
truth in here and there.

A long beat.

Moreira sighs.

MOREIRA
How do I know I can trust you?

DODD
Have that drink with me. If you
don't believe me then, you can walk
away.

MOREIRA
You're buying.

Dodd flicks his wrist, checks his watch. The hands show three-
fifteen.

DODD
Beautiful.

He reaches into his wallet, slaps down a bill.

MOREIRA
I'll pick you up.

DODD
No. I'd rather go to you.

Dodd cocks his head in confusion.

DODD (CONT'D)
You sure are different. 1430 Oak
Hills Ave. 7:30 pm.

He stands to exit.

MOREIRA
Where are you going?

DODD
I have to tidy up.

INT. HALLWAY 1430 OAK HILLS AVE.-DUSK

Moreira waits outside the door, knocks. Dodd answers.

DODD
I'm surprised you came.

MOREIRA
What do you have planned?

INT. JIMMY JAY'S BAR-NIGHT

Artificial light beams, highlighting plumes of cigarette smoke. Outside the beam, shadows.

Dodd and Moreira sit in a small booth, over drinks. Moreira's face is half illuminated.

They are silent.

MORIERA
No questions for me?

DODD
This is your interview with me.

MOREIRA
I see. What's the R.J. Stand for?

DODD
Robert James. My parents couldn't decide which father to name me after.

MOREIRA
I like it.

She ashes her smoke.

MORIERA
What were you doing at the police station?

MOREIRA
Usually you ease into the bigger questions. But, I was brought in for trespassing.

MOREIRA (CONT'D)
Where?

DODD
The railroad plant.

MOREIRA

Why?

DODD

Curiosity. Something didn't seem right about the whole story.

MOREIRA

How did you know?

DODD

Intuition.

MOREIRA

Do you follow your gut a lot?

DODD

Always.

MOREIRA

Has it every steered you wrong?

DODD

Only once. And it's because I didn't listen to it.

MOREIRA

What happened?

DODD

The wrong person got hurt.

MOREIRA

Someone close to you?

DODD

You could say that. Someone that was very good to me. Taught me a lot.

MOREIRA

Do you think about it a lot?

DODD

Sometimes. You just need to push on though. But enough about that.

MOREIRA

Okay. Hmm. What do you do when you're not in the bar or at the office?

DODD

I'm at the pictures.

MOREIRA
You go a lot?

DODD
I go enough.

MOREIRA
Why?

DODD
There's just a natural appeal. You
can always tell who's good and
who's bad.

MOREIRA
I thought you said you were a bad
guy.

DODD
Let's just say I'm gray.

She laughs.

DODD (CONT'D)
Can you trust me now?

MOREIRA
We're working on it.

DODD
I got some questions for you.

MOREIRA
Shoot.

DODD
What's your full name?

MOREIRA
Anita Moreira-Gonzales.

DODD
Quite the mouthful.

MOREIRA
I usually drop the last part. It
makes it easier for people to talk.

DODD
Does Galitz call you that?

MOREIRA
I don't think he even knows my full
name.

DODD

This guy sounds like a prize.
What did Galitz tell you he was
doing at the police station?

MOREIRA

He said one of the properties he
was working on was vandalized. He
had to file the paperwork.

DODD

And you couldn't be there for that?

MOREIRA

It was confidential.

DODD

He's feeding you a line.

Moreira pauses, stares at him.

DODD (CONT'D)

He was pretending to defend a
client.

MOREIRA

Who?

DODD

A kid on trial for murder. So
either he's lying to you about his
credentials, or he's pulling the
wool over all of us.

MOREIRA

Why would he do it?

DODD

I don't know that much yet.

MOREIRA

When will you?

DODD

As soon as I can.

MOREIRA

Is there anything I can do?

Dodd smirks.

DODD

Get to Galitz's files. Look for
anything involving a Fred Mason.

Moreira pulls out a pen, writes "FRED MASON" down.

MOREIRA

I'll try.

DODD

Don't waver on me. Either you can
or you can't.

MOREIRA

What's next?

DODD

We get another round of drinks.
Maybe do some dancing.

Moreira chucks, sips her drink. Dodd raises a drink, they
clink their glasses.

EXT. MOREIRA'S APARTMENT BUILDING-NIGHT.

Shadow shrouds the scene. Street lamps cast light
intermittently across the sidewalk. An inebriated Dodd and
Moreira stumble toward the door, laughing.

They stop in front.

DODD

I told you I'd get you home.

MOREIRA

For some reason I didn't believe
it.

DODD

What else don't you believe about
me?

A beat.

MOREIRA

Why don't we find out.

She opens the door, reaches for Dodd's hand. He takes it,
gets pulled inside.

INT. ANITA MOREIRA'S APARTMENT-MORNING.

The morning sun shines through window panes, illuminating
part of a bed. Sheets scattered from a night of passion.
Moreira lies still. Dodd sits up, begins dressing.

Moreira awakens.

MOREIRA

You're not going to skip out on me
are you?

DODD

Of course not. You know where I
live.

MOREIRA

Where are you going?

DODD

I've got a few more questions to
ask. When can you get the files?

MOREIRA

Today, when Mr. Galitz leaves for
lunch.

DODD

Bring them to my place after.

He adjusts his button down, leans in, kisses Moreira.

EXT. AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY PLANT-LATE DAY

Shadows erase the details of the building's facade,
transforming it into a black mass from a distance. Its
location shields it from the sun's rays. No movement is
visible from the outside, making it appear as a graveyard.

Dodd ducks low to avoid suspicion, moves swiftly toward the
plant. The side entrance near the row of trucks is locked
tight.

He goes around the side, comes to an army green, barn-door-
style entrance under chain and padlock. Dodd pulls the door,
there's give in the chains, opening the door slightly. He
takes off one of his brown Florsheim boots, leaves it on the
ground. He pulls at the door, exerting himself, opening it as
wide as possible. With his bare foot, he wedges the boot
under the door. He slides inside.

INT. AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY PLANT-LATE DAY

The door opening sends splinters of light into an otherwise
dark warehouse. Outlines of machine equipment and tanks are
hardly visible. Dodd fights through the opening, gets in,
pulls his boot free. The door slides closed. He examines the
boot, brushes it, slides it back on.

He cautiously moves forward. His foot connects with metal. A loud clang. He curses under his breath. To the side, a completed tank.

To the side, at the entrance, a lock clicks. Muttering is heard. Dodd scales the tank, gets in the open hatch.

INT. TANK-LATE DAY

Darkness envelops the inside. Dodd pulls out a lighter, ignites it, creating a ball of luminance. He surveys the inside.

It's a claustrophobic interior. A control panel sits in front of him with gears, knobs, and cranks behind. He moves the light around. It gleams off an object in front.

Dodd leans closer, observing the control panel. He moves the light along it. Close on MacGuffin's charm bracelet, wedged under a welded seam. He pulls it out, white paint caked on the charm. He pockets it, fishes around, pulls out a quarter. He scrapes along the seam, then both sides of it, revealing two distinct colors of metal, one sleek gray, the other a rusted brown.

He turns, begins scraping at various parts of the tank, discovering the same issue.

He peeks out the hatch.

DODD'S POINT OF VIEW

The warehouse almost completely dark. Only a glow of light from Mason's office above.

INT. TANK-LATE DAY.

Dodd squirms through the cramped hatch, pulls himself out of the tank.

INT. AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY PLANT-LATE DAY

He jumps down, landing quietly, ducks, slinks toward the exit.

The industrial, overhead lights flash, flooding the warehouse. He rises, exposed and overwhelmed, covers his face.

Atop the catwalk stands Mason. Dodd lowers his hand, squinting. Mason descends the staircase.

MASON

You know what they say about curiosity and the cat, don't you Mr. Dodd?

DODD

Not exactly, I've always fancied myself a dog over a cat. More loyal.

Mason nods.

MASON

Did my tanks pass your little inspection?

DODD

It looks like you got them out of a Cracker Jack box. Are all these tanks made of crummy metal?

Mason is silent.

DODD (CONT'D)

What were ordering on the phone? More scrap metal to sell to Uncle Sam?

MASON

These tanks are combat ready.

DODD

Oh don't play dumb, Mason. These things look like they've already been to war.

MASON

I bet my workers would disagree.

DODD

They wouldn't know any better. They're too dumb and happy getting paid to sit at the bar.

MASON

Why don't you tell them that.

Mason whistles. Walter, Jake, Marlon, and Archie step from behind a stack of boxes. Walter, Jake, and Marlon stand, arms crossed. Archie cracks his knuckles.

DODD
How we doing, boys?

WALTER
Enough.

ARCHIE
I knew you were bad news from the start. I bet you aren't even a reporter.

DODD
Not anymore.

MASON
That's right. You know, fellas, Professor Dodd here was quite the hotshot. Until one bad story.

Dodd grimaces, stares at Mason.

MASON (CONT'D)
What's the matter, you a little sore? I thought you newspapermen prided yourself on exposing the truth?

JAKE
What did he do?

DODD
Nothing.

MASON
The boys down at the Times don't see it that way.

Dodd is silent.

MASON (CONT'D)
That was quite the slanderous little column you wrote.

ARCHIE
What?

MASON
That's right, our golden boy here has a history of selling out his own.

Mason walks closer to him.

MASON (CONT'D)

You hear a crazy yarn about some guy stashing money to run off with his secretary and write a story without following through? You make your boss, the man who hired you and gave you every opportunity look like a low-life? What kind of loyalty is that?

Dodd's hands tremble. His eyes lose their edge, show remorse. He remains silent.

MASON (CONT'D)

Did you ever really believe what you were writing?

A beat.

MARLON

Was any of it true?

MASON

Of course not. Once they dug deeper they saw he was giving money to his buddy's wife. He offed himself once the market crashed. She would've gone hungry if it wasn't for him.

ARCHIE

What happened to him?

MASON

He was disgraced. His wife threw him out. His friends turned on him. He ended it all in some crummy hotel room a few weeks later.

DODD

It was a mistake. You guys need to see the truth. These tan--

ARCHIE

Enough!

Archie lunges at Dodd. The others restrain him. Mason stares at Dodd.

MASON

That big mouth has caused a lot of trouble, Dodd.

He looks back at the men.

MASON (CONT'D)

Make sure he doesn't open it
anytime soon.

Mason turns, walks away. The men swarm Dodd, punching him, kicking him, throwing him to the ground. Aerial view of the men surrounding him, unleashing a fury of punches.

Dodd, in the fetal position, covers his face. The attack continues. Finally, a boot connects with Dodd's nose, knocking him cold.

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-NIGHT

Heavy rain spatters an empty street. An ALCO truck whizzes closer, headlights blaring. It slides along the curb. A door flies ajar. Dodd's limp body is pushed out, falls to the curb, rolls a few times. The truck speeds off.

Rain soaks his suit, wets the dried blood on his face.

A long beat.

Two lovers, a younger MAN and WOMAN, walk, engrossed in a conversation. They edge closer, pause, rush toward Dodd. The man removes his jacket, covers Dodd with it. The woman kneels, cradling his head. She taps his face.

WOMAN

Hey! Wake up.

The man stands, hands on hips. She looks at her lover.

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Call an ambulance.

He rushes toward a brownstone across the street, bangs on the door. Close on Dodd being held. In the background, a confused tenant answers. The man points to Dodd, is let inside the brownstone.

INT. ST. CHRISTOPHER'S HOSPITAL ROOM-EARLY MORNING

Dodd lies in bed, asleep. His wounds are cleaned, but still aggravated. His nose is bandaged. To the side, his suit, folded, and hat are on a chair. The shade is drawn, keeping the room dark. A blonde NURSE, 30s, enters, pulls it back. Light streaks diagonally across Dodd's body, leaving part of his face obscure. He awakens, gingerly touches his nose, moves his other hand. It's cuffed.

NURSE
Good Morning, Mr. Dodd.

DODD
What gives?

NURSE
It's a precaution we take with
certain patients.

DODD
What kind of patient am I?

He leans forward, clutches his ribs.

NURSE
One that took quite a licking.

DODD
Do the cops have you cuff everyone
that gets tossed around?

NURSE
I'll be back to check in on you.

She exits.

He whips back the blanket, slides his legs over the bed,
reaches for his hat, can't reach. The burly officer enters.

BURLY OFFICER
Leaving already?

Dodd freezes, stops reaching for his clothes.

DODD
No.

He hold up his cuffed hand. The officer smirks.

BURLY OFFICER
It's for yours and our protection.

DODD
Is getting your head kicked in a
crime these days?

BURLY OFFICER
Those are some nasty bruises. But
don't expect me to believe you
didn't bring this on yourself.

DODD
I deserve them. Another bar room
brawl. Only this time, the girl was
better looking.

Dodd shifts his weight, clutches his ribs, coughs deeply. The
officer laughs, crosses his arms.

BURLY OFFICER
With who, Fred Mason? He claims you
broke into the mill to attack him.
Fortunately his buddies fought you
off and forced you to run off.

DODD
He's--

A coughing fit erupts.

BURLY OFFICER
He's pressing charges. So we've got
you for assault and tampering with
evidence.

DODD
What?

The officer reaches behind his back, pulls MacGuffin's
notebook out, tosses it on his bed.

BURLY OFFICER
This was found in your jacket.

A small beat.

BURLY OFFICER (CONT'D)
You're in it deep, Dodd.

DODD
Take me in. But I can prove to you
I'm not the only crook here.

BURLY OFFICER
Keep dreaming.

Dodd is silent.

Moreira enters.

MOREIRA
Dodd!

She rushes toward him. The officer blocks her.

BURLY OFFICER
I'm sorry ma'am. No personal
contact.

MOREIRA
But--

BURLY OFFICER
No exceptions.

DODD
C'mon pal. Not even a goodbye kiss?

BURLY OFFICER
No.

The officer motions for her to leave, turns his back, exposing his club. Instantly, Moreira pulls out the club, slams the officer's head, knocking him out.

DODD
Jesus Christ.

MOREIRA
Come on.

She takes the keys, uncuffs Dodd.

He whips back the sheets, struggles to put on his clothes. She assists him. He grimaces lifting up his arms, buttons his shirt. It's bloodied and ripped. He feels inside the breast pocket, pulls out MacGuffin's bracelet.

He cuffs the officer to the bed, pockets the keys. He grabs the notebook, staggers toward the door, exits.

INT. FOYER OF ST. CHRISTOPHER'S HOSPITAL-MORNING

The two, heads lowered, drops the cuff keys in a waste basket, skirt unnoticed out of the hospital.

INT. DODD'S SEDAN-MORNING

Moreira drives, Dodd in the front seat. The rising sun shines through the windshield.

MOREIRA
Are you all right?

DODD
Never better.

MOREIRA

What happened?

DODD

I got what I deserved in some respect. In another, I got my ass handed to me. How did you find me?

MOREIRA

I knew something bad had happened when you weren't at your apartment. I called around.

DODD

What about the car?

MOREIRA

I got lucky. I figured you went to the mill.

DODD

What happened last night?

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-NIGHT

Moreira strolls along an empty sidewalk, draped in a white head scarf. A dark Proctor Theater's marquee sits across the street. Streetlights glimmer overhead, fending off complete darkness.

She crosses over. Headlights beam as she reaches midway, increasing her pace. She gets outside Dodd's building, enters.

The headlights slow, pull up in front of the building. It's an ALCO truck. Marlon, Jake, Archie, and Walter exit.

INT. HALLWAY OF APARTMENT BUILDING-NIGHT

Moreira climbs a curved staircase, moves toward Dodd's apartment, knocks. No answer. She knocks again. Behind, men's voices murmur. She knocks again.

Marlon, Archie, Jake, and Walter enter. They rush toward Dodd's.

ARCHIE

Hey!

Moreira turns, startled.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
Who are you?

MORIERA
(stammering)
I'm Mr. Dodd's neighbor. I got some
of his mail by accident.

ARCHIE
He's not home. Leave it with us,
we'll make sure he gets it.

MORIERA
That's okay. I'll come back later.

She starts moving, Archie grabs her arm.

ARCHIE
Hang on. You said you're Dodd's
neighbor?

MOREIRA
Yes, let go of me.

She squirms, unable to break his grasp.

ARCHIE
He never mentioned a pretty
neighbor.

MOREIRA
I said let go of me.

MARLON
Hey, come on Arch. Leave her alone.

A beat.

ARCHIE
Calm down, I was just asking a few
questions.

He stares at her, whips her aside.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)
Get lost.

Moreira scurries away. The men watch her exit. She takes
cover in the stairwell, peeking at the men. Her point of
view, Archie rears back, kicks the door open.

CUT TO:

INT. DODD'S SEDAN-LATE MORNING.

MOREIRA

I said I was just your neighbor.
They ran down the hall and that's
when I ran.

DODD

Did they get the files?

MOREIRA

No. All three of them were pretty
focused on you.

DODD

Three or four?

MOREIRA

Four.

Dodd is silent, stares at Moreira.

DODD

Take me to my house.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDES DODD'S APARTMENT-LATE MORNING

Close on a footprint planted in the middle of the white door.

A small beat.

Dodd pushes the door open, enters.

INT. APARTMENT-LATE MORNING

The apartment is ransacked. Papers scatter the floor, tables
flipped, and his typewriter destroyed.

He tiptoes around the wreckages. Broken glass crunches
beneath his shoes. The framed clippings lie broken. He picks
up the unlatched phone, clicks the hook.

DODD

They got to everything.

MOREIRA

What do you do now?

DODD

Those tanks are garbage. I know
that.

(MORE)

DODD (CONT'D)

Now we just need to tie Mason to it. Can you get to the office? I need that file.

MOREIRA

You don't want me to stay?

DODD

No. Act like nothing is out of the ordinary. Go there and get that file back. I'll call you with what to do next.

She leans in, kisses Dodd on the forehead, exits.

A long beat.

Dodd surveys the room, walks toward his bar, tries an unbroken bottle. It's empty.

He picks up the phone, connects to the operator.

DODD (CONT'D)

Union College. The office of Jack Newell.

A clicking sound. Multiple rings.

More rings.

NEWELL (O.S.)

Hello.

DODD

Jackie boy. It's me.

NEWELL (O.S.)

Dodd?

DODD

Who were you expecting?

NEWELL (O.S.)

Dodd, you'd better be calling me from a jail cell.

DODD

What are you talking about?

NEWELL (O.S.)

I just got a call from someone over at the mill--

DODD
Don't believe it, Jackie. It's a
lie.

NEWELL (O.S.)
I can't be a part of this Dodd.
Turn yourself in and make this
easy.

DODD
Jackie, you know me.

NEWELL (O.S.)
I really don't think I do Dodd.

The phone disconnects. Dodd slams the receiver multiple times
in frustration.

He stands, paces. He takes the receiver, connects to the
operator.

DODD
Galitz Law Firm.

A few rings, a crackling noise.

MOREIRA
(trembling)
Galitz Law Firm.

DODD
Anita.

MOREIRA
(petrified)
Dodd.

DODD
What the hell happened?

MOREIRA
I'm sorry. He--

A shuffling sound. Muffled pleas heard interspersed.

GALITZ
Hello, Mr. Dodd. Or, do you still
go by Rothstein?

DODD
Only when it suits me.

GALITZ
I don't like snoops, Mr. Dodd.

GALITZ (CONT'D)
Almost as much as I hate deceit.

A loud slap echoes over the line.

DODD
You like beating up on girls? Leave
her out of this.

GALITZ
She's an ungrateful snoop. She's
forgotten everything I've done for
her. She's thrown away everything
she had to gain over a bum like
you.

A gunshot.

DODD
Anita? Anita!?

A beat.

Silence.

He hangs up, rushes out.

EXT. STREETS OF SCHENECTADY-LATE MORNING

The sedan weaves in between cars, honking at pedestrians
trying to cross the street. It blows through a red light.

INT. GALITZ LAW FIRM-DAY

Dodd bursts through the door. The foyer is empty. Galitz's
office door sits slightly ajar, drops of blood leading to it.
Dodd creeps forward. Close on his hand grabbing the doorknob,
thrusting it open.

INT. GALITZ LAW FIRM-DAY

Galitz's lifeless body is sprawled out of on floor. Moreira
sits in the corner, aimlessly staring, a .38 on the floor
between them.

Dodd kicks at Galitz's heel.

DODD
Nice shot.

Moreira breaks down.

MOREIRA

(sobbing)

I didn't mean to...I just tried to scare him.

DODD

Easy. Are you all right?

MOREIRA

Yes. The gun just went off.

DODD

The guy had it coming. No body is going to miss him. Where'd you get the piece?

MOREIRA

My cousin. A girl can't be too careful.

He removes a handkerchief, picks up the gun, dusts the handle, tucks it behind his back.

MOREIRA (CONT'D)

I can't go to jail.

DODD

Relax, if anything they'll give you the key to the city.

MOREIRA

This is no time for jokes!

DODD

I'll take care of it. What did Galitz mean when he said you had everything to gain?

She stares intently.

MOREIRA

I wish I knew.

DODD

Where are they?

MOREIRA

In my purse. He caught me putting them in my purse.

She points to Galitz.

DODD

Get them.

She hesitates, stands, walks off screen. Dodd, kneels down, examines the body, one slug to the stomach.

A quick beat.

Moreira returns, with purse. She pulls out a manila folder. Dodd takes it, slaps it on the desk, opens it, exposing real estate and government sealed documents.

Dodd scans the documents, flips pages. Close on pictures of a desolate plot of land, real estate agreement, signature "FRED MASON."

DODD (CONT'D)
He's buying a plot of land.

MOREIRA
Where?

DODD
A few miles outside the city, in
the sticks.

MOREIRA
What does it mean?

Dodd thumbs through papers, revealing a gambling license.

DODD
It's not a vacation house.

He pulls up the gaming license.

DODD (CONT'D)
And your boss here was facilitating
the whole thing.

MOREIRA
Why?

DODD
A piece of the pie.

DODD (CONT'D)
I'm getting the truth out. You're
done. Go home and stay there.

MOREIRA
What now? We can't just leave him.

DODD
Just go. I said I'll take care of
it. If anyone asks, you didn't make
it into work today.

Moreira stares at Dodd.

MOREIRA

Thank you.

DODD

Go.

She shoulders her purse, exits, leaves the office door ajar. Through it, we see her briskly walk toward the main exit. Her departure briefly emits natural light, extinguishes it.

Dodd looks at the office, rushes toward file cabinets, spills their contents all over the room. He flips Galitz's desk, continues trashing the office.

He exits the office.

INT. GALITZ LAW FIRM-DAY

Dodd, with handkerchief, closes the office door. Then, he turns, kicks it open, splintering the frame. He blindly fires two shots, gazes at the scene, Galitz's body at the center, sighs, exits.

EXT. ACADEMIC BUILDING-LATE DAY

Close on the shadow covering the ivy. Light creeps forward, pushing back the darkness.

Dodd opens the large doors, enters.

INT. HALLWAY OF ACADEMIC BUILDING-DAY

Dodd, disheveled and black-eyed, walks down the long hallway at a decent clip, notebook and Galitz files in hand. Cookie-cutter office doors display the names of various professors. Two elderly white men, 40s-50s, walk, conversing. They stop, look at Dodd, stunned.

DODD

Professor Cohen. Professor O'Leary.

He tips his cap, pushes past them.

At the end of the hallway, a slightly more embellished door. On it, "DR. JOHN NEWELL HUMANITIES PROVOST"

Dodd knocks. Newell's voice commands him in.

INT. NEWELL'S OFFICE-DAY

Newell sits at his desk, glasses resting on the bridge of his nose, thumbing through papers. Shelves of books line each wall.

He stands, dumbfounded.

NEWELL

What the hell are you doing here?

DODD

I've got something you need to see.

NEWELL

You can't be here.

He reaches for his phone, begins dialing. Dodd clamps down the hook.

DODD

Look, I'm not here to make trouble.
You have to trust me.

Newell hesitates, puts down the phone. Dodd slides the notebook and files to him.

NEWELL

What's this?

He thumbs through the notebook.

DODD

It's Christina MacGuffin's
notebook.

He looks up, holding it.

NEWELL

How did you get this?

DODD

That's not important.

NEWELL

It's very important how you got
this, Dodd.

DODD

Just listen. MacGuffin was on to
something big.

NEWELL

I want to know how you got this.

DODD

For Christ's sake, Newell. Will you listen to me. She was on to something at the mill.

A quick beat.

DODD (CONT'D)

Those tanks aren't worth the paint they're coated in. They're making half of them out of rust.

NEWELL

I don't want to hear it.

DODD

Just look at what else is there.

NEWELL

And what are these?

DODD

Fred Mason just bought a few acres a few miles outside of the city, and applied for a gambling license.

NEWELL

So what? Gambling isn't illegal.

DODD

But the way he's financing it is. He's skimming money off government contracts to buy the land.

He flips MacGuffin's notebook open to "GA"

DODD (CONT'D)

GA, gambling administration. She was trying to spell it. He'll have one of the first gambling palaces in the state. That's a lot of money.

NEWELL

I can't listen to this anymore.

He starts to exit. Dodd rushes in front, blocks him, dangles Macguffin's bracelet. He takes it.

NEWELL (CONT'D)

Whose is that?

Dodd is silent.

NEWELL (CONT'D)
Dodd, where did you get this?

DODD
A tank, inside the mill.

Newell is silent.

DODD (CONT'D)
She was inside the mill before she died. Why would Peter take her inside the mill before he killed her?

Newell takes the bracelet, examines it.

DODD (CONT'D)
This girl realizes the mill workers are spending more time on a bar stool than at the workbench. She goes to investigate it by talking to the plant manager, I've got her boyfriend's word on that.

He snaps his fingers.

DODD (CONT'D)
And she turns up dead the next day. Now they're trying to make her boyfriend take the fall. Come on Jackie, you can't tell me it doesn't all fit together?

NEWELL
No idle hands for you.

DODD
I've got a hole in my Florsheims and a busted nose to prove it.

NEWELL
What made you do all this?

DODD
People have gotten hurt because I didn't follow through like I should have.

Newell shakes his head.

NEWELL
What do you need me for?

DODD

Call around to the local papers. I need you to spread the truth. And I'm sure after tonight, I'll need you to testify on my behalf.

NEWELL

I'm going to be brutally honest.

Dodd smirks

DODD

I wouldn't dream of anything else.

Dodd picks up the bracelet, makes his exit.

NEWELL

What are you doing now?

DODD

I'm writing a story to be run.

NEWELL

I'll call around. Wait in your office.

DODD

Thanks, Jackie boy.

He exits. Newell snatches the phone, dials. Close on MacGuffin's notebook on the table.

INT. OFFICE-LATE DAY

Dodd sits at his desk, looking at his typewriter. He loads paper into the typewriter. Close on the title: "MURDER AT THE MILL: KILLING TO COVER CORRUPTION."

Close on him clacking away at the type writer. Pages fill with words.

He stops, eyes the manuscript, looks for the notebook.

He stands, exits.

INT. HALLWAY OF ACADEMIC BUILDING-LATE DAY

Dodd walks to Newell's office, opens the door.

INT. NEWELL'S OFFICE-DAY

The room is empty. He walks to the desk, sees MacGuffin's notebook open to the page "GA." On paper next to it, Newell's writing makes "GA" look like "GO".

Dodd scrunches his brow. He mouths "G-O." His eyes shoots up, eyes wide.

CUT TO:

INT. JIMMY JAY'S BAR-PREVIOUS NIGHT

Moreira sitting across from Dodd at the bar.

MOREIRA
Anita Moreira-Gonzales.

Emphasizing "GONZALES."

CUT TO:

INT. DODD'S SEDAN-EARLIER THAT MORNING

MOREIRA
No. All three of them were pretty focused on you.

DODD
I thought you said there were four of them?

CUT TO:

INT. DODD'S APARTMENT-EARLIER THAT MORNING

Dodd holding the phone.

GALITZ
She's an ungrateful snoop. She's forgotten everything I've done for her. She's thrown away everything she had to gain over a bum like you.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWELL'S OFFICE-LATE AFTERNOON

DODD

Jack!

He turns looks out in the hallway. Through the doorway, a group of police officers. They stop outside Dodd's office, knock.

A quick beat.

The police rush in.

Dodd shuts the door, scans Newell's office. He opens a window, eyeing the lip outside of it. He steps outside.

EXT. ACADEMIC BUILDING-LATE DAY

Dodd hugs the building's side, sliding his feet along the lip. He eyes the junction the lip and a lower section of roof. He slides along until he reaches the roof.

On the roof, he kneels, his shoes slipping on the tiles. He maneuvers his way to the edge, stares over it. It's a ten foot drop. He sits, legs dangling over, turns, grabs the edge of the roof, hangs down. He lets go, falls, landing awkwardly.

He grimaces in pain, limps off.

INT. SEDAN-DUSK

Dodd sits, eyeing the plant. He pulls the .38 from behind his belt, pops the chamber, checks the rounds, exits.

EXT. AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY PLANT-DUSK

The setting sun behind the mill casts a long shadow. Dodd stays in the darkness, rushing toward the mill.

He comes to the same barn-door entrance, locked, checks a side door, also locked.

Murmurs grow louder.

He ducks around the building's corner, peeks out. Archie and Marlon stroll toward the side door. Marlon fiddles with keys, conversing.

Dodd creeps out, puts the .38 behind Marlon's head. Marlon freezes.

DODD
Is he in there?

He turns, stares at Dodd, mortified.

MARLON
Jesus.

Archie turns, attempts slinking away. Dodd turns, points the gun at him.

ARCHIE
You're going to kill Mason? You're
crazy.

Dodd is silent. He squeeze the trigger, fires two shots in the air, points the gun at them.

DODD
Call the police.

Marlon looks at Archie, mortified, back at Dodd.

ARCHIE
Alright, alright. He's in his
office. Just don't kill me.

DODD
Give me the keys and get out of
here.

Marlon tosses Dodd the keys, runs off. He unlocks the door, enters.

INT. AMERICAN LOCOMOTIVE COMPANY PLANT-DUSK

Fading daylight seeps through murky window. Darkness takes over tanks, work equipment, raw materials.

Dodd scales the steps, bursts through Mason's door.

INT. MASON'S OFFICE-DUSK

Dodd rushes in, darkness overpowering a dim light on the desk. Mason comes from behind, slamming Dodd with a telephone.

Dodd stumbles into the desk, knocking the lamp off. The light bulb breaks, emitting a spark of light, then darkness. He drops the gun. Mason charges, tackling him to the floor. Mason, on top, delivers a haymaker to Dodd's ribs, immobilizing him.

Mason stands, rolls his sleeves.

MASON
You couldn't leave well enough
alone.

DODD
You son of a bitch. Where is she?

Dodd turns over, coughs. Mason kicks his stomach.

MASON
She's working. She's a great
worker.

CUT TO:

INT. MASON'S OFFICE-A FEW DAYS PRIOR

Moreira sits, on the phone, whispering into it. Mason stands to the side, clutching MacGuffin's arm, covering her mouth.

INT. PETER BOUCHER'S HOME

Peter listens on the phone. His eyes wide with fear.

CUT TO:

INT. MASON'S OFFICE-PRESENT

Dodd surveys the ground, sees the gun, crawls toward it.

MASON
You think a few files and a
madman's story are going to do you
any good?

Mason rushes past, snatches it. He cocks the hammer, pushes it into Dodd's temple.

MASON (CONT'D)
Tell me, how long before she slept
with you?

Dodd is silent.

MASON (CONT'D)
I told her to use her best
judgement.

DODD
What about Galitz.

MASON
He was always expendable.

CUT TO:

INT. MASON'S OFFICE--EARLIER THAT DAY

Mason slides Moreira the .38.

CUT TO:

INT. MASON'S OFFICE--PRESENT

MASON
And so are you.

Close on his finger squeezing the trigger. It clicks, no sound. He pulls, it clicks again.

DODD
Can't you count to six?

Off screen, police sirens echo.

MASON
I don't need to. They'll do the dirty work for me.

DODD
Take a look at that rod.

Mason glances at it.

DODD (CONT'D)
Look familiar? Like the one that pumped one into Galitz's back? They got that and his files.

Dodd, motions with his finger, smirks.

Mason looks stunned.

DODD (CONT'D)
She wasn't just looking out for you.

A quick beat.

DODD (CONT'D)

You killed everyone that's tried to figure you out. I got the paper trail and the nose job to prove it.

MASON

They won't believe you.

DODD

Sure they will. It all fits together, plus it explains why I was caught snooping around.

A beat.

Dodd pulls out a crumpled cigarette package, tamps one down.

DODD (CONT'D)

One count of murder, and one count of attempted. Plus perjury of government money. Sounds like the chair to me.

Red and blue lights shine through the office window, cut through the shadow. Voices off screen.

DODD (CONT'D)

Where's Anita?

MASON

Tying up one last loose end.

Dodd stares, concerned.

DODD

Where?

Police rush in, guns drawn, screaming at Mason. He drops the gun, puts his hands up. Officers swarm in, cuff Mason. An officer attends to Dodd.

DODD (CONT'D)

Where is Peter Boucher?

EXT. ST. CHRISTOPHER'S HOSPITAL-NIGHT

The building is completely shrouded in shadow, only the right hand of the Saint Christopher shadow is visible. Police cars power onto the scene. They park, lights flashing, Dodd and police officers rush inside.

INT. FOYER OF ST. CHRISTOPHER'S HOSPITAL-DUSK

A younger, attractive NURSE sits behind the desk. She looks up at him as he moves past.

NURSE
Can I help you?

Dodd puts both hands on it, leans over to the nurse. She leans back, uneasy.

DODD
Has anyone checked in to see Peter Boucher?

She scans a nearby clipboard.

DODD (CONT'D)
Hurry!

NURSE
Just some man. Robert MacGuffin.

DODD
Shit.

He looks to the officers.

DODD (CONT'D)
Let's go!

They sprint off screen.

INT. STAIRWELL AT ST. CHRISTOPHER'S-DUSK

The entrance to the stairwell bursts open. The group rushes up the stairs, Dodd tripping over his feet. He recovers, pushes forward.

INT. FIFTH FLOOR OF ST. CHRISTOPHER'S HOSPITAL-DUSK

Dodd sprints toward Room 508. Quick flashes of signs for 512 and 510.

Two loud bangs, followed by clamoring people, a woman's scream. Dodd stands awestruck. Two police officers wrestle with Robert MacGuffin in front of Room 508. One has him by the shoulders, the other pulls at a small pistol in his hands. His eyes emanate rage as he resists.

Two nurses and a doctor run into the room. Through the opening of the door, we see Boucher's lifeless body with two slugs in the chest.

The officers pull the gun away, cuff him.

DODD

Shit!

INT. MOREIRA'S APARTMENT

Moreira throws a suitcase on the bed, frantically packs the clothes.

She pulls out drawers, sifts through clothes.

DODD (O.S.)

Where you headed?

She turns, startled. Dodd stands in the doorway.

MOREIRA

You're okay!

She rushes to him, tries to hug him. He casts her aside.

DODD

You played me good, Anita.

MOREIRA

I didn't have a choice.

DODD

Save it. I'm not interested in your sob story.

MORIERA

It's the truth.

DODD

You could've walked into the police station and blown the whole thing. Instead, you got the blood of three people on your hands. You got greedy.

MOREIRA

I was trying to help you.

DODD

Did you ever really care about me?

MOREIRA

Don't say that. Of course I did.
They wanted me to let you rot in
jail. I couldn't do it.

DODD

But you could let me be a pawn.

MOREIRA

It was so I could get the money. We
can get away. Start anew.

DODD

I don't think that will work.

Police officers enter, take their cuffs.

MOREIRA

You traitor!

The police cuff Moreira. She fights their grasp. They pull
her away.

INT. DODD'S OFFICE-MORNING

Natural light creeps through the blinds, casting lines of
shadows.

Dodd sits, lines of darkness across him, at his desk. Newell
enters.

NEWELL

I'm sorry, Dodd.

Not looking up.

DODD

It's alright, Jackie boy. I know
how crazy it must have sounded.

NEWELL

They said she emptied Mason's
account. One-hundred thousand.
Word is they're trying to pin the
whole thing on each other.

DODD

She played us all real good.

NEWELL

I know it's tough, but you saved
more lives than you realize. Those
tanks are going to the scrap yard.

Dodd is silent.

NEWELL (CONT'D)
Are you sure you need to leave?

DODD
I think it's for the best.

NEWELL
Come on, Dodd, in the big picture
you came out clean.

DODD
It doesn't feel that way.

A beat.

NEWELL
Will you be back at school?

DODD
No. I think I'm done with
education.

NEWELL
What are you going to do?

DODD
I wish I knew. Maybe write a little
more.

Newell is silent, he walks away. Dodd puts his belongings into a box, streaks of darkness covering him.

INT. CALHOUN'S-NIGHT.

Dodd sits alone in a crowded bar. A cigarette smoulders in between his fingers. He scans a newspaper. Close on the title. It reads "BLOOD MONEY: CORRUPTION AND MURDER AT THE MILL." Dodd drops it on the counter.

The blonde from the earlier scene enters, sits down, orders a drink. One empty stool in between her and Dodd. She looks over at him.

BLONDE
Hey, it's the writer.

Dodd takes a puff, blows smoke.

DODD
Not anymore.

BLONDE

That's too bad. I was hoping you could interview me for one of your stories.

DODD

I don't think your boyfriend would like it.

BLONDE

We're not together anymore. I have higher standards now.

DODD

I'm glad to hear it.

She goes to move closer. He puts his hand up, stops her.

DODD (CONT'D)

Sorry, doll. I'm not looking for company tonight.

She stares, confused, picks up her drink, walks away. Dodd takes a long draw on his smoke, stares back at the paper.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END