

**'Girl with a Gun'**

**Original Screenplay by Yale Udoff**

FADE IN:

INT. ARCHITECTURAL OFFICES (SANTA MONICA, CA) - DAY

CAMERA PANS a wall of architectural models in this busy high-tech office. Two men talk quietly near a window overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

GREGORY EISEN, early thirties, holds a model of a distinctive, post-modern office building. He still believes in architecture that is more than just functional spaces for people to sit and move through. He wears jeans, polo shirt and worn boots.

GREGORY

At least let me show them the model. Talk about it.

PHILLIP SCANLON, late forties, Armani suit and wanting this over so he can get to lunch.

SCANLON

Greg, you know I admire your talent. Otherwise you wouldn't be here... But things take time.

From Greg's body language, we know he's heard this before.

SCANLON

(as he starts away)  
Just get me those breakdowns. We'll talk later. I promise.

GREG'S WORK AREA

He gently lays down his model, turns to the breakdowns (a line of calculations, numbers, etc.), glances out the window.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE HOLLYWOOD - DAY

Mid-day. Greg jogs through the hills with DMITRI, his four year old Siberian Husky on the leash.

He stops to take in the spectacular view looking down to the reservoir below and the city beyond. He bends, rubs Dmitri's head. We sense he's come to a decision.

GREGORY

Dmitri, we're both getting older.  
Hmm?

The dog looks up at him, tilts his head, wondering.

EXT. ARCHITECTURAL OFFICES - PARKING AREA - DAY

Late afternoon. Dmitri sits in Greg's battered old Saab convertible, his nose poking out the window toward...

GREGORY (O.S.)  
Phillip, I've got to do it now.  
Before -

INT. SCANLON'S OFFICE

Greg, still in his sweaty workout outfit. Scanlon rises from his desk, genuinely concerned.

GREGORY (CONT'D)  
...four years become eight.

SCANLON  
Do what - build beautiful buildings? We're not talking about a new suit, Greg. This is a business too. The startup costs are, well -

GREGORY  
I know, I know. But I've got to find a way to do what I've dreamt about...most of my life.

SCANLON  
(with sympathy)  
You don't think I had those dreams, that my partners didn't?

GREGORY  
I'm sure you did.

The implied criticism stops Scanlon for a beat.

SCANLON  
Wait for the right moment. Be reasonable.

GREGORY  
It's something I've always been, that I don't like about myself.

It's said without rancor, without his even knowing he knew this about himself. Scanlon has no answer.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREG'S HOUSE (LAUREL CANYON)- ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

A "fixerup" that still needs a lot of fixing. However, trees and lawn and winding driveway give it a sense of privacy.

INT. GREG'S HOUSE - VARIOUS ROOMS - NIGHT

Having just showered and still in his robe, Greg moves through the comfortable living room (excellent framed vintage photos, books, CD console, etc.) into the kitchen, pours himself a Vodka. He looks down at Dmitri.

GREGORY

Not to worry. We still have plenty of kibble. For now.

The Husky jumps up, pushes him with his paws. He fills Dmitri's bowl, then checks the tortillas warming in a pan, when the phone RINGS. He turns down the CD, picks up...

GREGORY

Hey Rick, how goes it? (listens)  
News travels fast. (listens) Sure,  
c'mon over.

Suddenly, Dmitri HOWLS like only a Husky (or a Wolf) can. Greg turns to see his tortillas burning.

LATER THAT NIGHT - GREG'S STUDY

Actually, the converted second-bedroom. Tacked on the walls are plans for all sorts of buildings; scale models sit above a large work table. The CD hums with the lyric second movement of *Shostakovich's 2nd Piano Concerto*.

Greg closes a book of architectural photographs, looks up and is greeted by a few framed photos: Dmitri as a pup; himself batting in a softball game; finally...

HIS POV - PHOTO - LOVELY YOUNG WOMAN

ANOTHER SHOT - GREG

A sadness washes across his face, but the DOORBELL brings him back.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

RICK MIDAS, still wearing his business suit sits, POPS the cork on a bottle of champagne, pours into coffee cups.

RICK  
Freedom!

GREGORY  
Yeah.

They drink.

RICK  
Been trying to free myself for ten  
years now. IRS won't let me.  
(a big sigh; another sip)  
I owe more than I make. Shit!

MUCH LATER

The champagne is almost dead. Greg empties what's left into both their coffee cups. Rick's tie has been loosened, and he looks pretty beat by now.

RICK  
Karen would've been proud.

Greg doesn't reply, sips his wine.

RICK  
Sorry.

GREGORY  
Hey...

Rick pushes himself up, moves to a row of liquor bottles.

RICK  
Mind?

Greg motions to go ahead. Rick pours himself some scotch.

RICK  
Next year it's the Big 35.  
(sips the scotch)  
I was twenty-one yesterday. What  
happened?

GREGORY  
The Internet.

RICK  
Yeah. So, you got an attack plan?

GREGORY  
 (feigns deep thought)  
 Have breakfast.

CUT TO:

EXT. SWINGERS COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Beverly Blvd. Late morning. Greg sits at an outside table finishing a late breakfast, browsing the morning paper. Dmitri lies at his side.

As his WAITRESS refills his coffee, he notices a Jeep Wrangler pull into a nearby space. A stunning YOUNG WOMAN gets out and sits at a table. But it's more than the obvious good looks (etched cheekbones, lovely hair, legs that do justice to her jet black mini-skirt), it's how they all add up, capped by a languid and cozy sensuality, a cat-like grace.

Yet, the way she fingers the menu, nervously checks out the area, we get the sense that perhaps something is wrong. The WAITRESS stops at her table. But before she can inquire:

YOUNG WOMAN  
 Coffee, black. Maybe...yes, an  
 English muffin. No butter.

As the Waitress move off, the Young Woman nervously checks a car that idles in the street a few yards away. She relaxes as a Young Man jumps into it and it speeds off. Turning back, she catches Greg watching her.

YOUNG WOMAN  
 A Husky, no?

He nods. She's at his table now, bending toward Dmitri.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)  
 I've never seen one this color.  
 What's his name?

GREGORY  
 Dmitri.

She bends down to Dmitri.

YOUNG WOMAN  
 Well Dmitri, you are one handsome  
 dog. Bet all the girls are at your  
 feet.

With her skimpy outfit, it's impossible not to glimpse her braless breasts.

GREGORY

He's a gent. Never pushes it.  
Anyway, dogs unlike us, have no  
vanity.

YOUNG WOMAN

God, you're deep.

She stands straight again, smiles at him, her playful expression telling him she knows exactly what he's glimpsed.

Thrown by her insouciance, he watches as she returns to her table. Aware that she's being watched, she smiles back to him, then turns her face up into the sun.

Greg ties Dmitri to the parking meter, starts for the coffee shop's door, but winds up at her table - thinking quickly.

GREGORY

Think you could...keep an eye on  
the handsome Dmitri?

YOUNG WOMAN

(opens her eyes)  
You mean, I'm in charge now.

He almost blushes, then heads into the cafe.

INT. SWINGERS

He exits the bathroom, pulls his cell phone, punches in his code number, listens. (Street can't be seen from here.)

RICK (V.O.)

Good wine. Almost no hangover.  
Anyway, if you need financial  
advice - call someone who knows,  
which isn't me. Good luck, buddy.

(message BEEPS; ANOTHER  
VOICE)

Hi, Husky rescue here. We have a  
lovely two year old female, black  
and white, lovely blue eyes. Make a  
great companion for Dmitri. A man  
needs a woman. Call us.

The messages end. He hangs up.

EXT. SWINGERS

He exits, looks to where the Young Woman was seated. She's gone. A moment's regret until he realizes - so is Dmitri!

A YOUNG MUSICIAN TYPE is sitting at one of the tables.

GREGORY  
(frantic)  
There was a dog here -

The MUSICIAN TYPE looks up.

YOUNG MUSICIAN  
Wha?

GREGORY  
There was a girl here with a dog.

YOUNG MUSICIAN  
Fine stuff. She and the dog just  
like, you know, flew.

GREGORY  
That's my dog she took!

YOUNG MUSICIAN  
Bummer man. They zipped off in that  
neat little Wrangler.

Greg rushes into the street, looks toward where the Young Musician had pointed. Nothing. The Waitress moves out with the English muffin.

GREGORY  
The girl who was sitting here -  
you know her?

WAITRESS  
What girl?

GREGORY  
(exploding)  
The one that muffin's for.

Waitress reaches the table, and as she picks up a bill -

WAITRESS  
She left me twenty. That's a  
sixteen buck tip.

GREGORY  
You ever seen her before?

In b.g., the Young Musician mutters: "She stole his dog."

WAITRESS  
Oh, no. What a bummer.

GREGORY  
DO YOU KNOW HER!!!

Waitress gestures to make it clear she doesn't.

CAMERA REMAINS outside as Greg rushes into the cafe, collars the Owner, pointing to the abandoned table. It's obvious from his body language, he has received no help.

CUT TO:

INT. GREG'S STUDY - NIGHT

A ball of paper misses the trash basket. Greg sits slumped in his work chair. The carpet around the basket littered with missed shots. He looks tense and worn, avoids the photo of Dmitri as a pup. Phone RINGS. He snatches it up.

GREGORY  
Yes? No, I don't want a chance to  
add to my life insurance. I'm  
already dead.

Slams the phone down, heads into the main room where the tv is turned to 3 CNN Pundits screaming at each other.

ANOTHER ANGLE - LATER

Greg dozes in front of the screen (ESPN Sports). Again, the phone RINGS. He clears the sleep away, reaches for phone.

GREGORY  
Yeah... (no answer) Hello!

YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE  
I was...sort of afraid to call.

The Voice, it's sleepy sensuality...

GREGORY  
It's you! Where's Dmitri? Is he  
okay?

YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE  
I guess, saying I'm sorry doesn't  
mean much. He's fine. Great dog.

GREGORY  
(calming slightly)  
How'd you get my number?

YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE  
His tag.

GREGORY  
How could you do something like  
this?

YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE  
I lost control. It happens. Here's  
my address. Come pick him up.

There's a plea in her voice, a feeling that she's hanging  
together by a thread. He reaches for a pencil.

CUT TO:

EXT. SANTA MONICA FRWY. - GREG'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

He zips in and around slower moving traffic. Suddenly, from  
behind, the flashing lights of a Hwy. patrol car.

Checking his rear-view mirror, he sighs, starts to pull to  
the side...

EXT. VARIOUS STREETS - SAAB (MOVING) - VENICE - NIGHT

He checks for the address as he drives down a silent, dimly  
lit street lined with small bungalows, spots the address.

No opens spots, he pulls around the block, parks out of sight  
of the bungalow, starts walking.

On the other side of the street, Two Young Men noisily exit a  
house, jump into a car and roar away as Greg stops at the  
gate to a run down bungalow with a weedy, unkempt lawn.

A light in the bungalow window as he steps up onto the narrow  
porch. He knocks; no answer. Repeats; again, no answer.

GREGORY  
Anyone home? Hello.

No dog sounds. Nothing. Slightly uncomfortable, he reaches for the doorknob - it's off the lock.

INT. BUNGALOW - NIGHT

The dimly lit living room is sparsely furnished. The tv is tuned to a Nature Program (a stalking tiger in India). The coffee table is turned over; two liquor glasses lie on the floor. Something unsettling has happened here.

A large dog bone, half-chewed, lies on the couch. He reaches for it, slips it into his jacket, his discomfort growing.

GREGORY

Anyone here? Dmitri...

He starts for the darkened, adjacent dining room...when his foot hits something which gives off a PING.

He looks down to see - a large bowl filled with dog food. Confused and a little scared, he is about to continue when - HE'S GRABBED FROM BEHIND AND WHIRLED AROUND.

TWO VERY SERIOUS LOOKING TOUGHS (FRANK & RALPH)

FRANK throws him against the wall.

FRANK

Where is he?

GREGORY

What?

FRANK

Where the fuck are they!

GREGORY

I don't know what you're talking about. I'm looking for my dog.

RALPH

Asshole! You're working for him, right?

Frank slaps him hard; to say he's in shock is just part of it. He's scared shitless.

FRANK

Where are they!

GREGORY

I swear - I got a call. This was the address. I don't know anything.

RALPH  
Call from who!

GREGORY  
I don't know her name. She stole my  
dog.

Frank pulls out a revolver fitted with a silencer.

GREGORY  
Oh no, please. I -- I...my dog.  
That's all I'm here for.

Ralph signals to get it over with. The muzzle is hard against Greg's temple, when FOOTSTEPS are heard outside. Instead of firing, Frank puts his hand over Greg's mouth; Ralph clubs him from behind.

SCREEN GOES DARK. HOLD ON DARK SCREEN FOR A FEW LONG BEATS:

WIPE TO:

INT. BUNGALOW - DAY

Weak fingers of light poke through the french shutters into the dining room, coming to rest on the crumpled figure of Greg, who MOANS as he comes to. Dazed, standing weakly, he touches the dried blood coating his neck and forehead.

Starting to remember what happened, he turns - immediately stiffens with the sight of:

A man, probably Mexican, a bullet hole through his eye socket. Decidedly dead.

Greg takes a deep breath, but it doesn't stop the shaking.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUNGALOW - DAY

Later. The bagged body is lifted onto a gurney. On the porch of the bungalow, JOE BRODY, a plainclothes detective takes notes while UNIFORMED OFFICERS tape the area.

BRODY  
So around eleven last night?

Greg nods. CHET SIMMONS, Brody's young partner moves to them.