

PRODUCTION VALUE

It will cost you your life...

by Richard W. Haines

SAMPLE CHAPTER

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for

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CHAPTER 36

Clarice finally woke up. Her head was groggy and her jaw was in tremendous pain. She couldn't see anything. There appeared to be tape over her eyes and across her mouth. She tasted something bitter, and her tongue felt a gap in her teeth. She gagged as she was forced to swallow her own blood.

She tried to move the rest of her body but was unable to do anything except wiggle her fingers and toes. Her legs and had been gaffer taped to the director's folding chair, and her hands had been taped behind her back.

She tried to stand up but a voice shouted at her.

"Sit down, bitch!"

Clarice recognized it immediately. It was the guy directing her scene when she was an extra. Panicking, Clarice began to twitch.

Suddenly there was a loud ripping sound, and she felt a sharp pain on her forehead and in her cheeks. The gaffer tape had been yanked off her eyes.

She could see where she was.

It appeared to be a room in the warehouse, the location of the film shoot. To her right was a window that led to the pier. It was cracked open, and she felt the wind blow onto her sore face. The throbbing pain of her jaw continued, but the

tape on her mouth prevented her from crying out. The cement walls made the place damp, and the sweat that drenched her chilled her to the bone.

She could hear the sounds of the van being loaded outside: they were clearing the warehouse of evidence.

Luan stood in front of her with a switchblade, holding her resume. He circled around her as he read it out loud. She tried to follow his movements, but the restraints made it difficult.

“Clarice Andrews, Chappaqua, New York. SAG member. Speaking role in a television pilot, *Fine Tuner*. Background work in commercials. Some modeling.’ Very impressive. Now why did you steal the film can?” he asked in a low voice.

Clarice was unable to talk with the gaffer tape over her mouth. He was tormenting her to make her break.

Luan stopped circling her and knelt down in front. He held the switchblade up to her left cheek. The tip of the blade gleamed in the overhead florescent light.

“You shouldn’t do things like that... nose around in other people’s business. Know what could happen?”

Clarice shook her head in terror.

“You’re pretty face could get cut up! Then what would you put on your resume, eh?”

He gently caressed the tip of the blade down the bridge of her nose as tears flowed out of her eyes.

Luan smiled, then continued. “I used to be called Luan the Knife. Do you know why?”

Clarice quivered with fear.

“Now here’s how it is,” he whispered. “I’m going to take the tape off your mouth, and you’re going to tell me everything. What you saw, what you know, and what you think you know. You’re also going to tell me who else you talked to. If you scream, I’ll slice off your nose. If I think you’re lying to me, I’ll cut out your tongue. Nod your head if you understand me.”

Trembling, Clarice shook her head up and down.

Luan ripped off the gaffer tape. It was painful and made her cry, but then she stopped, terrified he’d mutilate her.

Luan waited a moment until the sobbing ended, then dangled the knife in front of her face. “Let’s have it!”

Clarice tried to speak but choked from the blood in her mouth. She coughed, and the blood drooled down her chin.

“You’ll have to do a lot better than that, bitch!” Luan snarled as he placed the blade on the corner of her lips.

She clenched her mouth, terrified that he would cut out her tongue.

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