

SHOT!

A Play Written by

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SHOT

A new play by Vian Andrews

Prologue

This play is based on a film script the author wrote first. The cinematic version utilizes flashbacks, scenes from the here and now to be shot in various locations, and scenes from "Penetration", a film script the male protagonist, Christopher Beeston, is developing for the female protagonist, Sarah Siddons.

"Shot", the play, however, must do all of this within the four dimensions of the stage - and achieve it without *unnecessarily* confusing the audience.

"Shot" turns on a contest of wills between the two protagonists, the outcome of which depends on their contrived ability to make the best of their respective skills. The challenge to the actors who take on these roles is to find the means to both bury the artifice of their work, but to illuminate it to.

Both the film and stage versions of "Shot" are an attempt to pull audiences into the psychological space the characters inhabit, where time and space, the conscious and unconscious, evil and good, calm and storm, light and dark and dream and reality are all of a piece, and to do it in a way that tears at the certainties we normally project on our worlds when we leave the theater.

DRAMATIS PERSONNAE

CHRISTOPHER BEESTON - Academy Award Screenwriter
SARAH SIDDONS - Academy Award winning actress
BECCA DELISLE (Sarah Siddons) - LA "movie" Detective
GWEN ARTHUR (Sarah Siddons)- "Movie" award winning actress
JOHANNA - actress in "movie"
NEL JORDAN - Murdered daughter of Christopher BEESTON
KELLY (Nel Jordan) - "Movie" murder victim
SAMANTHA - Christopher's ex wife; Nel's mother.
DETECTIVE KEMP - detective in charge of Nel's cold case murder
DYLAN MATT - Sarah's agent
SARAH'S LAWYER (Dylan Matt) - "movie" lawyer
CHOKO - Nel's roommate
SUKI - KELLY's "movie" roommate
CHIEF OF DETECTIVES - Becca Delisle's "movie" boss
GEORGE EDWARDS - Hollywood leading man and A-Lister
CLAYTON MICHEL - "Movie" leading man and A-Lister
BRANDON TILLY - Nel's on set friend
JOSH (Brandon Tilly) - KELLY's on set "movie" friend
MALE ACTOR - in "movie" with Johanna

Scene 1

Night. In a large black frame, a film image of a barely visible car taken through the branches of a tree. The car engine is running. We can't see the driver.

In front of the screen, a beautiful young woman, NEL, about 25, emerges from her unseen apartment building and strides angrily toward the passenger door. She talks loudly with her back to the audience.

NEL

This is just too much. Enough.
Enough. Enough. Go away. Go
away!

NEL is gesticulating angrily at whomever is in the car but her and the driver's muffled voices are not distinct. Suddenly, she turns away from the car and walks back toward the audience (her apartment building).

She pivots, looks back at the car and yells at the driver.

NEL (CONT'D)

And don't think I won't!

NEL turns toward the apartment building and takes a step as two gunshots ring out in the night. NEL falls dead, and as she does a simple silver bracelet falls to the road near her.

On screen, a car engine revs and the car drives off, fishtailing for the first thirty yards.

Momentarily, NEL's roommate, CHOKO enters from the direction of the apartment building, cell phone in hand. Frantic, she rushes to NEL's now dead body.

CHOKO kneels beside NEL and shakes her shoulders. She pokes at her cell phone to call 911.

CHOKO

Please, please, come quickly...NEL,
NEL has been shot. She's bleeding.
Not breathing.

Once 911 hangs up, CHOKO looks around. She sees the bracelet and crawls to it and holds it up in the dim light. She reads an inscription on the inner rim then slips it on her wrist.

The screen fills with a video of parked cop cars with flashing lights. Nel and Choko make their way off stage.

Scene 2

Dawn. In the frame - now vivid blue - a filmed image of a long beach, with gentle waves rolling in. A surtitle on the screen says "5 Years Later".

On the deck of a house overlooking the beach, **CHRISTOPHER BEESTON**, an academy award winning screenwriter, used binoculars to search the strand below. He sees what he is looking for.

CHRISTOPHER
There you are. Right on cue.

CHRISTOPHER puts the binoculars down, zippers his jacket and disappears inside.

Scene 3

DYLAN MATT, a Hollywood agent, out for his morning constitutional, walks in from stage left, head into the wind.

CHRISTOPHER walks in nonchalantly from stage right. They pass one another in the middle of screen, then make very brief eye contact.

MATT
Windy today.

CHRISTOPHER
Not a wind to crack your cheeks...

MATT
(looking back)
Or rage or blow...

They both walk on but CHRISTOPHER stops and turns to MATT.

CHRISTOPHER
Hoy!

MATT stops and turns to face CHRISTOPHER.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
You're DYLAN MATT. Hollywood agent. Agent to the stars as they say.

MATT
And you're CHRISTOPHER BEESTON, screenwriter extraordinaire.

They shake hands.

CHRISTOPHER

Your name was booted about in Variety this week. What the hell was it...Something about you and SARAH SIDDONS.

MATT

I dared to take her on as a client.

CHRISTOPHER

Brave man.

MATT

She's difficult, but a fabulous talent.

CHRISTOPHER

Washed-up?

MATT

Not hardly. Not if we can find the right vehicle. Got anything she can look at?

CHRISTOPHER looks toward the ocean.

CHRISTOPHER

I'm working on something.

MATT

She's putting a lot of pressure on me to find something. So...

CHRISTOPHER

But, she's difficult.

MATT

She's a fucking great talent. And you're great. CHRISTOPHER BEESTON plus SARAH SIDDONS...movie magic.

CHRISTOPHER

I dunno...I'll think about it.

MATT hands him his business card. CHRISTOPHER takes it, then turns and continues on his walk.

MATT

I'm going to have her call you. You guys get together. See if sparks fly, which they sure as hell will. She's a *bad* good girl, if you know what I mean...

MATT turns and resumes his walk, casting a backward glance at CHRISTOPHER as he walks off stage.

Scene 4

As CHRISTOPHER and MATT leave the stage, a filmed scene of a parking garage flickers onto the on-stage screen. CHRISTOPHER walks into his home. He pours himself a scotch then finds the remote, turns toward the screen and "turns it on", opening a scene in a dark parking garage.

In front of the screen SARAH SIDDONS, Oscar-winning Hollywood actress, in the character of Johanna in the film he's watching, walks in a trench coat, enters with a gun levelled at an unseen actor..

SARAH

(As Johanna in the film)

You gonna make me come in there?
Or are you gonna be a man and show
your face?

The other actor comes out, tentatively, holding his arms in the air. They meet at center stage. CHRISTOPHER steps out from stage left and watches as he drinks a double shot of scotch. He holds the TV remote in the other hand.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(as Johanna)

You always said I had a killer
instinct. So die with a smile on
your face. For once you were
right. I did love you. Once upon
a time. But once is never enough
is it?

SARAH (Johanna) raises a gun and holds it steady on her counterpart then, her hand trembling, pulls the trigger. Blam! A body falls heavily in a heap in front of her.

Looking down at the body, "Johanna" opens her purse, finds a cigarette and a lighter, then, after taking a deep breath, lights up and exhales into the glow of spotlight coming from above.

CHRISTOPHER lifts the remote control and turns off the film, which is running a list of credits. SARAH and the other actor leave the stage. CHRISTOPHER lifts his glass in a salute to her, then turns and walks to center stage.

CHRISTOPHER

(absently)

Storm Warning. Into the Storm.

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Eye of the Storm. Big Fuckin'
Storm. Hurricane SARAH.

Scene 5

Next day. A loud knock on the door. CHRISTOPHER walks to the door, peeks out the peep hole, and opens it.

DETECTIVE KEMP
Hot day.

CHRISTOPHER
It is.

DETECTIVE KEMP
John Kemp, LA Police.

CHRISTOPHER invites DETECTIVE KEMP in. The detective hands CHRISTOPHER a business card, that CHRISTOPHER doesn't bother to look at.

CHRISTOPHER
What's up?

DETECTIVE KEMP
Bad news, I'm afraid.

CHRISTOPHER
Fear not.

DETECTIVE KEMP
Your wife passed away last night,
up in Carmel. I'm sorry for your
loss.

CHRISTOPHER
Don't be. Ex-wife, from whom I was
inexorably estranged. You could
have just called.

DETECTIVE KEMP
She made a dying declaration.

CHRISTOPHER
She liked to have the last word.

DETECTIVE KEMP
She gave you an alibi when we first
investigated the murder. She told
us she didn't really know your
whereabouts that night.

CHRISTOPHER

She was with me. We were both here. She was stupefyingly drunk.

DETECTIVE KEMP

She said you were a holy terror; abusive, manipulative, a horrible human being.

CHRISTOPHER

All this as she approached the banks of the River Styx. If I put words like that into the mouths of an actor on his death bed, I'd be drummed out of the business.

DETECTIVE KEMP

Actually, it's a cumulative picture of what she said over the last few months.

CHRISTOPHER

Maybe you put those words in her mouth.

CHRISTOPHER turns away from DETECTIVE KEMP, angry.

CHRISTOPHER

It's five years later.

DETECTIVE KEMP

The powers that be have re-opened a few cold cases. This one's on me to solve and to tell you the truth, there is something about it. It's got my juices going.

CHRISTOPHER turns toward DETECTIVE KEMP comes forward, puts his finger in DETECTIVE KEMP's chest and looks him in the eye.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Did Samantha tell you who was banging my daughter at the time of her death?

DETECTIVE KEMP

We weren't able to connect those dots.

CHRISTOPHER

So....?

DETECTIVE KEMP
Where were you the night of...?

CHRISTOPHER
Here. Said before. Many times.

DETECTIVE KEMP
Proof?

CHRISTOPHER
100. Drunker than a skunk.

DETECTIVE KEMP shakes his head.

CHRISTOPHER shows DETECTIVE KEMP the door. The Detective steps outside and turns to face CHRISTOPHER, but CHRISTOPHER shuts the door with a resounding bang and the detective walks off stage.

Scene 6

Across the stage, at her Beverly Hills home, SARAH in a silk nightgown stares into a mirror smoking a joint, looking intently at her own face in her reflection. On her left wrist she wears five identical bracelets.

A good looking young woman appears, hair dishevelled, no make-up, carrying a jacket on her arm, purse slung over her shoulder.

YOUNG WOMAN
I'm going, SARAH. Thanks for the good time.

SARAH does not reply. A door opens and closes behind her as the young woman leaves.

YOUNG WOMAN
SARAH...? OK. See you soon, maybe. Anytime.

On the screen, a video of a sports car driving down the Pacific Highway to Malibu.

Scene 7

The video on the screen now shows the Pacific waves rolling in on the Malibu beach on a hot and sunny afternoon.

CHRISTOPHER steps out from his living room onto his balcony, which overlooks the beach and ocean.

He is carrying two large drinks. He is surprised not to see SARAH and looks out over the balcony.

SARAH walks in and takes a step up to the balcony.

SARAH

I couldn't resist sticking my toes
in the sand.

CHRISTOPHER hands her a drink. They clink glasses.

CHRISTOPHER

To our collaboration.

SARAH

Possible collaboration. (beat)
Mr. BEESTON, I need something that
will not fail. Will not!

CHRISTOPHER

CHRISTOPHER. Chris. Box office?

SARAH

That, of course. But, I want to
show what I can do. Something that
gives me a future, Mr. BEESTON.
Chris. Like Streep. Like Emma
Thompson. Like Mirren. Helen
Mirren. You understand?

CHRISTOPHER

As Agent said, me CHRISTOPHER; you
SARAH.

SARAH

If you like.

CHRISTOPHER

Me like. There is no point in us
not working together. We each have
our own means...

SARAH

(skeptically)
And ends, I hope.

She opens a door and walks into the living room and as she does, he eyes her lithe, pant-suited figure.

SARAH puts her purse down on a table with a heavy thud walks around the living room looking at paintings and picking up various objet d'art for closer examination.

CHRISTOPHER notices SARAH'S bracelets. He walks over to her and takes her hand in his and tries to fondle the bracelets, but SARAH pulls her hand away and starts her stroll around the room. As she gets closer to the door to his den, he cuts across the room. She peers into the gloom and sees a pillow and cover laying haphazardly on a couch by his desk.

She is about to enter when he moves in front of her and prevents her from entering.

CHRISTOPHER

Not in there. I'm a messy boy.
Bachelor life.

SARAH

Bachelor?

CHRISTOPHER

Was married but the damsel in question managed to escape my clutches. She got the Picassos. I got the castle.

SARAH sits in CHRISTOPHER'S favorite chair which takes him aback, but he plays along and sits kitty corner on the couch.

SARAH

So?

CHRISTOPHER

I watched your three Oscar films and the last two, which were also damned good. It took two days of my precious life.

SARAH

And?

CHRISTOPHER

You can act like a hot damn.

SARAH

(big smile)
Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER

(toasting her)
One pro to another.

SARAH looks around.

SARAH

Any chance you have a decent wine?

CHRISTOPHER walks to the kitchen at the end of the living room and pulls a bottle of red from a small cupboard and a bottle of white from a wine cooler under the counter, then holds them up so she can choose. SARAH points to the white.

CHRISTOPHER finds a wine glass and pours her a glass then pulls another beer from the refrigerator and screws the cap off. CHRISTOPHER walks into the living room and extends the glass of wine to her. He remains standing.

CHRISTOPHER

You have created quite a ruckus on the sets of your last two films. Rumor has it.

SARAH

They made it impossible...

CHRISTOPHER

(overlapping)

Don't care, but, life's too short to make new enemies. So, while I admire your talent...

SARAH

(overlapping)

Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER

Look, if we're going to work together you'll have to play by BEESTON house rules. I don't mean to be bloody minded, but, thing is I'm a serious homebody.

SARAH

A reclusive, I'm told.

CHRISTOPHER

I won't work anywhere but here. Straight up, I won't put up with tantrums and other assorted bullshit, like showing up late, and snivelling when things don't go your way.

SARAH

Why don't you sit down Tarzan?

CHRISTOPHER

You're in my chair.

SARAH
Sorry, didn't know.

CHRISTOPHER
Sure you did.

SARAH rises out of the chair. He sits in it and smiles at her.

SARAH
Will you work with me?

CHRISTOPHER
Under contract, with a penalty if you walk. You agree to be a good girl. Like you were the first time you walked on to a set and fell head first into the magic.

SARAH
And...?

CHRISTOPHER
And I will write you into truth.

SARAH
And I will act until even you believe the lies you tell.

He stands. They clink glass and bottle.

She heads to the front door which she opens, and steps out of. But then, SARAH steps out and turns around to face CHRISTOPHER.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Monday?

CHRISTOPHER
4 O'clock.

She nods and steps off into the bright sunlight with CHRISTOPHER watching from the frame of the doorway. He walks in, sees her purse, picks it up and realizes how heavy it is. He squeezes it as he walks to the door, which he opens.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Hey!

SARAH returns. He hands her the purse, which she takes.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Locked and loaded.

SARAH pulls a gun out of her purse to show CHRISTOPHER.

SARAH
Something to waggle in the face of
my enemies.

She walks off stage.

Scene 8

On the movie screen, an image of Hollywood Boulevard.

Across the stage CHOKO, a friend and roommate of the murdered girl, NEL, enters carrying a box of stuff.

CHOKO
After NEL died her mom came by and
we got things all packed-up, but
she said you'd probably like this
stuff. Just books, pictures, you
know...sorry.

CHRISTOPHER walks across the stage and takes a position in her apartment.

CHRISTOPHER
It's OK, CHOKO.

CHRISTOPHER puts the box on the kitchen table and opens the flap. He rummages around, finding the odds and ends of NEL's life. He takes out a framed picture, the picture that now sits on his desk in his study.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Nice, huh?

Then he pulls out the bracelet.

CHRISTOPHER
Maybe you'd like to keep this.

CHOKO, now with tears in her eyes, shakes her head. CHRISTOPHER puts it back in the box then kisses her on the forehead.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
You want or need something, you
call me. Really.

CHRISTOPHER walks out of the apartment with the box under his arm. CHOKO exits.

Scene 9

Across the stage, it's late afternoon at CHRISTOPHER's house. SARAH, dressed in a pantsuit, perches on a high stool with her back to the kitchen counter holding a glass of white wine.

CHRISTOPHER enters with a pen and notepad.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
OK, so first thing is to nail down
the genre. Slapstick's not your
thing right?

SARAH shakes her head.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
But comedy could work...

SARAH winces.

SARAH
Not this time out.

CHRISTOPHER
You haven't done one for awhile.

SARAH
I was signed to do one...

CHRISTOPHER
I know all your films...

SARAH
A few days into filming, I backed
out. Pissed everyone off and
kicked a hornet's nest full of
lawyers, but...

CHRISTOPHER
Right. Yeah, yeah. That was
awhile ago. Heard about that. Not
a pleasant time. So, sayeth the
jungle drums.

CHRISTOPHER finds his beer on the side table near his chair and takes a long swig.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Ah...OK. Satire. But, thinking
man's satire like, er, what's it,
er, Bullworth. Warren Beatty's
thing from a few years back.

SARAH is becoming irritated.

SARAH
Never heard of it. I think you
promised immortality.

SARAH pours herself some more wine.

CHRISTOPHER
I'm guessing SciFi is not to your
taste either?

SARAH rolls her eyes.

SARAH
Western?

CHRISTOPHER
Western? White hats and black.
I've always wanted to do one.

SARAH
Spy thriller.

CHRISTOPHER
Yeah, possible. Deep throat.

SARAH
Don't make me choke.

CHRISTOPHER smiles at the joke, then steps out on his balcony, beer in hand. He gazes out across the film screen showing a choppy, dusky Pacific, with the red ball of the sun going down on the far horizon.

SARAH takes a gulp of wine to drain her glass, pours a little more, steps off the stool and walks toward the balcony doors.

SARAH walks up from behind and stands to CHRISTOPHER's left facing the ocean. Her multi-braceleted left arm sits on the railing. CHRISTOPHER stares at the bracelets.

SARAH (CONT'D)
One for each of my Oscars and two
nominations. (beat) Are you
lonely here?

CHRISTOPHER remains silent. Looking down he focuses on one of the bracelets - one where he can see along the inside surface.

CHRISTOPHER
What's that say?

SARAH takes off a bracelet and hands it to him.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

(reading)

"You're Tremendous". Well, yes you are, aren't you?

SARAH

Taking that as a yes. You're lonely.

CHRISTOPHER

The loneliness of the long feature writer.

He points out toward the ocean with the hand holding the beer he is still drinking.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Out there, eh? Where all the pains of life are salted for safe keeping and set into the veritable currents of time.

The sun is almost below the horizon.

SARAH

Put me on the water and I'll puke.

CHRISTOPHER

I can swim, but only metaphorically.

SARAH

You're going to drown in your own bullshit.

He starts toward the stairs at the end of the balcony.

CHRISTOPHER

C'mon. Walk time. We'll have the beach to ourselves.

SARAH

You go. I've got a date.

CHRISTOPHER

You're pissed. You can't drive. Look, I'll just be 30 minutes. Less. Daily ritual. The gods of the sea will be angry if I don't go. Park yourself on the couch and snooze a bit. When I come back we'll nail it down.

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

I've got an idea that will sober you up so you can take your very fine ass back to Hollywood.

SARAH shoots a withering look.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Pardon. That was uncalled for.

CHRISTOPHER steps down and heads to the beach - walking off stage.

SARAH steps back into the house, finds a pad and pen and writes a note which she leaves on the kitchen counter. She grabs her purse and car keys and starts toward the door. But before she does she walks to the door of his study and looks in. She does not enter, turns and walks away, and exits.

Scene 10

Just past dusk. The movie screen shows the Pacific in the deep dusk, the waves noisy, the wind kicking up.

CHRISTOPHER walks briskly past the screen head into the wind, his shirt collar pulled up round his neck, hands deep in his pocket.

Out of the wind the sound of a young girl's voice.

GIRL

(frightened)

No! No! Please.....no.....!!

CHRISTOPHER uses his hands to shut his ears to the voice and walks around and up his balcony stairs then into his living room. He picks up a note on the kitchen counter from under the empty wine bottle. He reads the line several times trying out a few readings as SARAH might do them.

CHRISTOPHER

(sternly)

I will bring my fine ass back here tomorrow. 5 PM.

(sarcastically)

I will bring my fine ass back here tomorrow.

(seductively)

I will bring my fine ass back here tomorrow.

He puts the note down, finds his whisky glass and drinks down the dregs.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Fine ass indeed.

Scene 11

Late afternoon. SARAH is angrily pushing the doorbell to CHRISTOPHER's house. No answer.

She turns from the door and carefully steps down to the bottom on her high heels. She looks toward the garden, then turns and walks along the side of the house toward the beach.

CHRISTOPHER, wearing his Panama hat, a loose shirt, ill fitting shorts and scruffy cross trainers comes up from the beach, takes off his hat, and uses his sleeve to wipe a thin film of sweat from his brow.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Thought I'd get my walk before you arrived. The evening, dear lady, is yours. Maybe get some dinner...

SARAH
I said 5.

CHRISTOPHER climbs the stairs and takes a key from his pocket and unlocks the door, which he holds open for SARAH who glares at him. She finally walks up the stairs, passes in front of him and enters.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I don't like being kept waiting.

CHRISTOPHER
Who does? But, even I, a man of legendary impatience, will forgive five minutes. Sit. Something to drink?

SARAH
Thank you, no.

CHRISTOPHER
You've rehearsed a few lines. Speak.

SARAH
A lot of writers want to write for me.

CHRISTOPHER walks into the kitchen, opens the refrigerator, grabs a beer and brings it to the counter where he cracks it open and takes a long draught.

SARAH (CONT'D)

They bring a script. I like it. I don't like it. My Oscars may not mean much to you...

CHRISTOPHER

As much as mine do to me.

SARAH

You are not getting me. Here's the thing CHRISTOPHER, you're a dreary alcoholic who enjoys his own miserable company.

CHRISTOPHER

And you're a wasting asset with a bad rep who also doesn't mind a drink. And, your carriage brought you back to Castle BEESTON for a reason. You could have texted your very fine speech.

SARAH

Write, don't write. You have something for me, send it to my Agent. It might get through.

CHRISTOPHER

You either commit, or you don't. But if you want me to write an immortalizing movie you abide by the contract I negotiated with your agent. Full stop.

SARAH gives him a hard look.

CHRISTOPHER

You're free to go. You don't even have to act angry when you leave.

SARAH

You're a bastard. A bastard without even an idea. So...

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, I have an idea, but, a girl's gotta do what a girl's gotta do.

CHRISTOPHER puts his bottle down, tugs his forelock as he bows sarcastically to SARAH, then turns and walks out the balcony doors.

SARAH watches CHRISTOPHER walk in the direction of the balcony stairs, then jumps to her feet. SARAH walks quickly to the top of the stairs, pulls off her shoes and descends.

On the movie screen, the ocean. The Pacific waves are rolling high and hard against the beach almost drowning-out their voices which we catch in mid-conversation.

SARAH is a step or two behind CHRISTOPHER who stops and turns to her.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Working title: Penetration.

SARAH

Penetration?

CHRISTOPHER

You're a frustrated cop. The men in the office are treating you like shit. You're an asshole so you deserve it. But you're smart as hell. Intimidating.

SARAH

What's the hook?

CHRISTOPHER

You're a cold woman on a cold case. Hitherto unsolvable. You have to take it on to make your bones; prove you're a cut above the boys in the mosh pit.

SARAH

That's it?

CHRISTOPHER

It's dangerous. High people in high places. A cold case that might claim one more victim. Might be you.

SARAH turns to face the waves, the wind whipping through her hair.

CHRISTOPHER stands beside her looking out to sea. He speaks facing the ocean.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

You've been living with a sense of
righteous dread your whole life.
Might as well use it.

Also looking out to sea, SARAH gets the last word.

SARAH

Takes one to know one.

As they walk back into the house, CHRISTOPHER pulls a few
pages of manuscript from his jacket and hands them to SARAH.

CHRISTOPHER

Read. You're Sam...Samantha.

SARAH, sitting on the living room side of the counter
impatiently throws the pages on the counter in front of
CHRISTOPHER standing on the other side.

SARAH

A thousand shows start and end in a
squad room.

CHRISTOPHER

Never mind that. What do you see?

SARAH

The usual. Man's world.

CHRISTOPHER

Right. And in Sam's case?

SARAH

Why do you have to masculinize her?
Samantha. Sam? One of the boys.

CHRISTOPHER

Give me another name? What looks
good on you?

SARAH

Rebecca. BECCA. Delisle.

CHRISTOPHER

OK. So, what does BECCA want?

SARAH

To conquer her world.

CHRISTOPHER

To put her foot on the neck of the
doubters. How?

SARAH
Do what they can't.

CHRISTOPHER
Read on.

CHRISTOPHER picks up the pages, finds where she had stopped reading and hands it back to SARAH.

SARAH looks across the stage. The "CHIEF OF DETECTIVES", standing with a bundle of file folders under his arm, motions her to come to him.

Now, SARAH as BECCA stirs out of her trance in the squad room and looks across the room to the window.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
You fucked up, BECCA. What, nothing to say for yourself? For once.

BECCA
No, sir.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
Fuck am I to do with you? You can't keep cutting the balls of everyone you work with.

He hands her the files.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES (CONT'D)
Cold cases. Work alone.

BECCA
Oh, come on Chief.

He hands her the file.

BECCA (CONT'D)
How long?

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
'Til hell freezes over.

SARAH turns back to CHRISTOPHER. The Chief walks off stage. SARAH turns back to CHRISTOPHER and walks to him.

SARAH
Solve a case or two and redeem myself.

CHRISTOPHER

One case in particular will do it.
Yeah, redeem yourself and all
humankind. You're going to walk
through the streets of Hollywood
bearing a bloody cross.

CHRISTOPHER pours SARAH a glass of wine and pulls out a
bottle of beer for himself. He snaps the cap as she stands
and walks into the living room.

SARAH turns to face CHRISTOPHER.

SARAH

I die?

CHRISTOPHER

I am absolutely going to crucify
you. Long lingering shot on your
dying, holy face. Fade to immortal
black.

SARAH walks out to the balcony and stares into the red ball
of the setting sun.

CHRISTOPHER walks out, sits on a chair and puts on his beach
shoes.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Coming?

SARAH shakes her head, looks down at her bracelets and turns
them on her wrist.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

I'll text you when I have the next
bit done. Lock the door behind
you.

CHRISTOPHER bounds down the balcony stairs and exits.

As the set darkens, SARAH watches CHRISTOPHER lope off in the
direction of the beach. The western sky is full of ominous
clouds; the wind stiff and disturbing.

SARAH hears a girl's voice in the wind and it freaks her out.

GIRL

No.....! No.....!

SARAH grabs her purse, fondles the gun inside, then makes a
hurried and fearful exit.

Scene 12

CHRISTOPHER walks into his study carrying a large glass of scotch and fires up his laptop. His computer screen is visible on the movie screen. He clicks on a few folders and suddenly a montage of images of a young girl in and around the BEESTON house and on the beach.

On his desk beside a computer monitor is a framed picture. He picks it up to look at it. NEL's head shot is now the only image on the movie screen. He kisses her picture, puts his glass on a small table beside a couch.

He lays down, and puts the framed image of NEL on his chest while he adjusts a pillow behind his head. He nurses the scotch while he examines her picture. The image on the screen changes to a picture of NEL with a strained look on her face.

Across the stage in SARAH's bedroom in her Hollywood home, SARAH, dressed in a nightgown, paces then goes to her closet. She finds a silk nightgown and pulls it off a hanger. She holds the collar with both hands and draws it to her face and smells deeply.

Scene 13

Morning in Hollywood. In the middle of the stage, CHOKO, NEL's roommate at the time of NEL's death, walks into a bar set up in front of the movie screen. She looks around as if looking for someone. She sits on a bar stool.

CHRISTOPHER sits up and gives his head a shake. He sees CHOKO at the bar. He picks up his glass, which still has a bit of scotch in it, and walks over to CHOKO.

CHRISTOPHER

Hey, sorry. Didn't see you come in. I was hiding in the shadows over there...

CHOKO

Hi Mr. BEESTON.

CHRISTOPHER shakes his finger at her.

CHRISTOPHER

Something to drink.

CHOKO shakes her head.

CHRISTOPHER

Thanks for coming. I, erm, I have a favour to ask. Big one.

CHOKO

OK.

CHRISTOPHER

I knew you'd say that. But, it's research and so, well, I need your help and you need the money.

CHOKO

I dunno...It's been...

CHRISTOPHER

It's painful, I know. But, I'm going to write a character around you. Have to. Maybe you can play the role...

CHOKO

Oh...I don't...

CHRISTOPHER

I'm going to have to bring that night back again. Ask you a lot of questions. You know stuff that no one else knows.

CHOKO looks very uncomfortable as she looks intently into his eyes.

CHOKO

I'll try to help...

SARAH, walks into CHRISTOPHER's living room, holding the last few pages of his script, vaguely aware of CHRISTOPHER and CHOKO at the bar. She sits and continues reading.

CHRISTOPHER

What were you doing just before...

CHOKO

Nothing. Sitting on the couch talking.

CHRISTOPHER

About?

CHOKO

You knew she was leaving...right?

CHRISTOPHER

Leaving?

CHOKO

The apartment. She was going to go live in the Hills. It was OK. She gave me..time. To find a new roommate. She was great that way. I mean, I didn't want her to go. I loved NEL. She was so...

CHRISTOPHER

Where in the Hills? Who?

CHOKO

She wouldn't tell me. She said she would later. She said it would be a big surprise.

CHRISTOPHER

You have no idea?

CHOKO

A big movie star. I'm not sure. But...I think she met him on the set of the film she was working on...I mean, it had to be a star. If they were living in the Hills.

CHRISTOPHER

(with a flash of anger)
C'mon CHOKO... Who?

CHOKO

(unsettled and taken
aback)
I...really, I don't know.

CHOKO looks at her cell phone for the time.

CHRISTOPHER

You have to be somewhere?

CHOKO

Cattle call...

CHRISTOPHER

OK. Sorry. I'm trying to put the pieces together.

She nods and exits.

Scene 14

CHRISTOPHER stands and looks toward SARAH.

SARAH

Why can't you just write the script? Like normal. Beginning, done. No middle. No end.

CHRISTOPHER

We know certain facts. They will lead the cops to an inescapable conclusion...a killer.

CHRISTOPHER walks up to SARAH takes a position very close to her and explains the scene set-up.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

C'mon. It's night. Nice night actually. The street in front of KELLY's apartment is quiet. You've asked CHOKO - I mean SUKI in the script - to come down so she can help you set the stage.

SARAH reads from the script with CHRISTOPHER taking the SUKI role.

SARAH

(as BECCA)

We're going to go back to the night. Tell me what you saw.

CHRISTOPHER

(as SUKI)

This is where she fell.

SARAH

(As BECCA)

Two shots?

CHRISTOPHER as SUKI nods.

SARAH lets the script hang down in front of her.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Wait. Where is this again?

CHRISTOPHER

Side street off Hollywood Boulevard.

SARAH

(alarmed)

You made this up?

CHRISTOPHER

No. It's a real cold case.

SARAH walks over to the door to the balcony, a very worried look on her face. She bites her lip. CHRISTOPHER stands behind her at some distance. Finally, SARAH turns toward CHRISTOPHER, and brings the script back up in front of her.

SARAH

Why this story?

CHRISTOPHER

Beautiful young woman murdered in Hollywood. She's in the prime of her life. Bang! Bang! Murderer takes off. She told her best friend she was being stalked. Who and why hang heavy in the air. We are going to solve it.

SARAH

Or not.

CHRISTOPHER

(testily)

You in or not?

SARAH gives him a hard look then steps back to the place where she had been reading her lines before.

Across the stage, CHOKO as SUKI is standing in the street where NEL - KELLY in the script - was shot. SARAH walks over and assumes the BECCA role.

BECCA

(as BECCA)

Where were you?

SUKI points to the window.

SUKI

We used to live up there.

BECCA

You told the police you saw a dark colored car.

SUKI

I couldn't see much. A branch of that tree was...

BECCA

In the way. I know.

SUKI

There was so much blood. I came down.

BECCA

She was angry when she went out?

SUKI

Totally pissed. Like I never saw her before. I told the cops five years ago.

BECCA

You probably know things you don't even know you know. And the case is still open, and it's on me to solve it.

SUKI

I don't know anything more...

BECCA

We're going to go over it all again to see if we missed something.

The scene behind BECCA and SUKI dissolves until they are standing in a pool of white light.

BECCA (CONT'D)

What were you doing that night?

SUKI

Just talking. She was going to be moving out...

BECCA

OK. Then?

SUKI

KELLY heard something outside.

BECCA

What?

SUKI

I don't know. But she got up on the couch and looked out the window. She said it was her stalker and just went down and...

BECCA

And...

SUKI
I heard them yelling.

BECCA
What were they saying.

SUKI
I couldn't hear them. Just
yelling.

BECCA
Who was it, SUKI?

SUKI
I don't know. Whenever I asked...
She was fucked-up about it. He
just wouldn't leave her alone.

BECCA
Why wouldn't she tell you?

SUKI
She said he would ruin her career
if anyone found out. He was too
powerful. She thought he'd just go
away.

BECCA
Where did she meet him?

SUKI
On a set. I think. I don't really
know, but she was working on...she
had some lines. First time. She
was so beautiful.

BECCA
A big star. Someone with power in
Hollywood. CLAYTON MICHEL?

SUKI
He was always coming on to her.
But, it wasn't him. I asked her.
She was involved with someone else.
She must have been. She was going
to live in the Hills with another
guy.

BECCA
(with increasing
insistence)
Who? Who? Who?

SUKI

(crying)

I don't know! I don't know!

SARAH stops reading. She turns toward CHRISTOPHER who is sitting in his chair with a big smile. He stands and claps. She walks toward him.

CHRISTOPHER

Nice. Very nice.

SARAH

It's confusing. It's...

CHRISTOPHER

Stay tuned. I'm working it out.

SARAH

If the stalker was that powerful he could have anyone he wanted.

CHRISTOPHER

Right. But NEL, she dished out plate of cold rejection. Made whoever it was feel old, stirred them up.

SARAH

Triggered him?

CHRISTOPHER

Bang. Bang.

SARAH

She was going to tell everyone he was stalking her? Is that why he killed her?

CHRISTOPHER

Nah. If it was GEORGE EDWARDS, all he had to do was stop stalking her. As you said, he could have anyone he wanted. So...

SARAH

But if he was obsessed his brain short-circuited.... What did the cops say?

CHRISTOPHER

They could never put it together.

SARAH

But you will?

CHRISTOPHER
It's Hollywood baby.

SARAH goes out to the balcony. Momentarily, CHRISTOPHER approaches from behind.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Hey. Hey. What's going on?

SARAH
We can't do this. It's not right.

CHRISTOPHER
Not getting.

SARAH
You can't stir people up like this.
That girl was killed. Five years ago.
What about her parents? It's cruel to rake it all up.

CHRISTOPHER
BECCA needs to find out who murdered her. Job one.

SARAH
It's a movie. It's not the truth.

CHRISTOPHER
Good enough these days.

On the screen, an image of the Pacific darkening into night.

Scene 15

Next day. Across the stage. At a table in a Hollywood restaurant texting while she nurses a half empty cup of cold coffee.

CHRISTOPHER walks up to the table.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Sorry, CHOKO. Parking. Fucking tourists.

He sits. A waitress carrying a coffee pot comes over and gives them both menus.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
(to waitress)
Coffee. Black.
(to CHOKO)
More?

CHOKO shakes her head. As the waitress walks away, she puts her cell phone down.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Behold the ordinary. A restaurant scene depicted a million times in a million films. Unless you're doing 5 Easy Pieces, don't tinker. It's background shit.

CHOKO

(slightly impatient)
Whatever.

CHRISTOPHER

Ever the writer. Anyway. Hey, thanks for coming. Again.

CHOKO

It's OK.

CHRISTOPHER

After NEL... you know...You gave me a box of NEL's things. Remember?

(beat)

There is a bracelet in the box.

What can you tell me about it?

(He hands her the bracelet)

What does the inscription mean?

"Bugged by You?"

CHOKO takes the bracelet, looks at the inscription, and hands it back to CHRISTOPHER.

CHOKO

Bugged was the original name of the movie NEL was on...so

CHRISTOPHER

A gift from someone?

CHOKO

Maybe.

CHRISTOPHER

So, who would have given her something like that?

CHOKO

She never said.

Mid-day. SARAH, looking exceedingly sexy, steps up to the door to CHRISTOPHER's house and knocks. She touches up her lipstick. No answer on the first knock so she tries again. No answer. She turns the handle - finds it unlocked and steps into CHRISTOPHER's living room.

She looks at CHRISTOPHER talking with CHOKO.

CHRISTOPHER sees SARAH and walks out of the scene with CHOKO and grabs a copy of his script as he walks toward SARAH and as he's walking toward her, sees how luscious she looks.

CHOKO stays on set as SUKI and takes a position standing.

CHRISTOPHER

A few more pages to get through.
We're not done with SUKI yet.

SARAH takes the script which is folded back to the pages he wants her to read.

SARAH playing BECCA moves toward CHOKO playing SUKI.

BECCA

So, you run down to the street?

SUKI nods yes.

BECCA (CONT'D)

You kneel down beside her? You can
tell she's dead?

SUKI

Yeah.

BECCA

You dial 911.

SUKI

Yeah. I've told you this a hundred
times. God...

BECCA

What's happening around you?

SUKI

I don't know. I'm fucking out of
it. My best friend's just been
killed.

BECCA

But, OK. The cops don't arrive for
a few minutes. What are you doing?

SUKI
I don't know. I don't know.

BECCA
You pace?

SUKI
Yeah, I guess so. So, what?

BECCA
And people start gathering around.

SUKI
Yeah, there was a big circle. Like
a wall of people. I was crying my
eyes out.

BECCA
Did they disturb the crime scene?

SUKI
It was unreal. All these people.
Then the sirens. I heard the
sirens.

BECCA
Then?

SUKI
I found KELLY'S bracelet.

BECCA
What did you do with it?

SUKI
The police came and all of a sudden
everything was just....it was
crazy.

BECCA
What did you do with the bracelet,
SUKI?

SUKI
I must have slipped it on my arm.
Or put it in my pocket.

BECCA
You didn't give it to the cops?
It was evidence.

SUKI

I forgot. I mean. No. I didn't think of it.

BECCA

Where is it now?

SUKI

Gave it to her dad, with a bunch of other stuff. The head shot she'd just had done. A couple of books.

SARAH, suddenly startled by the revelation, turns quickly around to CHRISTOPHER. CHOKO exits. SARAH walks toward CHRISTOPHER who meets her half way.

CHRISTOPHER

Her father's got the bracelet and the other stuff. "Bugged by you". The inscription. A clue? It's a clue, right?

SARAH doubles over and holds her belly with both arms.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Jeezus girl! What the...

CHRISTOPHER runs to the kitchen and gets a bottle of water from the refrigerator, and twists off the top as he runs back to SARAH.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Here.

He hands her the bottle. She looks up balefully and takes the bottle. She tries a sip, but retches a bit.

SARAH

I have to go.

SARAH grabs her handbag and rushes out the front door and exits just as DETECTIVE KEMP arrives. She brushes past him as CHRISTOPHER watches.

CHRISTOPHER

Not often my screenplays make someone want to puke.

Scene 17

The doorbell rings.

DETECTIVE KEMP
Was that...?

CHRISTOPHER
None other.

DETECTIVE KEMP
You know she...?

CHRISTOPHER
I know.

DETECTIVE KEMP
Knew your daughter.
Professionally.

CHRISTOPHER
You're a fucking idiot.

CHRISTOPHER goes to the balcony with DETECTIVE KEMP following.

DETECTIVE KEMP
Where you going?

CHRISTOPHER walks off the balcony toward the beach with the detective in pursuit. They exit.

Scene 18

Next day, at the office of SARAH's agent, DYLAN MATT. SARAH stands behind DYLAN who sits his desk chair in front of a computer monitor. They read the same HuffPost article.

SARAH
Did you tell him yet?

DYLAN MATT
No. And thank god for that.

SARAH
I'm not doing that movie. It's
shit. Police procedural 101.

DYLAN MATT
(handing her a copy of
Variety)
It's shit? You read what it says
here. It says you love it. Can't
wait to start shooting. CHRISTOPHER
BEESTON's a genius with a track
record of success.

SARAH

I didn't say that. Any of it. Pay him off. It's just a half a million.

DYLAN MATT

Don't you wish. It's going to be a million. He's more than half way through.

SARAH

What the fuck?

DYLAN MATT

Don't you ever read what you sign? I told you when we went into it. You back-out early it's \$500K. Once he's gone past the half way mark, it bumps.

SARAH

OK. A million. I can get that together.

DYLAN MATT

Sure. It's only a million. Protect the SARAH Siddons's brand. No way, SARAH. You'll never work again. Not with the last two films you walked from and now this. He put this release out to sand bag you. Consider yourself sand bagged.

SARAH

Fuck! Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

DYLAN MATT

Yeah. Fuck! But, you have to go back. Finish it off. Nothing says you have to do the movie. You only have to work on the script. Crazy, eh? So, what happens in Malibu stays in Malibu.

SARAH

I can't work with him. I can't.

DYLAN MATT

Act like you can. That's your brand right? Act for fuck's sake.

CHRISTOPHER lays on the couch in his study, pillow behind his head looking up when he hears a knock at the front door.

He swings his legs off the couch and sits, then grabs his cell from the corner of his desk and checks the time. He rises and heads to the front door just in time to hear the second knock. When he opens it, SARAH steps in - aggressively.

CHRISTOPHER
The day's done.

SARAH
Not by a long shot.

She walks with a sense of ownership into the living room with CHRISTOPHER trailing.

SARAH (CONT'D)
What have you got?

CHRISTOPHER
What have I got? I've got a bad dose of what-the-fuck blues.

SARAH
Have a drink. Me too. Scotch.

CHRISTOPHER leaves her in the living room as he goes to fetch her a drink.

He hands her a glass with two fingers of scotch and keeps one for himself.

SARAH turns to face him.

SARAH (CONT'D)
It seems I can't get out of this, so let's get to work and get it over with.

CHRISTOPHER
Something turned you off. Care to say?

SARAH
What have you got?

CHRISTOPHER picks up the manuscript from the kitchen counter.

He holds out the bracelet that was in NEL's stuff that CHOKO gave him.

SARAH almost recoils when she sees it, but quickly regains her self-possession. She takes the bracelet, her hand trembling but under control.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Where'd you get it? SUKI? Nel's father?

CHRISTOPHER

SUKI's a character in our movie. A girl named CHOKO was NEL's roommate. You'll meet the father. Soon. Real father.

SARAH

I don't want to.

CHRISTOPHER

Yeah, well... He's part of our inescapable reality...

He takes the bracelet from SARAH.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

We're going to use this to point the cops to the most plausible suspect. A killer for DETECTIVE KEMP.

He takes her glass and carries it and his glass to the kitchen counter to pour more scotch then brings them back, handing her one.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

So, BECCA's got to follow her instincts, right? That's BECCA. But leave that to me. Writer's domain. Look at the bracelet - inside. Read it.

SARAH looks at the inscription and quickly hands the bracelet back to CHRISTOPHER as though it's kryptonite to her.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

"Bugged by You". But, it's got to be affectionate, right? OK, so what's your fucking instinct? SARAH not BECCA.

SARAH

You're the writer.

CHRISTOPHER

(angrily)

C'mon SARAH. Get in the game.
You're gonna invest your entire
life in BECCA, remember, so what is
BECCA's instinct? Hell, what's
your instinct?

SARAH

Damn you!

CHRISTOPHER levels a stare at her and uses his hands to coax her to react.

SARAH (CONT'D)

It's a gift. From the stalker.

CHRISTOPHER

You have all those bracelets on
your hand.

SARAH instinctively covers them with her right hand.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

What are those?

SARAH

I told you.

CHRISTOPHER

It's a question.

SARAH

Mementos.

CHRISTOPHER

Of?

SARAH

Films. Films I've made.

CHRISTOPHER

So maybe this bracelet is a
memento.

SARAH turns to face the window again. Against the blackness we can see her reflection. She forms a resolve and turns back to face CHRISTOPHER.

CHRISTOPHER hands her the script and points to where he wants her to read from.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
You're onto something. BECCA wants
her boss to know. Time for a
meeting with the Chief.

The CHIEF OF DETECTIVES enters across the stage. SARAH walks
to him.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
Wassup?

BECCA
I think we caught a break.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
Remind me.

BECCA
The cold case. Hollywood. Young
actress was shot down.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
Right. Right. Whaddya got?

BECCA
We think she was in some kind of
relationship with the killer. She
knew him.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
Usually the case, no?

BECCA
She was working on a film. Maybe
they met there. He gave her a piece
of jewelry. A sweetener.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
Can you trace it?

BECCA
Working on it. We're thinking it
was the lead actor.

The Chief looks up.

BECCA (CONT'D)
CLAYTON MICHEL.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
Get the fuck... Wasn't he cleared?

BECCA
Doesn't mean he's innocent.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES

Be very careful. He's got a lot of friends in this city.

BECCA

I have to interview him. I need to go to Vancouver. He's on a shoot.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES

Not in the budget. Sorry.

BECCA is nonplussed. The Chief exits. CHRISTOPHER comes over and tries to take the script out of SARAH's hands. She's holding on tight, as if in a trance.

CHRISTOPHER

'Nuf for now. SARAH?

She releases the script to CHRISTOPHER's hands.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

BECCA leans hard on the Chief. Calls his manhood into question. He throws his hands in the air: Yeah! Yeah! Go. Blah blah blah.

SARAH

So you really think GEORGE EDWARDS was the killer?

CHRISTOPHER

No. But, he's gonna know something. I'm heading to Vancouver tomorrow. Gonna talk to GEORGE to get some background.

SARAH

GEORGE EDWARDS!?

CHRISTOPHER

Yep. He was the real actor on Animal Nature - the real movie that NEL was working on when she was killed. He's the model for CLAYTON MICHEL in our movie. You know GEORGE, right? Of course you do. Anyway. I've got to turn in early. You're welcome to stay if you want...

SARAH

Stay here?

CHRISTOPHER
(winkingly)
No hanky-panky though, SARAH. I
don't want you coming on to me.

She picks up her handbag and retrieves her car keys from within.

SARAH
Not a scene I could pull off.

She walks to the door and opens it, but turns around to face him before stepping off.

SARAH (CONT'D)
There were a lot of men on set.

CHRISTOPHER
A lot of people, indeed. And one of
them is a killer.
(with intensity looking at
SARAH)
Right?

Scene 20

Next morning. On the movie screen a shot of LAX with planes landing and taking off.

CHRISTOPHER steps off stage and returns with a small carry-on suitcase and walks to a departure gate and joins a small line ready to board for Vancouver.

SARAH strides into lounge pulling a small suitcase on wheels. She sees CHRISTOPHER in a short lineup ready to board and go down the ramp to the plane. Other passengers gawk at her. She waves off people who approach to get autographs.

CHRISTOPHER senses a change in the atmosphere and turns around to look and sees SARAH.

He leaves the line and strides over to her.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
What's going on?

SARAH
I'm coming with you.

CHRISTOPHER
I'm in economy.

SARAH
 Good enough for you...good enough
 for me.
 (beat)
 You need to know something.

CHRISTOPHER turns to face her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 I was on that movie.

CHRISTOPHER pulls back a bit.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 Animal Nature.

CHRISTOPHER
 I know.

SARAH
 Well, Mr. Research, as you clearly
 know, it was shit so I left. About
 2 weeks in.

CHRISTOPHER
 Three. Three weeks.

SARAH
 It wasn't called Animal Instinct
 then. Working title was "Bugged".
 I'd forgotten.

CHRISTOPHER
 What happened? Your version.

SARAH
 I had a terrible row with GEORGE.
 A couple of days later I left for
 Rome. I had almost forgotten all
 about it. That trip was a black
 hole. I...well...when you told me
 you would be seeing GEORGE...

CHRISTOPHER
 Bit of a coincidence wouldn't you
 say? You on the same set as NEL.
 You going to Rome - actually a day
after NEL was killed.

On the movie screen, a plane landing at Vancouver, the
 "Welcome Vancouver" sign clearly visible. SARAH and
 CHRISTOPHER walk down into the arrival area and off stage.

Scene 21

Across the stage, A-Lister, GEORGE EDWARDS, takes a seat on a dining terrace at the Bayshore Inn in Coal Harbour, Vancouver and begins a leisurely breakfast as he reads the paper.

SARAH emerges from the hotel, sees GEORGE and strolls over.

SARAH
Hello, GEORGE.

GEORGE looks up, and seeing SARAH, stands to receive her air kisses and to offer a couple of his own.

GEORGE
No escape for the wicked.

SARAH
Between now and the time one of us dies, I'm afraid you're stuck with me. Friends forever.

GEORGE
Sitting down?

SARAH
You're meeting CHRISTOPHER BEESTON.

GEORGE
How'd you know?

SARAH
I came with him.

GEORGE
Really? You two...?

SARAH
Not in your wildest. We're far more intimate than that. He's writing an Oscar-worthy screenplay starring yours truly. So, he says.

GEORGE
He mentioned he was writing something. I actually thought he was coming up to offer a role to me. I didn't know you were involved. Scout's honor.

SARAH
He was sworn to secrecy. Cat's out of the proverbial bag now.

GEORGE instinctively looks at his cell to check the time.

GEORGE
He'll be here any minute.

SARAH
Yes. Well, I wanted to see you first. I wanted to apologize. In person. For...for erm..

GEORGE
For throwing a big fucking monkey wrench into Animal Nature?

SARAH takes GEORGE's hand and holds it tenderly.

SARAH
I'm just so sorry, GEORGE. Will you accept my apology?

GEORGE
No, but I'll forgive you your trespasses.

SARAH
Said like a true god.

She leans in confidentially appealing to GEORGE's prodigious sexual appetite.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I'd love to make it up to you.

GEORGE pulls back and looks at her skeptically.

GEORGE
SARAH. SARAH. Are you offering yourself up?

SARAH smiles broadly.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I thought you swung the other way?

SARAH
Just a nasty rumor. Now, be your usual discreet self would you?

They both look up to see CHRISTOPHER standing nearby waiting for them to finish their tete-a-tete.

CHRISTOPHER
Not disturbing?

SARAH
(to GEORGE)
Be careful with this one...
(to CHRISTOPHER)
You're late!

CHRISTOPHER checks the time.

CHRISTOPHER
Good morning, SARAH.

GEORGE stands and extends his hand.

GEORGE
Greetings. I'm a great fan of your
work.

CHRISTOPHER
Likewise. Mr. EDWARDS or...?

GEORGE
GEORGE EDWARDS, or God of The
Silver Screen; as you prefer.

GEORGE and CHRISTOPHER sit. A waiter appears and puts menus
in front of SARAH and CHRISTOPHER then stands back. SARAH
stands.

SARAH
I'll leave you two boys to it.
Remember my peace offering GEORGE.

She walks into the hotel without a backward glance, both men
feasting on her as she goes.

CHRISTOPHER
Peace offering?

GEORGE
She's just offered me a piece of
that very fine ass.

CHRISTOPHER
At what price?

GEORGE
Funny you should ask.

CHRISTOPHER
I want to rake-up old coals.

GEORGE
Have at it. But, let's walk out of
ear shot, shall we?

They walk side by side off stage.

Scene 22

Lights up on SARAH knocking on CHRISTOPHER's door at dusk the following week. On the screen, a view of the Pacific blowing hard onto shore. She elicits no answer at the door. She steps away and walks a few steps so she can see down to the beach, ploughing through a strong wind.

CHRISTOPHER walks on with the wind behind. He walks past her muttering to himself.

CHRISTOPHER
 ...white flannel trousers, walk
 upon the beach, heard the mermaids
 singing each to each...

She turns and follows as he goes up the stairs to the balcony and into the house. He goes to the bar; SARAH perches uncomfortably on a stool by the kitchen counter. CHRISTOPHER pours her a scotch double and puts the bottle down heavily on the counter. He opens the fridge, grabs a beer and parades into the living room. CHRISTOPHER picks up the manuscript.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
 You gonna read or not?

SARAH carries her drink into the living room and stands close to CHRISTOPHER. Then she takes the manuscript.

SARAH
 (defiantly)
 Sure.

CHRISTOPHER
 I'll do CLAYTON MICHEL.

CHRISTOPHER will read the part of CLAYTON MICHEL, the lead actor in Penetration as SARAH reads BECCA. SARAH takes another swig of scotch.

As she lifts her arm to drink, CHRISTOPHER registers the fact that for the first time since they started working together SARAH is not wearing her bracelets. He picks up her hand and looks at her arm and looks into her eyes with a deeply questioning look.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
 (as CLAYTON MICHEL)
 I didn't even know the girl.

SARAH
 (as BECCA - woodenly)
 You were in three scenes with her.

CHRISTOPHER
 (as CLAYTON MICHEL)
 She was the hotel clerk for
 crissake. So, whenever we did a
 scene she was there. In
 background. Like wallpaper. You
 get it?

SARAH
 (as BECCA)
 You met in the craft tent.

CHRISTOPHER
 (as CLAYTON MICHEL)
 Maybe.

SARAH
 (as BECCA)
 Sure you did. She was there. She
 was gorgeous. Your willy lifted a
 little...

CHRISTOPHER, pissed at SARAH for reading so woodenly, angrily
 throws his script across the room.

CHRISTOPHER
 What the fuck? Read the goddamn
 thing.

SARAH
 I am.

CHRISTOPHER
 You're a fucking Oscar-winning
 actress.
 (imitating SARAH's wooden
 delivery)
 But you did. She was there. She
 was gorgeous.
 (to SARAH)
 He might be KELLY's murderer.
 You've gotta put him on the
 defensive. Make him think you know
 more than he wants to believe you
 know. And don't forget, he's
 innocent. He didn't really do it.
 His alibi is gold seal of approval
 tight. So, he's reacting to you.

SARAH's decides to fight back so she steps up to his face.

SARAH

Who the fuck do you think you're talking to? Some little girl? You're my daddy? I'm not here to answer to you.

CHRISTOPHER

I'll show him. I will be a little girl. I'll demean myself. You want out, you have an escape hatch.

SARAH

And make you a million richer? Fuck you. I'm working to rule buddy. Union dues paid. You want me to read something with - what are you say? Read it with feeling, SARAH. More intensity, SARAH. More passion SARAH. Like you're Scorsese Fuck you.

CHRISTOPHER

Hah! So...you do have it. The papier mache heart you carry around on your sleeve is a prop. I want to hear the thump and thud of the real thing.

SARAH walks over to the long windows facing into a black night, arms folded. Across the stage GEORGE EDWARDS as CLAYTON MICHEL ambles in and leans up against a wall and watches SARAH and CHRISTOPHER.

SARAH

GEORGE EDWARDS...he could have killed NEL.

CHRISTOPHER

He's innocent. GEORGE EDWARDS did not kill NEL in reality. CLAYTON MICHEL did not kill KELLY in our film. But he knows stuff. Just like CHOKO knew something. We have to penetrate the dark cave. Get inside. Rummage around. Scratch our matches on the stone and light it up.

SARAH

Yeah.

CHRISTOPHER

You want to win another Oscar? Do that.

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Anything I write is just going to lay there on the page, inert, until you breathe your mystic fire into BECCA and get inside her head.

SARAH

You really want to solve this murder...

CHRISTOPHER

I told you we're going to give the cops a killer.

SARAH

You're a bastard.

CHRISTOPHER

Yes I am. Now let's get back to Vancouver. Cop you are and must be. So frame-up his movie star face and go for the close-up.

SARAH as BECCA focuses on CLAYTON MICHEL and closes the distance between them.

BECCA

(SARAH shows her acting chops)

I know you didn't do it.

CLAYTON MICHEL

I told the cops what I knew five years ago. They almost ruined my career. Everyone assumed...

BECCA

I get it.

CLAYTON MICHEL

I did see her around.

BECCA stops and then he does.

BECCA

Say again.

CLAYTON MICHEL

KELLY was beautiful. Amazing. You couldn't not see her. I...I did make an...approach.

BECCA gives him a hard look.

CLAYTON MICHEL (CONT'D)
 I didn't tell the cops. Probably
 someone did though. Like it wasn't
 a secret that I was trying to...you
 know.

BECCA
 Fuck her?

CLAYTON begins to walk again. BECCA catches up to him.

CLAYTON MICHEL
 She bounced me like a ping pong
 ball off a paddle...

BECCA
 Ouch...

CLAYTON MICHEL
 She said she'd been warned about on-
 set romances. Especially with me,
 Mr. Heartbreaker. That holier-than-
 -thou dyke bitch inoculated her.

NEL, as KELLY, sidles on to the stage carrying a manuscript.
 SARAH and GEORGE are both aware of her presence. NEL crosses
 to a cafe table and sits.

Suddenly explosively SARAH comes out of character and rushes
 to CHRISTOPHER whom she slaps across the face. GEORGE slides
 away but stays on stage.

SARAH
 That cold, dyke bitch was me. You
 motherfucker!

CHRISTOPHER
 Yeah, it was. And that's what you
 and GEORGE argued about. He read
 you the riot act. And that's why
 you pulled out of the film when it
 was still called "Bugged".

SARAH
 Not quite. Chemistry gone. In
 thirty seconds, shot. I couldn't
 get into character and love him
 with a comic grin stuck on my face.
 I couldn't act my way out of the
 fucking hate burning in me. Men!
 You men...!

SARAH stomps out to the balcony looking at a night view of the Hollywood sign on the big screen, teary-eyed and angry but trying to regain her cool.

SARAH (CONT'D)

We were in the craft tent on the set of Bugged...Animal Nature.

As if in a trance, SARAH goes to NEL's table where NEL is memorizing lines.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Darling, here you are.

SARAH sits.

GEORGE EDWARDS watches NEL and SARAH, obviously attracted to NEL.

SARAH reaches across the table and takes NEL's hand.

NEL

I'm being ridiculous. I have two lines and I'm...

SARAH

You don't have a lot of lines, NEL. But the camera is on you while you're at the counter. That's your moment.

NEL

It's two lines, SARAH.

SARAH

Honey, it's not what you say. It's how you look and what you do.

NEL

Like...

SARAH

Make sure you're rested. Your face has to be bright and alive. Then...

GEORGE walks over and stands above them.

GEORGE

Hello ladies...

SARAH

Here comes God himself...

NEL turns her head and beams at GEORGE. Ignoring SARAH's annoyance, GEORGE sits down beside her so he can ogle NEL.

GEORGE
What are you two up to?

NEL
SARAH's helping me with my lines.

GEORGE
Imagine that. I thought she should be tuning her instruments.

NEL laughs; SARAH bristles.

SARAH
Would you mind, I'd like to have a quick word with GEORGE.

NEL stands, pulls a compact and lipstick from her purse, opens it and touches up her lipstick and makeup.

NEL
No problem. I've got to get ready for my scene anyway.

GEORGE
I think I'm in it with you... Lucky me!

NEL trots off with GEORGE looking at her very fine ass as she goes. GEORGE stands followed by SARAH.

GEORGE (CONT'D)
I really have to get going, SARAH. Make-Up beckons. You shooting today?

SARAH
I'm going to shoot you. Look, just keep your hands off her.

GEORGE raises his palms and offers SARAH a smarmy smile.

SARAH (CONT'D)
She's young. Naive.

GEORGE
You mean you want her for yourself. Well, let the best man win I always say.

GEORGE turns to walk away.

SARAH

Just leave her fucking well alone.

GEORGE

I wouldn't dream of leaving her
fucking alone but, if you insist,
we can share.

SARAH recoils in disgust, so GEORGE tugs his forelock and beats a hasty retreat in the direction taken earlier by NEL and exits.

The Hollywood sign re-appears. SARAH turns away from it and looks in to an empty living room in CHRISTOPHER's house then walks off stage.

Scene 23

Morning in Hollywood. CHRISTOPHER and DETECTIVE KEMP walk on stage from different directions and stand toe-to-toe.

CHRISTOPHER

I've been doing a little digging.

DETECTIVE KEMP

You could compromise the
investigation.

CHRISTOPHER holds up the bracelet then puts it in the detective's hand. He looks at it and sees the inscription.

DETECTIVE KEMP (CONT'D)

Bugged by You. Nice. So?

CHRISTOPHER

The movie my daughter was on when
she was killed was "Bugged".

DETECTIVE KEMP

Didn't see it.

CHRISTOPHER

It was changed to Animal Nature
later, so whoever gave her this was
on the set before the name change.
NEL's roommate...

DETECTIVE KEMP

CHOKO.

CHRISTOPHER

She says NEL was being stalked.
NEL was involved in an affair.

DETECTIVE KEMP

We checked that out. GEORGE EDWARDS wanted to fuck her. Hell, they might have had a thing going. But he was not - NOT in town.

CHRISTOPHER

You're not getting it. She got this from someone who was there before the name of the movie was changed.

DETECTIVE KEMP

Like?

CHRISTOPHER

(whispering)

SARAH SIDDONS.

DETECTIVE KEMP

What?!

CHRISTOPHER

She carries a gun. She threatened to shoot GEORGE EDWARDS. She walked off the picture three weeks in.

DETECTIVE KEMP

She's in the picture now.

Scene 24

Next day, afternoon. SARAH knocks lightly on CHRISTOPHER's door - doesn't wait for him to answer - enters his living area with great energy.

CHRISTOPHER moves out of the scene with DETECTIVE KEMP and into the scene with SARAH. DETECTIVE KEMP stands, gestures that he's keeping the bracelet and exits.

CHRISTOPHER

Who put the ginger in your ginger ale?

CHRISTOPHER finds a charged glass on the kitchen counter.

SARAH

I am a damn good actress, you know?

CHRISTOPHER
(toasting SARAH)
Here. Here.

SARAH
And you were right. I shouldn't
hold back.

CHRISTOPHER emerges from the living room onto the balcony
holding his manuscript.

SARAH (CONT'D)
GEORGE didn't do it. So, CLAYTON
MICHEL didn't do it. Who did it?

CHRISTOPHER
(pointing to his head)
It's in here. I'm still looking
for the way to do the reveal.

SARAH
Yeah. What I saw...I still think
GEORGE EDWARDS had something to do
with it.

CHRISTOPHER
Well, if you don't mind, I'll go
with the police on this. His alibi
puts him on a yacht out there in
the deep blue. The night of the
murder he was docked in Catalina
harbour.

CHRISTOPHER finds the manuscript and opens it to the pages
SARAH will read.

SARAH
(pointing to the
manuscript)
Where you going with this?

CHRISTOPHER
Think you can remember you're
playing Detective BECCA DELISLE?
Someone else will be playing you.
Look in the script you're GWEN
ARTHUR - famous Hollywood actress.

SARAH
I don't want to be in your movie.

CHRISTOPHER
Well, you're part of the story.
You were on that set. No choice.

CHRISTOPHER hands her the script and walks to the kitchen.

SARAH turns around and sees "GWEN ARTHUR" (played by Nel in a different character) in sunglasses stretched out on a chaise lounge at poolside at her Hollywood home. She takes on the role of BECCA and continues what sounds like an interview already in progress.

Gwen has five bracelets on her left wrist. She is the picture of calm, cool and very collected.

BECCA

More than one person said you spent a lot of time on set with her.

GWEN

I took KELLY under my wing. I was mentoring her.

BECCA

Mentoring?

GWEN

Showing her the ropes. Helping her with her lines. Tips and tricks.

BECCA

I like your bracelets. Can I see?

Gwen reluctantly holds out her wrist.

BECCA (CONT'D)

Nice. You left the movie early. Why?

GWEN

Artistic differences.

BECCA remains skeptically silent. Gwen stands and puts on a robe.

GWEN (CONT'D)

It got difficult between CLAYTON and me. One of us had to go.

BECCA

He was putting the moves on KELLY?

GWEN

It made me sick.

BECCA

Pretty standard stuff on set, though?

GWEN

I went through all that shit when I was an ingenue. Now I'm GWEN ARTHUR. I don't have to fuck any man to get ahead.

BECCA

And who do you fuck now?

Gwen gives her a bitter look.

BECCA (CONT'D)

I heard you're a lesbian.

Gwen shrugs.

BECCA (CONT'D)

So, you took poor KELLY aside and offered free advice. What was that? Stay away from men?

GWEN

Don't give yourself to men because you think they will help you get ahead. They won't.

BECCA

But, you could help her?

GWEN

Yes.

BECCA

See her off set?

GWEN

No. After I walked out I didn't see her again.

BECCA puts a bracelet on the table.

BECCA

Give her this?

Gwen picks it up and turns it around in her hand but doesn't look too closely.

The pool-side background dissolves into a white lit background.

GWEN

Might have. I give them to lots of people. It's a thing I do.

BECCA
Who else got one?

GWEN
You'll have to ask them. I can't remember. That was a long time ago. Look that girl was killed after I left the set. In fact, after I left the country. But, then you know that, don't you?

BECCA
You went from daily mentoring to zero contact?

GWEN
She didn't like it.

BECCA
How do you know?

GWEN
What?

BECCA
How do you know she was upset if you never had contact after you left the set?

SARAH comes out of character and walks back to the living room and confronts CHRISTOPHER who is sitting on a bar stool by the kitchen counter. Gwen saunters sexily off stage.

SARAH
Questions for me too, eh? I'm a suspect, is that it?

CHRISTOPHER
Circumstances are such.

CHRISTOPHER crosses to the kitchen, finds a bottle of white wine in the refrigerator and pours SARAH a glass - not quite filling it.

SARAH retreats to the living room.

CHRISTOPHER emerges making an effort not to slosh the wine out of the wine glass while holding a glass with two fingers of scotch in his other hand.

SARAH
Scotch would have been nice.

CHRISTOPHER
Sorry. I should have asked. Shall
I...

SARAH
This is fine. In vino veritas...

CHRISTOPHER
Let us pray. Saluti.

They clink glasses. CHRISTOPHER drains his drink and fetches another then walks in and sits in his favorite chair.

SARAH
I don't want to be here if you're
going to get drunk.

CHRISTOPHER
No audience. That the problem?

SARAH
I'll just leave...

CHRISTOPHER tries to stand, falls back again, then manages to stand, finding himself in front of her face to face. He takes a deep sniff of SARAH's perfume.

CHRISTOPHER
(as she steps back)
Nice.

CHRISTOPHER makes his way to the scotch bottle and pours two more fingers.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
(slurred)
Should check my messages.

He enters his study.

CHRISTOPHER walks behind his desk, and activates his computer.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
(sarcastically)
No messages. Nobody loves me.

He pulls up full length, sucks back the rest of the scotch, wobbles a bit and uses the desk to support himself as he comes round to the front of it.

SARAH appears in the doorway.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

(slurring)

You go. Go. I have to finish this
fucking script. Live and write in
peace, my motto.

She takes his arm and guides him to the couch.

SARAH

Lie down. I'll see myself out.

CHRISTOPHER sits down heavily on the edge of the couch.

CHRISTOPHER

(very slurred)

You shouldn't be in here. No one
allowed.

SARAH enters and leans down to push his shoulders back and down and lifts his legs and slides them up on the couch. He is awake enough to whistle a little at her cleavage.

She pulls a blanket up on him and makes his head comfortable on the pillow. He turns into face the back of the couch and is asleep quickly.

SARAH turns off the desk light and in the dark. As she is about to close the study door and leave the room the light from the living room illuminates the back of the picture on his desk so it catches her eye.

On the movie screen, a large picture of NEL - her last headshot.

SARAH walks back into the study.

With CHRISTOPHER snoring gently behind her, SARAH picks up NEL's picture illuminating the photo with her flashlight. She is startled to see NEL's picture, and almost drops it.

Her hands shaking, she looks up to the screen and stares into NEL's eyes.

SARAH

You're her father?!

Scene 25

Across the stage the screen lights up with another pool scene. NEL enters in a stunning one piece bathing suit, finds a bottle of sunscreen and smooths it on her arms and shoulders.

SARAH walks into the scene and picks up a towel folded on the end of her chaise lounge and tosses it to NEL. SARAH stares at NEL as NEL wraps the towel around herself.

SARAH (CONT'D)

I sent everyone home...

NEL

I have another scene with GEORGE on Monday.

SARAH

Are you managing to fend him off?
I'm sure he's still pressing...

NEL

He's nice, actually.

SARAH

Be careful.

SARAH sits up and perches on the edge of her chaise lounge and leans toward NEL.

SARAH (CONT'D)

He'd just love to make a meal of you and he's old enough to be your father.

NEL

(giggling)
How bad could it be?
(checking the time on her cell)
Oh goodness. I have to get going!

SARAH turns her back to NEL who pulls on a tank top and shorts, slips into her sandals, grabs her bag.

NEL (CONT'D)

Tomorrow?

SARAH turns to face NEL again.

SARAH

Hope so. I'll be here.

NEL exits.

SARAH pulls out of a trance, shivers a little, then puts the picture of NEL back on the desk, as quietly as she can, making sure it is in the place where it was sitting before she picked it up.

SARAH retrieves her purse and keys and exits through the main door.

Scene 26

In the study, CHRISTOPHER twitches and snorts, and falls into a dream.

CHRISTOPHER's wife, SAMANTHA, shuffles in wearing a business suit. She sits on the stool at the kitchen counter.

CHRISTOPHER
Samantha? Sam?

Dawn light pours through the long windows overlooking the Pacific buoyed on the fresh breezes wafting in through the open doors to the balcony.

CHRISTOPHER starts and sits up and tries to orient himself. In his dream he walks into the kitchen.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Kiddo up yet?

SAMANTHA
Yeah...she's getting ready.

CHRISTOPHER
You taking her to school?

SAMANTHA
We're going to Culver City...

CHRISTOPHER turns suddenly around.

CHRISTOPHER
What?

SAMANTHA
She's got an audition.

CHRISTOPHER
She's going to school.

SAMANTHA
She's got a chance for a series...

CHRISTOPHER
Uh, uh. She needs to get her grades up.

NEL, then about 18, walks in dressed to the nines, gorgeous.

Samantha grabs a cup of coffee and walks over to a mirror to straighten her hair.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

(to NEL)

You're going to school...

NEL ignores him as she gets herself a cup of coffee.

NEL

Did mom tell you? About the series...

CHRISTOPHER

You wanna act? Join the drama club at the university when you get there. First, you get a degree.

NEL

Mom's taking me...

CHRISTOPHER

(angrily)

Go get your school stuff on. First, you graduate high school...

NEL backs off to the mirror as her mother comes to confront CHRISTOPHER and watches them in the mirror.

SAMANTHA

(angrily)

It's a day. One fucking day. She's on the call list. She's going.

CHRISTOPHER spins around, spatula in hand, pointing and waving it at his wife.

CHRISTOPHER

She's not going. And she's not doing any more auditions until she graduates. That's final.

SAMANTHA

Fuck you.

Samantha starts walking away.

CHRISTOPHER

Whaddya want, Samantha? You want her to end up bitter and fucked-up like you because you didn't cut it? You empty-headed bitch.

Samantha turns back and flies into his face.

SAMANTHA

You finally sell a script and get a movie made. Good for you. Mr. PHD finally scores one after twenty years of failure. And you can finally get it up because all of a sudden you the man.

NEL steps forward towards CHRISTOPHER and Samantha.

NEL

Shut up. Shut up. It's always something with you two. I'm sick and tired of it.

Samantha and CHRISTOPHER look at her. CHRISTOPHER walks to NEL and tries to put his arms around her.

NEL (CONT'D)

Get your filthy hands off me!

NEL rushes to the front door, opens it, runs out.

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

Mom! Come on!

SAMANTHA

(to CHRISTOPHER)

Satisfied?

Samantha leaves through the front door. CHRISTOPHER follows them and stands at the door talking into space.

CHRISTOPHER

Exit stage fucking right.

CHRISTOPHER goes back to his study and sits on the edge of the couch as his dream ebbs away and the house is empty once again.

Scene 27

On the other side of the stage, a camera crew is shooting a scene. We do not hear any dialogue or other sounds. GEORGE EDWARDS is acting the hell out of a scene with another actor.

CHRISTOPHER suddenly stands, tucks in his shirt, pulls a tie around his neck and runs his fingers through his hair.

Across the stage, the action stops, the Director rises from his chair and walks in to GEORGE EDWARDS and the other actor and shakes their hands and has words inaudible to CHRISTOPHER.

CHRISTOPHER walks toward GEORGE EDWARDS as he walks out of the scene.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Hi GEORGE.

GEORGE

CHRISTOPHER. Come to lend a hand?
This clunker could use a little
BEESTON magic dust.

CHRISTOPHER

Love to. But, you and I are going
to have a chat.

GEORGE

Ah...about NEL? I thought you
might like a sequel. A bird of a
different feather has called to
tell me NEL was your daughter. I
don't know what to say. I didn't
know. I'm sorry about what
happened.

CHRISTOPHER

We need to get into it...

GEORGE

I'll tell you all I know. But,
truly, it's not much.

GEORGE takes CHRISTOPHER's arm and pulls him away. They talk intimately as they walk off stage, but they are inaudible to the audience. They exit.

Scene 28

Elsewhere on the stage, SARAH enters with her lawyer (played by DYLAN MATT). DETECTIVE KEMP enters from the other side and greets them.

DETECTIVE KEMP

Thanks for coming down. I know
your busy.

SARAH

What's this about Detective?

DETECTIVE KEMP

Kemp.

LAWYER

DETECTIVE KEMP.

SARAH

About NEL JORDAN?

DETECTIVE KEMP

Let's do this in private... Down here.

He leads her off stage.

Scene 29

A door knocker sounds from outside the foyer of SARAH's Beverley Hills mansion. No answer, he rings the doorbell impatiently.

SARAH

(from off)

Come in!

CHRISTOPHER, carrying his updated screenplay and a large almost empty cup of coffee, hears her beckon, opens the door and walks in. Momentarily, SARAH appears wearing a very sexy nightgown.

On the movie screen a video of blue water reflecting sunshine in a customized swimming pool.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Coffee?

He holds his cup up.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You don't mind working here today?

CHRISTOPHER

I do mind.

SARAH

Fair's fair.

CHRISTOPHER

And a deal's a deal.

SARAH

Out of your comfort zone?

CHRISTOPHER
And into yours.

SARAH
Sit.

CHRISTOPHER
You now know NEL was my daughter.

SARAH
You should have told me. I should
have guessed!

SARAH walks to a small table and finds a bottle of scotch.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Past time for coffee. Neat, no ice.

She hands him a scotch. CHRISTOPHER holds up a copy of his updated screenplay.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You don't want to talk about her?

CHRISTOPHER ignores her, then cracks open the screenplay and holds it open.

CHRISTOPHER
I found out that NEL was friendly
with a gaffer on the set. Guy
named BRANDON TILLEY. But, he's
Josh in the movie.

SARAH scans the first page he's opened.

SARAH
You're going to read Josh?

CHRISTOPHER
In character if you please.

He pulls two chairs together facing one another at close range. SARAH and CHRISTOPHER sit down.

BECCA
You were on the set of Animal
Nature with NEL Jordan. She was
attracted to you.

JOSH
Yeah. I guess.

BECCA
Did it go anywhere?

JOSH

NEL was great. We dug one another. She hadn't done a movie before so she didn't know how fucking boring it can get on set.

BECCA

You were doing what exactly?

JOSH

I'm a gaffer. Electrical. Anyway, I saw her sitting around one day bored as dirt and gave her wink or made a face or something. And on and on from there.

BECCA

Did it get sexual?

JOSH

It was heading in that direction. We got close for a bit. She was just super nice, you know. Girl of my dreams, really.

BECCA

What happened?

JOSH

Then CLAYTON MICHEL, biggest star on the friggin' planet, happened.

CHRISTOPHER as Josh leans forward and closes the distances between "BECCA" and himself.

JOSH (CONT'D)

When the King has a fancy for the peasant's wife, the peasant bows and goes out to feed the swine.

BECCA

Did it piss you off?

JOSH

I didn't like it. But, as I said...I know the game. We stayed friends.

BECCA leans back. Moment of silence.

JOSH (CONT'D)

That whole thing with CLAYTON though, that rocked the boat big time.

BECCA leans back up, gestures to Josh to be more forthcoming.

JOSH (CONT'D)

CLAYTON and KELLY were tonguing one another something fierce in some dark corner on the set, you know, hands all over one another, and...

Suddenly, SARAH stands, prompting CHRISTOPHER to stand.

SARAH slams the script into CHRISTOPHER's chest.

SARAH

I was walking onto set to do a scene with GEORGE...

CHRISTOPHER

You saw them.

SARAH

He was pawing her - leaving his scent all over her like a Tom cat marking turf. He knew people were looking. He wanted everyone to see the Alpha male taking whatever he wanted.

CHRISTOPHER

Your business? No.

SARAH

If you had been there...

CHRISTOPHER

I'd fuckin' hate to have seen it. But, I'd have reminded myself I had no right to play daddy.

SARAH

NEL told me you were always in her business.

SARAH turns and walks away. CHRISTOPHER, drains his drink first, sets the glass on a table, then strides into her space behind her.

CHRISTOPHER

I had a long talk with BRANDON TILLY and I talked to GEORGE again. You lost it. You scared the shit out of NEL and you tore a long hairy strip off GEORGE. It cost you a job at a time when you badly needed another winner.

SARAH

Yeah, I did. I did. She was a sweet kid. Beautiful and sweet. I had spent a lot of time with her. I was mentoring her. Protecting her.

CHRISTOPHER

Like you were here mother? Right.

SARAH dismisses him with the back of her hand and walks away.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Her mother would have thought, hey, she's fucking a Super Star, good on Nel. More the merrier. She would have held her hand while GEORGE fucked her.

SARAH stands before the image of the pool on the movies screen, the sun's reflections almost blinding her. She puts on her sunglasses to hide her tears.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

BECCA's coming after you hard now, full detective mode. And you're going to tell her what you know.

SARAH

I can't.

CHRISTOPHER

Maybe you can't but GWEN ARTHUR will. Tomorrow. My place. Here's the finished script. Come ready for a full read-through.

SARAH

Fuck you.

CHRISTOPHER

See you tomorrow.

CHRISTOPHER exits. SARAH pulls herself together, pours a drink then finds the script she flung on the floor and opens it.

The CHIEF OF DETECTIVES walks into the scene and takes a seat at his desk. SARAH becomes BECCA again and walks over to him.

BECCA

Chief. Couple of secs. GWEN ARTHUR doesn't have an alibi.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
She was in Rome.

BECCA
Uh uh. She left town the next day.
Last flight.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
What was she doing the night of...

BECCA
Nothing. She says she was at home.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
Staff there?

BECCA
A couple of days earlier he told
her housekeeper to go visit her
people in Guatemala. The trip to
Rome had been planned.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
So? She got the dates wrong. It
was five years ago.

BECCA
Yeah, right.

He sits up straight behind his desk.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
What else?

BECCA
She owned a dark blue Beamer.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
No more?

BECCA
She owned the Beamer and an SUV.
White Lincoln. Sometime after she
got back from Rome the Beamer went
missing. No trade in. No
transfer. Gone baby gone.

CHIEF OF DETECTIVES
The woman has some splainin' to do.
Good work, Rebecca.

The Chief exits.

The movie screen fills with an image of the beach in front of CHRISTOPHER's house. Off the beach about 1000 years, a shot starting low to the water, flying under tumultuous grey clouds over choppy waters, wind rising, moving toward the people-less beach toward CHRISTOPHER's house.

Scene 30

SARAH rises from her kneeling position, straightens herself out and walks into CHRISTOPHER's living room. CHRISTOPHER is sitting behind the desk in his study. On the movie screen, dark storm clouds and wind-whipped waves move in from the ocean.

SARAH walks over and looks in, not daring to go in.

CHRISTOPHER
(with fake bonhomie)
Here at last. Thank god almighty
you're here at last.

CHRISTOPHER stands.

SARAH
You've started drinking already.

CHRISTOPHER
Actually, I'm... Had a bit too much
last night.

He walks to the kitchen.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Hair of the dog for me. Something
for the lady?

SARAH shakes her head. CHRISTOPHER takes the glass on the script and drains it. CHRISTOPHER pours her a very full glass of white wine, but leaves it on the counter near the stool where she has sat before.

SARAH (CONT'D)
No means no.

CHRISTOPHER
Except when it doesn't.

Off balance, CHRISTOPHER strides into the living room and bumps his hip on the end of the counter, bruising himself.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
(rubbing his hip)
Bugger!

SARAH

NEL told me she left right after she graduated high school. She was only 18.

CHRISTOPHER

Sit.

SARAH sits on the end of the couch nearest his chair facing him. CHRISTOPHER gestures with his hand to tell her to tell him more.

SARAH

She never wanted to see you again.
Or her mother.

CHRISTOPHER shakes his head and looks deeply into his scotch.

SARAH (CONT'D)

You were a bully, right? To your wife. To NEL.

CHRISTOPHER

DETECTIVE KEMP has been speaking out of turn. But all that's irrelevant for our purposes.

SARAH

No. No. No. No. It's back story CHRISTOPHER. Why she ended-up in Hollywood. Why she was on that movie set and met someone who actually loved her. It's probably why she's dead.

A huge gust of wind blows in the window as the sound of thunder in the distance smashes against the windows.

CHRISTOPHER gets up, crosses to the sliding doors and closes them. He turns back toward SARAH.

CHRISTOPHER

It was a dark and storm night.
(beat)
Back story? I wanted her to go to College. To Yale, where I went.

SARAH

She didn't want to go.

CHRISTOPHER

That's when mom and dad dig in and present the wall of truth and fact. But my dear wife...

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

It was not pleasant around here in those days. I'm a bully for education, yeah. NEL was incredibly smart. An actress she was never going to be.

CHRISTOPHER walks over to the kitchen counter and picks up the glass of wine. He walks it back into the living room and gives it to SARAH who hesitates, then accepts it.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

But you knew that from your
(making air quotes)
mentoring, right? Beautiful, sweet, smart. But she didn't have IT, like you have IT.

CHRISTOPHER bends down with his nose close to SARAH.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

And now she's fucking gone!

SARAH is frightened. She reaches for her purse in a desultory move to leave before things get worse. Remembering she carries a gun, CHRISTOPHER straightens up.

SARAH

What do you want?

CHRISTOPHER

I want to get through the script.

SARAH

Lay on McDuff, but you're going to need a different ending.

CHRISTOPHER

What are you talking about?

SARAH stands and moves close to CHRISTOPHER, holding the script.

SARAH

GWEN ARTHUR...she's your prime suspect. I'm you're prime suspect. We're not going there.

CHRISTOPHER

You want me to write a different truth. It's good enough. KELLY wouldn't suck Gwen's toes...things do sideways. Boom. Boom.

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Off into the lovely Hollywood night, no scent of perfume left drifting in the air. Must have been a man goes the automatic thinking.

SARAH steps back. The wind howls and heavy rain pounds against the windows. SARAH throws the script at him.

SARAH

The truth is, this is a piece of shit.

Pain registers on CHRISTOPHER's face but he tries to stare her down in an effort to assert authority.

CHRISTOPHER

It's a piece of shit that's going to get made because I wrote it!

SARAH grabs her purse again, digs in to find her car keys and makes for the door but it blows back so ferociously she doesn't dare to leave. She puts her shoulder to the door to close against the wind. The lights flicker as the storm pounds and the rain drums on the roof of the house. CHRISTOPHER is leaning with his back against the kitchen counter.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Night of the living dead.

SARAH sits down on the couch and wipes rainwater from her face.

SARAH

Fuck.

CHRISTOPHER

The cops have re-opened the case. They've been here a few times. I told them what I learned from GEORGE and BRANDON.

SARAH

And you spouted your theories at them.

CHRISTOPHER

Believe me if I could have handed GEORGE EDWARDS - or, or that Brandon guy - to the cops. Either one. Here's NEL's killer. But unlike you, they've got fucking alibis.

(MORE)

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Too bad for you cause it narrows
the list of plausibles, doesn't it?

SARAH

What? What the fuck are you
saying?

SARAH sits, head in hands, bewildered.

CHRISTOPHER

They didn't know about your lesbian
ways; that you were trying to
seduce NEL in your sunny Hollywood
lair.

(sarcastically)

That you *loved* her.

(beat)

Humor me. Let's read.

SARAH sits angrily in her chair. CHRISTOPHER stands in front
of her and pulls her up.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

On your feet. Full voice. Let's
go for the Oscar. Let's give them
shadow and light. BECCA's drilling
down.

He puts the script into her other hand. He walks her over to
a mirror as she trembles.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

(pointing to a page
angrily) There! BECCA
DELISLE...read.

SARAH (as BECCA) looks into the mirror and reads to the image
of herself. CHRISTOPHER, standing to the side of the mirror,
reads GWEN ARTHUR's lines.

BECCA

(weakly)

Ms Arthur. I need you to pay
attention. You had an ongoing
relationship with KELLY even after
you left the set. You saw one
another frequently, mostly at your
house.

CHRISTOPHER

(as Gwen)

Yes.

BECCA

You lied to me. You took her shopping. Rodeo drive. Bought her things.

CHRISTOPHER

(as Gwen)

A few things. Yes. I liked her I wanted her to have some nice things.

BECCA

OK. Good. But you kept it secret.

CHRISTOPHER

(as Gwen)

Not really.

BECCA

You did. No one else knew how close you had become. Not your colleagues. Even KELLY's roommate, SUKI, her best friend didn't know.

CHRISTOPHER

(as Gwen)

I was mentoring her. I asked her not to say anything.

BECCA

Why would you make it a secret?

SARAH turns to face CHRISTOPHER and locks on his eyes.

BECCA (CONT'D)

It was all one way though, wasn't it? You loved her. Became obsessed by her. Tried to buy her affections? Promised to help move her career into the stratosphere.

CHRISTOPHER

(as Gwen)

She was good.

BECCA

Good but not great. You'd fallen in love with her. Isn't that right? Ms Arthur?

CHRISTOPHER

(as Gwen)

She loved me too.

BECCA

The night she died, where were you?

CHRISTOPHER

At home. My housekeeper was there.

BECCA

The one you gave your car to?

CHRISTOPHER

That was arranged sometime before. Ms Sanchez's son was to come up from Guatemala and take it down there. It was a gift.

BECCA

And you left for Rome the day after she was killed not the day before.

CHRISTOPHER

(as Gwen)

I was confused about the dates.

BECCA

There was a bracelet. "Bugged by You".

CHRISTOPHER

(as Gwen)

I gave it to her before I left the set. The movie was called "Bugged". So...

BECCA

It was found on the street near where she was killed.

The filmed piece dissolves and resolves again into a vicious storm. SARAH comes out of character.

SARAH

I'm so confused. The audience will be confused. I'm BECCA. You're me now. NEL is KELLY. OK. OK. People watching....people need a foothold in reality.

SARAH catches her breath and tries to regain her composure.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What about the bracelet? It was a trinket. It was a memento for the movie.

CHRISTOPHER

It's a pixel. BECCA's connecting the pixels, like DETECTIVE KEMP... putting the big picture together.

SARAH

But you know from CHOKO that NEL already had the bracelet. You're lying.

CHRISTOPHER crosses to the kitchen carrying his own glass and pulls down another tumbler, then pours themselves a couple of inches each.

A gust of wind pummels the balcony windows with rain and wind that whistles and shrieks.

CHRISTOPHER

I love it when it's howling like this.

CHRISTOPHER stands with chest out and sucks in a few deep breaths of air.

Pleased with himself, he sidles into the living room and hands her the glass.

SARAH holds the glass but doesn't drink as she watches CHRISTOPHER gulp.

SARAH

I understand. I get it. You're still grieving for NEL. Now the cops are stirring things up again. Asking questions. That's what all this is about isn't it?

CHRISTOPHER

(slurring slightly)
You think all this is about turning pain into art?

SARAH

Or commerce. Both. But, you're not venal. That I know.

CHRISTOPHER

(taking another swallow)
Read on.
(yelling)
Read on!

Frightened, SARAH refuses.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
I'll read your part. Shakespearian
boy actor dawns the wig.

SARAH keeps trying to move away from him but he stalks her as he reads.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
(as BECCA)
You're a lesbian aren't you?
It's actually a poorly kept secret
among your colleagues.

The interview room dissolves into a white background. SARAH slips into BECCA'S character.

BECCA
But you don't want the public to know. I think you came on to KELLY. You wanted her. You waited til you had groomed her. Seduced her with your gifts and money and affection. Your mentoring. Your promises. Then one fine day you made your move. And she rejected you. But NEL didn't reciprocate. You persisted. It disgusted her. So KELLY flew out of your gilded cage...back to her grubby little apartment.

SARAH
No. She loved me. She loved me!

SARAH (CONT'D)
What do you want, CHRISTOPHER? You want a confession? I stalked her? She got pissed off? I was panicked that she was going to out me? So, I killed her? That's your unprovable, ridiculous plot?

CHRISTOPHER
(heavier slurring)
It's so fucking plausible. It's so logical. The cops will deduce...

CHRISTOPHER'S legs wobble. He puts his finger into her sternum.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Here's looking at you, kid.

He backs away.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Nature calls. *My animal nature.*

Scene 31

CHRISTOPHER walks out of the living room using various tables and chairs to steady himself as he goes, leaving the stage to SARAH.

SARAH paces in the living room. She hears the wind howling and the rain pelting on the house. She looks at the movie screen into the tumult of the night, tired, inebriated and frightened.

NEL enters wearing a summer dress. She stands in front of the mirror preening. SARAH moves behind her.

SARAH
You're beautiful. You are really beautiful.

NEL turns around to face her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Try this on.

NEL turns to SARAH. SARAH puts both her hands on NEL's face and gently pulls her to her and tries a tentative kiss, meeting no resistance. NEL pulls SARAH to her and they kiss deeply and warmly. NEL pulls away and starts walking away. SARAH doesn't know why.

NEL
I'm going to your bedroom.

NEL exits the stage.

CHRISTOPHER has come back but goes into his study, lays down on the couch and goes to sleep almost instantly.

SARAH, tears in her eyes, turns from the screen and scans the living room and kitchen. She realizes a lot of time has gone by. She walks to the study and sees CHRISTOPHER who is snoring lightly.

The sound of the rain and pummelling rain and wind are steady in the background. She walks back to the living room and picks up the script, flipping through the last few pages. She tosses it down again.

Feeling a bit braver, SARAH returns to CHRISTOPHER's study and looks in. He has sunk even deeper into a deep, drunken sleep.

She tip toes in, finds a blanket and puts it over him. As she does so, she bumps his desk and the screen of the laptop flickers on.

The big screen shows what is on the laptop screen. His screen shot is a screen of NEL when she was a little girl. There are various folders and icons on the desk top. All of them have labels except one.

SARAH comes around the desk to look at the laptop. She is captivated by the image of NEL. She touches the unlabeled folder and instantly a series of other folders appeared, each of them labelled with the name "NEL" and a year, from 1990 to the present.

Curious, SARAH quietly lifts the laptop and takes it into the kitchen counter and sets it down. CHRISTOPHER snorts and startles her.

Across the stage, NEL re-enters.

NEL (CONT'D)

SARAH?

SARAH rises and walks to NEL.

NEL (CONT'D)

I feel like I've been liberated.

SARAH

From what?

NEL

Years and years of shit.

SARAH

You're only twenty five years old.

NEL

A lot of shit went down at home.

SARAH

Oh, NEL.

NEL

My mother wouldn't stop him....

SARAH

She was afraid of him. He's a big man... I see the violence in him. But, you're here now...

SARAH embraces NEL and they kiss again. CHRISTOPHER lets out a loud snort. NEL runs off, frightened.

SARAH looks at the movie screen still showing the laptop screen with its folders. She goes back to the counter where she opens the first folder, causing a series of seemingly innocent photos of young NEL to appear. She opens another and the same thing happens.

She opens another and finds only one file inside - a video. She opens it. The movie screen shows a badly blurred image capturing a man forcing a child against her will.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
C'mon NEL. Look at the camera.

The camera zooms closer to NEL and the blurred image jiggles as the camera jiggles as CHRISTOPHER moves. NEL continues to look into her arms.

A blurred hand comes out from behind the lens and the image grows larger as CHRISTOPHER, in his mid 30s, bends in toward NEL and shakes her shoulder.

CHRISTOPHER
For Daddy. Sweetheart. C'mon.

He shakes her again. NEL looks up into the camera, tears in her eyes and yells.

NEL (V.O.)
No. No. Daddy no!

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
Jeezuscris!

The camera is jostled, various images from around the room blur into one another. There are clicking sounds and then a refocusing of the camera on NEL. It's now fixed on a tripod.

CHRISTOPHER walks into the space between the camera and the bed and then sits heavily on the edge of the bed, blocking NEL.

CHRISTOPHER (V.O.)
(angrily)
Take that off. We're
going to get this shot.
(sweeter)
Just the two of us. C'mon
honey, it will be fun.

The blurred film stutters to an end and the screen goes black.

Scene 32

Close on SARAH staring at the screen, tears running down her face. The wind outside rises and howls.

SARAH
Oh, my god.

SARAH finds her purse and pulls out her cell phone and dials. DETECTIVE KEMP enters from the side of the stage carrying his cell phone.

DETECTIVE KEMP
Kemp.

SARAH
Come quickly. Come quickly.
Please. Help. Quickly.

SARAH hangs up. DETECTIVE KEMP rushes off stage.

CHRISTOPHER stirs, sits up and then stands. He moves stealthily toward SARAH who does not see him.

CHRISTOPHER
(from the study doorway
looking at SARAH with a
crazed look)
Boo.

SARAH muffles a noise in her throat as her eyes immediately shift to the dishevelled, fierce and malevolent looking CHRISTOPHER standing in the doorway of the study.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
You found the family movies.

SARAH backs into the darkened living room and strides to the couch. A crack of lightening followed by a peal of thunder rattles everything. Heavy winds and rain pelt the balcony and windows.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Storm's not over.

SARAH picks up her purse and fumbles for her car keys.

SARAH
It's dying down. I'm ok.

She run-walks to the front door, but CHRISTOPHER moves quickly to cut her off.

CHRISTOPHER
No, you're not gonna make it.

CHRISTOPHER snatches her purse, opens it and pulls out her gun.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
Sit.

SARAH sits down but perches the edge of the seat, surveying the room to find escape routes.

SARAH
(buying time)
I'd like a drink. Scotch.

CHRISTOPHER keeps his eye on her and the gun at the ready, but grabs her glass, crosses to the kitchen and recharges it.

CHRISTOPHER hands SARAH the scotch, which she takes. She pulls herself together and tries to take control of the situation. She finds a tough, sexy character in herself. She stands then drinks. He holds the gun on her.

SARAH (CONT'D)
Oh, for God's Sake, put it down.

He is unsure what to do, but after a few seconds, lowers it until the gun is hanging by his side.

SARAH (CONT'D)
You're kinky. Who knew?

CHRISTOPHER
It's not what you think.

SARAH
You think you're the only one
with...

SARAH walks toward CHRISTOPHER, talking as she goes...until she is very close and looking directly in his eyes.

SARAH (CONT'D)
...special needs?

She holds her glass up to CHRISTOPHER.

SARAH (CONT'D)
I'm empty.

CHRISTOPHER, caught off guard takes the glass and puts it down on a table.

SARAH (CONT'D)

She had to go. One of us was going to do it.

CHRISTOPHER's face is strained, but he's softening, but not yet sure if he's being gamed.

SARAH (CONT'D)

She was going to out me. Little no-talented blackmailer. She was going to peddle her tale of woe to the Enquirer. People Magazine. Fill her pockets with gossip. Is that why you killed her?

CHRISTOPHER

She would have.

SARAH

You and your wife created one nasty little, money-grubbing bitch.

CHRISTOPHER

No. No. No. No. I'm not buying this.

SARAH

She was beautiful. Lured us in. Sucked the love out of us. Betrayed us.

SARAH looks at the script, then picks it up.

SARAH (CONT'D)

The ending still works. You set out to create reasonable doubt for yourself, I get it. Smart. Oh so very smart. But, it works for me too, doesn't it?

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, you are so good, Ms Siddons. So very fucking good.

CHRISTOPHER raises the gun again and levels it at her heart.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Bit of re-writing to be done, I'm afraid. I promised you immortality. You'll have to do with infamy.

A loud crack of thunder sounds above the house.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
You're a loose end, now.

SARAH walks up to him again and takes his left hand and puts it on her breast. He pulls away, but is aroused and disgusted too. She pushes against him.

SARAH
I swing both ways, CHRISTOPHER.

CHRISTOPHER
When it suits you. GEORGE was right.

CHRISTOPHER takes a large swallow of scotch.

SARAH
We need to get into bed together on this one.

He puts his tumbler down heavily on the table beside his chair.

CHRISTOPHER
Ever the actress.

He walks directly in front of SARAH and bends his head down, eyes wide open as they look at one another. She stretches up on her toes and just before she puts her lips to his he grabs a large knot of hair and forces her down on her knees.

He falls to his knees behind her and puts the barrel of his gun to her head as SARAH struggles to get free.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
You came here to kill me. You brought this gun. Maybe the same one you used to kill NEL.

SARAH cannot sustain the act anymore. She falls forward, with her forearms on the couch, her head on her arms, sobbing. He's still upright and on his knees right behind her, doggy style, with his gun hand and gun on her butt.

SARAH
Are you man enough to take me?

CHRISTOPHER lays forward on her back, until his head is next to hers, the gun at her temple.

CHRISTOPHER

I know you hate men. I know you
worked on NEL. To hate men.

SARAH

I'm no little girl. Why don't you
find that out for yourself?

CHRISTOPHER straightens up, still on his knees behind SARAH,
breathing heavily and sweating.

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, you bitch...I am so fucking
tired of women. Really fucking
tired!

SARAH realizes he is impotent and her face screws to a look
of fierce resolve.

SARAH rears-up like a horse and knocks him back so he lands
between her and the front door, the gun between them.

They both see the gun at the same time, but standing now,
SARAH is able to kick it away. She runs to the balcony exit
and runs into the night. He crawls after the gun not knowing
she's left the house.

Scene 32

CHRISTOPHER gets the gun and stands. But SARAH is not to be
seen. The door to the balcony is open about two feet and the
storm is whipping the curtains.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

Chase scene. Ah, fuck...

From the beach SARAH sees CHRISTOPHER coming for her,
illuminated by lightning strikes.

He catches up to her. They face one another a few feet
apart. The screen goes to a silver grey. The sound of the
storm diminishes. The dawn sun starts to break - slowly at
first.

CHRISTOPHER looks at her, a devil smile on his face.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)

(very loudly)

Aaaaaaaaaaaghoooooooooooooooooooooooooooo!

His scream unsettles her momentarily - and as she regains her
composure he levels the gun at her chest.

SARAH

BECCA dies.

CHRISTOPHER

Self-destructive to the end.

SARAH

Tell me what happened. Why did you kill her?

CHRISTOPHER

Why would I tell you?

SARAH

My dying wish. Tell me.

CHRISTOPHER lowers the gun.

CHRISTOPHER

She left home. Right after high school. She should have got an education.

SARAH

But she already had that didn't she? From you. And from a mother turning a blind eye.

CHRISTOPHER

Her mother didn't know.

SARAH

Sure she did. But once you made it big in Hollywood you were part of her big plans for NEL. She looked the other way.

CHRISTOPHER

I went to see NEL in Hollywood. More than once. Try to say, it's OK. I'm sorry. Terribly sorry.

SARAH

For you it was over. She was a woman now. Not your type.

CHRISTOPHER

The past is past. She was my daughter...

SARAH

She didn't want you anywhere near her.

CHRISTOPHER
She was doing well. I opened some
doors...

The movie screen shows a blue sky and a full dawn sun.

SARAH
You're deluded. Your sick.

CHRISTOPHER
Then I heard. Heard she was
fucking around with GEORGE.

SARAH
He was fucking around with her.

CHRISTOPHER
Then I heard you had started to
pray on her. I confronted her,
told her that you, the great SARAH
SIDDONS, were just using her. I was
going to get her out of the
cesspool. Hollywood.

The high waves are rolling loud but only half the size they
were.

SARAH
She was almost free of you. Why
did you kill her? Why?

NEL enters the stage in the same clothes she wore on the
night of the murder.

NEL
I was already dead when you shot
me.

CHRISTOPHER turns suddenly toward NEL.

CHRISTOPHER
Hi Sweetie. I thought...

NEL
Shut up. Just shut up.

CHRISTOPHER shrinks back a little.

NEL (CONT'D)
You have to stop. I don't want to
see you. At all. Ever. Now just
fuck off and leave me alone.

CHRISTOPHER takes steps toward NEL who recoils.

NEL (CONT'D)
 (holding up her hand to
 stop him)
 What the fuck, CHRISTOPHER.

CHRISTOPHER
 Dad. Call me Dad.

NEL
 I thought I was your little girl
 friend, CHRISTOPHER.

NEL steps back.

CHRISTOPHER
 (to Sarah)
 I lost my little girl.

NEL (CONT'D)
 I'm going to the police. I'm
 going to tell them what you did to
 me. You understand?

NEL turns from him, and with her right hand turns the bracelet on her left wrist that SARAH gave to her as if to summon her courage and walks defiantly toward her apartment building.

CHRISTOPHER raises the gun toward NEL.

CHRISTOPHER
 (verbally)
 Bang. Bang.

NEL falls to her knees.

A small crowd of beach people, including DYLAN MATT, GEORGE EDWARDS, Brandon Tilly, the Police Chief and others gathers around CHRISTOPHER and SARAH, everyone holding a smartphone.

CHRISTOPHER (CONT'D)
 (looking up into the dawn
 sky, tears in his eyes)
 It was our secret.

SARAH steps toward CHRISTOPHER carefully. People in the crowd start to take pictures and videos of them with their cell phones.

DETECTIVE KEMP now enters at some distance. SARAH moves close to CHRISTOPHER. CHRISTOPHER raises the gun and again points it at her.

SARAH

It's a prop gun, CHRISTOPHER.

She puts her hand on the barrel of the gun. He pulls the trigger but there is only a click. He releases the gun and she takes it from him.

DETECTIVE KEMP shakes his head, takes out a pair of handcuffs and walks to SARAH and CHRISTOPHER through the crowd and cuffs CHRISTOPHER.

With SARAH by his side, DETECTIVE KEMP turns CHRISTOPHER toward the crowd so they can take more pictures and he, SARAH and CHRISTOPHER strike a pose.

CURTAIN DOWN