

## STINGER

(Scene from optioned script)

EXT PESHAWAR CLUB - NIGHT

Nick and Robin drive up the long, jacaranda-lined entrance to the residence club, a faded-yellow, colonial-era oasis of gentility.

EXT FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

Backed by a low-slung building, the lawn is a communal area with scattered seating areas, each grouped around an electric fan. Robin and Nick settle into a pair of comfortable rattan chairs, the parcels at his feet. Across the lawn, two Pakistanis relax before a large television. The evening news over, they are watching an episode of *Bonanza*. A turbaned waiter, MOHAMMED, approaches, dignified and correct.

MOHAMMED

Good evening, Mr. Daley.

NICK

(handing him a newspaper-wrapped package)

Mangoes to knock your socks off, Mohammed. Half for you, half for me.

MOHAMMED

Thank you, sir. Very good chicken tonight.

NICK

A mind-reader you are. And don't forget the naan.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

The table cleared, Robin sinks back in her seat with a happy sigh. They sit for a silent moment, enjoying the bright stars and clear sky. They are relaxed, earlier tension gone.

ROBIN

It was wonderful, Nick.

NICK

As good as home cooking. At least,  
as close as I've got.

(beat)

Now, how about a nightcap?

ROBIN

(with a hint of wariness)

I suppose it can't be served here  
on the lawn?

NICK

My ice cubes are made with bottled  
water.

ROBIN

Well...in the name of intestinal  
health.

He takes her hand, she doesn't remove it. Something about time and place and out-of-context, because the big city writer and the CIA cowboy are drawn to each other, despite themselves - and their better judgment.

EXT GARDEN - NIGHT

He leads her through the garden along a narrow path overgrown with fragrant old roses. They walk up two steps to his cottage.

INT NICK'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Looking around as they enter, Robin finds it cozy and casual, everything leftover Victorian. Sun-bleached chintz curtains. A faded green armchair, paisley quilt tossed across its ottoman. An old Royal typewriter on a small teak desk. A crowded bookcase. Maps of Pakistan, India, Southeast Asia. His history? Robin sits on the overstuffed brown sofa, avoiding a spring sticking out.

NICK

You like Armagnac?

ROBIN

Guess we didn't need the ice.

He gets the glasses, bottle, puts on a cassette of Ravi Shankar and Yehudi Menuhin. He pours, then lifts his glass.

NICK

To...Jamal.

Robin joins the toast, pleased. They clink. As he moves toward her, she tenses again. Seeing it's only to push the spring back inside the cushion, she relaxes and reaches to help him. Their fingers touch...she looks at them...he looks at her face. His other hand moves to her hair. She tenses again. Gently his fingers cross her cheek, circle her dimple, then he takes her stubborn jaw and turns it to him while his other hand grips hers. They look at each other, then kiss. A tentative kiss. Then another, more committed.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Still in his business suit, Mr. Yu bursts through the door, Beretta pointed straight at Nick, who eases away from Robin, while patting her arm.

NICK

Why, Mr. Yu, a new Beretta?

MR. YU

Quick trip to Darra, no problem.

NICK

You found a shop open this time of night?

MR. YU

I am here for the return of my property.

NICK

I'm sure we can work something out, but please stop waving that gun around. There's a lady present.

The Beretta doesn't budge.

MR. YU

Nothing to work out.

NICK

I wonder how your government would feel about a trusted official sidelining in drugs while the guest of an important ally - who also happens to be an important customer.

Yu directs a murderous look Nick's way.

NICK (CONT'D)

The Pakistanis pay with dollars, as I'm sure you're aware.

(MORE)

NICK (CONT'D)

Just as you are aware of China's stringent anti-drug laws. They're not too big on murder either.

Mr. Yu lowers the pistol slowly as Robin watches, her fear turning to confusion to fury. Guns, drugs. Murder.

NICK (CONT'D)

I'll tell you what. I promise to keep my mouth shut and return those nasty drugs. But I do need a small favor."

MR. YU

What about my money?

NICK

You mean the Russian dope dealer's money? There's an old American proverb: Finders keepers, losers weepers.

(beat)

I'd like our relationship to remain friendly. I could use you as a "consultant" on a little deal I'm working on.

Robin leaps to her feet. Whatever the "deal," she wants no part of it.

ROBIN

It's been swell, Nick, but I'm sure you two boys have a lot to discuss.

NICK

Sorry, Robin - business.

ROBIN

Get it while you can, Nick.

She turns, listening...but the bastard doesn't say a word to stop her. Well, good riddance. So what is that little grain of disappointment she feels? She slams the door behind her.