

ACES AND EIGHTS

INT. GILLY'S HOUSE - MORNING

GILLY WALKER - thirtyish, slim, offhandedly handsome - stands in his robe and pajamas in the kitchen of his modest but well kept home, blearily pouring coffee beans into a grinder.

Gilly hits the switch on the grinder; no response. He hits it again, a little harder. Still nothing. He whacks at it a few more times with growing frustration.

He glares at the coffee beans for a moment, then his eyes light up with an idea.

Go to a bag of coffee beans lying on the floor. A bicycle tire comes into view and rolls over the beans, followed by another tire.

Gilly circles the kitchen table on the bicycle, going around for another pass at the coffee beans.

INT. EMMA'S HOUSE - MORNING

The kitchen of a smallish suburban home. All the drawers and cabinets are open, as if a search has been conducted.

EMMA LANGLEY - a striking woman, rounding thirty, robed and slippered - comes in carrying a bra and a pair of scissors. She walks to the kitchen counter, snipping the bra in two with the scissors as she goes.

She puts one of the bra cups in the coffee maker as a filter and adds the coffee.

INT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - MORNING

RUSSELL BEACHUM - mid-fifties, thinning hair and thickening middle - sits at his breakfast table, reading the paper and smoking a cigar.

His wife SYLVIA walks into the kitchen carrying an electric fan. She puts the fan on the table, plugs it in and walks away. The fan blasts the cigar smoke away and sets the newspaper flapping wildly. Russell continues reading unperturbed.

INT. JAKE'S HOUSE - MORNING

A large, elaborate kitchen in a large, elaborate house. JAKE ROBINETTE - late forties, shortish, portly - stands at the counter. He switches on a blender filled with nasty vegetables - beets, broccoli, carrots, etc. The vegetables start to blur together.

Jake turns off the blender, pours the goo into a glass and takes a drink. His face scrunches up; his body shudders. He spits into the sink and wipes his mouth frantically with a dish towel.

INT. ARCH'S HOUSE - MORNING

ARCH DALTON - rugged features and a chunky frame - opens his refrigerator. It's filled with identical, neatly sealed MacDonald's bags. Arch pulls one out, throws it into the microwave and hits the buttons.

He takes a can of beer out of the refrigerator, opens it and tops off a half empty glass of orange juice.

INT. CRUNCH'S HOUSE - MORNING

CRUNCH SIMMONS - powerful build, sloping forehead, poorly cut hair - stands in his shabby living room, going through the pockets of a coat. His face brightens as he pulls out a half-eaten doughnut. He gives it a quick sniff and bites into it.

Crunch reaches back into the closet and takes out a sawed-off shotgun. He slips it under his coat and goes out the door.

INT. ARCH'S HOUSE - MORNING

Arch goes to a cookie jar on his kitchen counter and pulls out a cookie. He takes a bite, then reaches back into the jar, pulling out several ammo clips.

Arch pockets them and leaves the room, nibbling on the cookie.

INT. JAKE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Jake walks across his lavishly appointed bedroom and to a large mahogany armoire. He pulls the armoire doors open.

Inside are rows of handguns, polished and gleaming. He chooses one and sticks it in the waistband of his trousers, closing his perfectly tailored suit coat over it.

EXT. RUSSELL'S HOUSE - MORNING

Russell trots down the front steps of his house. He stops

at the bottom and starts searching himself, as if he's forgotten something.

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He turns back towards the house. Sylvia stands in the doorway, holding a shoulder holster and gun. Looking a little sheepish, Russell goes back to retrieve them.

INT. EMMA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Emma stands in front of her bedroom mirror, running her hand through her hair a few times, ending with a what's-the-use shrug.

Turning to the bed, she pulls a gun from under her pillow, puts it in a holster on her hip and walks out of the room.

EXT. GILLY'S HOUSE - MORNING

Gilly, still in his bathrobe, opens the front door and reaches for the newspaper. Looking up, he sees a dog tearing into a trash can at the curb. Gilly looks annoyed and goes back into the house.

He comes out with a gun in his hand and walks up behind the unsuspecting dog.

He pulls the trigger; water squirts from the gun. The dog yelps and runs down the street. Gilly blows on the barrel of the gun like a victorious gunfighter.

EXT. MT. COMFORT TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

Mt. Comfort, a small town in the Oregon mountains. The town square is lined with buildings, including the court house, a the fire station, and Olive's Diner.

The largest structure is the slightly rundown High Timber Hotel. A weathered awning with the words "The High Timber Hotel Mt. Comfort's Finest" in tattered gold leaf hangs over the front door.

INT. HIGH TIMBER HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

The door of Room 5D.

The door opens. Gilly gets halfway out before a woman's hand reaches out and pulls him back in.

INT. ROOM 5D - NIGHT

Gilly is pinned to the door by RACINE FOLEY- mid-twenties, ripe figure nearly spilling out of her dressing gown. She nuzzles his neck and tries to get his coat off.

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Gilly, meanwhile, is trying to keep his coat on and slip out the door.

RACINE

Oh, Gilly, come on. Don't go away mad like that.

GILLY

I just found out you talk in your sleep. What kind of mad did you have in mind?

RACINE

Look, it doesn't happen that often. Hardly at all, really. Mostly when I've been drinking. I'll be careful, I promise.

She keeps tugging at his clothes, playfully biting his ear.

GILLY

I don't really need to tell you how dangerous that is, do I? You're like a little time bomb, always about two tequila shooters from going off.

RACINE

I said I'd be careful. You don't have to leave right this minute, do you?

GILLY

(starting to pull away again)

Sorry, honey. Gotta go to work. A man's got to make a living.

RACINE

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

GILLY

All play and no work makes Jack miss a car payment.

Racine pushes him away good naturedly.

RACINE

All right, go on then.

He pauses for a moment on his way out the door.

GILLY
How about tomorrow?

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RACINE
Can't. How about Thursday? I think I
can slip out of choir practice early.

GILLY
Okay.

RACINE
I've been studying up on some more new
positions and stuff we can try.

GILLY
Okay, but I told you there's no way
I can sneak a chain hoist up here.
(kisses her)
Seeya, Racine. Be careful when you
leave.

Gilly opens the door and goes out.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gilly closes the door behind him. He straightens his
clothing takes a deep breath, and steps across the hall to
room 5J. He opens the door and goes in.

INT. ROOM 5J - NIGHT

A poker game is in progress with: LESTER SCOBEE - sixty,
tweedy and bow tied; AL BECKER - late twenties, burly
physique, halfhearted moustache; NEWTON MONROE - late
teens, flannel and jeans; MAYOR PIKE - a plump, matronly
woman in her mid-fifties.

GILLY
If this is the Gambler's Anonymous
meeting, I gotta tell you: you're
going about this thing all wrong.

They laugh and greet him warmly as he pulls up a chair.

Cut to several hours later. Gilly and Al are staring each
other down over a large pile of chips.

AL
Call. Whaddya got?

Gilly turns up his cards.

GILLY
Aces and eights.

Al grimaces and throws his cards down in disgust.

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LESTER
Dead man's hand.

NEWTON
What?

MAYOR PIKE
Aces and eights. That's what Wild
Bill Hickock was holding when he
got shot in the back.

GILLY
Yeah, but he won the hand, right?

Everyone laughs but Al, who continues scowling. There's a
break in the action as Gilly stacks his chips. The others
lean back in their seats or stand up to stretch.

LESTER
I want to put twenty down on the
Hernandez fight tomorrow night,
Gilly.

GILLY
So go ahead.

LESTER
I'll give it to you when we leave.

GILLY
Lester, what makes you think you're
still going to have twenty dollars
when we leave?

Lester tosses Gilly a twenty.

LESTER
Fair enough.

NEWTON
Any side bets, Gilly?

GILLY
Five to one it's a TKO, three to one

it doesn't go past the sixth. Eight to five Donald Trump's at ringside. Even money he's with a blonde.

LESTER

Didn't Donald Trump marry a brunette?

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GILLY

And your point is?

NEWTON

Give me five on the blonde.

GILLY

Five for Newton.

MAYOR PIKE

I'll take a piece of that.

GILLY

Five for the mayor.

Gilly picks up the cards and starts shuffling.

MAYOR PIKE

Hey, Al. I didn't see your girlfriend's name on the sign up sheet for the Miss Mount Comfort Pageant.

AL

(slightly drunk)

No, and you're not gonna. I'm not going to have her up there prancing around half naked.

MAYOR PIKE

But we canceled the swimsuit competition.

NEWTON

You did? Why?

LESTER

Cause Bunny Caldwell entered last year, remember?

MAYOR PIKE

Sixty-five if she's a day, and she goes goes walking up there in a bikini.

GILLY

Legs looked like a relief map of

Argentina.

MAYOR PIKE

Come on, Al. Let her be in the pageant.

NEWTON

It's a beauty contest, Al, not a strip club.

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Al gets up and heads for the bathroom.

AL

With guys like you in the audience,
it amounts to the same thing.

(over his shoulder)

And any guy who lays a hand on Racine
is going to be wearing his dick around
around his neck.

The cards spray out of Gilly's hands, flying all over the table.

GILLY

(covering)

Who got these things all greasy? No
more potato chips at the table, all
right?

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - NIGHT

A nondescript sedan parked on a downtown street, across from a coffee house.

EMMA

(protesting, from inside car)

Oh come on, Russell. Not in here.

RUSSELL

(from inside car)

Jeez, Emma. I'm rolling down the
window, all right?

EMMA

(from inside car)

Fine. I'll kick out the windshield.

INT. EMMA'S CAR - NIGHT

Emma is in the driver's seat; Russell sits next to her. He's firing up a fat cigar with a lighter shaped like a derringer, a small flame popping out of the barrel.

Russell puffs away. Emma fans at the smoke.

EMMA

God, is there any place you don't
smoke?

RUSSELL

Gas stations.

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Another car pulls up and parks in front of the coffee house. LENNY DOYLE - twenties, flashy clothes - gets out of the car.

RUSSELL

There he is.

EMMA

Nice of you to join us, Lenny.

RUSSELL

Man, that's a nice suit.

EMMA

Okay, so maybe crime pays a little.

Lenny takes a nervous look up and down the street before going to the coffee house door. He stops and takes another look around before going in.

EMMA

Why doesn't he just wear a sign?

A cell phone chirps; Russell answers it.

RUSSELL

Yeah. Where are they? Okay, stay with
them. At a distance, okay?

(to Emma)

They're right on schedule.

EMMA

Okay, Lenny. Go ahead and enjoy your
coffee.

(grimacing at the smoke)

When did Goodyear start making cigars?

EXT. LOS ANGELES CITY STREET - NIGHT

A luxury car moves through the same neighborhood as the coffee house.

INT. ARCH'S CAR - NIGHT

Crunch is in the driver's seat; Arch sits next to him. Jake is in the back.

JAKE

Let's make this thing quick with Lenny.
I'm going to be late for my meditation
class.

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CRUNCH

You ever try meditation, Arch?

ARCH

No, I've got a satellite dish.

JAKE

You should try it. It really centers
you, you know? There's a serenity
that -
(enraged, yelling out the window)
Try using the turn signal, you stupid
bastard! Yeah, I'm talking to you,
asshole!

ARCH

(wryly)

Yeah, I'm going to have to look into
that meditation thing, Jake.

CRUNCH

(enthusiastically)

Me, too!

INT. EMMA'S CAR- NIGHT

Russell is on his cell phone.

RUSSELL

Okay, now.
(clicks off phone, to Emma)
Let's go.

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - NIGHT

Emma and Russell get out of the car and start across the
street just as Lenny comes out of the coffee shop. Munching
on a bear claw, he saunters towards his car at the curb.

Emma calls out to him and flashes her badge.

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For the complete script please contact Jennifer Brooks at
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