

GhostWriter  
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FADE IN:

EXT. HERALD/TRIBUNE/SUN BUILDING -- EVENING

The main offices of the Big Apple's finest, if only surviving, daily newspaper.

INT. NEWS ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Busy offices filled with people who grew up watching "Lou Grant." Reporter LYNN ANNE MEYERSON is at work on her word processor, a story entitled "Organized Crime Muscles in on Garbage." She hums a tune she's listening to on her Walkman while eating a candy bar.

Fellow reporter, HARRY BLAINE, walks over to Lynn Anne's desk. He is a very straight arrow type. As he reaches her, she turns her screen off.

BLAINE

What-ho, Linnie, what are you working on so late?

LYNN ANNE

Oh, just a column for the lifestyle section.

BLAINE

You work entirely too hard. Aren't you due for a vacation or what not? You know, get away for a while.

LYNN ANNE

Sorry, I'm a type A personality.

BLAINE

I see. Well, some of us were going for drinks after work. Care to join us?

LYNN ANNE

Sorry, can't. I have plans.

BLAINE

Can't you break them for once?

LYNN ANNE

Can't. A good friend's getting engaged tonight. I mean, he is engaged and tonight's the party.

BLAINE

Very well then. Have a good time.  
See you in the a.m. Ta-ta.

LYNN ANNE

Tootles.

Blaine starts to move on. Lynn goes to turn on her monitor. Phone rings. Lynn Anne answers it, banging the phone on the headset of the Walkman. That smarts. She re-adjusts herself.

Blaine pauses to eavesdrop.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)

Herald-Tribune-Sun city desk.

INTERCUT:

EXT. DESERTED ALLEY -- EVENING

RAY "THE WUSSY" BENDUCCI, a seedy-looking, low-level criminal stooge, the kind usually found in deserted alleys. He's at a pay phone. He probably used a slug.

BENDUCCI

Yo, Meyerson, I got the stuff.

LYNN ANNE

Oh, hi, er, Lester. How are you?

BENDUCCI

Whattya talkin' about? It's me, Benducci.

LYNN ANNE

Of course you are, Lester.

BENDUCCI

Oh, I get it. Somebody's there, right?

LYNN ANNE

Very good, Lester. That's it exactly. Now, what can I do for you, Lester?

BENDUCCI

The stuff's there. Wait'll you see it. It'll make your hair curl.

LYNN ANNE

What are you talking about? Lester.

BENDUCCI

I can't say on the phone. But it's big. Manifests, receipts, daily logs. You'll see.

LYNN ANNE  
 Yes, well, I will see you tonight.  
 Lester. Thanks.

She hangs up. Looks up to see Blaine hanging about.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)  
 That was Lester. About tonight.  
 Excuse me.

She goes into her editor's office.

INT. MAC'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

"MAC" MCCARTHY, the gruff but lovable boss, is on the phone. Lynn Anne closes the door behind her. Mac sits at his desk, folding a sheet of newspaper into a large origami swan.

MAC  
 No progress on the sanitation talks  
 or you just haven't figured it out  
 yet? I know the union's crying strike  
 again. I got the paper right in  
 front of me. Gimme something more.  
 The people out there want to know if  
 their garbage is going to be picked  
 up next month. Me, I don't care. I  
 live in the 'burbs. Now get on it!

LYNN ANNE  
 (indicating swan)  
 Very nice, Mac.

MAC  
 Beats pulling my hair out. And I  
 suppose you got another hot exclusive?

LYNN ANNE  
 You betcha.

MAC  
 Whatcha got?

LYNN ANNE  
 I don't know.

MAC  
 (grabs phone)  
 Stop the presses!

LYNN ANNE  
 I'll have it for you tomorrow. My  
 man's coming in tonight. He promises  
 a surprise.

MAC

And of course it'll blow this town wide open.

LYNN ANNE

Of course. We just don't know how wide yet. My source promises it's big. We'll both see tomorrow.

(checks watch)

Right now, I've got a party to crash. Later, Mac.

She runs off.

INT. NEWS ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

She stops at her desk to lock it and turn the computer off. Discreetly Blaine watches.

INT. LOBBY NEWSSTAND -- EVENING

Lynn Anne stops to buy newspapers as VENDOR converses with her.

VENDOR

Hi, Lynn Anne without a hyphen. Should you be buying those?

LYNN ANNE

Have to keep up on the competition, Main. Later!

INT. PARKING GARAGE -- EVENING

Lynn Anne gets in her car, snaps on the radio to rock, then rolls. A black sedan starts and follows. Ominous, isn't it?

EXT. COMMUNITY HALL -- NIGHT

A small hall for hire in the suburbs, where a party is in progress.

LESTER WILLIAMS, our hero (though you'd be hard pressed to prove it yet), is leaning against a parked car contemplating the stars with his ten year old nephew, DONNIE.

LESTER

There, there it is. Starlight, star bright, the first star I see tonight. I wish I may. I wish I might, Get the wish I make tonight. Isn't that something?

DONNIE

That's a planet, Uncle Lester.

LESTER

What?

DONNIE

That's Venus. It's called the evening star but it's really a planet.

LESTER

Oh. Planet light, planet bright...no, I don't think that's going to cut it.

HEATHER BLINDEL comes out. She's a fashion conscious girl. Nice, but not comfortable in her surroundings, because they're just not "right" enough.

HEATHER

Here you are. It's time to open the presents.

DONNIE

How about the cake?

HEATHER

You go in and check.

He does, with glee.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

What are you doing out here?

LESTER

We were just wishing on a planet.

HEATHER

Does it work?

LESTER

Are all your relatives still here?

HEATHER

Yes.

LESTER

Then it doesn't.

HEATHER

You're just plain bad. Now, come on in.

INT. COMMUNITY HALL -- NIGHT

Heather and Lester are now seated before the GATHERED FAMILIES, including MR. & MRS. BLINDEL. Heather and Lester open presents including small appliances, housewares and a large assortment of crystal bowls piled nearby. Lester opens a box and pulls out another crystal bowl.

Heather reads the card.

There's a DJ setting up music as some CATERERS set up the trays of food.

LESTER  
(feigning excitement)  
Oh boy, another crystal bowl!

Heather elbows him in the ribs.

HEATHER  
Thank you, Uncle Sam and Aunt Edna.

LESTER  
I'll just put this with the others.

Heather opens the last present. It is a crystal bowl.

HEATHER  
Oh, how lovely.

LESTER  
A crystal bowl!  
(to Heather)  
Was there a sale on these things?

HEATHER  
Hush. Oh, thank you cousin Minnie.  
Thank you, everyone. The food's out  
now, so eat and enjoy.

Music comes on. The guests go over to the food, buffet style. Heather joins her parents. Lester winds up with some buddies.

SOME PAL  
So next Saturday Sal wants to take  
the boat out fishing. You in?

Lester takes out a date book.

LESTER  
Saturday? Nope. Sorry. Heather  
and me have to pick out some wedding  
favors.

SOME OTHER PAL  
Can't she just do it?

LESTER  
No. It's one of those "couple"  
things.

Lynn Anne comes in. Lester brightens.

SOME OTHER PAL  
Whoa, who's the babe?

LESTER  
That's no babe. That's Lynn Anne.  
My friend from college.

SOME PAL  
You had a friend like that in college?  
And Heather knows about her?

LESTER  
Nothing like that. We were friends.  
And Heather knows her. Excuse me.

He heads to Lynn Anne.

SOME PAL  
He is a chump.

SOME OTHER PAL  
A chump and a half.

Lester joins Lynn Anne as she hangs her jacket.

LESTER  
Hey, Lynn! So, you made it.

LYNN ANNE  
Would I miss the social event of the  
season?

LESTER  
I guess you had to if you came here.  
Soup's on.

People start to dance.

LYNN ANNE  
Thanks, but I can't stay too long.  
Big doings tonight.

LESTER  
You ace reporters are so busy.

LYNN ANNE  
Ho and ho.

Heather comes over and takes hold of Lester's arm. Meanwhile,  
an ELDERLY GUEST begins dancing around the hall, shuffling  
all over, on his own.

HEATHER  
Hello.

LYNN ANNE  
Hi.

LESTER  
Heather, you remember Lynn Anne.

The Elderly Gent glides by.

LYNN ANNE

Congratulations again on your forthcoming nuptials. You're getting a great guy.

She musses his hair.

HEATHER

He is special.

Heather smooths his hair.

LYNN ANNE

If I had half a brain, I would have snapped him up.

HEATHER

Fortunately, you don't.

Lynn Anne takes out an envelope and hands it to Lester.

LYNN ANNE

This is for you guys. I'm sorry, I wanted to get you a nice gift, you know, like a crystal bowl or something, but I couldn't find any.

LESTER

That's because they're all here.

LYNN ANNE

The way I figure, a couple starting out could always use a couple of dollars.

LESTER

You figured right.

HEATHER

Thank you very much.

Lester peeks in the envelope.

LESTER

And they're the right size, too!

Elderly Gent sweeps by again.

HEATHER

Food's being served. Do join us.

LYNN ANNE

Thank you.

Lynn Anne goes to the food. Heather and Lester follow. The Elderly Man glides by once more. A crash is then heard. Apparently he's bumped into something. Whoops.

EXT. COMMUNITY HALL -- NIGHT

Lynn Anne leaves. The Figure in the black sedan raises a gun. Lester comes to the door. The Figure lowers his gun.

LYNN ANNE  
Thanks for having me.

LESTER  
Hey, you're a friend, right?

LYNN ANNE  
The best kind. I bring cash.

LESTER  
We appreciate it, too. And we'll be sending you a thank you card just as soon as we test for counterfeits. I'm really glad you came. It means a lot.

LYNN ANNE  
All the luck to you. The both of you.

LESTER  
Thanks.

She kisses him on the cheek.

HEATHER (O.S.)  
Oh, Lester, where are you?

LESTER  
Gotta go.

LYNN ANNE  
Me, too. I'll see you.

Lester goes back inside. Lynn goes to say something, but checks herself. She glances at her watch and walks off.

EXT. VICTORY DINER -- NIGHT

Lonely road. Lynn Anne pulls into the parking lot, then goes into the diner. Moments later, the sedan pulls up beside Lynn's car and turns its lights off.

INT. VICTORY DINER -- CONTINUOUS

Lynn Anne looks around and checks her watch again. She goes to the counter. A BORED WAITRESS comes up.

LYNN ANNE  
Coffee, please. Caffeinated.

Waitress serves her and then disappears into the back. Lynn Anne moves over to one of the booths and finds a large envelope taped beneath it. She leaves money for her bill and heads out.

EXT. VICTORY DINER -- NIGHT

The sedan pulls away and leaves. Lynn Anne watches it go. Whistling, she gets into her car and starts it. It explodes.

EXT. SOMEPLACE ELSE

The harsh light of the explosion gets brighter, then subsides.

We see Lynn Anne, dazed and confused, walking in a void-like non-place, netherworldish section of the universe.

In the distance is a bright source of light. She is holding the steering wheel of the car.

LYNN ANNE  
Whoa, what the hell was that noise?  
Hey, where am I? Where's my--?

She pauses to listen and faces the source of light.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)  
Hello?  
(listening, the  
conversing)  
Who's there? No, I don't know where  
I am. Well, I was in my car and...  
(catching on)  
Ooooh.

She realizes she's still carrying the steering wheel and lets it drop in a hurry.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)  
No, no. I'm deceased? I can't be.  
Not now! I didn't finish. It was  
this article. I'm a reporter. Maybe  
you know my work?

As she talks, she is haltingly strolling toward the light.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)  
It was very important---at least I  
seem to recall something being  
important. That's very sweet music.  
Very soothing. What is that, a harp?  
A string section? No, wait, I can't.  
(MORE)

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)

There's this thing---why can't I remember? What's wrong with me? I was working on this, this story! It was an essential feature---Do I smell chocolate chip cookies? I can't go there just yet . Please, let me go back. Just to take care of this. It's right on the tip of my tongue. I was being figurative. I can remember, I have to. Lester! Yes, I have to see Lester!

EXT. CEMETERY -- MORNING

Lester, Heather, Blaine, Mac and OTHERS are gathered around the grave site of Lynn Anne as the service ends. The mourners begin to head back to their cars.

Lester is the last to leave, drops a flower on the casket. Heather comes up and places a hand on his shoulder. They walk off.

The GRAVE DIGGERS fill in the grave as a breeze blows up.

EXT. WALL STREET -- MORNING

Lester, the closet environmentalist, is walking to work. He reaches his building and goes to enter the revolving door but a LINE OF PEOPLE entering from the other side keep cutting in front of him.

Finally, he gets into the door.

INT. LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Lester follows people to this elevator. Just as he reaches the door, it closes.

He puts his arm in to block it but it doesn't spring open.

LESTER

Hey, wait, my arm!

The next elevator opens, loads and leaves before he can get his arm out. He finally gets free and steps back and waits.

Another elevator arrives. He steps in and before he can press his floor button, a CRUSH OF PEOPLE charge in, pinning him to the back of the car.

The doors close and the elevator ascends. The indicator shows the car going up to each floor, reaching the top and descending to the lobby.

The doors open and Lester is still up against the back of the wall of the now-empty elevator.

He pulls himself together and presses his floor button.

INT. OFFICE LOBBY -- MOMENTS LATER

Elevator reaches Lester's floor. Lester gets off and heads to his area.

INT. BACK OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

Back office of Locke, Stock & Barrows; a large room with rows of CLERKS at desk performing mind numbing duties. At the far end is the office of MR. BROZ, the stern, yet strict, supervisor.

Lester makes his way to his desk, nearby Broz's office. And next to the departmental weasel, JOHNSON. Broz comes by.

BROZ  
Williams! You're late!

LESTER  
I was attending a funeral, sir.

BROZ  
Oh, I'm sorry. Was it immediate family?

LESTER  
No, it was a close friend.

BROZ  
Then I'm going to have to dock you for that time.

He proceeds along his merry way.

LESTER  
(muttering)  
Is it time for lunch yet?

EXT. BATTERY PARK -- AFTERNOON

Now it is time for lunch.

Lester is seated on a park bench, eating his sandwich and writing in a marble notebook.

A breeze blows up, scattering some loose papers. Lester gets up to catch them.

As he bends over to pick up the last one, Lynn Anne's ghost appears. He sees her leg and looks up.

LESTER  
Oh, excuse me.

LYNN ANNE  
Lester? It's me.

LESTER  
Oh, Lynn Anne, hi---  
(sudden realization)  
Lynn Anne!

He begins screaming, drops his book and goes slightly hysterical.

Other PEOPLE look up only to see Lester alone acting goofy.

The slide down the bench from him.

Lester pulls out two pens and forms a cross to her.

LYNN ANNE  
Lester, Lester, cut it out. It's me.

LESTER  
You're dead! They buried you. I saw you. I sent a mass card. You died!

LYNN ANNE  
Okay.

LESTER  
Oh my God, oh my God. This can't be. I'm losing it.

LYNN ANNE  
Les, please, calm down. Sit. Get a hold of yourself. You have to. It is me.

Lester backs to his bench and sits on his sandwich. He takes his brown bag and breathes into it.

LESTER  
Ohmigod, ohmigod  
(sudden realization)  
I don't believe it.

LYNN ANNE  
It's true. It's me.

LESTER  
No, not that. I just sat on my sandwich.

He gets up to clean himself off.

LYNN ANNE

Slick move. Good. Now that I know you're yourself...You sent a mass card?

LESTER

Why are you haunting me?

LYNN ANNE

Haunting? Who's haunting? This is haunting?

LESTER

Lynn, you're dead and you show up here. I think that constitutes haunting.

OTHERS looks over to see Lester talking to himself.

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

No, Lester, really. I need you. I need your help.

LESTER

How much help do you need to be dead?

LYNN ANNE

Can we get pass that, please?

LESTER

What, that you're dead?

LYNN ANNE

Yes.

LESTER

Sorry but that's what you are. It's a fact. I saw the obituary. You're a reporter. I mean, were a reporter. You should know now to deal with facts.

LYNN ANNE

We needn't dwell.

LESTER

You had better get use to it. You're going to have to live with it, so to speak.

LYNN ANNE

Lester, I haven't much time.

LESTER

Why are you here?

LYNN ANNE

I don't know quite why or how but for some cosmic reason, I've been given a chance to finish my story.

LESTER

What story?

LYNN ANNE

The story I was working on when I---

LESTER

The "d" word.

LYNN ANNE

Yeah.

LESTER

And?

LYNN ANNE

I've been allowed back to finish it.

LESTER

How are you going to do that?

LYNN ANNE

With your help.

LESTER

Who's help? I'm no journalist.

Lynn Anne is unseen as she picks up Lester's notes. They float into Lester's hands.

LYNN ANNE

I worked with you in college. I know what you can do.

LESTER

College was college. This is real life here. You know a lot of real journalists.

LYNN ANNE

But no one I can trust.

LESTER

What's that mean?

LYNN ANNE

I don't know. It just came out. A feeling. It seems like such a long time ago.

LESTER

Time?

(checks watch)

Holy zepolies! Lunch is over! I gotta get back.

He gets his stuff together.

LYNN ANNE

What about me?

LESTER

Lynn, I thank you for your faith in me and I know you wouldn't return from the dead unless it was really important but I gotta think about this.

LYNN ANNE

Please, don't leave me. Let me walk you back.

LESTER

Can you do that?

LYNN ANNE

I don't see why not.

They start out, heading for the park entrance, where there's a RELIGIOUS ZEALOT preaching to no one, a BAG LADY, looking through garbage and muttering, a BUM standing, rocking with laughter at a joke only he can hear and a SHIRTLESS NUT pacing back and forth, screaming every so often.

LESTER

Lynn, is this one of those deals where I'm the only one who can hear or see you?

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

Yeah.

LESTER

So don't I look great walking around, talking to no one.

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

Oh, please, this is New York. Nobody will even notice.

INT. BACK OFFICE -- DAY

Lester is working at his desk. As is Johnson.

JOHNSON  
 Broz needs the P and S PNL for OCC,  
 CBOE, PSE and ISE to send to the  
 SEC, P.D.Q, ASAP!

LESTER  
 Johnson, you're talking in letters  
 again.

JOHNSON  
 I M?

LESTER  
 Stop it.

JOHNSON  
 O.K.

Broz walks by.

BROZ  
 You balanced yet, Williams?

LESTER  
 Mr. Broz, the volume was close to a  
 billion yesterday. It takes a while  
 longer.

BROZ  
 Nonsense. It's been hovering around  
 a billion for a month now. You should  
 be able to do this standing on your  
 head.

He leaves.

LESTER  
 (muttering)  
 I'd rather do it standing on your  
 head.

Lynn Anne appears at his desk.

LYNN ANNE  
 Lester?

LESTER  
 (startled)  
 What the---!  
 (whispering)  
 What are you doing here?

JOHNSON  
 I work here. What's your excuse?

LESTER  
Johnson, spin in your chair until  
you screw yourself into the floor.

LYNN ANNE  
I have to know if you're going to  
help me.

LESTER  
I haven't decided.

Other clerks start to look at Lester, only to see him talking  
to himself. Lester notices them and starts coughing.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
(to Lynn)  
Wait a second.

He picks up a phone and pretends to dial.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
Hello.

LYNN ANNE  
Hello.

LESTER  
I haven't made up my mind.

LYNN ANNE  
It's important, Les. A matter of  
life and death. And you know I'm  
not exaggerating.

LESTER  
I know that.

LYNN ANNE  
'Cause if you don't help, I'll have  
no reason to be here and I'll just  
fade away. I'm not ready for that  
yet.

LESTER  
I'll help. What ever you need.

LYNN ANNE  
Oh, Lester, thank you.

She tries to hug Lester but her arms pass through him.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)  
Oops.

LESTER  
That was eerie. Now, what do we do  
first?

LYNN ANNE

First, we have to get my notes up a the Herald-Tribune-Sun and re-assemble my story. Can we go now?

LESTER

I don't get off 'til five.

LYNN ANNE

Ask for the rest of the day off. Personal time.

LESTER

I don't know. Mr. Broz isn't much into personal time.

LYNN ANNE

Lester, please. We have to get this started.

LESTER

Fine, fine, fine.

Lester hangs up the phone. He goes to Broz's office and knocks.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Mr. Broz?

INT. BROZ'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

A stern and practical room with wall charts and productivity graphs.

BROZ

Williams? What do you want now?

LESTER

Well, sir, it's like this; I have this appointment uptown---

BROZ

Well, cancel it. You're doing O.T. tonight.

LESTER

But sir---

BROZ

You see the volume. We have to hunker down.

LESTER

But I can't hunker tonight---yes, sir.

Lester leaves. Broz nods then looks puzzled.

INT. BACK OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Lester returns to his desk. When he gets there, he sees a pen float up, then drop onto his desk. We now see Lynn Anne, concentrating, picking the pen up again.

LESTER

What are you doing?

Lynn Anne, startled drops the pen.

LYNN ANNE

Lester, you startled me.

LESTER

So now we're even.

LYNN ANNE

I'm starting to get the hang of this.  
Watch.

She picks up the pen.

It floats. Other employees see the floating pen. Lester quickly grabs it.

LESTER

Whoa, these things can really get  
away from you.

(sotto)

Very nice.

LYNN ANNE

So, what did the boss say?

Lester looks around, sits and picks up his phone and feigns dialing.

LESTER

Forget it. I have to hunker down.

LYNN ANNE

Can't you just cut out?

LESTER

I can't do that. They're very strict  
about that kind of stuff here. People  
get docked or canned. I can't afford  
that now.

LYNN ANNE

But this is important.

LESTER

So is my job. I have  
responsibilities.

LYNN ANNE  
You're right. I'll wait.

LESTER  
Fine.

Lester begins using his calculator. Lynn watches over this shoulder.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
Do you mind?

LYNN ANNE  
Sorry.

She sits on the desk, whistling.

LESTER  
Don't whistle, it's distracting.

LYNN ANNE  
Sorry again.

She sits, humming and swinging her legs. Lester, not looking, reaches to get a pen and goes through her, er, lap. Lester then looks and pulls back, embarrassed.

LESTER  
Oops. Excuse me.

LYNN ANNE  
What? Oh, I got it.

She reaches through herself to get the pen and hands it to Lester.

EXT. STREET -- DUSK

Lester leaves his building. Lynn Anne appears as he hits the street.

LESTER  
Where to now?

LYNN ANNE  
Uptown. Grab a cab!

Lester hails a cab. One stops a bit pass him. As Lester goes for it, another COUPLE comes out of nowhere and gets into it and takes off.

Lester hails again and is ignored. A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN comes out next to him and hails.

Three cabs come to a halt. She gets in one and drives off. The second cabs drives off before Lester can get to it. Lester then throws himself in front of the third.

Lynn looks embarrassed and fades away.

Lester, hugging the cab, works his way over and gets in.

INT. CAB -- CONTINUOUS

Lynn appears beside Lester in the back seat.

LESTER

Oh, there you are. Now what?

The CABBIE quizzically glances into his rear view mirror at Lester.

CABBIE

Usually the passenger now tells me, the cabbie, where he wants to go.

LESTER

Huh, were you talking to me?

CABBIE

Yeah, occupational hazard. You got a destination or what?

LESTER

Oh. The Tribune-Sun-Herald building.

LYNN ANNE

The Herald-Tribune-Sun.

LESTER

The Herald-Tribune-Sun.

CABBIE

Yeah, right.

The Cabbie takes a baseball bat from under his seat and lays it next to him.

EXT. DAILY HERALD-TRIBUNE-SUN BUILDING -- NIGHT

Lester leaves cab and enters building.

INT. LOBBY -- CONTINUOUS

Elevator doors open and Lester steps out, alone.

LESTER

Where to?

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

Over there.

LESTER

Where? Are you pointing? I can't see you.

Lynn Anne appears and points.

LYNN ANNE  
Sorry. There.

LESTER  
That's better. Thank you.

INT. NEWS ROOM -- NIGHT

Lester and Lynn Anne enter and head to Lynn's desk.

Lester does the combination on the drawer lock and opens it.

LESTER  
Empty. Unless you count those packets  
of ketchup.

LYNN ANNE  
It must be there.

LESTER  
I'm not making this up. It's not  
here. What's that, soy sauce?

LYNN ANNE  
Check the other drawers.

INT. MAC'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Mac looks up from his origami dragon to see Lester alone,  
going through the desk. He gets on the phone.

MAC  
Hello, this is McCarthy. Send  
security up to the news room.

Mac goes into the news room.

INT. NEWS ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

MAC  
Hey, you!

Lester looks up and around, then goes back to the desk.  
Other reporters look up.

Harry Blaine comes over, seeing only Lester at the desk.

Mac reaches the desk as well.

MAC (CONT'D)  
You! Get away from that desk!

Lester turns to Harry.

LESTER  
You heard the man.

BLAINE  
I say!

Lester resumes his search of the desk.

MAC  
What are you doing there?

LESTER  
Who? Me?

MAC  
Yes, you.

LESTER  
Well, you see, I'm a friend of Lynn Anne's and I'm here to, er, pick up her personal effects. Yeah, personal effects.

MAC  
Who are you?

LESTER  
I'm Lester Williams. Glad to meet you.

He puts out hand to shake. No one seems willing to take him up on it. But he doesn't give up.

BLAINE  
Yes, you were at the funeral. College chum, right?

LESTER  
That's right.

BLAINE  
It was a terrible shock to us all here. Who knew---

LESTER  
Not me, that's for sure. She told me before she died that I should get her notes.

MAC  
She did?

LESTER  
Yup.

Lester goes back to a bottom drawer.

MAC

Wait a second!

Lester springs up, cracking his skull in an amusing manner on another drawer.

MAC (CONT'D)

Lynn didn't know she was gonna die!  
And she was alone at the diner! Who  
are you?

As Lester stammers for an answer, over at the next desk, a pen floats and writes on a slip of paper. The paper then floats into Lester's hand. SECURITY GUARDS enter.

BLAINE

Here are the guards.

MAC

Good. Now we'll get some answers.  
Over here, boys!

Lester suddenly presents the paper.

BLAINE

What's that?

Blaine goes to grab it but Mac beats him out.

MAC

(reading)

"Dear Mac, if you're reading this,  
it means my worse fears were realized.  
My good friend and trusted colleague,  
Lester, has been instructed, should  
anything happen to me, to collect my  
notes and papers."

Lester looks around and realizes Lynn Anne is standing beside him, mouthing the words as Mac reads. She winks at Lester.

MAC (CONT'D)

"He is to pick up alone, where we  
left off. Please let him finish the  
job. Good-by, Mac. Bless you, you're  
one of the good ones." Damn. Why  
didn't she tell me she was in danger?

LYNN ANNE

'Cause then you would have pulled me  
off the story.

LESTER

'Cause then you would have pulled  
her off the story.

BLAINE

That's right. And she would be alive today.

LYNN ANNE

Point taken.

BLAINE

She should have been re-assigned. But she never told anyone any of her affairs. She kept everything to herself.

LESTER

Don't you know it.

LYNN ANNE

What's that mean?

MAC

If Lynn trusted you, I guess I can. Take the notes.

Mac waves off the guards.

LESTER

They're not here.

MAC

What?

LESTER

The desk's been cleaned out.

MAC

That desk was supposed to be sealed.

LYNN ANNE

Try the computer, Les.

LESTER

Let me try the computer.

BLAINE

Do you know her access code?

LESTER

Do I know the access code. Ha! Do I?

LYNN ANNE

I'm thinking, I'm thinking.

Lester sits at the screen, doing a little "Ed Norton" warming up, stalling for time.

Lynn notices the trash pail.

MAC

Well?

LYNN ANNE

It's the "G files."

LESTER

(typing)  
G file.

LYNN ANNE

Garbage pail.

LESTER

Oh, I get it. The garbage. Like X  
Files only not.

The monitor flashes "Files Deleted."

LYNN ANNE

What?

MAC

Damn it!

LYNN ANNE

I knew it! I knew there was a mole!  
There's nothing left here.

LESTER

I'm afraid there's nothing here to  
salvage. Thank you for your time.

MAC

I'll be looking into this.

LYNN ANNE

You'd better.

LESTER

You'd better.

MAC

What?

LESTER

I mean, that seems like an excellent  
idea. Good evening, gentlemen.

Lynn and Lester leave.

INT. ELEVATOR BANKS -- CONTINUOUS

They reach the elevator and Lester pushes the button. Lynn  
Anne has dropped back and is looking at the news room.

LESTER  
Lynn? Lynn Anne, you okay?

LYNN ANNE  
I'm dead, Lester.

LESTER  
Besides that.

LYNN ANNE  
That's it. Odds are I'm never going to see this place again. Really. This job was home. My life.

LESTER  
I'm sorry.

LYNN ANNE  
Maybe I would have been better off going without knowing what hit me.

LESTER  
At least you've got the chance to say good-bye.

LYNN ANNE  
Do you know how painful a good-bye it is?

LESTER  
Sure.

LYNN ANNE  
No, you don't. You're losing one friend. I'm losing dozens. Everything. Forever. I was too young to die.

She starts to weep. Lester tries, then realizes he can't comfort her. The elevator arrives. He goes in.

LESTER  
It's here, Lynn.

LYNN ANNE  
(to surroundings)  
Good-bye.

Doors close. She puts her arm out to catch the doors, but they close right through her. She rolls her eyes and passes through the doors.

INT. NEWS ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Blaine and Mac are still at Lynn's desk.

BLAINE

Do you suppose this chap's legitimate?

MAC

He seems to know Lynn's business.

BLAINE

I wonder how much?

MAC

What do you mean?

BLAINE

Let me follow this story, Mac. Jones can handle the garbage strike talks. We shouldn't lose it. Shouldn't let this blighter solve it. She is one of us.

MAC

All right, take it.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Lynn and Lester hit the street.

LESTER

Well, I guess that's it, then.

LYNN ANNE

What do you mean? We have to go back to my apartment. I have some notebooks there. They're not as extensive but it's a start.

LESTER

Oh, no, no, no, no. I have to get home. Heather is probably wondering where I am.

LYNN ANNE

She's probably called the hospitals and police by now.

LESTER

Probably. I mean, it's late and we can do it tomorrow after work.

LYNN ANNE

After work?

LESTER

Yes, after work. I'll see you then.

LYNN ANNE

But Lester---

LESTER

I have to go.

LYNN ANNE

All right.

Lester heads for the subway. Lynn Anne slowly fades away, shivering as if cold.

INT. LESTER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Lester's small bachelor pad somewhere in Queens.

He comes in, opens up a can of cat food and puts it out.

His cat, Julius, watches from the window sill.

Lester goes to his answering machine and turns it on. It plays the Three Stooges "Hello" chorus, then a beep and the messages begin.

HEATHER (O.S.)

Lester, call me when you get in.

Machine beeps. Next message.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Lester, aren't you in yet? Call me the minute you get in.

Machines beeps again.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Lester, where are you?

Lester turns off the machine. He dials the phone.

LESTER

Hi, Heather? It's me. You called?

INTERCUT:

INT. HEATHER'S HOME -- NIGHT

A very proper and neat house. Heather is on a princess phone (get it?).

HEATHER

Where have you been?

As he talks, he goes to a closet, pulls out a box. It contains copies of his old college newspaper, "The Soapbox." He finds a copy of his college yearbook.

LESTER

I had to work overtime.

HEATHER

I called work first. You don't think I would check there first? You weren't there.

LESTER

Well, it was secret overtime.

HEATHER

What are you talking about?

LESTER

I had to run an errand.

HEATHER

What kind of errand?

LESTER

I had to go up to the Herald-Tribune-Sun building.

HEATHER

For what?

LESTER

To, ah, make sure they get our wedding announcement right.

HEATHER

Why didn't you tell me?

LESTER

I wanted it to be a surprise.

HEATHER

How sweet. Oh, I wish I could hug you right now. Why don't you come over here?

LESTER

Oh, dear, it's late and it is a school night.

HEATHER

Don't you miss me? We didn't see each other all day.

LESTER

I know, and I do. It's just I had a long day.

HEATHER

Oh, it's okay. Really. You don't have to come over if you don't want to.

LESTER

It isn't that I don't want to, it's just---

HEATHER

It's okay. Really. Don't feel guilty.

LESTER

(pause)

I can come over for a little while.

HEATHER

Are you sure?

LESTER

Do you want me to come over?

HEATHER

Yes, but you don't have to.

LESTER

But I want to. I can be there in a few minutes.

HEATHER

Okay, I'll be waiting. Good-bye, love.

LESTER

Bye.

Lester hangs up and heads out.

EXT. BATTERY PARK -- DAY

Lester is yawning and eating lunch. Not a pretty sight. Lynn Anne appears.

LYNN ANNE

Hi!

Lester is startled.

LESTER

That's a little unnerving, you popping in and out like that.

LYNN ANNE

Sorry.

Lester yawns.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)

Late night?

LESTER

Late enough.

LYNN ANNE

You dog.

LESTER

I'm not a dog.

LYNN ANNE

Sorry. I didn't mean anything by it.

LESTER

Yeah, well. It's good you came early.

LYNN ANNE

Why?

LESTER

About tonight. I'll have to cancel. Heather and I have some plans.

LYNN ANNE

But Lester, you can't.

LESTER

I'm sorry. It's something that came up.

LYNN ANNE

What about me?

LESTER

I'm sorry.

LYNN ANNE

I know! You're on lunch. We can do now!

LESTER

Now?

LYNN ANNE

Sure. We can shoot up to my place, get the notes and be back in a flash.

LESTER

I dunno. I guess.

LYNN ANNE

Oh, come on, get off your duff and do it.

LESTER

Okay, okay. Let's go.

(MORE)

LESTER (CONT'D)

They say only the good die young. I guess the pushy get to hang around afterwards.

They get up and head into the subway.

EXT. WEST SIDE BUILDING -- DAY

Lester comes to the apartment building and enters.

INT. HALLWAY -- DAY

Lester comes out of the stairwell. Lynn Anne appears down the hall in front of her room. It's an old fashion lock that needs a key for both sides.

LYNN ANNE

Come on, Lester.

Lynn Anne walks through the closed door. Lester follows, bumping into the door.

LESTER

Ouch.

Lester tries the door but it's locked. Lynn pokes her head through.

LYNN ANNE

Sorry. I forgot.

LESTER

I don't suppose you have your key?

LYNN ANNE

(patting herself down)

No, I think I left them in my other life.

LESTER

Can't you just unlock it from the inside?

LYNN ANNE

I'm a ghost, not a magician. I need the key.

LESTER

Great. Well, I guess I'm out of here.

LYNN ANNE

Wait, I know! Come on!

They go down to the end of the hall to a window.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)

Climb out the ledge, then work your way around to my window. I'm sure I can unlatch the window and let you in.

LESTER

(a beat)

I'm sorry, were you talking to me?

LYNN ANNE

Lester, please.

LESTER

Lynn, I'm a brokerage clerk, not Spiderman. Brokerage clerks don't climb out onto ledges unless the market is really bad.

LYNN ANNE

It's the only way.

LESTER

Are you nuts? I'm not going out there. It's crazy. You can't make me do that.

LYNN ANNE

(getting sweet)

Lester, if you have ever cared for me in any way, you'll know how necessary this is.

LESTER

Oh, I'm a sucker for emotional blackmail.

Lester climbs out the window.

EXT. LEDGE -- DAY

Lester is nine stories up and clings to the side of the building.

LYNN ANNE

I'll meet you inside.

She disappears.

LESTER

I hope I don't meet you on the other side.

Our High & Dizzy portion of the program. Lester begins working his way uneasily around to the window.

A pigeon lands on him.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
Shoo. Scat. I think I hear Alfred  
Hitchcock calling.

The pigeon flies off. Lester reaches the window. He looks in and Lynn Anne appears. He gets startled and almost flies backwards off the ledge.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
(quite adamant)  
Don't do that!

INT. LYNN'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

A very Spartan, empty apartment, just enough to hang your hat, eat some take out and move on. Really, not much more personal than a motel room.

There's a bedroom, living room and a small galley kitchen, separated by a set of swinging doors.

Lynn Anne concentrates and then unlatches the window. Lester opens it and climbs in.

LYNN ANNE  
Piece of cake. Angel food cake.

LESTER  
Ha & ha. \*  
(looking around)  
We're too late. You've been robbed.

LYNN ANNE  
What are you talking about? This is  
how my apartment always looks.

LESTER  
Oh. What, did you just move in?

LYNN ANNE  
I've been here for years, Les.

LESTER  
Oh. Okay, so where are these notes?

LYNN ANNE  
In my desk.

They go over to a work desk, covered with papers and a manual typewriter. Her answering machine light is flashing.

LESTER  
Hey, you got a message.

He activates the machine.

MAN (O.S.)

Lynn, babe, I'm sorry about the other night. I didn't mean to pressure you. But after a night like we had, you can understand my offer. Ciao.

LESTER

Who's that?

LYNN ANNE

A friend.

LESTER

I guessed that much. So you blew off yet another guy.

LYNN ANNE

What can I say? We didn't connect.

LESTER

Not according to that message.

Beep. Blaine's voice comes on.

BLAINE (O.S.)

Lynn timer, are you there? Please pick up. Bloody hell. She must have gone out straight away.

Beep. Recorded voice comes on next.

RECORDED VOICE (O.S.)

Hello! You've been selected as a winner by our company for a Florida vacation!

Lester turns off the machine.

LYNN ANNE

I wonder what he wanted?

LESTER

They want to sell you a time share.

LYNN ANNE

Not that. Blaine.

LESTER

Maybe he has a time share he's looking to sell.

Lester opens a drawer and finds a pad and key.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Ha! Success! And your key.

LYNN ANNE

All right! Now we're cooking.

They go to give a high-five but Lester's hand goes right through Lynn's hand.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)

Les, you can take this, too.

LESTER

Take what?

LYNN ANNE

My typewriter. You can use it.

LESTER

I've got a PC at home. Why should I take that typewriter?

LYNN ANNE

It's my lucky typewriter.

LESTER

Fat lot of good it did you.

LYNN ANNE

I wrote my best stuff on that. I've had it since college.

LESTER

Hey! That's from the Soapbox! You stole it!

LYNN ANNE

Sh. Please take it, Les. You're the only one who can appreciate its meaning. You'll take good care of it.

LESTER

It's not a puppy, Lynn.

LYNN ANNE

Lester, take it please.

LESTER

Okay, okay, okay. The lucky typewriter lives. Let's go, I'm gonna be late.

Lester tucks the note pad in the back of his pants and picks up the typewriter and they head to the door. Just then, they hear voices at the door. The door knob rattles.

LYNN ANNE

What's that?

LESTER

Mice?

The door rattles violently.

LYNN ANNE

Mice.

LESTER

Big mice.

DUKE (O.S.)

Want I should shoot the lock, Earl?

EARL (O.S.)

Don't be stupid, stupid. Just pick the lock. Then we'll kick it in.

LESTER

Big violent mice. What now, Brenda Starr?

LYNN ANNE

Into the bedroom!

She runs into the bedroom through the closed door. Lester goes to follow, carrying the typewriter and slams into the door instead.

INT. BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Lester gets in just as the two thugs, DUKE and EARL, kick in the door.

EARL

All right, let's do this fast. Take the bedroom, Duke. I got the desk.

DUKE

What should I be looking for?

EARL

Anything with the boss' name on it.

Lester goes into the wall closet. The kind with the two sliding doors. Duke comes in. He starts trashing her dresser. She tries to stand between him and the desk but Duke merely passes through her person.

LYNN ANNE

Damn you!

He goes to the closet. He slides the outer door. Just as he's ready to look in, Lynn Anne knocks a small vase off her night stand. When Duke whirls around to see, the inner door slides close. Duke goes to reach in and bumps into the door instead.

He starts to slide the door open and Lynn Anne knocks off a picture frame. This time Duke goes over to check. Lester opens the door and hustles his little buns out carrying the lucky typewriter.

As he heads for the door, he sees Earl lurking about in the living room, and doubles back to under the bed. Duke goes back to the closet to search.

INT. UNDER THE BED -- CONTINUOUS

Lester hits the tab key on the typewriter. The carriage slides over, the bell rings and Lester gets hit in the head.

INT. BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Duke pulls his gun. Lynn pops out.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Lynn Anne appears and manages to ring the door bell.

INT. BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

DUKE

Hey, Earl, somebody's at the door.

Duke exits the bedroom. Lester climbs out from being bed-bound. Lynn Anne appears.

LYNN ANNE

The typewriter.

Frustrated, he goes back and pulls out the typewriter and darts out of the bedroom.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

He cuts through the living room and ducks into the kitchen via the swinging door.

Earl and Duke are looking out the front door.

EARL

Nobody.

DUKE

Kids. They got no respect for nuthin'. They oughta kill 'em.

EARL

Never mind that. Finish the bedroom. I'll start in the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Lester rolls his eyes in annoyance, since that is pretty annoying news.

He goes to the hinged side of the door.

Earl pushes the door inward, entering the kitchen and doesn't see Lester behind the door. Lester then follows the swinging door out and darts into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Lester heads for the front door. Duke is heard coming out of the bedroom.

DUKE

Yo, Earl, ain't nothing in there but frilly stuff.

EARL (O.S.)

Check the closets.

Lester ducks behind the hanging wicker chair ( I mentioned the hanging wicker chair, didn't I?). As Duke exits bedroom and goes to the desk, Lester slowly rotates the chair so he remains obscured. And unseen, too. Then Earl comes out and they confer beside the chair.

DUKE

Nothin'.

EARL

Me neither.

DUKE

Maybe the dame had all her papers with her.

EARL

Perhaps you're right.

DUKE

Huh?

EARL

I said "could be." But you better hope so. The boss don't want no loose ends left. 'Specially now, what with this big deal coming down. So here's what we do: You double check the kitchen and I'll double check the bedroom.

DUKE

Gotcha.

Duke goes to the kitchen. Earl head to the bedroom, giving the wicker chair a spin as he goes.

Lester is crouching in it with the typewriter.

Earl catches a glimpse as he enters the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Earl starts to search, then does a take. He goes back to the living room

EARL

Duke!

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The spinning chair is empty and the front door is open. Duke and Earl dash out.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors close as Earl and Duke slam into them.

EARL

The stairs!

They run down the stairs.

Down the hall is a garbage chute. It's open.

INT. LOBBY -- MOMENTS LATER

Earl and Duke reach the lobby. The elevator doors open. Lynn Anne is in it.

Earl and Duke step in and look around, Duke has his gun drawn.

DUKE

What was it, Earl?

EARL

I'm not certain.

DUKE

Huh?

EARL

I dunno.

(shoving Duke's gun)

Put that away.

LYNN ANNE

Vermin. I hope Lester made it.

INT. BASEMENT -- DAY

Near the garbage bin. We hear a sustained scream echoing in the garbage chute approaching. Then Lester flies out of the chute into the dumpster. A moment later the typewriter comes out. Lester grunts in pain as the dropping typewriter lands on him.

INT. BACK OFFICE -- DAY

Lester walks in, carrying the typewriter. He's a wreck. He's covered with garbage and whatnot.

The other workers stop working and stare. The office becomes completely quiet.

Lester punches in his time card.

LESTER

So much for sneaking in late.

He goes to his desk and puts down the typewriter.

JOHNSON

You're late.

LESTER

Yeah, well, something came up.

JOHNSON

Broz was looking for you.

LESTER

What did you tell him?

JOHNSON

That you were late.

LESTER

Thanks for covering for me, Johnson.

BROZ

Williams!

JOHNSON

He wants you.

LESTER

Is it five o'clock yet?

Lester goes into Broz's office.

INT. BROZ'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

LESTER

Yes, Mr. Broz.

BROZ  
You're late!

LESTER  
Yes, sir. Johnson told me. Sorry,  
sir.

BROZ  
How many times have you been warned  
about this?

LESTER  
Once, sir. I think it was October  
last, sir. During the hurricane.

BROZ  
Don't let it happen again.

LESTER  
No, sir.

BROZ  
By the way---

LESTER  
Yes, sir?

BROZ  
What the hell happened to you? You  
look like crap.

LESTER  
I---had an accident, sir. Quite  
nasty.

BROZ  
Well, be more careful.

LESTER  
I'll try, sir.

BROZ  
Now get back to your desk.

LESTER  
Yes, sir.

Lester leaves as Broz returns to his paperwork.

INT. BACK OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Lester goes to his desk and tries to straighten up. He pulls  
a can out of the typewriter. Lynn Anne appears.

LESTER  
Look at this, will you?  
(MORE)

LESTER (CONT'D)  
 This should be recycled. What was  
 it doing in the trash?

Everyone looks up at Lester. Lester sees them and feigns dialing the phone.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
 Hello.

LYNN ANNE  
 Hello. Are you okay?

LESTER  
 Yes. What happened to you?

LYNN ANNE  
 I tried to see what those two gorillas  
 were up to but it started to happen  
 again, so I came here.

LESTER  
 What happened?

LYNN ANNE  
 I started drifting away again. I  
 was---

She snaps out of it when she notices her notes in Lester's pants

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)  
 Are those my notes, or are you just  
 glad to see me?

LESTER  
 You're the funniest dead person I  
 know.

LYNN ANNE  
 Let me see my notes.

Lester takes the note pad out from his back pants waist. Lynn starts flipping the pages. Johnson looks over, only to see the pages slowly flipping by themselves. Lester looks up to see Johnson.

LESTER  
 Do you feel that draft, too?

LYNN ANNE  
 There!

She points to the name "Wussy" and a phone number.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)

That name. It means something.  
Wussy. The Wussy. Raymond "The  
Wussy" Benducci. Now I remember.  
He was my deep background.

LESTER

You're unnamed source?

LYNN ANNE

He's the man on the inside who gave  
me a lot of my info.

LESTER

The inside of what?

LYNN ANNE

What was it? The garbage. Garbage.

She looks at the notes, Lester flipping pages. He comes to  
the name Fuscilli.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)

Fusculli! Fuscilli carting company!  
Benducci works there. It was a story  
about mob ties with the private  
garbage companies. Benducci gave me  
some information on it but then  
uncovered something big. That's why  
I was meeting him!

LESTER

Great! What was the information?

LYNN ANNE

Darned if I know.

LESTER

Oh, that's just wonderful. A fine  
job all around. Hardly seems worth  
the trip across the river Styx.

LYNN ANNE

So excuse me for dying. Like it's  
my fault I'm drawing blanks. We'll  
have to call him.

She goes to grab the phone but only manages to rock it in  
its cradle.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)

Would you do the honors?

LESTER

Call him? What makes you think he'll  
talk to me? I don't know him. He  
doesn't know me.

LYNN ANNE  
But he doesn't know that.

Lester starts dialing.

INTERCUT:

INT. BENDUCCI'S OFFICE -- DAY

Benducci's small cluttered office-ette at Fuscilli's Carting Company. The phone rings. RAY BENDUCCI answers.

BENDUCCI  
Fuscilli's Carting company. Can I  
help youse?

LESTER  
Yes, can I speak to Mr. Ray Benducci.

BENDUCCI  
This is me.

LESTER  
Mr. Benducci, my name is Lester  
Williams. I'm a friend of Lynn Anne  
Meyerson.

Benducci thinks "oh-oh."

BENDUCCI  
Sorry. I think you got me confused  
with some other Ray Benducci.

Lynn Anne is leaning in close to listen. This rattles  
Lester's windows some. She points to Benducci's full name  
in the notes.

LESTER  
This is Raymond Benducci of Fuscilli  
Carting?

BENDUCCI  
Yeah, fella, but I don't know any  
Meyerson dame.

LYNN ANNE  
Tell him you're my associate.

LESTER  
Mr. Benducci, I was working with  
Lynn Anne on the story. It's  
important we speak.

BENDUCCI  
Look, I told you, I don't know any  
Meyerson dame or anything about no  
story.

LESTER

Lynn Anne told me everything. You're not like the rest of them, Mr. Benducci, are you? Lynn Ann told me you were doing a brave thing.

BENDUCCI

She says brave. I says stupid.

LESTER

Then you do remember.

BENDUCCI

Yeah, yeah, game's over. Look, Williams, you don't know what you're involved in. You don't cross these guys. But---

LESTER

But what?

BENDUCCI

This kinda stuff makes people sick. Kids sick. I got kids. I don't want no one getting hurt. But I'm not about to get hurt neither.

LYNN ANNE

But I did get hurt. Tell him he can't stop now. Book him on a guilt trip.

LESTER

Lynn Anne did get hurt, Mr. Benducci. It would be such a waste to let your good intentions just end there.

BENDUCCI

That's how it is on the road to hell.

LYNN ANNE

Ask for a meeting.

LESTER

Can we meet, Mr. Benducci? Please?

BENDUCCI

I can't.

Lynn Anne looks lost. Lester is "effected," so suddenly he blurts:

LESTER

For God's sake, mister, the woman was killed because of what you know!

LYNN ANNE

Lester!

BENDUCCI

Hey, it wasn't my fault! You think I knew? I wish I could bring her back.

LESTER

That won't be necessary.

BENDUCCI

It coulda been me, you know.

LESTER

It still can be.

BENDUCCI

You threatening me?

LESTER

Er, yeah, apparently.

BENDUCCI

Okay, okay. I must be crazy. But I name the place.

LESTER

Fine.

BENDUCCI

Tonight. The Baxter Bowling Lanes.

LESTER

Tonight? Tonight's a little awkward.

LYNN ANNE

Lester!

BENDUCCI

It's tonight or nuthin', chief. I got problems enough without worrying about your schedule.

LYNN ANNE

Lester, you say yes.

LESTER

But, but---

BENDUCCI

What am I, talking to a motor boat here? Are you in or out?

LYNN ANNE

Lester!

LESTER  
 Okay, okay, I'm in.

BENDUCCI  
 Tonight at eleven. If you're late,  
 I'm gone. Carry a note pad like  
 Meyerson. I'll come to you.

LESTER  
 Bye.

Lester hangs up.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
 Why did I do that? I'm having dinner  
 with Heather's folks.

LYNN ANNE  
 Sound's like fun. We can kill some  
 time there until eleven.

INT. DINING ROOM -- NIGHT

Lester and Heather are gathered around the table mapping out the seating arrangements using name cards and a chart. Mr. and Mrs. Blindel are straightening up after dinner. Fun, fun, fun.

HEATHER  
 What about your Aunt Gertie?

LESTER  
 She's got halitosis. Nobody wants  
 to sit next to her.

HEATHER  
 I can put her next to Uncle Newton.  
 He's got clogged sinuses.

LESTER  
 You can't seat my Uncle Thomas next  
 to your cousin Otis.

HEATHER  
 Why not?

LESTER  
 You're cousin's a cop. My uncle's  
 wanted in nine states. Put him near  
 an exit.

HEATHER  
 What are you doing? You can't put  
 them together. Jack and Dave don't  
 like each other.

LESTER

I don't like either of them. Let them suffer.

HEATHER

Do you have a Cousin Lenny?

LESTER

Go fish.

HEATHER

Oh, here, we can put him here, where Lynn Anne was supposed to be...oh, I'm sorry, Lester.

MRS. BLINDEL

So, Lester, Heather says you've really been putting your nose to the grindstone. I hope you aren't overdoing it.

LESTER

I don't think so, Mrs. Blindel.

MR. BLINDEL

Nonsense. Little hard work never hurt anyone. It's the sign of a responsible young man providing for his family. A good omen.

LESTER

Thanks for the plug.

HEATHER

Did I tell you he went up to the paper to place our wedding announcement?

MRS. BLINDEL

How sweet. When will they run it?

LESTER

Huh? Oh, some time in the not too distant future.

MRS. BLINDEL

How about a break? Coffee?

HEATHER

I'll help you get it, mom.

MR. BLINDEL

Let's go into the living room, Lester.

LESTER

Yes, sir.

INT. LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Mr. Blindel goes to his easy chair. Lester sits on the couch.

MR. BLINDEL

Blast! Left my pipe upstairs. Excuse me.

LESTER

Yes, sir.

Mr. Blindel leaves.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Oh, not the pipe. I hate the pipe.

Lynn Anne appears behind the couch.

LYNN ANNE

Guess who?

Lester jumps.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)

It's me!

LESTER

I didn't think it was Christmas Past. You're early.

LYNN ANNE

I was, er, bored. You know, Limbo is a pretty dull place. Nothing goes on there.

LESTER

Hence the name, "Limbo."

LYNN ANNE

Probably.

LESTER

I still haven't figured out how I'm getting out of here.

LYNN ANNE

Tell them you have a headache.

LESTER

That wouldn't be a lie. I've certainly had one since you got back.

LYNN ANNE

This is important.

LESTER

Oh, and what I'm doing isn't?

LYNN ANNE  
I didn't say that.

LESTER  
No, you only inferred it.

LYNN ANNE  
You can take care of this any time.

LESTER  
No, I can do it now. If you don't like the job I'm doing, why don't you latch onto somebody else? Get yourself some nice perfect super hero to help you out. I hear the Silver Surfer is available. So why don't you bust his chops for a while?

LYNN ANNE  
Sorry, Les. What can I say?

LESTER  
Nothing. Forget it.

Mr. Blindel re-enters with his pipe.

MR. BLINDEL  
Found it. Did you say something, Lester?

Lynn Anne disappears.

LESTER  
Huh? Oh, I said, "nothing," sir.

MR. BLINDEL  
I heard. Why did you say, "nothing?"

LESTER  
Nothing else to say.

MR. BLINDEL  
Maybe you should slow down a bit, Les.

LESTER  
You mean slow down a bit more, don't you?

MR. BLINDEL  
No, I mean, slow down, Lester.

LESTER  
I see. What are we talking about?

MR. BLINDEL  
Haven't a clue.

Lynn Anne is visible now. Mrs. Blindel and Heather enter with coffee and such. Mrs. Blindel walks through Lynn Anne, then shivers.

MRS. BLINDEL  
My, what was that?

LESTER  
What was what?

MRS. BLINDEL  
I just caught a chill. Oh, this drafty old house.

HEATHER  
It's August, mom.

She keeps glancing over at Lynn Anne, then to Lester.

MR. BLINDEL  
Anything the matter, dear?

MRS. BLINDEL  
I feel like I'm being watched.

Lester drops his coffee. Lynn Anne walks over to Mrs. Blindel. Lester attempts to keep up himself. Lynn waves her hand in front of Mrs. B's face. Mrs. Blindel senses it.

LYNN ANNE  
This is spooky.

Lester drops his coffee again.

LESTER  
Sorry.

HEATHER  
Let me get a sponge.

MR. BLINDEL  
You okay?

She looks toward Lynn, then Lester.

MRS. BLINDEL  
Would you get me a sweater, dear?  
Maybe some aspirin.

Mr. Blindel and Heather exit.

LYNN ANNE  
Maybe I should go.

She does.

MRS. BLINDEL  
It's left.

LESTER  
What has?

MRS. BLINDEL  
That feeling. Oh, forgive me. I'm  
just a silly old woman.

LESTER  
No, no, not at all. What was it?

MRS. BLINDEL  
A presence. An urgency.

LESTER  
Wow.

MRS. BLINDEL  
And something else.

LESTER  
What?

MRS. BLINDEL  
Fear. Loneliness.

LESTER  
Why lonely?

MRS. BLINDEL  
I don't know. But it's gone now.

Heather re-enters with a damp clothe and starts mopping up.  
Mr. Blindel re-enters with sweater and aspirin.

MRS. BLINDEL (CONT'D)  
Silly, you forgot the water.

They both leave the room.

LESTER  
Maybe I should be going. It is a  
school night.

HEATHER  
Maybe.

They leave.

EXT. FRONT DOOR -- NIGHT

They kiss.

LESTER

I hope you're mom feels better. Say good night for me.

HEATHER

I will. Good night, dear.

LESTER

'Night, Heather.

He gets into his car and leaves.

INT. CAR -- NIGHT

Lester drives. Lynn Anne appears in the passenger seat.

LYNN ANNE

Shotgun!

LESTER

Oh, there you are, Casper.

LYNN ANNE

Don't call me that.

LESTER

Sorry. So, Lynn, you feeling okay?

LYNN ANNE

Kinda dead. Why?

LESTER

I dunno. Making small talk.

LYNN ANNE

I don't do small talk.

LESTER

Maybe you should try.

LYNN ANNE

(glancing in rear-view mirror)

Oh-oh.

LESTER

What?

LYNN ANNE

Speed up a little.

LESTER

Why?

LYNN ANNE

Just do it.

Lester accelerates. Lynn Anne watches a pair of headlights in the mirror. They speed up as well.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)  
We're being followed.

LESTER  
Oh, great. Just great. How did they find out?

LYNN ANNE  
How did who find out what?

LESTER  
The people following us! They're on to us! Me! Er, us!

LYNN ANNE  
How can they know what we're doing? We don't even know what we're doing!

LESTER  
I know that and you know that, but they don't know that. Who are they?

LYNN ANNE  
Who are who?

LESTER  
Them what are following us.

LYNN ANNE  
I don't know. I'm a ghost, not a psychic. Wait here.

She pops out, then pops back.

LESTER  
So?

LYNN ANNE  
Just follow my instructions. Speed up.

LESTER  
But that would be unlawful.

LYNN ANNE  
Just do it! Good, now, quick, U-turn.

Lester clicks on his turning signal.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)  
Don't signal the turn!

LESTER  
 Sorry, force of habit.

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

They have pulled far ahead. Suddenly the car pulls a 180 and begins heading for the chase car.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

LYNN ANNE  
 Floor it!

LESTER  
 I hate this! I really hate this.

LYNN ANNE  
 Don't worry.

LESTER  
 Easy for you to say, you're already dead.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Lester heads right for the mystery car in a spirited game of chicken. The mystery car loses, driving off the road.

EXT. FIELD -- CONTINUOUS

The car goes through a fence and into vegetable stand or chicken coop, or some such thing.

It's Harry Blaine behind the wheel.

BLAINE  
 That maniac.

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY -- NIGHT

Lynn Anne is unseen as Lester pulls up, parks and enters the building. He carries Lynn's note pad.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY -- CONTINUOUS

Lester looks around.

LESTER  
 You see him?

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)  
 No. Try the lounge.

INT. LOUNGE -- CONTINUOUS

Small bar catering to the bowling leagues. Benducci is seated in a booth in the back. Lester walks in.

LESTER

Well?

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

There he is. Back booth. Wait for him to come to you. Go to the bar.

Lester takes a seat at the bar.

LESTER

Light beer, please.

BARTENDER serves him. Lester drinks and glances over to Benducci.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Think he saw us, er, me?

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

He saw. Here he comes. Act natural.

LESTER

What's more natural than sitting here and talking to my ghost friend?

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

If I wasn't already dead, that joke would have made me die laughing.

Benducci gets up and comes over to Lester.

BENDUCCI

Williams?

LESTER

Mr. Benducci?

BENDUCCI

Yeah. Okay. I'm here. Now what?

LESTER

The information you gave Lynn Anne, can you get me a copy?

BENDUCCI

Are you nuts? It was a fluke I got a copy in the first place. If they knew I was dropping a dime on them, forget about it.

LESTER

Dropping a dime?

BENDUCCI

Making a call.

LESTER

It costs more than that to make a phone nowadays.

BENDUCCI

Not for me. I got this calling plan---

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

Could we get back on track here?

LESTER

Back to the matter at hand.

BENDUCCI

Yeah, well, that would be the part where I say, "no way," 'cause if they catch on to me, I'll be making like landfill.

LESTER

You must be able to tell me something about it. Then I can write it from there.

BENDUCCI

I been thinking about that. If I spill my guts to you, then the only way you'll be able to get them is for me to testify. Then they'll be spilling my guts for shark chum. Joes who testify against Rocco Fuscilli don't live none too long.

LESTER

You paint graphic pictures with words, you know that?

Lynn Anne appears.

LYNN ANNE

So, why'd you meet with us?

LESTER

Yeah, why'd you meet with us?

BENDUCCI

Us?

LESTER

I meant me. As in me and Lynn Anne Meyerson. Us. If you're not gonna talk, why am I here?

BENDUCCI

The way I got it figured is you build the case up by yourself. Then you won't be needing only me.

LESTER

Which means?

BENDUCCI

I'm the guy that tells you if you're hot or cold.

LESTER

That's it?

LYNN ANNE

I know bathroom faucets that can tell me that much.

BENDUCCI

Hey, that's plenty enough. I'm taking a big chance meeting you. I don't know you from spit. Lester Williams. What the hell kind of name is that?

LESTER

Hey, watch the monikers, Ray "the Wussy" Benducci.

BENDUCCI

Okay, okay, don't get your bowels in an uproar.

He takes out paper and hands it to Lester.

BENDUCCI (CONT'D)

Take this?

LESTER

What is it?

BENDUCCI

A manifest of Fuscilli's customers. If you're gonna build your case, you gotta start at the source and work your way up.

LESTER

This'll tie Fuscilli to the mob?

BENDUCCI

It's beyond that now. You have to stop him.

LESTER

Stop him from what?

BENDUCCI

That would be telling. I'm outta here.

Benducci leaves. Lester starts to leave.

LYNN ANNE

Wait. Let him get a head start out.

LESTER

What does it all mean?

LYNN ANNE

Don't know. This is where I came in. What's the manifest say?

Lester opens it up.

LESTER

It's a who's who of garbage.

MAN walks in and sits at the stool beside Lester, who doesn't notice. Lynn Anne is unseen. The Man watches Lester talk to himself.

LESTER (CONT'D)

You got your restaurants. Your delis. Your supermarkets, your chemical plants---

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

Chemical plants?

LESTER

Yeah. Petro-Chem Industries.

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

Since when does a carting company haul chemical waste?

LESTER

What, chemical companies can't have garbage?

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

They have lots of it. That's the rub. I think we should move Petro-Chem to the top of our list. We can check it out in the morning.

LESTER

I knew it! I knew you were going to say, "we can check it out in the morning."

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

Well?

LESTER

I have work, Lynn. My job.

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

I know that. I got it all figured out.

LESTER

Good. What?

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

You phone in sick.

Lester pays the tab and they head out.

LESTER

Well, since you got it all figured out.

LYNN ANNE

What? You don't have any sick time coming?

LESTER

That's not the point! When did this go from haunting to nagging?

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

Nagging!

And they're out. Man at bar watches and shakes his head.

MAN AT BAR

He must be crazy, wouldn't you say?  
 (turning to himself)  
 Mad as a fruitcake, indeed.  
 (turning back)  
 Indeedy do.

He drinks.

INT. LESTER'S APARTMENT -- DAY

It's morning time and our boy Lester is in his nice three piece suit, dialing his phone. Cat lazily looks on.

Mr. Broz answers.

LESTER

Hello, Mr. Broz--cough--this is me, Lester, hack, Williams. Sorry, sir, but--cough, cough--I'm not feeling well. I'm really sick. So I'm phoning in...whattya mean no? I'm sick! Fever! Nausea! Projectile vomiting! And you say no? I've never taken a sick--cough--I'll talk to you tomorrow.

(MORE)

LESTER (CONT'D)

(hangs up)

The nerve of the guy!

(sudden realization)

What did I do?

Lynn Anne appears.

LYNN ANNE

Sounds like you stood up for yourself.

LESTER

Great. And now I'll be doing my standing up on the unemployment line.

Cat jumps off and rubs against Lynn Anne.

LYNN ANNE

Julius, how are you?

She scruffs its head.

LESTER

What are you doing? How can you do that?

LYNN ANNE

Cats are really psychic. Didn't you know that?

LESTER

I guess they left it out of my owner's manual.

LYNN ANNE

You ready?

LESTER

Called in sick. Heather's busy fitting for her gown. Cat's fed. Got two number two pencils. Yeah, I'm ready.

LYNN ANNE

You look nice.

LESTER

It's my 2-W suit.

LYNN ANNE

Two W suit?

LESTER

Weddings and wakes.

LYNN ANNE

Oh, yeah, I think I remember it.

LESTER  
I'm still worried.

LYNN ANNE  
The suit looks fine.

LESTER  
Not about the suit.

LYNN ANNE  
What can happen? You've got a guardian angel.

LESTER  
You're not an angel. You're a ghost.

LYNN ANNE  
Figure of speech.

LESTER  
Let's get this over with.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- DAY

Lester is driving to the industrial side of town, dotted with chemical plants.

EXT. PETRO-CHEM INDUSTRIES -- DAY

Lester drives into the plant.

INT. V.P. OFFICE -- DAY

Lester walks in with ARNOLD LIPPSMAN, junior vice-president. They sit. Lippsman reads Lester's business card.

LIPPSMAN  
Now, then, Mr. Williams, how might I help you?

LESTER  
Well, Mr. Lippsman, my company, er, Edward A. Broz and Sons is seriously looking into the investment potential of the petroleum and chemical industry. And here you are, being both. But, frankly, sir, we're a little worried about the rash of oil spills in the area lately.

LIPPSMAN  
So are we.

LESTER  
And you are the vice-president in charge of spill control---

LIPPSMAN  
That's spin control.

LESTER  
Oh. My mistake. Spin control and environmental overviews.

LIPPSMAN  
That's oversights.

LESTER  
Of course. Well, as I was saying, we're always looking for new markets, trying to keep up with the Dow Jones. Ha-ha. I'd like to get some insight into your business so we might include it in a portfolio.

LIPPSMAN  
I think we can help you there.

He goes to a file cabinet and pulls out a report. The drawer falls out and papers spill.

LIPPSMAN (CONT'D)  
Oops. Ah, yes, here, I have a copy of our quarterly report.

He gives it to Lester.

LESTER  
Thank you.

LIPPSMAN  
Any questions?

LESTER  
Yes, actually. Concerning the latest spill, the state report says that your claims of the condition of the tanker carrying the oil were false.

LIPPSMAN  
What do you mean, "false?"

LESTER  
False. Untrue. A lie.

LIPPSMAN  
Oh, that's what you mean. In what sense?

They take their seats at Lippsman's desk.

LESTER

You claimed the tanker was seaworthy and the captain competent. They weren't. They spilled millions of barrels of oil and your company wasn't prepared to deal with it.

LIPPSMAN

Petro-Chem disagrees with that.

LESTER

You disagree with the state's report?

LIPPSMAN

No, we disagree with the spill. Sheesh! It's not like we wanted the spill to happen! Do you know how much oil is going for on today's market? We took a bath on that spill.

He reaches to get a glass of water and knocks it over.

LIPPSMAN (CONT'D)

We are well aware of our responsibilities and we lead the industry...oops, sorry. Did I do that?

LESTER

Er, yes.

LIPPSMAN

That's really a bad place for a glass of water. I'll have to tell my secretary about that.

LESTER

I guess. Anyway, there has never been an adequate explanation as to why your workers ignored the safety alarms. The alarm system was simply deactivated and the pumping resumed.

As Lippsman fields this question, he takes his glass and pitcher and pours himself a new glass. It keeps pouring until it overflows and then some.

LIPPSMAN

Now, our company employees are the best. They are a dedicated, loyal group of people who know their jobs. We are still looking into precisely that question and as soon as we have an answer, we will be the first to know.

(MORE)

LIPPSMAN (CONT'D)

But I do know this: if the workers on duty that fateful night did merely over-ride the fail-safe devices, then they had better have a good and legally acceptable reason that, of course, will clear our company of these charges of negligence, that frankly, we're tired of dealing with.

LESTER

Mr. Lippsman---

LIPPSMAN

Arnold, please.

LESTER

Arnold, your glass!

LIPPSMAN

What? Oh, wow! Jeez, look at this glass. Obviously defective merchandise. Now, as I was saying, our corporation is doing its darnedest to clear up the situation. We're a big company. Hell, we're global! You can't expect us to know everything that we're doing. But we do a lot for this city and this country.

He gestures grandly, sloshing water around.

LIPPSMAN (CONT'D)

We've left our mark all over this nation, from sea to slimy sea.

LESTER

That's "shining seas."

LIPPSMAN

Not any more.

LESTER

Ah, right. Well, thank you. I think this will be a big boost in our analysis. The bulls and bears should get a kick out of this, eh? Ha-ha. It is a fascinating industry.

LIPPSMAN

We think so.

LESTER

I'm curious, though. Just how do you dispose of your waste products?

Lippsman begins handling his pen which, of course, begins leaking.

LIPPSMAN

We contract that job out to a licensed disposal company. They pick up the drums of waste, take it to their treatment plant, treat it and dispose of it.

LESTER

What company do you retain?

He flips through his Rolodex and the cards spill out, naturally.

LIPPSMAN

Hmm. Ah, yes, Fuscilli Waste Disposal.

LESTER

Huh?

LIPPSMAN

Fuscilli Waste Disposal.

LESTER

Waste disposal? Fuscilli waste? Who picks up your regular trash?

LIPPSMAN

Regular trash? I believe it's  
(checks Rolodex)  
Ace Trucking company.

LESTER

Fuscilli Waste Disposal is a licensed contractor?

LIPPSMAN

It wouldn't be legal otherwise.

LESTER

How'd you..., er, might I ask you came to select Fuscilli?

He knocks over his water pitcher.

LIPPSMAN

Truthfully, I'm really not sure. They dealt with my superiors.

While holding the glass of water, Lippsman checks his watch, spilling the drink in his lap.

LIPPSMAN (CONT'D)

Look at the time. I have another appointment now. Is there anything else?

LESTER

No, thank you, Mr. Lippsman. You've been more than generous.

They shake hands and Lester leaves.

INT. HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Lester closes the door.

LESTER

Lynn. Lynn Anne.

Lynn Anne appears and they walk out.

LYNN ANNE

Yo!

LESTER

Remind me to send a donation to Greenpeace.

LYNN ANNE

Fuscilli is licensed to haul toxic waste?

LESTER

And it don't rain in Minneapolis in the summer time.

LYNN ANNE

Let's run this pass Benducci.

LESTER

The man with the thermal clues.

They leave the building.

EXT. PETRO-CHEM INDUSTRIES -- DAY

As they walk to the parking lot, they see a truck labeled "Fuscilli Waste Disposal" drive pass to the chemical plant. Lester and Lynn walk to it.

They reach the truck parked by the chemical storehouse and see the TRUCKERS, thuggish looking characters, loading the waste drums into the truck.

EXT. ROAD -- DAY

The truck drives along, Lester follows in his car.

EXT. FUSCILLI CARTING COMPANY -- DAY

The truck pulls into the compound and the gate closes behind it.

Lester pulls up and gets out. He tries the front gate but it is locked. Casually, he goes around the side. He suddenly backs up as the two thugs, Duke and Earl, confront him.

EARL  
Yo, no trespassing.

LESTER  
Sorry. Forgive me my trespasses.

DUKE  
Want I should pound on him, Earl?

EARL  
Excuse me, have we met?

LESTER  
No, I used to be someone else and I thought this was someplace else. I better get going.

EARL  
Yeah, you better.

Lester goes back to his car. Lynn Anne appears.

LYNN ANNE  
Hey, it's my pair of home wreckers.

LESTER  
So their boss is Fuscilli. And Fuscilli suddenly deals in toxic wastes. Curiouser and curiousier.

LYNN ANNE  
Can we go to City hall and see if they're licensed for it?

LESTER  
Let's roll.

They drive off.

INT. WEDDING SHOP -- DAY

Heather is being fitted for a gown. Her two friends, BARBARA and LORRIE are with her. The SEAMSTRESS works on the gown.

LORRIE  
Oh, it looks lovely, Heather.

HEATHER

Thank you.

SEAMSTRESS

How's the material?

BARBARA

Looks good to me.

SEAMSTRESS

I think it's a mite snug.

HEATHER

Thanks for coming with me, guys. I couldn't get Lester to come.

LORRIE

Isn't it bad luck for the groom to see the gown before the wedding?

BARBARA

No, only the price tag.

HEATHER

He's been acting funny lately.

BARBARA

Cold feet.

SEAMSTRESS

Care to try a size larger?

HEATHER

It's just fine. I plan to lose some weight before the ceremony.

SEAMSTRESS

(chuckling)

Uh-huh.

HEATHER

Did I say something funny?

SEAMSTRESS

No, it's just that every girl says that. Then next time I see them, boom, she's packed on ten pounds.

HEATHER

Well, I'm not like that.

SEAMSTRESS

Uh-huh.

LORRIE

You were saying about Lester?

HEATHER

Oh, I guess he's just working hard.  
I don't want to push it. I don't  
want us to have our first fight now.

BARBARA

What do you mean? You had your first  
fight with him months ago.

LORRIE

Sure, don't you remember? Over the  
wedding song. You wanted "Just the  
Way You Are" and he wanted "Another  
One Bites the Dust."

HEATHER

Oh, he was just fooling around.

BARBARA

How about the time he called your  
Aunt Edna a communist?

LORRIE

Or the time he brought his cat over  
and it ate your goldfish?

HEATHER

That was an accident!

BARBARA

Come on, Heather. You still believe  
that was an accident?

LORRIE

He hated your goldfish, Heather.  
Everyone knew it.

HEATHER

It was an accident.

BARBARA

Freud said there are no accidents.

HEATHER

I'm not marrying Freud.

SEAMSTRESS

I can take it out a bit.

HEATHER

(angry)  
It's fine, do you hear me? It's  
just fine!

SEAMSTRESS

(sighs)  
Okay, it's your funeral.

INT. LESTER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Lester walks down the hall to his apartment carrying several files.

LESTER

I would have bet my eye teeth that  
Fuscilli didn't have this license.  
I thought we had him.

Lynn Anne appears.

LYNN ANNE

Yeah but catch the dates on the  
application. It was approved after  
they started hauling.

LESTER

So something is fishy in Denmark.

LYNN ANNE

You have to show you can properly  
dispose of the chemicals. I didn't  
see anything that would suggest he  
could handle that kind of job. Why  
would the city approve this?

LESTER

You can't fight city hall.

LYNN ANNE

No but you can buy it.

LESTER

What's he going to do with all this  
waste? Start a second New Jersey?

They go into Lester's apartment.

INT. LESTER'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Lester sees Heather seated, waiting. Lynn Anne is out of sight.

HEATHER

Who are you talking to?

LESTER

Heather? Heather! What are you  
doing here?

HEATHER

I'm waiting for you.

LESTER

Oh. Then it's a good thing I showed  
up or you would've wasted your time.

HEATHER

Where were you? And who were you just talking to?

LESTER

I had some things to attend to.

HEATHER

You didn't go to work?

LESTER

No.

HEATHER

What's come over you? You used to be so dependable.

LESTER

I had to take care of some things. I needed the time off.

HEATHER

Where did this typewriter come from?

LESTER

I got it from Lynn Anne. I mean, her estate. She willed it to me.

HEATHER

Why did she give it to you?

LESTER

I guess she thought I could use it.

HEATHER

For what?

LESTER

Typing?

HEATHER

Typing what?

LESTER

You know about my writing.

HEATHER

I thought you got over that.

LESTER

Relapse. Why are you here?

HEATHER

I've been trying to get you all afternoon. Our band called up. They're canceling out on us.

LESTER

Why?

HEATHER

The lead singer is pregnant. She can't sing.

LESTER

Doctor's orders?

HEATHER

No, her wedding's the same day.

LESTER

Well, our contract says they have to supply a replacement.

HEATHER

Yes and we have to go meet them tonight. Hurry. We'll be late.

The phone rings. Lester gets it.

INTERCUT:

INT. BENDUCCI'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

The office is dark. Benducci speaks on the phone.

BENDUCCI

Williams, it's me. You crazy? Snooping around the plant already? There's nothing here.

LESTER

It just happened. Spur of the moment. But I have to ask: How did a hairy knuckle type like Fuscilli get into the high-tech yuppie world of Petro-Chem?

BENDUCCI

Easy. He strong-armed a v.p. into canceling their old contract.

LESTER

And the vice-president did it?

BENDUCCI

One thing you should know about the mob. They'll kill people for a couple of bucks. And since most people aren't willing to die for a couple of bucks, they get their way.

LESTER

The law of supply and de mob.

HEATHER

Who are you talking to?

LESTER

Sh. I suppose he got his license the same way?

BENDUCCI

Naah, he already owns a couple of councilmen. They pushed it through.

LESTER

So we are on the right trail.

BENDUCCI

The pieces are there. Just put them together.

LESTER

But where to now? Is this all leading somewhere?

BENDUCCI

Follow the sludge.

LESTER

But how can we get at Fuscilli?

BENDUCCI

Follow the sludge.

Benducci hangs up.

LESTER

Wait. Nuts. He hung up.

HEATHER

Who was that?

LESTER

A friend of Lynn Anne's. A story she was doing. I'm kinda involved. I mean, she asked me to work on this.

HEATHER

Why you, for heaven's sake? You're no reporter.

LESTER

I guess she feels different.

HEATHER

Les, I know Lynn Anne and you were close. I know all that stuff about the college paper. She was a good person.

(MORE)

HEATHER (CONT'D)

A little pushy and insensitive to others but nice. But she's gone. You have to get pass this. She is gone.

LESTER

You'd think so, right?

HEATHER

What?

LESTER

Nothing.

HEATHER

Never mind that, hurry, we're already late.

They leave.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Oh, and about my goldfish---

INT. LOFT APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Heather and Lester are seated, listening to DUDE, the punk band leader, the GAPING WOUND, his band, stands by.

DUDE

Our band is hot. Our band is cool. It jives, it swings, dig?

HEATHER

Can you do weddings?

DUDE

Sure. But we don't do that usual wedding crap, we do a lot of our own crap. Hey, we'll play the Alley Cat, the Hokey Poky, the Tarantella, and a medley of hardcore tunes by AC/DC, 50 Cents and Marilyn Manson. Then we shoot the works with a polka, dig?

LESTER

Polka?

DUDE

For an extra five bills, our lead guitarist will set himself on fire and leap into your wedding cake, dig?

LESTER

Consider yourself dug.

DUDE  
But do you know how we can really  
improve your reception?

Lynn Anne appears.

LYNN ANNE  
Adjust your antenna?

DUDE  
Hit it, guys!

The band starts playing loudly.

LESTER  
Great.

HEATHER  
Oh, Lester, what are we going to do?  
Every other band we found was booked.

LESTER  
What?

LYNN ANNE  
Rockin' band.

LESTER  
Thanks.

HEATHER  
What?

LYNN ANNE  
We have to stake out Fuscilli's. He  
must be doing something with all  
that sludge.

LESTER  
What?

HEATHER  
I said, "what."

LYNN ANNE  
Stake out Fuscilli's.

LESTER  
When?

HEATHER  
Not "when", "what!"

LESTER  
(to Heather)  
What?

HEATHER

Yes.

LESTER

What are you talking about?

HEATHER

This noise would wake the dead.

LYNN ANNE

(to Lester)

I've been getting a few complaints,  
yes.

Lester gets up to leave.

LESTER

Let's go. We can't deal with this.

HEATHER

But we don't have a band!

LESTER

Do you want some flaming maniac  
leaping into your cake?

HEATHER

No. But we do need a band. People  
will talk.

LESTER

Who cares? With these guys no one  
will be able to hear anyway.

They leave.

INT. CAB -- NIGHT

Heather and Lester drive. Lynn Anne appears in the back  
seat.

HEATHER

What are we going to do?

LESTER

Maybe we can hire a D.J.

HEATHER

A D.J.? I don't think so.

LESTER

Would you rather have the Band of  
the Living Dead?

HEATHER

I would be mortified.

LYNN ANNE  
I thought they were hot.

LESTER  
(to Lynn)  
Oh, you would say that.

HEATHER  
Well, I would be. My mother would die from shame.

LYNN ANNE  
I don't see the problem here.

LESTER  
(to Lynn)  
Oh, you don't know what you're talking about.

HEATHER  
I suppose you do? You think my father would like that noise? Hardly. I don't know. What should we do?

They pull up in front of Heather's house.

LYNN ANNE  
(mocking)  
Gosh, the band's icky. Maybe we should call off the wedding.

LESTER  
Right, call off the wedding.

HEATHER  
What? How could you even think that? Are you trying to use this as an excuse to back out?

LESTER  
Huh? No, no. I wouldn't use that excuse.

HEATHER  
Then what excuse? This is the rest of our lives you're talking about.

LYNN ANNE  
Oh, please.

LESTER  
(to Lynn)  
Just shut up and don't interfere.

HEATHER  
What?

LYNN ANNE

What?

LESTER

Huh? No---.

HEATHER

Interfere. Is that what I'm doing? If I didn't interfere, this wedding would be a royal joke.

LESTER

What's that mean?

HEATHER

If you had it your way, we wouldn't have our wedding videotaped.

LESTER

So excuse me that I don't want you to blow a grand to turn our wedding into a reality show! Maybe show it on one of those funny video shows. We can fight over coconuts for the immunity challenge instead of the bouquet! It'll be great, I've never seen your mother in a sarong.

HEATHER

Pardon me. I finally get something I want and you mock it. What about you and that discount baker? The guy didn't even have a bride and groom for the top of the wedding cake! He had two leprechauns left over from St. Patrick's Day. "No problem," he says, "I'll paint one white and one black. No one will know the difference," he says. I'll know the difference because I don't have pointy ears!

LESTER

Oh, nice talk from someone who thinks Niagara Falls is a good spot for a honeymoon.

HEATHER

So what's wrong with Niagara Falls?

LESTER

Everybody goes to Niagara Falls!

HEATHER

It's a tradition!

LESTER

It's a cliché! Niagara Falls is wet. It's boring. And you might get hit by some jerk in a barrel. I'm not going to Niagara Falls because someone else thinks it's a good idea. I'm tired of it.

HEATHER

What's that mean?

LESTER

All my life, I've been the good sport. Mr. Go-Along-To-Get-Along. Making sure everyone else is satisfied. I want to do something because I want to.

HEATHER

Like what?

LESTER

Quit my job, for instance.

HEATHER

What's wrong with your job?

LESTER

What isn't? It's a horrible job. My father made me take it.

HEATHER

But they have such a good health plan.

LESTER

That's not the point! I wanted to write.

LYNN ANNE

I knew it!

HEATHER

Oh, that again.

LESTER

I'm rotting there. Look at me! I'm turning into a, a, clerk!

HEATHER

You are a clerk. Be real. How can a writer support a wife and family?

LESTER

Maybe I shouldn't be trying to.

HEATHER

What's that supposed to mean?

LESTER

It means maybe we have a lot to talk about still.

She takes off her ring and throws it at Lester and stomps off.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Huh? No, wait, Heather. I didn't---

EXT. HEATHER'S HOME -- CONTINUOUS

Heather runs in. Lester comes up and knocks. Mrs. Blindel answers.

MRS. BLINDEL

Lester, what's wrong?

LESTER

We had yet another in our increasing number of disagreements.

MRS. BLINDEL

About what?

LESTER

Life. Love. Marriage. I think we broke up.

MRS. BLINDEL

Maybe you two---

(suddenly)

It's back. That presence. The loneliness.

LESTER

How do you know that?

MRS. BLINDEL

I've gotten these feelings all my life. My mother used to get them, too.

LESTER

Are you psychic?

MRS. BLINDEL

I don't know about that. My mother used to say we were very empathic. I guess that's what made my art so vivid.

LESTER

I didn't know you were an artist.

MRS. BLINDEL  
Before I got married.

LESTER  
But no more?

MRS. BLINDEL  
It's just sometimes you have to re-  
arrange your priorities.

LESTER  
So I hear.

MRS. BLINDEL  
Unless, of course, you don't want  
to. Give her some time to cool off,  
Lester. Use it to finish up what  
you have to do. And then see what's  
what.

LESTER  
Thanks, Mrs. B. Good night.

He goes back to car.

INT. CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Lynn pops out of the back seat into the front.

LESTER  
Thank you very much. I guess this  
is what you wanted. Certainly frees  
up my schedule.

LYNN ANNE  
I'm your friend.

LESTER  
Were. You were my friend, Lynn Anne.  
Now, your some misplaced ectoplasm.

LYNN ANNE  
Not misplaced. I have an important  
job. We have to stake out Fuscilli's.

LESTER  
For Pete's sake, I just chased Heather  
out of my life by refusing to just  
do things. Didn't you hear? Don't  
you start bossing me around now.

LYNN ANNE  
Bossing you around? Lester, for  
once in your life, take a stand. Do  
something for the common good.

(MORE)

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)

There are major issues to be dealt with here. We can crack City Hall wide open!

LESTER

Lynn, give it up, already. Get an afterlife, will you? If you get this crook, who cares? There's dozens of others waiting to take his place.

LYNN ANNE

You telling me my life's work is pointless?

LESTER

It was your passion, not mine. I wanted to write fiction, not report facts.

LYNN ANNE

Then why the journalism classes? Why'd you join the Soapbox?

LESTER

I had my reasons.

LYNN ANNE

And you had the talent.

LESTER

Thanks for the boost. But that doesn't change much. I want a wife. A family. How long am I supposed to put my life on hold chasing a dream?

LYNN ANNE

I wouldn't know. But Heather's not the girl for you. It's so obvious.

LESTER

No, it's not. Maybe this isn't a storybook wedding but I'm no Prince Charming either. If I can find someone who actually would consider spending her life with me, I can't afford to lose her.

LYNN ANNE

Les, you can't mean that. You're a great guy. It never occurred to me that you felt that way about things.

LESTER

Exactly. You never did.

LYNN ANNE

All I can say is I'm sorry. I didn't mean to mess up your life. It's just that, you've always been there for me and I thought you always would be. I guess I took you for granted. I didn't mean to overstay my welcome. Good-bye, Les. I'm so sorry.

Lynn Anne pops out. Lester drives off.

INT. LESTER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Lester comes home and plops down somewhere. He can see the typewriter. He turns away. Julius the cat jumps off the bookstand, knocking the yearbook and a binder filled with old issues of the Soapbox.

Lester picks them up. He looks over the old muck-raking headlines, looks at the yearbook picture of him and Lynn posing at their desk.

Suddenly, his life has meaning and purpose. He heads out the door.

LESTER

If anyone calls, Julius, take a message.

The cat meows knowingly. They're psychic, you know.

EXT. FUSCILLI CARTING COMPANY -- NIGHT

Lester is seated in his car across the road from Fuscilli's. He is eating a doughnut. Lester occasionally looks through his field glasses. If field glasses are unavailable, binoculars will do.

Some noises are heard. He looks up. The gates open and two trucks drive out. One is a covered flatbed and the other a tanker. They drive off.

Lester starts the car and follows.

EXT. DESERTED ROAD -- NIGHT

The tanker pulls over. The DRIVER gets out, opens the rear valve and the liquid waste pours out.

The Driver returns to the cab and drives again, leaving a trail of sludge. He soon rejoins the flatbed.

Lester reaches the beginning of the sludge slick and skids off the road.

Lester gets out of the car and examines the road.

LESTER

Sludge. They're dumping it as they go. Very nice. No wonder they got their license so quickly, using such environmentally sound methods of disposal. Makes you wonder what they do with the drums.

Lester takes some pictures.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Well, let's follow the yellow slick road.

Lester gets back into the car and heads off after the trucks.

EXT. WETLANDS -- NIGHT

The trucks are by the swamp's edge. The Drivers are rolling the drums into the water. Lester is creeping up to watch.

LESTER

There you have it. He underbids the competition by cutting out frills like chemical waste treatment facilities, dumps the stuff on the public land and makes 100% profit. The American scheme come true.

He takes some pictures. Further back we see another car pull up, lights off. It's Harry Blaine, shaking his head.

INT. LESTER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Lester unlocks his door and enters. He goes to his refrigerator and gets a beer.

LESTER

So that's what Benducci wanted to stop. Illegal dumping of toxic waste. Well, it's nice to know that someone who deals in graft, bribes, extortion, racketeering and underworld activities has his limits. I still wonder what that thug Duke meant when he said "the boss don't want no trouble with the big deal coming up?" Who am I talking to. Lynn's not here, remember? I wish she was.

The phone rings. Lester gets it.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Hello.

BENDUCCI

Turn on the channel four news.

LESTER

Benducci, is that you?

There is no reply, the line goes dead. Lester turns on the news.

NEWS ANCHOR

---And in other news, in an obvious tactic to counter the Sanitation workers' threatened strike, city officials announced a move toward hiring private sanitation companies to collect residential refuse on a trial basis. Fuscilli Carting company has been awarded the first contract and will be collecting garbage in selected neighborhoods of Queens and Brooklyn. Should it prove successful, other contracts for other boroughs will be awarded. The contracts give the Fuscilli company access to all city owned landfills and dumps. Union officials for the Sanitation Workers declared this a breach in good faith negotiations and a direct attack on its members. Moving on to sports---

Lester is wide-eyed and slack-jawed.

LESTER

If they let Fuscilli into the city dumps, he can start full scale dumping. It'll be like Love Canal meets Three Mile Island. Somebody has to stop them.

Julius jumps onto him out of nowhere.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Oh, good. Thanks for volunteering. I was afraid it was going to be me. Come here, let me show you how a typewriter works.

Lester sits. Julius meows.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Sure, I remember how to work one of these. It's just like riding a bicycle, you never forget.

Lester stares at the typewriter.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Where's the pedals on this thing?  
(MORE)

LESTER (CONT'D)

Lynn Anne always thought that was funny.

He notices the yearbook stuff again.

LESTER (CONT'D)

But she was easy, she always thought I was funny. That's why I hung around so much. I thought...I hoped---Oh, well, no sense in crying over spilled sludge. This one's for you, Lynn Anne.

He starts to type but nothing happens. He reaches into the typewriter and pulls out a banana peel. Just then the door is kicked in. Earl and Duke step in, guns drawn.

EARL

Okay, nobody moved.

DUKE

Want I should plug him, Earl?

EARL

Nah. The boss wants to see him first. Come on, Williams, move it. The boss wants to meet you.

LESTER

Bruce Springsteen wants to meet me?

EARL

Move!

LESTER

Oh, Lynn. Lynn Anne!

EARL

Who you talking to?

DUKE

You want I should shut him up, Earl?

EARL

Naah. Search the rest of the joint, see who's here.

Duke goes into the bedroom, Earl cases the room.

EARL (CONT'D)

You are in serious trouble, buddy. You don't know what you've gotten yourself involved with.

LESTER

Excuse me?

Duke re-enters.

EARL

Don't try nothing. Duke hasn't maimed anyone all week and he's getting a little fidgety.

LESTER

Fair enough.

Earl grabs the camera and they lead Lester out.

EXT. FUSCILLI'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Darkened room. ROCCO FUSCILLI is seated in an overstuffed swivel chair, back to his desk.

Benducci is seated, taking notes as Fuscilli dictates.

The door opens. Lester is shoved in ahead of Earl and Duke. Fuscilli turns and flips on his small desk lamp. He's dressed in a tuxedo. Earl places the camera on the desk.

Benducci looks faint. Lester looks surprised, then covers.

Fuscilli is stroking a cat.

EARL

Here he is, boss.

FUSCILLI

So, this is the bothersome Mr. Williams.

LESTER

Have we met?

FUSCILLI

The name's Rocco Fuscilli.

LESTER

Rocco Fuscilli? Oh. Oh-oh. Well, nice to meet you. Nice cat. I have a pet cat, too.

FUSCILLI

No pet. I was about to feed my pit bulls. Who are you, Mr. Williams?

LESTER

What do you mean?

FUSCILLI

You say you're a colleague of Lynn Anne Meyerson but you don't work for any news organization.

LESTER

I freelance.

FUSCILLI

What a coincidence. So do I. How did you happen on to our little enterprise?

Earl grabs Lester from behind. Benducci crosses himself quickly.

LESTER

What are you talking about?

FUSCILLI

Who talked?

LESTER

Nobody talked.

FUSCILLI

How did you latch on to me, Williams?

LESTER

Lynn Anne gave me her notes after she died. I mean before. Before she died.

FUSCILLI

Where did she get the information?

LESTER

I don't know. I'm just a clerk.

FUSCILLI

So you are. File him, boys. Needless to say my associates frown on this type of notoriety, so it will be necessary to keep you in absentia for the moment. I'll finish my questioning after the banquet.

LESTER

Banquet?

FUSCILLI

Oh, yes. I'm being honored tonight with a dinner. Ray, how did the press release put it?

Benducci hands him a sheet.

FUSCILLI (CONT'D)

"As a tribute to my many years of community service."

LESTER  
 You're getting a dinner? Red Buttons  
 never got a dinner!

FUSCILLI  
 Mr. Buttons didn't have a contract  
 with the city.

LESTER  
 Oh, sure, rub it out. I mean in.  
 Rub it in.

FUSCILLI  
 The mayor, the city council, the  
 borough presidents. They'll all be  
 there. I believe it's called a media  
 event, right, Ray?

BENDUCCI  
 (stammering)  
 Right, boss.

DUKE  
 Come on, worm.

LESTER  
 Who? Me?

He is dragged out by Duke and Earl.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
 No, guys, seriously, where we going?  
 Did I mention I cried when they shot  
 Sonny in "The Godfather?"

INT. BASEMENT ROOM -- NIGHT

Lester is tossed in. The door slams shut and is bolted.  
 This is serious stuff going on here.

LESTER  
 I lied! I laughed when Sonny got  
 it! Brando should have never gotten  
 the Oscar! Ha! And don't think I  
 forgot about that "worm" crack,  
 either!

A noise is heard. Lester quickly backs away from the door.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
 Kidding, guys, kidding. Hello?

INT. BASEMENT ROOM -- LATER

Lester is now sitting on a crate pondering his fate. Or  
 lack of it.

LESTER

Common good. See where it gets you. This is what happens when you stick your neck out for the common good. Heather was right. Take care of your own. That's it.

(pause)

No, it's not it. Lynn Anne was right. That's why she's dead. And I'm next. Isn't there a happy medium in there some place? Oh, God, I tried. I really tried. I'm sorry I let Lynn Anne down. Sorry I let you down. You go and give her a second chance and I blow it. Help me, please. Somebody, please help.

EXT. SOMEPLACE ELSE

Lynn Anne is slowly gliding to the light.

LYNN ANNE

No, really. It's fine. I'm ready. I haven't a care in the world. I'm floating. At complete peace! Did you hear something? What was that? Lester? Something's wrong with Lester. He needs help. What? Yeah, no, I'm coming. Really. Hold that thought.

She dashes off into the fog effect.

INT. BASEMENT ROOM -- NIGHT

Lynn Anne appears.

LYNN ANNE

Les, are you okay? Where are we?

LESTER

Oh, Lynn Anne! You're back.

He tries to hug her but she does that ghost-thing.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Rocco's Fuscilli's kidnapped me to keep me quiet. He's got the evidence. I tried to stop him but I screwed up, as per usual.

LYNN ANNE

You tried to stop him? You got involved? Lester, I'm so proud of you.

LESTER  
Shut up and get me out of here, please-  
please-please.

LYNN ANNE  
No prob. Door's only bolted.

Lynn Anne walks through the closed door. Lester goes to follow and bumps into the door.

LESTER  
I hate when I do that.

EXT. BASEMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Lynn Anne concentrates and slides the bolt open.

LYNN ANNE  
There! Come on, Les!

Lester steps out.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)  
Let's blow this waste basket.

LESTER  
We have to get the camera. We need those pictures.

LYNN ANNE  
Lead on.

They head out.

INT. CORRIDOR -- NIGHT

Darken corridor to Fuscilli's office. Lester pokes his head around the corner. He makes his way to the door and opens it.

INT. FUSCILLI'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Lester comes in and goes to the desk.

LESTER  
It's gone.

The door slams shut. Duke is behind it. He holds the camera.

DUKE  
Looking for this?

LESTER  
As a matter of fact, I was. I have some vacation snapshots on it.

He approaches Lester, slipping on his brass knuckles.

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)  
 (whispers)  
 Close your eyes, Lester.

LESTER  
 I was about to.

Suddenly the window opens and a breeze blows in, distracting Duke. The camera is pulled from his hand and goes off, the flash blinding Duke. It then floats out the door.

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)  
 Run, Lester!

He runs out.

EXT. CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

The camera is floating in corridor when Lynn Anne appears, holding it. Lester joins her.

LYNN ANNE  
 Take this.

She gives him the camera.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)  
 And let's get out of here.

LESTER  
 I'm right behind you, Lynn!

She runs through the exit door, Lester runs into it. He gets his bearings and opens the door while holding his nose.

EXT. FUSCILLI'S GROUNDS -- NIGHT

Lester leaves the building and reaches the gate. It's locked. Lester runs back and heads to the storage sheds and trucks. He runs into Earl.

EARL  
 What the---?

LESTER  
 Oh, nuts.

EARL  
 You idiot! Are you hell-bent on blowing this operation?

LESTER  
 What?

EARL  
 I'm a cop. Undercover.

LESTER  
You're very realistic.

EARL  
Get back into that cellar before you  
blow this whole deal.

LESTER  
Sorry.

EARL  
And gimme the camera.

The unseen Lynn Anne clucks Earl with a large wrench knocking him out.

LESTER  
Oh, you shouldn't have done that.

Duke comes out, gun blazing.

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)  
Follow me.

Lester starts to run but doesn't know which way to go.

LESTER  
Lynn Anne, stop doing that!

Duke comes around, Lester sees him and runs off. Lester is cornered against a building as he closes in. Suddenly, a truck engine starts and the lights come on.

INT. TRUCK CAB -- NIGHT

The stick shift goes into gear and the accelerator goes down as the truck goes.

EXT. FUSCILLI'S GROUNDS -- NIGHT

LESTER  
Oh, here's my ride now.

The truck comes down, between Duke and Lester. After the truck passes, Duke sees that Lester is gone. Lester is now hanging onto the back of the truck.

EXT. FRONT GATE -- CONTINUOUS

Truck barrels through the gates. Duke gets the car and follows.

EXT. ROAD -- NIGHT

The truck speeds along. Duke follows.

The truck begins to swerve. Lester hits the nozzle of the tanker and the waste pours out onto the road. Duke skids off the road. Lester works his way up to peek in the cab.

INT. TRUCK CAB -- CONTINUOUS

Lester looks in to see no one driving.

LESTER

Lynn, I sure hope that's you.

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

Who were you expecting? My Mother the Car?

Lynn Anne fades in at the controls of the truck.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)

Now be quiet. This takes a lot of concentration.

Lester climbs in.

LESTER

Thanks, Lynn, you're a life saver.

LYNN ANNE

I try to take care of me and mine. Where to now?

LESTER

Fuscilli's media event.

LYNN ANNE

But we're not dressed for it.

LESTER

Maybe it's a come-as-you-are party.

Lynn Anne begins to look faint and fade in and out.

LYNN ANNE

Oh-oh.

LESTER

Hey! You're fading! Quick, adjust your contrast knob!

LYNN ANNE

I can't hold it!

Lester leaps over to grab the wheel and jumps in the driver's seat as Lynn Anne fades. Lester twitches a bit, then Lynn Anne slides over, out of Lester, to the passenger seat.

LESTER

Excuse me.

They both ponder the sensation, then share a smile.

EXT. ROAD -- NIGHT

They enter the main drag of town.

INT. BANQUET HALL -- NIGHT

Busy room filled with PEOPLE to honor Fuscilli. Attending are Rocco's CRONIES, including Benducci, as well as the MAYOR and his CRONIES.

There is a dais for the guest of honor.

Harry Blaine and other REPORTERS and TV CREWS mull, covering the event. Mac is at a table.

EXT. BANQUET HALL -- NIGHT

There are SEVERAL THUGS, in ill-fitting tuxes, patrolling the parking lot. The truck drives to the back of the hall.

INT. BANQUET HALL -- NIGHT

Lester, dressed as a waiter, comes out the kitchen doors carrying a soup turret. He goes to the dais, where Fuscilli and other big shots are now seated.

Lester starts ladling some toxic gunk into the soup bowls.

Benducci goes to spoon some up but his spoon dissolves. He looks up to see Lester, who waves.

Benducci faints.

FUSCILLI

Hey, waiter, what's wrong with this soup.

Lester takes the podium.

LESTER

Why, that's not soup at all. That's just a taste of the toxic waste that Mr. Fuscilli has been illegally dumping into the city's public lands and now plans to use his new contracts to dump his deadly waste into city dumps. I have photos, I have records.

MAC

That's Meyerson's pal!

Lester holds the camera up. Benducci comes to, only to see Lester and faints again.

LESTER

Garbage collection is a stinking business.

BLAINE

Williams! Blimey! What the devil are you doing here? Fuscilli was supposed to---

LESTER

Fuscilli was supposed to what?

LYNN ANNE (O.S.)

Oh my God, it's Blaine! He's spying for them, not the paper!

LESTER

You Mata Hari!

Lester leaps onto Blaine and takes him down. Mac has worked his way up.

BLAINE

Stop! Wait!

LESTER

You! You fingered me to Fuscilli! You knew what I was working on.

BLAINE

Williams, wait.

LESTER

And you fingered Lynn Anne! You bastard! You had her killed!

BLAINE

No, I didn't know, I swear! They said they were just going to put a bloody scare into her to get her off the story. I had no idea they'd kill her.

People wrestle Lester off Blaine. Blaine gets up, with Mac's help.

LESTER

You know all about it.

MAC

Is that true, Blaine?

BLAINE

I was heavily into debt with his book makers. To cancel my marker, they said I could assist. I liked Linnie.

LESTER

If you liked her, you'll stand up to  
Fuscilli now. Take him to court.

Some POLICE come in, lead by Earl.

LESTER (CONT'D)

Ah, there you are. Officer, take  
him away.

EARL

He hasn't broken any laws.

They all grab Lester.

EARL (CONT'D)

You, however, have.

LESTER

Hey, what are you doing? I'm the  
good guy! Wait! This isn't right.

They cart Lester off. Mac calls after him.

MAC

Don't worry, Williams. The paper  
will bail you out in exchange for  
the exclusive rights to your story.

Lester tosses the camera to Mac.

LESTER

Deal.

The crowd starts to break away. Mac wanders up to Fuscilli  
as Lester is removed.

FUSCILLI

What did the little runt say?

MAC

To paraphrase, the jig's up.

FUSCILLI

What are you talking about?

Mac takes a napkin and folds it into a hat and puts it on  
Fuscilli.

MAC

You read our paper tomorrow. Your  
picture will be the one under the  
glaring headline.

Mac walks away.

FUSCILLI

I'm not afraid of you and your fish  
wrap. My hands are clean!

He sits. His soup bowl tips itself over and the sludge pours  
out onto Fuscilli's lap. Lynn Anne's giggle can be heard.

INT. PRISON CELL -- NIGHT

Lester is sitting on the bunk of a holding cell. He's  
scribbling away with a stubby pencil on a legal pad. A DRUNK  
is passed out on the next bunk. Lynn Anne appears next to  
him.

LYNN ANNE

Hi, Les.

LESTER

Hi, Lynn. Welcome to my cell.

LYNN ANNE

Don't sweat it. Mac's a good guy.  
He'll spring you soon.

LESTER

I know he will. It just that I've  
never been to jail before.

LYNN ANNE

Stick with me, kid and we'll go  
places.

LESTER

So what brings you here?

LYNN ANNE

I have to say good-bye, Lester.

LESTER

What?

LYNN ANNE

I'm done. We're done. I have no  
reason to stay.

LESTER

But I want you to stay.

LYNN ANNE

And I want to stay, too.

LESTER

Then why go?

LYNN ANNE

Not my decision.

LESTER

I have to apologize for what I said to you. I was upset. I didn't mean it. You're my friend. The best.

LYNN ANNE

No, you were right. I was so busy trying to change the world, I forgot about the things I wouldn't change for the world. I'm so proud of you, Les.

LESTER

I have to tell you something before it's too late.

LYNN ANNE

It is too late, Les. I'm dead and buried.

LESTER

I know. It's just that when you were here, I should have told you. I never had the guts. I felt I wasn't good enough. Here goes: I love you, Lynn Anne.

LYNN ANNE

I love you, too, Lester. I realize now, when everything was gone, when I was drifting away, you were the one I remembered. You were the anchor I needed to come back. You were always there for me. I wished I realized it sooner.

LESTER

I wish I had your nerve.

LYNN ANNE

I wish I had your heart.

LESTER

You'll have my heart. Always. I'm sorry I never said anything.

LYNN ANNE

Me, too. Well, better too late than never. Close your eyes, Les. I want to try something and I really have to concentrate.

Lester closes his eyes. Concentrating very hard, she closes her eyes and kisses Lester. Lester's eyes pop open as Lynn Anne finishes.

LYNN ANNE (CONT'D)

Did you feel that?

LESTER

To my shoes.

LYNN ANNE

I have to go now, dear.

LESTER

Now? But---

LYNN ANNE

The spirit is willing, Les.

LESTER

Right. Well, I guess this is good-by then. Good-by.

LYNN ANNE

I'm so scared, Lester. You know, I'm not a religious person, but something like this really opens your eyes. I hope you do okay.

LESTER

I'm sure you'll do okay. You're pretty decent.

LYNN ANNE

Thanks, Les.

LESTER

When you do get there, put in a word for me.

LYNN ANNE

You bet I will. Good-bye, Les.

Lynn Anne's figure begins to glow and sparkle. A breeze blows up and around the cell. A bright light shines into the cell.

Lester has to shield his eyes as Lynn Anne begins to fade into the light.

LESTER

Lynn Anne!

LYNN ANNE

Think of me, Lester!

LESTER

I will, I promise. Bye!

The light dims, the cell returns to normal. Lester looks over to see the Drunk sitting up in wide-eyed shock.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
Some special effects in this cell,  
huh?

INT. BACK OFFICE -- DAY

Lester is at his desk, adding up numbers. Broz walks by.  
Johnson looks up from his work.

JOHNSON  
Good morning, Mr. Broz.

BROZ  
Morning, Johnson. Working hard, I  
see.

JOHNSON  
You bet, sir. Right, Williams?

LESTER  
Of course. Don't we all?

BROZ  
Stop lallygagging, Williams.

Broz enters his office. Johnson giggles.

LESTER  
Go snort asbestos.

Lester's phone rings.

INTERCUT:

INT. MAC'S OFFICE -- DAY

Mac is fiddling with Blaine's press pass, cleaning his nails  
with it. Lester's manuscript is before him.

MAC  
Williams? It's McCarthy. Your toxic  
dumping piece is excellent.

LESTER  
Thank you, Mr. McCarthy.

MAC  
Call me Mac. All my top reporters  
do.

LESTER  
Come again?

MAC  
I don't know what bushel you've been  
hiding under, but Lynn Anne's faith  
(MORE)

MAC (CONT'D)  
 in you was well deserved. And since  
 I find myself short a couple of  
 reporters.

He folds Blaine's pass into a plane and flies it into the  
 trash.

MAC (CONT'D)  
 I'd like to take you on. Interested?

LESTER  
 Interested? Well, I---

MAC  
 This is a great opportunity.

LESTER  
 If I learned anything at all from  
 all of this it's to grab all the  
 great opportunities that come my  
 way.

MAC  
 Is that a yes?

LESTER  
 It's a yes and a half.

MAC  
 Great. Come over tomorrow morning.  
 We'll discuss the details.

LESTER  
 Thank you, Mr...er, Mac. I'll see  
 you tomorrow.

Lester hangs up. He pauses a moment, then looks the office  
 over.

LESTER (CONT'D)  
 Whoopee!

Lester starts throwing his papers into the air.

JOHNSON  
 Hey! What's going on?

LESTER  
 The governor called! I'm sprung!

Broz comes out.

BROZ  
 Williams! Stop enjoying yourself,  
 this is work!

Lester pinches Broz on the cheeks.

LESTER  
Bye-bye, Brozie! See you in the  
funny papers.

He takes his jacket and leaves, whistling into the hall. We hear him:

LESTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Going down! Hold the doors!

BROZ  
Why that ingrate!

JOHNSON  
He just never fitted in, sir.

BROZ  
Shut up, Johnson. Get to work.

JOHNSON  
(worried)  
Oh-oh.

BROZ  
What was that, Johnson?

Johnson is panic stricken. And well he should be.

EXT. BUILDING -- DAY

Lester walks to the curb and hails a cab. It pulls up.

CABBIE  
Where to?

LESTER  
Uptown.

And they drive off into the sunset, which is actually a reflection off those Manhattan glass towers but it really doesn't matter since it's:

The end