

DESPERATE DOLLS

A Play for Stage

By

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DESPERATE DOLLS

(Synopsis)

1960s L.A.

After auditioning for a low-budget film producer, three beautiful young actresses become tangled in a nightmare of hypnosis, killing, and apparitions. Sunny Jack Fennigan has the best intentions - to make female-led independent feature films that make a quick buck at the box office. A powerful agent known only as "Captain" calls with a proposition that may turn his life around. His three best prospects - girls with handpicked nicknames - seem ripe for stardom. Soon then Hollywood becomes a dark parade of seedy motels and murders that threaten to wipe out all three of the girls and Sunny Jack, too.

This horror-noir features a mostly female cast, blood and media effects, mature themes, and brief nudity.

CAST OF CHARACTERS (in order of appearance)

MATCHBOX, a young woman

THE VIL (also known as "VIL"), a young woman

PRETTY SEXY, a young woman

CAPTAIN, an older man

SUNNY JACK, an older man

THE SETTING

Hollywood, California in the late 1960s.

THE SCENE

A motel room that also doubles as an office, with one entry door, one bathroom door, a filing cabinet, a telephone, and a double-bed.

A NOTE ON MEDIA AND EFFECTS

The motel room should be able to change appearance through subtle light and other effects. Meaning, sometimes it will be bright and perfectly livable, other times a dingy hovel, while remaining the same static set.

Sound design has a featured presence in the script and these have been indicated by "SOUND:" proceeding, for ease of review. Some sound effects are practical, others recorded.

Photographs and flashes are used to represent filmed media, but it is the director's discretion on the best approach.

ACT I

SCENE 1

MATCHBOX, an attractive young woman dressed in revealing nightclothes, lies on a bed in a darkened motel room. Above her, a mirror hangs. The reflection makes her look oddly distorted and more visible to the audience.

MATCHBOX

Look at you. You pathetic bitch. Look at you.

She opens then closes her legs.

MATCHBOX (Continued)

You'd like that. Wouldn't you? Look at you. You're as bad as the rest.

SOUND: A knock on the door.

MATCHBOX covers her exposed body with the white sheet.

MATCHBOX (Continued)

Come.

The door opens by itself. No one enters.

After a pause, MATCHBOX sits up, holding the sheet in place.

MATCHBOX (Continued)

Is that you? Captain? Is that you?

She rises, wraps the sheet around her shoulders, goes to the door, and slowly shuts it.

SOUND: Another knock.

MATCHBOX (Continued)

(To door, in whisper)

Is that you?

Lights fade.

ACT I

SCENE 2

Lights rise.

THE VIL (VIL) is on the bed now,
alone, sleeping. She is a
beautiful brunette wearing a black
cocktail dress, above the covers.

MATCHBOX is behind the bed now.
Only the top of her is visible.
She looks wild in her eyes.

THE VIL awakens and looks into the
overhead mirror, stretches.

She sees MATCHBOX's reflection in
the mirror. She startles! But
stays put on the bed.

THE VIL

You're back.

MATCHBOX

(Cowering, scared)

He's here.

THE VIL

He can't be. You know that.

MATCHBOX

He's here.

THE VIL

Captain. He's here? You know that's impossible.

MATCHBOX

He's. Here.

THE VIL

Where?

MATCHBOX

He's in the lobby... and he's waiting for you. Just like he waited for me.

MATCHBOX comes out, moving strangely, snake-like, inhuman.

THE VIL curls on the bed.

THE VIL

You need to go away. I don't like seeing you.

MATCHBOX

Get off. The bed.

THE VIL

No.

MATCHBOX

You have to find a way out. Are you scared of me?

THE VIL

No.

MATCHBOX

I'm your friend. I came to warn you.

THE VIL

How did you find me?

MATCHBOX

One motel room is quite like another. He's downstairs waiting. He thinks you have to leave sometime.

THE VIL

Jack's coming to rescue me.

MATCHBOX

Are you sure? He didn't come for me.

THE VIL

Jack loves me.

MATCHBOX

Are you absolutely *certain*?

MATCHBOX disappears.

THE VIL stays in a curl. She spots her bathrobe across the room. Her teeth chatter. Quickly, she races to the hanger, grabs the robe, runs back to the bed, just in time for-

SOUND: Knock at the door.

THE VIL

(Soft)
Come in.

The door opens slowly.

No one is there.

Lights fade.

ACT I

SCENE 3

SOUND: A retro bubblegum pop song plays loudly, distorted, as if through terrible loudspeakers.

Strobe lights begin.

The motel room is empty.

Enter PRETTY SEXY, an equivalent beauty to the others, but different - blonde, all-American. She wears a short skirt and tight sweater.

PRETTY SEXY trembles in the strobe, oddly moving and frightened. She gropes the wall and furniture, blinded.

PRETTY SEXY

(Screaming over music)

Jack! JACK! Help me, Jack!

Sudden blackness and silence.

ACT I

SCENE 4

Lights rise on SUNNY JACK, alone.

He knots a necktie. Finished, he grins and then bends to check himself in the mirror.

Meticulously, he arranges two folding chairs to facing.

Satisfied, he goes to the door and opens it.

SUNNY JACK

(Calling offstage)

You can send the first one in now, Paul.

SUNNY JACK bobs back, slicks his hair, and then waits.

MATCHBOX enters slowly, but with confidence. She wears a happy sundress, carries a small handbag, and holds a large manila envelope.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Come. Have a seat.

MATCHBOX sits in one of the chairs. SUNNY JACK does *not* take the opposite chair.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Let me see that.

MATCHBOX hands over the envelope. SUNNY JACK examines the contents - an actor's resume and headshot.

He reads in silence, a last
pointing to something on the
resume.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

You know I'm never going to remember that.

MATCHBOX

My name?

SUNNY JACK

Have you thought about changing it?

MATCHBOX

What's wrong with my name?

SUNNY JACK

Too... Anyway, you should think about changing it.

MATCHBOX

I'll think about it.

SUNNY JACK

Says here you were in your high school's production of
"Annie Get Your Gun." But it doesn't say who you
played.

MATCHBOX

Annie.

SUNNY JACK

Then you should say that.

SUNNY JACK finally takes the
second chair and hands her back
the materials.

SUNNY JACK

You had any work in L.A.?

MATCHBOX

I've just arrived.

SUNNY JACK

Just?

MATCHBOX

Tuesday.

SUNNY JACK

Green. Who got you this audition?

MATCHBOX

Someone on the street. Said he worked for you. Paul.

SUNNY JACK

Did you recognize my name when he said it? Any of the pictures I've done?

MATCHBOX

No, we didn't talk about you. He gave me a card with your production company name on it. Though he said he worked for someone important.

SUNNY JACK

I am important. I'm a triple threat. Producer, director, writer. I'm probably better at the first one than the others, but I'm not trying to win an award.

MATCHBOX

Paul just said that he liked my face and, if I wanted to, if I thought I could cut it, I could come here this afternoon at 1 PM, and that you would give me a shot.

SUNNY JACK

Were you worried I make adult films?

MATCHBOX

Do you make them?

SUNNY JACK

(Smiling)

Not anymore.

(Pause)

I'm joking. You should laugh.

MATCHBOX

Like I said: Paul gave me a card. I figured adult film producers don't carry cards.

SUNNY JACK

You'd be right. They carry guns.

MATCHBOX

I'm not scared of guns.

SUNNY JACK

Ah, that's right. You were Annie.

(Pause)

Twenty-six other girls are in that lobby. Not all of them Paul met on the street. Some are from agencies. Are you better than those twenty-six others?

MATCHBOX

Paul said you had a type. You favor a certain girl.

SUNNY JACK

Can you confirm that by looking at the faces in the motel lobby?

MATCHBOX

I can. They're all young girls with a figure.

SUNNY JACK

I need more than that.

MATCHBOX

I can sing. I can dance

SUNNY JACK

Can you act?

MATCHBOX

Absolutely.

SUNNY JACK

You had any training?

MATCHBOX

At an academy?

SUNNY JACK

Yeah, any kind of lessons?

MATCHBOX

Back in Ohio, I had-

SUNNY JACK

Tap classes. Ballet. Little girl in a tutu.

MATCHBOX

Lots of classes. And I outgrew my tutu years ago.

SUNNY JACK thinks. He takes out a cigarette and a large box of matches from his jacket pocket. He taps the cigarette on the box, never taking his eyes from the girl.

MATCHBOX (Continued)

If you want I can...sing for you, or do a monologue. This is an audition, right?

SUNNY JACK

I like to know a girl first. I like a little foreplay.

MATCHBOX

Are you looking for a special audition? This is a motel room.

SUNNY JACK

I told you, I don't make those kind of pictures.

MATCHBOX

Casting couch. Isn't that what they call them?

SUNNY JACK

Do you see a sofa here? No. That's not me.

MATCHBOX

So you want a monologue then, or is this still foreplay?

SUNNY JACK

Okay. Mah-no-log. From what?

MATCHBOX

You like Williams?

SUNNY JACK

You a Stella or a Blanche?

MATCHBOX

Ste-

SUNNY JACK

(Overlapping)

Stella, of course.

He sits back, again staring at her. She smiles, stands, poses, as if that's what he wants to consider.

He lights his cigarette and waves her back down into her chair.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Do you smoke?

MATCHBOX

Yes. I smoke.

SUNNY JACK

Have one.

He does not offer her one of his.

Getting wise to the signal, she reaches into her purse, withdraws a pack, and, excruciatingly slow, pulls the tip of a cigarette until it's out of the pack. She pouts her lips, lightly puts the cigarette between them, slides the pack away, and leans forward.

MATCHBOX

Got a light?

Pleased, he holds out his box of matches.

SUNNY JACK

Keep the box. Two left.

She reaches in, strikes one, never dropping her cool façade.

MATCHBOX

Never before seen a man carry a whole box of matches around. Most people carry packs. You a pyromaniac?

He laughs.

SUNNY JACK

You never know when you're going to need a whole shitload of matches.

MATCHBOX takes the box from him, with its one last match rattling, and tucks it in her handbag.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Forget your name. I'm going to call you Matchbox.

MATCHBOX

That wouldn't look very good on a marquee.

SUNNY JACK

It's a trick I have. Name the girls you like with something weird. These days, names all blend into a pile of mush. Janes and Jennifers. That's why the world invented nicknames, you know? To keep us better separated. Right, Match...Box? See: rolls off tongue.

MATCHBOX

Okay. If I have one for you. I'll call you...Sunny Jack. For that tan. And that sunshine smile.

SUNNY JACK

I do have a good smile.

SUNNY JACK circles her in her chair. She remains unfazed.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Any other desperate dolls down there in that lobby?

MATCHBOX

Twenty-six you said.

SUNNY JACK

Any of them you dig?

MATCHBOX

Depends on your definition.

SUNNY JACK

I'm talking about who you might have some chemistry with on screen. You talk to any of them? Or is everyone milling around like cats?

MATCHBOX

I talked to two girls. I liked them quite a bit.

SUNNY JACK

They new to town, too?

MATCHBOX

One is from Seattle. Like being off a boat, I suppose, right, Sunny Jack?

SUNNY JACK

Do me a favor, Matchbox. Go down. Get them. Tell them I want to audition all three of you at the same time. Then tell the rest to beat it, go home.

Blackout.

ACT I

SCENE 5

SOUND: Another retro bubblegum pop song, distorted, loud, then fading.

Dim lights rise on the bed where THE VIL lies, covered up to her eyes.

The mirror above is now a changed, more like a funhouse mirror than a clear reflection. She looks at her body, transfixed. Without removing the sheet, she raises and lowers her legs, then turns her face from side to side.

At last, she sits bolt upright and SCREAMS at her reflection, then says:

THE VIL

(Spiteful)

One room is quite like another!

The room's door opens slowly by itself. THE VIL turns.

After a pause, in walks a man wearing a strange costume party mask and suit and neck tie that's draped in clear plastic.

THE VIL turns her head slowly and looks at the man. This man is known as: CAPTAIN.

THE VIL (Continued)

Don't come any closer. I know who you are now, and,
(MORE)

THE VIL (Continued)

and, and I'm sorry. I told you, I'm sorry. I want to go home. I'm sorry. I'll go home, and I won't say anything to anyone.

CAPTAIN crosses to the filing cabinet on the other side of the room. He pulls out three photographs - the actor headshots of THE VIL, MATCHBOX, and PRETTY SEXY. He returns with them to the bed and lies down beside THE VIL. She is terrified.

He looks at MATCHBOX's picture, shows it to her, holds it up to the mirror so it distorts. He does the same with PRETTY SEXY.

At last, he inspects THE VIL's headshot - smiling, perfect. He holds it up to the funhouse mirror and looks straight at the real girl.

Lights fade to blackout.

ACT I

SCENE 6

SOUND: A film projector with la-la-la music.

A flash of a photograph hits the corner of the motel room. Another flash elsewhere. This repeats, turning the motel room into a mini-theatre of quickly revolving still photographs. The images are of the three girls, in sunlit shots, happy together, playing parts.

When the flashes stop:

A blare of lights erupts on PRETTY SEXY as she stands downstage.

SOUND: Light street traffic.

She speaks to someone unseen.

PRETTY SEXY

Is it always so bright in this fucking town? I'm going to go through a whole pile of sunglasses, I can tell. I buy cheap ones, 'cos I lose them. Where I'm from, it rains all the time. Of course I'm an actress. This is Hollywood, isn't it? No, nothing yet. But soon. Fingers...crossed. Do you have a stick of gum? No. Okay. What did you say your name was again? Paul. Gotcha. And what's that other guy's name again? Jack Fennigan. No, no I haven't. What kind of pictures? Girl pictures. Ah. Things where girls get- Oh, okay, good. I'm not quite ready to show my tits on camera. Not just yet. My grandmother's still alive. Yes, when she's dead the world can see my tits. Ha ha. Yes, people have called me sexy before. Right before they tried to touch my leg under the dinner table. So I'm used to it, yes. But I got talent. Yes, Paul, I am pretty
(MORE)

PRETTY SEXY (Continued)

sexy. I know, I know. Remind me not to go to dinner with you any time soon. You'd be all over me like a cheap wig. Uh huh. Yeah. Uh huh. One o'clock today? Uh huh. Okay. No plans. Why a motel? Oh, that's common? Okay. What should I wear? I mean, what's the part? What will impress this Jack F.? Be myself. Pretty. Sexy. Gotcha. Thanks for the card. Yes, I'll be there. I know. I'll be there. But if it's squirrely, I'm leaving. I'm a good girl. Don't want involved in that stuff. Okay, Paul. Okay.

Lights fade.

ACT I

SCENE 7

Rise on the motel room, sun
through the window.

THE VIL is dressed in a bikini and
sits on the edge of the bed. She
sighs a big, bored sigh.

She stands and approaches the
cabinet. She flips through files,
reads.

SOUND: The telephone rings.

She quickly puts away the
materials and answers the call.

THE VIL

Jack Fennigan Productions. Oh, hey. Well, I just
thought I better sound official. Yes, I'm wearing it.
Of course it fits, Jack. You know this body well.

(Looks to the watch)

Two more hours? But the sun will be starting to go
down. No, I'm *going*. I said I wanted to go to the
beach and damn it... Yeah, I could call them, I
guess. Okay. I will. So I'll see you tonight. Yes,
baby, I'll smell like *sand*. I know you love it.
'Bye, Jack. Don't work too hard.

She hangs up.

She dials another number.

SOUND: Rings through telephone, an
answer.

MATCHBOX

(Over telephone)

Hello?

THE VIL

It's me. I'm going to the beach. Jack stood me up for some meeting at the lot. Want to come and distract silly boys on surfboards until they drown?

MATCHBOX

(Over telephone)

Should I call our favorite blonde?

THE VIL

If you don't mind the competition.

MATCHBOX

(Over telephone)

Maybe I'm hers, you ever think of that?

THE VIL

I'll meet you at the usual.

MATCHBOX

(Over telephone)

Did Jack buy you a new bikini?

THE VIL

Of *course* he did. Kisses!

THE VIL hangs up. She starts to pack a bag for the beach. She starts to put on a skirt.

As she does, the door comes open!

Standing there is CAPTAIN. He wears no mask this time but still has plastic over his suit. He holds in one hand a toolbox, in the other, a key.

Startled, THE VIL gives a short yelp and yanks up her skirt.

CAPTAIN

Mr. Fennigan told me before he left that I could come and inspect your shower.

THE VIL
Oh. Are you with the motel?

CAPTAIN
People call me Captain.

THE VIL
Captain? You the owner then?

CAPTAIN
I just...fix things that are broken.

THE VIL
Okay. Well, come on in. I'm leaving in a sec. I just have a few more things to get together.

CAPTAIN enters. He goes to the bathroom and sets down his toolbox.

THE VIL, back turned to him, rubs on deodorant.

THE VIL (Continued)
What's with the plastic?

CAPTAIN
So I don't get wet. I hate being wet. What about you? You hate being wet?

THE VIL
No, I'm wet a lot. This town's too hot.

CAPTAIN takes out a radio from inside his toolbox. He places it on the cabinet and turns it on.

SOUND: Retro bubblegum pop emits from the radio.

CAPTAIN
I like music.

THE VIL

No problem. It doesn't bother me.

CAPTAIN

You been in L.A. long?

THE VIL

Ah, just about three months. Longer than some.
Longer than my friends. I'm an actress.

CAPTAIN

Mr. Fennigan makes movies. He told me. Cheapies.

THE VIL

Cheapies? He's not Louie B. Mayer, if that's what you mean. I was in "Girls from Venice Beach." Did you see that? No. I figured. I played the bad girl. I was the villain. That's how I got my nickname. My friends call me The Vil. Or Vil, for short. I need to get my beach towel. Excuse me.

CAPTAIN flattens against the wall and she slides past and reaches to pull a towel from the unseen rack. As she does so, CAPTAIN tugs her bikini string and her top unties. She catches the bikini top just before it falls.

THE VIL (Continued)

What the fuck are you doing?

Still holding her top, she grabs her towel.

THE VIL (Continued)

Better be a goddamn accident.

CAPTAIN

I'm not with the motel. I'm a friend. I can help you. I wanted to meet you, but Jack wouldn't let me.

She turns to leave the bathroom,
but he blocks her, stays in close.

THE VIL

Move.

He lays his hand on her hand that
holds the bikini.

THE VIL (Continued)

I will hit you so hard that you will shit your plastic
pants.

SOUND: The radio changes,
distorts, becomes an alien sound.
Now, the CAPTAIN's voice comes out
of it.

CAPTAIN

(Over radio)

I want you to listen to what I say. I want you do
what I tell you. I'm not wearing this because I'm
afraid of water.

THE VIL

You're not afraid.

CAPTAIN moves his hand down and
her hand comes with his, revealing
her skin beneath.

CAPTAIN

(Over radio)

I'm not what you think I am. You are right to be
scared of me. You think you're a villain?

THE VIL

You're the villain.

CAPTAIN

(Over radio)

That's right...It's me.

SOUND: Radio turns to blindingly
loud static.

Blackout.

ACT I

SCENE 8

Strobes.

SOUND: Busy signal from a telephone plays throughout...

The “movie” from before plays, only now, it’s a bit more disturbing. The photos flashed are not of three girls in the sun, smiling, but a darker, more violent texture.

The movie stops suddenly, but the telephone continues on.

PRETTY SEXY comes out of the bathroom and looks down at the buzzing motel telephone.

She is hesitant but, at last, she picks it up and puts it back in its cradle. After a moment, she picks it up again.

SOUND: Retro bubblegum pop plays over the telephone.

Confused, she hangs up.

Enter SUNNY JACK, who is startled to see PRETTY SEXY in the room.

SUNNY JACK

Why hello.

PRETTY SEXY

Hi ya, Jack.

SUNNY JACK

What brings you to my neck of the woods?

PRETTY SEXY

Let's be honest, Jack. This isn't your woods at all.

SUNNY JACK

What are you talking about?

PRETTY SEXY

Paul's got loose lips.

SUNNY JACK

Oh, really. That was almost your nickname.

PRETTY SEXY

Dirty boy.

SUNNY JACK

And that was almost mine.

(Resigned)

So what did Paul tell you? He tell you about Bel Aire?

PRETTY SEXY

Bel Aire and Amelie. From your French excursion. Thinking of making "Girls from Riviera Beach" now, Jack, or did you just tell her that to get her to fly to Hollywood? She could be the kind of girl you like.

SUNNY JACK

You don't know what I like. Not at all.

PRETTY SEXY

Maybe you're right, maybe you're right. I'm a dummy. But The Vil isn't. Technically, she was my friend before you were. Only by, say, an hour in a motel lobby, but an hour's an hour.

SUNNY JACK

I'm not knifing Vil. She's my girl. Amelie's just an actress I met and liked. She's in town on her own motor and I gave her a place to stay until she finds a place.

PRETTY SEXY

You know, it's weird, Jack, that you have permanent residence in this crap motel when you have a nice

(MORE)

PRETTY SEXY (Continued)

place for a nice girl in Bel Aire. How come The Vil doesn't get the sweet accommodations? She gets the dirty mattress.

SUNNY JACK

You're funny.

JACK takes PRETTY SEXY gently and guides her, somewhat against her will, to sit on the mattress. He lays her down. He lays down himself. They both look up at the mirror.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

The mattress is just fine.

PRETTY SEXY

Makes for nice casting, doesn't it, Jack?

SUNNY JACK

You tell me.

(Points to mirror)

What do you see there, Sexy? You know what I see? I see a beautiful woman. I see a woman with talent. I see someone who came to this town from rainy Seattle thinking one day, one day... And it was me who found you. Via Paul, of course, my trusty field agent. So I cast you. Two pictures. In the second one, you got to rob banks and you liked it, I think. You're not as dangerous in real life as you were on that screen. But you're pretty sexy in both.

PRETTY SEXY

I'll tell you what *I* see. Here lies a man who likes women. Young ones. He likes them so much he makes movies just to have them in his company. And, one day, he thinks he'll discover a star. And that star is *not* me. It's Vil. So you keep her close. Not because you're jealous, but because she may be worth a lot of money one day.

SUNNY JACK

Matchbox is the only one of you three that can act.

PRETTY SEXY

But would she do this?

PRETTY SEXY undoes his belt then
lays back down.

SUNNY JACK

You think I'm going around Vil's back? Look at you.

PRETTY SEXY

Maybe I'm just showing off how good I am with belts.

SUNNY JACK

Maybe.

PRETTY SEXY

Want to see how good I am with buttons?

PRETTY SEXY slowly pops the top
button on her sweater. Then the
next, then the next, then the
next. She opens her blouse and
reveals the bra beneath.

SUNNY JACK

What about your grandma?

PRETTY SEXY

What about your girlfriend?

SUNNY JACK

Last time you and me were like this...Vil wasn't my
girlfriend. She was my audition. And think about it.
I'm old enough to be your father.

PRETTY SEXY

Or my boyfriend. What to see how I am with zippers?

She unzips his pants.

PRETTY SEXY (Continued)

Where is she?

SUNNY JACK

I don't know. She disappears sometimes. Past few months.

PRETTY SEXY

Will she be coming home in the next hour?

SUNNY JACK

And if she does?

PRETTY SEXY

Lock the door.

SUNNY JACK

She has a key.

PRETTY SEXY

Does it really matter if she finds you with me or with the French slut?

SUNNY JACK

You heard about Amelie so you thought I'd go for you, too. You want to be a star?

PRETTY SEXY

I want to be a star.

He quickly, roughly pins her to the bed.

SUNNY JACK

Tell me you want it.

PRETTY SEXY

I want to be a star.

SUNNY JACK

Say it again!

PRETTY SEXY

I want to be a star!

She worms her legs around him. He pins her, but doesn't go in for her yet. She writhes.

They kiss.

SOUND: The telephone rings.

They don't stop.

After a moment, SUNNY JACK breaks away from her. He goes to the ringing telephone.

PRETTY SEXY undresses beneath the sheets.

SUNNY JACK picks up the line.

SOUND: Retro bubblegum over the receiver.

SUNNY JACK

Hello?

He slowly hangs up.

She's waiting for him.

He drifts then dives into bed.

Blackout.

ACT I

SCENE 9

SOUND: Running water.

THE VIL sits on the end of the bed, doll-like, in the dim motel room.

SUNNY JACK enters.

SUNNY JACK

You're back.

He crosses, puts his stuff down then hears the running water. He investigates.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

How long's the water been on? You taking a shower?

She doesn't answer him.

He goes inside the bathroom and shuts off the water.

Back in the room, he leans against the wall and crosses his arms.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Where you been?

(No answer)

Didn't used to be like this. First few months. I could count on you.

(Pause)

You got another guy?

(No answer)

What's wrong?

(No answer)

You can go, you know. Not like we're married. Do people even get married anymore? This town. What's the point? Vil? Are you listening?

THE VIL

I think something's wrong with me. I'm not myself when I'm away from you. But some things don't change. Does every motel in L.A. look like this one?

SUNNY JACK

Is that what you do? Go to other motels? Hell, doll, if you need a change of scenery, I can-

THE VIL

When are we going to make another movie, Jack?

SUNNY JACK

I'm working on it. Paul wants to direct. I'm close on the money.

THE VIL

Who do I play this time? I want to be someone different than me.

SUNNY JACK

No script yet. I...wasn't sure if you were coming back. There are a few girls in line so far. French girl. And Pretty Sexy wants a piece. Might be something for you if you stick long enough.

THE VIL

Jack...why didn't you take me to the beach that day?

SUNNY JACK

What?

THE VIL

Last summer. Why didn't you take me to the beach?

SUNNY JACK

Jesus, that was months ago.

THE VIL

If you had come home on time and we went to the beach. Oh, God. I'm so scared all the time.

SUNNY JACK sits with her.

SUNNY JACK

Listen. You need what I call "movie therapy." Let's go see a few flicks. Something old. Something stupid and light. A musical.

THE VIL

Matchbox is dead.

SUNNY JACK

Is that a joke?

THE VIL

She's dead. Last night. She was found in her apartment on La Cienega. Someone cut her up in the shower and then reassembled her on the bed using stitches you'd find in a rag doll.

SUNNY JACK

That's terrible. These things don't make the papers? How'd you hear?

THE VIL

I found her.

She breaks down, holds him.

THE VIL (Continued)

Jack, Jack. Sometimes, I don't know who I am. I can't remember things. I can't remember you. I don't know where I live. It scares me. I go to a motel and walk up the stairs and into the room and it's not this room, it's someone else's, and they come home and say, "How did you get in here?" And I can't explain, because my key worked. It worked. But I can't remember opening the door. Something is happening to me, Jack.

SUNNY JACK

Vil, calm down. You're fine. Doll, you're fine. All this - this is about Matchbox. What you saw. Did you go to the police? We'll go to the police. I'll take you right now.

She shakes her head, buries herself in him.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

You'll get better, you will. You'll stay here. With me. I won't let you leave my side. You'll never disappear again.

THE VIL

I don't want to leave you.

SUNNY JACK

Stay. I love you. Stay.

She pulls away.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Don't look surprised. Of course I love you. You're my star. You know, I've had a lot of girlfriends, it's true. But I've never told any that I loved them.

THE VIL

I'm your star.

SUNNY JACK

The brightest. I'm holding onto you until I burn.

Lights fade.

ACT I

SCENE 10

SOUND: Mechanics.

Strobes.

CAPTAIN, in mask, enters, walking stiffly, slowly. He heads for the cabinet.

MATCHBOX can be seen just behind the bedpost, but only her eyes and the top of her head.

CAPTAIN opens the cabinet, takes out files, and spills them on the floor. He picks up photographs of actresses and places them on the bed.

MATCHBOX's eyes watch as CAPTAIN rips the photos up on the bed and then begins to lean into them, sexually.

MATCHBOX comes around from the bed, screaming, only there is no sound except for the roaring mechanics.

CAPTAIN sees MATCHBOX for the first time. As she screams, CAPTAIN leaves the bed, enters the bathroom then locates his toolbox and returns. He throws MATCHBOX on the bed and begins to tear at her the way he tore at the photographs.

Just as she begins to come apart...

Blackout.

ACT I

SCENE 11

Lights rise.

SUNNY JACK, alone in the motel.

SOUND: The telephone rings.

He picks it up on first chime, as if waiting for it.

SUNNY JACK

Yes, I'm here. Come on up. Sixth floor. You'll have to walk, I'm afraid. Okay, then.

He hangs up the telephone.

Lights fade.

ACT I

SCENE 12

Lights rise.

MATCHBOX is again behind the bedpost.

THE VIL sits on the mattress.

PRETTY SEXY is in the bathroom with her back turned.

SOUND: Dull voices from other rooms.

THE VIL

This isn't my motel.

PRETTY SEXY

(Offstage)

No. It's mine.

PRETTY SEXY exits the bathroom.

PRETTY SEXY (Continued)

She comes to see me, too, you know.

THE VIL

Is she here now?

PRETTY SEXY

I don't see her.

THE VIL rises and inspects behind the bed. Even though MATCHBOX actually *is* there, she's apparently invisible.

THE VIL

No. No, I don't see her either.

PRETTY SEXY

Maybe she's hiding from you. When she comes out, she scares the shit out of me. Never believed in ghosts. Never believed in much besides movies. You know, I met an agent. Jack introduced us and we hit it off. He's a strange pet. But I hear he's connected. He tells me he's seen our stuff and he liked what I did. He's coming to the set next week. What can I do to sabotage the French flower?

THE VIL

Just do your best performance.

PRETTY SEXY

I show my tits in this one. Didn't take as much convincing as I thought.

THE VIL

I want to act again.

PRETTY SEXY

Then do it.

THE VIL

Most days I don't even know where I am.

(Long pause)

Have you ever been...hypnotized?

PRETTY SEXY considers before answering.

PRETTY SEXY

Well, well. Okay. I saw this one show in Seattle. At a club. I was pulled up by this old man who said he could put me in a spell of suggestion and the audience would give me a command later in the show. He goes through his whole bit with a pocket watch and then, at the last second, he leans into my ear and whispers, "We're going to have some fun with them tonight and, if you play along, there's a hundred dollars in it for you." I'm an actress, right? He must have seen it. Knew that I'd perform the hell out of it. So I pretend to be under his spell and he gets

(MORE)

PRETTY SEXY (Continued)

the command from the audience. Most in the crowd are men who want me to take off my bra and wave it in the air when the old man says the word, "Shocking!" I wasn't very comfortable with the idea of waving my bra, but I liked the idea of a hundred dollars for so little effort. Twenty minutes later in the show, he says "shocking," but I wasn't paying any attention. He kind of gives me a harsh look and repeats the word. Like a zombie, I stand up, I unhook my bra, ease it down off my shoulders, and wave it like it was the American flag. The men cheer, he wakes me up, and I sit down, pretending like nothing at all happened. I just happen to have no bra on now. At the end of the show, a woman meets me as I exit. She asks me to follow her backstage, that the old magician needs to "un-hypnotize me" so at every mention of the keyword from that night forward won't affect me. I suppose she's not in on the hundred bucks. So, backstage...everyone's gone and I'm waiting for the old man. After what seems like forever, he comes in behind the curtain and I say, "Where's my hundred dollars?" And he...claps...twice, like this, very fast. Midnight, I wake up in a motel room...a room much like this one. I'm in a chair. My clothes are on, but buttoned wrong. My panties are missing. There's a hundred dollar bill on the bed. And I'm alone.

THE VIL

Oh, my, God.

PRETTY SEXY

A little while later, I got real sore between my legs, and later I got a very bad yeast infection that took a month to cure.

THE VIL

Did you tell the police?

PRETTY SEXY

The motel room was registered in my name and paid for by me. I had no evidence anything had happened. But I'm pretty certain I was raped.

(Pause)

So what makes you ask about hypnosis?

The light in the bathroom begins to grow brighter and brighter.

SOUND: A growing electrical hum, matching the light.

PRETTY SEXY (Continued)

She's here.

Lights fade to blackout as MATCHBOX lifts from behind the bed.

ACT I

SCENE 13

Dim lights rise.

MATCHBOX, as at the start of Act I, lays on the bed, alone, looking at the mirror.

MATCHBOX

Look at you. You pathetic bitch. Look at you.

She opens then closes her legs.

MATCHBOX (Continued)

You'd like that. Wouldn't you? Look at you. You're as bad as the rest.

SOUND: A knock on the door.

MATCHBOX covers her exposed body with the white sheet.

MATCHBOX (Continued)

Come.

The door opens by itself. No one enters.

After a pause, MATCHBOX sits up, holding the sheet in place.

MATCHBOX (Continued)

Is that you? Captain? Is that you?

She rises, wraps the sheet around her shoulders, goes to the door, and slowly shuts it.

SOUND: Another knock.

MATCHBOX (Continued)

(To door, in whisper)

Is that you?

SUNNY JACK

(Through door)

It's Jack.

MATCHBOX

How did you know where to find me?

SUNNY JACK

(Through door)

Vil told me. Can I come in?

MATCHBOX starts to dress.

MATCHBOX

Just a moment.

At last, she opens. SUNNY JACK stands at the door. She pauses then gestures for him to enter.

SUNNY JACK

Did you meet him?

MATCHBOX

(Weighing words, a bit weary)

I did.

SUNNY JACK

Did you like him?

MATCHBOX

Oh...I've been thinking about him a lot.

SUNNY JACK

Did he like you?

MATCHBOX

He did.

SUNNY JACK

Then why didn't you come and talk to me? Did he offer you a contract?

MATCHBOX

Yes. He says that I will live forever.

SUNNY JACK

I suppose congratulations are in order. "Annie Get Your Gun," two of my films, and you're off to bigger and better.

MATCHBOX

How come you didn't introduce him to the other girls?

SUNNY JACK

Oh, I dunno... Sexy might get her shot. She's willing to do a lot to move up. Vil is my girl. I want to make sure the circumstances are right for her.

MATCHBOX

You never thanked me. For introducing you two. I was the one who held her hand in that...what do you call it? Audition.

SUNNY JACK

It was an audition.

MATCHBOX

You have a peculiar style of such.

SUNNY JACK

What do you care, you got the part? And now look at you. I'll bet you'll be on *The Mod Squad* before then end of the summer.

MATCHBOX

Did your last "finds" go on to such legitimate heights?

SUNNY JACK smiles and thinks.

SUNNY JACK

Well. You're in good hands now. Better hands. I just wanted to make sure you were all right. I didn't hear from you since the introduction. So I assumed it went bad and you were pouting. You're too talented to pout. Next time pick up a telephone.

He crosses to exit.

MATCHBOX

Sunny Jack?

He stops.

MATCHBOX (Continued)

Got any matches?

He holds then wrestles out a box and tosses it on the bed.

SUNNY JACK

Keep 'em. Good luck, Matchbox. I always liked you.

He exits.

MATCHBOX lights a cigarette.

Lights fade.

ACT I

SCENE 14

Lights rise on the empty motel room.

SOUND: Bubblegum pop music.

From the bathroom, CAPTAIN enters, wearing mask. He comes and stands before the audience, very still behind his mask.

Strobes.

SOUND: The projector runs. The music and the mechanics compete for dominance.

A movie begins, more flashes and pictures, this time more violent than ever, with nudity, almost like a psychotic fugue.

THE VIL enters into the cacophony.

She covers her ears and screams at intervals, staggering around the motel room, tearing at it, taking out the files from the cabinet, taking pillow and bed sheets off the bed, screaming.

All the while: CAPTAIN stares.

Sudden stop to blackout.

Curtain.

ACT II

SCENE 1

Lights rise on the motel room.

It is cleared of the destruction from the previous Act I. However, the mattress remains bare, without bed sheets.

A key is heard in the door and SUNNY JACK enters. He walks in a daze. He sits on the bed, strokes the mattress, and becomes teary-eyed.

SUNNY JACK

I'm sorry. I couldn't do anything. I tried to save you, doll. If you're anywhere but heaven or hell, know that I, I love you. I'm trying to reach you. I love you. I love you.

He thinks he hears something. At last, quickly, he exits.

Long pause.

Slowly, THE VIL crawls out from under the bed as...

SOUND: Low beats and hissing.

She goes to the motel room door.

She pulls the knob, tries to get it open. She bangs on the door.

She backs up, turns to the audience, and for the first time we see that her face is covered in stitches.

She continues scratching at the door, animalistic.

Lights and sounds fade.

ACT II

SCENE 2

Lights rise on the motel room.

PRETTY SEXY stands alone, flipping through photographs.

SOUND: The telephone rings.

She doesn't answer.

SUNNY JACK

(From offstage)

You going to get that?

The ringing stops.

She continues inspecting photographs.

SUNNY JACK steps out of the bathroom, wiping his hands on a towel...

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

You didn't answer?

PRETTY SEXY

You don't live here anymore. We shouldn't be answering the telephone.

(Indicating photographs)

Why do you keep all these?

SUNNY JACK

You never know when someone will come walking back through my door. Also, I want proof of age. Un-agented girls must be eighteen or older to audition.

Lazily, she discards the photographs.

PRETTY SEXY

Can you do hypnosis?

SUNNY JACK

Hypnosis? Hell no.

PRETTY SEXY

Do you know any hypnotists?

SUNNY JACK

Nope.

(Gestures to photographs)

What did the cards tell you?

PRETTY SEXY

No, sorry. Hypnosis wasn't listed as any special skills. Lots of dancing and singing. Pity you never did a Broadway show. One girl claims can stand still for long periods of time. Not sure if that's a skill, though, or just weird.

SUNNY JACK

I don't know. Could be a skill. Depends on what kind of movie you're making. Is that why you wanted me to come back here? To look at old headshots and resumes and find yourself a hypnotist. I think there's an easier way. L.A. Times has dollar advertisements for just that kind of kook.

PRETTY SEXY

Last time I saw Vil, she said she thought she had been hypnotized.

SUNNY JACK

Did she now.

PRETTY SEXY wanders, saying nothing.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Do believe in that? I don't. I believe in drugs.
(MORE)

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

I bet a person can be drugged into believing something, anything. People are schmucks. Why do you think there's a rocketship effects department? Fool people into thinking there are aliens up there. But mesmerism - I always thought that was a crock of crap.

PRETTY SEXY

(Shrugs)

It's what she told me.

SUNNY JACK

(Doubtful)

Vil...was hypnotized?

PRETTY SEXY

A few weeks before she died, she told me she suspected that she had been hypnotized.

SUNNY JACK

How could she be hypnotized without her permission or her knowledge?

PRETTY SEXY

She didn't know *how* it happened. But...she thought she knew *when* it happened. She told me you and her had made some plans to go to the beach. On that day, you telephoned and said you would be late. That's the last thing in her head. She never hooked up with me and I thought she was flaky. I teased her later. But after that...lost day...she started blacking out. She'd be in the middle of a thing, lose track, then hours later, or days later, wake in a strange motel rooms across Hollywood with no idea how she got there or whom she had been with.

SUNNY JACK

She slept with other men?

PRETTY SEXY

I asked her that. She couldn't remember. She did feel, though, that she had done something awful. I'm sorry. I'm sorry I have to tell you that. Do you know what else she said? That Matchbox came to visit her...as a ghost. She warned Vil that she was going to die.

SOUND: The telephone rings.

SUNNY JACK looks to her. She doesn't move. At last, he answers.

SOUND: Retro bubblegum over the telephone.

SUNNY JACK pulls the telephone from his ear and turns to PRETTY SEXY.

SUNNY JACK

Come here.

PRETTY SEXY

Who is it? No one knows we're here.

He holds out the telephone and she listens, takes it.

SUNNY JACK

This has happened before on this phone. I thought it was a crossed wire.

Saying nothing, she hangs up.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Some kind of joke.

PRETTY SEXY picks up her purse and goes into the bathroom, out of sight.

He drifts back to the telephone, considering.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

I mean, don't you think that's odd? That tune, over and over on this line?

The bathroom door shuts.

Pause.

Jack sits at the desk.

SOUND: The telephone rings again.

SUNNY JACK picks it up on first chime, as if waiting for it.
(This is a repeat of Act I: Scene 11's start.)

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Yes, I'm here. Come on up. Sixth floor. You'll have to walk, I'm afraid. Okay, then.

There is a sudden knock on the motel room door and SUNNY JACK answers it. CAPTAIN, without mask and with briefcase rather than toolbox, stands expectant.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

What did you do, fly?

No answer.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

You just called.

CAPTAIN

I was in the lobby.

SUNNY JACK

I know. But. Jesus, okay, come in.

CAPTAIN enters, looks around the room.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Have a seat. Here, I'll get you a chair.

He unfolds one of the chairs against the wall and, satisfied, gestures.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Sorry. Not luxury, I know, but you should have seen my last office. And they say there're no basements in L.A. Place was a cavern. Safe in an earthquake, though, if we ever get the big one. I still have the lease for just that possibility.

CAPTAIN sits.

CAPTAIN

One motel room is quite like another.

SUNNY JACK

I suppose you're right.

CAPTAIN

Are we alone?

SUNNY JACK

Sure.

CAPTAIN

I like doing business in confidence.

SUNNY JACK

So you said.

CAPTAIN opens his briefcase, pulls out some papers and inspects them.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Contracts? So soon. We haven't even started to talk turkey.

CAPTAIN

I come prepared. It steers the conversation.

SUNNY JACK

Now I see why they call you Captain.

CAPTAIN

I saw your last film, Mr. Fennigan. "Devil House."

SUNNY JACK

Good flick. I can do better.

CAPTAIN

I rarely go to the cinema much anymore. I used to see them all the time, but I got very bored. All of them were beginning to look the same.

SUNNY JACK

I know your type. In the business, but hate the product.

CAPTAIN

I could tell just from the posters that there was a growing desert in the imagination. But lately, I've taken in a few shows and it's got my juices flowing. I particularly like seeing ones when there are very few people in the theatre. Maybe just one or two.

SUNNY JACK

Sounds like "Devil House," all right. It wasn't a great smash.

CAPTAIN

Oh, but it was. It was to me.

CAPTAIN reviews his paperwork. At last, he smiles, sets the papers aside, and pulls a photograph from the case.

CAPTAIN (Continued)

Do you know this girl?

SUNNY JACK

That's Cindy Valentine.

CAPTAIN

Have you seen her movies?

SUNNY JACK

One or two. She's good. Where's she been lately?

CAPTAIN

She's under contract to me.

He takes out another photograph.

CAPTAIN (Continued)

Do you know her?

SUNNY JACK

Amanda LaSalle. She auditioned for me about two years ago, when she was seventeen.

CAPTAIN

But you didn't hire her?

SUNNY JACK

No. But now I wish I did. She really blossomed.

CAPTAIN

She's under contract to me.

He takes out another photograph.

CAPTAIN (Continued)

How about her?

SUNNY JACK

No.

CAPTAIN looks at the picture
himself, surprised.

CAPTAIN
You don't recognize her?

SUNNY JACK
No. But I don't know every face in town.

CAPTAIN
Scarlet Raines.

SUNNY JACK takes the picture into
his hands, surprised.

SUNNY JACK
No shit. She looks young. I didn't- Wasn't she mur-

CAPTAIN snatches back the picture,
puts it in the case, and shuts it.

CAPTAIN
She would have had a bright future.

SUNNY JACK
I agree.

CAPTAIN
I think you're going to have a bright future.

SUNNY JACK
Are you a fortune-teller?

CAPTAIN
I know talent. I like talent. I think you can help
me. Those actresses in "Devil House" were all
very...talented.

SUNNY JACK
I'm sorry. I don't understand what kind of
arrangement you're proposing.

CAPTAIN

I want you to be my scout.

SUNNY JACK

I have a scout. His name is Paul.

CAPTAIN

Ah, Paul.

SUNNY JACK

Paul tells me you have a lot of sway in this town. You can get movies made. You know people with money.

CAPTAIN

I do have sway. I'm thankful that Paul has arranged this meeting so I can...sway.

SUNNY JACK

But I thought you wanted to talk about production funding. I didn't realize you were after my girls.

CAPTAIN

Your girls? Do you have contracts?

SUNNY JACK

Just per picture. I'm not a studio with central casting.

CAPTAIN

You make it sound so nefarious. Mr. Fennigan. I can do you a great many favors. You have an eye for actresses. And your eye is similar to my eye.

SUNNY JACK

Similar eye for recognizing talented girls?

CAPTAIN

That's what I'm saying

SUNNY JACK

Uh huh. What if it's it not talent we similarly recognize?

CAPTAIN

I wouldn't suggest presuming my taste in anything.

SUNNY JACK

No, sure. Sure. And I don't mean to imply you're...what'd you say, nefarious? This town's got a side that's lies just beyond the disappointments. A blackness. Horrors that are like deep cuts in the skin. People you wouldn't want to know in a million years.

CAPTAIN

Do you not *want* to know me?

SUNNY JACK

I'm considering.

CAPTAIN stands, picks up his case and his paperwork.

CAPTAIN

I can't spend my days looking for just the right girls. I need someone. Someone who wants to be successful. You help me acquire some talent, I will make sure they become something more. It's great to have a name in your picture, right? One of these actresses could go onto television and that makes the rights to your film worth much, much more. More theatres. More work. A bigger crowd. Imagine how much money Marilyn Monroe would have made her early champions if she had started in independents and then moved to the majors? That's possible now. The era of the smaller picture. You sign girls to a picture-by-picture deal because you never know where the money's coming from. But now you'll know. The good ones will go on. And the others will stay in your stable of players, acting in films that can now more readily find funding. Your scripts. Your choices. Your rewards. I think this sounds like a very wonderful bargain for you, all in exchange for just a few introductions. After all, the girls are not forced into contract with me. It's a two-way arrangement, Mr. Fennigan. Or should I call you Mr. DeMille?

SUNNY JACK

(Smiles)

Now you're just being hurtful.

CAPTAIN precisely rests the paperwork on the now empty chair.

CAPTAIN
Here is my contract. I'll be here tomorrow at this same time to retrieve the signed copy.

SUNNY JACK
Doesn't it require two signatures?

CAPTAIN
I've already signed it.

SUNNY JACK
So you're that sure there are no changes?

CAPTAIN
There will be no changes. I'm sure you'll find everything to your liking.

SUNNY JACK
And if I don't?

CAPTAIN
I'll be here tomorrow regardless.

SUNNY JACK picks up the paperwork, thumbs it.

SUNNY JACK
I need to show it to my lawyer.

CAPTAIN
But of course. Still, there will be no changes. Goodbye, Mr. Fennigan.

SUNNY JACK tips his head to the man as CAPTAIN steps out.

Returning, SUNNY JACK paces with the contract in his hand. At last, he gets an odd look, a

nervous look. He stuffs the contract quickly into the cabinet and shuts the drawer.

He rests by the phone.

Behind him, the bathroom door slowly opens.

Unseen by SUNNY JACK, PRETTY SEXY appears in the motel bathroom doorframe. She wears a terrifyingly plain mask that covers her face.

SOUND: A pulse sound, low in frequency.

SUNNY JACK

Have you ever had heard that song, Pretty Sexy? I mean—

He turns and startles.

She stands completely still.

He reaches out to take the mask off her face when—

SOUND: The pulse builds, stronger, more mechanical.

From behind the bed, MATCHBOX's face appears.

SUNNY JACK sees this ghost and freezes.

Slowly, from under the bed, crawls THE VIL, covered in blood all over white clothes.

SUNNY JACK backs towards the door.

PRETTY SEXY steps out of the doorframe, towards the telephone.

SOUND: The telephone begins ringing. No one answers.

SUNNY JACK opens the motel room door and bolts.

The three girls vanish inside the scene and the sound quiets.

Lights down.

ACT II

SCENE 3

Slow rise on THE VIL as she lays flat on the mattress. She still wears her blood-covered clothes. She seems to be waking from a nightmare. Suddenly, she jumps out of bed, shaking.

She looks down, sees the blood. She starts to examine it, pulling the hem to her eyes. This is not her blood, but someone else's.

She exits into the bathroom.

SOUND: Running water.

From the motel room door, CAPTAIN quietly enters and sits on the mattress. He sets his toolbox beside him. He opens it and takes out his radio from within and switches it on.

SOUND: White noise.

THE VIL hears this, turns off the water, and then emerges from the bathroom, freezing when she sees CAPTAIN on her bed.

CAPTAIN's radio speaks to her through the static.

CAPTAIN

(Over radio)

I'm impressed with your talent. I read about you in the newspapers today. Six this time. I thought it may be too many. You're very skilled. As I knew you would be.

THE VIL

Go away.

CAPTAIN

(Over radio)

Why would I do *that*?

CAPTAIN approaches her. He lifts her bloody dress up over her panties, stopping at just below her breasts, then lifts it fully off. He touches the center of her chest, where there's a bit of splatter left.

CAPTAIN (Continued)

(Over radio)

Go take a shower.

She exits to bathroom.

Lights fade. The white noise continues, until...

ACT II

SCENE 4

Flash: a picture on the wall.
Another. Another, in another
spot. Faster and faster, to
strokes.

Sudden stop to blackout.

Blazing white light accompanied
by:

SOUND: A woman screaming offstage.

Sudden stop to blackout.

ACT II

SCENE 5

Lights rise to PRETTY SEXY in the motel room, sleeping.

She wakes up suddenly, shakes off a dream.

She goes to the corner and turns on a lamp.

She sits near the bathroom and stares out. After a long pause...

PRETTY SEXY

I know you're here. I can tell when you come. I've always had a sense for that. Why do you wear a mask sometimes? I get the feeling that it isn't your face. It's the face of another. Who am I supposed to be afraid of? Somehow...I don't think it's you.

(Pause)

You can come out.

(Pause, then singsong)

Come out, come out, wherever you are...

SOUND: Vibrations, continuing.

Out from under the bed, comes THE VIL. She is covered in blood, only in panties.

PRETTY SEXY turns and sees her friend. She does not seem frightened by this event.

THE VIL

I miss you.

PRETTY SEXY

I miss you, too. You're dead, right? This isn't some kind of fucked up dream?

THE VIL

Matchbox warned me...that I would die. I came to warn you, too.

PRETTY SEXY begins to cry.

PRETTY SEXY

I'm going to die? Why?

THE VIL

You signed a contract.

PRETTY SEXY

I didn't sign anything.

THE VIL

Yes. You did.

PRETTY SEXY

You mean with Captain? But you didn't sign with him?

THE VIL nods.

THE VIL

I wanted it. I signed it. We all wanted it. I just didn't tell you.

PRETTY SEXY

I didn't come to Hollywood to die! I came here to live *forever!*

SOUND and LIGHTS: Sudden swell of cacophonous jazz horns to complete blackout. Horns fade into car horns and traffic.

Lights rise on PRETTY SEXY, wandering lost in upstage spotlights, hysterical.

PRETTY SEXY (Continued)

Don't leave! Don't leave me! I didn't sign a contract! I'll tear it up!

(Aside)

Fuck you -- I know, I know. It's MY street, too. Fuck YOU!

(To the air)

Fuck you, Hollywood! Do you want to see my tits! My grandma's dead! Everyone I know is deeeeeaaaad!

Blackout.

Long pause in total darkness.

In a nearby corner, a flashlight comes on. It shines on the face of the person who holds it: PRETTY SEXY, eye makeup smeared and running in tears. She continues to weep and listens to the silence.

SOUND: Rattles.

PRETTY SEXY (Continued)

Please go away...please. I want you to go away. Please...please...please...please...

SOUND: Softly, bubblegum pop.

She cries fiercely and quickly. Suddenly, the flashlight is swept from her face and covered by her hand.

Long pause.

When the light comes back to her face, she wears a distorted mask, a horrific image, funhouse and strange.

The flashlight goes out.

SOUND: A hissing; Music fades.

ACT II

SCENE 6

Lights rise on the motel room.

The doorknob turns. Pause. A key
in the lock.

Enter SUNNY JACK.

He considers leaving the door
open. At last, he shuts it. He
paces, wanders.

SUNNY JACK

I regret running. I should have stayed with all of
you. It was a missed opportunity, to see the three of
you all together in one spot. Even if...like that. I
think you were trying to tell me something.

(Pause)

I'm across town now. If you're listening. Hyatt West
Hollywood. To be honest, it's...not for me. Full of
junkie musicians from the Strip. But, I suppose one
motel room is like another.

(Pause)

Are you here? Are you?

SUNNY JACK bends and, hesitantly,
inspects under the bed. Then
behind it. Nothing, no one.

The bathroom door is shut.

He walks towards it.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

You're not going to jump out and scare me, are you?
You *like* old Sunny Jack, right? I'm counting on that.
Vil? Match? Sexy?

No answer.

Slowly, he approaches the bathroom door. Gaining courage, he opens it slowly to reveal...

A rope around her neck, PRETTY SEXY dangles several feet of the ground.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

No, no, no!

He struggles and brings her down. He lays her on the bed and unwraps the rope.

He checks her pulse.

She's dead.

He pulls away.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

You did it. You did it. You fucking idiot! You were the last one who could help me. Were you too scared? *Goddamn it!*

(Breaks down)

Oh, girls, girls, girls. I let you down, didn't I? I ruined you. I opened the door to this motel room and let you all...

(Shakes her body)

Wake up! Wake up! This isn't a goddamn audition!

(Collapsing)

Wake up! Wake up! Wake up...

(Whispering)

Please let me wake up.

Pause.

SOUND: A knock at the door.

Pause.

SOUND: Another knock.

The door opens on its own.

For a long moment, no one is there, until...

CAPTAIN steps from the darkness of the unseen corridor into the doorway. He wears no mask, carries no briefcase or radio or toolbox.

He enters, each step a slow, agonizing drawl.

He sees PRETTY SEXY, dead on the bed. He sits with her and caresses her hair.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

Get your fucking hands off her.

CAPTAIN smiles. He reaches between her legs.

SUNNY JACK grabs CAPTAIN's hand and shoves it away.

SUNNY JACK (Continued)

She's dead! She's dead, can't you see that, you fuck!

(Pause)

What are you? No. I want to know. You're not a man. You show me all your goddamn photographs. The people you handle. You don't handle them at all. You do *this*. You tricked me. Your fucking contract. What are you! Stand up. Get up. What are you, you fuck! Are you the Devil? Answer me!

CAPTAIN

I'm not the Devil, Mr. Fennigan. But we do run in the same social circles.

CAPTAIN begins to softly sing the
bubblegum pop song.

SUNNY JACK

Shut up! Shut up! Your shit doesn't work on me. I
see through you. I see right through your head! This
is my motel room!

CAPTAIN

Is it?

SUNNY JACK

I'm calling the cops.

SUNNY JACK crosses to telephone,
picks up the receiver.

Suddenly, PRETTY SEXY jumps up
from the bed and screams, straight
upright.

SUNNY JACK fumbles and drops the
phone. He stares at her.

CAPTAIN stands.

CAPTAIN

Kill him.

(Pause)

Kill him.

(Pause)

Kill. Him.

PRETTY SEXY takes a step.

Another.

Another.

SOUND: The telephone's off-the-
hook signal starts.

PRETTY SEXY looks infinitely sad.

At last, she moves forward and starts to choke SUNNY JACK. With great strength, she pushes him against the wall, the telephone still in his hand.

SUNNY JACK, at first, does not resist. He doesn't want to hurt her; he's too stunned at what's happening. But slowly, he comes to realize...

He frees a hand and wraps the phone cord around PRETTY SEXY's neck and pulls and pulls. After a moment, she slackens and slides to the floor, dead again with the phone around her, still buzzing.

SUNNY JACK hangs up the telephone just to stop the sound.

CAPTAIN

Who's killed her now, Mr. Fennigan? You. Call the police.

Flashes of light begin. The film is starting once more. The images are severe, awful, increasing in speed and frequency.

SUNNY JACK

I want out of here. I want out.

CAPTAIN

This motel is yours. You said it yourself. Outside that door is motel after motel after motel. And they all look like this very room.

SUNNY JACK

You're telling me...what's out there is the same as what's in here? No.

CAPTAIN

It's all the same. It's Hollywood.

SOUND: A building, blazing noise.

Strobes, blackouts, strobes again.

In the darkest seconds, CAPTAIN is gone from the room.

SUNNY JACK runs to the motel room door. It is shut, locked; he can't escape.

He runs to the bathroom door. It slams in his face.

He circles around, trapped, panicked.

At last, in the noise and blare, resigned, he sits on the bed. Lays down.

He pulls a box of matches from his jacket.

From the wall, PRETTY SEXY rises from the dead. She crosses in the noise and crawls onto the bed.

SUNNY JACK welcomes her beside him.

From behind the bed, MATCHBOX emerges. She lays at SUNNY JACK's feet.

At last, THE VIL emerges from underneath the bed and, with a look between her and SUNNY JACK of resignation, she joins him on the bed, coming close and sleeping softly.

Flashes turn red, the color of flames, orange and...

SOUND: A fire overtakes the other noises.

Blackout.

Final Curtain.