



CADENCE

SOMETIMES WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE CAN HURT YOU

LOGLINE

Forced by an online prowler to ride a connected spin bike above 80 rpm or it will explode, a temporarily blind woman discovers a hidden family secret in her new home.

FEATURE | Crime and Thriller

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LENGTH 90 minutes

SCENES 67

LOCATIONS Pacific Palisades, West LA Spin Class,
Transatlantic Jet, West LA Apartment.

LOCALES Los Angeles

TIME PERIODS Present Day

EST. BUDGET \$\$\$

CONTENT RATING R
Language, sexual situations,
and violence



WHAT IT IS

Cadence is a Contained Feature Film Crime Thriller. I drew inspiration from "Hush", "Wait Until Dark" and "Speed." As much as our heroine is stuck on her spinning bike I want the audience to feel as trapped as our protagonist. She's also a contradiction – Judith is super-fit but has no tolerance for pain or even discomfort.

I got the idea for a blinded heroine in "Cadence" when my wife's ex-boss suddenly became very 'attentive' after she left his company and wanted her to share their Peloton bike's "video" function. Sensing a "Jeffrey Toobin" moment, I blanched but thankfully my wife refused. Why the eye thing? I managed to damage my eyes shooting too many videos of my kid's track meets with one eye open and away from the viewfinder. It was sudden onset cataracts due to sun damage so I had some experience with "going under the knife" and how vulnerable one feels being temporarily blind.

Judith Krieg (think Paula Patton) and her husband Michael finally find their dream house, a gorgeous craftsman near the beach. It seems too good to be true since it's in the tony Pacific Palisades

neighborhood of LA. But it came at a price – the house also comes with a human fixture – the guest house has an immovable inhabitant, the original owner, an ancient and eccentric old man, an ex-LAPD cop called Richard Charlton who also happens to be Judith's father.

Judith, while jousting with their spin instructor Cornel in an epic riding contest, suffers acute angle closure glaucoma and has to have surgery right when her husband must travel to London on a last-minute photographic assignment. Michael invites Judith along for the ride but, after feeling pain during the night, her doctor counsels against airline travel.

Similar to "Hush" we have a blind woman in peril fighting for her life in her home. Despite previous hints via an urban legend of a mysterious stash of money she's unaware of its location and must ride for her very life while being tormented by a mysterious video prowler.

PACE VISUAL STYLE & TONE

*"Cadence" is a claustrophobic Contained Crime Thriller. Judith's 1930s vintage **Omega stopwatch** is the talisman that keeps her riding as the lactic acid builds up in her legs to unendurable levels. We're partly online, 'in the screen' listening to the mad unknown prowler but we're grounded in her loft, trapped on an exercise bike that will **explode** if she tries to get off. The screen looms large and seems to grow almost big enough to swallow the room as Judith desperately keeps up the cadence receiving an electric shock whenever she falls close to 80 rpm.*

*The day starts out bright and LA Beach Sunny but the evening descends into the darkness as her eyesight fades in and out. Finally, it's almost completely **dark** as Judith uses the shadows to make the **deadly** game more even as she turns all the lights off. Even the audience seems blind now as the characters seem to leap out of the darkness searching for each other, searching for the light. The repartee is deadly, dark, and Shakespearean.*

EXPLOSIVE





SYNOPSIS

Judith Krieg inherits her father, Richard's, Pacific Palisades craftsman in the middle of recovering from eye surgery. To make matters worse her husband is flying to London, leaving her alone. Her pal Susy offers to drop by to keep an eye on her. Waking to discover her husband gone she finds her spin instructor Cornel assembling a new Peloton bike. Without eyesight she gamely goes for a ride only to find the bike has been hijacked by an Unknown Prowler and is rigged for electric shocks if she falls below a cadence of 80 rpm. Our video prowler also informs Judith the bike is booby-trapped with a bomb. She sets out on the ride of her life, while the prowler presses her for the location of her father's hidden cash. A local cop comes by but Judith, agonizingly, has to fob him off.

The prowler torments her with electric shocks when her speed drops but the video feed eventually gets garbled and Judith, exhausted after hours of spinning, answers the front door to another cop, this time LAPD. Still blind, she can't see it is Cornel, her erstwhile tormentor. Dressed like a cop, he makes his way into the house to see if he can persuade Judith to reveal the hidden cash.

THEMES

"Cadence" is a story about what we see and don't see. And what we don't want to see.

It's also about finding one's mettle. Judith starts out as a veritable wimp who won't let her husband tweeze a splinter from her foot and by the climax, she's rolling up a nasty arm wound into a pretty good tourniquet and battling (and beating), while blind, a raging psychopathic bully.

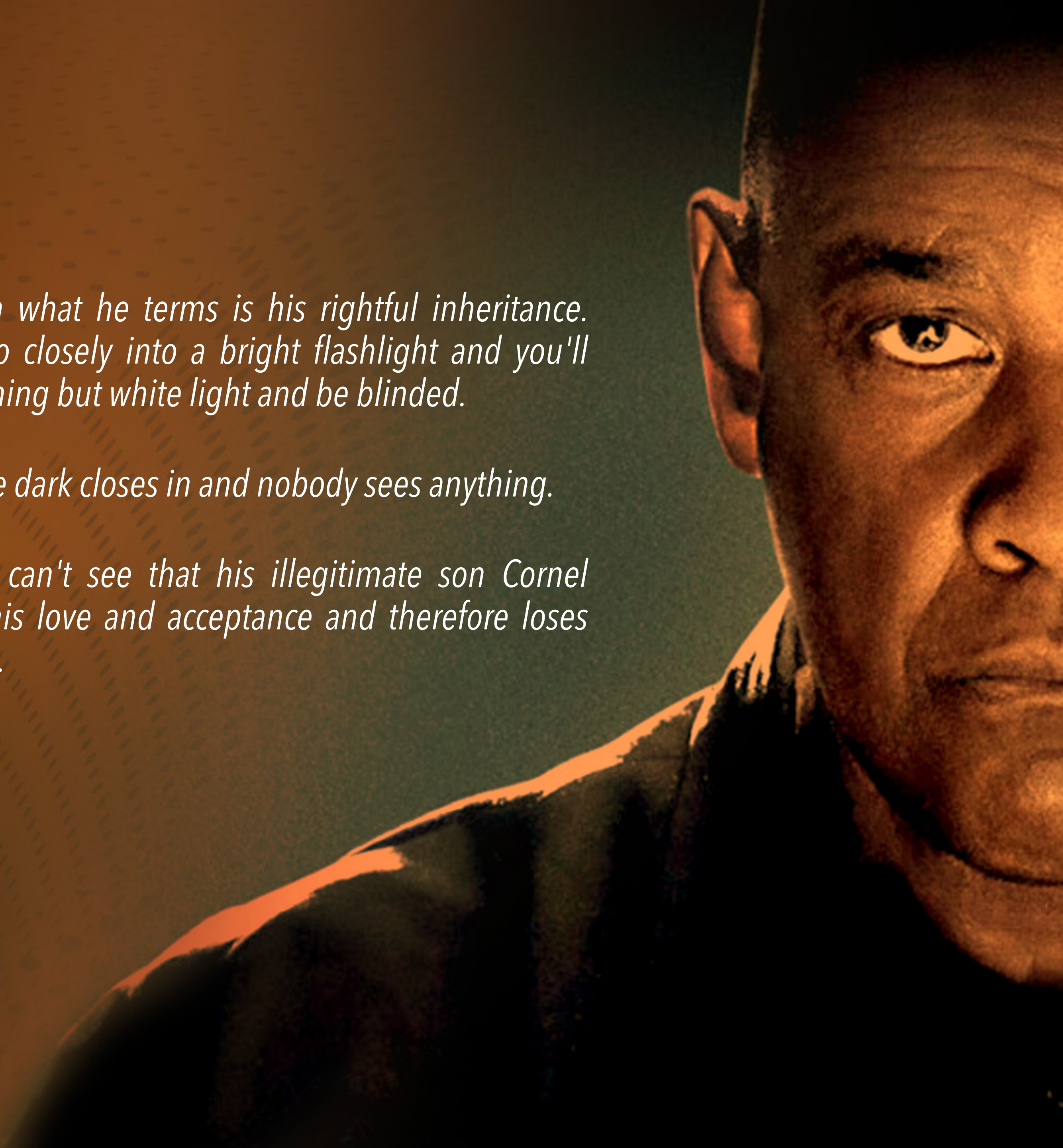
It's also a story about people not being who they appear to be and how sometimes we need to listen more and look less as Richard, her father, hints early on in the story.

It's a journey into the world (temporarily) of unsighted people. Judith thinks she "sees" Susy in the spin bike screen and Cornel thinks he sees a way

to claim what he terms is his rightful inheritance. Look too closely into a bright flashlight and you'll see nothing but white light and be blinded.

Then the dark closes in and nobody sees anything.

Richard can't see that his illegitimate son Cornel needs his love and acceptance and therefore loses his eyes.



THE WORLD

The world of the Peloton subscriber\member is full of sweat, competition, and arcane phrases like 'Cadence', 'Output, and 'Resistance'. It's a high-tech fitness world at the intersection of good old exercise bikes and high technology. It's Bluetooth heart rate monitors, and sliding scales of exercise intensity – all available via a huge 21.5-inch monitor. It's a brilliantly designed exercise platform with high-quality spinning bikes. It's a world full of shout-outs to those who have achieved 100, 500, 2,000, or more, rides. Everyone's 'Output' stats and the number of rides completed are there for all to see. Riders yearn to be called out in a live class. The competition is palpable – in spite of being able to virtually 'high-five' your fellow spinning members, you are still trying to out-ride them. You can also see someone's age group and their 'Cadence' or speed against resistance. Visible also are people's all-time rankings – how they compare to other riders around the world in terms of speed and output.

A lot of personal data is being shared and sent over the airwaves – age, sex, city, heart rate, and, of course, how many rides you have achieved. The old compete against the young and men against women – it's like a real spin class for the age of COVID without the loud music (you can adjust your own volume.)

The video chat feature has been turned off now (almost certainly for the prurient reasons you'd imagine) but the video camera is still there and what's preventing it from being remotely activated once more?

The main Peloton studios are in New York and London with live or 'encore' classes available but who's to say you couldn't hijack someone's feed and pump in your own video class for some nefarious purpose?

Judith and Cornel take healthy competition one step further and get into an epic spinning battle in a live gym with no holds barred. The duel is re-enacted with a deadly purpose in her new home's loft on a video-enabled bike this time. The loft in her swanky new Pac Pal craftsman should be an exercise junky's place of refuge but instead, it becomes a battleground for someone in some studio somewhere, to torture her. The world of high-fiving friends and people one follows online has become a video nightmare as the exercise technology has been turned on its head and become a sort of 'Spanish Donkey' as the Unknown Prowler rides with her like a real Peloton spin instructor and corrupts the exercise bike – perverting it into an instrument of torture.

Everybody bought a Peloton exercise bike during COVID and they came equipped with cute little video cameras so you can chat with your friends while riding. But what if you get a 'friend' request from someone who turns out to be a prowler? And they take over your bike.

It's "Hush" meets "Speed" meets "Wait Until Dark."

This is a woman in jeopardy film with a twist – she's trapped on an exercise bike and the prowler is online in the studio somewhere back in New York. Or are they?



CASE

"Cadence" is definitely a post-COVID cautionary tale but it could just as easily have taken place during the pandemic. Peloton has now actually removed the video chat feature (probably because of what is pictured in "Cadence") but we've probably all been on a Zoom call where someone's cat jumped on their lap or someone was doing something 'weird'. We're living in a world where AI can create virtual human beings or disguise real ones so well that they're indistinguishable from the real thing. Wanna hijack my 'smart' fridge and lock up all my food? Care to ransom my Tesla and stop it from moving for \$100? Do that to 500 'smart' cars on the 405 on a Friday afternoon and see who will pay up. Via Venmo of course.

Banks are easily hijacked, hospitals inevitably pay off ransomware demands and people's electronic lives are up for virtual robbery at the drop of a hat. Using 'smart' appliances may be convenient but it also enables the bad guys to get people right where they want them.

FINANCIALS

We loved Audrey Hepburn in "Wait Until Dark", we were thrilled by "Speed" and jumped in our seats over "Hush."

Cadence is a contained thriller. Very contained. We're talking about 90% of the action taking place inside the house. With a small cast. "Cadence" is like an elevated horror film without all the gore. Audiences will stick around to see if Judith survives her ordeal and will want to see evil Cornel get his comeuppance.

Peloton might even come along for the ride with some product placement dollars. Omega certainly might for their famous watches.

Contained Thrillers are part of the holy trinity of films that are cheap to make and profitable to release (the others being Distinct-Concept-Horror and Faith-Based Movies).

A Contained Thriller can easily blend with action, science fiction, and horror genres and their real strength is the budget versus profit margin. Like most horror movies, the lower budget means that it will be easier for "Cadence" to hit the black and make a profit.

INTRO TO THE CHARACTERS

Some of the characters are shortsighted, some are near-sighted; some have no vision at all – at least temporarily. They all 'see' things differently. But what they do have in common is vision. Some think they can see; others like Cornel see what they want to see. Judith cannot see what she wants to see while others, like Richard, can barely see at all and have made their peace with it.

All four of the main characters have slept with at least two of the other characters. They cheat on their partners but they are oh so careful not to cheat themselves. We meet all four together for the last time at the spin class in the beginning scene. Cornel masters it over his universe of sweat and the other little ducklings get in line. They're all addicted to endorphins and obsessed with beating the clock or someone else. All three are in love with Judith – Cornel because she's the sister he could never claim; Susy wants to BE Judith because she's Amazonian and buxom whereas Susy is boyish and pixie-like; and Michael because he can't help himself and he's simply in love with this irascible, beautiful dark woman.



JUDITH KRIEG

FEMALE - 40S - BLACK - CAUCASIAN - MIXED RACE

Judith Krieg (think Paula Patton) is the only daughter of Richard Charlton and, given Richard's exposure to radiation during the infamous Santa Susana Field Lab meltdown, is lucky to be around at all.

Judith is tall, dark, and irksome. But she's worked on her irritability over the years and could now be described as a high-functioning neurotic. She has no to little tolerance for any sort of discomfort. She has a sticky aversion to pain bordering on the ludicrous. But she can spin and run and row.

The reality is that Judith has been quietly coveting her erstwhile father's craftsman in the Palisades for years and is pleasantly unsurprised that he is bequeathing it to her. But she doesn't, as a cat-hater want to be stuck babysitting Ferdy, her father's moggie. It's not that she hates cats so much as she hates the idea of cats.

Judith is surprisingly uninhibited and she, her husband Michael, friend Susy, and spin instructor Cornel all thought it would be a swell idea to enjoy the surf at Black's Beach, the famous clothing-optional hangout. Susy was jealous of Judith's rack and Judith got a close-up look at Cornel, compared him to Michael, and decided a fling was in order. Michael, watching the whole thing, became determined never to leave Judith alone again. He isn't really a wimp, he's just a nice guy who fell in love with the hot black chick with a lot of issues, one of which is not inhibition.

Thus Judith has been carrying on a lingering affair with her spin class instructor Cornel for a couple of years now. Huge, muscular, and dominating, there's something in Cornel, 20 years her senior, that Judith needs, but just can't get from Michael, some 15 years her junior. Yup, this is a September-May couple.

Judith attended a private girls' school. When they did Shakespeare the girls got to play all the juicy male roles. She played Edmund in "King Lear" and the eponymous title role in "Othello."



Paula Patton

Halle Berry



Rashida Jones





Denzel Washington

Laurence Fishburne



Samuel L. Jackson



CORNEL ARBUTHNOT

MALE - AGE 55 TO 70 - BLACK - MIXED RACE - AMERICAN

Richard Charlton's crazed, illegitimate son with Sydney Williams, the Kodak private investigator who came to LA to discover what happened to her brother Darryl. Judith's father Richard had an affair with Sydney and Cornel was the result. She told Cornel only years later and after Sydney had married Zernell Arbuthnot, Cornel's bullying stepfather.

But he's even more bitter that his father, prompted by his first wife Vida, shunned him over all the years. Ruthless in getting what he wants, he's as tough as his mother and as resolute as his father. Cornel served time in the US Army Rangers during Operation Desert Storm in the early nineties and rose to the rank of Major before being mysteriously cashiered out of the army with a dishonorable discharge. Some say it was because he was the ringleader at the infamous Abu Ghraib prison twenty miles west of Baghdad. The rumor is that, while the others like Lynndie England wired up the unfortunate Iraqi prisoners with fake electric wires Cornel used real electricity attached to large portable batteries. Even when the information was gleaned Cornel kept torturing the prisoners. "He seemed to enjoy electrocuting hogtied POWs," said a fellow officer at his court-martial.

Cornel claims to have invented the craze of spinning on stationary bikes back in 1991. In the Army, he kept fit by spinning on a stationary bike which he wedged in a tent between two large sandbags – the art of spinning was born. He came back from the Middle East as fit as a butcher's dog and tried to patent the idea. Cornel insists his partner cheated him out of the business and then the big bicycle companies copied the model without paying him any royalties. He's more bitter than a lime wedge soaked in vinegar.

Cornel is ultimately looking for a payoff and payback against all his 'wrongdoers'.

RICHARD CHARLTON

MALE - AGE 75 TO 95 - CAUCASIAN - AMERICAN - ENGLISH

Lieutenant Richard Charlton, 80s, was formerly a tough and handsome, no-nonsense head of the LAPD Intelligence Division and part of the "Palace Guard" in the late 50s and 60s, rising to the rank of captain in Internal Affairs, seeking out and firing corrupt cops.

He had a penchant for violence and black women. Not in that order. Now retired, of course, he was renowned for his intelligence, attended Stanford, is a student of history, and is fond of quoting from Shakespeare, particularly Othello and King Lear. He wanted, originally, to name Judith 'Cordelia' after King Lear's youngest daughter but Yasmin, Judith's mother, would have none of it.

Richard, as a former member of the Police Sharpshooting exhibition team, is also the man behind the legendary 'impossible' shot. Two corrupt Atomic Energy thugs assaulted him in his home only to be sent scurrying down the street at night. Richard took them both out at 50 yards in near darkness but always denied it.

Richard has always been somewhat ethereal and cerebral and this, combined with Cornel's impatience, provides for a near-deadly mix of the two characters' needs.

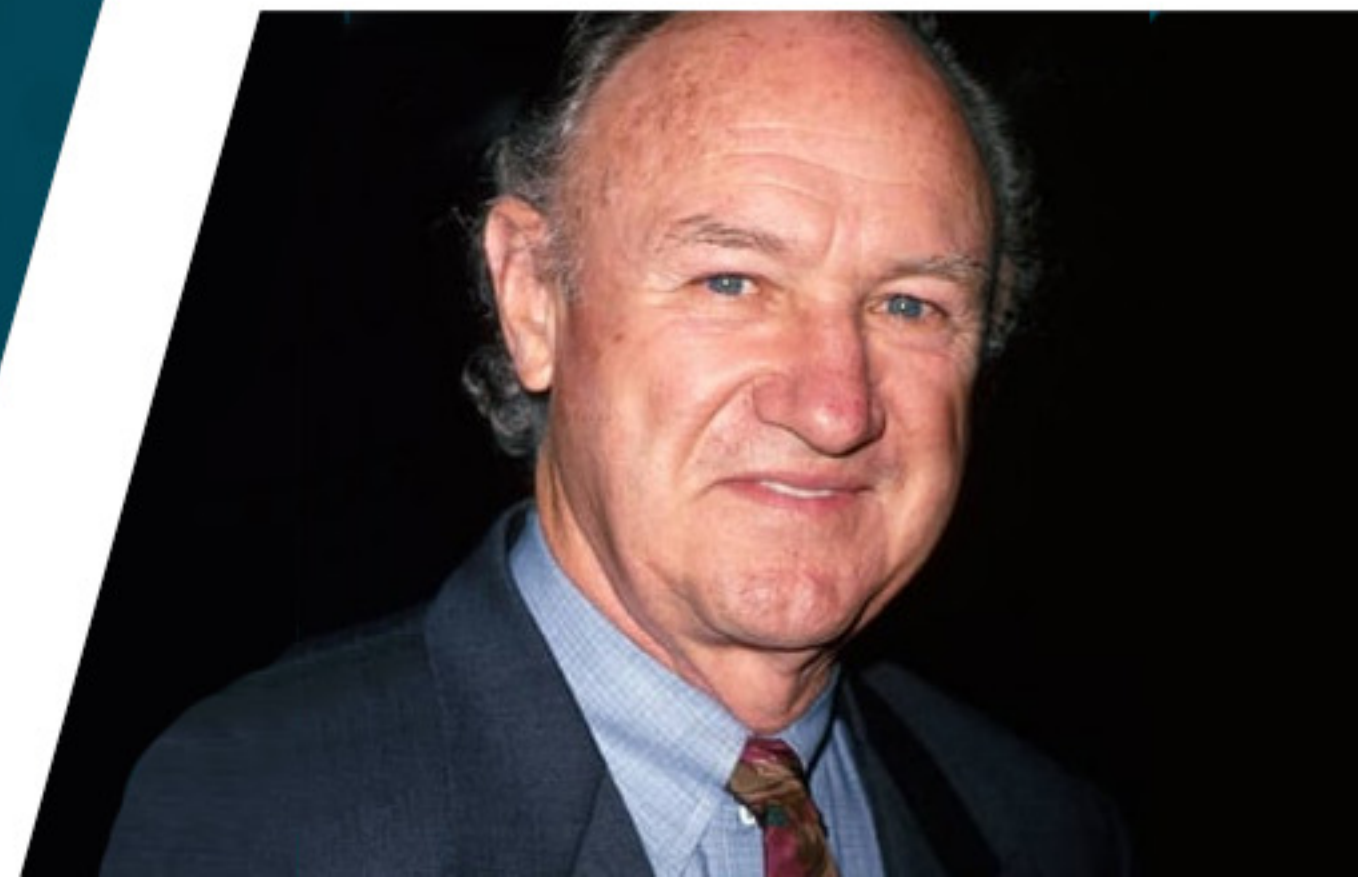
Despite his upper-middle-class educated background, Richard fell for Vida, a black drug-ridden call girl working the whiter areas near LA Downtown. Richard was a former reconnaissance photographer in the United States Army Air Force.

Richard loves LA but hates the heat, which is why he moved to Pacific Palisades and, with his worsening eyesight, keeps the time these days by watching Lawrence Welk on an old Magnavox television which, somehow, still works. Ferdy, his cat, keeps him company and is a descendant of the original feline the cops found when hurling some hoodlums into a freight car way back in 1959. He vaguely remembers having an affair in 1959 with Sydney Williams from Kodak but having an illegitimate son seems like just a bad dream or something from someone else's life. Cornel, however, has not forgotten – and it's eating him alive.



Michael Caine

Gene Hackman



Anthony Hopkins



SUSY ADKINS

**FEMALE - AGE 22 TO 27 - CAUCASIAN -
AMERICAN - ENGLISH**

Susy Adkins is in her mid-twenties, pixie-ish, and as boyish as Judith is Amazonian and voluptuous. She covets Judith's chest as she covets Judith's husband, Michael. She, in fact, used to date Michael and this has created tension in their friendship – Judith thinks Susy's friendliness is a come-on to rekindle their relationship.

Susy got her real estate license recently and has helpfully agreed to handle the paperwork for Judith and Michael as they take over Judith's father's home in the Palisades.

Susy is also pretty fit, although not up to Judith's level but she can hold her own with them all in Cornel's spin class.

She's also a dab hand with vegan cooking and is famous for her vegan matzo ball soup. Guacamole is perhaps her favorite snack dish and she brings Judith all the kit needed to make a great green bowl of the stuff – avocados, a molcajete and tejolote not to mention a bag of chili powder to spice things up.

MICHAEL KRIEG

**MALE - AGE 20 TO 25 - CAUCASIAN -
AMERICAN - ENGLISH**

Michael Krieg, 25, had the unfortunate luck to fall in love with a dark, drop-dead gorgeous half-black Amazonian woman. It's been only a year since his marriage to Judith but he can sense she's been cheating already or maybe just continuing something that started with Cornel years ago.

He's tall, pale, and languorous, almost ghostly in complexion, especially next to the dark Judith, (who doesn't have a 'type') but Michael has one, and Judith is it. Michael might almost seem to have come from the turn of the century England and appears sometimes to have walked straight off the set of "Brideshead Revisited".

Michael feels like a cuckold because he IS a cuckold but he's still madly in love with the wild, free-spirited Judith. In fact, they met while he was doing an in-studio glamour shoot for a Pop music icon and Judith was the fitness model. She stripped off at the drop of a hat and he immediately was entranced...

Lucy Hale

Emma Roberts

Sasha Pieterse



Matt Smith

Charlie Plummer

Noah Schnapp



TEASER

Judith is temporarily blind and hasn't realized that the helpful cop in her living room is actually her tormentor, Cornel. She's just found the location of the hidden money inside the living room couch (which has a new cover over the old frame) and is terrified that Cornel will find it too and then immediately kill her. She stalls for time all the while getting big musty whiffs of the ancient bundles of notes which she is sure his male olfactory organ can detect but Cornel fails to smell.

As she leans back like a manic Little Jack Horner, her arm slips into a torn section and comes away with a fistful of cash, but she quickly stuffs it back into the sofa. Then Ferdy the cat startles her by jumping on her lap and starts sharpening his claws on the couch alerting Judith's sensitive nose to more hidden loot. She manages to stuff a few remaining bills back into the couch but a roll of money falls onto the floor by her feet and she scrambles madly to pick it up before he notices.

He turns suspiciously toward the noise. Feverishly, she searches at her feet, finally finds the faded roll of bills, and quickly stuffs it down her sports bra. He begins to realize she may be on to him.

Cornel walks slowly to Judith and we think he's going to rip the sports bra clean off her body as he notices her disheveled cleavage and a bit of paper peeping out the top of her sports bra. She freezes then regains her wits and explains it away as being "an old candy wrapper." He's not convinced. "Show me," he suggests.

She reaches into her sports bra where she stuffed the bill. Cornel is almost salivating with anticipation. But when her hand unfurls it is just a candy wrapper.

