

A MAN OF ACTION

written by

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EXT. DARK ALLEYWAY - DAY

Rain pours. Terrible-sounding suspense music heightens. An aged RUSSIAN MAN in a suit, grabs the arm of a WOMAN in a bright dress, and drags her through the alleyway.

WOMAN

Help! Help!

RUSSIAN MAN

(Terrible Russian accent)

Shut up! I need to get out of here!
And I'm taking you with me! We must
get to the helipad... before *he* finds
us!

Just then, a Black Mustang enters the alleyway and blocks the path in front of them.

The driver is JACK THUNDER, late-40's with slicked back hair. He sports sunglasses and dresses in all black.

RUSSIAN MAN (CONT'D)

Holy shit.

WOMAN

(Relieved to see him)

Jack!

The Russian man forces the woman to enter a random door in the alleyway.

RUSSIAN MAN

We're taking a detour!

EXT. FRONT OF STORE

The Russian man and the woman exit through the store entrance. The Russian man spots the skyscraper they need to get to, it's across the street. He grabs her arm and pulls. The pair cross the street in a hurry.

EXT. EMPTY PARKING LOT - OUTSIDE SKYSCRAPER

The Russian and the woman approach the building. Just then, the headlights of the Black Mustang in the parking lot turn on. It's been waiting for them.

The Russian man quickly gets himself and the woman inside.

EXT. ROOFTOP OF SKYSCRAPER - HELIPAD - DAY

The Russian man forces the woman toward a helicopter. She weakly slaps his arm as he pulls her. The Russian man reaches for the helicopter door, but the sound of a car horn makes him freeze in place. The Mustang magically appears on the roof. Somehow, Jack found a way to get it up there. He steps out of the car.

JACK THUNDER
(*Bad acting*)
L-let her go.

WOMAN
Jack!

JACK THUNDER
Game over, Drevenoff. Your nuclear bombs have been disarmed. The hostages have been rescued.

Jack reaches into his pocket and takes out an orange, glowing orb.

JACK THUNDER (CONT'D)
And I now have possession of the sacred orb.

Jack puts the orb back into his pocket.

JACK THUNDER (CONT'D)
Face it. You are finished! Why don't you face me one on one? Mano y mano.

RUSSIAN MAN
Ha! No thanks!

The Russian man blows a whistle. Three Russian THUGS sporting baseball bats exit the helicopter. All three circle Jack.

RUSSIAN MAN (CONT'D)
There's three against you, Jack. This isn't a fair fight.

Beat. Jack cracks his knuckles.

JACK THUNDER
You're right. It ain't.

One of the thugs charges in. Jack takes both of the thug's arms and bends them 90-degrees in the other direction. Jack then kicks the thug across the face, knocking him out.

A second thug approaches and swings his bat, but Jack quickly ducks out of the way. Jack then kicks the thug in the chest, launching the thug off the roof of the skyscraper.

The last thug is able to hit Jack in the back of the head with a baseball bat. Jack collapses. The thug then wraps his hand around Jack's neck and begins choking him.

Jack tries to break the thug's grip, but he can't. He continues choking. His face turns red. His vision blurs. Suddenly, he hears the voice of his mentor, the SENSEI.

SENSEI (V.O.)
(Reverb voice)
Remember... disable your opponent.
Then apply the wish-bone leg snap.

With newfound determination, Jack jabs the thug in the eye. The thug rolls off Jack and covers his face. With all his might, Jack picks the thug up by his legs. The thug now hangs upside down. Jack then separates the thug's legs away from each other and pulls aggressively. Thug shrieks. Jack roars. Eventually, he is able to rip the thug perfectly in half. Guts spill on Jack's face.

The Russian man reaches for his side, takes out a gun, and aims it at Jack. He pulls the trigger, firing a bullet at Jack.

WOMAN
Jack!

JACK
Yeah?!

WOMAN
Duck!

JACK
What?!

WOMAN
Duck!

JACK
Oh! Right!

Jack ducks. The bullet passes over his head.

JACK (CONT'D)
Whew! Close one!

The Russian man cocks the gun's hammer back. He's about to fire another shot. Before he can, the woman stomps on his foot.

RUSSIAN MAN

Aw!

The woman is free from the Russian man's grip. She steps out of the way.

Now that the Russian man is distracted by his hurt foot, Jack charges at him. Before he can fire another shot, Jack snatches the gun out of the Russian man's hand. He begins taking apart the gun.

JACK

(While breaking apart gun)

Guns, huh? I don't believe in guns.
A man who relies on guns is a
coward. Makes the fight too easy.

Jack then reaches under his suit jacket and takes out a crossbow. He fires an arrow into the Russian man's head, killing him instantly. Jack gives a sigh of relief. It's over.

The sun begins setting in the distance. The woman approaches Jack.

JACK (CONT'D)

Thanks for the assist back there.
You may be a woman, but you got
balls, you know that?

The woman hugs Jack.

WOMAN

You came back.

JACK

Said I would, didn't I?

The woman then kisses Jack.

WOMAN

Now... how about that drink I owe ya?

JACK

You had me at sex.

WOMAN

I never said sex.

JACK
You just did.

The two make-out. It's intense, passionate and continues until finally...

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Cut!

INT. FILM SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Bell rings. Crew members flood the set. Playing Jack was actually CHIP RONDO, an action-movie star. Director approaches Chip and the woman.

DIRECTOR
Chip, how do we feel about that?

CHIP
Good. I mean... I'm still not crazy about the last thug pinning me down. I don't know. I don't think that would happen to my character. It makes him seem less cool and badass.

DIRECTOR
We could do another take if you want?

CHIP
Uh... nah. I don't think that's necessary. I think we got it.

DIRECTOR
How did you feel about it, Susan?

CHIP
To be honest, I feel like she could've seemed a bit more... into me. My character, I mean.

WOMAN
Well, he's giving me nothing to work with. It's kinda hard when your scene partner has no charisma whatsoever.

DIRECTOR
Alright, guys, could we not-

CHIP

Sweetheart, I've been in this business for a long time. I think I know what I'm doing.

(Pointing at someone)

Besides, I did the best I could, considering this dipshit wouldn't stop moving.

Chip points to a young PRODUCTION ASSISTANT, who's holding big posters with all of Chip's dialogue written on it.

CHIP (CONT'D)

How do you expect me to perform at my highest level if the sign bitch keeps moving?

The woman groans, then storms off the set.

CHIP (CONT'D)

I told you. Middle of act two, we shoulda killed her.

DIRECTOR

You know what, when she gets back, maybe we should do another one.

CHIP

Why? That take seemed fine to me. I think we got it.

DIRECTOR

Mhm. Right. No, for sure, Chip. We got it. It's just... perhaps we try one where you give a little more... I don't know... emotion, maybe?

CHIP

I don't know. Pretty sure I nailed it. I think we got it. You know me, when I see it, I see it. You know what I mean? So, we done for today?

DIRECTOR

...Uh... well, we still have to shoot-

CHIP

Cool. See you tomorrow, Doug!

Chip walks away and heads toward the craft services table where his agent, PAT, is shoving a bagel in his mouth.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Let's ride.

EXT. FILM STUDIO - OUTSIDE SOUND STAGE - LATER

Chip and Pat exit the soundstage. The two walk and talk.

PAT

(Chewing on food)

Look, just don't worry about it,
okay? Let's just focus on-

CHIP

I wanna know, Pat. How did we do?

PAT

Forget the critics. You don't make
films for the critics, Chip. You do
it for the audience.

CHIP

Then what's the audience saying?
Check box office.

Pat takes out his phone and types something into google.

PAT

(Scanning phone)

Mhm. Hmm. Okay... okay.

CHIP

How did we do?

PAT

...You know, you don't make films for
the audience either. You do it for
yourself-

Chip snatches the phone from Pat. He scrolls through the
various news articles.

CHIP

Bombed. I bombed. "*The Hitman
Driver 2: Retribution* runs out of
gas." Okay, can we please stop
choosing films with titles that can
be easily mocked if they bomb at
the box office.

(Goofy voice)

"Ooh *Baseball Tale* is a foul ball.
Oh, uh, *The Dog Trainer* is all bark
and no bite." It's annoying as
fuck.

Just then, JOSH MCKINLEY, an acclaimed actor walks by
sporting 1940's detective attire. He reads character sides as
he walks by Chip, paying him no mind.

Chip is stunned. He watches as Josh enters a nearby soundstage.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Did you see that?

PAT

What?

CHIP

Did you see the dude that just walked right by?

PAT

No. Who was it?

CHIP

Josh McKinley.

PAT

Shut up! I didn't even notice. Man, he's been killing it. He's in everything right now.

CHIP

The kid didn't even notice me.

PAT

He's great. He won an Emmy last year, you know? Say, you think he's happy with his representation?

CHIP

I mean... he just walked right by me. Pretended like *The Killer's Code* never happened.

PAT

Well, he's come a long way since working with you.

CHIP

You make it sound like he came from dogshit. That was a good film we did.

The two continue walking. Famous film director, TOPHER HALE, late-50's, walks by. He has receding hair and giant, thick-rimmed glasses. A viewfinder dangles from his neck.

PAT

Topher Hale. How the hell are ya?

TOPHER

Good, Pat. Good. Doing screen tests today.

PAT

Say, Topher. Have you met my friend-

Pat shakes Chip's hand.

TOPHER

Chip Rondo. Every block I drive on, I see a billboard with your face on it.

CHIP

We, uh, we actually live in the same neighborhood.

TOPHER

Really? No way. I didn't know that. Well, sorry Shannon and I haven't had you over for dinner yet.

CHIP

Well... maybe you could make it up to me by putting me in one of your films. Haha.

Topher laughs hysterically at the notion of this. Chip stands unamused. He laughs for about a minute.

TOPHER

(Wiping tears from eyes)

Oh... oh... now that was a good one, Chip. Well, I gotta run. See you fellas around.

Topher walks away, still laughing. He enters the same soundstage as Josh.

CHIP

I was joking. I don't even wanna be in his shitty movies anyway. His wife was really hot back in the day though. I'll give him that.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - LATER

Topher is on a phone call, as he and a small crew watch Josh pose for the camera while standing in front of a black-and-white city backdrop.

TOPHER

(Into phone)

Mhm. Yes, everything's on track,
Frank. Don't worry about it.

(Waits for response)

Yep, I'll talk to you later.
Tootles.

Topher hangs up the phone.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

Looking good, Josh. Real tough.
Definitely hard boiled.

Topher steps away and walks over to a beautiful woman in her mid-40's sitting in a make-up chair in front of a mirror. It's SHANNON SOMMERS, an actor and also Topher's wife. A MAKE-UP PERSON applies fake bruise marks to her face. Topher kisses Shannon on the cheek.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

My love, how are you doing?

SHANNON

(Holding script up)

Uh... I'm unsure about this
character. She's only in like... one
or two scenes-

TOPHER

Baby, baby, baby. You have a
crucial role in the picture. You
play the mother of the victim of
the crime. The drug lord has
murdered your son. This is a juicy
part.

SHANNON

(Holding script up)

But in the script, that's all she
is. Crying mother. Even her
character's name is just "mother".
She needs... something more. Like,
can't she have a real name or
something?

TOPHER

Sure, yeah. Whatever, Sweetheart.
Name her whatever you want. I don't
care.

SHANNON

That's not the-

Just then, an ASSISTANT whispers something in Topher's ear. Topher raises his finger up, shushing Shannon.

TOPHER
(Whispering to assistant)
 Who?

The assistant whispers again into Topher's ear.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
(Whispering to assistant)
 How did-? Ugh, alright. I'll take care of it.

SHANNON
 What is it?

TOPHER
 Uh, you know. Usual shit.

Topher kisses her cheek again, then begins walking toward the exit. On the way out, he passes Josh.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
 Kid, you're wrapped for today. We'll talk later.

JOSH
 Thanks, Mr. Hale.

EXT. FILM STUDIO - OUTSIDE SOUND STAGE - LATER

Josh exits the sound stage and begins smoking a cigarette. He's at peace, until Chip appears out of nowhere and puts him in a playful chokehold.

JOSH
 Aw!

CHIP
 Josh McKinley. You 'ol son of a bitch. How are you, man?

Chip lets Josh out the chokehold. Josh coughs a bit, then laughs awkwardly.

JOSH
 Oh, uh, hey, Chip.

CHIP
 Long time, no see, Kemosabe. How are you? What have you been up to?

JOSH

Uh, you know. This and that.

CHIP

Oh, I think a little more than "this and that". Someone has become a bit of a hotshot since the last time we've worked together. What was it... 15 years ago?

JOSH

Mhm. Sure. I think so.

CHIP

The Killer's Code. Man, now that was a great film.

(Pointing to himself)

Who would have thought that Johnny Orlando, the rogue CIA agent betrayed by his own country would years later regroup with...

(Points at Josh)

...Tanner, the idiot sidekick who could never keep up. Man, that was a great film, huh?

Josh gives a whatever reaction.

CHIP (CONT'D)

What? What was that?

JOSH

It's just... nothing.

CHIP

No, no. Say it. Come on, man. We're bros.

JOSH

I mean... that was a long time ago. Early in my career, you know. I've... I've evolved so much since then.

CHIP

Right, no, exactly. Me too.

JOSH

...Uh, well... really? I don't know. I don't wanna be a dick or anything but... I feel like there's a big difference between the work I do and the work you do.

CHIP

...What do you mean?

JOSH

Well... you do wacky, easily-digestible action movies. And that's fine! That's great and all! But I do... *real* work. Stories and characters that matter. That have impact.

CHIP

How dare you? I do "real" films too.

JOSH

Come on. Be real, Chip. The work I do deals with real issues. Your films aren't serious.

CHIP

Oh, okay. I guess stopping deadly terrorists on a global scale isn't serious enough, right? Got it.

JOSH

All I'm trying to say is, it seems like you always do the same type of B-action movies. Movies that all have the word "kill" in the title. And in all of these movies, you play the same character every time. Me on the other hand, I dive deep. I lose myself in characters vastly different from myself. I act. You don't.

CHIP

Acting is stupid. People don't show up to my films to see *acting*. People show up to my films to see *action*.

JOSH

Well... for you, Chip, people don't really show up at all anymore.

Beat. Chip has no response. Josh stomps on his cigarette.

JOSH (CONT'D)

See you around, *Tanner*. Oops, I mean... Chip.

Josh walks away, chuckling to himself. Chip stands quietly.

BEGIN MONTAGE

INT. CHIP'S LIVING ROOM

Chip watches on his laptop a video of Josh accepting an award for acting.

INT. TRAILER

Chip slumps down on the couch inside his trailer. There's a Production Assistant outside, knocking on the door.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT
We're ready for you, Mr. Rondo.
Come on out please.

Chip groans. He's unmotivated.

INT. BACK TO CHIP'S LIVING ROOM

Chip watches a film on his flat screen, displaying a scene where Josh sits inside of a rusty cell. He's playing a prisoner of war with no arms or legs at an internment camp, pleading to a GUARD.

JOSH
(From television)
How... how am I supposed to play
catch with my boy? How... how am I
supposed to walk my little girl
down the aisle?

The Guard enters the cell, takes out a knife, and points it at Josh's manhood.

GUARD
(From television)
And if you wish to make love to
your wife again, you best keep you
voice down.

The Guard exits the cell. Josh's character begins sobbing.

Chip continues watching the television screen. He's sort of impressed with Josh's performance.

INT. BACK TO TRAILER

There's another knock. Chip now lays on the floor.

CHIP

Go away!

INT. FILM SET

Chip unenthusiastically performs a scene. He's holding a skateboard and standing in front of a green screen.

DIRECTOR

Cut! Chip, I don't think you're taking this scene seriously.

CHIP

Right. Sorry. Remind me again what we're filming.

DIRECTOR

This is the scene where your character does a kickflip over the dead dragon's corpse.

Beat.

CHIP

..Okay. I'll be sure to take it seriously then.

BACK TO CHIP'S LIVING ROOM

Chip watches more videos of Josh accepting awards. Chip drinks from a liquor bottle.

BACK TO TRAILER

Two PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS are attempting to pull Chip away from the couch. Chip is being difficult.

CHIP (CONT'D)

(A bit intoxicated)

No! No! I'm not... I'm not going!

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Come on, Mr. Rondo. You're needed back on set.

Eventually, the two are able to pull Chip out of the trailer.

CHIP (O.S.)

NOOOOO!

END OF MONTAGE

INT. CHIP'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Days later. Pat scans through a pile of scripts laid out on a coffee table. Chip is on the other side of the room, making himself a drink behind the mini bar.

Pat picks up one of the scripts.

PAT
(*Holding up script*)
I say we go with *The Shark Sniper*..

Pat sets the script down and picks up another.

PAT (CONT'D)
(*Holding up new script*)
Or *Killmander in Chief*. What do you think?

Beat. Chip ponders.

CHIP
Hmm. Is there something in there that's maybe a bit more... deep?

PAT
Well, *The Shark Sniper*, I believe, has a scene where your character would suba about 12,000 feet underwater-

CHIP
No, I mean depth. Nuance. Something juicy.

PAT
Woah! "Depth?" "Nuance?" The hell's the matter with you, Chip? You never cared about any of that shit.

CHIP
I don't know. I've... I've just been craving something new. Something different.

PAT
Is this about the box office? We'll have another action hit soon, Chip. Don't worry-

CHIP
No, No. This is more than that. I want... I want to be an actor.

PAT

You are an actor, Chip-

CHIP

Not like a one-note blockbuster movie star that does the same shit every summer. I mean... an actor. A real actor.

Chip runs over to a shelf and picks up a DVD of a drama film starring Josh McKinley.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Josh was right. He's doing cool shit. I'm not. I want what he has. I want the acclaim. I want people to say, "wow, what an actor", when I walk into the room. Becoming a beloved action star was great. But now I want a new challenge. I want to be taken seriously as a performer. I want to actually start memorizing lines and shit.

Beat. Pat stands and puts his hand on Chip's shoulder.

PAT

Look, Chip. That sounds all well and good. And believe me, this whole renaissance narrative your proposing makes me see dollar signs. But... it's just not realistic.

CHIP

...Well, why not?

PAT

It just wouldn't work. You're a movie star, Chip. People know you. No matter what role you play, they'll always see Chip Rondo. The name of the character could be John, Steve, Paul, whatever. It doesn't matter because they will always say, "that's Chip Rondo." You ever see those videos of humans dressing up as pandas in order to trick the real pandas that they're one of them? That's what you acting would be like. Sure, it may look legit to a buncha dumb idiot pandas. But to humans. No way, man. I'm sorry.

Chip is devastated.

EXT. CHIP'S DRIVEWAY

Chip walks Pat to his car.

PAT

Look, just stick to what you're good at: the action films. I promise, just keep at it and we'll start getting great reception again. As long as you keep being you.

From afar, Chip and Pat spot Topher and Shannon leaving their home across the street. The two walk towards a nice-looking sports car. Chip waves. Topher and Shannon don't seem to notice him.

Topher kisses Shannon on the cheek, then enters his car and drives away. Shannon watches him leave.

PAT (CONT'D)

(Pointing at Shannon)

You see, take Shannon Sommers for example. She's hot, but she used to be very hot. I mean, that one show she was on in the early 2000's when she played the lifeguard. Oh my God. Now, do you think someone hot like that would start doing Shakespeare all of a sudden? Nuh uh. She's perfectly content with being pretty. You gotta be more like her. Just be content with being an action star.

Pat opens his car door and looks at Shannon again.

PAT (CONT'D)

Sucks though. She used to be like way hotter. Welp, think about what I said, Chip.

Pat drives off. Chip stands, thinking to himself.

INT. CHIP'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chip stands shirtless in front of a mirror, drinking from a liquor bottle and rambling to himself. There's a tattoo of a panther on his stomach.

Music blares from a speaker. He drunkenly does renditions of iconic acting scenes in film to see if he's any good.

CHIP
 (*Drunk/Marlon Brando
 voice*)
 I... I used to be a contender...

Chip burps.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 (*De Niro voice*)
 You... you talking to *me*?

Chip burps again.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 I'm just a citizen. Citizen Kane.
 (*Gives up*)
 I don't know. I'm sure that's a
 line from the movie. Never seen it.
 It's on my watchlist.

Just then, there's a shriek from outside. It sounds like Shannon Sommers.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 What the...?

Chip turns his music off and looks out his bedroom window. His eyes widen. Across the street, Shannon and Topher's house is on fire.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 Holy shit! Sh... Shannon's in there!
 I need to-

Just then, Chip notices movement in the downstairs window. Inside Shannon's home, is a MASKED FIGURE, wearing all black robbery gear.

CHIP (CONT'D)
 Who... the fuck is that?

The Masked Figure's glove is a little on fire. They quickly put out the fire with their other hand, then run into a different room of the burning home.

Chip reaches under his bed and takes out a Katana sword. He leaves his bedroom with urgency.

EXT. TOPHER AND SHANNON'S DRIVEWAY

Chip drunkenly runs with a Katana sword toward the burning house.

CHIP
(*Still drunk*)
I'm... I'm coming!

Suddenly, a plate-less dirty white van crashes through the garage door of the burning home. It's heading right for Chip.

Chip dives away right before the van can hit him. He lands on the front lawn.

Chip then looks up, and watches as the Masked Figure drives off in the van away from the burning home. He can hear Shannon crying from inside the vehicle. The van exits the scene.

Chip lays on the ground in front of the burning home, defeated.

INT. BROADCAST NEWS STUDIO - DAY

Two NEWS ANCHORS directly speak to the camera.

NEWS ANCHOR 1
Breaking news. Hollywood superstar,
Shannon Sommers, is missing.

An image of Shannon and Topher's home appears on screen.

NEWS ANCHOR 1 (CONT'D)
Yesterday evening, she and her
husband, Topher Hale's home was
burned to the ground. Since then,
she has yet to be seen. Topher Hale
was not home at the time.

Image of a young Shannon Sommers running on a beach in a bikini appears on screen.

NEWS ANCHORS 2
The actress found early success
playing Vivian on *Deadly Shores*.

This image is replaced by a movie poster, depicting Shannon being carried by a man wearing a tuna costume.

NEWS ANCHOR 2 (CON'T)

This role would propel her to star in the most financially successful film of her career, playing the love interest of the superhero, Tuna-Man.

Poster image disappears.

NEWS ANCHOR 2 (CONT'D)

We'll have more updates shortly. We wish Shannon Sommers, age 42, a safe return.

NEWS ANCHOR 1

It's a shame. She was hot.

NEWS ANCHOR 2

She's still missing, Phil. She's not dead.

NEWS ANCHOR 1

I know. But she got old.

EXT. OUTSIDE SHANNON AND TOPHER'S BURNT HOME - DAY

Paparazzi gather around police tape. Police Officers investigate the property.

Topher sits on the grass in front of his burnt home, enraged. Nearby is Chip, drinking from a cup of coco with a blanket wrapped around him as an OFFICER questions him. The Officer writes in a small notebook as Chip speaks.

CHIP

I immediately ran over and attempted to enter the flames. At which point, I saw the intruder exfiltrate the home in a white van.

OFFICER

Mhm. Could you describe them?

CHIP

I cannot. They we're wearing a mask and dressed in all black.

TOPHER

Pssh! What the hell do you know?

Beat. Topher stands and approaches Chip and the Officer.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

I mean, how are you so sure you even saw someone?

OFFICER

Mr. Hale, I'm gonna need you to step-

TOPHER

You know, before I met you, I always wondered who was living across the street, blaring music and drinking like a fish. The way I would see rows and rows of empty liquor bottles in front of your driveway every garbage day. And recently, I discovered it was you! Chip Rondo! So lemme ask you, were you drinking last night?

CHIP

I was there, Topher. I saw everything-

TOPHER

But you were drunk, weren't you?

Chip looks at the Officer for help.

OFFICER

Were you?

CHIP

...I mean, a little bit but-

TOPHER

Exactly. Look, maybe you did see someone. But then again, maybe it was a squirrel.

(Now facing Officer)

I mean, Officer, the legitimacy of his claims are now questionable if he was intoxicated, right?

Beat.

CHIP

I know what I saw.

Officer sighs. He closes his notebook.

OFFICER

I'm sure you think you saw something, Mr. Rondo.

Officer walks away.

CHIP
 What the hell are you doing, man?
 I'm just trying to help you-

TOPHER
(Tone change)
 Is it true?

CHIP
 ...Is what true?

TOPHER
 You saw the kidnapper?

CHIP
 ..Uh, yeah. I did.

Beat. Topher looks around and makes sure everyone else around them is pre-occupied.

TOPHER
(Whispering)
 Noon. Today. Hollywood Roosevelt.
 Room 415. Be there.

Topher walks away. Chip stands dumbfounded.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - LATER

Chip cautiously walks toward Room 415. He knocks on the door.

TOPHER (O.S.)
(Muffled voice)
 I said, it's clean!

CHIP
 Uh... what?!

Topher quickly opens the door.

TOPHER
 Sorry. Thought you were the
 cleaning lady. Come in, come in.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Topher welcomes Chip into the messy hotel room, that's cluttered in whatever didn't burn down in the house fire. Topher's assistant named Tammy sifts through the belongings. Some are half-burnt. Most are totally burnt.

TOPHER
We need the room, Tammy.

Tammy begins leaving.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
Wait!

Topher takes a flash drive out from his pocket.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
Plug this into the computer, would
ya? But *don't* press play. Got it?

TAMMY
On it!

Tammy plugs the flash drive into a half-burnt laptop.

CHIP
You gonna tell me what the hell I'm
doing here?

TOPHER
This morning, there was an envelope
sent to my office. Inside,
contained a flash drive. How's the
video coming along, Tammy?

Tammy is struggling on the laptop.

TAMMY
Uh? Just having a little trouble-

TOPHER
Oh my God.

Topher stands over the Tammy's shoulders as she messes around
on the laptop.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
Okay, so go to the tab that says
USB.

Tammy clicks something.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
No, that's file.

Tammy clicks on something else.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
No, that's view.

Tammy clicks on another thing.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
Why are you opening Chrome? I don't understand.

Tammy clicks a few more times.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
Yep, that's the video. No, no. Why are you downloading it?

TAMMY
Do you want it full screened?

TOPHER
I don't... I don't care. Just gimme. Gimme it.

Topher takes the laptop away from Tammy.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
Okay. Thank you. Bye, Tammy.

Tammy waves to Chip as she leaves the room.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
She is the worst niece ever. I swear to God. I am so sorry-

CHIP
It's okay. She's trying her best.

Topher places the laptop on a coffee table in the middle of the room. The two stand above it.

TOPHER
There's something I need you to see.

Topher clicks play.

ON LAPTOP SCREEN

Crappy looking camcorder footage of Shannon Summers tied up to a chair with a bag over her head in the back on a van.

BACK TO SCENE

CHIP
My God.

TOPHER

I know. The rule of thirds here is
a joke-

CHIP

No, I'm talking about you wife
being tied up!

TOPHER

..Oh, right. That too.

BACK TO LAPTOP SCREEN

The video of Shannon tied up cuts to a different video. This time, it's video secretly recorded on a hidden iPhone of Topher having intercourse with a woman who isn't his wife.

BACK TO SCENE

CHIP

..Dude.

TOPHER

Nice, right?

BACK TO LAPTOP SCREEN

The sex tape disappears. A video of the Masked Figure from earlier speaking to the camera in a dark room.

MASKED FIGURE

(In video)

BRING ONE MILLION DOLLARS TO 6922
HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD PARKING GARAGE
TONIGHT OR THE GIRL DIES AND THE
TAPE RELEASES.

Video ends.

BACK TO SCENE

Topher pulls the flash drive out of the computer.

CHIP

I... I don't understand.

TOPHER

He has my wife, Chip. He's also
gonna show the world a video of me
banging an escort. He wants a
million dollars.

CHIP

You... you need to show this to the police-

TOPHER

Show the police a video of me cheating on my wife who's currently missing? Yeah, no thank you. If this thing releases to the public, it'll be a career-ender.

Topher destroys the flash drive.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

Besides, the police won't bring me justice. I want to find the son-of-a-bitch responsible and kill him myself.

CHIP

Why did you show this to me, Topher?

Beat. Topher looks at Chip dramatically.

TOPHER

I want you to find the kidnapper and rescue my wife.

CHIP

...What?

TOPHER

I want you to find the kidnapper and rescue my wife! Think about it! You are an action hero!

CHIP

In the movies I am.

TOPHER

And in real life! The way you described running towards the burning building to save my wife-!

CHIP

I was drunk.

TOPHER

You have the heart of a hero! I know it!

CHIP

...N-no. You should... you should find somebody else.

TOPHER

There is nobody else! Chip, it's you! You're my guy! I can't trust anybody in this town!

CHIP

Then... do it yourself.

TOPHER

If the intruder gets one whiff of me trying to stop them, they'll kill my wife and release the tape. I need you for this, Chip! Please!

Beat. Chip ponders.

CHIP

...I'm sorry. But the answer's no.

Chip turns around and heads to the door. He reaches for the handle.

TOPHER

I'll put you in my movie!

Chip's hand freezes before it touches the handle. He turns back around.

CHIP

W-what?

TOPHER

I'll put you in my movie!

Topher creates a frame with his fingers and looks at Chip through it.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

Yes, yes! I see it! The tough and grizzly demeanor. The aging face and body that's not quite what it used to be. You are my Detective Conrad Rockwell, fighting against the drug-riddled, corrupted streets of 1970's New York City. This role has serious academy award potential.

CHIP

I thought you already offered the role to Josh McKinley-

TOPHER

Forget Josh McKinley! I was gonna fire him anyway! He's not right for it. You are.

CHIP

...I don't know. What if... what if I don't have what it takes. I've never done a role like this before.

TOPHER

Chip, this is a chance for you to redefine yourself. Chip Rondo will no longer be a name associated with shitty B-action films. No, Chip Rondo... will be a serious, well-regarded actor. Whose name shall be uttered along with the greats. A true comeback story.

Beat. Chip thinks about this.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

So, what do ya say? You in?

CHIP

...I'm in.

TOPHER

Great! Now... let's get start-

Knock from outside door. A CLEANING LADY pokes her head into the room.

CLEANING LADY

Do you want me to clean-?

TOPHER

No! No, I already told you to not-

The Cleaning Lady enters the room and begins dusting anyway.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

Ugh! Oh my God. Fine, whatever.

(Now talking to Chip)

Here's where you should start: Donna Maxwell. That's who you should be looking for.

CHIP
Who's that?

TOPHER
She's the woman in the..

Topher checks and makes sure the Cleaning Lady isn't paying attention.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
(Whispering)
...Sexy, fun time tape.

The Cleaning Lady stops cleaning a second and stares at Topher.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
Oh, so now you listen to me? Cool.

The Cleaning Lady resumes cleaning.

Topher walks Chip out of the hotel room.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Topher and Chip step outside the hotel room.

TOPHER
(Now facing Chip again)
Donna's an escort. She must've hidden a camera to film us doing it so she could use it against me.

CHIP
You think she's behind this?

TOPHER
Maybe. It would make sense.

CHIP
Why would it make sense?

TOPHER
Look, it doesn't matter. Just find her and get her talking, okay? Remember, your only job is to rescue Shannon and bring the kidnapper to me. Now, around this time today, there's usually a huge pool party at Producer Davey Sinclair's house in the hills.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
 Chances are, she's there looking
 for rich prey. Go there and see
 what she knows.

CHIP
 ...And what about tonight? You gonna
 meet with this kidnapper?

TOPHER
 I don't know. See what you can find
 at the party first. Get going,
 Detective.

Chip nods, then walks away from Topher.

EXT. FRONT GATE - OUTSIDE MANSION - DAY

Party music is heard in the distance. Chip walks over to the
 front gate of the mansion, where a buff SECURITY GUARD
 holding a clipboard is posted.

CHIP
 Uh... hi?

SECURITY GUARD
 Oh my... Chip Rondo! I'm such a huge
 fan of your work! I literally have
 an *Operation Missile* tattoo on my
 body.

CHIP
 Oh, that's cool! Where on your body
 is it?

SECURITY GUARD
 Where else would it be, you know
 what I'm saying? Ha!

CHIP
 (*Chuckles nervously*)
 I'm, uh, here for the party.

SECURITY GUARD
 (*Looking at list on
 clipboard*)
 Of course. Let's see here... uh... hmm.
 Doesn't look like Mr. Sinclair has
 you on the list.

CHIP
 Hmm. Are you sure?

SECURITY GUARD

Lemme check again.
*(Reading through names to
 himself)*
 Keanu, Scorsese, Tilda, Tucci,
 Denzel...

Chip's eyes widen upon hearing the A-listers attending this party.

CHIP RONDO

Feels like.. every cool person in
 Hollywood is on the list.

SECURITY GUARD

Yep, I don't see you here. Sorry.

Chip walks away sadly.

INT. CAR - LATER

Chip drives down the road, unsure what to do now. His car stops at a red light.

Just then, he spots a colorful looking pawn shop next to him. He comes to a realization.

BEGIN MONTAGE

INT. PAWN SHOP

Chips scans around the store putting various costumes, wigs, and make-up into a cart.

Chip spots a long, dark haired wig. He picks it up.

CHIP

(Holding dark hair wig)
 Keanu.

He puts the wig into his cart.

Chip then picks up a bald cap.

CHIP (CONT'D)

(Holding bald cap)
 Tucci.

Chip puts the bald cap into the cart.

EXT. BACK TO FRONT GATE OUTSIDE MANSION

Chip approaches the Security Guard wearing a bald cap.

CHIP
(*Wearing bald cap*)
Hi, I'm Stanley Tucci. I should be
on the list.

SECURITY GUARD
Uh, Chip?

CHIP
Nope. I am Stanley Tucci.

SECURITY GUARD
Chip, I know it's you.

INT. BACK TO PAWN SHOP

Chip picks up more props and puts them in his cart.

EXT. BACK TO FRONT GATE OUTSIDE MANSION

Chip is now wearing the long, dark haired wig while speaking
to the Security Guard.

CHIP
(*Wearing long haired wig*)
Keanu Reeves.

SECURITY GUARD
Come on, Chip. It's not gonna work.

INT. BACK TO PAWN SHOP

Chip checks out a bunch of fake mustaches.

EXT. BACK TO FRONT GATE OUTSIDE MANSION

Chip has put fake mustaches on top of his eyebrows. He speaks
to the Security Guard again.

CHIP RONDO
Martin Scorsese. Pleasure to meet
you. Movies!

SECURITY GUARD
Chip..

EXT. FRONT GATE OUTSIDE MANSION - LATER

Chip is now wearing a blonde wig as he speaks to the Security
Guard.

CHIP
(Wearing blonde
wig/British voice)
I am Tilda Swinton.

SECURITY GUARD
You're not Tilda Swinton, Chip.

CHIP
Yes, I am. I am Tilda Swinton.

INT. BACK AT PAWN SHOP

Chip holds up a can of brown paint.

CHIP
..Denzel?

Chip thinks for a moment, then ultimately decides that wouldn't be a great idea. He puts the can of paint down.

INT. PAWN SHOP - LATER

As Chip is looking for more props, he notices a poster for a film called *Sasha's Secret* directed by Topher Hale and signed by the star, Shannon Sommers, in the autographed section. Chip examines this, then continues purchasing props.

EXT. BACK TO FRONT GATE OUTSIDE MANSION

Chip is sporting sunglasses, a brown hair wig, a leather jacket, and is smiling like a psychopath.

CHIP
Tom Cruise?

The Security Guard shakes his head.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. FRONT GATE - OUTSIDE MANSION - STILL DAY

Chip walks away sadly from the Security Guard.

EXT. WALL - OTHERSIDE OF MANSION - DAY

Chip, still in Tom Cruise attire, strolls down a street that's on the other side of a ten-foot-tall wall, blocking the view of the pool party.

Chip leaps up, grabs the top of the wall, and pulls himself up.

EXT. POOL AREA - BACKYARD OF MANSION

Chip lands on the other side of the wall. No one seems to notice. The party is packed. Music bumps. Celebrities are dancing.

Chip approaches a RANDOM STRANGER.

CHIP
(Yelling over music)
I'm looking for Donna!

RANDOM STRANGER
What?!

CHIP
I said, I'm looking for Donna.
Donna Maxwell.

RANDOM STRANGER
Ha! You dirty dog!
(Points somewhere)
Yeah, she's over there!

The Random Stranger points to the other side of the pool area. From across the party, Chip spots someone who looks like the woman from the video. It's DONNA, late-30's, and sporting sparkly clothing. She's talking to a skinny WEIRD GUY, who has a receding hairline and big teeth.

Chip walks toward Donna, but dancing people are getting in his way. He slowly makes his way through the crowd. Suddenly, he watches as Donna and the Weird Guy enter the house together.

Once finally out of the crowd, Chip enters the house behind them.

INT. MANSION LIVING ROOM

The room is packed. People are dancing.

Chip makes sure his wig and sunglasses are still on. He looks around the room, and eventually spots Donna and the Weird Guy walking up the stairs together. He follows.

INT. HALLWAY

Donna and the Weird Guy enter a bedroom. Chip slowly follows.

INT. BEDROOM

Chip busts open the door. Donna and the Weird Guy are sitting at the edge of the bed.

DONNA
(Chewing gum)
 Woah? What the hell? Wait a minute,
 I know you! Chip Rondo!

Chip takes off his brown wig and sunglasses.

CHIP
 Sssh! Keep your voice down! I'm not
 allowed in here! Look, I need to
 ask you some questions. Are you
 Donna Maxwell?

DONNA
 Who's askin'?

CHIP
 ..You just said my name.

WEIRD GUY
 Donna, is this guy bothering you?

CHIP
 Get lost, creep. I need to ask the
 escort a few questions.

WEIRD GUY
 I'm boutta escort your ass out the
 fucking building if you don't-

DONNA
 Steve! It's okay! Just get out of
 here.

Beat. The Weird Guy reluctantly leaves the room.

DONNA (CONT'D)
 Look, I came here to have a good
 time, okay? What do you want?

CHIP
 Have you been sleeping with Topher
 Hale?

DONNA
 Dunno. I sleep with a lot of people
 in Hollywood. Hell, we probably
 slept together at some point.

Chip scoffs.

CHIP

I find that very unlikely.

DONNA

Say, come to think of it, I'm pretty sure we have!

CHIP

Nuh uh. No way we have.

DONNA

Wasn't that you at Steven Segal's party a few years back? Drinking like crazy? Kept talking about how you know karate?

Chip begins sweating.

CHIP

That's... hehe... no. That... that doesn't sound like me.

DONNA

Tattoo of a panther on your stomach?

CHIP

Look, let's focus on the task at hand. I need to ask you something very important: where is she?

DONNA

Where's who?

CHIP

Shannon Sommers. Where is she?

DONNA

How should I know? News was sayin' she was still missin' last I checked.

CHIP

Cut the shit. You secretly recorded that little freak tape and then used it to try and blackmail him.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Or maybe you actually do have her tied up somewhere? But you will start telling me the truth. Now.

DONNA

This level of intimidation may work in your shitty movies but it ain't gonna work in the real world, hun. Look, I admit to recording the sex tape! But you don't understand. That bastard, Topher, said he would cast me in his movie. But he never did! I can't be too surprised though. I figured he wouldn't. That's why I had the sex tape ready in advance, to screw him over. But if all I'm tryin' to do is get cast in the movie, then why would I need to kidnap his wife too? Why would I need to burn his house down? I already have the leverage: the tape.

Beat. Chip ponders.

DONNA (CONT'D)

I never blackmailed him with the tape. I never had the chance to. Someone else did.

CHIP

Alright, then... who? Who did you show the tape to?

Just then, the Security Guard from earlier, along with two other BUFF GUARDS, barge into the room.

SECURITY GUARD

(Annoyed)

Alright, Chip. It's time to go.

Chip quickly puts the brown wig and sunglasses back on.

CHIP

I'm Tom Cruise.

The Security Guard puts Chip in a chokehold.

SECURITY GUARD

No, you're not, Chip-

CHIP

(Choking)

I am Tom Cruise.

EXT. FRONT GATE - OUTSIDE MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

Chip is thrown onto the street by the three guards. He stands and brushes the gravel off himself.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Chip approaches the hotel room. Just then, the door opens, and out walks Topher with three scary-looking men in suits. One of them is FRANK RUSSO, late-50's, shiny black hair, sunglasses, and a mustache.

FRANK

Uh, you know, Toph'. I want you to know, we always got your back. I know the news is saying they're unsure whether it is a kidnapping or not. But I promise you this... if it was, we'll handle the scumbag responsible. I promise you that. We love Shannon. We don't wanna see her get hurt.

TOPHER

I appreciate that, Mr. Russo. I really do.

Frank playfully slaps Topher's cheek.

FRANK

Now, you let me know if there's anything I can do. I'll do anything to get this picture back on track.

Frank and his goons begin walking away. They stop when they notice Chip.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Ay! Action man! How you doing?!

Chip nods, then looks as the three men head toward the exit.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Chip watches as Topher stressfully paces around the room. Something's on his mind.

Topher's Assistant, Tammy, continues going through the items that survived the fire.

TOPHER

Discover anything?

CHIP

I don't think it was Donna.

TOPHER

How?! She was the only one who had the tape!

CHIP

She must've shown it to someone else. But I was kicked out before I could find out who.

Topher looks at Tammy.

TOPHER

Tammy. Scram. We need the room.
(Now facing Chip)
I need to show you something.

TAMMY

(Writing in notepad)
Just one more second.

CHIP

Uh, Topher, who were those guys?

TOPHER

They were... some of my film's financiers.

CHIP

Mhm.

TOPHER

(Frantic)
Look, Chip. Making movies is hard, okay? It's really hard. Not many see the potential of a gritty period piece set in the nasty streets of 1970's New York City. Not many are particularly interested in watching a rotten detective attempt to get drugs off the harsh street. Getting funding for a film like this is tough. Mr. Russo has been nothing but supportive. And sure... he is *allegedly* the leader of a deadly Mob-slash-drug syndicate.

CHIP

So... let me get this straight. Your anti-drug detective story is partially financed by drug dealers?

TOPHER

..Yes. These are very dangerous people.

CHIP

..And you're sure they had nothing to do with kidnapping Shannon?

TOPHER

Now *that* they would never do! They adore Shannon. They want her in the film.

CHIP

Well, then why didn't you get them to help you find the kidnapper?

TOPHER

These guys are ruthless, Chip. They're the type to skin someone alive and then dip them in a pool of lemonade. They're twisted. They would bring too much noise. People would start asking questions. It's best if we leave the investigation to just me and you.

Chip nods.

Tammy approaches Topher.

TAMMY

So, the foosball table looks like it can stay. But the Britta unfortunately has seen better-

TOPHER

Yeah, yeah. Whatever, Tammy. You need to leave now.

TAMMY

But we still need to go through what we can save and what we can-

TOPHER

Just.. just get rid of everything, okay? I don't care. I'll buy new shit. Auction it all off. Auction everything off for charity. I don't care.

TAMMY

Uh, including stuff that might be Shannon's?

TOPHER
I said everything, didn't I?
Alright, leave. Get outta here.

Tammy leaves the room.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
It's bad, Chip. It's real bad.

CHIP
What is?

Topher reaches into his pocket and takes out a new flash drive.

TOPHER
This was slid under my door a few hours ago.

CHIP
Another video?

Topher plugs the flash drive into the computer and presses play.

ON LAPTOP SCREEN

Shannon is still tied up in the back of a van with a bag over her head.

A hand slowly creeps up from out of frame holding a gun. The hand cocks back the trigger, and shoots Shannon in the head, killing her instantly.

BACK TO SCENE

CHIP (CONT'D)
Holy shit?! Holy shit?! Oh my God!
Oh my God! They... they killed her!

ON LAPTOP SCREEN

Video cuts to the Masked Figure speaking to the camera.

MASKED FIGURE
THOUGHT YOU COULD ATTEMPT TO STOP
ME AND THERE'D BE NO CONSEQUENCES?
TONIGHT. 6922 HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD
PARKING GARAGE. BE THERE. GO ALONE!

Videos stops.

BACK TO SCENE

Beat. Chip is speechless. Topher takes out the flash drive, throws it on the ground, and crushes it with his foot.

TOPHER

They... they killed her, Chip. That animal killed my darling. He must've somehow found out what we we're trying to do and... w-what do I even do now?

CHIP

..Get the million ready, Topher. We gotta meet with him. If he releases that tape, you're done-zo. When the world finds out what you did... especially after what happened to Shannon... things won't look too good for you.

TOPHER

So, that's it, huh? We just give this scumbag exactly what he wants? Right after he killed my wife?! Let's say I do give this sicko the money he wants? You really think he won't just release the tape anyway? Just to be an asshole?

CHIP

In the video, his van had everything. Bed. Water. Food. Laptop. Safe to say, this weasel is living there. That means if he has copies of the sextape-

TOPHER

It's probably in there too! But what about his phone? Surely, it's on his phone too.

CHIP

I have a plan, Topher. But first... do you have a firearm?

Topher runs over to the dresser, opens a drawer, and takes out a revolver.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Good. So, here's what we gonna do-

EXT. PARKING GARAGE ROOF - NIGHT

Topher holds a suitcase, inside containing the million dollars. He stands in front of his car in the middle of the rooftop. There are no other cars around him. He's been waiting for hours.

Just then, a white van drives up the ramp and parks a little bit away from Topher. Out walks the Masked Figure, holding a firearm. They walk menacingly toward Topher.

They stand a bit away from each other, and stare. Standoff-style.

MASKED FIGURE

Money?

Topher drops the suitcase on the ground and kicks it over to the Masked Figure.

The Masked Figure picks up the case and opens it, revealing the million dollars.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the van away from the deal, Chip slides down a light pole he was perched on top of the entire time. He peaks around the back of the van and makes sure the Masked Figure is still busy doing the deal with Topher.

Chip then peaks his head in the window of the van. Inside, he sees everything that was in the video: a bed, dirty clothes, food. He also spots a laptop with a bunch of flash drives surrounding it.

CHIP

(To himself)

Bingo.

Chip reaches into his backpack and takes out a bottle of whiskey, a rag, and a lighter. He begins constructing a Molotov.

Just then, a HOMELESS MAN appears behind him.

HOMELESS MAN

What are you doing?

Chip jumps. He quickly turns around.

CHIP

(Whispering)

Shit! Uh... nothing.

HOMELESS MAN
Doesn't look like nothing. Who are you?

CHIP
(Weird homeless person impression)
I'm, uh, I'm a homeless person.

HOMELESS MAN
No, you're not-

CHIP
I... I... yes, I am. Been on the streets mah' whole life.

HOMELESS MAN
That's not what homeless people sound like. You're being problematic.

CHIP
This is, er' exactly what homeless folk sound like.

Meanwhile, the Masked Figure turns around, hearing this commotion.

MASKED FIGURE
Who's there?!

TOPHER
There's no one. Let's just get this over with.

Back to Chip and the Homeless Man behind the van.

CHIP
This is, uh, usually where I come to... push my cart around and do homeless shit.

HOMELESS MAN
I don't see a cart on you.

CHIP
Well, that's because I left it at home.

HOMELESS MAN
I thought you were homeless.

CHIP
Ugh! Listen pal, I need you to-

HOMELESS MAN

You don't look like any of the
homeless people I see around here.
But, you still look familiar.

Back to Topher and Masked Figure on the other side of van.

TOPHER

Be honest. Are you just gonna
release the video anyway?

MASKED FIGURE

Probably.
*(Hears Chip and Homeless
Man talking)*
Somebody's here. Sounds a lot like-

Back to other side of van.

HOMELESS MAN

Chip Rondo! A ha! I knew I
recognized you!

Back to other side of van. The Masked Figure heard that. They
look behind again.

MASKED FIGURE

Chip Rondo?

Just then, Topher charges at the Masked Figure and tackles
them onto the ground.

Back to other side of van. Chip karate kicks the Homeless Man
across the face, knocking him out. He then breaks the van
window with his elbow and throws the Molotov inside. The
interior of the van immediately erupts in flames, burning the
laptop and flash drives.

Topher wrestles the Masked Figure on the ground. The Masked
Figure is finally able to point their gun at Topher's head,
but before they can fire...

CHIP

(Aiming revolver)
Freeze.

Chip jumps out from behind the now burning van and aims his
gun at the Masked Figure.

The Masked Figure drops their gun. Topher quickly gets to his
feet and throws the Masked figure's gun off the roof. He then
kicks the Masked Figure in the stomach.

TOPHER

Yeah! Take that, motherfuckaaaaa!
Now... let's see your phone.

The Masked Figure continues to lay on the ground, doing nothing. Topher kicks them in the stomach again.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

I said phone!

The Masked Figure hands their phone to Topher, who smashes on the ground immediately.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

(To Chip)

Alright, I think all copies of the tape have been destroyed.

(To Masked Figure)

Not that it matters anyway. You won't be able to release any tape after I blow your head off.

Topher then extends his hand out to Chip.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

Gun?

Chip hands Topher the gun.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

You know, Chip. You almost fucked us back there. The asshole was seconds away from killing me.

CHIP

Yeah, sorry. There was a homeless guy and...

TOPHER

"And" what?

CHIP

(Frantic)

I don't know. He wouldn't fuck off. Didn't know what I was doing here. Tried telling him I was a homeless guy like him.

TOPHER

And did he buy it?

CHIP

No, he didn't buy it. I don't know why. I wanted to sound like him...

CHIP (CONT'D)
*(Terrible homeless person
 voice)*
 So, I started talking like this
 and-

TOPHER
 No, no. You see, that's why it
 didn't work. You sound nothing like
 a homeless person.

CHIP
 Really? Well, I thought it sounded
 kinda good so-

TOPHER
 It sounded bad, Chip.

MASKED FIGURE
 Yeah, that wasn't good.

CHIP
 Well... whatever. I'm sure I'll play
 a much better Detective than a
 homeless person.

TOPHER
 ...Right. Hey, Chip. Can I talk to
 you for a moment?

Topher and Chip step away from the Masked Figure for a second
 to have a private one-on-one session.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
(Whispering)
 Look, Chip. I appreciate you
 helping me out and all. But... right
 now may not be the right time for
 you to star in my film.

CHIP
 ...What?!

TOPHER
 It's nothing personal. You're
 great. But I don't think you have
 the skillset necessary to...
 transform into a different
 character.

CHIP
 But... I helped stop the kidnapper. I
 can be a good actor. I promise.

TOPHER

Chip, your poor acting almost
fucked up this entire plan. I'm
sorry.

Topher turns to face the Masked Figure again and aims his
revolver at their head. Before Topher can fire, Chip grabs
the gun and throws it off the roof. No longer held at
gunpoint, the Masked Figure gets up and runs away. They're
too fast. No point in chasing.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

Fuck! You dumb fucking idiot! Why
would you do that?!

Topher faces Chip again.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

Great! He got away! Get out there
and find him!

CHIP

Why the fuck would I help you?
You're not gonna put me in your
movie!

TOPHER

Ugh! Let me ask you a question,
Chip? Did you actually think you
had what it takes? Did you really
believe you had the range and chops
to be the lead actor in one of *my*
films? You were *never* getting the
role. You're a fucking loser. On a
perpetual decline to irrelevancy.
In a few years, photos of you
leaving a gas station, looking fat,
will go viral for two seconds.
Then, that's it! You're nothing!
Poof! Forgotten!

Beat. Topher takes out his phone and dials a number.

CHIP

What are you doing?

TOPHER

Something I should've done in the
first place.

(Phone up to ear)

Hey, Mr. Russo. We need to talk.

Topher begins walking away.

CHIP
I'll tell people about the tape!

Topher freezes for a moment, then continues walking like he didn't hear anything.

Chip stands, devastated.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CHIP'S HOME - NIGHT

Chip enters his house, enraged. He immediately takes an empty trash bag and begins filling it with DVDs of films starring Josh McKinley that he purchased.

Chip then takes out his phone and calls his agent, Pat.

PAT (O.S.)
(Tired)
Chip? Aw, man. Do you know what time it is?

CHIP
We're doing *The Snark Sniper!*

PAT (O.S.)
Uh, okay?

Chip hangs up the phone.

INT. FILM SET - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Days later. A Director and a film crew are in the process of changing camera set-ups. Chip walks away from the film set unenthusiastically.

DIRECTOR
Great work, Chip. We'll call you back in a few.

EXT. FILM STUDIO - OUTSIDE SOUND STAGES

Chip walks gloomily towards his trailer. An OLD LADY driving a golf cart almost hits Chip. She's wearing a Craft Services Outfit.

OLD LADY
Get outta the way!

Chip doesn't seem to notice this.

INT. TRAILER - LATER

Chip is laying down on the couch.

EXT. FILM STUDIO - OUTSIDE SOUND STAGES

A TOUR GUIDE with a headset on leads a pack of VISITORS around the studio.

TOUR GUIDE

(Pointing to Sound Stage)

And if you look on over to the side here, you'll see that we are walking past a soundstage where Chip Rondo is filming his next movie. Very exciting, I know.

Crowd awes. Some take pictures of the soundstage. As the pack continues walking, a man sneaks away from the group and wanders elsewhere. It's a MOB ENFORCER, hired by Frank Russo.

INT. TRAILER

There's a knock on the trailer door. Chip is still laying on the couch.

CHIP

(Eyes closed)

5 more minutes!

There's another knock.

CHIP (CONT'D)

I said 5 more minutes! Fuck!

Another knock.

CHIP (CONT'D)

(To himself)

Oh my God.

Chip gets on his feet and storms to the door. He opens it. He's immediately pushed backwards and lands back on the couch. In walks the Mob Enforcer.

CHIP (CONT'D)

What the-?

The Mob Enforcer takes out a firearm.

CHIP (CONT'D)

Woah, woah! Alright, calm down.
I'll go back to set-

MOB ENFORCER

I'm not a PA, Mr. Rondo. I was sent
by Mr. Hale and Mr. Russo. Now...
have you told anybody about Mr.
Hale's little tape?

Beat. Chip shakes his head.

CHIP

...No.

MOB ENFORCER

Good. That makes my job easier.

The Mob Enforcer aims his gun. Chip freezes.

Just then, there's a knock at the door.

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT (O.S.)

Chip, you're needed back on set!

While the Mob Enforcer is distracted by the knock, Chip
tackles him. The two are launched out of the trailer.

EXT. TRAILER - FILM STUDIO

Chip and the Mob Enforcer land on the ground. Chip stands up
and runs away. The Mob Enforcer chases behind. The Production
Assistant is astounded.

EXT. EMPTY SOUNDSTAGE HANGER

Chip runs into a random soundstage. The Mob Enforcer follows.

INT. EMPTY SOUNDSTAGE

The Mob Enforcer enters. In the middle of the room, there's
jagged and rough stone structures, meant to represent the top
of a mountain. There's a large green screen background.

The Mob Enforcer walks around the set, gun in hand, searching
behind stone structures for Chip.

Just then, Chip steps out from behind a stone and whacks the
Mob Enforcer over the head with a plastic futuristic gun prop
like a baseball bat. The Mob Enforcer collapses and drops his
real gun.

Chip then stands over the Mob Enforcer and swings the futuristic gun prop down. The Mob Enforcer rolls out of the way, then sweeps Chip's leg. Chip falls. The Mob Enforcer stands above Chip.

Chip swings the futuristic gun prop up, but the Mob Enforcer kicks it out of his hand. The Mob Enforcer then picks up his real firearm off the ground and aims it at Chip.

MOB ENFORCER
(Cocking gun)
I prefer practical effects.

Chip shuts his eyes.

Suddenly, the Mob Enforcer is trampled by a golf cart driven by the Old Lady from earlier. Chip is stunned.

The mangled body of the Mob Enforcer sits under the golf cart. The Old Lady quickly steps out of the vehicle.

OLD LADY
Heavens! I... I didn't even see him-

The Old Lady notices Chip laying on the floor.

OLD LADY (CONT'D)
Oh, jeez. Didn't hit you too, did I?

CHIP
No, ma'am. The guy you ran over was actually attacking me. You might've just saved my life.

OLD LADY
Well... I'm glad you're alright. Here let me help you.

The Old Lady extends her hand. There's a massive burn mark on it. Chip's eyes widen.

QUICK FLASHBACK

INT. CHIP'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Flashback of Chip looking out his window at Shannon and Topher's house across the street in flames.

Chip spots the Masked Figure walking around inside the burning home with their hand on fire. The Masked Figure puts out the fire on their hand with their other one.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BACK TO SOUNDSTAGE

The Old Lady is confused why Chip is looking at her that way. She realizes her mistake, and quickly changes hands.

CHIP

Uh, wow. How did... how did that happen to your hand?

OLD LADY

(Frantic)

Oh... burnt it while cooking. I was being silly. Harold was watching television in the other room and it was catching my eye because it had that Jason Segal on it and I love him. But I was so distracted I accidently plopped my hand right down on that burning pan. And boy, did it hurt! Harold was so worried. But it's me who's worried about him. I'm all he's got, you know. Just me. Carol Ann! Uh... anyways... I'm ranting. I'll go get security hehe.

The Old Lady leaves the Soundstage in a hurry. Chip ponders, then follows behind.

EXT. FILM STUDIO - OUTSIDE SOUND STAGE

Chip exits the soundstage. The Old Lady is now sprinting away from him.

CHIP

Get back here!

Chip chases the Old Lady through the Hollywood Studio.

Just then, some CREW MEMBERS, carrying a large wooden table, cross in front of the Old Lady and Chip.

The Old Lady jumps up and slides over the table flawlessly. Chip runs around it, confused on how an old lady was able to perform such an amazing move.

Suddenly, MORE CREW MEMBERS, carrying a giant 30-inch-tall donut prop, cross in front of the Old Lady and Chip.

The Old Lady dives through the hole of the donut perfectly and lands into a perfect roll. She continues dashing away. Chip runs around the donut.

CHIP (CONT'D)
Holy shit! How did she do that?!

EXT. ENTRANCE GATE - FILM STUDIO

There's a 15-foot-tall gate in their path. The Old Lady parkours over it seamlessly. Chip is unable to. He looks over at the GATE GUARD.

CHIP
Open it! Open it!

The Gate Guard opens the gate. Chip runs out.

EXT. LA STREET

The Old Lady crosses the busy road while dodging traffic. She enters an alleyway on the other side of the street.

A few cars almost hit Chip, but he manages to cross safely and enter the alleyway.

EXT. ALLEYWAY

The Old Lady stops running. It's a dead end. No way out.

Chip enters, out of breath.

CHIP
(*Catching breath*)
No... nowhere left to run! Who the hell are you?

The Old Lady sighs. She raises her hand up to her head, then begins rubbing something off of her face.

CHIP (CONT'D)
Oh my God! What are you doing?!

Eventually, the Old Lady has peeled enough layers off to finally reveal who she is underneath... it's Shannon Sommers.

CHIP (CONT'D)
Shannon? Shannon Sommers?

SHANNON
 In the flesh. Or...
*(Holding fake skin peel
 up)*
 Under the flesh, I suppose.

CHIP
 I... I don't understand. Start
 talking.

BEGIN MONTAGE

INT. AUDITORIUM OF SCHOOL

Shannon, as a little girl, performs in a school play dressed up as a sunflower. SHANNON'S MOM records the performance proudly on a camcorder.

SHANNON (V.O.)
 I always loved acting. I saw it as
 a means of escape. From schoolwork.

INT. CHILDHOOD HOME

Younger Shannon watches as her Mom and Dad argue over Shannon's report card.

SHANNON (V.O.)
 ...From my shitty homelife.

The Dad slams the report card down on the table.

DAD
(Muffled voice)
 She's a fucking idiot. She don't
 know nothin'!

INT. BATHROOM

Younger Shannon stares at herself blankly in the mirror.

SHANNON (V.O.)
 ...From myself-

CHIP (V.O.)
(Eye-rolling)
 Oh my God.

SHANNON
 Shut up.

Younger Shannon begins reaching for some make-up. She gives herself a big unibrow and a fake mustache.

SHANNON (V.O.)
I saw the appeal in... becoming
someone else.

INT. AUDITORIUM

Shannon, now a TEENAGER, performs in another play, dressed as a 1940's lawyer. The audience applauds.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CHRISTMAS MORNING

Shannon's Mom watches as teenage Shannon opens a present. Inside, is a photograph of her and her mom at a county fair.

TEENAGE SHANNON
(*Holding photograph*)
What is this?

MOM
It's us. At the county fair a few
months ago.

Teenage Shannon sets the photograph down.

TEENAGE SHANNON
...I said I wanted more wigs and
make-up for the play coming up.

This makes Shannon's Mom sad.

EXT. GRADUATION CEREMONY

Shannon accepts her diploma from a PROFESSOR. There's a big banner in the background that says "Julliard".

INT. WAITING ROOM OF AUDITION

Shannon, now in her 20's, sits among a group of girls, all waiting to be called in to an audition. There's a sign hanging up that says: CASTING CALL FOR SERIES DEADLY SHORES.

CASTING DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Shannon!

Shannon stands.

INT. AUDITION ROOM

Shannon stands in front of a group of Casting Directors. She scans through the script sides.

SHANNON
So... Vivian?

CASTING DIRECTOR
Yes?

SHANNON
And... what are her goals?

CASTING DIRECTOR
To have fun on a bright and sunny beach.

SHANNON
Okay. And... what are her obstacles?
What prevents her from achieving what she wants?

CASTING DIRECTOR
...Rain?

Shannon sighs.

SHANNON (V.O.)
I figured... this part would at least give me some attention. Make people take notice. From there... I could probably take on more serious roles.

EXT. LA STREET - DAY

Fans swarm Shannon as she walks down the street, begging her to sign *Deadly Shores* posters. She does so reluctantly.

SHANNON (V.O.)
But that never happened. And I became known as the hot chick from *Deadly Shores*.

INT. SMALL FILM SET IN DIRTY APARTMENT

Camera films Shannon as a drug addict, sticking needles into her arm. Topher watches, astonished.

TOPHER
Cut! Woah! That was fabulous!

SHANNON (V.O.)

Topher was the first person to take a chance on me and give me nuanced characters.

INT. EMPTY MOVIE THEATER

Shannon enters a screening of her independent film directed by Topher, but there's not many people in the audience.

SHANNON (V.O.)

Critics loved it. But... I still wasn't being recognized for my abilities by the masses.

INT. RESTURANT

Shannon sits across the table from Topher. The two hold hands.

SHANNON (V.O.)

Topher promised me more interesting roles...

EXT. OUTDOOR WEDDING CEREMONY ON BEACH

Topher and Shannon kiss. Wedding attendees clap and cheer.

SHANNON (V.O.)

...But he probably only said that to keep me around. I never loved him, if I'm being perfectly honest. And I always knew he liked screwing around with whores at weird parties.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM

Shannon and her AGENT sit at the table, discussing future roles.

SHANNON (V.O.)

I had spent too much time waiting for interesting roles to come to me... I had missed the chance. I was getting lame one after lame one.

AGENT

(Holding script)

This is a great part.

(MORE)

AGENT (CONT'D)
"Sad Grandma." This has some real
potential, I'm telling you.

INT. FILM SET IN FRONT OF GREEN SCREEN

Shannon stands in front of the camera, holding a script.

DIRECTOR
So, in this scene, I feel like
Sally would-

SHANNON
Hallie.

DIRECTOR
...What?

SHANNON
Hallie. My character's name is
Hallie.

DIRECTOR
...Right! Hallie. Anyways, I feel
like *Hallie* would *really* be happy
to see her husband finally arrive
home after a long day.

INT. BEDROOM - SHANNON AND TOPHER'S HOME

Topher sleeps in bed. Shannon lies wide awake and stares at
the ceiling.

SHANNON (V.O.)
I thought about running away.
Getting out of this hole I was
trapped in. But how? I'm famous.
People would wonder where I was.
And if I was gonna leave town and
start this new life... I would need
money. But how would I be able to
take out a large sum without people
asking questions?

INT. SOUNDSTAGE

Shannon sits in a chair as A MAKE-UP PERSON applies make-up
to her face. Topher quickly walks by and kisses her on the
cheek.

SHANNON (V.O.)
I thought... this was it. This would
be the rest of my life.

EXT. FILM STUDIO - OUTSIDE SOUNDSTAGE

Shannon walks out of the soundstage. Donna appears, and quickly hands Shannon a flash drive.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SHANNON AND TOPHER'S HOME

Shannon stares blankly at the sex tape playing on her laptop. She ponders.

SHANNON (V.O.)
But then, an opportunity had
arisen.

INT. CLOTHING STORE

Shannon loads various pieces of clothing, wigs, and props into her shopping cart. She picks up a mask she would later sport as the Masked Figure. She stares at it.

Beat. She nods, then puts it into her cart.

INT. MAKE-UP TRAILER

A MAKE-UP PERSON brushes Shannon's hair, then steps away. Shannon quickly steals the person's make-up bag and shoves it into her purse. When the Make-Up Person returns, they are confused where their bag went.

INT. BATHROOM - SHANNON AND TOPHER'S HOME

Shannon stares at herself in the mirror.

SHANNON (V.O.)
I've played a ton of bad characters during my time in Hollywood. Bikini babes. Gorgeous dancers. Superhero's girlfriend. When I was older, it became crying mothers and supportive wives. But the worst character of all... was myself. I hated my life. This was the reason I wanted to be an actor... to escape into someone else. Into a different person. I longed for that escape.
(MORE)

SHANNON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 This was finally my chance. The chance to dedicate the rest of my life living in hiding as someone else. This is what I was waiting for.

SHANNON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 This would be the greatest role of all. But first, Shannon Sommers needed to disappear.

CHIP (V.O.)
 Dude, I have to pee so fucking bad right now. Like, I'm sorry but holy fucking shit it's bad.

SHANNON (V.O.)
 Almost done.

EXT. JUNKYARD

Shannon, in disguise as a MECHANIC, hands \$200 to a JUNK YARD WORKER, who then hands a set of car keys to her. In the background, is the shitty white van.

SHANNON (O.S.)
 If I wanted to escape this town... and begin my new life as a different person... I would first need some money. Fortunately, I had some leverage.

INT. VAN

A camera on a tripod records Shannon with a bag over her head and her arms behind her, pretending to be tied up. She struggles a bit for the camera, then calmly stands up to turn off the camera once she feels she got a good take.

INT. VAN

Shannon, with the Masked Figure mask on, sits menacingly in front of the camera, attempting to record part of a segment for the Blackmail tape.

SHANNON
 (*Deep voice/Messing up words*)
 BRING ONE MILLION DOLLARS TO 6922 HOLLYWOOD BOULEBARD... Boulebard?

INT. VAN - LATER

SHANNON
BRING ONE MILLION TO 69...? Fuck!
What's the address again?

INT. VAN - LATER

SHANNON
BRING 6922 HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD TO
ONE MILLION DOLLARS OR... Fuck!

INT. VAN - LATER

SHANNON
*(Smacking herself in the
forehead over and over
again)*
Stupid! Stupid! Stupid!

INT. VAN LATER

SHANNON
BRING ONE MILLION DOLLARS TO 6922
HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD PARKING GARAGE
TONIGHT OR THE GIRL DIES AND THE
TAPE RELEASES.
(Brief pause)
...That one felt good. Let's move on.

INT. HALLWAY - PRODUCTION HALLWAY - NIGHT

Shannon puts the Blackmail flash drive into an envelope and slides it under a door with the name TOPHER HALE written on it.

EXT. DRIVEWAY OUTSIDE SHANNON AND TOPHER'S HOME

Flashback. Topher opens his car door, then kisses Shannon on the cheek. In the distance, we see Chip and Pat watching.

TOPHER
Headin' to the office, baby. You
good?

Shannon nods. Topher steps into the car and drives away. Shannon watches.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SHANNON AND TOPHER'S HOME - NIGHT

Shannon, while dressed in full Masked Figure attire, pours gasoline everywhere.

INT. KITCHEN

Shannon pours gasoline around the kitchen.

SHANNON (V.O.)
Sylvia Kritel once said, "the actor works to escape". Not to find themselves.

INT. BEDROOM

Shannon begins pouring gasoline on all her valuables.

SHANNON (V.O.)
"You become an actor by leaving yourself, and then you have to keep acting."

She then reaches into her pocket and takes out a box of matches, lights one, then drops it on the floor without hesitation. Flames immediately erupt. Shannon walks out of the room dramatically.

INT. BACK TO LIVING ROOM

Shannon walks through the living room towards the front door. Flames form behind her as she walks. She reaches for the doorhandle but freezes when she spots something sitting on the bookshelf in the living room.

On the middle shelf, it's the photograph: Young Shannon at the county fair with her mother.

Shannon approaches the photograph. She stares at it for a while.

Suddenly, the bookshelf lights on fire, causing the photograph to as well. Shannon instinctively reaches for it and attempts to put it out, but she can't. The photograph engulfs in flames. The glove on her hand lights on fire as well. She tries to put it out, but the entire room is almost entirely in flames. She runs for the exit.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

Flashback. Just as we saw earlier, Shannon crashes through the garage door while driving the white van. Chip watches as Shannon, still in disguise as the Masked Figure, drives off.

INT. VAN

Shannon cries as she drives away from the burning home.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Shannon, in disguise as the Cleaning Lady we saw earlier, peaks around the corner and watches Chip enter Topher's room for the first time.

SHANNON (V.O.)

I had to be sure Topher would give me the money, and not try anything sneaky.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Chip and Topher plot. Knock from outside door. Shannon pokes her head into the hotel room as a Cleaning Lady.

SHANNON

(Strange accent)

Do you want me to clean-?

TOPHER

No! No, I already told you to not-

Shannon enters the room and begins dusting anyway.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

Ugh! Oh my God. Fine, whatever.

(Now talking to Chip)

Here's where you should start:
Donna Maxwell. That's who you
should be looking for.

Shannon's eyes widen.

SHANNON (V.O.)

I realized my plan could get Donna into deep trouble.

EXT. OUTSIDE FRONT GATE OUTSIDE MANSION

Shannon is in disguise as the Weird Guy we saw earlier. She approaches the Security Guard at the front gate. She's wearing a receding hairline wig and giant fake teeth.

SHANNON
(Weird voice)
 Steve Buscemi.

The Security Guard nods.

SECURITY GUARD
 Yup! You're definitely Steve
 Buscemi. Right this way.

The Security Guard opens the gate for Shannon.

EXT. POOL AREA - BACKYARD OF MANSION

Shannon, still in disguise, spots Donna Maxwell dancing in the middle of a crowd. Shannon approaches her.

SHANNON
(Still doing weird voice)
 Donna Maxwell.

DONNA
 Oh my God! Steve Buscemi! I'm a
 huge fa-

Shannon grabs Donna's arm and drags her off the dance floor.

SHANNON
 Can we go somewhere private? So we
 can... talk?

DONNA
 That depends. How much you
 offerin'?

Just then, Shannon spots Chip on the other side of the pool area, heading towards them.

SHANNON
 Whatever! I'll pay you whatever!
 Just... follow me!

Shannon quickly leads Donna inside the mansion.

INT. BEDROOM OF MANSION

Shannon pushes Donna inside and quickly closes the door behind them. Donna sits down on the edge of the bed. Shannon then takes off her wig and fake teeth. Donna is stunned.

DONNA

Oh my God! Shannon?! I thought... I thought you were-

Shannon quickly puts her costume back on. She sits next to Donna.

SHANNON

You need to get out of town, Donna. Get far away from-

DONNA

W-what? Why? I don't understand-

SHANNON

(Frantic)

Long story. I... I'm threatening to leak the tape if Topher doesn't give me money so I can start a new life. I'm using it as blackmail. So, you could be in danger and-

DONNA

Fuck! That's smart! Why didn't I do that?!

SHANNON

Donna, listen to me! You need to leave town! Or get security! Or... fucking something! Topher... he's having people look for you and-

DONNA

This is amazing! This is a huge win for me! Are you gonna release the video after you receive the money? Cause if you don't, then I could also use it as blackmail so Topher will cast me in his movie. But if you do release it, I would probably become famous. I could write a book and... they would probably make a Hulu series based on my life and-

SHANNON

Donna! Your life is in fucking danger! You need to security the fuck up!

Just then, Chip barges into the room.

SHANNON (V.O.)

It became clear you and Topher were pretty determined to do anything other than give me my money. So, I needed to do something drastic.

INT. PAWN SHOP

Shannon, in disguise as a CREEPY MAN, picks up a full-body mannequin and places it in her cart.

INT. GUNSHOP

Shannon, in disguise as a REDNECK, looks at a row of guns behind the counter.

INT. BACK OF VAN

Shannon sits the mannequin down in a chair. She reaches into a grocery bag, pulls out some rope, and ties the mannequin to the chair. She then puts some of the clothes on the mannequin as she was wearing in the fake hostage video.

She reaches into her pocket, takes a pocketknife and cuts a hole at the very top of the head, until she can see the mannequin's hollow insides.

Shannon then reaches into the grocery bag and takes out a gallon-bottle of red Hawaiian Punch. She unscrews the cap, takes a big sip, then pours the juice into the mannequin. Once empty, she reaches inside the bag, takes out another gallon of Punch, and pours it inside the mannequin again. This process repeats until the juice is filled to the very top of the mannequin's head.

Shannon puts a brown bag over the mannequin's head. She then walks over to the camera on the tripod, and hits record.

Shannon takes out the firearm, aims it at the mannequin's head.

Beat. She ponders a second. Eventually, she cocks the weapon, and fires. BANG!

Punch sprays from the mannequin's head, then the entire thing falls off the chair.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY

Shannon, once again in disguise as the Cleaning Lady, walks by Topher's hotel room, and slides a new envelope under the door.

SHANNON (V.O.)
 Everything could have been perfect...
 until you ruined it.

INT. VAN - PARKING LOT ROOF

Just like earlier, Chip's elbow breaks the window of the van. A Molotov is thrown inside. The laptop and flash drive copies of the sex tape, along with the rest of the van's interior, lights on fire.

EXT. PARKING LOT ROOF

Topher aims his revolver at Shannon, still in disguise as the Masked Figure. Chip then takes Topher's gun and chucks it off the roof.

SHANNON (V.O.)
 But then... you saved me.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. ALLEYWAY - BACK TO PRESENT

Beat. Chip is speechless. Shannon takes a big gasp of air.

SHANNON
 Whew! Oh my God! That was a lot of
 exposition! Sorry! You wouldn't
 happen to have any water on you,
 would you?

CHIP
 That doesn't explain why you're
 still here. Why did you stick
 around? He's probably got the Mob
 looking for you right now.

SHANNON
 I figured... you saved my ass. I
 probably should stick around and
 save yours. I knew he would also
 have a loose end: You.

(MORE)

SHANNON (CONT'D)

You know about the tape. He wants you dead, Chip.

Beat. Chip thinks. He then takes a scary step toward Shannon.

CHIP

Well... maybe I'll give him a peace offering.

SHANNON

..Chip-

CHIP

And then maybe... he'll reconsider and put me in his movie. I'm sure he'll be real thankful I found the kidnapper and his wife, who's still alive.

SHANNON

Look... please don't tell him about me. Just... I don't know... let me leave town. If you still want the role in his film then... pin the whole thing on someone else. Pick just a random guy or something. Boom. Problem solved.

CHIP

That's terrible! I'm not framing some random innocent guy for murder.

SHANNON

I don't mean just some random guy. I mean a random shitty guy. Like a bad person, who kinda deserves it. Like Hitler.

CHIP

Hitler? The former leader of Germany who's been dead for 80 years?

SHANNON

Oh my God! That was just an example! I meant someone *like* Hitler.

(Snaps fingers)

Neil Patrick Harris!

CHIP

Look, you're coming with me! He needs to know the truth!

SHANNON

Dumbass! He's not gonna put you in his movie! You can't act for shit! The minute you hand me over, him and his goons will kill you! He betrayed you once, he'll do it again!

SHANNON (CONT'D)

So... here are your options. You sit around waiting for his men to knock down your door and kill you... or you help me.

CHIP

Help you?

SHANNON

All of my copies of the sex tape are gone, Chip. You burned them. And I need that money from Topher if I'm gonna get outta this town forever. I need to meet with Donna again. She probably still has the original video on her phone. Once I have the upper hand, I'll have another shot at that million.

CHIP

Why do you need my help?

SHANNON

I know acting... but you know action. If Topher's men are looking for me, I need backup.

CHIP

No. No... I'm done with all this, Shannon. This is getting way too fucked up for me. I'm sorry.

Chip turns around and begins walking away.

SHANNON

I'll teach you how to act!

Beat. This peaks Chip's interest.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

You wanna stop making garbage and get the attention of serious filmmakers? You wanna be a contender? Act in the big leagues?

(MORE)

SHANNON (CONT'D)

You gotta learn how to act first. I can teach you.

Chip faces Shannon again. He smirks.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MEANWHILE

Topher paces around the room. A MOVER takes a cardboard box of Topher's belongings, then exits the apartment.

Just then, Frank Russo enters the apartment. He takes his sunglasses off.

FRANK

The hell was that guy doin'?

TOPHER

Taking all my shit to be auctioned off tomorrow. I'm startin' fresh, Frank. Don't worry about it.

(Whispering)

Is it done? Any word from Tony?

FRANK

Security found him lookin' like roadkill. I'm thinkin' Chip bested him and got away.

TOPHER

Fuck! I told you to send more guys! He's an action star for fucks sake!

Topher stops pacing.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

Alright... he knows we're out to get him. He'll probably try to leave town.

FRANK

What if he spills the beans 'bout the tape?

TOPHER

It'll fucking suck. It'll be a headache, but a manageable one. Without proof, the allegations will mean nothing. We'll kill him some other time. I say we worry about the kidnapper. I bet you they're out there right now, trying to get another copy of the tape.

FRANK

I thought Chip destroyed them all.

TOPHER

All the *copies*. Donna Maxwell still has the original.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

The kidnapper's probably gonna try to get it from her. New plan: Take out Donna. And destroy her phone too. She's probably still got the video on it.

Frank nods and exits the room.

EXT. OUTSIDE NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

There's a line of trendy-looking people waiting outside the club. A car pulls up to a nearby curb.

INT. CAR

Chip puts his car in park. He and Shannon stare at the club.

SHANNON

She's here most nights.

CHIP

How do you know?

SHANNON

I knew about her long before the tape, Chip.

(Switching subjects)

After her last interaction with you, she probably beefed up security. Topher's goons could be in there as well. So here's what we're gonna do..

Shannon begins reaching for something inside a grocery bag. She takes out a glowstick necklace, LED colored sunglasses, and a fedora.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

Acting challenge! You are a DJ!

Shannon reaches into her bag again and takes out a business suit and a black straight-haired wig.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

And I'm your manager. We wanna meet with Donna to discuss the potential of her appearing in one of your music videos.

CHIP

What? Why?

SHANNON

People are searching for you, Chip. You need to be in disguise-

CHIP

No, but... why a DJ? I'm nothing like a DJ.

SHANNON

Exactly. That's why it's called acting, dumb dumb. Now... what's your name?

CHIP

Uh... Chip?

SHANNON

No, your DJ name?

CHIP

Oh, uh... Bernard?

SHANNON

Bernard? You think a hip, cool young DJ will be named Bernard?

CHIP

...Xander. My name is Xander.

SHANNON

Now we're getting somewhere. Tell me about yourself, Xander.

CHIP

I'm, uh, a DJ.

SHANNON

Right... but what else?

CHIP

I don't see why this is necessary. I'll only need to be in disguise for like... 15 minutes-

SHANNON

Life for a character doesn't begin when the director says, "action". These characters are people, who've lived entire lifetimes before the film even begins. You need to know your character. The more you know, the better. Now... tell me about yourself, Xander.

CHIP

I... I like music.

SHANNON

..And? What else?

CHIP

And cool cars. And dancing. And partying. And being awesome.

Shannon sighs.

SHANNON

Good enough.

EXT. ENTRANCE OUTSIDE CLUB

There's a BOUNCER at the entrance not letting anyone in the large line enter the club.

Chip and Shannon, both in full costume, walk around the line completely and towards the Entrance.

SHANNON

(Whispering to Chip)

Follow my lead.

Chip follows Shannon, as she attempts to walk right through the entrance, ignoring the Bouncer completely. The Bouncer stops them.

BOUNCER

Woah, woah! Sorry, but I can't let you two in.

SHANNON

(Strange accent)

Pardon me? Have you the slightest idea who my client is?

BOUNCER

Uh, no?

SHANNON
DJ Xando. Sound familiar?

BOUNCER
Uh... no.

SHANNON
You must be deaf cause this rascal's been making serious noise in the music industry.

SHANNON (CONT'D)
He's hot shit right now!
(Covers nose)
Ugh, I'm boutta throw up right now. That's how much he smells like hot shit. The shit is *that* hot and smelly.

BOUNCER
Has he made anything I would recognize?

CHIP
Uh... yeah. There's one I made that goes like...
(Shitty beat-boxing)
Bwuuhhh! Bwuuhhh! Cha! Cha!
Bwuuhhh! Bwuuhhh! Cha! Cha!

Beat. Shannon and the Bouncer stare at Chip blankly.

SHANNON
Alright, well, if you haven't heard of him... then you've certainly heard of me: Shontarious.

BOUNCER
Shontarious? Shontarious... *what?*
What's your last name?

SHANNON
No last name. Just Shontarious.

BOUNCER
We'll I've never heard of you either, Lady.

SHANNON
Manager of Xando, and half of the DJ's who perform at this club. I manage all the hot and rising artists. But I prefer the term WO-
MAN-AGER.

(MORE)

SHANNON (CONT'D)

Because I'm just a badass woman
killing it in this industry for 20
plus years.

BOUNCER

I still don't know you. Get lost.

SHANNON

"Get lost?" How rude! Anybody ever
teach you some WO-MANNERS?

SHANNON (CONT'D)

I assure you, if you don't let me
in tonight, all of my clients will
no longer perform at this venue and
this club shall turn to ruin. You
will likely lose your job.

BOUNCER

Woah, hold on! Wait here and... lemme
make sure my boss know's you first.
Then I could maybe-

SHANNON

You work at one of the hottest
clubs in the city and you don't
know who, I, Shontarious, am? I
assure you, if you tell your boss
you don't know who Shontarious is,
you will be laughed out his office
with a pink slip in hand. So,
what's it gonna be? Will you let us
in?

INT. NIGHTCLUB - MINUTES LATER

Flashing lights. Loud, bumping music. Chip and Shannon walk
through the large crowd of party goers, searching for Donna.

SHANNON

Be on the lookout for Topher's
guys!

CHIP

(Yelling over music)

Holy shit! I can't believe you got
us in here! How did you do it?!

SHANNON

I became the character, Chip! I
became Shontarious! That's all it
is!

(MORE)

SHANNON (CONT'D)

Just absolutely convincing yourself that you can be a completely different person. And be specific! These aren't one-note tropes! These are human beings with nuanced experiences!

Eventually, Shannon spots a private section, where Donna is getting wasted by herself. A CLUB EMPLOYEE stands in front of the section, blocking anyone who isn't allowed in. Shannon and Chip approach.

CLUB EMPLOYEE

Private section. Sorry.

Shannon signals for Chip to do the talking this time.

CHIP

Uh... listen, chum. Name's Xando. I'm performing later tonight. And, uh, if you want me to bring the bangers, you better let me in this section.

CLUB EMPLOYEE

Can't allow it. Wait a minute... I know you!

Chip begins sweating.

CHIP

Uh, no. No you don't.

CLUB EMPLOYEE

Are you famous? Have I seen you from something?

CHIP

..Coachella maybe.

CLUB EMPLOYEE

Yo! You know who you look like? That one guy in all those action films! Chip Rondo!

Beat.

CHIP

..Hehe. Yeah, I get that a lot. But... I'm just a DJ. Not an action star.

Ugly pause. Club Employee doesn't seem convinced. Chip's losing it. Shannon is about to step in. But then...

CHIP (CONT'D)

But, uh, that don't mean I ain't
also gettin' *action* as a DJ, if you
know what I'm sayin'?

Club Employee laughs.

CLUB EMPLOYEE

Oh, yeah, I bet it's insane.

CHIP

Chicks dig a DJ. One spin of a
record, and she's in love. Which
is, uh, actually a song I made.

CHIP (CONT'D)

"One spin and she's in love." Some
people think it's about, like,
twirling. But it's actually about
DJ'ing.

Club Employee laughs. Him and Chip continue having a lovely
conversation.

As the Club Employee is distracted, Shannon sneaks behind
him, and gives Chip a thumbs-up.

SHANNON

(Mouthing to Chip)

You're doing good!

Shannon waltzes right into the Private Section. The Club
Employee doesn't notice.

INT. PRIVATE SECTION - CLUB

Donna snoozes on a sofa. Shannon approaches.

SHANNON

Donna! Donna, wake up!

DONNA

(Waking up/Drunk)

Ugh! The fuck? Who are you?

Shannon quickly takes off her black-haired wig, then puts it
back on her head.

DONNA (CONT'D)

Sha... Shannon?

SHANNON

We need to talk. Not here. It isn't safe.

DONNA

Did you... did you release the video?

SHANNON

It's gone, Donna. I need you to send it to me again. Is it on your phone?

DONNA

Uh, yeah-

Shannon pulls Donna onto her feet.

INT. BACK TO OUTSIDE PRIVATE SECTION - CLUB

Chip and the Club Employee are still chatting.

CLUB EMPLOYEE

I'm telling you, man. Let's buy the house together. It's in a great area. There's... there's a beach right out-

CHIP

No, no. You can't do that, Daniel. Your roots are here. The club needs you.

CLUB EMPLOYEE

Oh, forget the club!

CHIP

And what about your sister? Who's gonna take care of her?

Just then, Chip spots a menacing looking Italian man across the room. It's definitely one of Frank's GOONS.

The Goon is coming their way, towards the Private Section. His hand inside his jacket, ready to pull out a firearm.

Just then, Shannon leaves the Private Section with Donna leaning on her, still drunk.

SHANNON

I got her.

CHIP

Dude's coming. You two need to run.
Now.

Shannon and Donna make their way toward an exit. The Goon, now standing closer to Chip, takes out his gun and points it at the two women.

Before the Goon can fire, Chip tackles him onto the floor. Chip then punches the Goon repeatedly in the face.

Shannon and Donna are able to leave through an exit.

Chip stands up. Goon is still on the floor, unconscious.

CHIP (CONT'D)

(To Club Employee)

I need to go.

CLUB EMPLOYEE

Will I ever see you again?

CHIP

...I don't know. Probably not.

CLUB EMPLOYEE

In another life then, I suppose.

Chip dashes away. Club Employee wipes a tear from his eyes.

EXT. PARKING LOT BEHIND CLUB

Shannon and Donna exit out the back. Just then... BANG!

Donna collapses. She dies instantly.

Shannon is dumbfound. ANOTHER GOON holding a smoking gun stands in front of her.

The Goon slowly reaches into Donna's purse, takes out a phone, then smashes it on the ground. He then cocks the gun, and aims it at Shannon.

Just then, Chip leaves through the exit and enters the parking lot. His eyes widen at the chaos.

The Goon then decides to aim his weapon at Chip. Shannon quickly punches him in the stomach.

Now that the Goon is discombobulated, Chip quickly dashes over and drop-kicks the Goon in the head. Goon is knocked out.

Beat. Shannon leans over Donna's body. Chip does the same.

CHIP
...We need to go.

Shannon nods.

INT. CAR - STILL NIGHT

Later. Chip drives. Shannon sits in the passenger seat. The two sit in silence.

CHIP
It's not your fault.

SHANNON
This never would've happened if I didn't-

CHIP
She took the video of Topher. Her life was in danger. It would've happened to her regardless.

Beat.

CHIP (CONT'D)
...Now what?

SHANNON
Now... I'm fucked. That video was my last shot at starting a new life.

CHIP
You have no spare downloads of it?

SHANNON
All in the van.

CHIP
And you can't just start this new life now?

SHANNON
I can't. With no money, I won't make it far. And I can't take money out the bank without people asking questions. I might as well meet Topher and tell him everything.

CHIP
He'll kill you.

SHANNON

Or worse. Forgive. And I'll continue living this unsatisfying life. Who knows? Maybe some of my things survived the fire.

CHIP

Don't get your hopes up. He's auctioning everything off.
(Realizes something)
Holy Shit!

Chip quickly pulls the car over and parks. Shannon is confused.

SHANNON

What?! What?!

CHIP

The auction! There's gonna be a huge Celebrity give-away auction!

SHANNON

Okay? So?

CHIP

Topher's giving away everything. He's so fucking stupid and pissed off that he's giving away all of his possessions.

SHANNON

I still don't get it. Why is this important?

CHIP

His assistant? Tammy? Do you know who I'm talking about?

SHANNON

His niece? She's a dumbass.

CHIP

She's trying her best. Anyways...

QUICK FLASHBACK

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Just as we saw earlier, Tammy struggles with opening the video on the laptop. She clicks download on accident.

CHIP (V.O.)
When she plugged the flash drive
into the computer, she accidentally
downloaded it! It's still on the
computer!

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. BACK TO CAR

SHANNON
Well... what if he deleted it?

CHIP
What if he didn't?

SHANNON
...What if he doesn't put the
computer on auction?

CHIP
What if he does?

SHANNON
You really think Topher's shitty
laptop would go up on a celebrity
item auction?

CHIP
You're famous. If you're famous,
everything you touch has value.
People will try to buy the fucking
patch of grass LeBron James took a
shit on. Not to mention, you're
still "missing". Every item Topher
gives away will be purchased for
top dollar. Look, this is our best
shot. I say we do it.

SHANNON
...I'm still not sure about this,
Chip.

CHIP
This is the only way. Now...

Chip reaches into a grocery bag in the passenger seat, takes
out a gray-haired wig, and hands it to Shannon.

CHIP (CONT'D)
Get your act together.

INT. CAR - PARKING LOT - OUTSIDE AUCTION HOUSE - DAY

Chip wears a suit, fake handle-bar mustache, and round glasses. Shannon wears a gray-haired wig, round glasses, and an expensive-looking dress. Both have make-up wrinkles on their face.

SHANNON

What's your name?

CHIP

(British voice)

Warren Chansley Hearst.

SHANNON

What's my name?

CHIP

Dottie Hearst. Wife. My fourth.

SHANNON

What do you do, Warren?

CHIP

Former head of a steal beam manufacturing company. Made me a fortune.

SHANNON

How did we meet?

CHIP

Train convention.

SHANNON

Why did you come to this auction today?

CHIP

Because you wanted to come to this auction today. In our later and more boring years, you picked up the hobby of collecting various trinkets belonging to that of Old Hollywood stars. I roll my eyes and say I don't wanna be here. But, who am I kidding? I do. At some point, I'll raise my paddle when there's a prop lightsaber on stage and act like I'm only getting it just to be cheeky. In reality, I long for such a piece of memorabilia. But I would never let you know that. But you know anyway. And you still love me.

Beat.

SHANNON
You're ready.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MEANWHILE

Topher paces around in his hotel room while Frank speaks. All of Topher's belongings are gone. The space is essentially empty now.

Tammy lays on the bed, playing on her phone.

FRANK
We got Donna. After we take out Chip and the Kidnapper, that's all loose ends. Now, are you sure all copies of the freak tape are destroyed?

TOPHER
Absolutely. I'm sure of that.

Tammy comes to a realization. She stands up from the bed.

TAMMY
Wait a minute, boss. I accidentally hit download on the video. It's still on the laptop, remember?

TOPHER
Woah! Yeah, that's right! Great memory, Tammy! I completely forgot about that. Great work! Go ahead and open up my laptop. Delete that video ASAP.

Beat.

TAMMY
Uh, I can't.

TOPHER
What? Why now?

TAMMY
It's not here.

TOPHER
Well... then where is it?

TAMMY
At the Auction.

TOPHER

What?! Why?! Why is my laptop at
the fucking auction, Tammy?!

TAMMY

Uh, you said get rid of everything.

Topher walks over to Frank, reaches into his suit jacket,
takes out a gun, and shoots Tammy in the head. Her dead body
plots onto the carpet.

TOPHER

I told my sister this was a bad
week.

Frank isn't too astonished by this. Topher blows the smoke
off the gun, then puts it back in Frank's suit jacket.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

Let's go!

Topher and Frank leave the Hotel Room in a hurry.

INT. AUCTION HOUSE - MEANWHILE

Ballroom-type setting. There's a stage in the very back of
the room. The packed Auction will commence shortly. Attendees
drink and chat amongst each other.

Chip and Shannon, still in disguise as a wealthy elderly
couple talk to a random fancy AUCTION ATTENDEE.

Shannon watches proudly as Chip fully dives into his
character.

CHIP

And I said, Dottie dear, that's
what snow pants are for!

The Auction Attendee laughs hysterically.

AUCTION ATTENDEE

Oh, my! Warren, you are too much!
(Facing Shannon)
How do you put up with him?

SHANNON

Wine!
(Makes strange chugging
sound effect)

Chip and Auction Attendee chuckle.

AUCTION ATTENDEE

Well, I'm just glad you two are still so close. Even after everything! I mean, losing a child? I can't even imagine-

CHIP

Ah, yes. Losing Baron had its toll. And I'm not gonna lie to you, Phil, it wasn't easy. I still think about our boy every day.

CHIP (CONT'D)

I remember the manor we had upstate. You remember upstate, dear?

SHANNON

Oh, yes. I do.

CHIP

And every summer, we would stay there to unwind. I would chase little Baron around our hedge maze, pretending to be a big scary monster. Like Frankenstein or a Mummy or a ghost or a poor person. Good times, they were.

The Auction AttendeE shows an Auction Item Pamphlet to Chip and Shannon.

AUCTION ATTENDEE

Say, you two see some of the items on the agenda? Some stuff in here that belonged to Shannon Sommers.

SHANNON

Hmm. Interesting.

CHIP

She's still missing, isn't she?

AUCTION ATTENDEE

I believe so. Yet all of her possessions are being sold off. Seems like the world has concluded that the girl is dead.

CHIP

Oh, I'm sure she'll show up sooner or later. She's stronger than she looks.

Beat. Shannon coughs, signaling Chip to stop talking about this. However, the Auction Attendee's interested is already piqued.

AUCTION ATTENDEE
What makes you say that?

CHIP
...I knew her.

AUCTION ATTENDEE
Really? You knew Shannon Sommers?

CHIP
Indeed, I did.

SHANNON
I wonder when the auction will begin-

AUCTION ATTENDEE
I guess, I never really thought of her much. Other than being that quite attractive woman on that dreadful show that was popular so long ago.

CHIP
Oh, she was more than that.

AUCTION ATTENDEE
Well, what was she like?

Beat.

CHIP
She was the greatest actor I've ever met.

The Auction Attendee is shocked by this claim.

AUCTION ATTENDEE
Really?!

CHIP
Mhm. In 2004, when I was living in Chelsea, a local theatre had cast me in a retelling of Macbeth set in the Punk Rock world of 70's London. I had auditioned on a drunken dare from my so-called chaps. I was terrified. I've never acted in anything before.

(MORE)

CHIP (CONT'D)

However, I became friendly with a Producer who knew Shannon. We met, and she taught me how to act. Here I was, someone who was completely helpless, turned into a somewhat decent performer, thanks to her help. A great teacher. A great listener. And a great friend to all.

The Auction Attendee is impressed. Shannon is speechless.

AUCTION ATTENDEE

Well... it was a pleasure meeting you both.

The Auction Attendee walks away.

SHANNON

(Whispering)

Whew. All that stuff you said about me back there. That was some serious acting! Great work.

CHIP

I wasn't acting.

Shannon smiles.

Just then, an AUCTION ANNOUNCER stands on top of the stage.

AUCTION ANNOUNCER

Thank you all for attending! We shall now begin!

INT. CAR - MEANWHILE

Frank drives crazily through traffic. Topher sits in the passenger seat.

INT. BACK TO AUCTION HOUSE

A diamond necklace is brought on stage by a PRESENTER.

AUCTION ANNOUNCER

We'll now begin with an item owned by Actress, Shannon Sommers. This is a white gold and diamond pendent.

In the audience, Shannon whispers into Chip's ear.

SHANNON
(Whispering)
 Ooh! I bought that necklace for
 \$50,000. I wonder what it'll go for
 here.

An AUDIENCE MEMBER raises a bidding paddle.

AUDIENCE MEMBER
(Raising paddle)
 \$14.

AUCTION ANNOUNCER
 Anyone else? Sold!

SHANNON
 Bullshit! I payed-!

Everyone in the audience stares at Shannon. She pauses.

SHANNON (CONT'D)
 I mean... I'm sure *Shannon* payed a
 lot of money for that! That's all.
 My apologies.

Auction continues.

INT. BACK TO CAR - MEANWHILE

Frank and Topher continue speeding.

INT. BACK TO AUCTION

Just then, a presenter brings out the laptop.

AUCTION ANNOUNCER
 And now, another item that belonged
 to Shannon and Topher. A lavish
 Dell XPS 16 laptop. As you can see,
 the cool Star Wars stickers on the
 front really add to the
 exclusiveness of this item. We'll
 start the bidding off at \$100. Do
 we have \$100?

Shannon raises her paddle. Another BIDDER raises theirs as
 well.

AUCTION ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
 200? Can I get 200?

CHIP
(Whispering to Shannon)
 Who's paying for this?

SHANNON
 You.
(Raises paddle)
 \$1000!

Shannon raises her paddle. The other Bidder does not.

EXT. PARKING LOT - OUTSIDE AUCTION HOUSE

Frank and Topher's vehicle enters the parking lot.

INT. BACK TO AUCTION

Shannon is the only person with her paddle raised.

AUCTION ANNOUNCER
 \$1000 is the one to beat!

EXT. BACK TO PARKING LOT

Frank and Topher quickly exit the car and sprint towards the entrance.

INT. BACK TO AUCTION

AUCTION ANNOUNCER
 Going once? Going twice? And...

EXT. BACK TO PARKING LOT

Frank and Topher charge through the entrance doors.

INT. BACK TO AUCTION

AUCTION ANNOUNCER
 Sold! Congratulations, ma'am!

Audience applauds. Topher and Frank enter the room in a daze.

TOPHER
(Catching breath)
 Stop! Stop! I... I need to take an
 item off the auction! The laptop!

AUCTION ANNOUNCER

Mr. Hale. My apologies. But I'm
afraid it's already been sold to...
(*Pointing to Chip and
Shannon in audience*)
Mr. and Mrs. Hearst.

Topher furiously stares at Chip and Shannon, both still in
disguise. He and Frank exit the Auction house.

EXT. EMPTY PARKING LOT - OUTSIDE AUCTION HOUSE - LATER

Chip and Shannon exit the Auction House holding the laptop.
The two laugh.

Just then, a car pulls up in front of them. Out walk Frank
and Topher.

FRANK

Good Evening. On behalf of Mr.
Hale, I would like to congratulate
the both of you on winning the
laptop.

CHIP

(*Still in character*)
...Thank you?

FRANK

However, a mistake has been made
and my friend here is really eager
to get his laptop back.

SHANNON

(*Still in character*)
Yeah, well, we already paid for it.
Sorry.

FRANK

\$1000, right?

Chip and Shannon nod.

Just then, Topher reaches into the car, takes out a
briefcase, and opens it, presenting the million dollars he
was gonna give to the "Kidnapper" earlier.

Chip and Shannon are stunned.

FRANK (CONT'D)

We're prepared to offer you both
one million dollars for the laptop?
What do you say? We have a deal?

Beat. Chip stares at Shannon, and gives a nod that says, "Take the deal!"

SHANNON
We need to discuss first.

FRANK
Absolutely.

Chip and Shannon step away from Frank and Topher.

CHIP
(*Whispering*)
What the hell are you doing?! Take the deal! This is what you wanted!

SHANNON
I don't know. It's just... I don't know. Doesn't seem right.

CHIP
Shannon. Do it. Take the deal.

Beat. Shannon nods. The two regroup with Frank and Topher.

FRANK
What do you say? We gotta deal?

CHIP
Deal.

FRANK
Terrific.

Frank hands the suitcase to Shannon. She accepts. Beat. She's not handing over the laptop.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Is there a problem, sweetheart?

Shannon still doesn't move.

CHIP
Uh, *Dottie dear*. Are you okay?

Shannon nods.

SHANNON
Mhm. Everything's okay.

Shannon hands over the laptop. Frank accepts, then he hands it to Topher.

TOPHER

I appreciate this. My wife she... she's still de... I mean still missing! And, yeah, I really miss her a lot. So, yeah. This means a lot.

Topher and Frank approach the car with the laptop.

SHANNON

Your wife? You love her?

Topher freezes.

TOPHER

Uh, yeah. Of course. Duh!

SHANNON

What did you love about her?

CHIP

Dottie, I-

TOPHER

Uh, you know... she was... nice, I guess. Very nice person. And beautiful. Insanely beautiful.

SHANNON

Yeah, I always thought so too. So, I guess I'm wondering, how come you never put her in any more of your movies? She starred in like... one or two. Then it feels like... she got sidelined, I suppose. How come?

TOPHER

Look, she was a wonderful person and-

SHANNON

How come?

Beat.

TOPHER

You want the truth? Okay. I just... I didn't feel like she was that good of an actor. She was just alright to me. I don't know... I was never convinced she could accurately play a completely different person.

SHANNON
Thought she couldn't play a
"completely different person", huh?

Shannon removes her glasses.

CHIP
Woah, woah! Now, Dottie, honey.
Let's-

TOPHER
The fuck you doing, lady?

Shannon rips off her wig.

SHANNON
"Not that good of an actor"?

TOPHER
Wait a minute-

Shannon rubs the fake wrinkle marks off her face. Topher and Frank are perplexed.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
Shannon?!

Shannon punches Topher in the stomach, then reaches for the laptop in his hand. Before she can grab it, Frank smacks her across the face.

She falls to the ground, dropping the million dollar suitcase.

Frank takes out his gun and aims it at Shannon. Chip kicks the gun out of Frank's hands.

Chip then quickly gets Shannon back onto her feet, and drags her away from the scene.

SHANNON
No, wait! Chip, go back! We need
the tape and the money!

TOPHER
(*To himself*)
Chip?

Frank picks up his gun and fires at Chip and Shannon. The two escape.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

In the dirty motel room, Chip paces. Shannon sits on the edge of a bed.

CHIP

Fuck! You coulda had it, Shannon!
You could've had your money and
gotten the fuck outta here by now!

SHANNON

It's not enough simply being a
great actor. I want... I want the
world to know it as well.

CHIP

That's stupid as fuck, Shannon.

Shannon stands up and enters the bathroom. She slams the door behinds her.

CHIP (CONT'D)

(To himself)

Dumbass.

Just then, Chip's phone rings. He answers.

CHIP (CONT'D)

(Into phone)

Hello?

TOPHER (O.S.)

Chip, Chip, Chip. Chip, Chip,
Chippy.

CHIP

...Topher.

TOPHER (O.S.)

Just destroyed the laptop. Felt
awesome. How's Shannon doing by the
way? I should've know you would've
tried to team-up with the
"kidnapper" after I fucked you
over.

CHIP

What do you want?

TOPHER (O.S.)

Dude, that was some legit acting
back there. I mean, Holy Fuck. You
as the old man?

(MORE)

TOPHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 I didn't know you had it in you.
 You surprised me today.

CHIP
 Cut to the chase, Topher.

TOPHER (O.S.)
 I was wrong about you. You are a
 good actor, Chip. Perhaps good
 enough to star in my movie.

CHIP
 If I had a nickel, Topher.

TOPHER (O.S.)
 I'm not bullshitting you, Chip. I'm
 serious. I fucked you over once.
 But not this time. I will put you
 in my movie.

CHIP
 And how do I know you'll come
 through? This could be a trap?

TOPHER (O.S.)
 Dude, at this point, every guy I've
 sent to kill you, you handled them
 no problem. I couldn't kill you
 even if I tried. You're more than
 capable of defending yourself. Now...
 I'll put you in my movie. You just
 need to do one thing for me: Bring
 her to me. Bring me the girl.
 That's all I ask.

CHIP
 No way, Toph-

TOPHER (O.S.)
 Listen to me, Chip! The chick's
 crazy. Speaking from experience
 here. She almost got you killed
 today. She burned my fucking house
 down then tried to ruin my life!
 She needs to be taken care of.

Beat. Chip has no response.

TOPHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Maybe because she taught you some
 neat tricks about acting, you feel
 some sort of loyalty to her?
 (MORE)

TOPHER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

But let me tell you something about loyalty in this town... it doesn't mean shit. This is what you wanted, Chip. You learned how to act. I have a good part. Let's make a deal? What do ya say?

Chip ponders.

EXT. UNATTENDED GATE OUTSIDE FILM STUDIO - NIGHT

Chip parks his car near the entrance of the studio.

INT. CAR

Chip sits in the driver's seat. Shannon looks concerned.

SHANNON

Wait, why are we here? You said you knew a better hideout-

CHIP

I'm sorry, Shannon.

SHANNON

What-?

Just then, Shannon's car door swings open. Frank pulls her out of the vehicle. Shannon shrieks.

Topher then runs out and puts the suitcase full of money in the passenger seat of Chip's car.

TOPHER

As an extra thank you. The million dollars is yours. Have your agent call me tomorrow. We'll schedule test shoots and rehearsals.

CHIP

..Okay. Sounds good.

Topher steps away from the car. Him and Frank begin dragging Shannon away. They head towards an empty soundstage hanger.

As Chip takes the car out of park, he looks at Shannon being taken away. She has a devastated look on her face.

Chip sighs. He drives away.

INT. CAR - LATER

Chip drives, pondering.

INT. EMPTY SOUNDSTAGE - MINUTES LATER

Shannon sits in a Director's chair tied-up, at gunpoint.
Topher does circles around her while holding a firearm.

Just then, Frank reenters the soundstage, also holding a gun.

FRANK
Coast is clear.

TOPHER
Good.

Topher then stops doing circles around Shannon.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
Thought you could ruin my life then
run away, huh? Thought you could
get away with it? Fake your death?

TOPHER (CONT'D)
That shooting yourself in the head
thing was well done, I must admit.

Topher cocks the gun, and aims it at her head.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
But let's see how well you did your
research.

Just then, there's a banging sound.

TOPHER (CONT'D)
The fuck was that?

Frank shrugs.

FRANK
Dunno.

Topher sighs.

TOPHER
Whatever. Alright. Where was I? Oh,
yeah!

Topher aims his gun at Shannon's head again.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

Adios.

The banging, almost knocking sound, is heard again. It's coming from the soundstage entrance door.

Topher quickly holsters his weapon.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

Fuck! Someone is definitely there!
I'm gonna check it out.

Frank nods.

Topher creeps over to the entrance door. The knocking sound coming from it is relentless. He reaches for the handle, twists, and opens the door revealing...

Frank, standing up and hopping while tied-up with duck tape around his mouth. He's trying to speak and warn Topher about something, but it's muffled.

TOPHER (CONT'D)

What the-?!

Just then, a gun points to the back of Topher's head. It's "Frank".

CHIP

Don't move.

Chip takes off the fake mustache, sunglasses, and shiny black hair wig that made him look like the real Frank.

TOPHER

What?! Chip?! No! No, this can't
be! How?!

Chip whacks Topher in the head with the bottom of the gun, knocking him out.

CHIP

It's called acting, you sick son-
of-a-bitch.

Chip then runs over to Shannon and unties her.

SHANNON

..You came back.

CHIP

Of course I did. Sorry I almost got
you killed.

Shannon stands up.

SHANNON
Alright, let's get outta here.

CHIP
You had me at sex.

SHANNON
Uh, I never said sex.

CHIP
You just did.

SHANNON
What?

CHIP
Sorry, it's... I'm referencing something from earlier. I don't actually wanna have sex with you. You seem great! But... I think I'm comfortable with the friendship we have right now now, you know?

SHANNON
..Okay? Uh, yeah. I agree.

CHIP
Yeah. Cool.

The two head toward the exit.

CHIP (CONT'D)
What's your plan? I have the million. It's all yours.

SHANNON
Then... I guess I'll go through with the plan. Start a new life.

CHIP
Oh, come on. You don't *really* want to leave.

SHANNON
What?

CHIP
I don't think you actually want to leave. You've played a lot of characters.

(MORE)

CHIP (CONT'D)

But I think at some point, you realized you liked Shannon Sommers more than you thought you did.

Shannon smiles.

SHANNON

...Maybe so. Then what should we do with the million dollars?

CHIP

I think I have an idea.

INT. 1940'S BATHROOM - DAY

One month later.

Chip, in costume as a Husband, argues with Shannon, in costume as a Wife.

CHIP

You can't be serious!

SHANNON

I am serious!

Shannon's character stands in front of the bathroom mirror and begins cutting her hair short.

CHIP

Penelope, it will never work!

SHANNON

I have to try! My brother is in Germany right now, fighting for his life. He needs my help! He took care of me when we both lived on the streets!

CHIP

They don't let women in the army, sweetheart.

Shannon then puts on a fake mustache.

SHANNON

You're right. They don't.

CHIP

I can't let you go. Not alone.

SHANNON

Come with me.

CHIP

You know my heart ain't no good.

SHANNON

Well, mine is. He's my brother,
John. And I won't stop until I
bring him home.

Shannon exits the room, then quickly reenters, now out of character.

SHANNON (CONT'D)

Cut! Change set-ups!

CREW MEMBER (O.S.)

Changing set-ups.

A very small film crew swarms the set, and begins changing camera set-ups.

A Crew Member gives Shannon a handheld monitor screen. She reviews the take. A MAKE-UP PERSON fixes something on Chip's face.

CHIP

How was that take? Bad, right?

Beat. Shannon smiles at Chip.

SHANNON

It was perfect!

The End.