"...You're an independent contractor. This is your place of business. You negotiate your own fees with your clients, in your room. You can use that as a tool to get rid of undesirable customers, but don't make a practice of it. You can refuse service to anyone, but you better have a good excuse. Remember, your customers are our customers..."

The Business of Pleasure

by John Lau

reg. WGA
THE SUN HAS RISEN

over a bleak stretch of Nevada desert. A black ribbon of concrete draws the shortest distance between two points.

A battered Honda Civic wearing Arizona plates streaks down the highway. Heading away from here as fast as it can.

BEHIND THE WHEEL

is THE GIRL. She’s in her early twenties. Pretty but unadorned. Her eyes hidden behind large sunglasses. Wearing a determined set to her jaw. A sad song, Eva Cassidy’s cover of “Fields of Gold” perhaps, mourns over her iPhone earbuds.

THE CIVIC PASSES A BILLBOARD

from which a beautiful HAREM GIRL casts a come-hither glance behind her veil. The sign reads: THE VISTA OASIS. JUST 5 MORE MILES TO PARADISE.

The Civic heads for the horizon.

A NEON SIGN,

currently turned off, marks the entrance to a vast, gravel parking lot. Barren hills backdrop the VISTA OASIS, a compound of pink, stuccoed, one-story structures, surrounded by a white iron fence.

The Civic parks close to the gate. There's only a couple of cars in the lot at this hour, one of them a weathered, stretch limo.

INSIDE THE CAR

The girl just stares at the place. Imagining a life inside. Her eyes fix on a menu board like you'd see at a gas station. The sign reads:

INQUIRE WITHIN
WEEKEND RATES
ALL DAY RATES
ALL NIGHT RATES
HOURLY RATES
QUICKIE RATES
FREE TOUR WITH GIRL OF YOUR CHOICE
VISA AND MASTERCARD

The girl glances down at her handwritten directions. The last one is RING TWICE.
A SMALL VIDEO MONITOR

in the MADAM'S OFFICE shows the girl at the entrance to the gate. Somewhere in the brothel, a BELL RINGS, twice.

ON THE MONITOR: the girl looks up, noticing the camera ZOOMING in on her face. Then she's startled by the gate buzzing open in front of her. She pushes her way thru.

STEPPING THRU THE FRONT DOOR

into THE PARLOR, the girl takes off her sunglasses and looks around. Her eyes seem a bit hollow for someone this young.

The lights are low, you wouldn't know what hour it was. Three women in lingerie stare at her from the LOUNGE, adjacent to the parlor. They're not bad looking. But hard. Sizing up the new competition.

THE GIRL

Hi. I... called about a job.

THE BARTENDER looks like he commutes on a Harley. He points.

THE BARTENDER

Madam's office. Her name's Stacy.

STACY THE MADAM

sits behind the desk in her small, wood paneled OFFICE. She looks like a middle-aged accountant... because, she is. Reading the girl's job application thru her bi-focals. She hands back the girl's driver's license.

STACY THE MADAM

How'd you hear about us?

THE GIRL

Your website. I, you know, did a search and looked at a bunch.

STACY THE MADAM

Great. Why us?

THE GIRL

You were closest.

Stacy likes straightforward.

STACY THE MADAM

Ever done this sort of work before?

The girl pauses. Then shakes her head.
STACY THE MADAM
What makes you think you can do it now?

THE GIRL
Because I want to.

STACY THE MADAM
How many men have you had sex with?

THE GIRL
Um. Two.

STACY THE MADAM
(raising an eyebrow)
Just two?

THE GIRL
Yeah. Is that... enough?

The madam stares at her awhile.

STACY THE MADAM
Honey... I don't know what you think but... this ain't "Pretty Woman"). No handsome millionaire is gonna walk thru that door, sweep you off your feet and let you live happily ever after.

THE GIRL
I'm not looking for that.

STACY THE MADAM
So why do you want to do this?

The girl looks down.

THE GIRL
I just want to get paid for it.

STACY THE MADAM
Do you have specific financial goals in mind?

THE GIRL
No.

The two women stare at each other.

STACY THE MADAM
You married? Have a boyfriend? This kind of work can be hard on--
THE GIRL
(cutting her off)
There's nobody.

STACY THE MADAM
What are you willing to do?

THE GIRL
What do you mean?

STACY THE MADAM
Well, you have to do straight sex. And oral. But other things— you know, like amputees, Blacks, bondage, fetish. Other women. Couples. They're optional.

THE GIRL
I have a choice?

STACY THE MADAM
You always have a choice.

The girl finds that reassuring, somehow.

THE GIRL
So I don't have to... like do it in the butt? Unless I want to?

STACY THE MADAM
Even if you want to, you never do it in the butt. It's not legal.

THE GIRL
Really? Is that just Nevada, or--?

STACY THE MADAM
It's a health regulation. And the client always, always wears a condom. Even when you blow him. If he eats you, he uses a dental dam.

THE GIRL
I don't even know what that is.

STACY THE MADAM
You'll find out.

Another silence. Last chance to walk away.

THE GIRL
I'll do whatever I have to. To whoever I have to.
The madam nods.

STACY THE MADAM
You do drugs?

THE GIRL
No.

STACY THE MADAM
Good. Don't.
(she stands)
All new girls work a day shift.
It's twelve hours, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Fourteen on weekends. 10 a.m. to midnight. When do you want to start?

THE GIRL
My bags are in the car.

STACY THE MADAM
Alright. We'll move you in. I'll start your paperwork while our runner shuttles you to the doc.

THE GIRL
(stands as well)
If you give me directions, I can drive myself.

STACY THE MADAM
No. You can't. You won't be driving yourself anywhere for three weeks. That's the length of our standard contract. State law. You can't leave the premises without our escort to ensure compliance.
(off the girl's look)
STDs. You get tested at the start of every contract.

THE GIRL
So I can't leave here for three weeks?

STACY THE MADAM
Not unescorted. You also can't go into the local bars, casinos or residential areas. At all. You can't have family in town. Or be on the streets after five p.m. Or you lose your work card.
THE GIRL
Sounds like jail.

STACY THE MADAM
It pays a lot better.

SHE LEADS THE GIRL OUT OF THE OFFICE
back into the parlor.

STACY THE MADAM
You're an independent contractor. This is your place of business. You negotiate your own fees with your clients, in your room. You can use that as a tool to price out undesirable customers, but don't make a practice of it. You can also refuse service to anyone, but you better have a good excuse. Remember, your customers are our customers.

THE GIRL
I won't refuse anyone.

STACY THE MADAM
Everyone refuses someone. All your fees and tips are split 50/50 with the house. So keep that in mind when you negotiate. We provide limousine service from Vegas, but if your client uses it, the driver gets 20%, half of it from you. That goes for other limo services and cab drivers too. You also pay for the runner's time while he's taking you on your errands. Don't try to cheat us. We'll know, and you'll be out on your ass. If you do drugs, we'll know and you'll be out on your ass. We charge you $100 a day for room and board, but if you do a thousand bucks worth of business that day, you get comped. Also, your taxes are your business, so you'll have to file a 1099. Any questions, feel free to ask.

The madam surveys the smattering of professionals lingering in the parlor. Makes eye contact with one who seems to cultivate a passing resemblance to Tina Louise.
STACY THE MADAM

Ginger.

GINGER saunters over, checking out the new girl.

GINGER
(friendly)
Two in two days.

STACY THE MADAM
Honey, this is Ginger. She'll show you around and get you situated.

Ginger gives the girl a smile.

10 BACK IN THE PARKING LOT

The girl unloads a rolling suitcase from her car trunk. Then a smaller bag.

GINGER
Stacy tell you you don't use your real name in the house?

THE GIRL
Um, no. I guess that makes sense. So Ginger's not your real name?

Ginger has a loud, earthy laugh.

GINGER
On a good day, I don't even remember my real name.

THE GIRL
So you picked Ginger because you look like her?

GINGER
A gimmick's a gimmick, right?

They head back into the brothel with the bags.

GINGER
Some girls change their names when they're not getting picked. One girl here, changes hers every time she gets her hair done. I think she's Ashley now.

THE GIRL
How often have you changed yours?
GINGER
Just once. I get a lot of repeat business. Ginger works for me.

THE GIRL
Yeah. I can see how... I mean, you look like her a lot.

GINGER
Thanks. You don't have to pick a name right away. Your results won't come back till... what day's today?

THE GIRL
Tuesday. No. Wednesday. Tuesday.

GINGER
You got a couple days.

THE GIRL
I don't need it. You're Ginger. I'll be Mary Ann.

GINGER
(guffaws)
You're kidding.

MARY ANN
A gimmick's a gimmick, right?

Ginger holds the front door open for MARY ANN.

GINGER
"Come into my parlor," said the spider to Mary Ann.

11 MARY ANN'S HAIR WAS LONGER

-- SIX YEARS AGO. It splayed out ON THE BED. She WINCED as the young man penetrated her from behind.

MARY ANN
Ow. Lane... Lane... it hurts...

If LANE heard her, it didn't make a difference. He just grabbed her hips and drove into her, harder.

MARY ANN
Ow... ow...

She clutchted the sheets. She bit the pillow.
Lane's eyes bulged as he reached his climax. He moaned like he'd been gutted.

He collapsed on top of her. Dead weight. They both breathed hard. Lane kissed her cheek.

LANE
I love you, Mary Ann.

MARY ANN
I love you, Lane.

She meant it too. She held his hand. They wore WEDDING RINGS on their fingers.

GINGER'S VOICE
The closet locks...

BACK IN THE PRESENT...

Ginger stretches out on a double bed like a cat.

GINGER
-- You can keep valuables in it. But management has a master key. They do random room searches to make sure nobody's stashing anything.

It's a spartan BEDROOM. Small and rectangular. Pastel pink walls. Fiberboard furniture.

GINGER
Don't worry. They respect your stuff. The house holds your money till you leave. I mean, it's yours. You can send some to somebody if you want, f'renstance. Or take as much as you want when you go out shopping. If you're paranoid, you can check the records whenever you want. They charge you enough. They don't have to steal from you. Besides, it's better this way. You know no john's gonna rip you off when you're running his Visa card in the office. Check this out.

She's pointing at something in the ceiling. Mary Ann takes a closer look.
GINGER
Microphone. They listen and record when you negotiate with your john. You can't have your radio or TV on or anything, or they'll come in and search later. And they know all the hiding places.

MARY ANN
They listen to us...?

GINGER
Only when you negotiate. Not when you're working. Here. This is important.

What looks like a DOORBELL is attached to the top of a nightstand.

GINGER
Here's your panic button. Some guy's in here giving you a hard time, or turns into some kinda freakin' weirdo, push this.

MARY ANN
What happens?

GINGER
The wrath of God comes thru your door.

MARY ANN
Sounds interesting.

She wanders into the bathroom.

GINGER
It is. So don't use it to order room service.

MARY ANN
We get room service?

GINGER
No way. You give it, baby.

MARY ANN
What's up with the toilet seat?

Ginger gets off the bed and slinks into the bathroom.
GINGER
It's a bidet. You wash yourself
and your customers with it.

MARY ANN
How?

GINGER
Take a seat.

Mary Ann looks at her- is she serious? She is. The girl
hesitates, then pulls down her jeans and panties and sits
down. Looking at Ginger.

GINGER
See the control? There? Push that
button.

Mary Ann does. Then SHRIEKS and leaps to her feet. Ginger
laughs and hands her a washcloth.

GINGER
A little bit longer than that. But
you get the idea.

MARY ANN
Oh my God. That's so fucking
weird.

Laughing, she wipes herself. Then feels self-conscious with
Ginger standing there. Mary Ann pulls up her jeans and exits
into the bedroom.

The madam appears in the doorway.

STACY THE MADAM
Here you are. The runner's
waiting. When you're out at the
doc's, stop at the drug store.
You're gonna need some things.

She hands Mary Ann a list.

13 IT WAS A RECIPE FOR CHOCOLATE CAKE

Mary Ann tried to follow its directions in her KITCHEN, when
the front door of the house crashed open.

LANE'S VOICE
Fuck!

MARY ANN
Lane? Is that you?
She left the kitchen and followed the sound of objects being thrown about the house.

14 INSIDE THE BEDROOM

Lane stripped off his construction gear. Mary Ann looked at him in dismay.

MARY ANN
What're you doing home?

Lane threw his toolbelt into the closet.

LANE
Fuck!

MARY ANN
Again?? You asshole!

Lane glared at her.

NURSE'S VOICE
You're going to feel a little prick...

15 BACK IN THE PRESENT...

Mary Ann is sitting on an EXAMINATION TABLE. She turns and looks at the NURSE.

The woman SLIPS THE NEEDLE into Mary Ann's arm. Mary Ann doesn't even blink.

Watching the vial fill with her blood.

16 LATER...

Mary Ann is alone in the EXAMINATION ROOM. Her legs in stirrups. The door opens. Mary Ann cranes her head to look.

The DOCTOR doesn't even make eye contact with her. He just crouches between her legs with a speculum and has a little look inside.

DOCTOR
Knock knock.

Is he really telling a knock-knock joke?

MARY ANN
Uh... who's there?
DOCTOR

Herpes.

MARY ANN

No way!

The doctor stands and looks at her.

DOCTOR

You're supposed to say, herpes who.

MARY ANN

... Herpes who?

DOCTOR

Her piece of the doctor's bill came to $85. Pay at the front desk on your way out. Everything looks fine. We'll call when your test results come back.

He's out the door. Mary Ann sits there with her mouth open. She takes her feet out of the stirrups.

17 PHARMACUTICAL ITEMS

move down a DRUG STORE conveyor belt. Astroglide... mouthwash... Mentholatum... cosmetic sponges... Lysol... vitamin E capsules... baby wipes... Betadine...

Mary Ann waits at the register as the CASHIER rings up her purchases. The man behind her has a BAD TOUPEE.

BAD TOUPEE

Good Lord. They're even out in public now.

Mary Ann turns. He's looking right at her.

MARY ANN

Excuse me? Can I help you?

BAD TOUPEE

No, thank you. The day I need a prostitute is the day you can put me in the ground.

Mary Ann's cheeks flush. She turns away. Speechless. The cashier looks from one to the other.

CASHIER

$32.24.
MARY ANN STEPS OUT

into THE PARKING LOT, upset. Looking in either direction. Bad toupee guy emerges behind her.

BAD TOUPEE
This was a nice county. A moral county. Then you sleazy tramps infested it.

MARY ANN
Fuck off and die, asshole.

She starts to hurry across the parking lot. Looking. The man follows after her.

BAD TOUPEE
The language you use. You're going to burn in Hell. God will stand in judgement of you and you'll burn in Hell for all eternity.

MARY ANN
Fuck you. Go away!

BAD TOUPEE
Or what? You'll call the police? The police protect good people. Go crawl back under your rock with the rest of the vermin. Your kind isn't welcome here.

Mary Ann spots where the battered limo is parked and runs for it. The driver's door opens. The Oasis' biker bartender explodes out of the car and charges toward them.

Bad toupee stops in his tracks, turns and runs. The bartender sprints past Mary Ann after him.

MARY ANN
Kick his ass, Lowell! Kick his ass!

THE MAN LOCKS HIMSELF

inside HIS BUICK. Fumbles with his seatbelt, then his ignition. BANG! LOWELL smacks his fist against the window. The man YELPS.

Lowell smiles and holds up the man's TOUPEE. The man gasps and feels the top of his bald head. *Oops.*
BAD TOUPEE
That's my property! You give that
back to me right now!

Lowell steps back away from the car. Drops the rug on the
pavement in front of him.

LOWELL
Why don't you come out and pick it
up, dickwad?

The man holds up his cell phone.

BAD TOUPEE
I'm not intimidated! I'm calling
911!

Lowell unzips his jeans.

BAD TOUPEE
What are you doing? Dear Lord!
That's indecent!

Lowell URINATES on the toupee.

The wig's owner gapes. Then starts his ignition, backs out
of his parking space and roars away.

Lowell WRITES HIS NAME IN CURSIVE on the pavement with his
stream. He shakes off and zips up.

20 RIDING IN THE LIMO

Side by side in the front seat.

MARY ANN
How did he know? Do I look like a
prostitute? I haven't even started
yet!

Lowell picks up the bag of pharmaceuticals and shakes it.

LOWELL
Whore products.

Mary Ann looks relieved. At least it's not her.

MARY ANN
I don't even know what some of that
stuff is. What's...
(opens bag)
-- Mentholatum?
LOWELL
It's for your twat when it gets sore. You just put some on a tampon and...

Mary Ann looks stunned. Lowell looks at her and LAUGHS.

MARY ANN LAUGHED A LOT

at her old job. Especially when she was around GREG. He was a nice looking guy, a little older, but not much. They worked together at BANANA REPUBLIC. And did things like fold clothes together.

They stood a little closer together than they had to when they did stuff like that. Close enough to feel the other person alongside them.

They'd meet each other's gaze a lot. And hold it. Like they had an understanding, or shared a secret.

Greg had BEAUTIFUL EYES for a man. Clear, with long lashes. Mary Ann could stare into them forever.

But mostly, they just laughed and joked. At work, anyway.

One time, Lane WALKED INTO THE STORE without them noticing.

LANE
Hey. What's up?

Greg and Mary Ann moved apart and looked guilty, like they'd been caught naked or something.

Lane put his arm around his wife's neck.

MARY ANN
Ow. Lane...

Lane glared at Greg.

LANE
What're you gonna do about it?

Greg just held up his hands and walked away.

MARY ANN'S VOICE
Hey. You're Desiree?
A thin, mousy girl in a thong bikini, late teens or early 20s, reads US magazine behind a SOUVENIR COUNTER. DESIREE looks behind her. Then realizes Mary Ann is talking to her.

DESIREE

(laughs)
What? Oh, yeah. I guess I am.

MARY ANN

I'm Mary Ann. Stacy said to relieve you.

DESIREE

Thanks. I haven't seen you here before.

MARY ANN

I just got here this morning. I'm waiting for my bloodtest results.

DESIREE

Yeah, me too. I started yesterday.

MARY ANN

I guess we're the newbies then.

DESIREE

I guess.

They check each other out the way girls do.

MARY ANN

When you went to the doctor, did he tell you a knock-knock joke?

DESIREE

Oh my God. About herpes?

MARY ANN

Yeah!

DESIREE

I almost shit!

MARY ANN

Me too!

They share a laugh. Some guy wearing a HANDLEBAR MOUSTACHE and shit-eating grin wanders over and starts perusing the souvenirs. He leers at the girls.
HANDLEBAR MOUSTACHE
Damn. Howcum you girls weren't in my line-up? What am I, chopped liver?

DESIREE
(preens)
We're in the on-deck circle. Come back in a couple days. You can help break us in.

HANDLEBAR MOUSTACHE
I'll definitely have to do that.

He winks at her. Then looks at Mary Ann. Reaches out and pinches her nipple thru her t-shirt. Mary Ann gasps.

HANDLEBAR MOUSTACHE
Cold in here? Or is it just me.

Mary Ann crosses her arms over her chest. Handlebar looks at the display case.

HANDLEBAR MOUSTACHE
You guys don't got souvenir poker clits? I mean chips?

DESIREE
We got playing cards. Take a look.

She places a box on the countertop. The customer examines the pin-up girls on the backs of the cards.

HANDLEBAR MOUSTACHE
These are cool. How much?

DESIREE
Ten bucks.

HANDLEBAR MOUSTACHE
Ten bucks!

DESIREE
(conspiratorial)
I'll give 'em to you for eight. Just don't tell my boss.

Handlebar grins and reaches in his wallet for a TEN.

HANDLEBAR MOUSTACHE
Keep the change. It's a pleasure doing business with you and your fine establishment.
DESIREE
It's mutual. Come again. Next time, inside me.

HANDLEBAR MOUSTACHE
I'll be back this way on the 28th. Save the date, sweet thing.

The girls watch him strut out the door into the sunlight.

DESIREE
There goes a satisfied customer.

MARY ANN
You've done this before.

DESIREE
Nope. But I think I'll be good at it. We only charge five for those cards.

She rings up the register, puts in the ten and helps herself to five. Tucks the bill into the front of her bikini bottom.

DESIREE
I'll be out by the pool.

She starts to go.

MARY ANN
You're not even nervous, are you?

DESIREE
I been spreading my legs for free since I was fifteen. What's to be nervous about?

MARY ANN
Everything. I don't even know how much to charge.

DESIREE
As much as you can get, man.

MARY ANN
Yeah, but... how much is too much? I don't want guys to just laugh at me or run out.

DESIREE
I been talking to some of the other chicks who work here? And...

(MORE)
DESIREE (cont'd)
don't take less than like, sixty bucks for a blowjob. And that's only if he's not totally gross.

They both laugh.

MARY ANN
How much if he is?

DESIREE
I don't know. You decide. What'll it take for you to put his nasty little pecker in your mouth. And get like, at least a hundred to fuck you. And a hundred fifty for both. I mean, at least. And that's only if you really like him.

MARY ANN

DESIREE
How much were you thinking of?

MARY ANN
I had no idea. Wow. A hundred bucks.

DESIREE
And that's just for ugly chicks. Try and get at least two hundred. That's what I'm worth. Don't you think?

MARY ANN
Oh yeah. Most def. For sure.

23 Night Falls

over the facility. The NEON SIGN lights up. The PARKING LOT accommodates a STEADY STREAM of motorcycles, cars and trucks, even semis.

24 MARY ANN LOOKS UP

when she hears the BELL RING. Watches the women gather in the parlor from her station IN THE GIFT SHOP. The professionals form a line-up...

-- And stand there waiting when the CUSTOMERS enter the parlor from outside. The madam greets the men.
STACY THE MADAM

Good evening, gentlemen. Would you like to select a consort? Or would you prefer making yourselves comfortable in our lounge?

This particular instance, the customer points at Ginger. The line-up breaks up.

Ginger winks at Mary Ann as she leads the man past the gift shop into the long hallway off the parlor.

LOWELL WIPES DOWN THE BAR

in the LOUNGE. About a half dozen men, in two different groups hang out. Four working girls mingle.

Mary Ann plants herself on a stool.

MARY ANN
Tell me I can drink here for free.

LOWELL
You don't even get a discount, babe.

MARY ANN
That's chickenshit.

LOWELL
Get one of these guys here to buy for you.

Up till now, Mary Ann has been intentionally ignoring her immediate environment. Not so, the men. Or the other women. They're all aware of her presence.

A skinny guy with greasy hair and BAD SKIN is closest. He grins at her. He's got bad teeth too.

BAD SKIN
Hey, Good-lookin'. I didn't see you in the line up.

MARY ANN
No. I haven't started working yet.

BAD SKIN
Whoa. Then does that mean I can do you for free?
MARY ANN

(ick)
Sorry, I--

TURQUOISE, one of the two Black girls in the lounge, takes the man's arm.

TURQUOISE
Nothin' in this worl's free, sugar.
A man like you should know that.

BAD SKIN
No shit. Five bucks for a beer?

TURQUOISE
See what I mean? So... what? You like overpriced, watered down beer better than gettin' your dick sucked?

BAD SKIN
Not especially.

TURQUOISE
Well, come on then. Let's do what you came here for.

She's rubbing him thru his jeans. The guy downs his beer and sets down the glass.

BAD SKIN
(re: Lowell)
Sweetheart, I wouldn't fuck you with HIS dick.

He heads for the exit.

TURQUOISE
I'M SURE THAT'S CUZ YOU CAN'T EVEN GET IT UP, UGLY MOTHER Fucker!

She shoots Mary Ann a voodoo glare.

TURQUOISE
Stay the fuck away from the customers, girl. You ain't even working yet.

She stalks out of the lounge. Mary Ann looks like she just witnessed a car accident.

LOWELL
You can run a tab if you want.
MARY ANN LIES ON HER BED

Reading the label on her bottle of Mentholatum. Someone KNOCKS on her door. She gets up and opens it.

The madam stands in the hall with another middle-aged woman.

STACY THE MADAM
Mary Ann? This is Donna. She's the nightshift madam.

DONNA THE NIGHTSHIFT MADAM
Hey, kid.

MARY ANN
Nice to meet you.

Unlike Stacy her counterpart, DONNA looks like she's lived the horizontal life. Her work attire runs to full make-up and evening gowns. And obviously, smoking is allowed on the premises. She sizes up the raw recruit.

DONNA THE NIGHTSHIFT MADAM
How do you like the place so far?

MARY ANN
(weakly)
It's... fine.

DONNA THE NIGHTSHIFT MADAM
(nods approval)
You're gonna make money here.

She cocks her head at Stacy. The two madams walk down the hall together. Discussing madam business, no doubt.

Mary Ann watches them go.

LATER, WALKING THE HALLWAYS

Mary Ann listens to the SOUNDS OF SEX on the other side of the doors.

SHE STICKS HER HEAD INTO THE SPA

Two women are NAKED IN THE JACUZZI with a FAT GUY IN A COWBOY HAT.

SHE PEEKS INTO THE DOMINATION ROOM

where a naked man is strapped facedown onto some kind of uncomfortable-looking contraption. SOBBING underneath the hood that covers his face.
on an athletic Black woman wearing full DOMINATRIX regalia, washing a paddle in the sink. Blood swirls down the drain.

DOMINATRIX
How ya doin?

MARY ANN
(wide-eyed)
Great. Thanks. Sorry.

She closes the door.

Mary Ann sits with her toes in the water. The sky filled with stars. Somewhere in the darkness, a coyote HOWLS. The loneliest sound in the world.

Mary Ann turns and stares at the distant hills. Knowing how it feels.

streams thru the brothel's CAFETERIA windows. Even at this time of day, the women are dressed in their work outfits.

Mary Ann carries a bowl of corn flakes over to a table where Ginger reads a newspaper with her grapefruit, toast and OJ.

GINGER
Good morning.

MARY ANN
Okay if I sit here?

Ginger gestures: be my guest. Mary Ann takes a seat.

GINGER
Sleep well?

MARY ANN
Not really. I kept dreaming about all the people who've had sex in my bed.

Ginger chuckles thru a mouthful of grapefruit. Mary Ann looks around at the other girls eating. Waves at Desiree, who’s just walking in. Desiree waves back.
MARY ANN
How many girls are working here?

GINGER
Right now there's just six. But you guys will make eight. And the place can accommodate as many as thirteen. Who've you met?

MARY ANN
Well, Desiree...

Desiree orders breakfast AT THE COUNTER.

GINGER
You've met Flora...

FLORA's the Mexican woman working behind the counter.

GINGER
-- She lives here full time and sends all her money down to her family in Acayucan.

MARY ANN
She's a prostitute?

GINGER
No, are you kidding? (makes sign of the cross) Catholic. She cooks and cleans.

Mary Ann indicates the two Black chicks, seated together.

MARY ANN
I met them. Separately. Sort of.

GINGER
Devon and Turquoise. I like Devon. She's been here awhile. Turquoise came from Penny's Ranch last month.

DEVON was the dominatrix last night. Turquoise was the girl in the lounge. Mary Ann points to the last three women, seated together at another table.

MARY ANN
I saw them when I first came in. And two of them were in the jacuzzi last night with a guy.

GINGER
Ashley, Courtney and Jennifer.
MARY ANN
Howcum you didn't sit with them?

GINGER
They didn't sit with me.

Whatever that means.

MARY ANN
And the two madams, Stacy and the slutty one...

GINGER
-- Donna. And there's another one who comes in on weekends too. Peggy. She's a grandmother.

MARY ANN
And Lowell. I love Lowell.

GINGER
Not too much I hope. Did you meet the night guy- Simon?

MARY ANN
Cop-looking guy? I just saw him. We didn't talk.

GINGER
And Juan Manuel's the handyman.

Desiree plops down at their table with a banana and coffee. Pouts when she notices Ginger's breakfast.

DESIREE
I didn't see any grapefruit.

GINGER
Membership has its privileges.

DESIREE
Fuck it. I don't care. (yes, she does)

The BELL RINGS somewhere inside the house. The working girls all look at each other, get up. Ginger slides her grapefruit to Desiree.

GINGER
It's all yours.

DESIREE
What if you don't get picked?
Ginger smiles at her.

	GINGER
	Be serious.

Mary Ann and Desiree watch her slink out to the hallway. Then Desiree helps herself to the grapefruit.

MARY ANN WALKS OUTSIDE

to the SWIMMING POOL. Carrying a towel and wearing a one piece. She's got a nice body. Athletic, like she played a sport in high school. She finds an empty lounge chair.

Notices that ACROSS THE POOL, Ashley, Courtney and Jennifer are sunbathing nude.

Not only that, a big Mexican guy is cleaning the pool. This has to be JUAN MANUEL. He doesn't seem remotely interested in the girls.

Ashley, Courtney and Jennifer are chatting amongst themselves. Two of them glance this way.

Mary Ann peels off her swimsuit. Sits on the lounge and starts putting lotion on her pale, white breasts.

Juan Manuel pays no attention to her either.

SLEEPING IN THE SUN

A SHADOW eclipses her. Mary Ann opens her eyes with a gasp.

Lowell is standing over her.

	LOWELL
	Get dressed. Now. I'm taking you to the Sheriff.

	MARY ANN
	What did I do?

Lowell drops Mary Ann's discarded swimsuit onto her stomach.

MARY ANN STARES AT CAMERA

FLASH! Her PHOTO is taken by a WOMAN DEPUTY SHERIFF.
HER FINGERPRINTS
are rolled onto the glass plate of the FINGERPRINT MACHINE. It buzzes and hums.

THE DEPUTY FILLS OUT A FORM
at a desk. Mary Ann sitting next to it.

    FEMALE DEPUTY
    Any noticeable scars?

    MARY ANN
    Just one.

    FEMALE DEPUTY
    Let's see it.

Mary Ann hesitates. Glances at the MALE deputies present, who're not even pretending not to stare.

Mary Ann stares back. Stands and unbuttons her jeans.

WALKING ACROSS THE PARKING LOT
Lowell opens the door into the back of the limo. Mary Ann smiles at him and climbs in.

RIDING IN THE BACK OF THE LIMO
Mary Ann stares at something in her hand.

The PHOTO she just took, looks back at her from her BROTHEL WORK CARD.

THE NEON LIGHT
outside the Vista Oasis flickers on at dusk.

INSIDE THE LOUNGE
Lowell watches a BALLGAME. CUSTOMERS drift in from the parlor. Lowell picks up the remote and switches the TV to some hardcore PORN action and busies himself behind the bar.

IN THE MADAM’S OFFICE
Mary Ann and Desiree are in with Donna, the nightshift madam. Listening on the intercom.
ASHLEY'S VOICE
What are you interested in, and how much are you willing to spend?

ASHLEY'S WITH THE CUSTOMER

in HER ROOM. The decor seems trendy, flashy and bourgeois. Not unlike ASHLEY. Her CUSTOMER vibes a certain middle-aged, middle class affluence himself.

HER CUSTOMER
A little of this, a little of that.
(waves a vial)
Wanna do a line?

ASHLEY
We're not allowed to do drugs. But for fifteen hundred, I'll keep your balls pumping semen all night.

The customer references the MOVEMENT in the front of his Dockers. It's like something's alive in there.

HER CUSTOMER
Tell you what. I just took a Viagra like... 15 minutes ago. I'll give you three hundred if you keep Little Billy warm and wet for the next hour and a half.

IN THE MADAM'S OFFICE

Donna counts FOUR HUNDREDS, drops them in the lockbox and enters the sum into her computer database. Ashley writes in her logbook, then shoves it back into her mailbox.

She sets her EGG TIMER for 55 minutes.

ASHLEY
Soon as this thing rings, I need you to pound on my door, Donna.

She puts the timer in her box and runs out of the office.

THE CUSTOMER IS NAKED

in ASHLEY'S ROOM. A towel draped over his prominent erection. Ashley comes in, closes the door and smiles.

ASHLEY
You didn't put that coke away, did you, sweetie?
She climbs onto the bed.

46 LATER, IN THE HALLWAY
Mary Ann passes Ashley smoking a cigarette outside her room while Flora changes her topsheets inside.
Mary Ann starts to say something, but Ashley just stares into the distance inside herself.
Mary Ann decides to keep walking.

47 SPLASH!
Mary Ann dives into the pool. Swimming UNDERWATER in the dark.

MARY ANN'S VOICE
I'm pregnant.

48 GREG STARED AT MARY ANN
The two of them were alone in the STORE'S DRESSING ROOMS.

GREG
It's mine?

Mary Ann covered her face.

MARY ANN
I don't know. Maybe. Probably.

Then she looked at him. His face was pale.

GREG
Does Lane know?

MARY ANN
I haven't told him yet.

GREG
What... what do you want me to do?

MARY ANN
I don't know, Greg. I guess it's not your problem.

GREG
It's not necessarily a problem at all. I mean... you're married.
That's when she realized she'd been fucking an idiot.

MARY ANN
It might not be Lane's.

GREG
Yeah, but... he'll never know that.
I mean... it'll look like you too,
right? And it's not like I'm Black
or Mexican or anything.

Mary Ann started to cry.

GREG
Shit. You want me to step up?
I'll pay for half, alright. Fuck
it. I'll pay for the abortion.
I'll go with you. I love you.

And that's when Mary Ann realized that she was the idiot.

49 BACK IN THE PRESENT...

Mary Ann shivers in a lounge chair BY THE POOL. A coyote HOWLING in the dark.

50 SHE SAT IN THE DARK

until Lane came HOME. He didn't realize she was there until he turned on the light.

LANE
Shit- you scared me. What're you
doing sitting in the dark?

He grew concerned when she didn't answer.

LANE
Mary Ann?

MARY ANN
I quit my job.

Lane's expression darkened. He went into the kitchen for a beer. He drank half on his way back to the living room.

LANE
That's fucking great. We'll never
get out of the fucking hole.

She didn't, or couldn't, look at the man.
LANE
You just quit your fucking job.
Why the fuck would you do something like that?

MARY ANN
Because Greg's an asshole.

LANE
Well, hell. I coulda told you that the first time I saw him. In fact, I did tell ya that.

MARY ANN
Fuck you, Lane.

LANE
Fuck you, Mary Ann! You quit your job without asking me first? Do you know how many ASSHOLES I work with? If I quit my FUCKING JOB every time I didn't like working with some asshole, I'd NEVER HAVE A FUCKING JOB!

Mary Ann started to cry again. Lane let her. For awhile anyway...

LANE
Okay. Shut up. I'm sorry.

When that didn't work, he actually sat down next to her and held her.

LANE
Knock it off, alright? I said I'm sorry. You'll get another job. It's no big deal.

MARY ANN
We're going to have a baby.

Lane stood up like he'd been cattle-prodded. He stared at his wife. She never did stop crying.

Lane drank the rest of his beer and then crushed the can in his fist.

LANE
God damn it. Are you sure?
BACK IN THE PRESENT...

Clad in her underwear, Mary Ann stands before the full-length mirror on the back of HER BEDROOM door. Studying her body. Her assets and debits.

She fingers the small CAESARIAN SCAR at the bottom of her belly.

MORNING IN THE DESERT

Mary Ann stares out her window. Someone KNOCKS on HER BEDROOM door. She goes to open it.

The madam and the housekeeper are standing outside.

STACY THE MADAM
Your bloodtests came in.

Mary Ann catches her breath.

STACY THE MADAM
Suit up. Soon as you're ready, you're in the line-up.

MARY ANN
Oh my God.

STACY THE MADAM
You want to back out, just say so now and we'll settle up your bill. No harm, no foul.

Mary Ann takes a seat on the bed. The madam hands her a cardboard carton. Mary Ann looks at it. It's filled with flavored CONDOMS.

STACY THE MADAM
Let me know when you run low. We charge you the bulk rate, our cost.

Mary Ann stares at them. The madam drops a pile of HARDCORE PORN MAGAZINES on the bureau.

STACY THE MADAM
These are for your customers. Help 'em get in the mood. You don't have to pay for them. They stay in the house.

The housekeeper steps in.
FLORA
Senorita? Pardon?

MARY ANN
Oh, sorry.

She stands to allow the housekeeper to strip the comforter off the bed. Flora starts fitting a top sheet over the bed linens.

The madam eyes Mary Ann the whole time. Then throws a glance around the spartan bedroom.

STACY THE MADAM
You might wanna decorate.

53 FINGERS TEAR OPEN A CONDOM PACKET

and place the rubber BETWEEN PAINTED LIPS.

Ginger slowly goes down on a lifelike rubber dildo. When she withdraws, the prophylactic encases the artificial penis like a sausage skin.

Mary Ann and Desiree are both more than a little impressed. Holding dildos of their own like they were milkshake glasses.

GINGER
If he's not hard, it won't happen. Some guys, it's no problem. But the majority are too drunk, too old or too nervous. Drunks are the worse, by far. Try and price them out, but some of 'em, you won't be able to. They're made out of money. But, at least you make book for all your hard work.

She drips some Astroglide onto the dildo. Massages its rubber testicles, shaft and tip to illustrate.

GINGER
Some guys will come without getting hard, so you don't want to use your mouth on them until you get the rubber on. The hand is a useful tool. Be real gentle with the balls, and don't yank on the shaft. You're not starting a lawnmower, okay? Concentrate on the hood, where all the nerve endings are.
It's quite a demonstration of manual dexterity. Mary Ann and Desiree are getting a little flushed just watching.

DESIREE
I've never had a problem with guys not getting hard. Usually they just come too quick.

GINGER
That could be a problem when they've paid in advance and the show's all over before it gets started. I'll tell you how to deal with that in a second. Right now... you guys ready to try this?

Mary Ann and Desiree look at each other and giggle. They each put a condom between their lips.

GINGER
Ready set go.

The girls go down on their respective dildos. Desiree finishes and throws up her arms like a prizefighter.

DESIREE
Oh yeah! Fuck me, baby!

Mary Ann coughs out her dildo. The rubber nowhere to be seen. Desiree laughs at her distress.

GINGER
You alright?

Mary Ann is turning blue. Choking, gagging and pointing inside her mouth.

DESIREE
Oh my God, she fucking swallowed it!

Ginger applies the Heimlich.

MARY ANN BREAKS THE SURFACE
of the pool, grabbing lungfuls of fresh air. Ginger crouches by the side of THE POOL, aiming a digital camera.

GINGER
Mary Ann! Over here!
Mary Ann turns and starts wading across the shallow end 
TOWARD CAMERA. FREEZE FRAME.

55 LOOKING AT HERSELF

Mary Ann models a negligee in a full-length mirror.

GINGER
That works. Wanna try this one?

She offers another barely-there garment for inspection.
Unlike Mary Ann's spare quarters, GINGER'S ROOM looks fit for 
Lana Turner in her heyday- if Lana left her vibrator 
collection out in the open. Amazing, the things one can do 
within the same four walls with lighting and draperies.

Mary Ann holds the new choice in front of her. Then pulls 
the other one off over her head.

She models the new one. Ginger WHISTLES.

GINGER
I'd fuck you if I had a dick. Wait 
a minute. I do have a dick.

She reaches for one of her big, rubber dildos.

MARY ANN
So we fuck 'em, but we never kiss 
'em?

GINGER
Kissing's personal. They're not 
your husband. They're not your 
boyfriend. They're just men who 
pay you to perform a service.

The BELL RINGS out in the hall. Mary Ann stiffens.

GINGER
It's showtime.

MARY ANN
Oh my God, I have to pee.

She scampers into the bathroom. Ginger follows her--

56 INTO THE BATHROOM

She leans against the sink and watches Mary Ann pee.

MARY ANN
Oh God oh God oh God...
GINGER
Breathe.

MARY ANN
You're going out there, right?

GINGER
One of my regulars booked me for the night. He's coming in at eight. So I'm cruising till then.

MARY ANN
I don't know if I can do this, Ginger!

GINGER
Sure you can. Just get out there, stand in line and try not to fall over.

Mary Ann gets off the toilet and flushes it. Checks herself in the mirror.

MARY ANN
How do I look? Okay?

GINGER
Totally fuckable.

Mary Ann marches out of the bathroom.

GINGER
Remember, you're in control. Get on top if you can. And don't let anyone put their fingers inside you. They'll tear you to pieces.

MARY ANN
Workmen's comp doesn't cover that?

57 THE WOMEN GATHER IN THE PARLOR

Ashley, Turquoise and Desiree form a cue. Mary Ann makes four. She looks back down the hallway.

MARY ANN
The other girls coming?

ASHLEY
We work staggered shifts.

MARY ANN
What? So it's just us four?
DESIREE
Wow. You coulda been a math teacher.

Their attention shifts as the DOOR OPENS. Mary Ann's breath catches.

The TRUCKER standing there BLOTS OUT THE SUNLIGHT. Pausing to let his eyes adjust to the dimly lit parlor. Then, the door swings shut behind him. He's enormous in every way. Tall and wide, with gunboats for feet, and a huge, hairy, buffalo head.

Suddenly, the parlor seems very small and claustrophobic...

STACY THE MADAM
(stepping forward)
Welcome to the Vista Oasis. Would you like to choose a consort now? Or would you prefer to relax in our lounge for a bit first?

TRUCKER
I gotta be in Phoenix by 8. So I'll just do my business and be on my way.

STACY THE MADAM
Ladies..?

The madam presents the line-up. The trucker stares at Ashley. Who stares straight ahead.

ASHLEY
Ashley.

The trucker shuffles over to Turquoise. Who meets his gaze.

TURQUOISE
Turquoise.

He stands in front of Desiree. Who doesn't even look up.

DESIREE
Desiree.

The trucker arrives at Mary Ann. Breathing thru his mouth so hard, he sounds like a horse. Mary Ann looks at Stacy. Then CLOSES HER EYES...

MARY ANN
Mary Ann.

A long SILENCE...
Mary Ann swallows hard. She opens her eyes. Then sees that the trucker has taken Desiree by the hand. The girl shoots a wide-eyed glance back at Mary Ann.

THE TRUCKER SITS ON THE BED

in DESIREE'S ROOM. Although she's only been here four days, she's managed to hang some posters and display some candles. The trucker pulls off one of his enormous boots.

DESIREE
Wait wait wait wait wait. Hold on, dude. What do you want to do? We haven't even talked money yet.

The boot hits the floor.

TRUCKER
First, I'm gonna watch you play with yourself.

There goes the other boot.

TRUCKER
Then I'm gonna fuck you real good. I like doggy style.

He starts unbuttoning his sweat-stained shirt.

TRUCKER
Then when I get tired of that, you're gonna blow me till I come in your mouth. That should cover it.

Desiree is trembling. She doesn't even try to hide her revulsion for this guy.

DESIREE
Oh yeah? Well, I think a thousand bucks should cover all that, dude.

The man stares at her. He doesn't even change expression.

TRUCKER
You better be worth it.

He pulls down his pants and stands up.
TRUCKER
Wanna look at my dick first?

59  MARY ANN AND GINGER

relax on GINGER'S BED, listening to MUSIC. A door SLAMS in
the hallway. Heavy FOOTFALLS pass by the door.

The two women look at each other. Scurry to the door and
peek outside.

60  WHISTLING, THE TRUCKER

shuffles down the hallway toward the parlor, the highway, and
eventually Phoenix.

61  THE DOOR IS OPEN

into DESIREE'S ROOM. Mary Ann and Ginger peek inside.

Flora changes the top sheet. The shower runs in the
bathroom.

MARY ANN
Desiree?

They advance to the threshold of the bathroom.

GINGER
Honey? You okay?

DESIREE'S VOICE
Get out of here!

MARY ANN
Desiree--

DESIREE'S VOICE
I said GET THE FUCK OUT OF HERE!!!

62  THE LITTLE GIRL WAS CRYING

Mary Ann scooped her up off the floor.

MARY ANN
Lane! What's wrong with you?

LANE
We're fucking broke and you buy her
another stuffed animal?? How many
of these fucking things does she
need???
He waved the STUFFED LAMB in his fist. The little girl SCREAMED.

MARY ANN
It wasn't that much! She's your daughter!

LANE
You mean she's your daughter. She doesn't even look like me. Here. Take it.

He rubbed the lamb in the little girl's face. Mary Ann grabbed it and started to walk away with her daughter.

MARY ANN
Asshole! Come on, sweetie...

LANE
Hell. You know who she looks like? That pussy who had the hots for you at Banana Republic. That's who she looks like.

Mary Ann froze in her tracks. She didn't turn around.

MARY ANN
What are you talking about?

LANE
What'd you do? Let him fuck you in the dressing room? I'll bet you did. You little whore. I don't see how I coulda knocked you up. I usually just squirt up your ass.

Mary Ann blinked back tears.

MARY ANN
It just takes one time, Lane.

She carried her daughter to the other room. Lane SLAMMED the front door on his way out.

63 LATER, THEY TOOK A BATH

and Mary Ann washed the little girl's hair.

SHANNON
Does daddy hate us?
MARY ANN
No, sweetie. I don't think we're the ones he hates. He's just not a happy person. And unhappy people feel they have to blame other people sometimes.

SHANNON
That's not fair.

MARY ANN
You're right. But life's not always fair, Shannon.

SHANNON mulls that over.

SHANNON
Are you happy, mommy?

Mary Ann looked at her daughter. She had HER FATHER'S EYES. Clear, with long lashes. Mary Ann could stare into them forever...

MARY ANN
I am when I'm with you, cookie dough.

Shannon hugged her mommy.

SHANNON
I am too, mommy.

She thought of something.

SHANNON
But I'm sad when I'm not.

MARY ANN
Then do what I do.

She put her hand over her daughter's heart.

MARY ANN
Think about me here.

YOUNG MAN'S VOICE
Oh, wow. You're really here.

BACK IN THE PRESENT...

Mary Ann in the line-up, looks puzzled by the young man's comment. The boy looks across THE PARLOR to the madam.
YOUNG MAN
Her. I want her.

THEY'RE IN MARY ANN'S ROOM

Sitting on the bed. It's hard to tell who seems more nervous.

YOUNG MAN
So... I'm Josh.

MARY ANN
(laughs)
I'm Mary Ann.

JOSH
Yeah, I know. I--

MARY ANN
-- That's right. I told you in the parlor. Sorry.

JOSH
About what?

MARY ANN
Nothing. Forget it.

She looks at JOSH. He's small. He's sleight. He can't be a day over 19.

GINGER'S IN THE MADAM'S OFFICE

Listening in on the barter session with Stacy.

MARY ANN'S VOICE
So... what do you want to do?

JOSH'S VOICE
You know. The usual. Whatever.

MARY ANN'S VOICE
Okay. Do you like, you know, oral?

JOSH'S VOICE
(laughs)
Yeah. I mean... who doesn't, right?

The two women look at each other, chuckle and shake their heads.
BACK IN MARY ANN'S ROOM

The two of them have edged a little closer together.

MARY ANN
(laughs)
Right. Okay. Um... do you want to have, you know... intercourse?

JOSH
Yes. Definitely. I want to have intercourse.

He's looking her in the eyes. Mary Ann blanks out for a second.

MARY ANN
-- Okay, great. And how much are you willing to spend?

JOSH
Is, uh... a friend of mine told me... is a hundred bucks enough?

MARY ANN
Yeah. Yeah, that should be fine. Do you mind if... I get on top when we do it?

JOSH
(swallows)
I don't... think that should be a problem.

MARY ANN
Alright.

They're just grinning at each other.

JOSH
Oh. I guess you want my money first.

MARY ANN
Actually... I have to examine your penis first. Would you mind taking off your pants?

SHE RUNS INTO THE MADAM'S OFFICE

clutching a handful of twenties. She and Ginger exchange excited looks.
MARY ANN AND GINGER
Oh my God!
They giggle together like schoolgirls. Mary Ann hands the money to the madam, grabs her logbook and scribbles in it. Looks at Ginger again. They do a pinkie handshake.

MARY ANN AND GINGER
Oh my God!
She runs from the office.

ALONE IN MARY ANN’S ROOM

MARY ANN
You... put your pants back on.

JOSH
Is that okay? I felt, you know, stupid... with them off.

She takes a seat next to him. Starts rubbing his back.

MARY ANN
I don't want you to feel stupid.

JOSH
It's actually my default mode.

MARY ANN
(laughs)
You're not stupid.
(massaging him)
God. What you are, is tense.

JOSH
I know. I can't help it. I've never done this before.

MARY ANN
(laughs)
Never paid for sex before? I couldn't tell.

JOSH
No. I've... never had it at all before. This is my first time.

Mary Ann stops and stares at him.
JOSH
I mean... I've had girlfriends.
Well, not really. They were more like friends who were girls. But we'd, you know, mess around a little bit sometime. But...

He looks her in the eyes again.

JOSH
I thought for sure when I started college that...
(he shrugs)
Anyway. I thought I'd just get it over with and... I saw your picture and I thought... her. I mean- YOU. I can't believe I'm really going to do this with you.

MARY ANN
You saw my picture? Where?

JOSH
On your website. I thought maybe it was just a come-on.

MARY ANN
My picture's on the website?

JOSH
Yeah. Of course it is. You mean you didn't know?

MARY ANN
And you came out here... specifically to lose your virginity... to me?

JOSH
I'm sorry. Do you want more money?

Mary Ann just stares at him. Then she takes his face in her hands and kisses him. They make out like teenagers.

They fall onto the bed.

IN THE MADAM'S OFFICE

The EGG TIMER in Mary Ann's mailbox COUNTS ALL THE WAY down from an hour. DING.
MARY ANN'S DOOR OPENS

She leads Josh by the hand down the hallway to the parlor. Other girls look at her from their open doors.

THEY'RE IN THE PARLOR

Not quite ready to say goodbye.

JOSH
I know you do this all the time, but... I'm always going to remember you, Mary Ann.

MARY ANN
I'll remember you too, Josh.

JOSH
I'm sure you say that to everybody.

MARY ANN
Believe me. You're the first one.

She gives him a long kiss goodbye. When it's over, it's hard to tell who looks happier.

MARY ANN
Drive safe.

JOSH
You too.

Mary Ann looks puzzled. Josh cringes.

JOSH
See. I told you stupid was my default mode.

Mary Ann laughs and shepherds him out the door. Closes it and leans against it. Hanging on to the moment. Then, self-conscious, she throws a glance toward the lounge.

No one there is paying any attention to her.

SHE WALKS DOWN THE HALL
Back to her room.

THERE, INSIDE
Flora is changing her top sheet.
MARY ANN TAKES A SHOWER

Leaning against the wall, just letting the hot water rush over her.

SHE STEPS OUT OF THE BATHROOM

Her bed is made, the room empty. Like nothing happened.

A PHOTOGRAPH OF MARY ANN

in her swimsuit, wades out of the swimming pool. She looks innocent and lost. It's the PICTURE THAT GINGER TOOK.

Mary Ann on her iPhone, stares at her image on the Vista Oasis WEBSITE. Ginger sits down next to her.

GINGER

Welcome to my world.

They smile at each other. The two women hug.

THE BELL RINGS

in the HALLWAY. The working girls hurry out of their rooms.

MARY ANN STANDS IN LINE-UPS

A diverse parade of DIFFERENT MEN look her over.

She LOOKS BACK at some of them.

Sometimes a MAN CHOOSES her.

Sometimes the man chooses someone else. Either way, Mary Ann just goes about her business.

SHE NEGOTIATES WITH CUSTOMERS

in HER ROOM. The men are all ages, shapes and sizes. They're INTERCHANGEABLE.

SHE BRINGS MONEY TO THE MADAM

Sometimes it's Stacy. Sometimes it's Donna. They count it and log it into her account.

A MAN STANDS WITH HIS PANTS DOWN

as Mary Ann SCRUTINIZES his genitals with the clinical detachment of a professional.

She removes her latex GLOVE and smiles up at him.
MARY ANN
You're cleared for take-off.

SHE HAS SEX WITH STRANGERS

in a variety of positions. She STRADDLES a fat man. Hard work.

Does it DOGGY STYLE with some guy with tattoos. Unpleasant.
Takes it MISSIONARY from a guy wearing glasses. Uninvolving.

Sits IN THE LAP of an Indian. He makes her come.

The MEN'S FACES CONTORT when they climax. Young, old or middle-aged. Ugly or handsome. They all look in pain at the moment of truth. Their FACES BLEND TOGETHER...

A man lies in Mary Ann's arms. Just SOBBING. She holds him and strokes his head.

MARY ANN HANGS A POSTER

of JANIS JOPLIN on her wall. It's not Ginger's room. But it's a start.

IT'S MORNING OUTSIDE

Lowell leads Mary Ann out the front door into THE PARKING LOT. Mary Ann ogles a low-slung piece of automotive machinery parked by itself.

MARY ANN
Who drove the Viper? I didn't hear a bell. One of Ginger's customers?

LOWELL
That's Wilson's. He owns the place.

MARY ANN
What's he like?

LOWELL
He used to be a dentist.

TWO MEN STAND IN THE DESERT

behind the brothel compound. Staring into the distance. WILSON NAKATORI's in his 50s, in spectacles, Levis and cowboy boots. The other guy's wearing a HARDHAT.
HARDHAT
So what are we talking about?

WILSON
I think three thousand feet should be sufficient.

HARDHAT
By what? Fifty?

WILSON
Hell, there's room. Make it a hundred.

HARDHAT
How do you feel about grass?

WILSON
In this heat?

87 RIDING IN THE LIMO

Mary Ann sits next to Lowell as they head out onto the highway.

LOWELL
So where am I taking you?

MARY ANN
Someplace to buy a gun.

Lowell sizes her up.

LOWELL
You can't keep it in your room, you know.

MARY ANN
I'll just pay for it now and pick it up later on my way out of town.

Lowell turns his eyes to the road. Not his business.

88 SHE LOVED BRUSHING SHANNON'S HAIR

It was part of their ritual at bedtime. They both tensed when they heard the front door.

Lane appeared in the BEDROOM doorway, looking downcast.

LANE
I'm sorry.
That's all it took. They wanted to forgive him. He came in and sat on the bed next to Mary Ann.

LANE
Let me do that.

She handed her husband the brush and stood up.

MARY ANN
Did you eat? I'll heat something up.

LANE
That'd be great, hon.

Mary Ann left her husband alone with her daughter. He brushed her hair. She looked at Lane.

SHANNON
I love you, daddy.

LANE
Please don't make a fool of me, little girl.

Somewhere, the BELL RINGS.

89 THE PROFESSIONALS ASSEMBLE
in the PARLOR. Mary Ann looks up and down the line-up.

MARY ANN
Where's Desiree?

JENNIFER
She left.

Nobody looks surprised. They face front as the front door opens. But instead of a man, or men... A TRIO OF WOMEN lug in some baggage.

ONE OF THEM
It's beauty day!

The working girls SHRIEK, break ranks and gather round.

90 ASHLEY AND COURTNEY
are having their hair done in the CAFETERIA. Jennifer gets a manicure. The other girls just hang, waiting their turns. Turquoise holds up her little finger.
TURQUOISE
I swear, even hard, he was only this big.

Lots of laughter.

TURQUOISE
My clit gets bigger than that.

More laughter. High fives.

MARY ANN
What's the biggest you've ever done?

TURQUOISE
Longest or thickest? Cuz the longest was like twelve inches. But he wasn't the thickest. The thickest was only eight. But that muthafucka was fat as a baseball bat. And the man was only like five foot six. Teeny little dude with this big, fat dick.

MARY ANN
Did it hurt?

TURQUOISE
Girl, I usually fake it. But that boy felt gooooooooood.

Laughter.

MARY ANN
You fake it?

ASHLEY
You always fake it.

GINGER
(reading newspaper)
You mean you always fake it.

ASHLEY
And you don't?

GINGER
What can I say? I love my work.

ASHLEY
Slut.
GINGER
Whore.

JENNIFER
I saw this black guy on the internet? Dick like a fucking cobra. I swear to God, it was weaving back and forth in his face. I don't think I could fuck that. I mean, he could kill you.

COURTNEY
Hey- I saw that on CSI. "Grissom, you're not going to believe this. I matched the dent in the dead girl's heart... to a DICK."

Laughter.

MARY ANN
Is that why we don't have to do blacks if we don't want to?

GINGER
For some reason, a lot of working girls originate from the South, dear. Old habits, as they say.

TURQUOISE
I won't do anyone I don't want to. Course, I haven't met that man yet.

DEVON
My man won't let me do brothers. He's jealous that way.

MARY ANN
You're married?

ASHLEY
Oh, hell no. She means her pimp.

MARY ANN
You have a pimp?

DEVON
He's not a pimp. He's a businessman.

ASHLEY
You just send him all your money.

DEVON
He's investing it.
ASHLEY
Yeah. In bling, mink coats and spinning rims.

GINGER
Yo. Ladies. Attention.
(reads out loud)
Vista Oasis owner Wilson Nakatori's recently announced expansion plans are a warning shot across the bow for our local communities. Moral citizens have long turned the other cheek, because this legalized vice has for the most part, kept its ugly head in the shadows. However, if panderer Nakatori is allowed to build his so-called "Adult Fantasyland", this will no longer be the case. His disturbing vision will become the garishly painted face our county presents to the public. The time has come for us to draw a line in the desert sand. We must decide whether our best interest is to follow the path of light, or forever succumb to the darkness. Yours in Christ. Rev. Richard T. Greenleaf, Pastor. First Bible Church.

The girls have been booing and catcalling since Ginger first read the word "moral".

TURQUOISE
Somebody needs to get laid.

ASHLEY
Somebody needs to take a bullet.

Mary Ann glances over at the comment. Then stares at something deep inside her head.

LOWELL WATCHES A BALLGAME
from his station behind the bar. Mary Ann stares into an empty shotglass.

MARY ANN
Ever kill anyone, Lowell?

LOWELL
Never even come close.
MARY ANN
Guess you never been married, huh.

LOWELL
(chuckles)
Fifteen years in September.

MARY ANN
You're shittin' me. You don't wear a ring.

Lowell holds up his hand. He's wearing a ring alright. It's got a SKULL on it.

MARY ANN
How romantic.

LOWELL
Ya think? She picked it.

MARY ANN
How'd you make it work so long?

LOWELL
Fear.

MARY ANN
You beat her?

Lowell just shakes his head.

LOWELL
Fear of losing her.

Mary Ann doesn't know what to say.

92 ALONE IN HER ROOM

Mary Ann lies on her bed. Tears streaming down her face as she stares at her iPhone.

It's a PHOTO OF SHANNON.

MARY ANN
I'm almost there, cookie dough...

A loud BUZZER rips through the facility. Mary Ann looks up.

93 GIRLS EMPTY INTO THE HALLWAY

The BUZZER continues to shriek.
MARY ANN
What is that? A smoke alarm?

COURTNEY
Someone pushed the panic button!
Who's booked?

Mary Ann realizes who, and runs down the hall.

MARY ANN
Ginger!

GINGER'S ON THE FLOOR

of HER ROOM. Blood pouring from her broken nose. A naked man standing over her. His face is purple, his penis isn't.

Devon is the first one thru the door, wearing a STRAP-ON DILDO around her waist.

DEVON
Mother fucker!

She tears off her rubber wanger and belts the guy upside the head with it. SPLAT! He drops to one knee. Devon continues to beat on the guy with the dildo. WHAP. WHAP. WHAP.

Mary Ann comes thru the door. Gasps and takes a step back. Then she looks around, grabs a dildo from Ginger's collection and joins in the beatdown. WHAP WHAP WHAP WHAP!

More girls come in. Join the party. WHAP WHAP WHAP WHAP WHAP--

BLAM! Everyone SCREAMS and jumps off. PLASTER RAINS DOWN from the ceiling. Lowell looms in the doorway with a .44 Magnum, smoke drifting from the barrel.

Mary Ann runs to Ginger's side.

MARY ANN
Ice! Somebody get some ice!

Courtney runs from the room. The night madam appears in the doorway.

DONNA THE NIGHTSHIFT MADAM
I'll call the sheriff.

She's gone too. Ginger sits up and looks at Mary Ann.

GINGER
How bad dud id loog?

Mary Ann starts to cry.
GINGER
Thags. You're a big fuggid helb.

The naked man tries to get up.

DEVON
Fucker!

WHAP! She drops him with her strap-on.

OUTSIDE, BY THE SWIMMING POOL

A single, scrawny COYOTE emerges from the shadows. Bathed in the diffused and swirling COLORED LIGHTS. Listening to the EMERGENCY RADIOS emanating from the other side of the building into the Nevada desert night.

It tiptoes up to the edge of the pool and drinks.

THE SUN RISES

over the Vista Oasis compound.

THE MADAM COUNTS HUNDREDS

Placing them into a neat pile on top of a computer printout.

STACY THE MADAM
... eight, nine. Eighteen thousand. One, two. And fifty.

She looks up at Mary Ann.

STACY THE MADAM
Not bad for a beginner.

The girl looks at the money. Picks it up and wraps it in her printout. She stuffs the package into her purse.

STACY THE MADAM
Want us to hold your room?

MARY ANN
I'm not coming back.

The madam nods. It happens all the time.

STACY THE MADAM
Where you going from here?

MARY ANN
Home.
The women look at each other. The madam stands. The girl does as well.

STACY THE MADAM
Good luck.

Mary Ann swallows hard. She nods.

MARY ANN
Tell Ginger I said goodbye.

She turns and walks out of THE MADAM'S OFFICE.

ROLLING HER SUITCASE

into THE PARLOR, Mary Ann looks up to see a NEW GIRL standing in the doorway. Looking around, letting her eyes adjust to the dark. The new girl looks at Mary Ann. She looks scared.

NEW GIRL
Who do I talk to about working here?

Mary Ann points.

MARY ANN
Down this hall. First door on your right. Madam's name is Stacy.

NEW GIRL
Thanks.

She passes Mary Ann and heads down the hall.

Mary Ann just stands there a moment, not looking back. She throws a glance into the lounge. Behind the bar, Lowell raises a shotglass to her.

Mary Ann walks out the front door INTO THE SUNLIGHT.

LANE CLOSED THE DOOR

Locking himself in THE BATHROOM. He looked down at the BRUSH in his hand. Pulled out a clump of loose hair. Then he withdrew a clear sandwich bag from his back pocket. And sealed the hair inside.

LANE
Please don't make a fool of me.
BACK IN THE PRESENT...

It's a beautiful day. Mary Ann is backdropped by clouds as she LOOKS DOWN at you.

MARY ANN  
I'm ready to go now, cookie dough.

She reached into her purse for the package of money. Then pulls out a disposable lighter. She sets the packet of bills ON FIRE.

Then places it on the grass in front of a HEADSTONE that reads:

SHANNON LEIGH MICHAELS  
2007 - 2012  
Sleep, Angel

The MONEY BURNS...

THE LITTLE GIRL LOOKED UP

as someone opened her bedroom door.

SHANNON  
Daddy, why are you crying?

Lane trembled.

LANE  
Don't... call me daddy...

He held a .38 revolver behind his back.

MARY ANN PULLED UP TO THE HOUSE

in her Civic. The DRAPES MOVED in the front window as she unloaded her groceries.

SHE WALKED IN THE FRONT DOOR

and heard her little girl SCREAM. BLAM!

Mary Ann jumped at the sound of the gunshot. Then took a moment to register--

MARY ANN  
Shannon???

She dropped her groceries and ran--
INTO THE BEDROOM

The horror of the moment was painted on her face.

MARY ANN

NOOOOOOOOO!

Lane turned to face her. His face and clothes were spattered with blood.

LANE
I hate you. You did this to us.
Live with it, you whore.

He put the gun to his forehead--

BACK IN THE PRESENT...

Mary Ann places the barrel of a small .22 pistol under her chin and slams her eyes shut. BLACK.

BLAM!

MARY ANN CROUCHED DOWN AND HELD OUT HER ARMS

as Shannon ran thru the PRE-SCHOOL CLASSROOM to greet her.

SHANNON
Mommy! Mommy!

They held each other tight.

MARY ANN
Hey, cookie dough. Did you miss me?

SHANNON
Yes... I mean... I started to.

Mary Ann looked her little girl in the eye.

MARY ANN
You started to? What happened?

The little girl touched her chest over her heart.

BACK IN THE PRESENT...

Tears stream down Mary Ann's cheeks. Her hand over her heart. She lowers the pistol from under her chin.
The money burns on top of her daughter's grave. Like Kennedy's ETERNAL FLAME...

108 JANIS JOPLIN LAUGHS

from the POSTER in MARY ANN'S ROOM. Mary Ann unpacks her suitcase. A familiar silhouette appears in the doorway.

GINGER'S VOICE
Thought you weren't coming back.

MARY ANN
Changed my mind.

GINGER'S VOICE
Yeah? Howcum?

Mary Ann unpacks her daughter's stuffed lamb. She holds it in her hands.

MARY ANN
Someone told me I could.

She turns and smiles.

Ginger smiles back. Her eyes hollow, her nose set and bandaged.

GINGER
I'm glad.

MARY ANN
Yeah. Me too. How you feeling?

GINGER
Well, I can't smell a thing. And if I don't get a cock in me soon, I swear it's gonna seal right up. But it's a blessing in disguise, I guess. I used to have a deviated septum? The doc took care of it when he reset my nose.

MARY ANN
Talk about a blessing. Why's the place smell like tar?

GINGER
Probably the airstrip.

MARY ANN
What airstrip?
GINGER
Miss Observant. Out back. Wilson put in a runway so boys can fly their Cessna's in. Devon fucked one of them in the ass with her strap-on yesterday.

MARY ANN
I thought it was illegal for us to do anal.

GINGER
Not quite. They can't do us. But we can do them.

Mary Ann mulls that over. Sounds like a perk! She sets the STUFFED LAMB down on her bed.

MARY ANN
I thought you'd be home while your face healed up. Wherever that is.

GINGER
Honey. This is my home.

She gets off the doorframe and walks back to her room.

109 STACY AND DONNA
discuss madam business in THEIR OFFICE. On the video monitor: a group of COLLEGE BOYS walks up to the gate.

The BELL RINGS somewhere in the house.

110 GIRLS GATHER IN THE PARLOR
Turquoise, Devon, Ashley, Courtney and Jennifer cue into a line-up.

111 WATCHING A BALLGAME
Lowell switches THE LOUNGE TV to hardcore porn.

112 GINGER SITS DOWN
in HER ROOM and studies her face in the mirror.

113 NIGHT IN THE DESERT
The LANDING LIGHTS come on alongside the runway.
OUTSIDE, UNDER THE STARS

Mary Ann gazes out at the distant hills.

She sets a big DISH OF DOG FOOD on the deck by the pool.

FROM THE AIR

you can read THE VISTA OASIS in red neon far below. Then below it, in green: COME AGAIN.

Somewhere below, a coyote HOWLS.

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