



CUT SNAKE

By

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Based on a True Story

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1

EXT. NIGHTCLUB CARPARK - NIGHT

1

Fire victims in blankets, smoke streaked, stagger around. Above them, curtains of smoke stream from the upstairs windows.

DUCK and CARL, two detectives, emerge from the fire, coughing, and step over to uniformed police that have arrived on the scene. They are taking charge.

POLICE

They're in there.

The POLICE indicate the open cellar. DUCK takes this in. BRUCE is there as well.

DUCK

(using megaphone)

These blokes are armed and dangerous. So don't stuff about.

*

He turns to Bruce.

*

DUCK (CONT'D)

Shoot to kill.

The police get ready, arranging themselves behind every vantage point around the cellar door.

2

INT. CELLAR - NIGHT

2

POMMIE (mid 30's, roughly handsome) looks out on the scene. He sees BRUCE (the nightclub owner) with Duck.

*

Behind cars, and at every vantage point, are police with rifles. There is no way out.

Smoke snakes across the ceiling. Sirens howl.

Pommie looks at the young couple cowering before him. SPARRA and PAULA. Sparra looks to Paula.

*

*

Pommie just stares. Thinking. Thinking.

He decides. He raises his gun. Aims at Sparra.

TITLE: CUT SNAKE

*

3 EXT. MCGRATH HOUSE - DAY 3 *

CAPTION - ONE WEEK AGO

A warm, low-key garden party is playing out under a marquee. Catering staff offer drinks. Couples sip wine and laugh. Others call to their children who scurry underfoot, or tug at their parent's sleeves whinging for chips. *

Sparra stands on the fresh lawn grass of a neat middle class suburban home. He watches all this with enjoyable interest. He's fresh-faced, in shirtsleeves and tie. *

He is making polite conversation with a stocky salt and pepper-haired bloke in his late fifties, MR MCGRATH. *

MR MCGRATH
(So)you talk to Kev? *

SPARRA
(yes)
He's already put on an apprentice. He said maybe call back at the end of the year... *

MR MCGRATH
I'll ring him. *

SPARRA
Mr McGrath- *

MR MCGRATH waves his concern away. *

MR MCGRATH
You young people have a hard enough time getting ahead. If I can help you or Paula I will. *

SPARRA
I just want to do a bit better for myself. For us. *

MR MCGRATH
Good man. *

He smacks Sparra heartily on the arm. SPARRA looks over and suddenly smiles. *

The reason for his happiness steps boldly towards him. A radiant woman in her early twenties, PAULA MCGRATH: sparkling eyes, cheeky smile, a class above.

(CONTINUED)

3

CONTINUED:

3

She slips her arm around his waist.

PAULA

(It's)all lies. I was a perfect child.

(to SPARRA)

You believe me, don't you?

*
*
*
*

It's clear Sparra can't believe his luck in having her by his side.

*
*

4

EXT. MCGRATH HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

4

*

MR MCGRATH, is giving a speech to the group of seated partygoers.

*

MCGRATH is obviously popular, and the mood of the crowd is warm, indulgent. As he speaks, he occasionally addresses a quick-witted woman beside him. This is MRS MCGRATH, also late fifties.

Sparra and Paula are seated a few places down from the speaker at the head table. Sparra watches.

MR MCGRATH

...a marriage is about dependability. Knowing you can rely on it when you need it most.

MRS MCGRATH

(droll)

Sounds like a lawn mower, David.

Eruption of laughter. Sparra and Paula join in.

MCGRATH raises his voice, half seriously stern.

MR MCGRATH

...love, successful love, is more breakfast table than candlelight dinner. To have constancy, reliability...trust in another person - that, to me, is true love.

He looks to his wife.

Sparra looks to Paula, smiles. She's holding his hand under the table. Sparra takes in the words.

It's a good speech but once a crowd starts laughing it's hard to make them stop, they still titter.

(CONTINUED)

4

CONTINUED:

4

MR MCGRATH (CONT'D)

Oh, get lost the lot of you.

More laughter. MCGRATH raises his glass.

MR MCGRATH (CONT'D)

To my darling wife, Thea,
happy thirty dependable
reliable, years.

CROWD MEMBERS

To thirty years!

MRS MCGRATH

You idiot.

MRS MCGRATH reaches up and kisses him.

Cheers from the crowd.

Paula glances at Sparra, squeezes his hand. She stands.

PAULA

I'd like to propose another
toast.

Paula raises glass.

PAULA (CONT'D)

To blind, crazy, passionate,
illogical love.

The Crowd loves the toast.

CROWD MEMBERS

To blind love!

She looks at Sparra.

*

5

EXT. MCGRATH HOUSE - BACK YARD - LATER

5

*

Sparra gambols unself-consciously with kids in party outfits out on the grass. He is totally unafraid of the green stains streaking his crisp white shirt.

Paula watches him. Her sassy beehived friend, YVONNE, sidles up beside her.

They watch Sparra for a beat, then:

YVONNE

Where did you get him again?

(CONTINUED)

5

CONTINUED:

5

PAULA

He fell from the sky.

YVONNE

Doesn't have a mate, does he? *

Paula kicks off her shoes and skips over to join in with Sparra and the kids.

He watches her come and join him. *

He takes her in his arms and swings her around.

Kids run and laugh around them.

This is too good to be true.

6

DELETED SCENE

6

*

7

EXT. GAOL - DAY

7

SUPER: 'Parramatta Gaol, Sydney'

Pommie stands with the rough, nineteenth century sandstone walls of Parramatta Gaol looming behind him.

There's grass under his feet. And above him a blue sky races on and on. Freedom. *

A car roars up the street. He scratches his still new moustache and steps out to the road. But, instead of slowing down for him, the vehicle keeps on going.

Pommie watches it go. Then glances around. Looks like no one came to pick him up.

He starts walking. *

8

EXT. MRS. FARRELL'S HOUSE - DAY

8

Pommie jiggles nervously in front of a sagging inner-Sydney terrace house. The door opens an inch on a chain, and an elderly woman's face appears. MRS FARRELL.

MRS. FARRELL

What do you want?

POMMIE

It's me.

(CONTINUED)

8

CONTINUED:

8

And when the woman doesn't look like she recognises him...

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Merv's mate.

And then she gets it. But there's no prodigal-son-returning joy in her face.

MRS. FARRELL

He's not here.

POMMIE

Can I come in anyway?

Mrs Farrell is already closing the door.

Pommie puts his foot in the gap and leans his whole body in.

He holds a slick bottle of whisky in her view.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

I come bearing gifts.

*

9

INT. MRS. FARRELL'S HOUSE - LOUNGEROOM - DAY

9

*

MRS. FARRELL seems a frail, wire-thin sixty-year-old, but you wouldn't want to take that whisky bottle from her.

POMMIE

You're prettier than he let on.

The house is curtain-drawn dark. Pommie glances around with more than passing interest. He notices a dresser in the lounge topped with photos and keepsakes.

MRS. FARRELL

I haven't been well.

Mrs. Farrell struggles to open the bottle. Pommie takes it from her, cracks it open, and hands it back.

POMMIE

Now, why don't you go grab us some glasses?

Mrs Farrell hesitates.

(CONTINUED)

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, I'm not going to
nick anything.

Mrs Farrell shuffles off to the kitchen.

As soon as she has gone Pommie heads to the
dresser. He looks with purpose through the photos
turning them over, searching behind them.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

(calls)

The boy said he'd be around
when I got out. You haven't
heard from him?

MRS FARRELL (O.S.)

Nah. Never one for keeping
up, that one. Just like his
dad.

*
*

From the kitchen comes the sounds of cupboards
squeaking open and the tinkle of glasses.

Pommie opens a drawer. Through napkins and string
and pens he SEES a stack of letters and postcards
wrapped with a rubber band. He snaps the band and
flicks through the stack until he FINDS it: a
postcard with a tram on it - signed 'Merv'

*

Pommie pockets the postcard. As he turns he sees
Mrs Farrell is there, holding a tray with two
glasses. She's surprised and the tray dips and a
glass falls and THUMPS down on the carpet.

Pommie coolly bends down and picks up the glass
and then carries it to her.

POMMIE

Why don't we have this out in
the sunshine? It's a miracle
day.

But all Mrs Farrell can see is her drawer open,
and the spray of letters on the floor. She looks
chilled.

MRS FARRELL

What are you...

POMMIE

What?

She averts her gaze. Pommie looks to where she's
looking, out the side window. He catches a glimpse
of the backyard.

(CONTINUED)

The yard is knee high in grass and slopes down to paling fence which backs onto train line. The garden beds, once cared for, are now overgrown.

Pommie turns to Mrs Farrell, who looks at him in trepidation.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Oh Mrs, why didn't you say?

*

10

EXT. MRS FARRELL'S HOUSE - YARD - LATE AFTERNOON 10

*

Later. The lawn is mown. The garden beds weeded and Pommie, his sleeves rolled, in on his knees, cutting the edges.

He's dirty and sweaty, but happy.

Mrs Farrell sits watching, a frozen smile on her face. Drinks her whisky in a big gulp.

11

EXT. PAULA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

11

*

Somewhat merry with alcohol, Paula and Sparra return to their new home. It looks, in the single street-light dark, as a simple farmhouse right on the edge of the outer suburbs.

*

*

Paula fumbles with the keys. Her key is stubborn in the lock.

*

*

12

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

12

*

A bare bulb lights the house, filled with unpacked cardboard boxes.

It looks like the residents are still moving in. Cords of unfinished wiring dangle from holes in the roof.

PAULA

I can't wait to get this off.

Paula steps out of her party frock, revealing the bra and panties underneath. Sparra just watches her. How beautiful is she?

*

She has a thought. Rubs her head.

PAULA (CONT'D)

When's the plumber coming?
Hope it's not too early.

SPARRA

I cancelled.

Paula looks: why?

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Till payday. *

PAULA

Mum and dad said-

SPARRA

(over)

I don't want to take any more *
money from your parents. We'll *
be alright for a few days. *

Paula semi-drunkenly slips a record from his *
sleeve and places it on the player. Needle hits *
the vinyl and the opening bars of 'Son of a *
Preacher Man' fill the room. *

PAULA

Okay Mr. Stand On His Own Two
Feet. Come and get me.

Paula sees Sparra still watching her, and decides *
to do a bump and grind for him. Sparra sits on a *
cardboard box and grins. *

SPARRA

I'm so lucky.

She walks towards him, half-tripping.

PAULA

I'll fucking say.

She kisses him.

And he knows it's true. He is fucking lucky.

Sparra pulls away. He holds her face in his hands.

SPARRA

Wait.

PAULA

No. *

He turns from her and leaves the room. Paula *
looks: huh? Awkwardly waits. *

A moment later, Sparra returns. *

(CONTINUED)

Paula notices he is holding something. A ring box. With nervous fingers Sparra opens it to reveal a simple engagement ring (solitaire diamond).

SPARRA

Was down at the bottom of the kitchen box.

*
*

PAULA

It's beautiful.

*

She holds it.

SPARRA

It was my gran's.

*
*

She looks at him.

PAULA

So we are actually doing this?

*
*

SPARRA

It's up to you...

*
*

A moment's hesitation. There's something she's not sure about.

Then she puts it on. His face- the relief!

*

But the ring is too big, it slips off.

PAULA

Your gran had a bigger hand.

*

SPARRA

I can get it resized.

*

He looks at her open vulnerable. Paula stares into Sparra's eyes. And any doubts she has vanish in that moment.

She kisses him. They make love. The sex is gentle, loving.

Three days later. Pommie dodges traffic as he crosses the street in front of a large warehouse.

*
*

He is about to enter the warehouse when he stops, checks his reflection in the mirror of a parked car. He looks a little sweaty, unkempt. He straightens his hair, tucks in a stray shirt end. There. Better.

14 INT. ASHTON'S WAREHOUSE - DAY 14

Sparra, in work overalls, is making wire brooms by hard in a sweeper factory. Working beside him is his 40ish, avuncular co-worker, NEIL. *

NEIL *
You'll be the oldest apprentice in history. Little kids'll throw stones at ya.

SPARRA
I'll still be younger than you.

NEIL *
How could you leave this place with all its... old fashioned charm.

Sparra's short-statured, chip-shouldered BOSS arrives.

BOSS
Farrell. Visitor.

Neil doesn't look up. *

NEIL *
What's she look like?

POMMIE (O.S.)
A knockout.

At the sound of Pommie's voice, Sparra's face reacts in a beat of pure panic.

But he has nowhere to go, so he regains his composure and by the time he raises himself up and turns, it is with a big smile.

SPARRA
Fuck me.

BOSS
(at Sparra, stern)
Language!

SPARRA
(to BOSS)
Sorry. *

Sparra starts to pull off his work glove to shake Pommie's hand but Pommie ignores this gesture, and pins Sparra in a hug. *

(CONTINUED)

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Steady on.

They break apart. Pommie's beaming.

POMMIE

Look at you. You've gone
skinny.

Pommie tries to pinch Sparra's side. Sparra
deflects this.

SPARRA

What happened to your lip? *

Sparra indicates the moustache above Pommie's lip.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

You hiding from someone?

POMMIE

Could ask you the same.

The BOSS interrupts.

BOSS

Merv?

SPARRA

(tired)

Yes?

BOSS

You've said your hellos. *

BOSS claps his hands together.

BOSS (CONT'D)

Let's go. *

And the BOSS walks briskly off, followed by NEIL. *
Sparra peels off his gloves, throws them down.

SPARRA

Sorry mate, (I have to). I'm
already on 'strike two' with
this prick. *

POMMIE

(A)drink later then? *

Sparra hesitates.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Don't sound so thrilled.

SPARRA

The Royal's on the corner. Be there quick as I can.

Pommie goes to head off.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

And it is good to see you.

Pommie is appeased. He turns back and goes, and when he does Sparra's face crumples. What is he going to do?

Sparra sits behind the wheel of a golden Valiant. He's down the end of the street from the Royal Hotel. His hands drum nervously on the steering wheel. Should he just drive off? *

The windscreen rattles as someone THUMPS it, hard. Sparra jumps. It's a wide-grinning Pommie. He comes to the window.

POMMIE

I thought you'd pissed off on me. Again.

SPARRA

Shame everything's closing up. Might have to have that beer some other time.

Pommie brings the topic back.

POMMIE

Spouse you'll just have to take me to your joint. *

SPARRA

(already backing out)
Oh mate...

POMMIE

What? Haven't tidied up? *

SPARRA

If I'd known - I can't. *

Pommie leans in.

POMMIE

Listen. I found out where you work in ten minutes flat. *

15

CONTINUED:

15

Pommie's smile belies the menace. Sparra laughs, hollow.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

So be nice and show us this little hideout of yours.

Sparra knows he has no choice.

CUT TO:

16

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - AFTERNOON

16 *

Sparra drives through the late afternoon. Tense. Pommie lounges, immediately familiar. He breaks the silence.

POMMIE

You know Little Mark necked himself. Week he got out. Couldn't hack it.

SPARRA

Wouldn't have pissed on him if he was on fire. No, I might've. Just wouldn't have put the fire out.

*

Pommie laughs.

POMMIE

What are you up to, eh?

Pommie stares.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Mervyn Farrell is not a bloke that stacks brooms for a living.

*

SPARRA

That's just temporary. I start an apprenticeship in cabinet-making next month.

Pommie snorts.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

What?

POMMIE

My arse. Don't worry - I'll get it out of you.

17 EXT. FARMLAND STREETS - AFTERNOON 17 *

The car SURGES out to the city's fringe: farmland and the sparser, bush-edged housing.

Finally, the car pulls up to a FARMHOUSE. *

POMMIE

So, this is the big secret?

Pommie gets out, Sparra following.

18 EXT. PAULA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON 18 *

Pommie's at the front gate. A "FOR SALE" sign has been recently uprooted but still lies by the front gate.

He can't believe his eyes.

POMMIE

No.

Sparra doesn't respond.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

No. Yours?

Sparra finds some shy pride. He nods. Pommie opens the front gate.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Fuck off! Your own place.
Christ - even got veggies.

SPARRA

(sheepish)
Just a bit of silver beet.

POMMIE

Silver beet?

The garden is still new, but some green shoots already stud the turned dirt.

SPARRA

And that's radish, and some carrots. Wasn't sure if they'd work, but... (think it's okay).

POMMIE

Nah, I can see you out here, in your own world. It's magic, mate. Magic.

19 INT./EXT. PAULA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

19 *

Sparra opens the door with a SHOVE when it sticks. It's clear the house is not-yet-really-lived-in. There's a pile of boxes in the hall marked: "KITCHEN", "LOUNGEROOM".

POMMIE

Very nice.

Sparra is still on edge.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

When you fix it up a bit.

On the sideboard is a hamper of homemade jams and fruit.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

What's all this?

SPARRA

Housewarming.

POMMIE

Shoot me. I'm empty-handed.

Pommie spies a stiletto heel cast off casually in the hallway.

*

SPARRA

I'll get us that drink.

Pommie stops him.

POMMIE

What about "the tour"?

Pommie pokes his head into the lounge room. A couch has been moved in, curtains have been fitted but, again, there are still boxes to be unpacked.

SPARRA

Later, eh?

Sparra strides towards the back of the house and the kitchen. Pommie picks up a jam jar from out of the hamper.

POMMIE

Like quince, do you?

Pommie opens the jar and scoops some jam out with a finger.

20 INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY 20 *

Sparra is pouring beer into a glass.

SPARRA

(calls)

Not much.

He spies a Stanley knife on the counter.

Sparra finishes pouring.

21 INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - LOUNGE ROOM - DAY 21 *

Sparra enters with a foamy glass of beer. He hands it to Pommie. Pommie licks his finger, re-screws the jam jar. Takes the glass from Sparra.

POMMIE

Cheers then.

(notices)

You're not drinking?

SPARRA

Look, um, I'm sorry I was so...

POMMIE

(over)

Fucking hot and cold to me today.

SPARRA

Yeah. Hot and cold. I didn't know you'd be coming. I didn't even know you were out.

POMMIE

What does that matter?

SPARRA

Things aren't the same for me...

POMMIE

What things?

SPARRA

Circumstances... I'm not the same bloke...

A key crunches in the front door lock, but the door doesn't open. Pommie's eyes go to the door. A woman's voice calls.

(CONTINUED)

21

CONTINUED:

21

PAULA (O.S.)

Merv?

22

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

22 *

Sparra walks swiftly towards the door. The doorbell rings, insistent.

SPARRA

(at door)

Coming!

Sparra opens the door to Paula who wears a crumpled work uniform. *

PAULA

Stupid key! And this is the new one.

She's the prettiest girl Pommie's ever seen.

SPARRA

You're early.

PAULA

So we've got the whole afternoon.

She pulls Sparra to her and kisses him, but he resists. She's bemused until he moves away from the doorway and she sees... The unexpected guest. *

Pommie stands at the doorway to the bedroom looking down the hall.

Paula glances to Sparra. Sparra doesn't know what to say. So Paula takes the initiative.

PAULA (CONT'D)

(at Pommie)

Hello.

Pommie stands dumbly.

SPARRA

This is a mate from Sydney. Pommie, I mean - Jim.

PAULA

Paula.

She extends her hand. Pommie's stony-faced.

A beat. And then Pommie recovers and shakes her hand. All charm.

(CONTINUED)

22

CONTINUED:

22

POMMIE

So this is the big secret?
(up and down)
Worth the surprise, mate.
Worth the surprise.

Sparra throws a protective arm around Paula.

23

EXT. PAULA'S HOUSE - FRONT STEPS - NIGHT

23

*

Pommie sits on the front step, smoking. A low yellow moon hangs above the STILL night. Sparra sits with him. Both smoking.

*

*

SPARRA

(It was a)deceased estate,
Paula's dad found it and put a
deposit on for us. Growth area
he says. All I've got to do is
fix it up.

*

*

*

*

*

POMMIE nods, he thinks he knows SPARRA's 'angle'.

*

POMMIE

Smart play - rent free gig.

*

SPARRA

It's not like that.

*

*

POMMIE

(disbelieving)
Sure. Nah, you've done well
for yourself mate.

*

*

*

*

SPARRA

I didn't know how to tell
you...

POMMIE

Well, now I know. I'm happy
for you.

Silence.

SPARRA

I can sort you out with a
hotel... If you're sticking
around.

*

*

Pommie nods, keeps nodding, and stubs out his cigarette on the freshly painted door frame, leaving an ugly mark.

POMMIE

Where's your lady friend?

(CONTINUED)

SPARRA
Kitchen, probably.

POMMIE
(getting up)
That's a bit rough isn't it?
She cooked.

He stands. Sparra gives him a look: what? Pommie starts to walk inside. Sparra follows- he doesn't want Pommie and Paula alone together.

Sparra watches as Paula washes up in the sudsy sink. Pommie stands beside her, tea towel in hand.

POMMIE
(cheeky)
Are you always this slow?

Paula's amused by her domestic helper.

PAULA
It's normally just me. I can go at my own pace.

She puts a soapy cup in the dishwashing rack. Pommie swiftly dries it. She washes another cup and Pommie leans in and grabs it, drying it quickly.

Sparra watches from the doorway, aware of what Pommie is doing.

SPARRA
(to Pommie)
Sit down mate. You're the guest.

POMMIE
(no)
And that's why I should do my bit. Forgotten your fucking manners?
(to Paula)
Pardon.

PAULA
(to Sparra)
You can take over if you like.

She undoes her apron and steps away from the sink. Sparra slides into her place. He glares at Pommie.

Sparra starts washing, Pommie drying very quickly. Pommie eyeballs Sparra, smiles. Then turns to Paula.

Paula sits back on a kitchen chair, enjoying this competition for her approval.

PAULA (CONT'D)

So, James, I didn't ask - anyone special in your life?

POMMIE

(to Sparra)

She always this nosey?

PAULA

Sorry...

*

Pommie returns his lazy gaze back to Paula.

POMMIE

I'm just teasing. Nah, there's no one. Think I might need to fall in love, though.

(to Sparra)

Look what it's done for this bloke.

Sparra makes a decision- he needs to distract Pommie.

SPARRA

Come on, let's get out of here. Have some fun.

POMMIE

You're on.

Paula's smiles.

PAULA

Where do you want to go?

POMMIE

Where do they keep all the girls like you?

Pommie looks to Sparra. Smiles.

A barechested, wet-haired Sparra is searching a removal box for a shirt. Paula is already dressed.

25

CONTINUED:

25

Sparra pulls out a blue shirt, crumpled and mouldy.

PAULA

Can't wear that.

She hands him a shirt, which he starts to puts on. *

PAULA (CONT'D)

So?

And when Sparra doesn't speak (as usual) she needs to prompt him.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Who is he?

SPARRA

We met in Sydney. While back. *

PAULA

He's your friend right? *

Paula comes up beside him, smelling him, doing up his buttons. Sparra shrugs.

SPARRA

Guess so.

Paula waits for more. Sparra grabs his keys.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

You coming?

Paula nods. Disappointed.

26

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

26

*

Sparra drives into the night. Paula's in the front seat, Pommie in the back.

Paula takes Sparra's hand. He seems distracted and smiles tightly at her. Pommie leans over from the back. *

27

EXT. YVONNE'S FLAT - NIGHT

27

*

Sparra turns off the main drag and along a inner suburban street. Paula points to a block of art deco flats. *

PAULA

This is where I used to live.

(then)

There she is. *

(CONTINUED)

27

CONTINUED:

27

Sparra pulls the car over to the kerb.

A woman in her twenties walks over to the car.
It's YVONNE, Paula's friend and co-worker.

*
*

PAULA (CONT'D)
Hope you don't mind, she's my best
friend.

Paula reaches into the backseat and opens the side
door. Yvonne squeezes into the back. The car fills
with her perfume as it moves off.

PAULA (CONT'D)
Yvonne, this is James.

Pommie looks to Sparra, then to Yvonne.

POMMIE
Well, Hel-lo.

YVONNE
Hi.

The car moves back into traffic.

28

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

28

*

POMMIE
(to Yvonne)
You got enough room? You need
me to wriggle over?

YVONNE
That sounds like an offer.

Pommie laughs. Yvonne pats Pommie sweetly on the
arm.

YVONNE (CONT'D)
Let's just see how we get on
first.

Now Pommie laughs. Paula looks to Sparra: see. It
was a good idea.

YVONNE's hands PAULA a safety pin.

*

YVONNE (CONT'D)
Pin me up will you?

*
*

PAULA pins the back of the dress together.

*

YVONNE (CONT'D)
I didn't have time to finish this.

*
*

(CONTINUED)

PAULA

It's gorgeous.

*
*

POMMIE

Talented as well.

*
*

The car slows and turns into the carpark out the front of the Silver Dollar nightclub.

By night the club is impressive. The slim windows above the street level blaze with red and silver and PULSE with music.

*

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - CARPARK - NIGHT

They enter the carpark.

*
*

YVONNE

(to Paula)

I was at Lalley Point this morning. They have the cutest little reception hall there.

*
*
*

Paula tenses. As does Sparra (for different reasons).

*

PAULA

Yvonne!

YVONNE

Just making conversation.

*
*

Pommie looks confused.

POMMIE

(to Yvonne)

You getting married on me already?

Sparra parks the car.

*

YVONNE

Not me, silly.

*

Sparra watches Pommie's reaction.

*

POMMIE

He didn't tell me. Congratulations, mate. You sly bugger.

*
*

Pommie punches Sparra in the arm.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Off the market before I had the chance to steal her away.

*

29

CONTINUED:

29

The car pulls up. The four get out. Sparra locks up. Sparra goes to speak to Pommie but Pommie has started striding towards the club. *

Sparra tries to keep pace. He watches as Pommie scans the carpark with intent, as if he was 'casing' the place. But for what? *

Paula can see that Sparra seems concerned. She comes over, puts her hand in his. *

She pulls him close to her, but Sparra's gaze is on Pommie.

Pommie is waiting at the small glassed-in foyer to the club, until the three others catch him up.

YVONNE

In a hurry Jim?

POMMIE

You've no idea, darling.

He smiles at Sparra who has a growing sense of dread.

30

INT. NIGHTCLUB - STAIRS - NIGHT

30

*

The thump and crash of a band BUILDS as the group ascend the steep stairs. The music sounds hot. Alive.

YVONNE

(excited, to Pommie)

Thursday nights are very interesting at this place. Full of *interesting* types.

Yvonne sounds like she's onto a very funny private joke.

POMMIE

Then I'll fit right in.

Sparra watches Pommie, knowing something's afoot.

31

INT. NIGHTCLUB - ENTRANCE - NIGHT

31

*

Guarding the jewelled, blood-red, curtain leading into the club is WAYNE - thick neck, thick hands and scrum-squashed face. He's massive.

(CONTINUED)

31

CONTINUED:

31

YVONNE
(showing off)
Hey Wayne. I've brought some
friends.

WAYNE nods gruffly, and the group move inside.

Sparra nods at WAYNE who eyes both men, sensing
something in them.

32

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

32

Thursday night at the Silver Dollar Nightclub is
SWINGING! It is like a rougher version of Les
Girls or the Trocadero. *

Yvonne and Paula stride through the club as if
they own it. And from the nods and appreciative
looks, they might well own it. They are thoroughly
at home. *

By contrast Sparra watches Pommie take in the
crowd, which is mixed with a bohemian edge: what
look at first like tough guys and girls, and
crims, mingle with cool women and obviously fey
men. Pommie's gobsmacked. *

A tall woman jostles Pommie. But a moment after
the woman has gone Pommie gets it: she's a tranny!

Yvonne notes his open-mouthed wonder.

YVONNE
Told you.

POMMIE
Never knew there were places
like this.

YVONNE
(sweet)
Where have you been, darling?

Yvonne takes Pommie's hand and leads him to the
dance floor. Paula is by his side, pleased with
her matchmaking.

PAULA
Looks like those two are
getting on.

Sparra and Paula start dancing. Pommie dances with
Yvonne more energetically, with less rhythm.

(CONTINUED)

PAULA (CONT'D)

He seems nice.

SPARRA

He's not.

Paula looks quizzically at Sparra then decides he's joking and laughs.

Just then the music stops, the lights go down and the dancefloor clears. *

Yvonne knows what is about to happen - she grabs the others and herds them to a table up near the stage. Yvonne, Paula, Pommie and Sparra sit. *

A spotlight shines on the stage revealing a bejewelled, dazzling DRAG QUEEN. A 'torch-song' fires up. The drag Queen parades the stage and mimes along. *

The song is pleading and soulful - think "My Guy" by Mary Wells. *

Yvonne's excited, claps her hands. Sparra looks to Pommie - what will his reaction be? Pommie is transfixed.

The Drag Queen stops the music for a beat, and asks, cabaret performer style.

DRAG QUEEN

Do we have anyone from out of town?

There is a murmur of 'yeses' from up the back. But Yvonne shoots up her hand, and points at Pommie.

YVONNE

Over here!

DRAG QUEEN

Where honey?

YVONNE

From Sydney.

The Drag Queen takes an interest.

DRAG QUEEN

Sin-city is it?

Pommie waves the attention away but the Drag Queen is not perturbed. She comes over the table. The spotlight hits Pommie, full-on.

(CONTINUED)

DRAG QUEEN (CONT'D)

That's some haircut. When did
you get out, sweetie?

*

Pommie is shocked. What? But the DRAG QUEEN isn't
so cruel...

DRAG QUEEN (CONT'D)

I'm joking. Can't a girl make
a joke?

*

She sits on Pommie's lap.

*

DRAG QUEEN (CONT'D)

What's your name, soldier?

Pommie's heart is beating so hard he feels like
it'll burst. His mouth is dry.

POMMIE

James.

DRAG QUEEN

Well James. Big Jim. You in
town for business or pleasure?

*

Pommie's lips are dry. Swallow.

DRAG QUEEN (CONT'D)

Don't tell me. I can feel a
bit of your pleasure already.

Boom tish! The crowd laughs at Pommie. The DRAG
QUEEN slips off Pommie's lap and showily wipes her
bum.

*

DRAG QUEEN (CONT'D)

Some ice for the young man.

(to Pommie)

Enjoy your stay. I have.

The music starts up again and the Drag Queen returns to
the stage. Applause fills the room.

*

*

For Pommie it seems everyone is laughing at him -
at the table, and in the crowd. Even though he
tries to laugh along, Pommie's not happy. He gets
up and goes, striding off.

After an awkward moment, Paula looks to Sparra.

PAULA

Go after him.

Sparra's out of his chair and racing after him.

*

(CONTINUED)

32

CONTINUED: (3)

32

In the background dancing boys have joined the Drag Queen on stage.

*
*

33

INT. NIGHTCLUB - TOILET - NIGHT

33

*

The toilet blazes in enamelled white. Water FIZZES. Pommie splashes his face in the sink as Sparra comes in.

He sees who it is.

POMMIE

What are you playing at?

SPARRA

I told you, I'm clean now.

Pommie comes close.

POMMIE

(no)

We had a plan. You and me. Not you and me and her and her fucking house and your fucking broomsticks.

*

SPARRA

Yeah, well, count me out now.

Pommie launches against the mirror violently.

POMMIE

No!

Bang!

POMMIE (CONT'D)

You made me a promise.

SPARRA

That was another life.

Pommie brandishes the Stanley knife from Sparra's house. He smiles.

POMMIE

There's only one life, mate.

SPARRA

No, Pom. Don't.

Pommie winks, and then heads out.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Shit!

(CONTINUED)

33

CONTINUED:

33

Sparra follows.

34

INT. NIGHTCLUB - BAR AREA - NIGHT

34

*

Sparra comes out searching the packed bar for Pommie. Where is he? Where is he?

*

On stage, the drag queen performs a cabaret number (new outfit) accompanied by her dancing boys.

*

*

Paula finds Sparra.

PAULA

Is he all right?

Sparra nods, but can't stop. He's still scanning the crowd.

SPARRA

Just a sec.

*

*

Sparra runs off. Paula looks to Yvonne - What?

*

Sparra pushes into the maw of the pulsing night crowd.

35

INT. NIGHTCLUB - BAR AREA - NIGHT

35

*

Sparra searches the crowd again. But it's impossible for him to see more than a few feet in front of him.

He makes his way to the dancefloor, scans the punters.

*

Shit.

He returns to the bar.

No.

He's back where he came from, just outside the toilets when suddenly Pommie appears, big grin on his face.

He whispers to Sparra.

POMMIE

Thanks for the lend.

Pommie lays the knife back in Sparra's palm. Sparra looks at his hand. A stain of blood from the knife.

(CONTINUED)

SPARRA

What have you done?

POMMIE

What have **we** done...

*

Sparra looks past Pommie. There's an angry commotion around the bar area.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

I reckon we've got two minutes.

*

And before Sparra can stop him, Pommie's making a move to where Paula is watching the show.

*

POMMIE (CONT'D)

We right to push off missus?

Paula's surprised. Pommie strides off at speed.

*

PAULA

(to Sparra)

What's wrong?

Sparra watches as a BARMAN and a BOUNCER are pointing into the crowd. Searching for someone.

Sparra decides. He takes Paula's arm.

SPARRA

Pommie doesn't feel comfortable. I think we should take him home.

*

*

PAULA

Should I talk to him?

*

SPARRA

No.

Is it her imagination Sparra's hand is on Paula's arm gripping a little tightly.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Can we go? Please?

PAULA

What about Yvonne?

*

*

SPARRA

Now.

*

*

She nods.

35

CONTINUED: (2)

35

Yvonne returns from the bar carrying drinks to see Pommie, Sparra and Paula walking through the crowd towards the exit. She's confused and annoyed.

*

YVONNE

(calls)

Bye then.

But the three are oblivious as they reach the top of the stairs and away.

35A

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

35A

*

Paula's hand is gripped tight in Sparra's as they hurry across the carpark towards the car. Pommie walks a few steps ahead of her - is that a smile she can see on his face?

*

*

*

*

36

INT. SPARRA'S HOUSE - LOUNGEROOM - NIGHT

36

*

Pommie is making up a bed for the night on the couch; tucking in sheets. Sparra is helping. He's straining to keep his voice down.

SPARRA

What the fuck did you do?

Pommie smiles, smugly. Tucks in the sheet. Sparra smacks Pommie's hand.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Huh?

Pommie nonchalantly dumps some crushed and crumpled stolen cash on the top of it. He pushes the money towards Sparra.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Are you insane? You're on parole.

Pommie ignores him, and starts unbuttoning his shirt.

POMMIE

Forget how easy it is? Beats making brooms.

*

Sparra can't help but stare at the money. There's so much money.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Go on.

*

(CONTINUED)

36

CONTINUED:

36

Pommie slips off his shirt, so he is bare-chested.
Proud. Vulnerable.

37

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

37

*

Paula comes along, pillow in hand. She can hear
low, harsh-toned, muttered voices coming from the
lounge. She props.

38

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

38

*

Sparra stares at the money then:

SPARRA

I want you gone.

POMMIE

No, you don't.

SPARRA

I am not going back inside for
your shit. Go, or I'll make
you.

Paula appears at the doorway. Pommie's half-naked
and she turns away.

PAULA

Sorry. Just seeing if you had
everything you need.

Sparra panics and throws a blanket over the money.

POMMIE

No dramas, luv. It's all good
as gold in here.

39

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

39

*

Paula and Sparra undress for bed. Paula's eyes are
on her fiance. Waiting for him to explain himself.

*

*

PAULA

Is something going on?

*

Sparra keeps undressing. Silent. When he turns
Paula is still looking at him.

PAULA (CONT'D)

You've never mentioned him
before. Suddenly he's in our
house, sleeping five feet away
from us.

(CONTINUED)

39

CONTINUED:

39

SPARRA

Pommie thinks we're a lot
closer than we are.

(then)

There's nothing more to know.

PAULA

There never is. *

SPARRA *

My life began when I met you.
That's all that matters.

He holds her, hoping for a reconciliation, at
least for tonight. But it will take more than a
hug to still PAULA's disquiet.

40

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - LOUNGEROOM - NIGHT

40

*

Pommie lies awake, listening to Sparra and Paula
talking in the other room. He smiles.

41

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

41

*

Later. Sparra can't sleep. Paula's body is turned
away: no comfort there. He can't keep his thoughts
from whirring down the same blind alleys: what did
Pommie do and when will it come back on him. He
stares at the ceiling.

42

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

42

*

Sparra wakes with a start. Rumpled sheets, bleary
eyed, sweaty. The first thing he realises is Paula
is not beside him. The next, he can hear laughter
coming from nearby.

43

EXT. PAULA'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - MORNING

43

*

Sparra finds Pommie and Paula having breakfast in
the backyard. The sun shines gloriously.

POMMIE

Cinderella wakes.

Sparra takes in the pair. How close they are
sitting. The intimacy. Huh?

PAULA

Jim's just telling how you got
your nickname.

(CONTINUED)

POMMIE

She's keen to know all about
your wild past. *

Sparra catches Paula's eye. He comes over to her,
kisses her on the cheek.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Why do we call him "Sparra"?
You see, he wasn't always the
fine specimen you see now.
When I met him, he was a weedy
fella. Little Sparra. Fit in
the palm of your hand. *

SPARRA

Yeah, well, Little Sparra grew
up.

POMMIE

Didn't he what?

Sparra tenses. Shit. He looks to Pommie.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

So you were asking how we met?

Paula looks to Sparra, then back to Pommie.

PAULA

I was just curious.

POMMIE

No big mystery. I helped him
out of a pickle. We became
mates. *

PAULA

What sort of a "pickle"?

Pommie goes to speak, then looks to Sparra and
ostentatiously zips his lips. Paula watches. She
is even more intrigued.

POMMIE

Nah, long time ago. Best left
in the past...but (laughs) the
shit we got into(laughs
again)... Well, thanks for
the hospitality, Paula, and
it's been a joy to meet you...

PAULA

You're not going?

POMMIE

Don't want to wear out my welcome.

PAULA

Why don't you stay, just for a few more days.

Is there an edge to her voice? Pommie senses it. Sees a chance.

POMMIE

I'd love to but...

Pommie looks at Sparra, who gives nothing away. He smiles at Paula, all charm.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

...I'm intruding.

PAULA

You're not.

Sparra can see Pommie is manipulating Paula.

POMMIE

Really? Only be a day or two.

Paula glances at Sparra defiantly.

PAULA

Is that alright?

Sparra eyeballs Pommie. Smallest smile in the world on Pommie's face.

SPARRA

Great.

44

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - DAY

44 *

Sparra and Paula on the drive to work. They drive in silence. He is angry, but can't find words to express it.

Paula hazards a glance at him, conscious that she may have done something wrong but Sparra's eyes are straight ahead.

45

INT. ASHTON'S WAREHOUSE - DOCK - AFTERNOON

45 *

Sparra is hard at work beside the trash bin. He sledgehammers a pile of faulty sweeper heads - getting his frustrations out.

Crash. Smash. Crash.

(CONTINUED)

45

CONTINUED:

45

NEIL joins him, opening a paper paypacket. Peeking inside. *

NEIL *

We're going for a quick beer -
you up for it? *

SPARRA *

Got to sort something out.

Sparra keeps smashing. Smash. Smash.

46

INT. DUKE OF KENT PUB - DAY

46

Sparra steps into a seedy pub. It's the sort of place where the new furnishings belie the fact that furniture gets broken and needs to be replaced here. Often.

The man who has to buy all this replacement tat is whippet-thin BEN, now wiping down the counter top. Sparra approaches.

SPARRA

Ben around?

BEN gives Sparra the up and down, then goes back to wiping the table.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

I'm looking for Ben.

BEN takes in the monogram on Sparra's work shirt.

BEN

I don't need a broom. *

Sparra smiles. BEN smiles.

SPARRA

Wolf Bailey told me you were a good bloke. That you might help a man out with a hard-to-come-by item. *

Sparra waits.

BEN

Where'd you meet this Wolf bloke? *

SPARRA

Here and there.

(CONTINUED)

46

CONTINUED:

46

SPARRA eyes go to a heavy spanner that's resting on tabletop, where it has been used in a repair job. That'd put a dent in a bloke's head. *

BEN follows Sparra's eyeline. *

SPARRA (CONT'D) *

Now can you help me, Ben? *

BEN decides.

BEN

(low)

100. Up front. *

Sparra nods. *

BEN reaches over and takes the spanner. *

BEN (CONT'D) *

Come with me. *

47

INT. CAFE - DAY

47

Paula and Yvonne at work in the quiet cafe. Yvonne is talking about Pommie's rapid exit from the club the night before.

YVONNE

It was rude. *

PAULA *

Sparra says he was having a rough night. *

YVONNE *

No excuse. I thought he was supposed to be a gentleman. *

Yvonne softens. *

YVONNE (CONT'D) *

...he did have lovely eyes though... and big hands... *

Yvonne smirks. Paula laughs. *

PAULA *

I might pop home to check on him actually.

YVONNE

Go ahead. I can cover for you.

PAULA

Thanks. Be back soon.

(CONTINUED)

47

CONTINUED:

47

Paula gathers up her bag.

YVONNE

Tell me if he talks about me?

*

48

EXT. DUKE OF KENT PUB - BACK ROOM - DAY

48

*

Sparra follows BEN into the back of the pub. Ben is holding a paper bag.

BEN offers Sparra a peek into the bag. Inside is a heavy pistol. Sparra slips Ben the money and takes the bag.

SPARRA

And you've never seen me before.

BEN

Seen who?

49

EXT. PAULA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

49

*

Midday. ECU of the red-hot glowing end of a car cigarette lighter. Paula sparks up a cigarette as she pulls up into her driveway.

She gets out and walks up the yard in the late afternoon sunshine.

50

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN/CORRIDOR/LOUNGEROOM 50
AFTERNOON

*

Paula comes in from the back door. The house gleams. The kitchen is spotless, the hallway swept and dusted. Pommie has cleaned the entire house.

She enters the lounge room, he is still vacuuming. He smiles to her, puts the cleaner down without switching it off.

PAULA

You shouldn't have.

*

Pommie smiles.

POMMIE

What do they say about the devil and idle hands?

Paula notices one incongruity: a battered old tin mug takes pride of place on the lounge room table. She picks it up.

(CONTINUED)

50

CONTINUED:

50

POMMIE (CONT'D)
Wasn't sure where that went?
Kitchen or bathroom...

PAULA
I've never seen it before.
Must be something of Merv's.

She puts the mug down.

At his housework:

PAULA (CONT'D)
It was very kind of you (to do
all this).

Pommie shuts off the cleaner. Twinkle in his eye.

POMMIE
Think of it as an engagement
present.

*

CUT TO:

51

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM/HALLWAY - DAY

51

*

Pommie and Paula are carrying a mattress out of
the bedroom.

They are struggling with it, and finally dump it
with relief into the hallway.

POMMIE
So where'd you two meet,
anyway? That club?

Paula laughs.

PAULA
(grins)
A party.

POMMIE
Good party, was it?

PAULA
Great party.

52

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM/LOUNGEROOM - DAY

52

*

Pommie and Paula now head back into the bedroom,
and take up positions on either side of the bed
base.

(CONTINUED)

The bedroom is now empty, save for the corner, where a folded drop cloth, some tins of paint and rollers, sit in preparation for the painting work ahead.

PAULA

I was visiting my cousin in Sydney. She had a party and Merv was there. And we just clicked, talked all night. Well, I guess I did most of the talking. But I was coming back here the next day so I thought...

Paula prepares to lift but Pommie puts his hand up to stop her. He comes over.

POMMIE

You thought?

PAULA

Nothing more of it.

Pommie's right beside her. The heat off his body. His hip against hers.

PAULA (CONT'D)

A week later I get a call at work. It's Merv, do I remember him?

They start to lift the bed. Paula resumes her story.

PAULA (CONT'D)

He tracked me down through my cousin and asked me if I wanted to grab a meal.

Paula wriggles her corner of the bed base out, around the corner and into the loungeroom. She's struggling.

Pommie puts his end down, then comes over to Paula. His chest brushes her breasts. She steps away from the intimate touch. Pommie smiles.

POMMIE

Sneaky bugger jumped a train to grab a pizza with you?

They pull the bed into the lounge and dump it with relief. Paula steps away, very relieved.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Sounds like you've got
something special there.

PAULA

OK, now my turn. How did you
two really meet?

On Pommie-

Flashback.

Years before. Prison shower block. Water
dribbles from an old spout. Below it a body is
being stomped by a pack of men in prison uniforms.
A blur of legs and arms kick, punch and break the
nakedness on the wet tiles.

One of the group, Pommie, looks on at the broken
and whimpering body on the wet floor.

The body on the floor belongs to a younger Sparra.
He looks over at Pommie, through his busted eyes
and bloodied face.

One of the prisoners pulls open his pants. The
others hold sparra's legs and arms down. Sparra
screams.

Flashback ends.

POMMIE

Just... around.

Pommie heads back to the bedroom, Paula follows.

Paula realises that he's being elusive. Pommie
just smiles. Gives little away.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

You like him, don't you?

PAULA

(nods)

It comes in handy if you're
going to marry someone.

POMMIE

I mean, he's got to you.

Paula stops. She knows what he means.

(CONTINUED)

PAULA

What happened last night,
James? Between you and Merv?

*

*

She is serious.

POMMIE

He's a mate.

PAULA

I'm his fiancé.

POMMIE

Then he should tell you.

PAULA

Yes, he should. And it's unfair
of me to ask you. But I am.

Pommie smiles.

POMMIE

I think I like you.

Pommie seems to consider.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Okay Sparra...got into some
trouble when he was young. Got
in with the wrong crowd. Did
some time.

Paula's shocked.

PAULA

Prison?

POMMIE doesn't have to affirm it.

PAULA (CONT'D)

That's where you met him.

POMMIE smiles innocently.

PAULA (CONT'D)

What did he do?

Pommie tries to soften things.

POMMIE

Nicked a car. Got into a
fight. Not sure really.

*

PAULA realises why Sparra never talks about the past now.

PAULA

I had no idea.

(CONTINUED)

54

CONTINUED: (2)

54

Pommie looks at Paula and starts to lay out the cloth drop sheets.

*
*

POMMIE

Last night, I told him he should come clean with you.

*

Paula's reeling.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

But he's... frightened.

*

Paula is still taking in his revelation.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I shouldn't've-

PAULA

No. I asked you to.

*

Pommie picks up a paint scraper and approaches her with a smile.

*
*

POMMIE

Ready?

*
*

55

INT. ASHTON'S LOCKERS - AFTERNOON

55

Work's over for the day. Sparra slips off his overalls and hangs them up in his locker. He takes a shirt and pants from his locker and gets changed.

He takes the bag (with the pistol) off the locker shelf and is about to put it in his zippered bag, when it tears open, and the pistol spills to the ground, falling under the bench. He goes to retrieve it when he hears a voice behind.

NEIL puts his hand fraternally on Sparra's shoulder.

*

NEIL

Running errands. Under the thumb all ready, is he?

*

Sparra's stunned. Neil pauses as Sparra put his body between Neil and the gun, and discreetly scoops it into his bag.

*
*

Sparra glances at Neil, his heart pounding. Did he see?

*

Yes. Neil saw. But he makes no comment.

*

(CONTINUED)

55

CONTINUED:

55

NEIL (CONT'D)

Catch you tomorrow.

*

SPARRA

Yeah. Tomorrow.

Sparra hurriedly half zips up the bag and walks off. Neil stares after him.

*

56

EXT. ASHTON'S WAREHOUSE - CARPARK - AFTERNOON

56

*

Sparra steps out into the still hot afternoon sunshine, flustered.

SPARRA

Shit...

He's startled by a car horn. He looks over. Paula and Pommie are in the car. They wave him over. Paula is driving. Sparra peers into the back of the car. Towels. An esky.

PAULA

Picnic.

POMMIE

Get in, you big sook.

Sparra looks at Paula. Is something different about her?

POMMIE (CONT'D)

We brought your medicine.

Pommie holds up a bottle of beer with a grin.

SPARRA

I'm not in the mood.

Paula looks imploringly at him.

PAULA

Come on...

He relents. Zipping up the bag properly as he gets into the back seat. He notices flecks of paint in Paula's hair. The same colour paint under Pommie's nails.

SPARRA

What have you two been doing?

Pommie smiles to Paula. Paula looks at Sparra. There's a curiosity in her look, as if she is seeing him for the first time.

57 EXT. RIVERSIDE - AFTERNOON

57

A butterfly dances lazily across a neat spread of ham and egg pie, chips, grapes, salad. Beer bottles are open, a few empty.

Pommie, Sparra and Paula are sprawled out across a picnic blanket, on a stretch of grass beside a slow, green-brown river.

Sparra is having trouble hiding the turbulence in his mind. He's watching Paula. What is up with her? Pommie holds up a bottle of beer.

POMMIE

My dad loved his home brew.
He'd line all the bottles up
under the house, tuck 'em in
like they were his kids. This
one night though we all woke
up to this Crash! Pop! Pow!

Paula's listening, but aware of Sparra. She glances over at him. Sparra watches her. What does she know?

POMMIE (CONT'D)

We thought it was a bomb, but
it was the old man's beer
blowing up.

Pommie is laughing and Paula has joined in, charmed by him. She drinks her wine too quickly. Sparra forces a smile.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Never seen him cry so much.

PAULA

Is your dad still around?

POMMIE

Wouldn't know. He and mum took
off when I was eight.

Paula's shocked. Her sympathies for Pommie growing.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Came home from school one day
and...

PAULA

They never came back?

Pommie shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

57

CONTINUED:

57

POMMIE
Welfare. Foster homes.

Paula can't hide her sadness at the story.

PAULA
I'm so sorry.

POMMIE
(don't be)
I loved it. Never had so much
attention.

Then he holds up the bottle.

POMMIE (CONT'D)
We drinking, or what?

PAULA
I will.

She puts out her glass to be topped up. Sparra
watches the interaction, a new dynamic unsettling
him. Are they flirting?

58

EXT. RIVER - AFTERNOON

58 *

SPARRA swims in green dark water. A moment of
sweet peace. *

PAULA's wet, slick-haired face bobs up beside him.
SPARRA sees POMMIE on the shore, watching them in
the water. Then he notices POMMIE has moved closer
to his bag. It's now next to POMMIE's leg. The bag
with the pistol in it. *

He goes to swim back but PAULA's hands encircle
SPARRA's waist. Her legs wrap around him.

PAULA
Think I'm a bit drunk.

Sparra just smiles.

PAULA (CONT'D)
It was love at first sight
when I saw you.

SPARRA
Oh yeah?

PAULA
Well, it was when you turned
around.

(CONTINUED)

She grabs his bum. Paula's lips brush his neck.

There's a moment there. In the water. In the golden light.

PAULA (CONT'D)

You know there's nothing you can't tell me.

SPARRA

(slight panic)

What does that mean?

PAULA

I don't want us to have secrets.

*

SPARRA freaks. What?

On the shore POMMIE, unlit cigarette in his mouth, searching around for a lighter. He checks SPARRA's shirt. No luck.

He keeps searching: SPARRA's bag? SPARRA sees and tenses. PAULA tries to get his attention.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Merv? I mean it. I love you. I won't judge you.

Now SPARRA is getting panicked. On shore, POMMIE is about to open SPARRA's bag.

SPARRA (O.S.)

Hey Pommie!

POMMIE looks up. SPARRA is waving at him.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Come on in. It's fucking freezing.

*

*

POMMIE looks at SPARRA, then glances down at SPARRA's bag and smiles.

POMMIE drops the cigarette and saunters down to the edge and then springs, fully dressed, into the water. He swims out to join them.

Later. The sun is going down, burning red. Pommie and Sparra are packing the car in the shadows of the afternoon. Pommie's in his wet pants.

59

CONTINUED:

59

Paula gets in the car. Sparra bends his head low to Pommie.

SPARRA

(whispers)

What did you say to her?

Pommie's sly, low.

POMMIE

Relax. You think too much.

*

60

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - AFTERNOON

60

*

Sparra drives home with Pommie in the passenger seat beside him. Paula glancing at Sparra, then across to Pommie.

Sparra looks at Pommie, trying to work out his next move. Pommie still wears the traces of a grin.

The sun is going down.

*

Sparra is almost home when a sedan surges past - blinding him with the high-beam and almost running him off the road.

*

*

*

Pommie watches it pass, unsurprised, an inscrutable expression on his face.

*

*

The car is away and Sparra continues on, pulling into his driveway. Oddly, the house lights are on.

*

*

He gets out, careful to grab his work bag and carry it towards the house. But it's soon clear to him that something's wrong. Very wrong.

*

*

*

The windows look to be smashed, the curtains hanging raggedly out of them.

*

*

Sparra strides up the yard. His garden has been trashed, ripped up, foot prints all through it.

*

*

When he gets to the house he sees the front door is open and half-hanging off its hinges.

*

*

The car door opens behind him and Paula sees what's happened. She stares, in shock.

*

*

PAULA

*

What?

*

Sparra calls to her.

*

(CONTINUED)

60

CONTINUED:

60

SPARRA

Stay there!

*
*

Pommie appears beside him. Indignant. Sparra can't bear to look at him. Shit.

*
*

61

DELETED SCENE

61

*

62

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

62

*

Sparra steps into the house, Pommie at his heels. The damage is worse inside.

63

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

63

*

The bedroom furnishings are tossed about. Boxes torn open, contents strewn. Clothes ripped. Sparra looks around, dumps his bag under a dropcloth and leaves.

64

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - LOUNGEROOM - NIGHT

64

*

Sparra glances into the lounge room. The chairs are slashed. The TV kicked in. A tin of paint lies tipped over, its contents thrown across the white washed walls, across the carpet.

65

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

65

*

A wide-eyed and terrified-sober Paula enters the house. Pommie appears, momentarily spooking her.

POMMIE

They've gone. Whoever they were.

Paula stands lost amongst the wreckage, not wanting to move.

PAULA

Who would do this?

POMMIE

They nick anything?

She notices the muddy boot marks on the carpet. And then the boot marks on the walls. Sparra appears. He has to look her in the eye.

PAULA

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

65

CONTINUED:

65

Sparra can barely return her gaze. Pommie makes himself scarce.

POMMIE

I'll check out the back.

66

EXT. PAULA'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

66

*

Pommie's in the backyard. Not really looking, just not wanting to go back inside. There's a element to him though - like he's enjoying this.

*

*

Sparra appears. He's furious.

*

POMMIE

I didn't think they'd come back at us. This quick. Shit.

*

*

*

SPARRA

You fucking robbed them!

*

SPARRA is furious.

*

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Fuck!

*

POMMIE

Come on then, let's fix this.

*

Sparra looks stunned.

SPARRA

No.

POMMIE

What are you going to do? Go to the cops?

*

SPARRA

Fuck you. You caused this. You sort it.

POMMIE

It's your house - it's your problem.

*

Sparra looks to Pommie. He knows he's right.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

You know these guys. You've known them all your life. There's only one way to deal. If you don't, they will have you. Remember how that feels, little Sparra?

*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

66

CONTINUED:

66

POMMIE (CONT'D)

And your pretty Paula? She
will never be safe. Not in
this house. Not in this town.

*

Sparra looks at Pommie, torn.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

You know I'm right.

Pommie's words hit the mark. But that doesn't make
it any easier to swallow.

Paula appears at the back step.

PAULA

They haven't taken anything.
Just...

PAULA is about to cry, but then stops herself,
resolutely.

PAULA (CONT'D)

I'm calling the police.

SPARRA

No.

PAULA

Why not?

And when Sparra won't answer she turns on her heel
and goes back inside. He follows.

67

INT. SPARRA'S HOUSE - LOUNGEROOM - NIGHT

67

*

SPARRA

We can't.

PAULA

Tell me why.

SPARRA

Because...

PAULA

(losing her temper)
Just say it!

SPARRA can't.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Because you were in prison.

Sparra takes the words like a blow.

(CONTINUED)

SPARRA

Pommie's on parole. One whiff of trouble and he'll go back in.

PAULA

And you? *

SPARRA

I've done my time. *

PAULA stares at SPARRA, as if seeing him for the first time.

PAULA

You lied to me. *

SPARRA

I was young, I did stupid things.

PAULA

Like what?

Paula waits for him to go on.

SPARRA

Me and a mate got into a blue - a bloke got hurt.

He pauses. But he can't go back now.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

It was an accident. But they still gave me two years.

PAULA

You should have told me. *

SPARRA

I was afraid. *

POMMIE (O.S.)

This is all my fault.

Pommie appears at the doorway.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

I think the guy who did this, he and I shared a few harsh words the other night.

Sparra falls into line with the almost truth.

SPARRA

Wayne, Yvonne's friend.
That's how they knew where
Pommie was staying.

PAULA

Wayne?

POMMIE

I think he was jealous or
something. And I could've
handled it better. Hard to
believe, but I sometimes rub
people up the wrong way,
Paula.

He smiles, charmingly.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

I just need to go eat a piece
of humble pie in front of him.
Hope I don't choke.

(to Paula)

I'm really sorry about...this.
I will be Mr Fix It when I get
back. You think I'm good with
a paint brush?

Sparra turns to Paula.

SPARRA

I don't want you staying here
on your own. I'll drop you at
your mum's.

PAULA

(To Sparra)

Why do you have to go?

POMMIE

To stop me from causing any
more trouble.

Paula looks to Sparra for confirmation.

SPARRA

We won't do anything stupid.

She still resists when he tries to touch her.

PAULA

I'm going to Yvonne's.

68 INT. SPARRA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT 68 *

Sparra pulls his workbag from where it is stashed under the bed. He opens it. The gun.

He takes it out, jams it into his jacket pocket. The metal against his skin. Turns to go.

Then stops. What is he doing?

He takes the gun out, shoves it back into the bag. Bag back under the bed.

69 EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT 69 *

The car rushes through the night. Pommie and Sparra sit in the front, Paula in the back. Silence. Pommie turns up the radio. *

An old pop tune. Pommie starts humming along, almost smiles. Sparra is grim.

70 EXT. YVONNE'S FLAT - NIGHT 70 *

The car arrives at Yvonne's flat. Paula gets out with an overnight bag. She slams the door. *

71 EXT. NIGHTCLUB - CARPARK - NIGHT 71 *

Sparra drives into the nightclub carpark. The club is not yet open but some lights are on.

Pommie gets out. He walks calmly over to a 'skip' bin on the carpark edge and pulls out two lumps of dusty wood. Swings them. Good. He offers one to Sparra.

Sparra looks at the wood.

POMMIE

Tim-ber.

Sparra takes the plank of wood. Looks like this is it.

Moments later. The pair scamper across the carpark towards the cellar door Sparra spied the night before last. They scope the back of the club for a way inside.

Sparra stops by the fire escape door [location dependent]. The lock seems to be broken. Bingo. He gestures to Pommie. *

72 INT. NIGHTCLUB - FIRE ESCAPE STAIRS - NIGHT 72 *

The fire escape stairs lead up to a sliding door [location dependent]. The sound of music, low crackle, comes from behind it. *

Sparra's heart is pounding. The closer he gets the more real it all becomes. He glances back. Pommie grins, this is what life is all about.

Sparra reaches the top of the stairs. Pommie pulls the sliding door across and runs in. It's on!

73 INT. NIGHTCLUB - BAR - NIGHT 73 *

POMMIE and SPARRA arrive into an empty bar.

Chairs on tables, curtains drawn, near dark. There's no one there. What to do now?

Then SPARRA hears music. Tinny, from a distance. And out of tune singing. They follow the noise down a short hallway that runs off the bar.

74 INT. NIGHTCLUB - BACK ROOM - NIGHT 74 *

BRUCE, the bar owner, is on his knees in front of a safe in a storeroom cum back office area. A large bandage covers a savage slash across his cheek (the legacy of Pommie's last visit to the club).

The office/storeroom is halved by an iron-barred heavy security gate. Behind the gate stands the safe, as well as what look like top-shelf liquor bottles.

BRUCE has the gate swung open while he opens the safe and empties some of its takings into a canvas register bags.

The Music comes from a radio. BRUCE is humming away.

POMMIE

Knock. Knock.

BRUCE turns, and tries to mask his fear, as Pommie and Sparra emerge from nowhere.

BRUCE

Fuck off.

But there's a real waver in his voice.

(CONTINUED)

POMMIE

(disappointed)

Ah Bruce, I thought we already had the manners discussion.

BRUCE

Listen, you guys are from Sydney, so you don't know. This is not the place to cause shit in. We are protected.

POMMIE

Yeah, about that.

But BRUCE sees the plank of wood in POMMIE's hand. Oh no.

He reacts, and tries to close the gate and himself behind it, to stop Pommie from getting to him. But POMMIE is too quick, he thumps BRUCE's hand hard against the metal, cracking bone. BRUCE whimpers, drops the safe keys on the carpet.

POMMIE hasn't finished.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

You did a stupid thing. You fucked with the wrong blokes.

He smashes BRUCE across the face. CRUMP. BRUCE falls to the carpet, blood streaming from his face.

BRUCE

Oh God.

And again.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Stop! Don't.

Pommie looks over at Sparra. He's gleaming. Come on. BRUCE implores Sparra.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Help me!

*

SPARRA

We're square now, yeah?

BRUCE nods, whimpers.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

It's over?

BRUCE

Yes.

Sparra pulls out BRUCE's belt and ties BRUCE's hands with it.

SPARRA

If anything comes back cos of this, we'll hit so you hard you won't get up again. You understand?

BRUCE nods, whimpering.

Pommie grabs Bruce but Sparra pulls Pommie away.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

That's it. Enough.

Pommie looks: what? Sparra shakes his head. No more.

POMMIE reaches down and grabs BRUCE's toupee as a souvenir. BRUCE howls.

As Pommie is exiting he notices what looks like the safe KEYS. *

He snatches them up. Sparra sees this, but doesn't comment. BRUCE is eating the carpet in fear and so doesn't see this.

Sparra's in the empty club. Fists pumping. Blood burning. He's got that old feeling. That out-of-control feeling. Pommie next to him.

WAYNE (O.S.) *

Bruce?

Sparra looks up to see: Wayne and a heavy-set barman, Len, appear at the other end of the nightclub. Shit.

WAYNE (CONT'D)

You there?

A muffled voice answers from the back room.

BRUCE

(off)
Help! Help me.

POMMIE looks to SPARRA. Smiles.

75

CONTINUED:

75

SPARRA has too much adrenaline coursing through his body. He feels sick. He feels great. He feels like he's only just pulled himself back from the edge.

This won't end unless it ends here.

Sparra launches at the two unsuspecting bouncers. WAYNE and LEN don't have a chance.

SPARRA's a whirlwind of malice. Voooom! He smashes WAYNE in the head, with the plank.

WAYNE reels, gripping his split face. SPARRA whacks him again, breaking the wood across on his head.

WAYNE

Ahhhh!

WAYNE crumples to the carpet, broken, sobbing.

LEN seizes his chance, leaping at SPARRA, getting him in a bearhug. SPARRA flexes, wrestles, is out of his skin almost, until LEN comes flying off and lands on his knees.

SPARRA, heaving, wired, punches LEN. And punches him. And punches him...

76

INT. NIGHTCLUB - FRONT STEPS - NIGHT

76 *

Pommie and Sparra head out via the front entrance. Pommie looks to Sparra, who is white-faced.

Pommie throws something to him. Sparra snatches at it, spooked until he sees what it is. Pommie starts laughing. The toupee.

But Sparra is riding a mix of fear and horror at himself, at what he's just done.

77

INT. PARK TOILET BLOCK - NIGHT

77 *

Later. Pommie and Sparra are at the sink in a suburban toilet block. Both are washing the blood out of their shirts. Pommie is hyped, Sparra more subdued.

POMMIE

I knew you weren't a fucking
...apprentice.

(CONTINUED)

77

CONTINUED:

77

Pommie laughs. Sparra is looking at his hands in the water. The blood. The torn skin. Who is he?

He's interrupted as Pommie reaches his hand behind Sparra's neck. Sparra stares at Pommie. Pommie pulls him in for a hard kiss. Sparra tries to break away but Pommie keeps kissing.

And then Sparra is kissing back, pushing at Pommie's shirt. Pommie sheds it himself. And then Sparra has his hands over Pommie's chest.

Kissing, holding, Pommie's hands are over Sparra's face, neck, crotch.

And then

*

Sparra breaks away: sweaty, lips bruised, busted.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

What?

Pommie steps over to touch Sparra but Sparra just walks outside.

78

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

78

Sparra walks towards his car. He can't walk fast enough.

SPARRA

No more. This isn't me anymore.

POMMIE

It felt like you.

Pommie following. Sparra reaches the car. Gets in.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Sparra...

SPARRA

I see you again I call the cops myself...

Sparra drives off.

Pommie is left alone in the dark, watching Sparra's tail lights fade.

He kicks a rubbish bin in rage.

*

79 EXT. YVONNE'S FLAT - NIGHT

79 *

Sparra buttons up his still wet shirt, tucks it in. He is outside Yvonne's. No lights are on. He creaks up the wooden steps to Yvonne's top-floor flat.

Heart pounding. He knocks.

Waits.

Lips dry. Shirt damp against his back.

Waits.

He is about to knock again when Yvonne opens the door.

SPARRA

I need to see her.

Yvonne takes him in. The sweat. The red eyes. Wet shirt. The disarray.

YVONNE

Come back in the morning.

She shakes her head and starts to close the door. Sparra tries to force his way in.

SPARRA

It can't wait.

YVONNE

She'll phone you when she's ready.

Paula appears behind Yvonne.

PAULA

(to Yvonne)

It's okay.

Yvonne looks to Paula. You ok?

Then an exasperated beat as she steps away, leaving the door open for Sparra to come inside.

80 INT. YVONNE'S FLAT - SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

80 *

Sparra and Paula stand in Yvonne's spare bedroom. During the day it is her sewing room. An overlocker and fabric sit in one corner, a blanket and pillow are pushed to the end of a mattress on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

Silence.

PAULA

I told her we had a fight.

SPARRA

Did we?

Paula's staring at his hands. The blood, and broken skin.

PAULA

You said there wouldn't be any trouble.

She sees him. The scared flicker in his eyes, the bruised hands, the clothes askew.

SPARRA

It was always going to be trouble.

He looks to her. She can see his hurt, his vulnerability. His truth.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

I don't know what to do. *

PAULA

I don't care that you went to prison. I only care that you lied to me.

Moonlight. SPARRA contrite.

PAULA (CONT'D)

I'm so fucking mad at you.

Long silence. And then she grabs him by the shirt and kisses him.

Pommie stares into his indigo reflection in a pub mirror. He swigs from a beer. *

MAY

Looking for someone?

A woman sidles next to him. Pommie realises he's being solicited. *

POMMIE

Am I ugly?

81

CONTINUED:

81

MAY

No, love, you're beautiful.

May gets to her feet, dropping her cigarette. With dreamy speed she is at his side, her hand a patient pressure on his arm.

She leads him through the pub. Up the stairs. Her "office".

*
*

82

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

82

*

Pommie follows MAY along the hot fug of the hotel corridor. A muscled TOUGH GUY in a western shirt lurks in the shadows.

*

83

INT. YVONNE'S FLAT - SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

83

*

Sparra puts his hand on Paula's breast, but she pushes him away. She tugs at his pants and Sparra wriggles out of them. But she won't let him touch her. Yet.

We see Sparra's body through moonlight. His arse. The curves of his chest and back.

She needs to see him again with this new knowledge of him. Feel he is hers. She pins him to the floor, and his arms are around her. They kiss deeply.

84

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

84

*

The room is not much more than a bed with a small towel on it. In one corner is a chest of drawers and a mirror at waist height. Boxes of tissues.

In the light MAY can see Pommie's been crying.

MAY

You've been in the wars,
haven't you? But all that's
over now.

Pommie closes his eyes. So tired.

MAY (CONT'D)

There, there.

Pommie falls into her arms.

POMMIE

I can love.

(CONTINUED)

84

CONTINUED:

84

MAY holds him, a little guarded.

85

INT. YVONNE'S FLAT - SPARE BEDROOM - NIGHT

85

*

Paula and Sparra fuck in Yvonne's spare bedroom.

Sparra's body, arcs in movement, in hard urgency. His bird tattoos on his arms and shoulders. His legs. Paula's arms around him. Her arse. Her fingers in his mouth.

It is almost brutal, animal, very different from the last time. For both of them. Raw. Honest.

86

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

86

*

Pommie's eyes open, his heart pounding, energised and full of fight. MAY is smoothing his brow.

MAY

You're okay, luv. Safe now.

But something's very, very wrong. Pommie pushes MAY off him. She sprawls face first onto the bed.

MAY (CONT'D)

Whoah.

Pommie's not listening. He holds one of her legs down with one hand while unbuttoning his pants with the other.

MAY (CONT'D)

Hey!

Pommie pins her to the bed with his body weight.

MAY (CONT'D)

Get off.

(angry)

I don't do that.

MAY kicks at his chest. But Pommie doesn't feel it, intent on fucking her. He presses her down.

MAY stops struggling. Pommie spits on his hand, ready for action, and so lets her leg go for a second and she takes her chance, wriggling out from under and punching him in the face. Pommie's stunned and MAY runs out the door.

MAY (CONT'D)

(calls)

Tony! For fuck's sake, Tony!

*

(CONTINUED)

86

CONTINUED:

86

HEAVY TREAD THUMPS down the hallway. Pommie is pulled off the bed and onto the floor.

TOUGH GUY

Come on cunt.

The TOUGH GUY kicks him. Pommie springs up and punches him hard in the chest.

Pommie punches his face again and again. *

Tough guys hits the ground hard. *

Pommie jumps on top of him and unloads a series of haymakers as Tough Guy's face begins to piss blood all over the floor. He doesn't move. *

87

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

87

*

Pommie runs through the city streets without looking, on and on, the air SCREAMING in his lungs. He finally stops, bent over, HEAVING.

Heaving. *

88

INT. YVONNE'S FLAT - SPARE BEDROOM - DAWN

88

*

Post-coital. Dawn light struggling through the curtains. *

SPARRA *

The old man couldn't keep a job so we moved around a lot. Spent most of my growing up years trying to stay out of his way. I was always the new kid, the new face. Only mates I had were other kids like me. Never dreamed a girl like you would ever look at me. Till you did. *

Paula watches Sparra, savouring this rare insight into his past. *

SPARRA (CONT'D) *

Let's go away. *

Paula is surprised.

PAULA

Now? Why?

(CONTINUED)

SPARRA

(yes)

We could go to Perth. It's supposed to be pretty.

PAULA

I don't understand. I thought you "sorted" things with Wayne.

Sparra knows that he can't keep lying to Paula.

SPARRA

It's not Wayne.

Paula understands.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Pommie says I owe him. From prison days. That's why he's here. To collect.

PAULA

Owe him what?

SPARRA pauses. How does he say? He doesn't.

SPARRA

He looked after me. I would've been dead before lock up without him.

PAULA

How much do we have to pay him? I could ask my...

SPARRA

It's not money. He wants me to... go back to the way I was.

*

PAULA scoffs.

PAULA

Well, you're not going to do that.

SPARRA

You don't understand what he's capable of, Paula.

*

Paula feels the dead-metal chill up the back of her neck.

PAULA

Then we call the police.

SPARRA

No. Never the police. We run or we fight. I say we run.

(then)

Just for a month or two.

PAULA

I need time to think. *

Sparra starts to get dressed. Going into "action" mode.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

SPARRA

We'll need money. Work owes me overtime. *

He kisses her.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

When I get back, we'll talk. Don't open that (the door) to anyone. *

Sparra goes. Paula is trying to absorb this new information. Things are racing out of control around her, and she is a woman used to being in control.

Sparra heads across the road to the dock. He scans around himself to see if Pommie is waiting for him.

No.

He steps into Ashton's dock and is immediately aware something's happened. He walks over to Neil who is sweeping up glass. *

SPARRA

Neil, look, Paula and me need to go away for a few days, family emergency. If that mate of mine comes looking, Pommie - can you tell him I've gone. Not sure when I'll be back. *

(SPARRA notices that something is not right with NEIL) *

What's up? *

89

CONTINUED:

89

Neil points to the BROKEN WINDOW high above them. *

NEIL *

Got in through there. *

Sparra takes this in, with a sinking feeling. Neil shakes his head. *

NEIL (CONT'D) *

Boss wants a word. *

Sparra glances over to the office. His BOSS is in there, pacing.

90

INT. ASHTON'S WAREHOUSE - OFFICE - MORNING

90

*

The Boss is mournfully attempting to clean up his defiled office. Each new broken object is causing grief. There's a stench of disinfectant but Sparra's spies some errant wisps of dirtied toilet paper still around the desk. A large piece of chipboard covers the wall.

SPARRA

Jeez what a mess. Need a hand? *

BOSS sees who it is: shakes his head.

BOSS

Close the door.

Sparra does this.

BOSS (CONT'D)

They call you "Sparra" don't they?

SPARRA

Yeah, why?

The BOSS moves the board. The word "Sparra" is smeared along the wall in human excrement. *

Sparra knows who wrote this: Pommie. But from the look on his BOSS's face, it's clear who he thinks defaced his office. *

SPARRA (CONT'D) *

I didn't do this. I wouldn't. *

(then, almost laughs) *

And if I did I wouldn't write my own fucking name, would I? *

BOSS now turns his attention on Sparra.

(CONTINUED)

BOSS

I don't care. Clean out your locker. I don't want to see you again.

*
*
*
*

BOSS looks at Sparra with disgust.

SPARRA

Come on mate-

*

BOSS

You front up, no resume, nothing. But I give you a shot. How do you repay me? You, or your mates, shit on my wall. Now piss off before I call the cops.

*
*
*
*
*
*

Sparra's reeling. This has all happened too fast. Sparra needs to set things right. Now.

SPARRA

(rapidly)

Phone Paula - I was with her all last night.

*
*

The BOSS reaches for the phone. Finger jabs at the screen. 0.0.0.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

It's a message for me. Got nothing to do with you.

*
*

The walls feel close, crushing.

*

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Please.

*
*

Boss keeps on dialling and Sparra GRABS the Boss's hand in a FLASH.

*

BOSS

Ow.

SPARRA

Down. Down!

The Boss tries to eyeball Sparra but it hurts too much. The phone CLATTERS onto the desk.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Take three months to heal a break like this. If it ever heals.

Sparra leans forward, all his weight on the Boss's wrist.

BOSS

Fuck...

SPARRA

Know how I know that? Cos I used to crush piss-weak little ants like you, six days a week. It was easy.

*

The Boss twists, getting down low, almost under the desk, to ease the pressure off his wrist.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

That's my fucking resume. Remember it.

Sparra throws the BOSS's hand off. He STEAMS out. The BOSS collapses on the floor.

Sparra comes out. His hands flexing, shaking.

SPARRA

Fuck it.

Neil has followed him. Sparra looks to Neil - how to explain?

*

NEIL

I don't know what you got yourself into.

*

SPARRA

Neil...

*

NEIL

I'd run.

*

Sparra see's two burly men striding towards him. They carry themselves like plain clothes policemen (or hired thugs).

*

*

*

DUCK

Merv Farrel... We need a word.

*

*

Sparra doesn't wait to find out what they want.

He RUNS!

92 EXT. BACK LANE - DAY 92 *

Sparra races down the back lane. His mind hammering, air burning in his lungs. He glances back - The two men chase behind, gaining. *

Ahead the lane comes to a T - left or right, he has to decide NOW.

He feigns left, the men follow, then instead he leaps at the fence, wriggles, kicks, wood biting into his chest, and over. *

92A EXT. BOAT WORKSHOP - DAY 92A *

...and lands on the roof of a tarp-covered car out the back of a boat workshop. Thump! Crunch! *

Sparra slides off.

He listens. He can hear the men calling to each other indistinctly. He turns. *

A burly MECHANIC is staring at him, a spanner in his hand.

Sparra looks around for escape or a weapon but the MECHANIC waves silently to Sparra to follow him. Sparra trails the MECHANIC through the back of the shop.

92B INT. BOAT WORKSHOP - DAY 92B *

Sparra wanders through the warehouse high on adrenaline. *

The mess of machinery and weaving tunnels surround and disorient him. It's like he's in a dream - another world. *

He finds sunlight peering through a half raised roller door. He clambers through the gap. *

93 EXT. STREET - DAY 93

Sparra emerges onto the street. He looks each way - no one in sight. *

Take a breath. Take a breath. Walk slowly.

He's escaped. But has nowhere to go.

Shit.

94 INT. YVONNE'S FLAT - DAY 94 *
Paula nervously smokes a cigarette. Yvonne has
gotten out of bed, and is in her dressing gown. *

YVONNE
What's happened?

PAULA
I need to run a few errands.
Can I borrow your car? I'll
be back in half an hour.

95 EXT. YVONNE'S FLAT - DAY 95 *
Paula gets into Yvonne's car.

96 INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY 96 *
Paula walks into her own house. It's worse than
she remembered. Busted up, beaten down, broken.
She hears a noise coming from the next room. *

PAULA *
Merv? *

She sees a stray cat run past the window. Relief. She
moves to the next room. *

97 INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY 97 *
Paula takes in her wrecked and paint splashed
bedroom. But she isn't there to linger. She
gathers up some clothes, puts them into a bag.
Then jewelery, some photos. *

HER ENGAGEMENT RING.
She picks it up. The box is crushed, she opens it.
The ring. She hesitates. She grabs it and leaves. *

98 INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - HALLWAY/DOOR - DAY 98 *
Paula is startled to see two burly men standing in
the recently broken doorway. It's the same men who
were chasing Sparra. *

They are veteran detective, Duck RICHARDSON and
his partner, DETECTIVE CONSTABLE TOMAS 'CARL',
CARLEWICZ, a shot-putter poured into a tight
sports jacket.

(CONTINUED)

They are not disguising their interest in the busted-up house.

DUCK

Paula McGrath?

PAULA

Yes?

DUCK

Police.

CARL

Mind if we have a look around?

Before she can object they are inside.

PAULA

Who called you?

Paula follows the POLICE into the lounge room.

PAULA

Nothing was taken.

Carl heads over to look at Pommie's suitcase, where it sits on the floor.

PAULA (CONT'D)

What do you think you are doing?

Carl opens Pommie's suitcase, searches it. He finds a railway ticket in the suitcase. Reads.

CARL

It's Stewart, all right.

That seems to solve some riddle for the police.

DUCK

Where's your boyfriend, Paula?

Paula takes in the situation. The POLICE, tromping around with impunity. Paula takes a punt.

PAULA

How do I know you're police?

DUCK

Who else would we be, love?

Duck pulls out a badge, flashes it.

(CONTINUED)

DUCK (CONT'D)

Where is he?

PAULA

I don't know. Why are you looking for him?

DUCK

Merv Farrell and Jim Stewart are wanted in connection with an armed robbery and assault at the "Silver Dollar" nightclub last night.

(then)

Still don't know where he is?

Duck looks to Paula for a reaction to this. She doesn't give anything away.

PAULA

Merv was with me last night.

Duck looks like he's heard the line before.

DUCK

He was with you.

Paula stares.

DUCK (CONT'D)

So our eye witness is lying?

PAULA

Yes.

DUCK

Or someone's lying.

Duck regards her. A little sadly. Paula stands up to Duck.

PAULA

Merv was with me. Now, as you don't seem to want to find out who trashed our house, I think you should go.

CARL continues to inspect the house. On the kitchen table, a shaving mug has been left. A razor in it. He pays no attention.

In the bedroom, he gets closer to the drop cloth, showing the edge of Sparra's bag...

*
*

*

*

*

*
*

101 INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - LOUNGEROOM -DAY 101 *

Duck comes close.

DUCK

I know your type, Paula. Nice girl, nice teeth, happy family. Like the bad boys, eh?

PAULA

You don't know anything about me. *

PAULA doesn't respond.

DUCK *

Let me tell you a fact. Men like Farrell use women like you. For money. For alibis. For... Other things. *

PAULA

Is there anything else I can help you with detective?

DUCK

Farrell won't change. Only person you can save is yourself. *

He takes a card from his wallet. Carl returns and gives Duck a nod. *

DUCK (CONT'D) *

You see Stewart or your boyfriend, you ring me.

She takes the card. Duck and Carl go.

Paula takes a deep breath. She makes a decision, and grabs a bag. Starts to pack. Ok, now's she's on the run. *

102 INT/EXT. YVONNE'S FLAT - MORNING 102 *

YVONNE is doing her hair in the mirror, getting ready for work. She hears a knock at the door... *

POMMIE *

Knock knock. *

YVONNE *

Who's there? *

She answers it to reveal - POMMIE, still in last night's clothes, the worse for wear but scrubbed up nonetheless, carries a bunch of flowers in front of his face. *

(CONTINUED)

POMMIE

A talking bunch of flowers?

He takes the flowers away.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

(serious)

Apologies for running off the other night and leaving you in the lurch, Yvonne.

(then)

Beautiful women make me panic.

Pommie shows her his hand. It shakes in an exaggerated way that gets worse and worse and worse.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

See.

YVONNE

(faux cool)

What do you want?

POMMIE smiles.

POMMIE

Some water for these (flowers)'s'd be a start.

103 EXT. PAULA'S HOUSE - DAY

103

Sparra arrives back at his house.

104 INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - DAY

104

Sparra walks through the house. Something's changed. Even in the chaos, he can tell things have been disturbed. He's alert. Expectant.

Sees the shaving mug, still there. On the table. A razor in it. A sign. Sparra knows.

He makes his way into the bedroom, sees the drop sheet has been moved. His bag visible. With great anxiety, he goes to his bag. Phew! Inside, the gun is there. The leveller.

105 INT/EXT. YVONNE'S FLAT - LATER

105

Paula gets out of Yvonne's car. She has a bag with her, prepared for going away. She feels out of breath, and she hasn't been climbing.

(CONTINUED)

She is at the front door, pushes at the door and it opens. Not locked? Huh?

Paula enters the lounge room, wary.

PAULA
(calls)
Merv?

And then Paula sees him. Sitting in an armchair, drinking tea, without a care.

Pommie.

She feels like falling.

POMMIE
Hello. Sleep well?

*

PAULA
Where's Yvonne?

*

*

Yvonne enters from the kitchen with a fresh pot of tea. Sees Paula.

YVONNE
Pommie wants us to all go out together tonight. I said he has to promise not to abandon me again.

POMMIE
Don't worry, Yvonne. I'm not going anywhere.

PAULA
I wouldn't mind a cup of tea myself.

YVONNE
Well, you know where the kitchen is.

*

*

*

She looks to Yvonne.

*

YVONNE (CONT'D)
Okay, okay.

*

*

Yvonne goes back into the kitchen. Once she is gone:

PAULA
(low)
Get out of here. Go. Leave us alone.

POMMIE

Too late for that. Don't you think?

Yvonne returns and immediately sees the tension. Paula turns to her.

PAULA

Can I just have a minute?

Yvonne looks to Paula: are you all right. Yes. Yvonne steps out of the room.

Once Yvonne is gone.

PAULA (CONT'D)

I know all about you.

Paula's heart is beating fast.

POMMIE

Not everything I bet.

PAULA

Everything.

Now Pommie looks at her. She just stares.

POMMIE

And you're still with him?

PAULA

The police are looking for you.

*

But Pommie hasn't finished.

POMMIE

(over)

Did he tell you I made him do it? 'Cos he came on to me.

(whispering)

I'd never even fucked a bloke before he crawled up on my bunk.

Paula. A breath-robbing beat. But it can't be true.

PAULA

You're disgusting.

POMMIE

So you don't know everything.

PAULA

I don't believe you.

Pommie gets up.

POMMIE

Yeah you do. You knew there was something different about him. That 'something's' me.

Pommie leaves, screen door clacking behind him. Paula takes in the devastating news. Her heart plunges.

Yvonne comes back with the tea.

YVONNE

Is it safe to come back... Where's Pommie? Are you ok?

Paula nods and stumbles to her feet, she feels sick. She stumbles outside.

Paula, in the backyard. Frozen. Like a statue. We track around her, from behind to in front, to see that she has tears running down her cheeks, involuntarily.

From the side of the house, Sparra emerges. He has a bag of things packed too.

SPARRA

We have to go.

Paula doesn't respond.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Paula?

He tries to put his hand on her, but she pushes him off.

PAULA

Don't touch me.

Paula's almost speechless.

SPARRA

What's wrong?

PAULA

Did you fuck him?

(then)

Did you?

And when Sparra doesn't answer right away she gets the answer she feared.

SPARRA

You don't understand. Young guys get bought and sold in there...

*

He tries to touch her but she gets away.

With a huge effort she gets out of his grasp and goes inside.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Please, Paula...

*

PAULA

Get away from me!

*

She races up the steps. He comes after her. She has been holding it in till now, but now she loses it.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Get! Away! Get-away!

She punches him.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Don't touch me!! Ever again!

Again. Again.

SPARRA

Paula!

A NEIGHBOUR cranes her neck at the commotion. Sparra gives her a 'mind your own fucking business' look.

*

*

Paula takes the opportunity to race into Yvonne's apartment and SLAMS the door.

*

*

Sparra gasps. The air hisses with heat. It burns.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Paula!

Sparra turns and turns. This can't be happening. He bangs on the door.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Paula!

107 INT. YVONNE'S FLAT - DAY 107 *

Paula sinks to her knees, her sobs uncontrollable. Sparra bangs on the door outside.

108 EXT. YVONNE'S FLAT - BACKYARD - DAY 108 *

Sparra turns away. He screams. He hates himself and grips his head hard - wishing he could just rip it off.

He's blown it. And someone must pay!

He walks to his car. Gets in.

109 EXT. PAULA'S HOUSE - DAY 109 *

Sparra pulls up in front of his house again. Someone is already there. Pommie. Watering the remnants of the garden, restoring order.

Sparra grabs the gun from his bag. He's going to kill Pommie. He gets out of the car.

Pommie sees him. The murder in his eyes. The gun in his hand.

POMMIE

Mate. She already knew.

Sparra raises the gun. Aims. Quick as a flash, Pommie squirts the hose into Sparra's eyes. Grabs a nearby shovel and swings it, connects with the gun. Knocks it out of Sparra's hand.

Sparra roars and throws himself at Pommie, under the swing of Pommie's shovel. Rugby tackles him to the ground.

They wrestle. Sparra FIGHTS hard, headbutting Pommie. Pommie reels but comes again, punching him hard in the face.

Sparra tries to grab his throat, to push Pommie back into the soil from whence he came, but Pommie asserts himself and is ultimately too strong. He throws Sparra from him.

Sparra scrambles for the gun but Pommie gets in the way. He lands on Sparra and picking up the shovel presses its handle into Sparra's windpipe.

(CONTINUED)

POMMIE (CONT'D)

What were you going to do, eh?
Keep lying for the rest of
your life? Were you?

Sparra gasps. Gasps. Blue. Black. Stars.

Finally, Pommie leans back off this shovel. Sparra wheezes, the air rushing back into this lungs.

As Sparra is attempting to rise Pommie kicks him in the gut to keep him down.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

I'm setting you free. Like you
did to me.

He picks up the gun. Goes inside. Sparra falls back in the dirt and mud, amongst the crushed vegie patch. He struggles for breath. *

Sparra's blinks in the yellow-white fuzz glare of the afternoon. He tries to get up. It hurts so much. He's shaky, muddy, sick, needs to steady himself to stand.

His vegie patch is completely destroyed.

What the hell is he going to do?

110

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - DAY

110 *

Sparra comes inside. Everywhere he looks he is witness to his broken dreams. Smashed. Damaged. Wrecked.

On the kitchen bench, Pommie's left the gun. Sparra picks it up. Checks. He hasn't taken the bullets out. Why?

111

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

111 *

Sparra finds Pommie standing barechested at the sink in the bathroom. He is washing the blood and muck off.

Pommie's ink-dark tattoo flecked skin, rippling muscle.

Sparra aims the gun at Pommie's head again. This time...

He should just shoot him.

He could just shoot him.

(CONTINUED)

111

CONTINUED:

111

One bullet. Over.

Maybe that's what Pommie wants. Love me or kill me.

He grips the pistol.

Flashback.

112

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

112

Pommie, in T-shirt and prison pants, perches on a bunk in a prison cell.

The cell door opens.

Sparra is thrown in. He's a mess from his recent bashing.

Pommie watches him. Sparra's a beautiful, wounded angel.

Sparra leans in close to Pommie.

Close enough to bite.

And then Sparra kisses him.

Pommie can't believe it.

Flashback ends.

113

INT. PAULA'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

113

*

Sparra can't shoot Pommie.

He puts the gun down.

Pommie finally acknowledges Sparra's presence. Sees the gun on the table behind Sparra. Doesn't acknowledge it.

Pommie gestures to the battered old enamel mug on the bathroom shelf.

POMMIE

(at tin shaving
mug)

Never thought I'd see this
again.

(then)

Who takes another bloke's
prison mug, chrissake you're
cheap.

*

(CONTINUED)

Sparra smiles ruefully. He had been played from the outset.

SPARRA

You know what we should do?

Pommie keeps on shaving.

POMMIE

What should we do, young Sparra?

SPARRA

I saw you take the keys from the club...

Pommie's silent.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

No one'd be stupid enough to rob the same place three times in two days eh?

Pommie turns. They lock eyes.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

It's the biggest night of the week, we'd clear 10 grand.

Pommie grins. He's won.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

So what do you say? Feeling stupid?

POMMIE

Why not?

Sparra notices blood on Pommie's face. A nick. He takes a face flannel. Gently wipes him clean. Tender.

The car speeds into the city, a shimmering blur on the horizon. Sparra's fresh faced, in clean clothes. Pommie watches him for a sign, but his face is unreadable.

SPARRA

Hungry?

115 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

115 *

Sparra sits across from Pommie, dwarfed by the enormous banquet table which is a catastrophe of spilled food and drink. Some wine bottles are half empty on the table.

Sparra seems very drunk.

SPARRA
Hey dickhead! Bring us
another!

Sparra gestures to a beleaguered waiter and makes a drinky-drinky motion.

POMMIE
Not so loud.

SPARRA
(pisstakingly
soft)
Bring us another. Dickhead.

Pommie stares. Sparra laughs. Then he leans in close.

SPARRA (CONT'D)
Don't you want them (he means
the other diners) to remember
us?

Pommie gets it. An alibi.

POMMIE
Smart.

A waiter comes over with another bottle - horrified at the mess caused by just two people. Sparra snatches it out of his grasp.

Pommie gently touches Sparra's hand. Sparra shrugs him off.

SPARRA
Piss off. You're not my
girlfriend.
(then)
Isn't this fun? You and me.
The life.

Sparra gives in the broad sweep of the room. The mess.

SPARRA (CONT'D)
The fucking life.

(CONTINUED)

He drinks from the bottle.

WAITER

Maybe you would be more comfortable at a smaller table, near the back.

SPARRA

What do you mean by that?

Sparra reaches out to pull the frightened WAITER.

POMMIE

(to WAITER)

Good idea. At the back's good.

Now POMMIE grabs SPARRA's hand.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

(playing along)

You need to go home.

SPARRA stares. Then blows Pommie a kiss.

The WAITER, bemused, begins to clear the table.

SPARRA sits back in his chair, then:

Spins the lazy susan and food and soy sauce sprays everyone.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Shit!

Sparra's laughing.

WAITER

You'll have to leave.

POMMIE

Mate, we'll pay. I'm sorry.
Too much to drink.

POMMIE pulls money out and piles the very unimpressed waiter's hand. SPARRA's shirt is covered in food.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Don't overdo it.

*

Sparra gets up. Nods.

SPARRA

(I'll) Just get cleaned up.

Sparra heads towards the back of the restaurant and the bathrooms.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: (2)

115

The WAITER is not happy.

116 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

116 *

Sparra stumbles down a hallway towards the bathroom, passing the flashing fires and fizzing woks of the kitchen.

But his manner abruptly changes once he's out of eyesight of Pommie - he straightens himself up, alert and sober. He's looking around himself, trying to plan his next move.

He spies a small office, off to one side. Bingo.

117 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - SMALL OFFICE - NIGHT

117 *

Intercut with:

118 INT. YVONNE'S FLAT - NIGHT

118 *

Sparra is on a wall-phone, in the over-lit office of the restaurant. An ELDERLY CHINESE WOMAN eyes him with more than suspicion.

In Yvonne's Flat, the phone rings. Yvonne gestures to get it, but Paula knows who it will be for. *

She lets it ring.

Sparra mutters impatiently. Come on, pick up. He doesn't have a lot of time.

Finally, Paula picks up.

SPARRA
(into phone)
Paula? Is that you?

Her breath. She says nothing.

SPARRA (CONT'D)
(into phone)
I know there's nothing I can say,
but, I need you to know. I'm
getting rid of him. Tonight.
(then)
He's going to rob the Silver
Dollar again. I'm going to
make sure he gets caught.

PAULA
(into phone)
What are you going to do?

(CONTINUED)

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118 CONTINUED: 118

SPARRA
I'm making it up as I go. *

Sparra hangs up. *

119 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT 119
POMMIE looks towards the back of the restaurant.
What is taking Sparra so long?

120 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - SMALL OFFICE - NIGHT 120 *
Sparra left with the phone in his hand and his
future out the window. Shit.
He dials again.

SPARRA
Hello? Police?

121 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT BATHROOM - NIGHT 121 *
Pommie heads towards the bathroom.

122 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT BATHROOM - NIGHT 122
Pommie pushes the door into the bathroom. He's
almost surprised to see Sparra in there, wiping
his mouth, his face sweaty, his shirt spattered
with water.

POMMIE
Thought you'd fallen in. *

Sparra smiles. *

123 INT. YVONNE'S FLAT - NIGHT 123 *
Paula still sits where she hung up the phone.
Agitated. Anxious. What is Sparra planning to
do. *

PAULA looks at her bag, that she had packed to
escape with Sparra.

YVONNE
What are you doing? *

Inside, Paula finds the broken box with the
engagement ring. Hers. *

(CONTINUED)

123

CONTINUED:

123

YVONNE (CONT'D)

You can't just forgive him.

*

PAULA

I know I can't...

*

PAULA grabs her bag and leaves.

*

YVONNE

You're a bloody idiot, Paula.

*

PAULA

Yeah.

*

*

124

EXT. NIGHTCLUB CARPARK - NIGHT

124

*

Sparra and Pommie pull up. Sparra offers Pommie the gun.

SPARRA

You want to look after this?

POMMIE shakes his head.

POMMIE

It's yours.

Sparra tucks it into his belt.

They get out of the car and scamper low through the darkness of the carpark towards the Silver Dollar nightclub.

125

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - FIRE ESCAPE DOOR - NIGHT

125

*

Sparra follows Pommie to the fire escape door. He clutches the pistol in his pocket.

Pommie glances around himself then pushes on the door. But it's locked! He pushes again. Locked.

Shit.

What now?

126

EXT. NIGHTCLUB ENTRANCE - NIGHT

126

*

Sparra and Pommie peer over at the nightclub entrance. People are lining up, eager for a big night, but instead of heading straight up the stairs, the patrons are greeted by TWO THICK SET men, (DUCK and CARL) who frisk them before they go inside. SPARRA recognises them as cops but doesn't say anything to Pommie.

(CONTINUED)

126

CONTINUED:

126

Instead, Sparra spies the wooden trapdoor to an underground cellar is open as men are finishing rolling a kegs of beer down a ramp into it.

SPARRA

Here's our way in.

Once this late delivery is done the delivery man, drops the trapdoor and then walks back into his truck.

127 INT./EXT. NIGHTCLUB - CELLAR DOOR/CELLAR - NIGHT 127 *

Pommie pops the cellar door. The cellar is old, filled with steel beer barrels sweating moisture. He gestures for Sparra to go in first. Sparra hesitates, then drops inside.

128 INT. NIGHTCLUB - REAR STAIRS - NIGHT 128 *

Pommie's a step behind Sparra heading up the stone stairs that lead up from the cellar to the club. A weird red glow envelopes the pair.

At the top of the stairs is the sliding door, behind which seeps crowd hum and muffled loud music.

POMMIE

Kiss for luck, eh?

He kisses him. Pommie opens the door and heads into the crowd.

129 INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT 129 *

Sparra feels the change in mood, instantly. His ears are assaulted by a blast of guitar rock as a live band revs the crowd. The vibe is dangerous, seething with suppressed violence. *

Sparra follows Pommie. The gun is biting into his back. *

Once they've passed to the bar Pommie turns, nods for him to follow down a short, dark hallway. *

130 INT. NIGHTCLUB - CORRIDOR - NIGHT 130 *

At the end of the corridor is the door to the back room. Pommie just turns the handle and they are in.

131 INT. NIGHTCLUB - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

131 *

Pommie opens the security grille with one of the keys on the key ring.

Once this is done he drops to his knees in front of the safe. He slips the key into the lock.

The key works and the safe opens revealing a thick stack of cash notes. Yes! Pommie starts to stuff his pockets with cash. *

Thumbs up to Sparra. Sparra smiles, leans over and takes the key from out of the safe, then stands, and swiftly closes the security grille on Pommie. Before Pommie can react Sparra has locked him in.

POMMIE

Not funny, mate. Not funny.

But Sparra isn't joking.

SPARRA

(calls out into hallway)

Help. Help!

POMMIE

What the fuck are you doing? eh? Stop fucking around!

SPARRA

(calls)

He's got a gun. He's got a gun!

Sparra takes out his gun, and POMMIE quietens. Then SPARRA shoots the gun into the ceiling. BANG. BANG.

He puts the gun back in his belt.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

Bye mate.

Sparra goes. Pommie can't believe it. He's been betrayed! He throws himself against the grille. SLAM. The iron shaking.

Shit!

132 INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

132

Sparra pushes back into the crowd. He runs immediately into a waiter, carrying drinks.

(CONTINUED)

132

CONTINUED:

132

SPARRA

In there. He's got a gun!
Stop him!

The WAITER dumps his tray and makes eye contact with some BOUNCERS who come running. Sparra doesn't stick around.

133

INT. NIGHTCLUB - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

133

*

Pommie throws himself against the grille again. No good. It's not moving.

He slams against the wall in frustration, breaking the plaster. He starts to break the plaster, making a hole.

134

INT. NIGHTCLUB - HALLWAY - NIGHT

134

*

DUCK and CARL have been alerted by the bouncers and step cautiously down the hallway towards the back room, guns drawn.

135

INT. NIGHTCLUB - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

135

*

Pommie is halfway through the hole in the wall when he hears voices outside. They will be coming for him. What to do? He takes up a bottle of spirits, snaps off the cap. He pours the contents through the bars and onto the carpet of the office.

*

As they are about to enter...POMMIE lights a banknote and throws the burning money onto the carpet.

BOOM!

The room erupts in flames. DUCK backs off.

136

EXT./INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

136

PAULA has arrived at the club and is searching the crowd for Sparra. Is it too late. And what's that smell? Smoke?

137 INT. NIGHTCLUB - BACK ROOM - NIGHT 137 *

A fire is raging. Smoke everywhere. Pommie kicks and punches and throws himself against the wall beside the safe, until he breaks through, cracking plaster, snapping the wooden frame.

138 INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT 138

Sparra pushes through the anxious crowd. He is about to leave when he sees...PAULA.

SPARRA

What are you doing? Get out of here.

PAULA

I don't want you to do anything stupid.

*
*

SPARRA

Too late.

*

He grabs her hand and she lets him and they push through the now panicking crowd.

139 INT. NIGHTCLUB - BACK ROOM - NIGHT 139 *

Intercut with:

140 INT. NIGHTCLUB - WALL CAVITY - NIGHT 140 *

DUCK and CARL brave the smoke and fire, unlock the grille and come into the backroom. Bruce joins him.

*
*

BRUCE

Fuck! The safe.

*
*

DUCK

Where is he?

*
*

BRUCE

I warned you, boss. They're bloody mad.

*
*
*

A huge hole is now in the back wall. The safe is open and empty and Pommie is gone.

DUCK

No one fucks with my things. They don't walk from here.

*
*
*

He turns to Carl.

*

(CONTINUED)

140

CONTINUED:

140

DUCK (CONT'D)

Find them, I want them dead.
The pair of them.

*
*
*

Nearby Pommie leaves the adjoining room, head down. He has over-heard everything.

*

141

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

141

Sparra arrives at the back entrance with Paula. He opens the door to escape and...

WHACK!

Pommie flattens him with a king hit. Sparra falls to the floor. Pommie searches Sparra for his gun and Paula leaps on him, pounding him. She fights hard but Pommie HITS HER HARD and throws her off and she lands with a CRUNCH against the wall.

*

Pommie finds Sparra's gun. He aims it at the lovers. They are coming with him.

142

INT. NIGHTCLUB - CELLAR - NIGHT

142

*

Sparra and Paula stumble down the stairs into the cellar. Smoke streams into the room from above.

Pommie closes the door on the gathering panic but the cellar door leading out to the carpark is open. From it emerge the sound of sirens keening wildly. The ambos are here and the fire brigade.

And more cops.

Glass breaks. Screaming.

But Pommie has something else on his mind.

POMMIE

You crawled onto my bunk,
remember? You wanted me.

The gun waving around. At Paula. Sparra gets in the way.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Five years you were with me!
Five years. I'd never been
like that... with anyone.

Sparra, quiet. Pommie is aiming the gun at Paula, Sparra's trying to get in the way.

(CONTINUED)

SPARRA

Don't Pommie.

POMMIE

Did you love me?

Sparra doesn't answer.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Did you?

Sparra looks over to Paula.

He knows he could lose it all by this confession, but...

SPARRA

Yes. I loved you. You were everything.

Beat. Paula takes this in.

POMMIE smiles.

SPARRA (CONT'D)

But not anymore. I love Paula now. It's not a choice, Pommie. It just is.

*

The room is suddenly bathed in yellow lights. Car doors open and slam shut. Boots running on gravel.

POMMIE

Well now I get to break your heart.

Pommie aims the gun at Paula. Sparra sees he will kill Paula. He puts his body in the way.

SPARRA

No.

Pommie cocks the gun. Is about to fire.

POMMIE

Get out of the way Sparra.

SPARRA

You have to kill me.

PAULA

Merv, don't...

SPARRA

kill me.

*

142

CONTINUED: (2)

142

In that moment, Pommie realises that he is defeated. He will never have Sparra.

143

EXT. NIGHTCLUB CARPARK - NIGHT

143

Fire victims in blankets, smoke streaked, stagger around. Above them, curtains of smoke stream from the upstairs windows.

DUCK and CARL, emerge from the fire, coughing, and step over to uniformed police that have arrived on the scene. They are taking charge.

POLICE

They're in there.

The POLICE indicate the open cellar. DUCK takes this in. BRUCE is there as well.

DUCK

(using megaphone)

These blokes are armed and dangerous. So don't stuff about.

*
*
*

He turns to Carl.

*

DUCK (CONT'D)

Shoot to kill.

The police get ready, arranging themselves behind every vantage point around the cellar door.

144

INT. NIGHTCLUB - CELLAR - NIGHT

144

*

Pommie looks out on the scene. He sees BRUCE with Duck. Realises what this means. Behind cars, and at every vantage point, are police with rifles. There is no way out.

Smoke snakes across the ceiling. Sirens howl.

Pommie just stares. Thinking. Thinking.

He decides.

POMMIE reaches over and roughly grabs Sparra. Sparra looks to Paula. Goodbye.

But he stiffens when Pommie pushes the gun into his neck.

(CONTINUED)

144

CONTINUED:

144

POMMIE

(calls)

Give me up, will you?

SPARRA

Pommie, what are you-

SPARRA is stunned as the barrel bites into his skin. His knees sink, buckle.

POMMIE

Shut up!

Pommie pulls Sparra up the step ladder towards the outside.

145

EXT. NIGHTCLUB CARPARK - NIGHT

145

Intercut with:

146

INT. NIGHTCLUB - CELLAR - NIGHT

146

*

DUCK and CARL and other police aim their weapons at the cellar.

POMMIE

(calls out in
carpark)

You hear me! I've got your
Judas; I've got your prick
informer, and I'll kill him.

SPARRA tries to fight his way free but POMMIE is too strong. He's a coil of fire and power.

SPARRA

Don't do this.

POMMIE

I'll blow his fucking head
off! I always knew he was
working for the cops.

DUCK

(calls)

Let him go, Jim! We won't hurt
you.

Duck looks about him. News reporters are starting to arrive, cameras out. Duck has no choice but to negotiate.

(CONTINUED)

POMMIE

(calls)

After what I've done? I just
walk out?

DUCK breaks cover, steps closer.

DUCK

(calls)

Let him go Jim.

All the time the police are creeping closer.

Then:

POMMIE drags Sparra up out of the gloom and into
the carpark.

POMMIE backs out into the white hot light, pulling
SPARRA behind him. POMMIE raises the pistol at the
police, but he's outgunned twenty to one.

Camera men filming.

DUCK

Put the gun down.

POMMIE shakes his head. He looks back. Paula has
emerged from the cellar. Sparra sees her too.

Pommie winks at Sparra.

Sparra doesn't understand.

POMMIE

(low to SPARRA)

Now.

Pommie's grip loosens on SPARRA.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Run.

SPARRA is suddenly free. But his legs are jelly.

His legs are ice.

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Run. You stupid prick.

The police come closer. POMMIE waves the gun.

147

CONTINUED:

147

POMMIE (CONT'D)

Get back!

Sparra grabs Paula's hand and they race away from the police, along the edge of the building.

POMMIE watches SPARRA and Paula's escape.

Sparra and Paula run. Through the electric white light. Through the breath burning blackness. They are running for their lives.

Pommie remembers:

148

INT. PRISON CELL - DAY

148

Flashback.

Sparra, shaving in the cell. Pommie watches. Sunlight streaming in through the bars. Sparra turns: what are you looking at? But Pommie doesn't say a thing, just leans back on the bunk. Never been happier. His shaving mug on the sink.

149

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

149

Flashback ends.

Pommie rouses. Sparra and Paula run off in the distance. *

And he knows what he has to do. He points the pistol at DUCK.

DUCK

Put it down, Jim. Doesn't have to end like this.

Pommie steps closer. Closer. *

The police open fire on POMMIE.

BANG

BANG

BANG

150

EXT. NIGHTCLUB CARPARK - NIGHT

150

*

Sparra hears the gun shots, turns.

We now see what he is looking at.

(CONTINUED)

POMMIE falls, his body crumpling to the ground
under the gunfire.

*

He lands on the ground.

His eyes glassy. Soul free.

The boots of the police crunch and come closer to
Paula and Sparra. Shouting, menacing, but Sparra
doesn't hear them.

Instead he takes Paula's hand.

They are together. Hand in hand.

He takes her in his arms.

The sky burns red with fire.

ENDS

*