

**Scene 1:**

An office, fairly luxurious. The camera pans around the room to show that it's in a shambles: everything is broken or knocked over. A wall (or under-the-desk) safe is open. A few bright green bills flutter around it. Pan up to the desk, where stands a framed photograph of a beautiful young woman. It's the only thing still standing in the room – get it? We hear the sound of a door closing, hurried footsteps going away, getting fainter. Suddenly, a bloody hand reaches up over the desk, trying to reach the photograph, but failing. Cut to:

**Scene 2:**

A figure in a long dark coat and broad-brimmed hat comes out a door, turns and hurries down the dark street into the night.

Opening credits.

**Scene 3:**

A small house in a suburb. (Your house will do nicely.) A tall man in a long coat and hat (BENNIE) comes up to the door. (We see him from the back.) He rings the bell. A MAN answers. He looks scared, backs away. BENNIE comes in after him, closes the door behind him.

MAN

Roemer sent you? (BENNIE just nods, solemnly, almost sadly.)

MAN

To retrieve...? (BENNIE nods again, interrupting him.)

MAN

I...I don't have it anymore. (Fearful, yet defiant. BENNIE advances slightly towards him; he backs away. This should all be done very subtly. The MAN backs a little more, turns halfway, walks back to the kitchen. BENNIE follows. Finally says...)

Do you have\*anything\*?

MAN (As if relieved, hopeful. He was resigned, now he suddenly thinks he might have a chance...)

Well, yeah. Here. (He turns his back to BENNIE, reaches for a drawer. As he touches it, BENNIE suddenly, with smooth, economical motion, reaches up and snaps the MAN's neck with powerful hands. The MAN slumps; BENNIE slowly, gently lowers him to the floor. BENNIE opens the drawer, looks in, shrugs, takes out a small package, closes the drawer, turns to leave. Notices something at his feet. It's a dog bowl. It's empty. **He looks around, then sniffs, listens. A dog barks in the back yard.** BENNIE comes back down the hall, opens the door to one of the rooms. The dog is in there, looking a little scared. BENNIE squats down; the dog comes to him, and BENNIE pets it, talks to it. Then he looks at his watch, and regretfully gets up to go. He's walking down the hall, and suddenly stops, looks back, turns and goes back into the kitchen. He looks around, past

the slumped body of the MAN, and finds what he's looking for: a bag of dog food. He fills the bowl, and the water bowl at the sink. He looks sadly at the dog once more, then walks down the hall and out.)

**Scene 4:**

The office. At a desk sits a middle-aged, grey-haired but formidable looking man. On his lap sits FELICIA, a beautiful young woman. They're looking at a photo album, and a picture of her in a frame on the desk – maybe there's wrapping paper on the desk, as if she just gave him the picture as a present. He strokes her hair

**Scene 4A:**

BENNIE comes down a hallway, to a door. Outside the door lounge two GOONS, big men like BENNIE, in suits and ties. They're chewing gum. BENNIE goes to the door; they look at him warningly, as if they aren't sure he's supposed to go in, but BENNIE is. He knocks at the door.

**Scene 4. Cont.:**

A knock at the door. ROEMER and FELICIA look up.

ROEMER:  
Yeah?

BENNIE (outside)  
It's me.

ROEMER  
Come on in. (BENNIE comes in. Sees FELICIA, nods to her; she nods back..)  
Hey. (BENNIE nods.) It's taken care of?

BENNIE  
Yeah.

[ROEMER:

Good boy. Have a bonus. (He takes an envelope from his desk, or his vest, and hands it to BENNIE, who is rummaging in his pockets for the package, and takes the envelope in his mouth. He finds the package, takes it out, holds it out to ROEMER, takes the envelope from his mouth.)

Just put it in the safe. (BENNIE goes to the safe, dials the combination, opens it, puts the object from the MAN's house in. Before he can close it, FELICIA looks at her watch, jumps up, smooths herself.)

FELICIA  
I've got to roam.

ROEMER

OK. I'll see you tonight, then. (They kiss quickly, she leaves [by the side door? And BENNIE looks inquisitively at the door.] ROEMER turns his attention to BENNIE, and to the door.) Just had it put in. Look in there (points to envelope, which BENNIE is still holding. BENNIE opens the envelope, takes out a key.) Just for you and her.]

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ROEMER:

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FELICIA

I've got to roam.

ROEMER

OK. I'll see you tonight, then. (They kiss quickly, she leaves.)

**Scene 4B:**

FELICIA comes out the door. The GOONS look at her, follow her with their eyes.

**Scene 4 (cont.)**

(ROEMER turns his attention to BENNIE.)

Good boy. Have a bonus. (He takes an envelope from the safe. BENNIE leans down and takes it in his mouth, straightens up, takes it out. [Maybe he's patting his pockets for cigarettes, and after he finds them, or ROEMER offers him one, and a light, he stands there smoking for a moment.]

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ROEMER sits looking towards the door after the departed FELICIA. BENNIE's tongue is hanging out, but he realizes and pulls it back in as ROEMER turns.)

ROEMER: (Admiringly, sort of amazed.)

She's....(looking for an adjective)

BENNIE:

(Agreeing with his boss, but not just a yes-man.) Yeah. (He has nothing more to say; ROEMER snaps out of his reverie.)

I'll see you later. (BENNIE nods, leaves. ROEMER is left looking at the picture of FELICIA, smiling.)

**Scene 5:**

BENNIE's apartment. He's sitting at the kitchen table, eating some sort of beef stew out of a bowl; the can sits next to him. Knock at the door. It's FELICIA; she comes in. She looks at what he's eating, picks up the can.

FELICIA

Jeez, you eat this crap? You'll eat anything. (He nods, shrugs.) You got anything else? (He opens a cabinet, where there are a lot of cans. She looks through them, carefully, takes a can of tuna, opens it, takes a bite or two. Then starts rubbing against him...)

**Scene 6:**

The office again. Some time has passed. ROEMER stands by the window. He looks sloppy, like he's been up all night. On the speakerphone on the desk, the sound of FELICIA's outgoing voicemail message: "can't come to the phone right now..." Something's bothering him. He turns to the desk, sits in his soft leather desk chair, and picks up a picture of FELICIA looks at it with sadness and anger, puts it down. Picks up the phone and dials...

**Scene 7:**

A bedroom. Faint sound of a barking dog. BENNIE and FELICIA are in bed. She's lying on her side, turned away from him, her arms straight out; he's awake, listening to the dog, staring towards the window from which the sound is coming, away from her. She wakes up, looks back at him. "Roll over," she says, and he complies, slipping his arm under her to cuddle her. The phone rings. BENNIE answers it.

BENNIE

Yeah? (He sits up, at attention.) OK. I'll be over as fast as I can. (He gets out of bed. She notices, looks at him questioningly.)

FELICIA

Stay.

BENNIE

It's Roemer. I've got to go. (He starts getting dressed.) You should, too.

FELICIA

(She sits up, sniffs under her own arms.) I should clean up. (sleepily) What time is it? (looks at clock at bedside, suddenly awake and panicked.) Oh shit!

BENNIE

What?

FELICIA

I was supposed to meet him...(she's looking at her cell phone.) He's been calling me...

BENNIE

(Starting to understand, hurrying her, pretty much dressed by now, putting on his own hat and coat, goes to closet and gets another one.) Here, wear this out the door. I'll go out the back.

FELICIA

(Suddenly alert, gets up, putting on dress, takes hat, wrinkles nose at the smell.) You think someone's watching? (BENNIE nods.)

**Scene 8:**

ROEMER's office. BENNIE comes in.[Through the side door?] The lights are dim. BENNIE can barely make out ROEMER in the dark. He looks ghastly.

ROEMER:

Sit. (BENNIE does.)

(Devastated.) She didn't come back. She's not answering the phone.

BENNIE:

You think something happened to her?

ROEMER: (Stands up, terribly. Hisses through his teeth.)

She's fucking someone else! (BENNIE just looks shocked.)

BENNIE:

How do you...

ROEMER: (Just smiles, half crazed.)

I know. It's not the first time. Goddam minx. (He turns, clenches hands, other violent gestures. Then calms down. Trustingly.)

I want you to find her. Find **him**.

BENNIE:

And...(implied "And kill him?")

ROEMER:

(Now commanding.) No, just tell me who it is, where they are. (Pause, explaining, evil smile.) I want to think about what I'm going to do to them.

BENNIE nods. Leaves. (By side door?)

**Scene 9:**

Early morning. A street. A figure in a long dark coat and hat walks along. Now we see the figure from behind, from the POV of someone following. Pull back to see that the person following is also in a long dark coat and hat. Second figure is overtaking first, catching up. First figure stops at a light, second figure catches up. Reverse shot to show them from the front. It's FELICIA and BENNIE has been following her.

BENNIE:

(Under breath, panting slightly from walking fast to keep up with her.) He knows.

FELICIA:

About us?

BENNIE:

About you. Not me yet. (The light changes, FELICIA hurries forward, BENNIE follows. She doesn't turn around. They're trying not to be associated with one another.)

FELICIA:

How do you know? (She ducks into an alleyway. He follows. It's very narrow.)

BENNIE:

He told me to find out who the guy is.

FELICIA: (thinking furiously.)

BENNIE:

He called you a minx. (She's not really listening.) Isn't that a kind of cat?

FELICIA: (looks at him pityingly.)

That's a \*lynx\*. You're so...(cuts herself short.)

OK. So there must be somebody he's mad at, wants an excuse to get rid of. You tell him that's who it is. He'll have you...wait - I could say he forced me, or he blackmailed me, and then he'd \*definitely\* have you...

BENNIE:

Oh no. It doesn't work that way. In this business, you can't start fights for no reason. The guy would have friends, they'd want payback. You can't have effects without causes. There's no slack for that. And if he ever found out I'd lied...

FELICIA:

That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard. You're just not smart enough to lie.

BENNIE:

(Looks wounded, but replies anyway.)

Well, even if we did that, what would be \*your\* excuse?

FELICIA:

I'd land on my feet.

BENNIE:

We should just tell him the truth. He likes us. He loves us. We'd beg for his mercy.

FELICIA

You can beg. I don't beg. (BENNIE is starting to turn away, she grabs his sleeve.) He's not God. He's not our father. Why should we let him judge us? (Pause.)

BENNIE

(Still has the same thought in his mind, he's decided, for himself at least.) We'll tell him we'll do anything he wants.

FELICIA

We already do. (BENNIE shrugs, resigned. He turns away from her, walks out of the alley. She's left, looking after him, not sure what he's going to do, the wheels turning in her mind.)

**Scene 10:**

ROEMER's Office. ROEMER is staring at BENNIE, who's just told him.

ROEMER:

You...(He slowly comes around desk to BENNIE.) You...(He punches BENNIE in the face, knees him in the groin. [Hits him with rolled-up newspaper?] BENNIE doubles over, goes down. ROEMER kicks him, and BENNIE lies there, whimpering slightly. ROEMER turns to the desk, maybe he's going to get a gun to finish BENNIE off? BENNIE rises to his knees, basically crying...)

BENNIE:

Boss, I'm so fucking sorry, I'll do anything...

ROEMER:

(Kneels next to him, puts his arm around him. It's half embrace, half headlock. He pats him on the head.) It's OK. It's OK. It's not your fault. That goddamn slut played us both for fools. But we'll show her, won't we? (He turns BENNIE's face towards his, looks right into his eyes.) You'll do this for me, won't you? Won't you? (BENNIE nods.)

Scene 11:

BENNIE's apartment. BENNIE sits in a chair, thinking. Sound of rain outside. Then he gets up. He rehearses the move that he used on the MAN in Scene 3, suddenly striking from behind. His phone rings.

BENNIE

Yeah. I'm here. Come on up, I'll tell you what happened. (He rehearses the move again. Knock at the door, and he goes to it and opens it. It's FELICIA, in BENNIE's hat and coat, wet and not happy about it.) Let me help you with that coat. (He goes behind her, as if to take off the coat, but really is about to do the move. Before he can, FELICIA stomps on his foot, wheels around, scratching his face with her nails. He howls in pain; she grabs his tie and pulls him down with it. He draws a small pistol from his ankle, but she has one concealed too. They are very close together, each with a pistol pointed at the other; she's still holding onto the end of his tie. He's panting, again.)

FELICIA

Well, I guess you talked to him! I guess he told you to...

BENNIE

How did you know?

FELICIA

He told me the same thing. (Pause, as this sinks in.) After I told him you took me by force. (BENNIE is aghast.)

BENNIE

How did you know it wasn't my own idea?

FELICIA

You'd never have come up with that yourself. (They stare at each other, at each other's guns. Actually, if they're kept close by her holding onto his tie like a leash, they could be using knives, if you prefer. But there are guns in the next scene, so maybe we might as well bring them out now...though in the next scene, ROEMER could have a gun, while the other weapon was a knife. Maybe BENNIE should do all his killing with a knife.) I'm not afraid of you. Maybe you've killed people, but I don't think you could kill me.

BENNIE

I don't know if you've killed anyone...but I believe you could kill me.

FELICIA

Or..(she implies with her eyes, "him".)





**Scene 12:**

Figure in trenchcoat and hat comes up to ROEMER's office. GUARDS look with slight surprise, then less respect. It's BENNIE. He stares them down. He enters. ROEMER looks up.

BENNIE

I did it. (ROEMER looks at him hard, at his scratched face, nods, considers.)

ROEMER

Where is she?

BENNIE

My place. [Her place? Does this make sense? Would she have a place, or live with Roemer? Not a big deal, really.]

ROEMER (slowly, with great menace)

Really?

BENNIE

What?

ROEMER

Did you really do it?

BENNIE

Yes.

ROEMER

No lie? You're not...protecting yourself? Protecting her? (He's moving around to the other side of the desk.)

BENNIE (scared, of course. But not stammering.)

No, boss.

ROEMER (Whistles loudly. The two GUARDS come in. They look puzzled, but obedient.)

Bennie's got a little problem we need to help him out with. I want you to go over to his place. Make sure it's OK. (ROEMER is putting his arm around BENNIE, in a great show of solidarity, but he's looking at BENNIE, to see if he's nervous. BENNIE's face doesn't betray any emotion. The GUARDS nod, and leave. **As soon as they do, ROEMER uses the arm to slam BENNIE against the desk, or the wall.**) Did you really??!! (Hits him again.) Come on, you son of a bitch, did you really do it? (BENNIE is struggling to speak, but ROEMER keeps hitting him.)

ROEMER

You really killed her.

BENNIE

Yeah.

ROEMER (moving behind him)

Tell me how. Show me.

BENNIE (Is he uncomfortable saying it...or having trouble making it up?)

I...(starting to raise hands..)

ROEMER (Chops him from behind.)

Like this? (BENNIE goes down.) One blow, so she wouldn't suffer? (Throws BENNIE down, kneels on his chest, gets him by the throat.) Or like this? So it took a while? (Finally reaches into his pocket, brings out a revolver, cocks it, points it right between BENNIE's eyes.) Maybe this way? (Crescendo.) TO FINISH HER OFF? (His finger's on the trigger...)

BENNIE

Boss, I...(desperate!) Boss, YOU TOLD ME TO!

ROEMER

I didn't tell you to \*FUCK\* her! She was mine, and one way or another, you took her away from me! If you could have shown just a LITTLE self-restraint, just a LITTLE loyalty, she'd be alive! And so would you!

BENNIE (He's squeezing his eyes together against the noise of the shot that he knows is coming, and the pain...)

She..she's alive...

ROEMER (pulls back gun slightly..)

What!!?

BENNIE

I didn't really...

ROEMER

You're lying!

BENNIE

No, it's true, I...she talked me...

ROEMER

Then you were lying before! YOU WERE LYING? TO ME? (Points gun again, ready to fire...) You disobeyed...ME??

BENNIE

What could I have..

ROEMER

YOU COULD HAVE NOT FUCKED HER IN THE FIRST PLACE!! But once you did that, you were trapped. You had to lie, or you had to kill. At this point, I really don't know which one you did, and I don't care. For either one, you'd have to die. (Pause.) It's a pity you won't have much time to appreciate this lesson.

(A gun appears behind ROEMER's head.)

VOICE (FELICIA)

Longer than you, Roemer. (ROEMER freezes, looks behind him.)

Drop it. (ROEMER does.)

Now get up. (ROEMER does.)

BENNIE

You came back. (He's grateful, touched, this means something to him.)

FELICIA

Don't get all mushy, Bennie. I just realized that your life savings wasn't going to last me very long. The contents of the safe here, on the other hand...And when you sent away your guard dogs...

ROEMER

You bitch. So that's what it's about then? Just the money? That's what you fuck for?

FELICIA

It depends. (looking towards BENNIE.) Sometimes I fuck because I want to, but I'm glad for the money. (looking towards ROEMER) Sometimes I fuck because I have to, and then I \*deserve\* the money.

ROEMER

You're a whore who fucks for money.

FELICIA

And you kill for money. What does that make you? Better? If \*I\* killed for money, would that make me worthy of respect? OK, maybe I will. (Pause, she moves slightly to get them both in her sights.) Roemer, you thought it would be interesting to pit us against one another and see who would survive. I think I'll do the same thing. So here it goes. Whichever of you gets to the safe first, and opens it, and gives me what's inside, lives. Whoever doesn't...(they don't move.) I see you're still figuring this out. I'll bet Bennie's wondering, if I win, maybe I can still have \*her\*. And I'll bet Roemer's thinking, if I can stop Bennie, maybe I can somehow get the gun away from her, and keep my money. (shakes head.) Not going to happen, guys. The best you can hope for is to stay alive. But that's not bad, considering....Now come on. Come on. Who's going to open the safe? Come on! This is where you show little delicate feminine me who's bigger and tougher! Show me who's the man! Who's the master? Who's the top dog?

Long pause. At last, BENNIE moves slowly towards the safe. As soon as his hand is on it, ROEMER leaps on him. Prolonged fight. FELICIA watches, at first gleefully cheering them on, then dispassionate, just wanting someone to win. Finally, BENNIE slugs ROEMER hard, puts him down. He drags himself back to the safe, opens it, then collapses on the floor. FELICIA comes over next to him, transfers gun to left hand, begins grabbing wads of bills and putting in pockets of trenchcoat. As she's distracted, ROEMER crawls over to gun on floor. BENNIE sees. She realizes, turns, and shoots him before he can get the gun. She goes on grabbing money. BENNIE crawls over towards ROEMER, in disbelief.)

BENNIE (to FELICIA)  
You...you...

FELICIA  
Yeah, well, he was a jerk to both of us. Maybe you can take over now.

BENNIE  
No. I couldn't. Not without...(suddenly, he grabs the gun. FELICIA looks resigned.)

FELICIA  
Come on, Bennie, you've been loyal enough. You really don't have to do this. (BENNIE is still reaching for, pointing the gun.) Bennie, don't make me do this. Him I wanted to get for a long time. Payback. You, I've got nothing against. So just...(BENNIE is still reaching for gun.) Come on, don't be a .... Heel! (But BENNIE doesn't. He reaches for gun, and FELICIA shoots him. Knocking at the door, voices of GUARDS. "Hey, boss!" GUARDS come rushing in. Look around. Lean over desk, to see bodies of ROEMER and BENNIE. Mild exclamations. While they are distracted, FELICIA, over at wall, slips out door. It slams behind her. GUARDS look back in puzzlement. Once more, shot of room, with only picture of FELICIA standing.)

[Remember, dogs and cats see only in black and white.....don't they?]

