

Jake Revolver, Freelance Secret Agent

A radio-noir parody

by

Matthew Konkel

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SYNOPSIS: In this radio-noir, private detective parody, Jake Revolver fights against conspiracy, double cross and self-reference to uncover the killer of his own narrator. Meant to be performed as the premiere episode of a nineteen-forties live radio broadcast complete with foley artistry and on-stage standup microphones, *Jake Revolver, Freelance Secret Agent* is packed with puns, play on words, oodles of self-referential absurdity (and Beatles references?) In the tradition of Firesign Theater, *Jake Revolver, Freelance Secret Agent* combines slapstick, screwball humor, commercial spoofs and a murder mystery for a stylish and ridiculous tour de force comedy.

JAKE REVOLVER, FREELANCE SECRET AGENT was originally produced by Milwaukee Entertainment Group in the Brumder Mansion, Milwaukee, WI, June, 2015.

The production was directed by Tom Marks with the following cast:

Jake Revolver.....	Phil Stepanski
Angel Fatale/Lt. Ann Danderson.....	Kristen Johnson
Emmy Award.....	Rachel Zembrowski
Windy/Raymond Rattle.....	Mohammad N. ElBsat
Narrator/Dashiell Roll.....	Sherrick Robinson
Mr. Cray.....	Tom Marks
Wallace.....	James P. Iaquina
Trudy.....	Leslie Fitzwater

CAST OF CHARACTERS

RADIO ANNOUNCER, Transitional character used to shift between story acts and to support the radio drama concept. Could be done as a recorded voice over.

JAKE REVOLVER, A freelance secret agent— basically a private detective in the tradition of Sam Spade or Philip Marlowe. Projects a persona of resourceful intelligence, sharp wit and a tough exterior, however, he often has spells of emotional frailty and dense intellect.

EMMY AWARD, Dedicated secretary to Jake Revolver. Resilient and perceptive, Emmy is a smart woman who's in love with Jake Revolver and harbors a big secret.

ANGEL FATALE, Her name tells her story. The traditional femme fatale of the noir genre. Angel exudes a false frightened and helpless exterior to manipulate Jake Revolver and serve her own personal nefarious agenda.

NARRATOR, Jake Revolver's chronicler used to speak Jake's thoughts and supplement his actions. At times Narrator acts as a partner to Jake. He's confident, omniscient and bold—often pushy and extremely verbose.

LT. ANN DANDERSON, Classic, overly suspicious and obsessive crime genre police officer. Danderson is an experienced and thorough cop with a fanatical agenda to take down Jake Revolver.

DASHIELL ROLL, Jake Revolver's former partner. Once a dedicated partner, he's now believed to be dead. He blames Jake for his near-death and returns to exact his revenge. He is smart, obsessive and totally insane.

RAYMOND RATTLE, Another of Jake Revolver's former partners. In the past he was a supportive colleague and a good agent but in present day he's become suspicious and irrational.

MR. CRAY, A client from Jake Revolver's past. A mysterious presence, cool and calculating.

WINDY, Shady owner and operator of Breezy's Nightclub.

TRUDY, Plastic, affected radio commercial spokesperson.

WALLACE, Hapless and innocent radio commercial representative.

TIME: After World War II

PLACE: San Noir City

(The half-lit stage is set as if for a live radio show. Two microphones are preset downstage. Upstage are chairs for the actors next to a sound effects station. Actors hold prop scripts in their hands and all lines are played into the microphones as if it is a live radio broadcast. When not performing, the actors sit upstage and do quiet business, i.e. play cards, do their nails, read a book, do crosswords, etc.)

(Lights slowly rise through the duration of the RADIO ANNOUNCER'S following speech.)

SFX: A RADIO DIAL TUNES IN.
STATIC, MUSIC, COMMERCIALS. THE
DIAL STOPS ON:

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...Freelance Secret Agent. Starring Gerald Crest as Jake Revolver and featuring the voice talents of Elaine Flagg, Colleen Forward, Penny Drops, Hamish Heggs, Jerome Wander, Louis Victor and Victor Louis. Jake Revolver, Freelance Secret Agent comes to you live from Air Waves America. The finest smelling radio network in the world. *(big sniff)* Ahhh. Add up the clues and play along at home as you solve the murder along with Jake. Jake Revolver Freelance Secret Agent is sponsored by Jitterz Whole Bean Coffee. Jitterz Whole Bean, the smart coffee makers with the bean to prove it. And now, the premiere presentation of Jake Revolver, Freelance Secret Agent.

(Lights to full. The actor playing the NARRATOR comes down to the microphone.)

NARRATOR

Previously on Jake Revolver...

(Stage goes BLACK.)

SFX: RADIO STATIC.

*(Jake Revolver theme music begins.
Lights up on NARRATOR at
microphone.)*

NARRATOR

Wherever there's a right needing to be wronged, he'll be there. Whenever there's food needed to be eaten, he'll have a fork. And whatever you can do, he can do better. Some say he's not human. Others say he's just a man. Only a small percentage say he's a woman. But no matter what he is, his name and title remains the same. Into the light of the dark black night comes...Jake Revolver, Freelance Secret Agent!

(Theme music crescendo.)

Tonight's episode: Self Reference Gone Haywire or Who Killed Jake's Narrator?

(Ominous organ chord.)

Business had been slow at Jake's Secret Agent office all month. San Noir City slept peacefully knowing— Wait a minute! What did I just read? But— No. This can't— I don't see—

*(The actor playing JAKE REVOLVER
comes down to the microphone.)*

JAKE

Hey, what's the hold up? When I hire a narrator I expect him to narrate not babble about like he's reading the script for the first time.

NARRATOR

I know, Jake, it's just— The title of the episode, Jake, I—

JAKE

Which one?

NARRATOR

Who Killed Jake's Narrator?

JAKE

Yes?

NARRATOR

Jake, I'm the Narrator.

JAKE

Yes, that's true. Can we move on now? I've still got errands to run after the show and-

NARRATOR

But, Jake- You mean... *(covers the microphone with his hand)* I'm going to get killed?

JAKE

(laughs)

Oh, don't worry. It will all be done with sound effects.

NARRATOR

You mean I don't really have to-?

JAKE

Die? Yes. It will be the greatest death never seen on radio. But I, Jake Revolver, Freelance Secret Agent, will see to it that your murderer is discovered and brought to justice league.

NARRATOR

Gee. Thanks. Our first episode and I gotta die. Sheesh. Okay. Our story begins in typical genre fashion, on a not-so-typical Tuesday afternoon, with our brave hero sitting in his office waiting for an initial plot incident to take place. Jake was knitting himself a cashmere pistol when Emmy Award, Jake's secretary, came through Jake's office door.

SFX: WOOD SPLINTERING, GLASS
BREAKING.

JAKE

Emmy, darling, how many times have I told you? Open the door before you enter.

EMMY

Sorry, Jake.

JAKE

I nearly dropped my knitted pistol.

EMMY

Yes, sorry.

JAKE

It could have gone off. Yarn everywhere.

EMMY

Of course, Jake.

NARRATOR

Despite Emmy's helpless attraction to Jake like an ocean liner to an iceberg, she kept their relationship strictly professional. Although filled with admiration for him she couldn't risk saying something for fear of destroying their working relationship.

JAKE

Now, doll face, what is it you wanted?

EMMY

There's a woman waiting—

NARRATOR

Emmy the doll face tells Jake there's a woman outside waiting to see him.

EMMY

Her name is—

NARRATOR

The woman's name is Miss Fatale and she seems horribly distraught.

EMMY

There's something—

NARRATOR

There was something about the woman Emmy didn't like. Something suspicious.

EMMY

(to Narrator)

Now, look. I have some lines in this script and I'm perfectly capable of saying them.

NARRATOR

But it's exposition. As Narrator it's my job to reveal it.

EMMY

You don't have to tell us exposition that's written in the dialogue. It's redundant and a sign of sloppy writing.

JAKE

Okay, let's not—

NARRATOR

I'm an omniscient narrator. I know more about the story than you do so obviously I am better qualified to reveal said exposition.

EMMY

It doesn't mean you have to cut me off on every one of my lines, you wordy, conceited—

JAKE

Okay, I think—

NARRATOR

Don't try and debate with me. I'm a narrator. I know more about you than you know about yourself. You're just a filler character used to tie plot plots together.

EMMY

How'd you like a plot-point-fist in your mouth?

JAKE

OKAY! ENOUGH!

EMMY

Arrogant word hog.

NARRATOR

Cliché character device.

JAKE

Emmy. Narrator. I need you both. And as long as I do we're going to get along. So can we just get on with the story now? We've got a lot pages to get through and a murder to solve.

EMMY

Yeah, that's right. Let's see how well you omnisciently narrate after you're cold as a fish. A Miss Angel Fatale is here to see you, Jake.

*(EMMY sticks her tongue out at
NARRATOR and sits down upstage.)*

JAKE

Show her in, Emmy darling. Show her in.

NARRATOR

Before she even stepped into his office Jake could tell Angel Fatale was just the kind of woman he longed for.

*(The actress playing ANGEL FATALE
comes down to the microphone.)*

JAKE

I could?

NARRATOR

Yes. Her scent, so exhilarating, it made the hair on the back of Jake's neck stand on end and sing three verses of Chattanooga Choo-Choo. She crossed the threshold. Jake's heart gave a round of applause.

ANGEL

Mr. Abbey Road?

JAKE

No. Abbey Road comes later. I'm Revolver.

ANGEL

Of course.

NARRATOR

Jake remained cool on the outside, even though inside Jake's brain was racing like a seventy-eight record played at forty-five.

ANGEL

I'm Angel Fatale. Angel. Like the cake.

JAKE

And just as sweet I'm sure.

ANGEL

Some get cavities just looking at me.

JAKE

If you don't mind my saying so, Miss Fatale, you smell terrific.

ANGEL

Thanks. I can hear pretty well, too.

NARRATOR

Yes, Angel's senses were keen, but that was only half of what attracted Jake to her. The other half was censored by the radio board.

JAKE

How can I help you, Miss Fatale?

ANGEL

I want to hire you.

JAKE

You want me to be taller?

ANGEL

No. I mean I want to employ your services for a job.

JAKE

Really?

ANGEL

You're a private detective, Mr. Revolver?

JAKE

No, I'm a secret agent. Freelance.

ANGEL

What's the difference?

JAKE

About four letters. Other than that, nothing. Private Detective is passé. The secret agent title keeps me off the radio board's cancellation list.

ANGEL

Very smart. If you're the secret agent then who's he?

JAKE

That's my Narrator. He's omniscient.

ANGEL

You'd never know it to look at him.

JAKE

He hides it well.

NARRATOR

In spite of Miss Fatale's fragile emotional state she seemed calculating and knowingly seductive.

JAKE

Now, how can you help me, Miss Fatale?

NARRATOR

Jake gestured for Angel to sit down. Jake couldn't help but take in an eyeful of Angel's long walking sticks.

JAKE

Nice canes you've got there.

SFX: TWO CANES THUMPING ON FLOOR.

ANGEL

Thanks. They belonged to my Grandfather. I keep them as a memento.

NARRATOR

As she related her tale her voice began to quiver, only slightly, but it did not go unnoticed by Jake.

ANGEL

It's my sister, Mr. Revolver. My step-sister.

JAKE

By marriage?

ANGEL

No, by porch. I found her on the steps, next to the newspaper one morning. Mother felt sorry for her, sitting there all alone. She adopted her as part of our own family.

JAKE

Go on.

ANGEL

No, it's true. Oh, Mr. Revolver, I feel almost silly telling you the story.

JAKE

Now, now. Just relax. Tell me about your sister.

ANGEL

Her name is Kitty. But she changes it a lot. I only know the last alias.

JAKE

What's that?

ANGEL

It's a fake identity used to operate anonymously.

JAKE

Of course.

ANGEL

She went by Schuster. Lucy Schuster. She's in hiding somewhere in the city and I need you to find her before the police do. She's most likely involved in something illegal. Perhaps...even dangerous.

JAKE

She's a career criminal?

ANGEL

Yes. Oh, Mr. Revolver, you must find her. Please. If she's caught they'll give her a life sentence this time for sure.

JAKE

You mean...for life?

ANGEL

My mother, she's now passed, made me swear on her death-bed that I'd take care of her. Will you help me, Mr. Revolver? Will you?

NARRATOR

Jake hesitated. He couldn't quite put his finger on it, but something wasn't quite right about this whole scenario.

JAKE

Well, I...I'll have to think about it, Angel. I-

ANGEL

Oh please, Mr. Revolver. I promise I won't betray you or lie to you or double-cross you for my own selfish gain.

NARRATOR

Despite his instincts to do the contrary, Jake agreed to take Miss Fatale's case. Angel directed Jake to a nightclub called Breezy's on Tempest Boulevard. Go in and ask for a bartender named Windy. He's a real blow hard but he serves a good draft. Windy and his sister Gale used to work with Lucy Schuster and might have some idea where Jake could look for her. Jake saw Miss Fatale out of the office assuring her that her sister would be found. Moments later, Jake and his Narrator, that's me, were heeling it toward Breezy's Nightclub, his trench on his back and Angel on his mind.

SFX: DOOR OPENING. NIGHTCLUB
CHATTER.

*(Slow, jazzy lounge music plays.
The actor playing WINDY comes down
to the microphone.)*

NARRATOR

Jake entered Breezy's. Two Gorillas in monkey suits doing security eyed Jake suspiciously as he entered. They were a couple of real swingers from the asphalt jungle. One was eating a banana split, the other nibbled on a red vine. Jake played it cool and sauntered over to the bar. The bar was too low to limbo under so he stepped over it and ordered a drink.

JAKE

Gimmie a whiskey sour.

WINDY

(friendly voice)

Here's your whiskey, sir.

JAKE

I said a whiskey sour.

WINDY

(harsh voice)

Here's your whiskey, sir.

JAKE

That's better. You know a bartender named Windy?

WINDY

I'm Windy. Whaddya want?

JAKE

You know where I can find Lucy Shuster? I might have a job for her.

NARRATOR

As soon as Jake mentioned Lucy, Windy became tight-lipped.

WINDY

Mm mmm mmm mmm mmm.

JAKE

Come on buddy, you can talk clearer than that.

NARRATOR

Windy's lips remained shut so Jake pried 'em open with a crowbar and stuffed in a twenty-spot.

JAKE

Now can you tell me where Lucy is?

WINDY

No. I'll tell Lucy yer looking for her though. Maybe she'll meet you. Maybe she won't.

JAKE

I'll make it worth her while.

WINDY

How?

JAKE

Well, there'll be lines in the script for starters. You sure you can't contact her now?

NARRATOR

Windy's lips started to go tight again and Jake got out the crowbar. The security Gorillas headed over. Jake was out of bananas so he put the crowbar away. The Gorillas took hold of Jake's arms ready to tear them out of their sockets. Jake strained under the pain. He liked his arms. He'd grown quite attached to them over the years and he wasn't about to lose them now.

JAKE

Get your stinking apes off me you dirty paws. Tell Lucy I'll be back here tomorrow night. If she doesn't meet me here tomorrow...

WINDY

Yeah?

JAKE

That's it. The line just ends.

WINDY

Maybe you'd better get outta here. I don't like your kind.

JAKE

What kind is that?

WINDY

The kind that can't think on his feet and finish a line. Go on, heel it.

JAKE

What, not even a goodbye kiss?

NARRATOR

Before Jake left he found out from the hostess that Windy was off at three a.m.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS IN THE SNOW.

NARRATOR

Jake headed back to the office—apparently in the snow—as he planned his next move. He would put a tail on Windy. After he had a tail on him it would be easy to follow him wherever he went. Hopefully he rattled Windy enough he'd go straight to Lucy and then he'll have her. Until then, Jake had other things on his mind.

JAKE

I did?

NARRATOR

Yes.

JAKE

Like what?

NARRATOR

Angel Fatale for one. He wanted to know more about her. He wanted to know the woman inside. He wanted to know if those biology charts he saw in college were correct.

JAKE

If they were, there's no telling what I've gotten myself mixed up in.

NARRATOR

Just then a gunshot suddenly exploded out of the darkness.

(Pause. Silence.)

JAKE

I didn't hear a gunshot.

SFX: A GUNSHOT

NARRATOR

There it is. I told you.

JAKE

Great Pulp Fiction, I've been shot!

NARRATOR

No, you haven't.

JAKE

Oh, the great Jake Revolver, Freelance Secret Agent, long time solver of crime and swimming-instructor, cancelled from a stray bullet in the night.

NARRATOR

You haven't been shot.

JAKE

What are you talking about? I heard the shot.

NARRATOR

Yes, one of us has been shot but it wasn't you.

JAKE

Now, look here. If one of us was shot and it wasn't me then that means—

(The NARRATOR grips his chest and falls to the stage.)

JAKE

Did you lose something?

NARRATOR

No.

JAKE

You have to speak into the microphone. Otherwise the people listening at home can't hear you.

NARRATOR

I've been shot.

JAKE

I can't say your lines too. You're supposed to speak into the mic. It's kind of how radio works.

NARRATOR

Jake.

JAKE

Yes, what is it?

NARRATOR

Come here.

(NARRATOR pulls JAKE down to him.)

NARRATOR

I'VE BEEN SHOT AND I'M GOING TO DIE!

JAKE

Die? But— That's— You can't.

NARRATOR

Jake, listen to me: The past...Rattle...Remember the genre...

JAKE

I. Don't. Under— stand. You can't just die, Nar. How will the story go on without you?

SFX: A HOPPING NOISE IS HEARD.

JAKE

Who will read your lines? What is that noise?

SFX: THE HOPPING NOISE RECEDES
INTO THE DISTANCE.

NARRATOR

Jake. Please...a favor.

JAKE

Oh, I don't need anything.

NARRATOR

Jake...bring the microphone down here so I can give my very last broadcast before the commercial break.

(JAKE props NARRATOR up and brings the microphone down to his face.)

NARRATOR

(as he dies)

Jake Revolver will return...will return in...in first person.
Jake, don't let me die in vain.

JAKE

I won't. You can die right here.

NARRATOR

Thanks.

(NARRATOR dies. Jake Revolver music fades up. During the following JAKE and other actors help NARRATOR off stage.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Jake Revolver, Freelance Secret Agent is brought to you by Jitterz Whole Bean Coffee. Jitterz, a whole bean coffee to help you get through the daily grind.

(Jake Revolver Music fades out as Jitterz Jingle Music fades up.)

(The actors playing TRUDY and WALLACE come down to the microphones.)

TRUDY

Hi, Wallace.

WALLACE

Oh, hi Trudy.

TRUDY

Are you okay?

WALLACE

Yes, I'm fine. I'm just didn't get enough sleep last night. I need to take a nap.

TRUDY

I know what you mean. It's seems like I can never get enough sleep.

WALLACE

But you never seem tired. How do you stay so energetic?

TRUDY

It's simple, Wallace: Jitterz Whole Bean Coffee.

WALLACE

Whole Bean?

TRUDY

Sure. Only the best coffee comes from whole bean.

WALLACE

I had no idea.

TRUDY

After eighteen cups of Jitterz in the morning I'm alert and ready to tackle the world.

WALLACE

Maybe I should try some Jitterz Whole Bean.

TRUDY

Well, it wouldn't be a bad idea, Wallace. Here. Try some right now.

WALLACE

Thanks.

SFX: SIPPING.

Mmm. Refreshing. Hearty. That's a whole new coffee experience.

TRUDY

That's a whole *BEAN* coffee experience, Wallace.

WALLACE

Right. Whole bean. This Jitterz is really something.

TRUDY

Nothing goes better in a cup than Jitterz Whole Bean Coffee.

WALLACE

Thanks, Trudy. I'm going out to buy some Jitterz Whole Bean Coffee right now.

TRUDY

But what about your nap?

WALLACE

Who needs a nap when there's Jitterz Whole Bean Coffee?

(TRUDY and WALLACE give a forced laugh.)

TRUDY

Jitterz Whole Bean Coffee. Whole coffee beans and a whole lot more. Now with Flavoreen.

(Jitterz jingle music fades out as TRUDY and WALLACE sit upstage.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

And now, Air Waves America, the most effervescent radio network in the world, returns you to this bubbling episode of Jake Revolver, Freelance Secret Agent.

(Melancholy Jake Revolver music comes up and fades out.)

JAKE

My Narrator had been shot— killed by a cowardly sniper in the shadows. I stood there next to his lifeless carcass asking myself 'Why?' 'Why?' Why was I talking out loud so passersby would look at me with strange glares? Why was I talking about things that had already happened as if I was narrating? Because no one else would, I answered myself.

SFX: POLICE SIRENS.

JAKE

I had to report the shooting so I put in a call to the bulls.

SFX: CAR BRAKES SQUEALING.

JAKE

They rushed to the scene in a stampede, eager to trample down an independent detective.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS RACING. GALLOPING HORSES.

JAKE

The cops hate freelance agents. They always have. But you put up with it. It's the nature of the business. They took me down to the station, fired questions at me left and right. I only caught the ones that came in the middle. I tell them nothing about Angel. I couldn't take it much longer. I felt like my head was being used as a pinball and they just hit tilt.

SFX: STREET NOISE. QUICK FOOTSTEPS. CLIMBING STEPS.

JAKE

After a long grilling I guess the cops could see I was well done so they let me go. I went up to the office and found the door ajar.

SFX: DOOR CREAKING OPEN.

(The actor playing EMMY comes down to the microphone.)

JAKE

I entered cautiously. The place looked like the aftermath of a Jay Gatsby party. Every drawer had been opened. Every nook and cranny searched. Whoever had trashed it, was long gone. I first called Emmy to give her the shocking news.

EMMY

Jake, I can't believe it.

JAKE

Believe it, Emmy. My Narrator is gone.

EMMY

But who, Jake, who could have done it?

JAKE

I don't know anything yet. It's possible the bullet was meant for me. Better stay outta the office for the next couple of days.

EMMY

Do you want me to order another narrator? There's a special at Rexall this week.

JAKE

Not just yet. I need to do some investigation on my own.

EMMY

Jake, please be careful.

JAKE

Don't worry, doll face. I hung up the phone with Emmy and next made a call to Angel. The hotel she was staying at said she had checked out, no forwarding contact information.

SFX: STREET NOISE. FOG HORN.
FOOTSTEPS ON PAVEMENT.

JAKE

I decided to walk home. A fog had rolled in thick as oatmeal so I grabbed a box of raisins and a spoon and made a path towards home. This was good. I needed the time alone. I needed to think. My Narrator: dead. I felt cut off. I felt tired and depleted. Depleted as an ironed schoolgirl skirt. I thought about Angel. She was everyman's dream. Why would she fall for guy like me? I was confused and bewildered. I couldn't remember the name of the guy who played Elliot Ness. His name was on the tip of my shoulder when I felt a firm grip on my tongue. The grip turned me around so fast I swallowed the name. I reacted fast and let

go a quick elbow to the head. The punk went down like a sack of potatoes.

SFX: BODY HITTING PAVEMENT

(The actor playing DANDERSON comes to down the microphone. NOTE: ANN DANDERSON and ANGEL FATALE should be played by the same actor.)

JAKE

Through the fog I heard a familiar voice. I was not happy to hear it.

DANDERSON

You still got your reflexes, Jake.

(JAKE coughs. And coughs some more.)

DANDERSON

You all right, Revolver?

JAKE

Yeah, just a name I swallowed. Well, well, Lieutenant Dan Anderson.

DANDERSON

That's Ann Danderson, Revolver, and you know it.

JAKE

Yeah, yeah. What brings you out on a foggy night like this, Dan?

DANDERSON

Believe me, Revolver, I'd much rather be in bed curled up with one of my big little books and a chocolate shake. I heard about your Narrator.

JAKE

Yeah. Tough break. But he knew the risks when he took the job.

DANDERSON

Was lead poisoning part of his job?

JAKE

So, what if it wasn't?

DANDERSON

Well, a good cop has gotta wonder that's all. If not, that means we got a murder on our hands.

JAKE

I got you.

DANDERSON

You never liked your Narrator, did you Revolver?

JAKE

Well, he was a little long-winded and- Hey, what are you getting at, Lieutenant!?

DANDERSON

Nothing. Just trying to sort out this mess is all, Jake.

JAKE

Look, a lot of people had reason to kill my Narrator. You know as well as I do that radio has lost its edge. The public demands something new. It's open season on tired story devices nowadays.

DANDERSON

Sure. All the classics are biting the dust. Flashbacks.

JAKE

Flashforwards.

DANDERSON

Cliffhangers.

JAKE

Twist endings.

DANDERSON

Dream sequences.

JAKE

Deluded cops.

DANDERSON

Overconfident private eyes. They're all being iced faster than coffee shop lattes.

JAKE

If you see the trend why get so bent out of shape over one Narrator?

DANDERSON

I'll tell you why: Because I got the law of the city to uphold. And neither you nor storytelling progress is going to keep me from doing my job.

JAKE

All right, all right, back up. You're chocolate shake breath is curling the hairs in my nose.

DANDERSON

Look, Jake. We go back a long way...

JAKE

Not that far, only three pages or so.

DANDERSON

Even so, you know I'm a fair guy.

JAKE

I always took you for more of a circus man.

DANDERSON

Either way, if you're innocent of killing your Narrator then you got nothing to worry about. And if you did do it, well, I'll find that out too.

JAKE

Am I free to go now, Lieutenant?

DANDERSON

But you don't have a Narrator anymore, Revolver. How're you gonna get around?

JAKE

Oh, I'll get by, Lieutenant. I always do. Good night, Dan.

DANDERSON

I told you its Ann. Ann Danderson.

JAKE

All right. I got it. Now let me go, would you, I got another scene to get to.

SFX: FOOTSTEPS ON PAVEMENT.

JAKE

I had to get away from the Lieutenant. Something was nagging at me. It was something my Narrator said before he died.

(ANGEL is suddenly at the microphone.)

ANGEL

Yes. Remember the genre.

JAKE

I was so deep in thought I didn't hear Angel approaching. She stood before me like a living dream, more beautiful than I remembered.

ANGEL

Uh...I'm standing right here. You can talk to me.

JAKE

I'd forgotten about her keen observational skills. She'd heard every word I said.

ANGEL

Yeah, right here. Hello.

JAKE

Sorry, Angel. I'm new to this thing. My Narrator was killed tonight.

ANGEL

I know. I read the scene.

JAKE

Then you know they want to pin it on me.

ANGEL

Jake, do you think this has anything to do with my step-sister?

JAKE

I don't know anything (*turns page*) yet, Angel.

ANGEL

(*tearing up*)

Oh, Jake. I can't help but think I'm somehow responsible.

JAKE

Now, now, that's...probably true.

ANGEL

What?

JAKE

Just take it easy. You disappeared on me, Angel.

ANGEL

Oh, Jake. That bartender from Breezy's followed me.

JAKE

Windy?

ANGEL

I was forced to run. I was able to lose him and then went back to your office to meet you there. I saw someone through the window ransacking the place. Oh, Jake, I was scared. I didn't know what to do.

JAKE

There there. You're fine now. Everything's going to be all right. *(Narrating)* She pressed her face into my shoulder. The tip of her perky nose tickled my clavicle but I held back a giggle. Her city was black. Black as the hair at night during a power failure. I wandered aimlessly through the darkness, willingly lost in the gloom.

ANGEL

Jake, what should we do?

JAKE

About what?

ANGEL

Everything.

JAKE

Everything? Gee, Angel, I wouldn't know where to begin.

ANGEL

I mean everything with us, Jake. Windy. Your office. My Narrator. You're sister.

JAKE

Slow down. Slow down. Now what was that first one again?

ANGEL

Jake, remember the genre. What do you think it means?

JAKE

I'm not sure, Angel, but he could have been talking about a case from my past. Let's go downtown to get some Jitterz. That'll help us think. Come on, baby. We can drive my car.

SFX: CAR ENGINE.

JAKE

Before we could read any more lines Angel and I were headed downtown on Penny Lane. We took a shortcut through Strawberry Fields. It took Forever and we wound up on a Long and Winding Road. The road ended at the top of a hill. There was a Fool there Fixing a Hole and we asked him for Help. He told us we could Get Back through Blue Jay Way and we would find our way downtown.

(Jake Revolver transition music.)

We dived over to the Ocean Café. It was packed to the gills so Angel invited me up to her hotel room. Her room was on the thirteenth chapter of a ten-story building. It was a quick read. Angel and I had some time to think.

ANGEL

Nice transition.

JAKE

I'm getting better.

ANGEL

Do you know what case in your past your Narrator might be talking about?

JAKE

I have a hunch.

ANGEL

Yes. I know a good chiropractor who may be able to help.

JAKE

Oh, thanks.

ANGEL

Don't mention it.

JAKE

Angel took out a cigarette and put it between her characteristic pouty lips.

ANGEL

Do you smoke, Mr. Revolver?

JAKE

Sure. Every time I'm on fire. *(Narrating)* Angel stared into me like I was that final, unreadable line of an eye-chart. Her cigarette still dangled from her lips. *(to Angel)* Do you need a light?

ANGEL

No, I can see fine.

JAKE

I mean for your cigarette.

ANGEL

Are you kidding? These things'll kill ya. I quit smoking.

JAKE

If you quit smoking, then why the cigarette?

ANGEL

I quit things one step at a time. First I quit smoking, then I'll quit cigarettes.

JAKE

I was astounded. There was so much more to this woman than meets the organ that converts detected light into electro-chemical impulses.

ANGEL

Does my not smoking bother you, Mr. Revolver?

JAKE

Not at all, Angel. You can not smoke all you like.

ANGEL

Tell me, Jake, the case. Do you know what it is?

JAKE

There is one I can think of. It was seven years ago— No. I— I can't talk about it.

ANGEL

Please, Jake.

JAKE

There are too many bad memories.

ANGEL

Please tell me about it.

JAKE

Oh, there's not really much to tell.

ANGEL

I see.

JAKE

Actually, that's not exactly true. I could write a comprehensive volume of books on the subject that would rival all known crime literature.

ANGEL

Oh, well, um, perhaps you could summarize?

JAKE

There was a woman. Miss Lola Chase was her name. My old partner, Dashiell Roll, died because of her.

ANGEL

What happened?

JAKE

It was a briefcase.

ANGEL

It only lasted a couple of days?

JAKE

No, I mean an actual briefcase. A briefcase that...It's difficult to talk about.

ANGEL

Well, why don't you use a flashback?

JAKE

Well, all right. It was seven years ago, which is more than six numerically, plus twelve months. I had partners then. Raymond Rattle and Dashiell Roll were their names.

(Flashback music rises as ANGEL sits upstage. Actors playing

*RAYMOND RATTLE and DASHIELL ROLL
come down to the microphones.)*

We were rated the top private detective team in the city by Gumshoe Review. Shamus Monthly gave us four stars. They were gold and we stuck them to the refrigerator. The job in question was The Case of Mr. Cray's Briefcase. At least, that's what it was called at first. But with the U-turn like changes in the case came the changes in the name.

SFX: PHONE RINGING.

JAKE

It all began on a Tuesday. Garbage day. Our cans were full. Just like our case-load. We were having a two for one special on stake-outs.

SFX: PHONE RINGING. TYPING.
MISCELANEOUS OFFICE SOUNDS.

JAKE

The phone rang right next to Rattle and he shook violently. It was a close call, but Rattle handled it beautifully.

SFX: PHONE PICK UP.

RATTLE

Jake, Rattle and Roll...What's that?...I can't hear you...You have to speak up.

FILTERED VOICE

Well, you never do nothin' to save your doggone soul.

SFX: PHONE HANGS UP.

RATTLE

Another lost caller.

ROLL

Hey, Jake. Where's that file?

JAKE
What file?

ROLL
The one on Emery Board.

JAKE
Emery Board?

ROLL
The manicurist.

JAKE
Oh, right. Rough case.

ROLL
A real nail biter.

JAKE
We smoothed it over though.

ROLL
Yeah. Polished her off good.

JAKE
Check over by the handcart.

ROLL
Got it. High five.

JAKE
Rattle and Roll were my wing men.

RATTLE AND ROLL
What?

JAKE

Nothing. I was narrating the flashback.

RATTLE AND ROLL

Oh.

JAKE

We were thinking about hiring on a couple more hands when a thin, dark-legged, long-haired, tall-dressed man stepped into the office. He entered with an air of extreme importance. As if the world was made just for him to walk through.

(The actor playing MR. CRAY comes down to the microphone.)

All commotion in the office ceased and our attentions were riveted. He spoke as if every word out of his mouth was carefully planned.

CRAY

I'm looking for an investigator.

JAKE

I think I can help you. There are three investigators right here in this room. Rattle and Roll congratulated me on another case solved. But our celebration was short lived, the tall man went on. There was much more to this case than I originally thought.

CRAY

My name is Mr. Cray. C-R-A-Y. I'm missing my briefcase.

SFX: TYPING.

ROLL

The Case of Mr. Cray and his Missing Briefcase.

JAKE

Good work, Roll.

ROLL

Thanks, Jake.

JAKE

Mr. Cray told us his briefcase had been stolen and he believed it was his daughter, a Miss Lola Chase, who took it. He wanted to hire Jake, Rattle and Roll Investigations to find his daughter and recover the briefcase. It was a case as complicated as its name.

SFX: TYPING.

ROLL

The Case of Mr. Cray, his Missing Briefcase and the Search for Miss Chase.

JAKE

A case this complex would require our combined skills and demand our immediate attention. So after ordering pizza and Chinese food, repainting the office, and answering our fan mail we dropped everything and got to work.

SFX: EVERYTHING DROPPING IN A LOUD CRASH.

JAKE

Lola Chase was easy to find. She did everything but take out a personal ad. Actually, she did that too. That's how we found her. Roll met up with her at the docks. Rattle and I were supposed to meet him there for backup. There was a storm...It was dark...

SFX: WIND BLOWING. WAVES CRASHING. CAT SCREECHING (or some other absurd sound).

JAKE

Roll was...He was...I saw him at the end of the pier and...Oh, it was horrible!

(ROLL screams. All sounds fade. Flashback music takes us back to present. ROLL and RATTLE sit up stage as ANGEL comes down to the microphone.)

JAKE

I witnessed Roll's heinous death. After that, Jake, Rattle, and Roll were no more. Rattle got out of the business and I started my own freelance secret agency. I still blame myself for Roll's death. The briefcase was never found.

ANGEL

I'm sure you did everything you could to save him.

JAKE

I don't know. I've gone over it and over it in my head so many times I've worn a hole through to the other side.

ANGEL

What was in the briefcase?

JAKE

I don't know. We never found out. Mr. Cray said only that it was plans for some kind of invention. Something, he said, that would change the world.

ANGEL

Mr. Cray?

JAKE

Yes. Cray. C-R-A-Y. Cray.

ANGEL

What happened next?

JAKE

The search for Cray's daughter, Miss Chase, changed the name of the case again. It was now: The Case of Mr. Cray's Missing Briefcase and Brief Chase for Miss Chase.

ANGEL

That's incredible.

JAKE

(narrating)

Thinking about what happened to Roll brought all those bad memories back to the surface. My head felt like a piece of paper folded into an intricate origami shape.

ANGEL

I love origami.

JAKE

She could read me like a blinking neon sign. It was as though my thoughts were written out in a script before her.

ANGEL

How about an Italian soda, Mr. Revolver?

JAKE

You read my mind, Angel.

ANGEL

Well, it's easy when you keep thinking out loud. You just relax and I'll fix us a couple.

SFX: GLASSES CLINKING. ICE CUBES DROPPING.

JAKE

She made us some drinks and never took her eyes off me the whole time. Her look was mesmerizing. It was the kind of look you found in a Garden magazine. It felt like Home. As comfortable as Angel made me feel I couldn't help thinking something was wrong. I'd learned over the years to trust that feeling. She reached past me, making a point to put our faces inches apart. It was then I felt a cold chill up my spine. Angel had backed me up into her ice machine. Uh, Angel?

ANGEL

Yes, Jake.

JAKE

Step back a little, would you?

ANGEL

Oh, sorry. Make yourself at home while I go powder my nose.

JAKE

She set her drink down and walked through the room like an indecisive politician. Angel changed her path suddenly and closed the window curtains before she went out of the room. While Angel was gone I took a look outside to see what she might have been hiding. There was freshly washed laundry hanging out to dry but I didn't notice anything unusual— then I got a closer look at the clothes. They were no ordinary wash. Every piece of clothing was only half. Pants were only one leg, shirts had only one sleeve. It was like laundry for circus freaks. She came back a few minutes later, her outfit sufficiently powdered and wearing a new nose like a second skin.

ANGEL

Sorry to make you wait.

JAKE

I'd wait a life-story for you, Angel.

ANGEL

You're sweet, Mr. Revolver. Like another drink?

JAKE

Angel took my glass and got us a couple of refills. Angel was quite a creature. She had legs that went all the way to floor. Her eyes could look at you or not depending on which way she was facing. And a set of ear lobes that looked so soft and supple you wish they were bigger so you could use them as pillows. She bent down to get something and I caught an eyeful of her ample womanhood. Nice rack!

ANGEL

Thanks! I'll just get out the billiard balls and we'll have ourselves a game. You can pick out a cue over there.

JAKE

(narrating)

My attention, so riveted on her, I hadn't even noticed the pool table in the room.

SFX: POOL BALLS BREAKING. POOL BALLS HITTING POCKETS.

Angel went on a run plunking balls into the pockets like they were sound effects.

SFX: POOL BALLS CLACKING

Angel, I want you to know something. Even though this Narrator killing has got me a bit on edge I'm still going to find your sister.

ANGEL

I know you will, Jake.

SFX: ONE POOL BALL DROPPING INTO A POCKET.

ANGEL

Game over, Mr. Revolver. You lose.

JAKE

So I do.

ANGEL

What game shall we play now?

JAKE

Before I knew it she pulling me by my lapels, whispering intimate secrets into my molars and leaving a trail of fashion

all the way to the couch. The strangely shaped laundry was bothering me but I didn't care. Her body, so close, she could make a frog forget he was green.

SFX: KISSING. HEAVY BREATHING.

ANGEL

Jake?

JAKE

Yes, my Angel.

ANGEL

Do we have to do this with the audience listening?

JAKE

Of course not, Angel. We can just bring the music up, fade our voices out...

(Jake Revolver music fades up.)

JAKE

...and the audience will get the idea that consummation has taken place. It's time for another Jitterz sponsor break anyway and...

(JAKE and ANGEL exit as WALLACE and TRUDY come down to the microphones.)

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

This mind-numbing episode of Jake Revolver, Freelance Secret Agent on Air Waves America will return after this percolating message from Jitterz Whole Bean Coffee.

(Jake Revolver music fades out. Jitterz jingle music fades up.)

TRUDY

Hi, Wallace.

WALLACE

Oh, Hi Trudy.

TRUDY

Hey, what's wrong? You seem a little down.

WALLACE

Oh, I guess I didn't sleep very well last night. My goldfish died.

TRUDY

Oh, that's too bad. I'm sorry.

WALLACE

Yeah, I found him floating on top of the tank. And somebody pulled a hit and run on my car.

TRUDY

Oh, that's awful.

WALLACE

Yeah. There's a big dent in the side and it's probably going to need a new paint job.

TRUDY

That's just terrible. I'm sorry—

WALLACE

Yeah, and I got a call from my father. He's disowning me and cutting me out of his will.

TRUDY

Oh, my.

WALLACE

No inheritance for me I guess.