

JEWEL OF ORLEANS

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - sunrise

EXT. NOLA FRENCH QUARTER - NIGHT

MICK, 40's, is on a stakeout sitting in the passenger's seat of an undercover car. He's a ruggedly handsome NOLA detective, wearing jeans and a T-shirt that has a picture of a local Blues Man on the front of it.

SHAUNA, 30's, behind the wheel, is his pretty female detective partner, who is obviously head over heels for him.

Mick is staring through a pair of binoculars looking up at a balcony where French doors are opened.

SHAUNA
Did you tell her?

MICK
Not yet.

SHAUNA
Are you?

MICK
I think she knows already.

SHAUNA
Do you regret it?

Mick doesn't want to answer that. Then, a man's shadow crosses the doors.

MICK
They're inside.

The answer she's looking for will have to wait.

MICK (CONT'D)
Let's see if this plays out the way
it's supposed to.

SHAUNA
Should we go in?

MICK
I should. You should wait here
until I tell you to call for
backup.

Mick slides out of the car and heads for the entrance to the corridor. He reaches for his gun.

INT. CORRIDOR - SAME

Mick quietly walks through the corridor, gun in hand.

An OLDER LADY is coming down the stairs and sees the gun. She scurries out of the building passing Shauna who is sneaking in behind him.

INT. STAIRS / HALLWAY - SAME

Mick climbs the staircase and knocks on the first door by the stairs.

JIMMY MORONI, 40's, opens the door expecting someone else. He's a New Orleans Upscale-Mafia-Gangster.

JIMMY

What the....

Mick enters the apartment without being invited in.

LENNE, late 20's, is there nervously observing with wild, distrusting eyes.

LENNE

What's he doing here?

JIMMY

That's a good question.

Lenne is about to get up.

MICK

Don't even think about it, Lenne.

Lenne settles back down.

JIMMY

Want a cup of coffee, Mick?

MICK

Cut the shit, Maroni. Where is it?

JIMMY

Where is what?

MICK

Don't jerk me around, Jimmy.

JIMMY

You got a search warrant?

Lenne starts to reach under the sofa until Shauna bursts in.

SHAUNA

Freeze!

Everyone turns to Shauna, who is standing in the entrance. Mick knows the plan is messed up now.

Lenne dashes out past Shauna and she trips him down the stairs. His gun accidentally goes off and its bullet hits Shauna.

Lenne tumbles all the way down the staircase and busts his head on the concrete floor at the bottom.

Mick turns to Shauna, realizing she's been shot. Blood seeps through her fingers while she tries to cover a hole in her gut.

MICK

Shauna!

Shauna drops to her knees. Mick goes to her and helps her lie down on the floor.

MICK (CONT'D)

Hold on, Baby.

SHAUNA

I have been holding on... but I guess now it's time to let go.

Mick yells at Jimmy.

MICK (CONT'D)

Call 911!

Jimmy dials 911.

JIMMY

We need a couple ambulances over here.

Mick knows he is losing Shauna by how much blood she is loosing.

MICK (CONT'D)

Shauna, why didn't you listen to me and stay put?

SHAUNA

I was tired of always waiting in the car while you get to do the fun stuff.

MICK

You think this is fun?

SHAUNA

It's all part of it, right? Now you don't have to tell your wife about us.

Mick knows this is all his fault.

SHAUNA (CONT'D)

Everything happens for a reason, right?

Shauna closes her eyes. Mick realizes she's gone.

LATER

More Police Officers are on the scene with the Paramedics.

From inside the apartment, Mick watches helplessly as Shauna's covered body is taken away on a stretcher.

Mick steps up to the window to watch as they load the body into one ambulance.

Then, he looks over at Lenne, who is unconscious on another stretcher as they load him into the other ambulance.

Jimmy steps up to Mick, knowing he's gonna take the fall.

JIMMY

Now, was all this really necessary?

Mick punches Jimmy in his jaw, sending him backwards on the floor.

While Jimmy is down, he glances under the couch where the briefcase is stashed. That's what Lenne must have been reaching for.

Mick notices Jimmy looking under the sofa. So, he looks too and drags out the briefcase.

Mick opens it and they are both surprised to find several PINTS OF BLOOD inside it.

MICK

What the hell...

JIMMY

That's not what I thought was in that briefcase!

MICK

Does my brother know about this?

JIMMY

No, that's why we were here instead of there. Lenne said he needed my help with something, in exchange, he would make it worth my while.

Mick picks up one of the pints of blood.

MICK

What does he think you are, a freakin vampire?

JIMMY

Do I need to call my lawyer?

MICK

You should have him on speed dial by now. But, you better call your boss first and tell him you won't be in for work for a while.

Jimmy dreads that phone call.

JIMMY

I'd be better off in jail.

MICK

Suit yourself.

EXT. APARTMENTS / QUARTER / STREET - LATER

Jimmy gets handcuffed and read his rights by another OFFICER.

OFFICER

You have the right to remain silent...

JIMMY

Yada Yada Yada... I know the drill.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS, 50's, a fit and handsome black man, approaches MICK.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

I'm sorry about Shauna?

Mick has been trying not to break down in front of his fellow officers.

MICK

This was all my fault.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Glad you realize that. Broussard, what the hell were you doing without proper backup? Don't answer that. I think you need to take a long vacation.

MICK

I've had my eye on Lenne for a while. He's been messing around with some heavy hitters.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Doesn't he work for your brother?

MICK

Since he was sixteen. Toulouse practically raised him. But, this time, I think my brother's hands are clean on this deal.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
Perhaps you are bias.

MICK
Toulouse and I may have had the
same Daddy, but we were never
family.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
Blood is blood.

MICK
Speaking of blood... We need to get
this logged in a tested.

Mick hands over the briefcase. Captain peeks inside.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
This is a first.

MICK
Something tells me it's not the
last.

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - DAY

A force of powerful currents wash against the river bank.
A tug boat pushes a ship up the mighty Mississippi River to
the Port of Orleans. A Cruise ship shares the water with
other tourist boats docked near the French Quarter.

The River Boat Casino is also docked at the port and
Gamblers are exiting that have been at it all night long.

INT. RIVER BOAT CASINO - SAME

Inside the RIVERBOAT CASINO under dim neon lights, high
rollers, locals and tourists, some draped in Mardi Gras
beads are still at it. Dice, cards, slot machines are busy
at work. Time doesn't matter.

Jimmy is out of jail, walking through the ship to check on
things. He's wearing a crisp white dress shirt, dress pants
and polished black shoes. He stops by a mixed group of
players sitting at a Roulette Table. He's grinning, arms
spread out to welcome himself like a true wanna-be gangster.

JIMMY
Is our crew treating y'all right?

Gamblers acknowledge him out of courtesy because they know
the boss sent him over.

GAMBLER
As always? Where's the man so I
can personally thank him before we
go deposit our loot.

JIMMY

You know Toulouse disappears when
the sun comes up.

Everyone chuckles, knowing it's true. Jimmy walks away and
heads to down the corridor.

INT. TOULOUSE'S OFFICE - SAME

TOULOUSE LEFLURR, 40's, is the boss man with cruel good
looks, a rough New Orleans accent, dressed in black, with a
large gator tooth on a silver chain around his neck. He is
also Mick's half-brother. They had the same father, but
different mothers.

Toulouse is sitting at a table in a small back room counting
cash. Stacks of bills are lined up in sections on the table
next to a bottle of chilled moonshine.

MRS. LEMACHE, 60's, tough as nails, is the accountant
keeping record of the money in a black book.

Lenne is parked in a wheelchair and doesn't seem to be there
mentally anymore. He just stares at nothing in particular.

Jimmy enters. Toulouse glances up to see who came in, then
goes back to counting.

JIMMY

The crowd was lively tonight.

TOULOUSE

It didn't take you long to get back
in the swing of things.

JIMMY

Thanks for giving me back my job.

TOULOUSE

I'm sure my Mother would want it
that way. She always liked you.

JIMMY

How is your Mother?

Toulouse lays out the last stack of bills.

TOULOUSE

She has her moments. Just a few
left.

JIMMY

I'm sorry to hear that.

Jimmy glances at Lenne.

JIMMY

The doctors couldn't do nothing
else for him?

TOULOUSE

They said he could come out of it one day, but not to get our hopes up too high. I'm just still wondering why he went to you instead of me.

JIMMY

I guess we may never know now, unless he snaps out of it.

Toulouse removes a stack of bills off the top and waves them at Mrs. Lemache so she can take notes. Then he hands the bills to Jimmy.

TOULOUSE

I want you to take Jewel to get her nails done.

Jimmy stops in disbelief.

JIMMY

You want me to take Jewel to the nail parlor!!!

TOULOUSE

I need to get her off the boat for a few hours while I tend to some other personal matters.

Toulouse doesn't elaborate and Jimmy don't ask.

JIMMY

Oh sure thing.

Jimmy puts the bills in his coat jacket.

EXT. FISHING DOCK - MORNING

A brand new pick-up truck travels through a little fishing community bordering the Lake.

INT. TRUCK - EARLY MORNING

MICK BROUSARD, 30's, drives the truck wearing jeans, a white tight t-shirt exposing a toned body and tats. He's quite handsome beneath the rugged, just woke up, living a tough life.

EXT. FISHING DOCK - SAME

The levee is busy with crew boats loading and unloading WORKERS from the rigs offshore. Commercial fishing boats are docked nearby. Seafood trucks are parked with WORKERS loading up for the day.

MICK's truck cruises to the wharf.

An oyster FISHERMAN is shoveling oysters into burlap sacks on the boat deck while his DECK HAND loads the sacks into a refrigerated truck. They both glance at MICK as he slides out of the truck.

On his way to the docks, MICK digs his wallet out his pants and counts cash.

Two young BOYS sitting in their daddy's old pick-up truck are watching the boats coming in.

MICK approaches the Fishermen.

FISHERMAN
Still shucking oysters?

MICK
My favorite past time these days.
Can you spare two sacks?

While the oyster man is filling sacks for MICK, they notice a crowd gathering by the commercial fishing boat at the end of the docks.

The boys slip out of their daddy's truck and scurry towards the crowd.

MICK notices the crowd gathering.

EXT. FISHING BOAT - SAME

A DEAD WOMAN is tangled in the shrimp net.

EXT. FISHING DOCK - SAME

One of the boys runs past Mick to spread the word.

BOY
It's a dead lady in the fishing
net!

MICK looks over at the scene as a New Orleans Police Car skids to a halt.

FISHERMAN
She probably fell off Bayou Blue
last night.

MICK glances out towards the water.

MICK
Or got thrown off.

FISHERMAN
Aren't you gonna go check it out?

MICK
I'm still on vacation.

FISHERMAN

When they gonna reistate you?

MICK

If I'm lucky, they won't.

Mick throws a sack over his shoulder. The fisherman gets the other one. They sling the oyster sacks into the back of the truck.

THUNDER ROARS in the distant. They look up at the black sky as rain clouds move in.

MICK (CONT'D)

Stop by Pop's place for a cold one
to wait out the rain.

MICK slides into his truck and drives slowly past the crowd, fighting the urge to get out and check it out. He decides to just drive on.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF THE FRENCH QUARTER - LATER DAY

MICK's truck cruises through the Quarter. He passes a flock of costumed revelers staggering down the sidewalk. They shout as he drives by.

EXT. POP'S RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - DAY - RAIN

Two different rugged FISHERMEN, wearing shrimp boots, trying to escape the rain, cross the street, entering a door under a neon sign that reads, "POP'S RAW OYSTER LOUNGE."

These two fishermen are RODNEY and BUCK.

MICK parks his truck behind the lounge. He heaves one oyster sack and heads for the back entrance under a stairway that leads to an apartment -- his temporary home.

INT. POP'S RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - SAME

In a dim lit oyster bar, a silent piano sits in the corner under a neon beer sign.

A TV is suspended at the end of the bar rebroadcasting the morning news about the coming Mardi Gras Season.

There are a few early morning BOOZERS hanging out, eyes on the TV, waiting for a football game.

POPS - 70's, wears a clean white apron as he wipes down the bar and speaks with a raspy New Orleans accent. He picks up a tip.

POPS

Another day, another dollar.

MICK makes his way behind the bar and dumps the oysters into a big stainless steel sink.

MICK

Don't worry, Pops. It's still early yet. Business will pick up during carnival.

POPS

Don't count your gators 'fore they hatch. Everybody's gonna be on Bourbon.

MICK

Only a fool would find themselves in the middle of that foolishness unless they had to be. This year looks like I don't have to be.

POPS

Captain Williams called.

MICK rinses the oysters, wishing that wasn't true.

POPS (CONT'D)

He said he'd stop by.

MICK is still not commenting, though a hundred things might as well be going through his mind at once.

WE PAN ALONG WALL where old photos hang; some of a younger MICK in a rookie uniform. Some of a younger Pops and MICK with people at parties and suited men, who look like associates of New Orleans Gangsters. There is a photo when MICK was sworn in.

Next to it is a wedding photo of MICK with his ex-wife, MONIQUE.

There is another photo of MICK holding a little girl. There are other photos of the little girl at different stages of her life. Then a photo of the little girl at her High School Graduation. This is CHERIE. We will meet her later.

Pops notices MICK opening a beer and chug down half of it.

Mick takes down a clean apron from a nail hook and slips into it. Then, he reaches for his oyster knife and wipes it on a towel.

CLOSE ON the rugged oyster knife chiseling into a hard oyster shell. The shell separates. A plump, juicy raw oyster jiggles. MICK slurps it down.

MICK (CONT'D)

Good and salty.

Rodney and Buck are chatting with a man at a table, then make their way to the bar.

RODNEY

Hey, Serge, give us a beer and
shuck us a couple dozen.

MICK slides over two cold beers.

MICK

Y'all catch any shrimp?

RODNEY

A few pounds. But we heard Ricky
caught a dead stripper.

Everybody looks at Rodney for more information.

RODNEY (CONT'D)

They said she was one of the Bayou
Blue girls.

Mick had already figured that out.

EXT. RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - SAME

MERCEDES TIRES splash into a deep puddle. Men's black shiny
dress shoes step out the driver's side. The passenger's
door opens and a curvy leg steps out.

INT. RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - SAME

One of the local bar hounds called WILLIE, decides to put in
his two cents from an earlier thought.

WILLIE

I think MICK's more content
shucking oysters than he was
arresting people.

MICK

Shucking keeps my mind off my
problems.

MICK slides the dozen oysters to Rodney and Buck.

RODNEY

(incredulous)

What kinda problems you got now,
Serge?

Daylight spills into the bar. MICK looks up at the opened
door. Pops and Rodney turn to look, too.

Jimmy Maroni steps in grinning, arms spread out to welcome
himself as he usually does.

MICK

You're looking at one of 'em.

JIMMY
How's it going, Boys?

MICK
What could possibly bring you in
here, Jimmy?

A WOMAN draped in a man's hooded raincoat, steps into the light. Jimmy turns to the mystery woman.

JIMMY
Jewel had to use the ladies room if
y'all don't mind.

Mick observes shiny painted fingernails loosening the belt on the raincoat and full painted lips under the shadow of the hood.

Jimmy helps Jewel pull off the wet jacket. The breathtaking beauty shakes out her long brown hair.

Mick soaks in her shapely figure wrapped in a cream linen dress exposed against the light outside. Her green eyes find Mick's who seems to recognize her and he accidentally cuts himself on the oyster shell.

MICK
(under breath)
Awe damn!

JEWEL ROUX, late 20s, is Toulouse's lady, who has a mind of her own and a body to die for. She is Creole from the bayou, who Toulouse met when she as only sixteen. Her parents were killed during a hurricane and Toulouse took her under his wing and hasn't let her fly away since. But, he usually has her close by at all times. So, this is unusual that she's out and about without him. Mick is aware of her back story, though he's never met her in person until that moment.

Mick wipes blood onto a white towel.

JIMMY
JEWEL, this is MICK Broussard. The
one who changed the course of life.

MICK
I hope for the better.

The FISHERMEN eye JEWEL more cautiously. JEWEL brings Mick's attention back to his injured hand.

JEWEL
You better put something on that
before it gets infected?

Mick opens a bottle of tequila and pours it over the wound. JEWEL watches as he wraps his hand with a clean bar towel.

MICK

Good as new.

MICK (CONT'D)

The ladies room is down the hall.

JEWEL drapes her wet raincoat around a barstool then sashays down the corridor.

POPS

How did you get your dirty paws on that one?

JIMMY

I guess I hadn't been punished enough.

Pops watches Jimmy brush lent off his new sporty slacks.

POPS

You look all spiffy for someone who's just spent a few months in the rat hole.

JIMMY

Thanks, Pops. How about a scotch on the rocks.

Mick watches Jimmy's reflection in the mirror behind the whisky bottles as Pops pours the Scotch.

MICK

What are y'all doing on this side of town, Jimmy?

JIMMY

The lady had to get her nails done down the street. So, I thought I'd pop in and invite you to the show.

MICK

What show?

JIMMY

The one your daughter will soon be starring in.

Jimmy knows he has really done it now when Mick reaches over the bar and grabs Jimmy's crisp collar.

MICK

If y'all even think about corrupting my daughter.

JIMMY

I'm just letting you know in case you didn't.

JEWEL interrupts.

JEWEL
S'cuse me, Gentlemen. Your plumbing
is having problems.

Mick releases Jimmy's collar and they turn to JEWEL, who has
snuck up on their conversation.

Pops steps up.

POPS
That happens when it rains a lot.

JEWEL
Since Jimmy hasn't offered to buy
me a drink, I guess I will have to
sweet talk MICK for one.

MICK
Sure. What do you like?

JEWEL
Something fearless?

MICK reluctantly fixes JEWEL a drink.

JEWEL
So, is it true that you are
Toulouse's brother?

MICK
Half-brother.

JEWEL
I've heard a lot about you.

MICK
Is that right?

JEWEL
Y'all don't seem anything a like.

MICK
You're right about that. He's a
criminal and I'm a cop. Can't be
more different than that.

JEWEL
Or more alike.

They look at one another, knowingly. Mick knows he hasn't
always be an honest cop, or honest husband. But, for the
most part, he is the good guy in the family.

Jimmy doesn't like the way JEWEL is looking at MICK.

JIMMY
Toulouse is waiting.

Jimmy places his hand on JEWEL's back, facing her towards the door.

JEWEL, clearly agitated by Jimmy's touch, is about to head out the door when MICK grabs JEWEL's raincoat.

MICK
JEWEL! Your coat!

MICK walks around the bar and helps her into the raincoat.

JEWEL
You're a real gentleman, aren't you?

MICK
I try.

JEWEL
I'll be back when I can finish a drink one of these these days.

Jimmy yanks JEWEL by her arm to escort her out the door. She pulls away from him and sashays out alone. He follows.

Pops picks up the dirty scotch glass and puts it in the sink.

POPS
That man's been cursed by the devil himself.

WILLIE
But, this time, the devil sent an angel with him.

POPS
I ain't so sure I'd call her no angel. But she was enchanting.

Rodney can't help but spread some gossip.

RODNEY
Toulouse will string a man up by his balls if he messes with her. She ain't like the rest of the girls working there. Down in Chalmette, I seen him poke a man's eye out for looking at her the wrong way, but get this. She was dancing her first dance, kinda her debut at the Edgewater Lounge. The guy said, what was I s'pose to do with her dancing half-naked? Then Toulouse says, you coulda looked, but you didn't have to look so hard.

WILLIE

Maybe he just didn't like the guy.

A long pause of thought. The customers who were listening crack up. MICK and Pops don't think it's funny.

BUCK

He ain't as nice as his father was.

MICK

His father wasn't nice.

BUCK

But the old man had a little more sense in public.

POPS

He had to no choice. He was a politician.

RODMEY

Toulouse is a bit off at times if you ask me. But, I've seen him with some pretty women.

He looks down where JEWEL's raincoat left a PUDDLE OF WATER.

MICK

I gotta take a ride.

MICK finishes off the beer and pitches the empty bottle in the barrel. He hangs his apron on the hook and he is out the door.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUGAR CANE FIELDS - DAY

The sky has cleared up. MICK's black truck speeds along the wet road as a SHARECROPPER waves to him from a tractor.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONROE PLANTATION HOME - DRIVEWAY - SAME

MICK's truck careens up the endless driveway that is outlined by oak trees and Spanish Moss. BUSTER, a golden retriever, tears across the big green lawn to greet MICK with a chewed up, out-of-air football in his mouth. MICK gets out, picks up the pathetic ball and throws it, which Buster catches in mid-air. The dog brings back the ball. MICK stares at the spotless white convertible jag in his driveway next to the BMW, then looks towards the house.

MICK throws the ball again. Buster tears across the lawn.

INT. MONROE PLANTATION HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Graceful brown hands weave strings through gold hooks on a vintage CORSET BRA.

CHERIE BROUSARD, 18, stands with a natural grace on a wood pedestal. She's MICK's daughter, a natural blue eyed blond, a bit spoiled like her mother. Some think that she is stubborn like her father. It comes with the territory.

MABEL, 70s, an older black woman, loops the hooks.

MABEL

Suck in.

Cherie sucks in her stomach and Mabel tightens the strings.

MABEL (CONT) (CONT'D)

How's that?

CHERIE

I can't breathe!

MRS. SHIRLEY MONROE ||

(off screen)

That means it fits.

MRS. SHIRLEY MONROE, '60s, Cherie's haughty grandmother, waltzes into the room decked out in Chanel, carrying a white chiffon dress on an antique silk hanger.

CHERIE

Grandmother, why do I have to wear this contraption?

MRS. SHIRLEY

Your mother wore it. I wore it, my mother wore it.

CHERIE

Then it should be retired by now, don't you think?

MRS. SHIRLEY

Men just love the way it pushes things up.

CHERIE

My things don't need pushing up.

MRS. SHIRLEY

I remember when I thought the same thing at your age. Then before you know, the life is sucked out of them. Along with your happiness.

Mrs. Shirley Monroe drapes the white chiffon dress over the heirloom velvet chair.

CHERIE

Well, I am not going to let that happen to me anytime soon. I am going places... one way or another.

MRS. SHIRLEY

Where were you going all dressed up yesterday?

Cherie is caught by surprised that her Grandmother is questioning her.

CHERIE

Uh, I went with Shelia to a party.

Mrs. Shirley gives her the eye, knowing better.

MRS. SHIRLEY

You just be careful, Cherie. Don't get yourself messed up with the wrong kind of man like your mama did.

They hear someone clear their throat.

Everyone turns to MICK who has slipped in through the kitchen and stands in the entrance.

MRS. SHIRLEY

You don't knock?

MICK

I didn't think I had to, just yet.

CHERIE

Hello, Daddy.

MICK stares uncomfortable at the corset and girdle.

MICK (CONT)

Interesting getup. Is that for your debut act at Bayou Blue?

Cherie is speechless. So is everyone else in the room.

CHERIE

Who told you something crazy like that?

MICK

I heard it through the grape vine.

Mrs. Shirley Monroe casually sips on her Mint Julep.

MRS. SHIRLEY

Gossip sure travels fast in a barroom, doesn't it, MICK.

MICK
No worse than it spreads around
here.

Mabel adjusts the corset on Cherie.

MRS. SHIRLEY
This will go under the dress Cherie
will wear at her Débutante Ball.

MICK
It's that time, huh?

MRS. SHIRLEY
Are you going to attend? Or will
you be shucking oysters?

MICK
Don't you have some shopping to do,
Mrs. Shirley? Need a new pair of
shoes.... a new Gucci purse?

MRS. SHIRLEY
As a matter of fact, I do.

Mrs. Shirley Monroe sets the glass on the silver tray and
strolls confidently pass MICK.

MRS. SHIRLEY (CONT'D)
Have a nice day, MICK.

MICK
(fake grin)
Same to you, Mrs. Shirley. Tell
your husband I said, hello.

When Mrs. Shirley walks out, Mick loses the grin.

MICK (CONT'D)
God broke the mold when he made
that woman.

MICK opens a drawer and takes out a BAND AID.

CHERIE
How did you cut yourself?

MICK puts the band aid on his wounded hand.

MICK |
With an oyster knife.

CHERIE
Daddy, maybe you should find
something safer to do.

MICK
Safe? Like what?

CHERIE

Like... working in an office or something.

MAYBELL

That would really do him in.

MICK

Seems Mabel knows me better than anybody else around this house. I just needed to step back for a new outlook on things. Seems the world is still a bad, bad place.

Cherie knows what he is talking about.

CHERIE

Mabel, are you finished?

MABEL

Uh huh. You can take it off now.

Cherie steps down from the pedestal.

MABEL (CONT'D)

I'll fix you a glass of sweet ice tea.

Mabel exits the room.

Cherie turns to her father, wanting to get to the point of his visit, which obviously hasn't happened lately.

MICK

Of all places on earth, why would you want to work at Bayou Blue?

CHERIE

You didn't come all the way over here to reprimand me, did you?

MICK

That casino is not a place for young ladies.

CHERIE

I'm of age to do what I want now.

MICK

Your Uncle Toulouse is not someone I think you should be working for.

CHERIE

Is that the cop point of view?

MICK

No, it's your fathers.

CHERIE

It's about time, but maybe too late.

Cherie wanders upstairs.

MICK feels bad about everything he ever did that tore his family apart.

Mabel enters and hands MICK a glass of cold sweet tea.

MABEL

She didn't mean that.

MICK

Sure she did.

MICK is about to head out.

MICK (CONT'D)

Tell Monique to call me.

MABEL

She's in Baton Rouge, until tonight.

MICK

She is spending a lot of time up there.

MABEL

It seems like you may still care, Mr. Broussard.

MICK stares off, wishing he didn't.

MICK

I better be going. Tell Cherie I'm not finished with our discussion.

Mabel watches him leave, knowing he is very troubled.

CUT TO:

EXT. MISSISSIPPI RIVER - BAYOU BLUE RIVERBOAT CASINO - DAY

Jimmy's Mercedes parks at the docks where BAYOU BLUE RIVERBOAT CASINO is docked. Jimmy jumps out and is racing around the car to open the door for JEWEL, but she's already out.

JIMMY

I was just trying to be gentleman-like.

JEWEL

Try harder.

Jimmy snickers incredulously as she passes him up and struts down the pier to the DOCK where SAL, the boat's security guard is waiting on the pier.

SAL

Y'all late.

JIMMY

It's her fault.

JEWEL walks down the pier towards the casino. Jimmy starts to trail her, but his name is called out. He turns to find his little brother, TOMMY with his side-kick, BO. Both young men are dressed in hip-hop street fashion.

TOMMY

Jimmy, wait up!

JIMMY

Tommy! What are you doing here?

TOMMY

We wanna play the slots and check out some hotties.

JIMMY

Does Mama know you gamble?

TOMMY

Yeah. She plays, too.

JIMMY

I leave for a few months and you and Ma' turn into gambling holics.

TOMMY

Someone had to carry on the family tradition while you were away.

JIMMY

Y'all lay low in here. I don't need no more trouble than I had on my hands today.

They glance at JEWEL who steps onto the dock of the river boat.

TOMMY

I'll take that trouble off your hands any day.

JIMMY

You don't even look sideways at her. You know what Toulouse will do to you?

TOMMY

Chill, Man. I ain't that stupid.

Jimmy shoots him the eye knowing he is that stupid.

They enter the boat.

CUT TO:

INT. A BACK SECTION OF THE CASINO - SAME

In a smaller room, a replica of a forties underground cabaret; cigarette smoke hazes over the dense casino. Ceiling fans slowly spin above roulette tables and slot machines.

CARD DEALERS dole out to serious PLAYERS at the blackjack table. Dice are thrown on the craps table as MEN and WOMEN stand around praying it's their lucky day.

Drinks are served by pretty WAITRESSES in short black skirts and tight white, low-cut shirts, draped with Mardi Gras beads.

IN A DARK CORNER at a private table, TOULOUSE is talking with SHELIA - a sexy, young waitress. We see a tense conversation taking place. Shelia breaks down and spills the beans. Toulouse gently rubs her back as if to say he doesn't blame her.

JEWEL, who is making her way through the casino, sees Toulouse mingling with Shelia. Toulouse sees JEWEL coming, Jimmy behind her.

TOULOUSE
(to waitress-Shelia)
Take the rest of the day off.

The frazzled waitress makes a quick getaway. Toulouse eyes JEWEL.

Lenne is sitting nearby in his wheelchair. He seems to be watching JEWEL approaching also, but it's not for sure.

TOULOUSE (CONT) (CONT'D)
(to JEWEL)
What took so long, Sha'?

JEWEL
My nails had to dry.

Toulouse inspects her freshly painted red fingernails and kisses her hand.

JEWEL pulls her hand away from Toulouse as she stares at Lenne, who's eyes still seem to be on her.

JEWEL (CONT'D)
How are you, Lenne?

Lenne just stares, wishing he could answer.

JEWEL (CONT'D)

Do you need anything to eat? Did they feed you today?

TOULOUSE

Don't worry, Sha'. Lenne is well taken care of.

JEWEL turns back to Toulouse.

JEWEL

I'm just trying to bring him back around.

TOULOUSE

You know what the doctor said. The chances are slim.

JEWEL

No harm in hope.

TOULOUSE

You're such an optimistic. Go to my room and wait for me.

JEWEL walks away. Toulouse turns to Jimmy.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)

Did she give you any trouble?

JIMMY

Nah... She was an angel.

Toulouse grins, knowing better. He sees Tommy and his sidekick at the DOLLAR SLOTS.

TOULOUSE

I wonder where your li'l brother gets all his extra gambling' dough?

Jimmy looks at Tommy feeding the machine. He thinks quick.

JIMMY

Mom gave him some spending money.

Jimmy knows something is up as Toulouse whispers something in a DEALER'S ear.

TOULOUSE

Push Lenne to my office, Jimmy.

Jimmy pushes Lenne behind Toulouse down a narrow hallway to the back room.

CUT TO:

INT. BAYOU BLUE BACK ROOM - SAME

Two big burly MEN sit at a card table. They are BIG EARL and RED. Several stacks of chips and cards are spread out. It's not a serious game.

Jimmy parks Lenne at the table while Toulouse opens a cabinet behind them.

BIG EARL
You wanna play, Lenne?

Big Earl deals a hand in front of Lenne, though he gets no response.

RED
Lenne never was any good at cards.

TOULOUSE
Or balance.

Jimmy doesn't think Toulouse's joke is funny, though Toulouse isn't really joking.

Jimmy observes Toulouse taking out a bottle of HOMEMADE MOONSHINE.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)
Jimmy, you remember my boys from
Shell Beach?

The guys check out Jimmy.

JIMMY
What's up?

Big Earl and Red nod suspiciously.

TOULOUSE
Jimmy's been away on vacation.

Toulouse pats Jimmy on his protruding belly.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)
They fed him good, huh?

JIMMY
When I was well behaved, I got a
piece of cheese with my bread.

The men crack up.

TOULOUSE
It's time Jimmy got a promotion
'cauz he kept his mouth shut and
did the time.

Jimmy grins, unsure whether he should or not.

Then BENARD walks in, dressed in his dealer outfit, who would normally be working the Black Jack table in the front room.

BENARD

You wanted to see me, Boss?

TOULOUSE

Sit down, Benard.

Benard sits at the table with the others. Toulouse locks the door behind Benard and pours everyone a shot of Moonshine. It's suddenly very tense in the room.

Jimmy stands in the corner behind them. Toulouse raises his glass, everyone follows his lead and down their shots; except Benard. Beads of sweat roll down his face.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)

This is some of my Daddy's
moonshine he made before he died. I
saved it for a special occasion.

Benard's shaky eyes look up at Toulouse. All eyes are on them. Benard's quivering hand slowly brings the shot to his lips and he spills it down his throat.

BENARD

Why is this a special occasion?

TOULOUSE

Giving Jimmy a chance to move up
the ladder.

Toulouse pours another shot of Moonshine for Benard, then pushes the glass in front of him. Benard cautiously stares at it, his face turns beat-red. Even Jimmy is starting to break a sweat now; he wipes his face with his hanky.

TOULOUSE

I got two fishermen pissed off
'cauz they caught a dead stripper
in their net this morning. Guess
who it was?

Benard shrugs his shoulders.

TOULOUSE(CONT)||| (CONT'D)

I had to fork over a lotta money
for a new net, not too mention,
Trisha was one of our best dancers.

BENARD

What's that got to do with me?

TOULOUSE

Shelly told me you took Trisha to a
party before she disappeared.

BENARD

Actually, she took me. It was some weird ass Vampire themed party set up like a blood bank. Everybody that donated a pint of blood, got injected afterwards with a high like they never had before.

Toulouse looks at Jimmy, then at Lenny.

TOULOUSE

That explains where Lenny may have gotten the pints of blood from.

Toulouse looks back at Benard.

TOULOUSE

So, did you and Trisha donate?

BENARD

I didn't donate shit. Trisha blew me off so I left her there.

TOULOUSE

What's my rules, Benard? Don't date the girls that work here. Don't fuck them, and don't give them drugs. And, most importantly, don't take them off somewhere in some strange place and leave them.

BENARD

I didn't get that memo.

Toulouse SLAPS Benard out of the chair and he hits the floor. Then, he yanks Benard back up and sits him in the chair.

Toulouse nods at Red, so he grabs a roll of DUCK TAPE and wraps Benard to the chair so he can't get up.

BENARD (CONT'D)

I swear I didn't think the stupid bitch would blow me off and then die.

TOULOUSE

That's just it. You didn't think.

Benard glances at Lenny who can't say anything.

Benard gives a quick glance to Jimmy. Jimmy tenses up, wondering if his brother Tommy might be involved, too.

TOULOUSE

I will have to deal with the heat and if I know my brother, he will force you to fess up.

Benard starts crying.

BENARD

Please give me another chance.

TOULOUSE

The rules have changed since I've
taken over. No second chances.

Toulouse nods to Red.

BENARD

But, I have kids and a wife?

TOULOUSE

You should have thought about them
before messing with my girls.

Jimmy can't believe it as Red wraps Benard's mouth with duck
tape around his entire head.

TOULOUSE (CONT)| (CONT'D)

And just so you know, Benard, I'll
take care of your family, like my
Father always has. 'Specially
Wanda. She's 'bout that age now.

Benard squirms in his chair. Toulouse opens another cabinet
drawer and takes out a pistol and screws on a SILENCER, then
hands Jimmy the gun.

Jimmy stares at the cold steel in his hands, confused.

JIMMY

What?

TOULOUSE

Shoot him.

JIMMY

Me?

TOULOUSE

Yeah, you.

Jimmy's hands tremble. Benard can't spill the beans now
with his mouth taped up.

Jimmy looks at everyone waiting, including Lenne, who
doesn't seem to comprehend the situation.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)

You have killed somebody before,
haven't you, Jimmy?

JIMMY

Uh, no.

TOULOUSE

So, here's your chance. Just make sure you hit the target so you don't sink my boat.

JIMMY

But, he said he was sorry.

TOULOUSE

This is your chance to prove you have not been swayed with all that cheese to become a rat.

JIMMY

Rat! Me, no way. I'd never rat. I'm loyal, Toulouse. Didn't I prove it already?

TOULOUSE

Shoot him, Jimmy.

Sweat trickles down Jimmy's cheeks as Toulouse waits. His trembling hand raises the gun at Benard's duck-taped head. Jimmy hesitates momentarily, looks at Toulouse who is still waiting. He has no choice, so he FIRES.

Benard's body jerks and kicks. Jimmy FIRES again and again, until Benard stops moving. Toulouse pushes Jimmy's arm down and takes the gun away.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)

See, it's not so hard.

BIG EARL

I think he kinda liked it.

The men laugh at Jimmy.

Toulouse puts the gun back in the drawer.

TOULOUSE

(to Red and Big Earl)

Feed him to the crawfish. I got important guest coming on board.

As the two men drag Benard out the back door, Toulouse looks at Jimmy, who watches painfully.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)

(to Jimmy)

Your brother, Tommy is young with a lot to learn, and we owe you a favor, so I'm letting him slide this time. Next time, you might have to shoot him too if he gets anymore of my employees involved with his bullshit.

Toulouse exits the room. Jimmy takes a big swallow and looks at Lenne who is just staring.

CUT TO:

INT. JEWEL'S BATHROOM - LATER

JEWEL is soaking in a deep tub of bubbles. Toulouse enters and checks himself in the mirror.

TOULOUSE

You feeling all right, Sha'? You look a little pale.

JEWEL

You didn't have to kill him.

Toulouse reaches for the cologne and sprays himself.

TOULOUSE

That's why I adore you, Sha'. You have such a good heart. You want to give everybody a chance... But, you're a little naïve.

Toulouse starts to head out.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)

I gotta get back to business.

JEWEL

You mean to that young little thing you had to sneak off the boat while I was having my nails done?

Toulouse stops, surprised that she knew.

TOULOUSE

That cute little young thing is my niece.

JEWEL

That was Cherie!

TOULOUSE

All grown up now and beautiful like you.

JEWEL

So, that's the salt Jimmy was pouring in Mick's wounds today.

Toulouse looks at Jewel, surprised.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)

You saw Mick today?

JEWEL

I had to use the bathroom really bad, so Jimmy stopped at the bar so I could pee.

Toulouse is not happy about that.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)

Is that right?

JEWEL

I can see there is no brotherly love between you two.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)

Never was.

JEWEL

I suppose sleeping with his wife didn't help matters.

TOULOUSE

That was a long time ago. We were friends before Mick was in the picture.

JEWEL

All bad guys should have friend who marries a cop, even if the cop is his brother.

Toulouse can't help but laugh.

TOULOUSE

Maybe you are not so naive after all. You just let me handle my business, Chere'.

JEWEL

Sure, you handle women so well.

JEWEL (CONT'D)

None of them girls holds a candle to you anyhow in my eyes. You're the one I adore. The one I will never give up.

JEWEL knows that he means what he says and she hates it.

JEWEL (CONT'D)

Just 'cauz I was raised on the bayou, don't mean I ain't smart enough to know what really goes on around here and I am getting tired of this kind of life.

Toulouse leans over the tub and grabs a fist full of JEWEL's hair and pulls her close to him.

TOULOUSE |||
I brought you from the bayou and
made something out of your
worthless life. You belong to me,
always.

He lets go of her hair, then gently strokes it away from her face.

TOULOUSE || (CONT'D)
Most women would die to be in your
place.

JEWEL
I heard some of 'em have.

Toulouse stands up and checks himself in the mirror as he speaks to her.

TOULOUSE
You shouldn't believe everything
you hear down on the bayou, Sha'.
Get dressed. The future governor
is coming on board tonight to see
the Jewel of Orleans dance.

Toulouse leaves the bathroom. JEWEL pulls the drain stopper out, then grabs her towel and wraps herself, feeling imprisoned.

CUT TO:

INT. CASINO - LATER

Tommy is hot on the slots. Jimmy snatches Tommy by his arm.

JIMMY
Come on, Stupid.

Tommy and Bo gather their coins and leaves with Jimmy.

WALKING THROUGH CASINO.

TOMMY
What's your problem?

JIMMY
You are. He spared you this time,
but he won't no more. So go home
and think about whether you wanna
live or die and don't be getting
his people mixed up with yours.

Tommy and Bo leave the boat. Jimmy needs a strong drink so he heads for the bar.

CUT TO:

INT. MONIQUE'S MASTER BATHROOM - EVENING

Monique is undressing and getting ready for bed. MICK sneaks in carrying a pint of ice cream.

Monique jumps, completely startled.

MONIQUE
You could get shot like that.

MICK
I know you don't keep the gun loaded.

MONIQUE
That was before you moved out.

MICK sets the pint of ice cream on her counter.

MICK
I got your favorite flavor.

MONIQUE
Is that a bribe?

MICK
Do you know where our daughter applied for a job?

MONIQUE
No. But, she is of age to do what she wants.

MICK
Not as long as it concerns Bayou Blue.

Monique looks up at MICK, surprised.

MONIQUE
It must be her way of getting back at us.

MICK takes the truth with a grain of salt.

MICK
That's what I figured.

Monique is staring through the mirror at MICK as she slips out of her dress and reveals a sexy black slip.

MICK (CONT'D)
He played you, now he is playing our daughter.

MONIQUE
He didn't play me. It is not what you think.

MICK

He's the bad guy, Monique. I don't want our daughter playing his game.

MONIQUE

I will talk to her.

MICK

I tried to get through to her today.

Mick stares at his wife's beautiful body, wishing he could wrap his arms around her and make up for everything.

MICK (CONT'D)

I know I screwed up.

Monique washes off the makeup.

MONIQUE

Not just with us. Seems you screwed up your career, too.

MICK

Isn't that what you always wanted? For me to change my career?

MONIQUE

It's not that I had a problem with your career, MICK. I had a problem with you putting your career before us all the time.

MICK

You knew what you were getting into when you married me?

MONIQUE

True. But, I didn't know you would cheat on me with your rookie partner, because you assumed I was having an affair with your brother.

MICK looks down, wishing he could take it all back.

MICK

I know I hurt you, Monique. I can't take that back.

MONIQUE

No, you can't take that back, nor your partner's life.

MICK nods, sadly.

Monique grabs a towel from the rack and dries her face.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)

We don't need you to chase away the
boogie man anymore.

MICK stares hard at Monique, wishing she could see how sorry he was.

Monique stares back, wishing she could tell him that she is also sorry for hurting him. But, nothing comes out of her mouth. So he exits.

Monique puts her face in her hands wishing she hadn't said such hurtful things.

She looks down at the melting ice cream, then dumps it in the trash.

CUT TO:

INT. BAYOU BLUE CASINO - NIGHT

In the Casino Lounge, Toulouse greets JR - a DISTINGUISHED POLITICIAN exhibiting big money. He is with two ASSOCIATES.

TOULOUSE

Good to see you, JR.

They shake hands.

JR

I needed a distraction from the political rat race. And by the way, thanks for your contribution to our campaign.

TOULOUSE

I'm sure you will repay the favor one day.

JR

I brought some of the party with me.

Toulouse shakes hands with the other two men.

TOULOUSE

Gentlemen, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Bayou Blue.

ASSOCIATE

I've heard it's the place to get rich if you're lucky.

JEWEL

(interrupts)

Or go broke if you ain't.

The men turn to JEWEL, who has wandered up, decked out in a sexy black gown and heels.

TOULOUSE
Gentlemen, this is my lovely lady,
Miss JEWEL Roux.

JR kisses JEWEL's hand.

JR
It's a pleasure, Miss Roux. Perhaps
you'll join us later at the table
for luck.

TOULOUSE
Of course she will, won't you,
Sha'?

JEWEL looks at Toulouse, annoyed.

|JEWEL
Of course.

TOULOUSE
(to gentlemen)
Right this way, Gentlemen.

JEWEL watches Toulouse escort the men to THE BLUE ROOM.

CUT TO:

EXT. MICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

MICK drives up to the back of Pop's Raw Oyster Lounge and
slides out. He climbs the staircase behind the lounge and
enters his temporary home.

CUT TO:

INT. MICK'S TEMPORARY APARTMENT- SAME

A typical divorcee apartment - the room is sparsely
furnished, the walls are decorated with out-of-place
photographs tacked to the wall - his rookie days, his
family, friends. He walks across the hardwood floor and
turns on a tiny TV sitting on an old milk crate in front of
a sunk in sofa with a pillow and sheet on it, that has been
slept on one too many times. He opens the icebox and finds
a carton of milk, opens it, takes a sip.

A BLACK ALLEY CAT jumps up to his window seal. MICK
notices.

MICK
Back again, huh? Maybe it's you
that's bringing the bad luck.

MICK pours the remaining milk into a bowl on the floor. The
cat licks it up. MICK sits on the sunk-in sofa, takes off
his shoes and tries to get comfortable.

He stares at the whiskey bottle on the end table. He knows he shouldn't drink it. He sees an old photo lying beside it. It's SHAUNA, the lady cop in uniform, all smiles.

MICK

I'm so sorry, Shauna.

MICK then notices a photo of his daughter, Cherie that is tacked on the wall. His face scowls at the thought of his daughter getting mixed up with Toulouse.

CUT TO:

INT. BAYOU BLUE RIVERBOAT CASINO - NIGHT

MICK treks through the crowded casino. He glances at the THREE gun packing MEN by the bar who have their eye on him too. MICK is scanning the place for his daughter. He sees Red standing by the bar.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLUE ROOM - BAYOU BLUE CASINO - SAME

MICK enters the Blue Room that houses only ten small tables - a dance stage where STRIPPERS perform under blue neon light for the GAMBLERS.

A BARTENDER makes drinks at the small bar in the corner where Jimmy is sitting, trying to get over his shock of killing Benard. He sees MICK enter and wags his head and downs another shot of Scotch.

MICK observes tables that have intense hands. Money is laid out, chips are stacked. The players that fold, watch the girls dance on stage.

JR'S table is going strong.

The WAITRESS hands out a round of fresh drinks.

JR places a hundred dollar tip in her tray.

MICK

Now we know where all the campaign dollars are going?

JR notices MICK and shakes MICK's hand.

JR

Sergeant Broussard!

MICK

It's just MICK tonight.

A WAITRESS approaches MICK.

WAITRESS

Can I get you a drink, Sir?

MICK
A coca-cola on the rocks.

She fetches his drink.

Toulouse appears behind MICK.

TOULOUSE
Don't you wanna play with the big
boys?

MICK turns to Toulouse. Both try to remain business-like in front of the crowd.

MICK
Not tonight.

TOULOUSE
Suit yourself. If there is
anything I can do for you...

MICK leans closer and quietly...

MICK
You can unemploy my daughter.

TOULOUSE
Now, why would I do that?

MICK
Because if you don't, you will
regret it.

Toulouse stares amused.

The MUSIC comes up again.

Everyone turns their attention to the stage where a neon sign glows, "Jewel of Orleans."

A curvy leg outlines the curtains. JEWEL dances out.

MICK's attention is drawn to JEWEL. She spots MICK.

Toulouse notices her reaction.

TOULOUSE
She's something ain't she?

MICK
She's a beautiful woman. But, you
always do manage to get your hands
on a beautiful woman who may or may
not know what she's doing with you
at the time.

TOULOUSE
(to MICK)
How is Monique these days?

Mick tries to remain calm as possible.

MICK

I didn't come here for small talk.
Cherie is not going to work here.

MICK follows Toulouse's stare across the room where he sees Cherie walk to the bar to talk to the BARTENDER.

TOULOUSE

It seems that Cherie is of age to
do what she wants to now.

MICK turns back to Toulouse.

MICK

My daughter is off limits to you.

TOULOUSE

That is what you thought about your
wife?

Just before Mick does something he probably won't regret...

JR interrupts with a friendly warning.

JR

The press will have a field day
with this.

JR points out a NEWS REPORTER AND PHOTOGRAPHER waiting in the shadows nearby.

JR (CONT'D)

I can't get them off my tail. They
follow me around like pathetic
puppy's waiting for a bowl of milk.

MICK and Toulouse back down from each other, knowing Press won't be a good thing at this point.

From the stage, JEWEL watches MICK and Toulouse.

MICK makes a mad dash to Cherie.

MICK

Cherie, can I have a word with you?

Cherie is surprised to see him.

CHERIE

Daddy!

MICK

Didn't I tell you to stay outta
this place?

CHERIE

I am going to be working here. So you and Mom might as well get used to it.

Toulouse observes their conversation from across the room. He then notices JEWEL's attention on MICK and Cherie.

MICK

When the boat docks, so do you. Or else I can make a really big scene.

CHERIE

Fine! Ruin my life again.

MICK is taken back by her reply. It sounded just like something his ex-wife said. Cherie walks away from him.

On her way out of the Blue Room, Cherie eyes Toulouse from across the room. He nods like he understands the circumstances. There is clearly some sort of relationship between them already.

JEWEL notices their connection also.

MICK turns to Toulouse and glares daringly, then exits the Blue Room.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYOU BLUE CASINO DECK - LATER

MICK leans against the railing, watching Cherie get into a car with her friend, SHELIA, the waitress who told Toulouse about Benard.

JEWEL walks up to his side and watches them get into the car.

JEWEL

The more you tell her she can't,
the more she will.

MICK looks at JEWEL, knowingly.

MICK

Can I ask you a question Miss Roux?
What are you doing at a place like
this?

JEWEL

I live here.

MICK

Frivolous place to live.

JEWEL

I know. I'm getting kinda tired of
floating in my sleep.

MICK and JEWEL watch the car drive away.

MICK looks into JEWEL's eyes, studying her.

JEWEL (CONT'D)
Any more questions?

MICK
Yeah? Why are you with a man like
Toulouse?

JEWEL
I suppose I had no choice.

MICK
Everyone has choices?

JEWEL
I didn't.

JEWEL looks down at the swift Mississippi River.

JEWEL (CONT'D)
I'm gonna get out one day.

MICK
When you do, just make sure you get
out alive.

MICK exits the boat, leaving JEWEL watching him and wishing she could go with him.

Toulouse approaches JEWEL, holding two shot glasses. He has seen them conversing.

TOULOUSE
Making new friends, Sha'?

Toulouse hands her one of the shot glasses.

JEWEL
Is it poison?

Toulouse grins at her sarcasm.

TOULOUSE
Tomorrow morning, I've got to go to
Chalmette to visit Daddy.

JEWEL
Do I have to go?

Toulouse studies her motive.

TOULOUSE
Why? Don't you wanna see your
family and friends?

JEWEL

I ain't got no friends down there.

TOULOUSE

My friends, are your friends.

JEWEL

You ain't got no friends either.
They all work for you.

TOULOUSE

I run a friendly network.

JEWEL rolls her eyes.

JEWEL|||

I have a hair appointment.

Toulouse knows she hates going to Chalmette.

TOULOUSE

You go have your hair done and do a
little shopping if you feel like
it. Buy yourself something nice.
I'll have Jimmy drive you.

JEWEL

You shouldn't put so much trust in
Jimmy Maroni.

TOULOUSE

I don't trust nobody, Sha'.
Especially not you.

Toulouse grins charmingly. JEWEL hands him back his shot of
Vodka and walks inside. Toulouse downs both shots.

CUT TO:

EXT. POP'S RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - LATER

MICK pulls up behind the lounge. Pops is closing up the
back entrance.

MICK

Sorry I left you hanging, Pops.

POPS

I can handle this place. Plus,
it's about time you ask for
your old job back.

MICK

I don't know that I want it back.

POPS

Being a cop is in your blood. It's
all you know, besides shucking
oysters.

MICK

I'd have to take that as an insult
if it wasn't true.

POPS

You'll figure things out when the
time is right. Just don't go
getting in no trouble before then.

Pops gets into his old Chevy and drives away.

MICK climbs the staircase and enters the apartment.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT ABOVE LOUNGE - SAME

MICK sits on his sofa, flips on the TV NEWS. He notices the
black cat in his window.

MICK

Sorry Old Pal, I'm out of milk
tonight.

The cat jumps on his lap. He strokes it's head as he stares
at a family photo.

MICK (CONT'D)

I thought love was all we needed to
hold us together.

MICK puts his head back and drifts off to sleep.

CUT TO: |||

EXT. BAYOU BLUE CASINO - DOCKED - MORNING

Jimmy leans against the railing, cigarette dangling from his
mouth, reading the TIMES PICAYUNE PAPER.

Jimmy's younger brother, Tommy walks up.

TOMMY

I need to borrow some cash.

JIMMY

What for?

TOMMY

'Cause I lost my ass last night in
Boom Town.

Jimmy digs in his wallet.

JIMMY

This is the last time, Tommy. You
better go find yourself a real job.

Jimmy hands over the cash.

TOMMY

Like yours? How much does a kiss
asser get paid?

Jimmy eyes bug out. Tommy laughs.

JIMMY

I ain't no kiss asser?

TOMMY

Oh, I'm sorry... you are a loyal
escape goat.

Jimmy rolls up the newspaper and swats Tommy in the head.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Hey, watch it!

JIMMY

Lucky for you I have this kiss ass
job so I can keep money in your
holey pockets, huh.

Tommy's ride pulls up with RAP MUSIC blasting. A couple
gangster wannabes wait on Tommy.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

And you need to find some new
friends with a little more class.

TOMMY

Like your friends? Right!

Jimmy scowls.

JIMMY

Get out of here before Toulouse
changes his mind.

TOMMY

Let Toulouse mind this.

Tommy moon walks on his way off the boat and accidentally
backs into Toulouse, who stands there grinning at him.

TOULOUSE

With talent like that, you might be
somebody one day if you live that
long.

Tommy suddenly realizes that Toulouse means what he says.
He backs away and dashes down the pier to the Rapper Car and
jumps in. The car skids off.

JIMMY

Sorry, Boss. He'll mature one day
I hope.

TOULOUSE

We will see. Listen, I have to go down to Chalmette for some business. Don't let Jewel out of your sight.

JIMMY

Sure thing.

SAL walks from the parking lot to the boat.

TOULOUSE

And, Jimmy, don't be bringing Jewel around my brother again if you can help it. If you have any problems... Sal knows where to find me.

SAL heard his name.

SAL

He ain't gonna have no problems.

Jimmy and Sal watch Toulouse get into the passenger's side of a brand new JAG that RED is driving. They drive away.

JIMMY (CONT) (CONT'D)

(to himself)

If I was only that lucky.

JEWEL steps up.

JEWEL

You ain't.

JIMMY

Oh, good, the Bayou Queen has arrived.

JEWEL

I have a hair appointment at 10:30.

JIMMY

What fun... Shall we?

JEWEL struts off the boat. Jimmy rolls the newspaper up and hands it over to SAL.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Here, Sal. I won't be able to read this anytime soon.

Sal grins, knowing Jimmy has his hands full.

EARL steps up and hands Sal a cup of coffee. They watch Jimmy races after JEWEL who is waiting by his Mercedes.

SAL

I wouldn't want his job.

EARL
I think Toulouse is punishing him
for what happened to Lenne.

SAL
Yeah, maybe jail wasn't hard
enough.

JEWEL and Jimmy get into the Mercedes and it drives away.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - ROYAL STREET - DAY

Jimmy follows JEWEL as she sashays down Royal Street.

CUT TO:

EXT. BRIDAL BOUTIQUE - SAME

JEWEL stops and looks at a sexy wedding dress in a store
front the window. Jimmy stops and lights a cigarette.

JIMMY
That'll be the day.

JEWEL
What do you know anyway, Jimmy?

JIMMY
I know Toulouse ain't the marrying
kind.

JEWEL
Who says I wanna marry Toulouse?

JIMMY
Well, anybody else around here
wouldn't have a shot in hell with
you long as you're considered
Toulouse's woman.

JEWEL
He doesn't own me.

JIMMY
Tell him that.

JEWEL is frustrated.

JEWEL
I'm gonna be somebody one day
besides Toulouse's woman.

JIMMY
If you say so.

Jewel scurries off. Jimmy catches up.

CUT TO:

INT. SAMI'S SHEIK HAIR SALON - DAY

JEWEL darts into Sami's Sheik Hair Salon. There are a few CLIENTS in hair chairs as their HAIR DRESSER fixes them up.

SAMI is the owner of the salon. He is standing at the front desk going over his appointments.

He sees JEWEL enter and a big smile brightens his face.

SAMI
JEWEL Darling.

JEWEL
Hi, Sami. I'm a little early.

SAMI
That's fine. I had a cancelation.

Sami notices Jimmy behind her. He looks to JEWEL for an explanation.

JEWEL
He's been summoned to be my watch dog.

SAMI
Oh... we all need one of those.
Come on back and let me get you shampooed.

Jimmy starts to follow them, but Sami stops him.

SAMI (CONT'D)
Okay, Fido... I can handle the lady from here. Why don't you have a pedicure on the house.

Jimmy sees a PRETTY TECHNICIAN in a white coat at the pedicure table. She smiles at Jimmy.

JIMMY
I can't resist a woman in uniform.

JEWEL walks to the back shampoo area with Sami.

CUT TO:

LATER

Jimmy is kicked back with his feet up on a pedicure pedestal and chatting up the pretty technician.

CUT TO:

INT. SAMI'S HAIR STATION - SAME

As Sami styles JEWEL's hair, she notices a back door EXIT.

JEWEL
Is that door unlocked?

Sami looks at her, inquisitively.

SAMI
From 9 to 5.

JEWEL smiles.

SAMI (CONT'D)
You're not!

JEWEL
I will try.

JEWEL leaves a BIG TIP, then whispers in Sami's ear and kisses his cheek, then slips out the back exit.

Jimmy never seen her go.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEY WAY - QUARTER - SAME

JEWEL exits the back entrance from the salon into the alley.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOURBON STREET - DAY LATER

JEWEL found her way to BOURBON STREET and squeezes through the CROWD of PARTY REVELERS.

A DRUNKEN FOOL blocks her and waves a pair of big beads.

DRUNK FOOL
Show your tits!

JEWEL
Get off, you Drunken Fool.

JEWEL pulls away from him and darts away.

CUT TO:

INT. SAMI' HAIR SALON - SAME

Jimmy is kicked back, enjoying his foot massage until he notices Sami at the desk looking at his appointment book.

JIMMY
Where is JEWEL?

SAMI
She was finished a half hour ago.

Jimmy panics, takes his feet down and slips on his shoes.

JIMMY
What! Is she gone?

SAMI
She said she'd be down the street
at the Bridal Boutique.

JIMMY
Bridal Boutique my ass! That
sneaky little witch.

Jimmy throws a wad of cash down on the table.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
(to pedicurist)
That was lovely, Sweetheart. I'll
be back soon for another one.

Jimmy heads out, cursing under his breath.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOURBON STREET - SAME

Jimmy pushes through the unruly crowd, looking all over for JEWEL. He checks the bridal boutique just in case. No sign of her. He thinks he sees JEWEL and rushes up and grabs a GIRL, who turns around and flashes him.

FLASHING GIRL
Happy Party Gras!

JIMMY
Ain't nothing happy about it, 'cept
them knockers you've got.

Jimmy would love to cop a field, but he hurries off instead in hopes he can find JEWEL.

CUT TO:

EXT. QUARTER BAR - SLOT MACHINES - SUNDOWN

Jimmy drags himself into a small Quarter Bar where a few SLOT MACHINES line the wall. He is exhausted, been looking all over the Quarter for JEWEL. No luck.

Jimmy finds a seat at a QUARTER SLOT MACHINE and wipes his brow with a hanky.

A WAITRESS comes around.

WAITRESS
Can I get you something, Sir?

JIMMY

The strongest drink you've got with
a couple aspirins.

WAITRESS

We don't supply pain killers.

JIMMY

How about a head massage?

WAITRESS

In your wildest dreams.

The waitress wanders off. Jimmy puts a quarter in the slot and pulls the handle. One sole quarter drops out. Jimmy picks it up.

JIMMY

That figures.

CUT TO:

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - NIGHT

JEWEL has slowed down, enjoying the sights of the Quarter. She is sipping on a cocktail that she picked up along the way.

JEWEL watches a YOUNG COUPLE making out under a sign that says, HUGE ASS BEER. Both have huge ass beers in hand. JEWEL wishes her life could be so simple. She cuts a corner.

Tommy spots JEWEL as he is coming out of a pic-a-pac. He shakes his head as he lights a mojo. Then he digs out his cell phone.

CUT TO:

INT. QUARTER BAR - SLOT MACHINE - SAME

Jimmy is popping two aspirins that he bummed off another SLOT PLAYER.

JIMMY

Thanks, Man. I needed that.

SLOT PLAYER

I never leave home without them.

Jimmy chases the aspirins with the potent drink.

His cell phone rings.

JIMMY

I hope that ain't the boss.

Jimmy sees Tommy's number and answers.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Yeah?

CUT BACK AND FORTH.

EXT. PIC-A-PAC- QUARTER - SAME

Tommy is on the cell phone, with his eye on JEWEL.

TOMMY

Missing something?

JIMMY

Where is she?

TOMMY

How much is it worth to you?

JIMMY

Just keep an eye on her till I can get there.

Jimmy heads out.

CUT TO:

INT. POP'S RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - NIGHT

Pops is behind the bar, shucking.

WILLIE is at the bar in his usual spot.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS struts in wearing workout sweats like he has been to the gym or a morning jog.

POPS

That's a good look for you, Captain?

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Just keeping it real, Pops. Fix me a Bloody Mary without the Mary.

POPS

You fixing to be on the clock, huh?

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

When am I not?

Pops whips up his drink.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS (CONT'D)

Where is MICK?

POPS

He will be down shortly.

Then JEWEL walks in.

Pops remembers who she is.

POPS (CONT'D)
(to himself)

Uh oh.

Captain Williams and the others check her out as she takes a seat at the bar.

JEWEL
Hello, Gentlemen.

POPS
Where's the master?

JEWEL
I broke my leash and ran away.

POPS
What can I get you?

JEWEL
Can you brew me a Hurricane?

Captain Williams butts in.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
(interrupts)||
Are you sure a little lady like
yourself can handle such a potent
drink?

JEWEL glances over at Captain Williams.

JEWEL
I'm not driving today.

Captain Williams puts a ten on the counter.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
Then, I'll buy the lady's first.

JEWEL |
Thanks.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
You look familiar.

CLOSE ON a tube of lipstick being twisted open. JEWEL leans over the bar. She feels Captain Williams eyes still on her as she paints her ripe lips in the mirror behind the bottles of whisky.

JEWEL
We've been introduced at Bayou
Blue.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
That's why you look familiar.
You're Jewel of Orleans.

JEWEL closes the lipstick tube, not commenting on that.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
You're not ashamed of showing off
that beautiful body, are you?

JEWEL
No, but it's not like I go around
telling people that don't know
already.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
Do you just dance, or do you do
what the other girls do?

JEWEL
What's that?

Captain Williams grins, daringly.

JEWEL audaciously leans close to Captain Williams...

JEWEL (CONT'D)
I don't do what the other girls do.
And if I did, I wouldn't do it with
a cop unless it was for love.

JEWEL leaves Captain Williams with his jaw hanging. He obviously didn't know she knew he was a cop.

Pops and Willie grin at each other, knowing Captain Williams has been put in his place.

MICK slips in behind the bar and sees Captain Williams looking at JEWEL.

JEWEL turns to MICK with a warm, sexy smile.

JEWEL (CONT) (CONT'D)
Hey, MICK.

MICK is surprised to see JEWEL there.

MICK
JEWEL!

JEWEL
I had an urge for some raw oysters.

MICK
Then you came to the right place.
We've got the best in town. I'll
shuck you a dozen in just a sec.

MICK gives Captain Williams a nod and they head to the back room.

Pops puts the hurricane drink down in front of JEWEL.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM LOUNGE - SAME

Standing in the back room with the door open, MICK can keep an eye on the front as he talks with Captain Williams.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

That one out there is a piece of work.

MICK

That's 'cause she is Toulouse LeFlurr's woman.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

As in old lady?

MICK

That's what they say.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

What is she doing here?

MICK

I don't know yet. But, I plan to find out.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

This won't turn out well.

MICK

Has anything I've done lately?

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Well, we were hoping your luck has changed. You've been on vacation long enough.

MICK

I don't think I have.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

MICK, you are one of the best cops we have on the force. If you just keep me in the loop when you get something crazy in your head... Like some grand tip that sounds too good to be true...

Captain Williams looks out at JEWEL.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS (CONT'D)
Like her... That is too good to be
true.

MICK
She just stopped in for some raw
oysters. What's so wrong with
that?

Captain Williams knows better.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
Welcome back when you're ready.

Captain Williams exits.

CUT TO:

INT. POP'S RAW OYSTER SPORTS LOUNGE - SAME

After Captain Williams is gone, MICK takes his place behind
the bar - got a lot on his mind. JEWEL notices a band aid
on MICK's hand as he pries open an oyster.

JEWEL (CONT) |
How's your wound?

MICK
Which one?

JEWEL points to the band aid.

MICK (CONT) (CONT'D)
I'll live.

JEWEL sucks on her straw.

MICK (CONT'D)
Where did you ditch Jimmy?

JEWEL
The beauty salon while he was
having a pedicure.

MICK
A pedicure!

A party hardy CROWD barges through the door, rowdy and
drunk.

A YOUNG MAN and his GIRLFRIEND make their way to the bar.

YOUNG MAN
Hey, Sergeant Broussard. Remember
me?

MICK
Not really.

YOUNG MAN

You almost arrested me last Mardi
Gras for indecent exposure.

MICK

Are you gonna try your luck again
this year?

YOUNG MAN

No, my girlfriend will do the
flashing this time. Ya'll seem to
go easier on women.

They stare at his sexy girlfriend wearing a tight shirt.

JEWEL

(to girl)

Why would you show yourself if you
didn't have to?

GIRL

Because we were on Bourbon Street
where anything goes and no one
cares?

The girls smiles at JEWEL, almost inviting her to join them.
JEWEL stares at her, wishing she had a choice like that.

MICK can't help but stare at JEWEL as she leans forward to
grab a pack of crackers. She knows he is checking her out.
He looks away to the MAN and his GIRL.

MICK

What can I get y'all?

MAN

A pitcher of beer and a dozen of
oysters.

MICK gets busy shucking.

LATER

AT THE BAR - JEWEL sips on the Hurricane as she watches MICK
shuck oysters.

JEWEL

The last person I saw shuck oysters
that easy, was my Great Granddaddy.

MICK

Was he an oyster fisherman?

JEWEL

He fished for just about anything
he could catch in Pointe à la
Hache.

MICK
So that is where you're from?

JEWEL
That's where we lived when I was a
kid.

MICK hands her a freshly shucked oyster in it's shell.

MICK
You ever go back there?

JEWEL
It's been a while. My people are
all gone now. I don't have no one
there. Except, for some family
friends, who didn't get washed away
in the hurricane.

JEWEL picks up a raw oyster with her fingers and drops it on
her tongue and lets it slide down her throat while MICK
watches.

JEWEL (CONT'D)
You got any special places you like
to visit just to stir up memories?

MICK
I don't want to stir them up.

JEWEL
Why? Aren't there any good ones?

NICK
Yeah, plenty. But, it's those I'm
trying to forget.

JEWEL hands back the empty oyster shell that has a tiny
pearl inside it.

JEWEL
You want that one for your
collection?

MICK uses the oyster knife to scrape the TINY PEARL out of
the oyster shell. He brings the pearl close to his intense
eyes.

MICK
Do you know how a pearl is made?

JEWEL
I never thought about it.

Willie mixes up horseradish with ketchup, listens in
curiously.

AT THE DOOR

Jimmy, Tommy and Bo slip in. Jimmy sees JEWEL at the bar. He quickly holds up his party in the shadows to watch the show.

MICK continues his speech as JEWEL listens.

MICK

Oyster spit. It starts with a tiny grain of sand. It rolls it around and around till it's too big to spit out. Then we come along and decide it's a jewel. Imagine that. Something created from grit can make a woman's eyes sparkle.

Willie has to put in his two cents.

WILLE

And our pockets empty.

MICK

Not if you string it up yourself.

MICK drops the shiny pearl into a glass jar. It bounces and rolls among the others he has collected.

JIMMY

(interrupts)

That sounds like some kind of Broussard philosophy?

JEWEL and MICK look at Jimmy, surprised he's there.

Jimmy props his elbows on the bar next to JEWEL.

JEWEL

Why don't you put a monitor on me and save yourself some trouble?

JIMMY

That's not such a bad idea.

JEWEL smiles cunningly.

JEWEL

Don't worry. I won't tell Toulouse I was here.

JIMMY

What makes you think I won't.

JEWEL

You are supposed to be keeping an eye on me, right? What good are you to him if you can't even keep me from escaping the first day he's gone?

Jimmy bares a hard grin, knowing she's right. He takes her by her arm.

JIMMY
I'm taking you back to the boat.

JEWEL pulls away.

JEWEL
I'll go when I'm good and ready.

Jimmy grabs her again.

JIMMY
Let's go!

MICK interrupts.

MICK
Jimmy, the lady wants to be left alone.

Jimmy points his finger in Mick's face.

JIMMY
This ain't none of your business.

MICK
Are you sure about that?

Pops butts in.

POPS
(to JEWEL)
He's kinda like gum on your shoe, huh, JEWEL?

Jimmy's temperature rises. He takes his hanky out his pocket and wipes his brow.

MICK puts a cold draft down in front of him.

MICK
Maybe this will cool you down, Jimbo.

JIMMY
How can I cool down when Toulouse's women who I'm supposed to be keeping out of trouble, is sitting up in a bar flirting with you?

MICK
Isn't flirting what Toulouse trained her to do?

JEWEL doesn't like that comment.

MICK (CONT'D)
Sorry, JEWEL.

She shrugs it off.

JIMMY
Well, I don't think you should be
looking at her the way you do.

MICK (CONT'D)
Since when are you worried about
me?

Pops reaches for a couple beers in the cooler.

POPS
He ain't. He's worried 'bout
himself 'cause he knows Toulouse
ain't gonna like knowing' his
little lady can handle Jimmy better
than he can.

Everyone laughs.

JIMMY
MICK, put a leash on your Grandpa,
before someone puts him six feet
under.

POPS
Jimmy's be thinking he's Scarface
now that he served time.

JIMMY
You sure are a cocky old buzzard.

POPS
This old buzzard can take you on
any day.

MICK stands between Pops and Jimmy.

MICK
Pops, we got thirsty customers.

Pops fearlessly eyes Jimmy, but respecting MICK's wish, he
backs down and goes on about his business.

JIMMY
Old buzzard is lucky he's lived
that long.

MICK leans over to Jimmy -- now very serious.

MICK|
Why don't you take your flock of
trouble out of here and stay out.

JIMMY
You ain't seen trouble till you
mess with her.

Jimmy turns to JEWEL.

(JIMMY (CONT'D)
(to JEWEL)
Get in the car.

Jimmy looks at Tommy and Bo, hoping they're going to do his dirty work. Both little men, nod "No Way." Jimmy looks back at MICK, contemplating the outcome if he should keep on.

MICK
Prison was that much fun, huh?

MICK steps between JEWEL and Jimmy.

MICK (CONT'D)
Just leave, Jimmy.

JIMMY
Not without JEWEL.

MICK grabs Jimmy's collar, ready to pitch him out the bar, but JEWEL interrupts.

JEWEL
Stop!

MICK stops. Everyone looks back at JEWEL.

JEWEL (CONT'D)
I suppose I've tortured him enough
for one day.

MICK
You sure?

JEWEL
Yeah, I'm sure.

MICK release's Jimmy.

MICK
It's your lucky day.

JIMMY
No, I think it's yours.

Jimmy straightens up his shirt collar and follows JEWEL outside.

MICK stands at the door, watching JEWEL get into the Mercedes with Jimmy.

Pops approaches with a tray of dirty glasses to watch, too.

POPS

I bet that girl's seen more evil in those pretty eyes than Anne Rice's got in her story books.

MICK

I know that's true.

POPS

MICK, I know you are hard headed sometimes, and gonna do what you're gonna do... but that woman will lead you to a lot more pain than you have ever known.

MICK

I doubt that.

POPS

Ain't no use warning you, huh?

MICK

Pain sometimes helps to give a new perspective on life.

POPS

Or death!

Pops walks away with the tray.

MICK watches the Mercedes disappear down the street.

CUT TO:

INT. JIMMY'S MERCEDES - NIGHT

Jimmy drives. JEWEL stares out the window. Tommy and Bo are in the back seat.

JEWEL

Thanks for ruining my night.

JIMMY

It's for your own good.

JEWEL

You mean your own good.

JIMMY

I know what you're up to, JEWEL and I ain't gonna let it happen.

JEWEL desperately stares out the window.

JEWEL

You think you coulda stopped me if I really wanted to stay there?

JIMMY

Yeah, JEWEL. We will stop you one way or another.

JEWEL

You and your little brother are just wannabes who are gonna end up dead sooner or later.

TOMMY

Why you gotta down me? This ain't my gig.

JEWEL

If it wasn't for you, Trisha wouldn't be dead, and neither would Benard.

TOMMY

Benard's dead? How?

JEWEL

Ask your brother.

Tommy looks at Jimmy, wanting answers.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASINO DOCK - NIGHT

Jimmy's Mercedes parks in front of the docks. JEWEL gets out quickly and heads to the boat. Jimmy turns to Tommy and Bo, digging a wad of cash from his pocket.

TOMMY

Y'all go to Harrah's and spin a few on me.

Jimmy tries to catch up with JEWEL on the boat.

Tommy and Bo watch them get on board.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

(to Bo)

That Bitch is gonna get us all killed.

As Tommy walks off with Bo, he looks back at Jimmy, not liking what he just found out.

CUT TO:

INT. BAYOU BLUE RIVERBOAT CASINO - LATER

Jimmy stops on deck by Sal and Earl.

JIMMY
(to Sal)
Don't let her leave again.

Sal and Earl nod.

CUT TO:

INT. BAYOU BLUE CASINO - NIGHT

JEWEL pushes past two of the STRIPPERS who are heading to the stage.

STRIPPER
Watch it, Princess.

JEWEL
You watch it, Slut!

STRIPPER
Toulouse ain't here tonight to save your ass.

JEWEL
I don't need Toulouse to save my ass.

Jimmy breaks up a potential cat fight. |

JIMMY
Ladies, Ladies, let's be friendly, huh.

STRIPPER
Shut up, Jimmy.

The Stripper dashes off. Jimmy's feathers are ruffled.

JEWEL sees CHERIE talking with SHELIA at a little table. Shelia is training her to be a waitress.

Jimmy throws up his hands when he sees JEWEL approaching Cherie.

Shelia notices JEWEL approaching them.

SHELIA
Here she comes.

JEWEL
Take a break, Shelia, while I talk to Cherie.

Shelia hesitates to leave her friend alone with JEWEL.

JEWEL (CONT'D)
I won't bite her.

SHELIA

I hope not.

JEWEL

Why don't you bring Cherie and I a glass of expensive Merlot.

Shelia walks away to the bar where the BARTENDER is making drinks.

Jimmy walks to the bar.

BARTENDER

Shelia, you look like you need something for your nerves.

JIMMY

I don't know about her, but I do.

JIMMY glances at Lenne who is parked by the bar in the wheelchair. He then eyes JEWEL who sits down at the table with Cherie.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

This ought to be interesting.

The Bartender pours a Scotch on the Rocks for Jimmy.

AT THE TABLE

Cherie nervously waits for a lecture.

JEWEL

Tell me why a beautiful, young woman like yourself who has the world at her fingertips would want to work in a place like this?

CHERIE

Something different I suppose.

JEWEL

When you realize you don't like it, here, you may not be able to walk away from it.

Cherie looks at JEWEL, curiously.

Shelia brings two glasses of Merlot to their table.

After Shelia walks away again...

JEWEL (CONT'D)

I know Toulouse is charming. He will make you feel like you are special. He will offer you the world if you become his property.

JEWEL glances at Shelia, who is trying to read their lips from the bar.

CHERIE

Uh... It's not like that...

JEWEL

I know a lot more about his motives than you realize.

Cherie is left speechless.

JEWEL (CONT'D)

Just remember the grass isn't greener on the other side of the bayou. You should listen to your Daddy.

CHERIE

What do you know about my Daddy?

JEWEL

I know he doesn't want you to get hurt.

CHERIE

He should have thought of that before now.

JEWEL

We all make mistakes, Cherie. He seems to be trying to make up for all the pain he has caused you and your Mama. I wish I had a father who cared half as much as yours does. Then, maybe I would have traveled a different bayou.

CHERIE

If you are so miserable, then why are you still here?

JEWEL stares a long moment thinking on that question...

JEWEL

I didn't have a better choice like you. Becoming what I am is not as glamorous and fun as it seems. If you don't want to listen to your Daddy, then listen to your own gut instinct. Be better than this.

JEWEL downs her glass of wine and then walks away from Cherie and to the BAR where Jimmy is holding his breath.

Shelia approaches Cherie.

SHELIA

What did she say to you?

CHERIE
Just the truth.

AT THE BAR

JEWEL approaches.

BARTENDER
Do you need something for your
nerves, too?

JEWEL
No, but I don't know how much
longer I can stand it here.

Lenne' stares as if he actually understands her.

Jimmy steps a little closer to JEWEL trying to smooth things
over.

JIMMY
Look, I don't want no hard feelings
between us, JEWEL.

JEWEL
You are nothing but a low life that
ain't worth a pot to piss in, and
when Toulouse gets back, I'm gonna
tell him so. So, if I were you,
I'd go ahead and jump in the river
and get it over with.

Lenne chuckles. Jimmy heard him and turns, stunned.

JIMMY
Lenne! You understood that!

Lenne goes back into La La Land. Jimmy turns to JEWEL,
amazed.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
(to JEWEL)
Did you hear him? He laughed at
what you said!

JEWEL
The stress must really be getting
to you?

JIMMY
I know what I heard.

JEWEL
Lenne, are you tired of being
around the aggravation? I'm going
to put you to bed.

JEWEL pushes Lenne's wheelchair down the corridor.

The Bartender and Jimmy watch JEWEL push Lenne away.

BARTENDER

I wish she'd put me to bed.

Jimmy shoots a stare at the tough man, who could smash him like a fly.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

What? Like you wouldn't want her to tuck you in.

JIMMY

You better hope Toulouse don't hear you make comments like that.

BARTENDER

You telling him?

JIMMY

I'm just saying.

BARTENDER

I ain't stupid like some of us around here.

Jimmy takes the drink and downs it, feeling pretty stupid at the moment, though he knows what he heard.

CUT TO:

INT. LENNE'S ROOM - NIGHT

JEWEL tucks Lenny in the bed. The HELPER who helped get him out of the wheelchair into the bed, gathers up his clothing while Jewel stares at Lenny as if her feelings are much deeper.

JEWEL

I wish I would have never got you involved in my escape plan. This is so unfair that you ended up like this.

Lenny's eyes move to her as she talks. Before she notices, Mrs. Lamache pokes her head in the room.

MRS. LEMACHE'

Is everything okay with Lenne?

JEWEL

I was just putting him to bed.

Mrs. Lemache glances at Lenne who is staring without emotion at the ceiling.

MRS. LEMACHE'

Poor thing just won't snap out of it, will he? He's lucky he still has you around to help take care of him.

JEWEL

Lenne was a good friend. I'm sure he would do the same for me if I was in his situation.

JEWEL exits with Mrs. Lemache and quietly shuts the door.

MRS. LEMACHE'

I gotta get home for my grandson's birthday party. I'm late.

JEWEL notices the briefcase in her hands.

JEWEL

I'll take that to the safe.

MRS. LEMACHE'

Uh...

JEWEL

I don't want you to miss your Grandson blowing out his candles.

MRS. LEMACHE'

My daughter would never forgive me.

Mrs. Lemache reluctantly hands over the briefcase, though she knows JEWEL could use that money to get far away if she wanted to.

JEWEL

Kiss that Grandson for me.

MRS. LEMACHE'

I will.

Mrs. Lemache glances at the briefcase in JEWEL's hands.

JEWEL

Don't worry, Mrs. Lemache. It's in safe hands.

Mrs. Lemache' heads out. JEWEL stands there watching her, then looks at the briefcase in her hands.

CUT TO:

INT. JEWEL'S BEDROOM - LATER

JEWEL takes the CASH out of the briefcase and puts it in her SUITCASE. Then she covers the money with clothes and pushes the briefcase under the bed.

CUT TO:

INT. POP'S RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - LATE NIGHT

The crowd is gone. Pops counts the money in the register.

LIGHTENING FLASHES OUTSIDE AND THUNDER ROARS.

POPS

I'm gonna get on back to the bayou
'fore Nana starts worrying 'bout me
driving in the rain.

MICK

Pops, how did you and Nana make it
all these years?

POPS

Because we were supposed to I
reckon.

MICK chuckles. Pops laughs about it, too.

POPS (CONT'D)

Sometimes she'd come through there
like she was possessed by the
devil. Several times I hit the road
running, but I'd always come back a
couple hours later when her head
stopped spinning and we'd work
things out.

MICK

I guess Monique didn't love me
enough to keep fighting with our
demons.

POPS

She loved you, but sometimes the
demons win.

MICK nods, knowing it's true.

Pops ruffles his hair like he did when he was a kid.

Pops exits. MICK notices a TEQUILA BOTTLE sitting out.

Mick twirls the tequila bottle in his hands, thinking hard.
Thunder rumbles and lightening crackles. He opens the
bottle and takes a long drink.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYOU BLUE CASINO - NIGHT - RAINING

JEWEL, wearing a black hooded raincoat and glasses, casually
walks with a group of rowdy PASSENGERS who are leaving the
casino. She carries the little suitcase.

Sal doesn't recognize JEWEL under the raincoat in the rain.
But, Cherie recognizes her from under her umbrella.

CUT TO:

INT. RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - LATE NIGHT - RAIN

CLOSE ON a PEARL being strung on a fishing line. MICK is making a pearl necklace. The place is dark, except for neon light above the bar and the street lamps outside.

JEWEL
(off screen)
Can't sleep, huh?

Mick looks up at JEWEL, finding lamp light crossing her eyes. She has snuck in the door, wet from the rain.

JEWEL removes the raincoat and drapes it over a chair next to her suitcase. Mick doesn't notices the suitcase that sits in the shadow.

MICK
You're determined to cause me
problems, aren't you, Miss Roux?

Mick strings on another pearl on the fishing line.

JEWEL
That wasn't my intention.

Mick glances up at JEWEL.

JEWEL grabs a clean bar towel from the counter, wiping the rain water off her face and neck as MICK watches.

JEWEL (CONT'D)
I just wanted to tell you that I
had a little talk with Cherie. I
tried to warn her about working at
a place like that.

MICK
Did it do any good?

JEWEL
Maybe. But, we all have to learn
our own lessons in life.

MICK looks up at JEWEL, wondering why she is telling him this.

She picks up the bottle of Tequila that is sitting on the end of the bar.

JEWEL (CONT'D)
May I?

MICK
Knock yourself out.

JEWEL takes a big swallow.

JEWEL
Maybe I will go far away and live a
normal life.

MICK
You don't look like the kind of
woman who can live a normal life.

JEWEL
You should know better than anyone
that looks can be deceiving.

MICK
Yeah, I suppose.

JEWEL
When I was a little girl, Mama used
to say, JEWEL, life ain't a bed of
soft rose pedals, sometimes there's
thorns in `em. Sometimes you have
to learn to sleep on the thorns.

Mick feels her pain as he puts the string of pearls around
her neck as...

JEWEL (CONT'D)
I hope Mama was wrong because I'm
tired of sleeping on thorns.

MICK
What do you want with me, JEWEL?

JEWEL
Is that a trick question?

MICK
Your old man ain't gonna like you
paying me visits in the middle of
the night.

JEWEL admires the pearls in the mirror behind the bar.

JEWEL
I'm leaving him.

MICK
How do you plan to accomplish that?

JEWEL
Defiance of Fate.

JEWEL stares at Mick through the mirror.

MICK
 You expect me to rescue you if he
 finds you?

JEWEL turns and faces him.

JEWEL
 I was hoping you would.

Mick, feeling needed for the first time in a long time,
 can't resist JEWEL any longer. He gently kisses her before
 they ravish each other.

LIGHTENING flashes outside. The street lights flicker.

CUT TO:

EXT. BACK DOOR OF RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - NIGHT - RAIN

The BLACK CAT jumps on a metal trash can and the lid bangs
 the cement.

CUT TO:

INT. RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - SAME

Mick and JEWEL hear the loud racket. Mick puts his finger
 over his lip, "shhhhhh".... He grabs a PISTOL from under
 the bar and quietly walks out the back entrance.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - SAME

CLOSE ON hands slipping on GLOVES. Mick cautiously slides
 outside, looks then notices the trash can lid on the ground,
 then sees the BLACK CAT.

MICK
 (to the black cat)
 It's just you.

As Mick is about to turn and go back inside, BAM! He is
 cracked over the head with a bat and is knocked unconscious.

CUT TO:

INT. RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - SAME

JEWEL waits for Mick to come back inside. Her attention is
 drawn to the front door that is cracked opened - she doesn't
 remember the door being opened earlier. She scoops up the
 tequila BOTTLE and carefully eases to the door, looks
 outside into the wet streets.

JEWEL looks back into the bar.

JEWEL
 Mick!

The GLOVED HAND reaches from behind the door and grabs JEWEL, yanking her inside.

The door closes.

JEWEL smashes the tequila bottle on the side of the attacker's head. He goes down.

The gloved hand seizes her leg and drags her to the floor.

JEWEL screams, but nobody can hear a damn thing with the THUNDER and RAIN. The pearl necklace breaks and pearls roll all over floor. She grabs a piece of broken glass and tries to slash at his throat, just missing his juggler and catches part of an earlobe instead.

JEWEL tries to get back to her feet, but the attacker grabs her. During the struggle, JEWEL falls back and hits her head, knocking herself out cold. The gloved hands reach down for her and carries her out of the bar.

CUT TO:

EXT. RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - LATER

Mick lies unconscious in a puddle of rain-water. The black cat rubs against him. He comes to and quickly realizes what happened by the pain he feels in the back of his head. He grabs his pistol on the ground and gets to his feet and cautiously slips inside the back door.

CUT TO

INT. POP'S RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - SAME

Mick eases in, pistol aimed. All is quiet and JEWEL is nowhere in sight. The place is a wreck, chairs turned over, tables flipped. JEWEL's raincoat is draped over the bar where she left it.

Mick steps on broken pearls on the floor and shattered glass from the tequila bottle. He picks up one of the blood soaked pearls, knowing something bad must have happened to JEWEL.

MICK

Son-of-a-bitch!

CUT TO:

INT. POP'S RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - EARLY DAWN

POLICE DETECTIVES search the premises for evidence.

Mick is standing with Captain Williams.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Toulouse is not going to take this well.

Pops enters the lounge, stops in disbelief.

MICK

I'm sorry, Pops. I will replace everything.

POPS

Never mind that. I'm just glad that ain't your blood on the floor

MICK

I will help clean up when I get back.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Where are you going?

MICK

To hell if I don't find JEWEL.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Do you think it was Toulouse?

TOULOUSE

Toulouse would have just finished me off while I was lying in the puddle.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

True. Then who?

MICK

I don't know. But, I know where to start asking.

Mick starts out...

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Mick! I think you will need this.

Captain Williams hands over Mick's Police Badge. Mick stares at it in his hand.

MICK

You sure you want me back now.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Well, if any cop can find the right bad guy, it is you.

Mick slides the badge in his pocket.

MICK

I'll be in touch.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

It's about time.

Mick dashes out.

CUT TO:

INT. JEWEL'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Jimmy stands in the opened doorway to JEWEL's room. He stares at the drawers that are opened and empty.

Mrs. Lemache is behind him, worried because she gave JEWEL the deposit money.

MRS. LEMACHE

We better call him before someone else does.

JIMMY

I might as well order my coffin.

Jimmy reluctantly dials the phone and waits for the ring.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Toulouse, JEWEL's done run off again in the middle of the night.

Jimmy hangs up.

MRS. LEMACHE'

How did he sound?

JIMMY

He didn't.

MRS. LEMACHE'

That's not good.

Jimmy looks at his watch.

JIMMY

I might have an hour to get things in order with my future widow.

CUT TO:

EXT. & INT. TOULOUSE'S CAR - MORNING

Toulouse slides into the car with his DRIVER. There is a harsh stare in his eyes. The Driver doesn't ask questions as he cranks up and pulls out.

CUT TO:

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

A JAR OF CRAB BOIL sits on the counter next to a BIG POT on the stove. Jimmy walks in and sees the pot on the stove. He stirs the concoction with a big wooden spoon, sweating bullets over the heat.

SUZANA, 40s, Jimmy's wife, hair a mess, wearing gaudy housecoat and slippers, drags to the kitchen with a

cigarette hanging from her lip.

JIMMY
Is this supposed to be breakfast?

SUZANA
You got a problem with it?

JIMMY
(sarcastic)
No, Honey. Boiled Crawfish is fine
for breakfast.

SUZANA
Where the hell were you for the
last few days, Jimmy?

JIMMY
I was working like I always am.
Listen, Suzana... we have to talk.

Jimmy peers outside and sees Mick coming towards the house.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Shit... Put on some decent clothes.

SUZANA
I thought we had to talk.

JIMMY
It has to wait, now.

Jimmy opens the door for Mick.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Let me guess?

Mick walks inside.

MICK
What did you do with JEWEL?

JIMMY
What are you talking about?

MICK
Don't play stupid, Jimmy.

Suzana butts in.

SUZANA
He's not playing stupid. He is
stupid.

JIMMY
Shut your trap, Suzana and get
dressed like I told you.

Suzana doesn't budge.

MICK
JEWEL showed up at my place last night.

JIMMY
That figures.

MICK
But, someone got her after they knocked me in head.

JIMMY
How come woman who get involved with you end up dead.

That hurt.

MICK
Is she dead, Jimmy?

JIMMY
I don't know! But, if I could get my hands on her though, she could be.

MICK
Well, we got us a problem, don't we?

JIMMY
Yeah, I suppose we do.

MICK
If I don't take you into protective custody, Toulouse is probably gonna kill you.

Jimmy thinks on that one.

JIMMY
Does this mean you're back on the force?

MICK
That's what it means.

JIMMY
Lucky me.

CUT TO:

EXT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - SAME

Suzana follows Jimmy and Mick outside.

SUZANA
They should have some kind of jail time insurance. I'd be a rich woman by now.

Jimmy snarls at Suzana as Mick puts Jimmy into his truck.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Jimmy is in the room being interrogated by Mick and Captain Williams.

MICK
Who had a motive to kill her,
besides you?

JIMMY
Just about all the strippers in
Bayou Blue.

MICK
I don't think a woman could have
hit me that hard.

Mick rubs the back of his head.

JIMMY
You ever seen them strippers climb
up those poles and hang from the
ceiling? They got some strong
arms.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
Don't get smart, Maroni.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

Mick and Captain are talking out of earshot of Jimmy.

Jimmy stares at LEONA through the glass window, wondering if she already called Toulouse, because he knows she is on his payroll also.

Captain Williams turns back to Jimmy.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
You're free to go.

JIMMY
What if I don't want to go.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
I think you will be more beneficial
on the outside.

JIMMY
I'll be dead is what I'll be.

MICK
You're probably right.

Captain Williams opens Leona's OFFICE DOOR.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS
Leona get Jimmy's paper work. I'm
sure his file is still close by.

LEONA
Yes, Sir.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION LEONA'S OFFICE - LATER

AS Leona searches the file for Jimmy's paperwork, she
carefully picks up the phone and dials...

CUT TO:

INT. TOULOUSE'S CAR - SAME

As Toulouse rides with his DRIVER back to New Orleans, his
cell phone rings. He answers.

TOULOUSE
Yes?

Toulouse is seething as he discovers where and how JEWEL
went missing.

CUT BACK AND FORTH
TO:

LEONA
It doesn't look good, Toulouse.

Toulouse listens to the rest...

TOULOUSE
Merci, Leona.

Toulouse hangs up, glaring forward.

Leona quietly hangs the phone back up and checks to make
sure no one heard her make the call.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYOU BLUE - LATER

Before Toulouse gets out of the CAR...

TOULOUSE
(to Driver)
Go pick up Jimmy at the station and
bring him back here.

DRIVER
Yes, Sir.

CUT TO:

INT. BAYOU BLUE CASINO OFFICE - LATER

Toulouse is sitting at the table slowly shuffling a deck of cards. The bottle of moonshine is sitting nearby. Mrs. Lemache is there also with Big Earl watching, waiting for his next move.

MRS. LEMACHE'

Maybe she just needed some time to herself.

Toulouse says nothing, just keeps shuffling.

MRS. LEMACHE' (CONT'D)

I'll be in my office.

TOULOUSE

Mrs. Lemache.

Mrs. Lemache turns to Toulouse, wondering if he will blame her.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)

Don't ever give a woman my money again. Or I will have to kill you.

Mrs. Lemache' nods with relief and then exits the room.

Jimmy walks in, accepting his fate. He approaches Toulouse at the table.

JIMMY

I swear I thought she was asleep in her room last night. I really don't know where she is now or what happened to her last night.

Toulouse stops shuffling the cards and pours a shot of moonshine as Jimmy watches tensely.

TOULOUSE

I asked you to do one simple thing while I was gone.

Toulouse reaches in his jacket for his SWITCH BLADE that he holds unopened in the palm of his hand.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)

You're worthless, Jimmy.

JIMMY

Please, Toulouse. You're the one who said she had a mind of her own.

Toulouse knows that wild horses couldn't have stopped JEWEL if she wanted to go.

TOULOUSE

Maybe you got rid of her so I
wouldn't find out about who she was
with last night.

JIMMY

(pleading)

I thought I'd let you handle her
your own way. It wasn't my place.

TOULOUSE

When?

JIMMY

Preferably when you weren't
drinking your Daddy's Moonshine.

A BEAT OF SILENCE. Then Toulouse can't help but laugh out
loud before he smashes the bottle over Jimmy's head. Jimmy
goes down. He covers his bleeding skull with his fingers.

Red forces Tommy into the room.

Jimmy looks at Tommy who now has a busted lip and swollen
eye. He wonders if Tommy could have done it.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Tommy!

RED

(To Toulouse)

He don't know nothing.

Red pushes Tommy over by Jimmy.

TOULOUSE]

Which one of you losers want to die
first?

Jimmy and Tommy look at each other, knowing it's coming.

Toulouse pops open the SWITCH BLADE.

As he starts to approach them, Mrs. Lemache' barges into the
room.

MRS. LEMACHE'

Captain Williams is on his way over
here to talk to you.

Toulouse stares at Jimmy and Tommy and then shuts the Switch
Blade.

TOULOUSE

(to Jimmy)

You're like a cat with nine lives.

CUT TO:

INT. CASINO BLUE ROOM - LATER

Toulouse is cooperating business-like as Mick and Captain Williams who were there to ask questions. The interrogation is pretty much over for now.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

We appreciate your cooperation Mr. LeFlurr.

TOULOUSE

I am just glad you are on top of things. I would sure like to know where she is. Dead or alive.

Toulouse glances at Mick, who eyes him boldly.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Just stay in town in case we have any further questions.

TOULOUSE

Of course.

Toulouse eyes Mick, boldly as Mick and Captain Williams exit the boat.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYOU BLUE PIER - LATER

As Captain Williams and Mick walk down the pier...

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

I really don't think he knows where she is.

MICK

I think you're right. I'm going to take a ride to Pointe à la Hache.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Why?

MICK

Just a hunch.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS

Oh Lordy, another one of those.

Mick gets into his truck that is parked behind the Captain's POLICE CAR. Captain Williams watches with a worried look as Mick drives away. He looks back at Bayou Blue and sees Toulouse watching from the window up top.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAIT SHOP - LATE DAY

Mick stops at a little Bait Shop where an OLD CREOLE MAN is sitting out front spitting snuff in a bottle and stringing led on a fishing line.

MICK
Nice day for fishing?

OLD CREOLE MAN
Nice as any.

MICK
I was looking for a woman.

OLD CREOLE MAN
Aren't we all.

MICK
Do you know JEWEL Roux?

The Old Creole Man glances up with just his eyes, as he keeps working on the line.

OLD CREOLE WOMAN inside peers through the screen door, listening.

OLD CREOLE MAN
Last I heard, JEWEL was living in
New Orleans.

Mick notices the Old Creole Woman inside listening in. He can tell by the look on her face that she knows JEWEL a little better.

MICK
You sell bottled water here?

OLD CREOLE MAN
Sure! Cold beer, too.

Mick enters the bait shop.

CUT TO:

INT. BAIT SHOP - SAME

Mick nods to the OLD CREOLE WOMAN at the register.

MICK
Good afternoon.

The Old Creole Woman watches Mick as he looks in the cooler and pulls out a bottled water and sets it on the counter.

OLD CREOLE WOMAN
Did something happen to JEWEL?

MICK
I'm not sure. But, she
disappeared.

OLD CREOLE WOMAN
She finally got away from him?

Mick is surprised the Old Creole Woman said so.

MICK
You know her well?

OLD CREOLE WOMAN
JEWEL stayed with her Grandfather
down the bayou for many years
before that wicked man got a hold
of her. All the rest of her family
dead and gone.

The Old Creole Woman studies Mick a little longer...

OLD CREOLE WOMAN (CONT'D)
Why are you so interested in JEWEL?

Mick shows his badge.

OLD CREOLE WOMAN (CONT'D)
You don't look like a cop.
Last time I seen her, a few months
back, she was with a young man.

MICK
How young?

OLD CREOLE WOMAN
A few years younger than her, I
suppose. He had them crazy eyes
for her.

MICK
Crazy eyes?

OLD CREOLE WOMAN
Yeah. The kind that get a person
into trouble.

MICK
Trouble, huh?

The Old Creole Woman nods.

MICK (CONT'D)
Do you know where I can find her
Grandpa's place?

The Old Creole Man interrupts -- still sitting outside the
screen door.

They see a YOUNG BLOND HAIREd WOMAN about twenty-one years old, pull up in a convertible while her FRIEND waits in the car.

YOUNG BLOND WOMAN
(TO HER FRIEND)
They probably don't sell fancy wine.

FRIEND
Then get fancy beer and get me a pack of cigarettes, too!

The Young Blond Woman reminds him of Cherie as she passes him on her way inside to the cooler.

YOUNG BLOND WOMAN
What is the best wine you've got to take to a rich people's party.

OLD CREOLE WOMAN
Only wine we got has a screw top.

The Young Blond Woman looks in the cooler.

Mick suddenly remembers the DEBUTANTE' BALL. He looks at his WATCH.

MICK
Shit... The Ball!

OLD CREOLE WOMAN
Better hurry before the clock strikes midnight!

MICK
You got that right. If JEWEL comes around, tell her Mick Brouard is looking for her.

OLD CREOLE WOMAN
JEWEL ain't a bad person. She just was dealt a bad hand.

MICK
Yeah, I've been dealt a few myself.

Mick pays for the cold drink, storing all this info in his head.

MICK (CONT'D)
Thanks for your cooperation.

The Old Creole Woman nods. Mick exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAIT SHOP

The Old Creole Man watches suspiciously as Mick passes to his truck.

Mick gets into his truck and quickly drives away.

The Old Creole Woman stands in the doorway with the screen door pushed open.

OLD CREOLE MAN
You should keep that mouth of your
shut, Woman. You will bring all
kinds of trouble down here.

OLD CREOLE WOMAN
That man was good. JEWEL needs a
good man on her side.

The Old Creole Woman turns to the young woman who sets a six pack of wine coolers on the counter.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAYOU CAMP - LATE DAY

ANGLE ON a cabin standing on pylons over the bayou. There is a muddy car parked near the pier. The place is quiet.

CUT TO:

INT. BAYOU CAMP - SAME

Late afternoon sunlight reflects on JEWEL's SUITCASE sitting on a dresser near the window.

JEWEL is sleeping on top of a bedspread wearing the same clothes she had on when she was taken. Her eyes open and she looks at her surroundings trying to figure out how she got there. It all comes back to her. She quickly sits up and turns to see --

LENNE sitting in a chair, watching her sleep.

JEWEL
Lenne!

LENNE
I was wondering when you were going
to wake up.

JEWEL is stunned and confused.

JEWEL
How long have you been...

LENNE
Long enough. I did pretty good
fooling everybody.

JEWEL

You could win an academy award.

JEWEL remembers what happened the night before.

JEWEL (CONT'D)

This was not part of the original plan.

LENNE

No, it's even better. In the original plan, I wasn't supposed to get tripped down a flight of stairs and shoot a cop.

JEWEL

Why didn't you tell me you were okay?

LENNE

Because you are so honest, I knew you couldn't keep it from Toulouse if he suspected anything.

JEWEL

So, your head is fine?

LENNE

Everything is fine.

Lenne stands up and crosses the room to her.

LENNE (CONT'D)

Now, Toulouse will think that Jimmy got rid of you to save his own ass, or Mick did it out of revenge.

JEWEL

I didn't want anyone else to get hurt.

LENNE

You wanted to be free of him. Now is your chance.

Lenne sits beside her.

LENNE (CONT'D)

I promised you I would help you.

JEWEL notices his wounded earlobe.

JEWEL

If you would have let me in on this new plan, I wouldn't have tried to kill you.

LENNE

I knew you'd never go along with it
after you got involved with the
cop.

JEWEL wonders about Mick.

JEWEL

You didn't hurt Mick, did you!

LENNE

He's fine... for now.

JEWEL is relieved.

JEWEL

Now what?

LENNE

I will go back before Toulouse
figures things out.

JEWEL

Don't you think he would have
noticed by now that you're not
there?

LENNE

I'm supposed to be at rehab for a
few days.

JEWEL

So, you're just going leave me out
here?

LENNE

Only for a little while. Then I
will come back for you and get you
far away from here.

Lenne smiles and kisses her cheek. She forces herself to
smile back at him.

She then notices her suitcase on the dresser.

JEWEL

You brought my suitcase!

LENNE

I figured if you packed it, you'd
want what was in it.

JEWEL

Yeah, I need to change into
something more comfortable.

LENNE

Do that. I'll be back soon.

As he walks away, JEWEL worries about everyone else involved now.

CUT TO:

INT. REHAB CLINIC - DAY

The REHAB NURSE is talking with Toulouse, shaking her head as if telling him that Lenne has not been there.

Toulouse turns away from the NURSE, figuring out that his Brother may be the culprit.

CUT TO:

INT. BAYOU BLUE CASINO - LENNE'S ROOM - LATER

Toulouse is staring at an empty wheelchair.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMP OVER SWAMP WATER - LATER

JEWEL is staring out the window at the water, then looks down at her little suitcase. She opens it and lifts her clothes where she had stashed the DEPOSIT MONEY that Mrs. Lemache gave her. It is still there. She sighs with relief.

JEWEL paces the floor, then stops to watch the sun go down over the cypress trees. She starts digging in the drawers and cabinets and finds a candle and matches. She lights the candle before the sun goes down. She can hear the crickets start to sing and other critters creeping around in the dark.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE MONROE PLANTATION HOME GARDEN - NIGHT

Monique, dressed in a classy dress, is greeting guests who are attending Cherie's Debutante Ball.

Cherie is surrounded by FRIENDS and FAMILY.

"IKO IKO, a hot Zydeco tune blasts from the BAND STAGE.

Caterers serve champagne, shrimp cocktails, mint juleps, watermelon, and of course, crawfish.

Mrs. Shirley waltzes over to her husband...

JUDGE JACK MONROE, wearing a white linen suit and a big Stetson Hat, sitting in a iron chair smoking a cigar. A big pile of CRAWFISH TAILS AND HEADS are in tray on the cast iron table in front of him.

His wife, Mrs. Shirley Monroe places her hand on his shoulder, flashing a big diamond as she hands over a mug of

beer.

MRS. SHIRLEY MONROE
Aren't you going to socialize,
Honey?

JUDGE JACK MONROE
When I spot somebody I want talk
to. Where's Mick anyhow?

MRS. SHIRLEY
I don't know why you're still so
fond of him.

JUDGE JACK MONROE
Some folks ask me the same about
you.

MRS. SHIRLEY MONROE
Jack, you're life would have been
dull as pea soup without me.

JUDGE JACK MONROE
That is true, Mrs. Shirley. Why
don't you go check the punch bowl
and me digest all these crawdads.

Mrs. Shirley promenades around the crowd. Mr. Jack Monroe
goes back to watching the band until his attention is taken
by the future governor JR.

JR
Judge Jack Monroe.

JUDGE JACK MONROE
Jr! Good to see you. How's the
campaign dollars holding up?

JR
Wonderfully. Feel free to donate a
few more if you like.

CUT TO:

INT. BAYOU BLUE CASINO - NIGHT

Lenne sneaks back into his room. He sees Toulouse sitting
in his wheelchair.

TOULOUSE
Welcome back, Little Brother.

Lenne reaches for a pistol that he usually keeps on a
dresser, but it is not there.

Toulouse is holding the pistol.

LENNE
Are you gonna kill me now?

TOULOUSE

No. I need you to tell me what you did with JEWEL.

LENNE

JEWEL is long gone.

Toulouse absorbs his worst nightmare.

LENNE (CONT'D)

You will never find her.

TOULOUSE

Why have you betrayed me?

LENNE

I couldn't watch you destroy her like your father destroyed my mother.

TOULOUSE

My father took you and your mother in and took care of her until the day she died.

LENNE

Yeah. The day she died was the day she was finally free.

TOULOUSE

So, this is about revenge?

LENNE

Not really.

Then it dawns on Toulouse...

TOULOUSE

You are in love with JEWEL!

Lenne doesn't answer.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)

Of course! I should have seen this before now.

LENNE

You would have if you were not so blinded by your obsessions.

Toulouse aims the pistol at Lenne's forehead.

TOULOUSE

Tell me where she is.

LENNE

Not in a million years.

Toulouse fires and hits Lenne between his crazy eyes.

Red and Earl rush in to see what happened. Jimmy is right behind them. They are stunned to see Lenne on the floor and Toulouse still sitting in Lenne's wheelchair.

Toulouse gets up from the chair and exits the room.

TOULOUSE
Don't touch anything.

Big Earl and Red look at one another, curiously.

Jimmy follows Toulouse.

JIMMY
What is going on?

TOULOUSE
Lenne played us all.

JIMMY
You mean he was not brain dead.

TOULOUSE
He is now.

Jimmy wipes his brow with his hanky, knowing he could be next.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)
JEWEL will also pay for this.

JIMMY
Why don't you just let her go?

Toulouse turns to Jimmy with a look of disbelief.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Or not.

TOULOUSE
There is one way to bring her out of hiding.

Jimmy cringes as he waits for the plan.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)
If JEWEL took the time to convince Cherie that I am no good and then stop and say goodbye to Mick Brouard... she must care about them. And JEWEL's caring heart was always her downfall.

Jimmy knows he is really in deep shit now.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONROE MANSION - CHERIE'S DEBUTANTE BALL - NIGHT

Mick wanders into the crowd. He gazes around searching for Cherie.

Mrs. Shirley steps up to Mick.

MRS. SHIRLEY
I was wondering if you would show?

MICK
Wouldn't miss it for the world.

MRS. SHIRLEY
Jack was just asking about you.

MICK
Good. I need to talk to him.

Monique points to Judge Jack Monroe sitting at a small table near the band stand, shaking hands with JR, who then walks away.

Mick approaches his Ex-Father-In-Law, Judge Jack Monroe, who is actually glad to see him there.

Jack pulls a unwrapped cigar out of his breast pocket.

JUDGE JACK MONROE
Smoke?

Mick takes the cigar and smells it.

MICK
Cuban?

JUDGE JACK MONROE
Of course.

MICK
Don't you know these are illegal?

JUDGE JACK MONROE
The best kind.

Mick's gaze hunts Cherie and Monique. He sees Monique chatting with the guest. Judge Jack Monroe follows his gaze.

JUDGE JACK MONROE (CONT'D)
It's hard to break old habits ain't it?

MICK
You'd know better than anyone.

Judge Jack Monroe laughs out loud.

MICK (CONT'D)

I need a favor from you, Jack.

JUDGE JACK MONORE

What kind of favor?

MICK

I'm gonna take down Toulouse
LeFlurr sooner or later and I hope
I can count on you to help keep him
down this time.

JUDGE JACK MONROE

You're playing with fire that can
burn us all.

Mick notices JR mingling with Monique.

MICK

I know about the kickbacks and the
pocket lining.

JUDGE JACK MONROE

Mick, this is Louisiana. It's been
this way for years.

MICK

Well, it's time things changed.

Judge Jack Monroe stares at Mick, knowing he is right.

Their attention is taken to the BAND STAND where the SINGER
makes an announcement.

BAND SINGER

We want to introduce the lovely
Debutante', Cherie Brouard, who
has blossomed into a beautiful
young lady, up for grabs by a
suitable gentleman.

Cherie blushes as the crowd claps.

CHERIE

Maybe after college.

The crowd laughs with her.

MICK

That's my, Girl.

Cherie spots her Daddy and is glad he showed up.

BAND SINGER

We are going to dedicate the next
song to the lovely lady, "If ever I
cease to love."

The band begins to play the famous Mardi Gras Song, "IF EVER I CEASE TO LOVE."

Mick approaches Cherie.

MICK

May I have the first dance?

Cherie smiles and extends her hand to him.

While they dance...

MICK (CONT'D)

Are you still mad at me?

CHERIE

Yes, but I will get over it. I'm glad you came.

MICK

I wouldn't miss seeing my little girl being elected to the womanhood hall of fame.

CHERIE

I'm sure it's not all they make it out to be.

MICK

It can be if you make the right choices in life.

CHERIE

Just so you know, I didn't take the job.

Mick is relieved, but he doesn't say I told you so.

CHERIE (CONT'D)

You can thank your friend, JEWEL.

MICK

I wish I could. But, she is sort of missing right now.

CHERIE

Missing? I got the impression she was leaving town of her own accord.

MICK

Why?

CHERIE

She left the boat with her suitcase.

Mick realizes he was played also.

Cherie sees Monique staring from across the lawn.

CHERIE (CONT'D)
Mom spotted you.

Mick glances over his shoulder and sees Monique being
chatted up by a handsome, distinguished gentleman.

STANLEY RAIMER interrupts the dance.

STANLEY RAIMER
Mr. Broussard. May I dance with
your daughter?

Mick stops and hands Cherie over to the eligible bachelor.

MICK
Sure, Stanley. Just don't step on
her toes.

Mick meanders over to Monique and interrupts her
conversation with the handsome gentleman.

MICK (CONT'D)
S'cuse us a minute, while I dance
with my ex.

Mick seizes Monique's arm and leads her to the dance floor.

MICK (CONT'D)
Is he your date?

MONIQUE
He's a friend of the family.

MICK
Someone your Mother conjured up?

MONIQUE
Of course.

Mick glances around the crowd, looking for suspicious
activity. Monique can see he is back at what he does best.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)
I'm glad to see you're back at
work.

MICK
Are you?

Monique nods, unconvincing.

MICK (CONT'D)
How did you know already?

MONIQUE
You have that relentless glow.

MICK
I do?

MONIQUE
It's becoming at times.

MICK
I get the feeling you miss it.

MONIQUE
Yeah, maybe. But, I don't know if
I miss it enough to let it burn me
again.

They stop dancing, just staring at each other.

MABEL brings Mick the PORTABLE PHONE.

MABEL
Mr. Brouard, you have an urgent
call.

Mick takes the phone and listens.

MICK
Yeah?

Worry creases his brow.

MICKS
I'll be right there.

Mick hangs up and hands the portable phone back to Monique.

MICK
I have to go.

Monique is sort of disappointed, but is used to it.

MONIQUE
I know.

MICK
Someone reported a problem at Pop's
place.

Mick looks for Cherie -- She is still dancing with Stanley.

MONIQUE
I'll tell her.

Mick turns back to Monique, not really wanting to leave, but
he has to.

MICK
Thanks for the dance.

Monique watches him leave through the gates.

MONIQUE
Same old, same old.

CUT TO:

Shelia approaches Cherie wearing a fancy dress.

SHELIA

Hey, girl.

CHERIE

Shelia! I thought you had to work.

SHELIA

I did. But, Toulouse wanted me to give you a message. He needs to see you.

CHERIE

I can't leave my party.

SHELIA

He said it is very important.

Mrs. Shirley notices Cherie talking with Shelia, who she saw her with the other night.

The CATERERS interrupt her to ask a question. When she looks back at Cherie, Cherie is not there. She doesn't think anything of it.

CUT TO:

EXT. MANSION GATES - SAME

Cherie stops by a waiting car. She turns to Shelia.

CHERIE

Can you tell him that I will come after the Ball.

The car door opens and Tommy steps out. Cherie is surprised to see him.

CHERIE (CONT'D)

Tommy!

TOMMY

This is nothing personal, Cherie.

Tommy aims the gun at her. She is stunned. She looks at Shelia.

SHELIA

I'm sorry. I had no choice.

TOMMY

Get in the car.

Cherie is forced into the car.

CUT TO:

EXT. POP'S RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - NIGHT

Yellow police tape surrounds Pop's lounge. But, nothing unusual is going on. Mick pulls up and checks things out. Then calls the station.

MICK
This is Brouard. There is nothing going on here.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - SAME

Leona is on the phone with Mick.

LEONA
Are you sure? A 911 call came in.

Mick suddenly realizes that he has been fooled.

MICK
Someone was trying to lure me away from there.

Mick hangs up and rushes back to his truck.

Leona hangs up, hoping she is never found out.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONROE MANSION - LATER

The party is winding down. Monique is chatting with another her father, Judge Jack Monroe. Mrs. Shirley is pouring herself a DRINK.

The CATERERS are cleaning up the mess.

A few GUESTS are being led out by their better-half.

Mabel brings a bottle of ANTI-ACIDS to Judge Monroe.

MABEL
This will put the fire out.

JUDGE MONROE
Thanks, Mabel. What would we do without you?

MABEL
I have no idea.

They laugh.

Mick bursts through the back gate.

Monique spots him. Mick spots her - relieved she is there, until he realizes Cherie is not in sight.

MICK
Where is Cherie!

MONIQUE
I suppose she pulled another one of
her disappearing acts.

Mick panics, starts looking everywhere, but can't find her.
Now Monique panics.

MONIQUE (CONT'D)
Why! What's the matter?

MICK
Did you see anyone out of place
here tonight?

Mrs. Shirley remembers...

MRS. SHIRLEY MONROE
Just that new friend of hers.
Shelia, that she has been bar
hopping with.

They look at Mrs. Shirley Monroe, who is clueless.

MRS. SHIRLEY
Don't panic. We all did it at her
age.

Mrs. Shirley Monroe has no idea what Mick and Monique know
about Sheila. But, Judge Jack Monroe can tell something bad
is happening with Cherie.

The PHONE RINGS. Monique picks it up.

MONIQUE
Hello.

She listens... then looks at Mick, horrified.

Mick takes the phone from her and puts it to his ear.

CUT TO:

INT. BAYOU BLUE OFFICE - NIGHT - SAME

Toulouse on the phone.

CUT BACK AND FORTH:

EXT. MONROE MANSION - SAME

Mick on phone. Everyone waiting...

MICK

If you harm one hair on her head.

BACK ON TOULOUSE

TOULOUSE

I don't want to harm Cherie. I am quite fond of her. Here is your chance to be the kind of detective you've always dreamed of being. Find JEWEL and bring her to me, and I will give Cherie back.

Toulouse hangs up. Cherie is staring at Toulouse, now realizing her Dad was right about him all along.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONIQUE'S HOUSE - SAME

Mick looks like he might be sick to his stomach. He turns to the family.

MICK

Seems he has the upper hand right now.

Judge Monroe takes a deep breath, knowing this is bad news.

JACK MONROE

I will call JR. Maybe he can talk some sense into him.

MICK

Politics can't help us now.

Mick starts to leave when Monique latches onto his arm.

MONIQUE

Take me with you?

MICK

No way.

MONIQUE

I can help.

MICK

It's too dangerous.

Mick leaves Monique, who is desperate.

Judge Jack Monroe steps up to her side.

JUDGE JACK MONROE

It's not always true when they say what they don't know won't hurt them.

Monique turns to her wise Father.

CUT TO:

INT. CASINO - JEWEL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Toulouse points to the made-up bed. Cherie stares at it.

TOULOUSE

You can stay in JEWEL's room for now.

CHERIE

I thought you liked me.

TOULOUSE

I do like you, Cherie.

CHERIE

Then why are you doing this?

TOULOUSE

Consequences. And, because your Dad and I have a score to settle.

Toulouse locks Cherie into the room alone. Cherie clutches to the pillow.

CUT TO:

EXT. POINT A' LA HASH - BAIT SHOP - NIGHT

Mick drives like a madman and parks in front of the Bait Shop where he was earlier. He hurries out of the truck and races into the Bait Shop. The Old Creole Man was just about to close. He is surprised to see Mick.

MICK

Tell me where JEWEL's grandfather's camp is?

OLD CREOLE MAN

Man, I ain't got no information.

MICK

Please, he has my daughter.

The Old Creole Woman approaches Mick. She can see that he is desperate.

OLD CREOLE WOMAN

Two miles down there is a little dirt road off to the left. There ain't no sign or nothing. Just a dirt road. Go to the dead end.

The Old Creole Man glares at his wife.

MICK

Thank you.

Mick hurries out.

OLD CREOLE MAN

Woman, you sure have a big mouth.

OLD CREOLE WOMAN

Why don't you go fishing or something.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY / DIRT ROAD / MICK'S TRUCK - LATER

Mick slows down when he approaches the dirt road on the left.

CUT TO:

He turns and heads towards the dead end.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - SAME

JEWEL was walking up the dirt road in the dark, carrying her little suitcase.

She sees HEADLIGHTS COMING. So, not knowing who it is, she quickly hides in the MARSH GRASS.

ON MICK

Mick turns onto the dirt road and drives towards the dead end.

JEWEL stands up after he passes, but does not realize it is Mick. She hurries onto the highway.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMP HOUSE - SAME

Mick pulls up and cuts the engine. The place is dark, so he leaves his headlights on. He gets out with his PISTOL in hand. He carefully checks the door and it is unlocked, so he slowly pushes the door open.

MICK

JEWEL!

INT. CAMP HOUSE - SAME

Mick steps inside and looks around the camp house. JEWEL is no where in sight. He sees the candle that has burned out, and then a NOTE PAPER with a pen lying beside it.

Mick picks up the note to read it.

CLOSE ON NOTE:

NOTE

Dear Lenne, Thank you for helping
me get free of Toulouse.

Mick looks up, realizing it was Lenne.

MICK

Lenne!

Mick remembers what the Old Creole Woman told him.

MICK (CONT'D)

He had crazy eyes for her.

Mick goes back to reading...

NOTE

I didn't know you would take it
this far for me. I wish I had
known about this new plan. I know
Toulouse will figure you out sooner
or later. That is probably why you
are not back now. I don't want
anyone else to get hurt on my
account. Goodbye, Love, JEWEL.

Mick realizes he may be too late.

MICK

Damn it.

Mick slips the NOTE in his pocket and heads out.

CUT TO:

EXT. BAIT SHOP - NIGHT - LATER

JEWEL approaches the Bait Shop and there is a CLOSED SIGN on
the door. She peers through the windows...

Suddenly, the Old Creole Woman comes from around the back
with a CAST IRON SKILLET in her hand, ready to attack.

OLD CREOLE WOMAN

You trying to break in!

JEWEL raises her suitcase in front of her face.

JEWEL

Wait! It's JEWEL.

The Old Creole Woman lowers the frying pan.

OLD CREOLE WOMAN

JEWEL!

JEWEL

Yes!

OLD CREOLE WOMAN

I guess he didn't find you at the camp.

JEWEL

Toulouse!

OLD CREOLE WOMAN

No. That nice looking cop.

JEWEL

Mick!

OLD CREOLE WOMAN

Yeah, that was his name.

JEWEL realizes it was Mick who she saw driving to the camp.

JEWEL

It's best he doesn't find me.

OLD CREOLE WOMAN

Oh. Well, why don't you come on inside with me and tell me what I can do to help you.

JEWEL

I want you to call a cab.

JEWEL follows The Old Creole Woman around the back where her HOUSE TRAILER is parked.

As they disappear around back, MICK passes on his way back to New Orleans, no clue JEWEL is there.

CUT TO

EXT. BAYOU BLUE BOAT AND DOCK - NIGHT

Bayou Blue is oddly deserted of customers. The railing is down and the CLOSED SIGN is flashing.

Sal is at the gate as Mick approaches on foot, empty handed.

SAL

He is expecting you.

MICK

I figured that.

Mick enters the casino.

CUT TO:

INT. BAYOU BLUE RIVER BOAT CASINO - SAME

Mick cautiously approaches Toulouse who is sitting at a card table with Jimmy.

Big Earl and Red are at the bar watching.

Jimmy can not believe it when Mick sits at the table facing Toulouse.

MICK

You win. Let my daughter go, and you can kill me if it makes you feel better.

TOULOUSE

So, you didn't find JEWEL?

MICK

No, but I found a note.

TOULOUSE

A note?

Mick reaches in his shirt pocket and pulls out the note.

MICK

Seems your foster child was the one who knocked me in the head.

Mick throws the note down in front of Toulouse.

TOULOUSE

The little bastard was more clever than we thought. But, not clever enough.

MICK

I suppose he's dead now.

Toulouse pours a shot of moonshine.

TOULOUSE

It was self defense.

MICK

Sure it was.

TOULOUSE

I'm really not as bad as you all make me out to be.

MICK

Then prove it and let Cherie go.

TOULOUSE

The big shot detective has not yet discovered the hard cold truth.

Mick is unsure where Toulouse is going with this.

Toulouse pours a shot of moonshine and pushes it over to Mick.

MICK

You are a sick person.

TOULOUSE

Probably so. But, I want what is rightfully mine.

MICK

You do not own JEWEL.

TOULOUSE

I wasn't talking about JEWEL.

Mick's mind starts tracing back to all the questions he had never got an answer to.

MICK

Then who are you talking about?

TOULOUSE

Maybe you should ask your lovely wife.

MICK

Ask her what?

Mick is starting to feel the painful truth seeping into his gut. He flips the table over and grabs Toulouse around the neck. The two of them fall over the chair.

Jimmy backs up.

Red and Big Earl draw their guns. Toulouse holds up his hand to them.

TOULOUSE

I want the pleasure.

Mick plows Toulouse in the gut and pushes him into the roulette table.

Toulouse manages to get out from under him and throws a hard punch in the nose.

Mick throws one right back.

The two rumble through the casino, crashing and breaking chairs and tables and anything else in their way.

Big Earl starts to help Toulouse, but Jimmy stops him.

JIMMY

Let them hash this out.

Big Earl looks at Red and shrugs his shoulders then pours them each a drink. The three men sit at the bar and watch the fight.

BIG EARL
Should we place bets?

Jimmy notices that the boat is moving.

JIMMY
Hey, looks like we left the dock.

Red and Big Earl glance at the window as the buildings appear to move.

BIG EARL
I better see what's going on.

Big Earl slips out.

Toulouse and Mick have beaten each other to a bloody mess.

TOULOUSE
I have to hand it to you, Broussard.
You're tougher than I thought you
was.

MICK
I ain't done.

Mick rams Toulouse backwards into a slot machine. The machine falls over and coins roll across the floor.

Mick has Toulouse where he wants him. He could do him in with one last punch, but he decides not to. He gets up and turns to find Monique.

MICK (CONT'D)
What is the hard cold truth,
Monique?

MONIQUE
I'm sorry, Mick.

MICK
Sorry? Is that all you can say?

MONIQUE
I wanted her to be yours.

Mick feels like he may be sick to his stomach.

Toulouse pulls himself off the floor.

TOULOUSE
Don't feel bad, Broussard. I didn't
know either...until recently when
Jewel told me.

MICK
Jewel? How did she know.

TOULOUSE
I have no idea how that woman knows
the things she does.

MONIQUE
I told her.

They all turn to Monique.

MONIQUE
I was grocery shopping when my
water broke and Jewel happened to
be in the same store. She stayed
with me until the ambulance got
there. That's when she told me that
she knew it was Toulouse's baby. I
made her promise not to tell you.

Monique notices Cherie standing in the doorway. She heard
everything.

MONIQUE
Cherie!

Everyone turns to see Cherie who has tears streaming down
her face.

CHERIE
You all are fucked up.

Cherie races out the casino.

Monique looks at Mick, who is disgusted with the whole
thing.

MICK
Yeah, we are.

Mick walks out of the casino, leaving Monique and Toulouse
facing each other.

TOULOUSE
You really should have told me
before now.

MONIQUE
So sue me.

TOULOUSE
That's not such a bad idea.

Monique knows he wouldn't bother, and turns and walks away.

Big Earl and Red look at Toulouse waiting for the signal to
go after them.

TOULOUSE (CONT'D)
Let 'em go. This is enough
excitement for one day.

Jimmy shakes his head and pours himself a Scotch On The Rocks.

CUT TO:

EXT. POP'S RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - DAY

Police tape is still wrapped around the place. Mick's truck is parked out back.

CUT TO:

INT. POP'S RAW OYSTER LOUNGE - SAME

Mick is sitting alone at the bar, drinking a beer. He is staring at his family photographs tacked on the wall. One in particular of him holding Cherie when she was a baby.

JEWEL
Word of advice... The more you love
her, the more it won't matter who's
blood flows through her veins.

Mick turns to JEWEL, who has slipped in.

MICK
I thought you were long gone.

JEWEL
I am.

JEWEL sits next to Mick at the bar.

MICK
So, you still hoping I can rescue
you.

JEWEL
No. I was hoping I can rescue you
for a while before I go.

Mick turns to JEWEL, who he can not resist kissing.

He needs her more than ever and he takes her hand and leads her upstairs to his little apartment.