

Audition Monologues for *City of Angels*

Stone Voiceover: “No sense kicking about death. No point arguing with the ump. For my money, checking out in your sleep gets the nod, the big nod, every time. Dying in bed’s the ticket - providing you’re alone when it happens. Cashing in because of a woman - dying with a skirt for a blindfold - that kind of death is for suckers.

Three million people in the City of Angels according to the last census, easily half of them up to something they don’t want the other half to know. We all get sucked in by the lobby. Palm trees finger the sky and there’s enough sunshine to lay some off on Pittsburg. But that’s all on top. L.A., truth to tell’s, not much different than a pretty girl with the clap. Monday. What other day works so hard at reminding you not to get your hopes up ‘cause it’s gonna be coming around again real soon?”

OOLIE (on the phone): My teller friend at the bank recognized her signature. He told me who she was, he was so grateful to finally get a check from you that wouldn’t hit the ceiling if he dropped it. Listen, you ever want to get in touch with Mrs. Kingsley, just try the top of Paso Robles Drive, right where it overlooks Arroyo Seco Canyon... I know. It doesn’t get much more Pasadena than that. Looks like Mrs. Kingsley’s not just any old Mrs. Kingsley, huh? Be careful. I’m getting that funny feeling I get in my bones, when people want to start breaking yours...Stone?

(he has hung up)

MALLORY (to Stone): It’s simple, Mr. Stone. I want half of whatever Daddy’s paying you to find me. I’ve earned, haven’t I? How many other lost people have turned up in your bed? Just tell Daddy you found me in... Tijuana, Frisco. He won’t care. Just as long as baby’s back. But don’t let Luther Kingsley’s condition fool you, just ‘cause he looks like a hot dog on a roll. He wants to know what the score is all the time. I can’t tell him why I need the money. Blackmail. I kind of had a thing with my tennis teacher last year. A couple of other people, too. We all kind of had a thing together. Sort of mixed doubles. Manuelo took some pictures. I love how they came out, but I don’t think Daddy would. He thinks I’m a good girl. He just doesn’t know *how* good.

MUNOZ (to Stone): There’re no God damn lumps for gringos. You want lumps? Be brown, be black, be yellow. Everything’s smooth for you milky bastards. Kicked off the force. That don’t even muss your hair. This happens to me, they hang me by my clock weights. Jesus, they’d fry me for jaywalking. You didn’t ask for this? You people don’t have to ask. It comes with being in the club. Heads or tails, you always win, as long as the heads are blonde. First, you stole the land; now, you’re murdering the law. The more you’ve got, the more there is to throw away, amigo. And you had it all. The badge. The right color skin.

BUDDY (to Stine): All that brown, yellow, and black stuff with Munoz. Cut all that “my” people, “your” people, social crap. Just give me a good private eye show.

Stine, Stine. Guy's sitting in the movies, right? Fifty cents to get in. The balcony's comfy, all nice and dark. He's got his hand between somebody's legs next to him. It might even be somebody he knows. We all of a sudden gonna remind him that he's white and that the Pachuco usher might try to stab him in his throat on the way out? What made your book was how good you write. I'm not asking you to write bad. Just safe? You bet your ass! This town's crawling with congressmen. The last thing I need is for you to get blacklisted. You got any messages, put 'em in a letter. Then don't mail it. You got any idea how many close friends, how many personal relatives I can't have to my house for a bagel, just 'cause they mighta bought a Henry Wallace button at a rally? I don't care what it is, just change all that brown, black, and yellow, to red, white, and blue.

GABBY (to Stine): You could have fooled me. God knows you're fooling yourself. You think making Stone a hero allows you to act like anything *but* one. If you want to write Hollywood endings, what about one for us where you start acting like he does, and he writes like you do.

[reading from Stine's letter]

"Okay, don't take my calls. If you won't listen, then read. One: Donna was obviously in my hotel room on Sunday when you phoned. Two: just remember no matter how incensed you were by 'One,' I was not there with her. Three: let me explain." [aside] I do love an apology by the numbers. [continuing the letter] "Trying to finish a new scene in time to bring to Buddy's brunch, naturally my typewriter picked that moment to start acting like a portable prima donna. An 'ortable rima donna,' actually, since the 'p' was just one of several keys that had decided to join the staff of the dead letter office. Half way out of the lobby, I bumped into Donna, half way in, having been dispatched by Buddy to make sure the pages got done, otherwise she could not have gotten into my room, where, using her own, far more reliable Corona to type up my notes, which she was doing when you called, while I was on my way to Buddy's, never dreaming that her presence, despite my absence, was going to cause you such needless, so easily-avoided pain." [end of letter] That's it? That's the explanation? Face the fact: It needs work.

ALaura (to Stone): No, Mr. Stone. [produces a gun] You unhooked the machine; then you came at me. If I hadn't lost time shooting you in self-defense, I might have been able to get it started again. You knew that when my husband learned you'd murdered Dr. Mandril *and* that you were having an affair with Mallory, he'd have used his influence to put you in the gas chamber – for a whole week running. Isn't that true, Luther? By now, Peter will have killed Mallory and be heading to the beach house to meet me. You've never seen it, Mr. Stone. Quite grand; it's on both side of the highway. A private tunnel takes you to the water. "The old swimmin' hole," as my husband calls the Pacific. The house lies at the bottom of Kingsley Canyon, the road built to twist and twist, so that you can unwind on the way down, but not too much so – each side drops off sharply a few hundred feet. When Peter's brakes –or what he *thinks* are his brakes – give out, he'll never make it past the first turn. [checking her watch] Which would have been just minutes ago. And now, Mr. Stone, if you'll turn him off, I believe it's time my husband turned in. One swift pull should do it.

STINE (to Donna): He can't shoot this! It's full of holes. Christ, he's got Mallory in it! I've written an earlier scene where she's killed. I've got Mallory dead, he bounces her back to life - and vice versa, I'm sure. Does he realize how many changes these changes require? Is it possible someone can write, without knowing how to read? "Wild, bloodshot private eye?" That's atrocious! Am I supposed to run up and down the aisles in every movie house in the country and say I didn't write that? [*realizing*] It's yours. It's your line. You "helped?" You'd need a divining rod to find the word "grateful" in me. Jesus, where the hell is everybody when they first deliver the typing paper? Where are all the "helpers" when those boxes full of silence come in? Blank. Both sides. No clue, no instructions enclosed on how to take just twenty-six letters and endlessly rearrange them so that you can turn them into a mirror of a part of our lives. Try it sometime. Try doing what I do before I do it. But in your own words. I'm sure they'll sound just like me. Maybe better. ...Donna. I thought we meant something to each other.