

"HOLLYWOOD SOLDIERS"

FADE IN:

EXT. SAN DIEGO ZOO PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Deserted except for a car parked under a light. A second car appears, and drives towards it with its headlights off.

CHARTRAND (V. O.)
Life works in mysterious ways.

INT. PARKED CAR - NIGHT

AGENT JOHN MCGOVERN, mid-fifties with intense eyes, taps lightly on the steering wheel as the other car approaches.

MCGOVERN
We don't have time for your philosophical stuff now, kid. Leave all the talking to me.

AGENT DAMON CHARTRAND, young and handsome, nods his assent.

EXT. SAN DIEGO ZOO PARKING LOT - NIGHT

McGovern gets out of the car as **TWO MEN** emerge from the other vehicle. Words are exchanged. The **LEADER** pulls out a gun and shoots McGovern twice in the head.

The **SIDEKICK** takes a machine gun from beneath his jacket and opens fire on Chartrand's car.

INT. PARKED CAR - NIGHT

Chartrand ducks and fires blindly out of his window as the windshield shatters and bullets tear into the seats inches above his head.

EXT. SAN DIEGO ZOO PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The sidekick goes down. Chartrand gets out of the car. He keeps firing until the leader falls.

McGovern and the leader are dead. The sidekick gets off a burst of gunfire from the ground before a single shot from Chartrand's gun shatters his skull.

Chartrand collapses. Agony on his face as he applies pressure to where the bullets ripped into his knee.

His hand is soon covered in blood.

INT. PRIVATE DETECTIVE'S OFFICE - DAY

Chartrand, a bright yellow rose pinned to his lapel, stares out the window, lost in a day dream.

IZZIE PRUITT, her hair covered by a kerchief and eyes hidden beneath large sunglasses, appears at the door marked "PRIVATE DETECTIVE".

IZZIE

Are you the detective?

Chartrand's chair squeaks as he turns to face his client. His eyes instinctively scan her body. She can hide her face, but her short, form fitting dress betrays the secret that a stunning lady is underneath the disguise.

CHARTRAND

Yeah. I'm the detective.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Through the front window, we can see that Chartrand sits at the counter and sips a cup of coffee.

CHARTRAND (V. O.)

She caught me daydreaming. You don't last too long in my line of work if you let people take you by surprise. She caught me again a few minutes later with her story.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Chartrand holds the cup halfway between his mouth and the saucer, oblivious to the hustle and bustle around him.

CHARTRAND (V. O.)

Before she came in, I was thinking of telling them I was ready to come back.

Chartrand puts down the cup, tosses a dollar on the counter, and then heads for the door. A slight limp is evident.

EXT. SAN DIEGO FREEWAY - DAY

Chartrand's convertible speeds past a sign that reads: MEXICO 25 MILES.

CHARTRAND (V. O.)

I obviously wasn't ready to go back just yet, but I sure as hell was ready to get out of San Diego.

INT. PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - DAY

DEL CAVANAUGH, thirtysomething and lean, looks out at the Hollywood Hills as he maintains a steady pace on his treadmill. Soft classical music fills the apartment.

When his cell phone rings, he taps a button on the head set and continues with his workout.

DEL

This is Del.

RADM

(filter)

Del, it's Radm. I need a very big favor, buddy.

DEL

How much is this favor going to cost me?

RADM

(filter)

Fifty G's and a quick trip south of the border.

Del rolls his eyes and stops the treadmill.

DEL

You're paying me back this time, right?

RADM

(filter)

You know it, Del. Now get your ass down here before I become a shotgun bride at a Mexican prison wedding.

Del stares at the framed photo that hangs on the wall, and then shakes his head. It's a picture of Del and another YOUNG MAN in caps and gowns at a high school graduation.

INT. MEXICAN BAR - DAY

Del and RADM HALABY are the only white men in the place. Mexican music blares out of the ancient stereo above the bar.

Radm is short and stocky, his face is peppered with welts and bruises, but we can tell he is the young man in the graduation picture with Del.

RADM

Thanks for bailing me out. Again.

DEL

What happened this time?

RADM

Some of the locals picked the wrong gringo to fuck at the card table.

DEL

And so you let them use your face as a punching bag as a way of teaching them a lesson?

Del chuckles, and Radm's eye twitches.

RADM

You're a real hard-on sometimes. Maybe now, I won't pay you back.

DEL

That wouldn't be anything new.

Radm glares and takes a long sip of his beer.

RADM

You remember Larry Wolarski?

DEL

Of course. May he rest in peace.

Del makes the sign of the cross.

RADM

Well, here's your pay back for everything I ever borrowed: I found your old, dead partner.

DEL

What are you talking about?

RADM

He owns a watch shop a coupla blocks from here.

DEL

Larry's dead. We were at his funeral.

Radm pulls a Polaroid photo out of his pocket and hands it to Del who stares at it in amazement. He then drops it on the bar like he's afraid he's holding the picture of a ghost.

RADM

He goes by the name Greg DuPont. He's been here ten months.

DEL

This is...

Del is at a loss for words at the revelation.

RADM

A fuckin' gold mine is what it is. Let's welcome him back from the dead and then negotiate a hefty fee to forget we ever saw him.

DEL

We've got to call Omar.

RADM

What the fuck you talking about?

DEL

If Larry's still alive, Omar needs to know.

Del reaches for his cell phone, but Radm grabs his hand.

RADM

Fuck Omar. This is me and you.

DEL
 You've got to think of the big
 picture, Radm

TWO ROWDY MEXICANS belly up to the bar next to Radm. Not wanting the interruption, he gives them an icy glare, and one of the men jumps back at the sight of Radm's bruised face.

MEXICAN
 El diablo.

The second man nods in agreement, and they both quickly make their way to another spot at the bar.

RADM
 The big picture only has room for
 Omar and the Old Man. This is your
 chance to force your way in.

DEL
 I don't think that way.

RADM
 You used to.

Radm storms out of the bar, bumping into one of the Mexicans as he goes. Del dials a number on his cell phone.

DEL
 (into phone)
 Omar, it's Del. We've got a
 serious problem

INT. MEXICAN WATCH STORE - DAY

LARRY WOLARSKI talks on a cell phone behind the counter when Radm enters and pulls out his gun.

RADM
 Don't say another word. Just hang
 it the fuck up.

Larry places the phone on the counter and puts up his hands.

LARRY
 What's with the gun?

Radm slams Larry across the back of the skull with his gun, and he crumbles to the floor behind the counter.