

ELMER GANTRY

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

LULU talks to BENNY.

BENNY

Are these pictures for
divorce or blackmail?

LULU

What's it to ya?

BENNY

Remember, position is everything.
Without any flash powder, you gotta
get this guy to freeze for a couple
of seconds. Time exposure takes time.
So keep him still... and quiet.

LULU

But that's so dull!

BENNY

And keep the radio playin'.
So he don't hear this.
(camera clicks)

OK?

LULU

OK.

She starts to prepare for Elmer's arrival. Benny prepares
to hide himself in the closet with his camera.

BENNY

Hey Lulu? This preacher fella.
You think you could get him into
bed?

LULU

Are you kiddin'?

A KNOCK on the door.

Benny scampers into the closet.

Lulu opens the door to admit ELMER.

ELMER
You look swell, Kid.

LULU
Likewise.

ELMER
Just swell.

He looks her over. She does the same. He recons the joint.

ELMER
Sorry about last night.

LULU
Forget it.

ELMER
If I'd known I'd run into you,
I'd have...

LULU
Oh, that's OK.

She starts to come on to him. He gets suspicious.

ELMER
What the hell's the big idea?

LULU
Elmer, honey...

ELMER
You think I'll sit still for a
shakedown?

LULU
How could I put the squeeze on you?
Who'd take the word of a five dollar
hooker?

ELMER
The old badger game, huh?

LULU

I only wanted to see you for...

ELMER

For what?

LULU

Well, for...

ELMER

For what?

LULU

Gee, honey, look. Look, I'm almost packed. The cops gave me notice. I got a ticket on the midnight bus. I got no beef against you. I only wanted to see you once more, kick around some old memories, maybe have a few laughs.

ELMER

Go on.

LULU

Who am I kiddin'? When you first hit town, I figured you could go to hell without my help. When you came bustin' in last night like God Almighty wearin' a tin star, I got mad, boilin' mad. All I could think of was how you took me and ditched me. That's all I could think of. Me, little Miss Lulu, the dumb pushover. And when the cops said "Get out of town in 24 hours", all I wanted to do was spit in your eye, blackmail you, a shakedown - anything to hurt you.

She touches him.

LULU

But...but when you walked in just now... gee honey...it was like the first time between us all over again. All goose pimples and...

Her face changes. Second thoughts?

LULU

You'd better beat it. I'm sorry
I phoned. I won't make any trouble.
Not even if I could. Please go now.

ELMER

I did run out on you back there in
Kansas, didn't I?

LULU

It's nobody's fault. Except maybe
my old man's.

ELMER

Ever hear from him?

LULU

Once, last Christmas. The letter
said "Daughter, read First Kings,
Chapter 21, Verse 23." I looked it
up. It said "And the dogs in the
street shall eat Jezebel."
My old man and his Bible. Tell me...
how is it some people can only
find hate in the Bible?

ELMER

Where will you be going to?

LULU

I think I'll go tramping through Paris.

ELMER

Can you use some cash? Sort of tide you
over?

LULU

Just... just kiss me goodbye. Just
once.

A long moment of hesitation, then an even longer kiss. In
the closet, Benny snaps away.

LULU

Stay awhile.

She sits on the bed.

LULU

Talk to me.

Elmer makes as if to go.

LULU

Oh, don't go yet. Please don't go.
Tell me anything. Tell me a good,
strong lie I can believe, but hold
me. Just hold me like you used to.
Please.

He tries, but breaks away.

ELMER

No use, Lu.

LULU

Why?

ELMER

Because I...I don't know. I...

LULU

Because of what? Because of her?
That Bible broad? I'm sorry.
No hard feelings.

LULU

Please. Don't go yet.

ELMER

Lu, I...

LULU

You know, I... I could use
some of that cash after all.

ELMER

Why, sure. Maybe I could send
you some from time to time.
Till you get a job, or...or
maybe meet some nice respectable
man, huh?

As he hands her the cash, Benny snaps more incriminating shots. She tucks the cash in her stocking, posing like the cover of Police Gazette for the hidden camera.

LULU

I meet nice respectable men
every night.

She pats her thigh.

LULU

Best bank in American.

He turns to go.

ELMER

Take care of yourself.

LULU

Likewise, Hon.

FADE OUT