

City of Nets
by
Debbie Bolsky
©2000

debbie@dbolskywriter.com
www.dbolskywriter.com

FADE IN:

EXT. CHICAGO TRIBUNE BUILDING - DAY

Calm music plays. Bright, sunny day.

JEN MALONE (late 30s), slight, pretty woman strolls across the street toward a parking garage. She carries a briefcase and bouquet of lilies.

Jen's husband, JAKE MALONE (40s), gruff exterior, the exact opposite of Jen, walks beside her, angrily talking on his cell phone.

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

They stop in front of a vintage Mustang convertible. Jake makes a "blah, blah" hand motion at the cell phone. Jen gives Jake a peck on the cheek as he hands her the keys.

Jen slides into the driver's seat and turns the ignition on.

The car explodes. Jake is flung backwards.

Jake rushes toward the burning car...Another explosion.

He's thrown to the ground, flames shoot out, his right leg catches fire.

JAKE

NOOO...

INT. JAKE MALONE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jake, passed out on his roll-out bed, hugging a Jack Daniels bottle, bolts up. The bottle crashes to the floor.

JAKE

...NOOO!

Rain beats outside.

Jake slowly rolls off of his bed in his underwear, revealing scarring on his right leg. He shivers.

A Silver Zuni Eagle Fetish hangs around his neck. He climbs into the dirty jeans and sweatshirt on the floor.

He walks through his dingy pigsty, one-room apartment, stepping around and over crumpled up papers, cluttered boxes and near empty Jack Daniels' bottles.

A baseball is wedged to keep the window open. A wooden cane lies by the door.

An old Remington typewriter, with a ragged sheet of paper rolled into it, sits on a crooked three legged table, a pile of clothes scattered beneath the table.

Jake empties a whisky bottle into a dirty glass. He slugs it back, BLASTS a Jethro Tull CD on the stereo and ignores the neighbors who POUND on the wall.

EXT. PORT OF CHICAGO - DAY

BERNARD TRIACHI, an attractive, well-dressed man with that perfect combination of a seductive smile and steely gaze, watches CAL ADAMS accept a sheaf of papers from the Shipping Agent.

Cal, Triachi's Irish weasel lieutenant, hands him the papers.

They stroll through the shipyard past freighters and the workmen unloading them.

TRIACHI

All of the arrangements are made?

CAL

(thick Irish brogue)

The cargo arrives Thursday from Bandar Abbas to New York, L.A. and Chicago. Our usual shipment of "Horse" in combination with a little something extra. As my Ma would say, they'll be gobsmacked, never know what hit them, or who. And don't worry, I'm using a small independent, nothing traceable to you.

Triachi grunts his approval.

CAL (CONT'D)

I do have one concern.

TRIACHI

Mr. Malone will be otherwise distracted. You did see to it that his anniversary gift is being delivered today, didn't you?

CAL

Of course.

TRIACHI

I don't want Jake to ever think I've forgotten him, especially on this day of all days.

Triachi and Cal get into a Town Car.

RUSS SHEINBERG (late 20s), wearing a well-worn Cleveland Indians cap, watches them from the shadows, takes pictures and types into his iPhone.

Triachi and Cal drive away.

Sheinberg walks over to the Shipping Agent.

SHEINBERG

I'd like to talk to you about some of your shipments.

SHIPPING AGENT

Not without a warrant.

SHEINBERG

(hands him money)

I'm no cop.

INT. CHICAGO TRIBUNE OFFICE - DAY

"Stan Marshall, Managing Editor" plaque on the door.

Scattered around the office, reams of computer printouts, random pages from the *Chicago Tribune* and ashtrays half-filled with unsmoked, chewed up cigarettes.

STAN MARSHALL (60-ish), balding, leans comfortably back in his chair, chews on a cigarette while scribbling red marks over papers.

Sheinberg stalks over to Stan.

SHEINBERG

(points to the papers)

I'd get it out quicker if you'd sanction my blog again.

STAN

But not as accurate. Dig deeper, Sheinberg. You do this right and maybe people'll realize this paper's not as antiquated as they think.

SHEINBERG

Most are too scared to talk.

STAN

Then use some of that initiative I hired you for.

SHEINBERG

That was always Jake's strong suit. I need his help. He knows more about Triachi than anyone.

Stan shakes his head no.

SHEINBERG (CONT'D)

He deserves another chance.

Stan tosses his cigarette out.

STAN

The last chance I gave him cost the paper more than he's worth. Let it go, you're as good as he ever was.

SHEINBERG

No one's as good as Jake. And if it wasn't for me, Jen would still be alive.

Stan chews on another cigarette, looks out his window at the rain.

STAN

If it wasn't for all of us...

INT. JAKE MALONE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Music plays LOUD. Neighbors still POUND. Jake refills his glass.

On his desk, a framed picture of Jen with her nameplate leaning against it: "Jen Malone, Assistant District Attorney, Cook County, Illinois"

JAKE

(toasts the picture)
Love ya, babe. Miss you.

Jake's eyes shift to the newspaper pictures and articles about Triachi papering his walls. More than half have been ripped.

On the right wall, a collage of Triachi and a woman (KATE LINDSEY). Kate, wearing a large brimmed hat, exudes sexuality. Adjacent, front page newspaper headlines "DRUG DEALER WITNESS KILLED IN PLANE CRASH."

Another grouping on the left, Triachi at various official city and state gatherings with the CHICAGO MAYOR. In all of these pictures Cal is by his side.

Jake swings his arm back to throw the glass but stops and downs the whiskey instead.

KNOCK.

Jake refills his glass. The bottle's empty.

He tries every one. They are all empty. He smashes one against the wall. This quiets his neighbors.

Jake opens his door. On the ground, a long flower box and pint of Jack Daniels.

Jake pours himself a drink and lifts the card attached to the flowers:

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

He glances at the picture of Jen and opens the box, lilies. He downs his drink.

JAKE (CONT'D)

You always remember.

Jake shoves the bottle into his overcoat pocket, picks up the lilies and his cane and limps out.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Dreary, drizzling. Jake limps to a headstone using his cane to maintain his balance.

CLOSE ON HEADSTONE

Jennifer Elizabeth Malone
1975-2013

Jake lays the lilies in front of the headstone.

JAKE

I'm sorry...so sorry.

He limps out of the cemetery.

INT. STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Jake shakes the rain off as he stumbles up the stairs and...

EXT. JAKE MALONE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

...bumps into the woman leaning against his door, LAURA PERCIVAL (mid-late 30s), beautiful, sexy, hard edged. He angrily pushes Laura aside.