CONTINUED:  

RONNA/GAINES  

IN THE BACKGROUND  

A WOMAN with a ballerina's body comes out of the bedroom. She tucks an unrealistically large breast down into her tight top.  

GAINES  

You leaving?  

She leans over the back of the sofa for quick, tongueey kiss. In a sneak attack, she shoves a Santa's hat down to his ears. He bats the white pom out of his eyes.  

GAINES  

Be good.  

The woman is out the door without a word. Gaines looks back over at Ronna, not the least bit self-conscious about the hat.  

GAINES  

I take it this is not a social call.  

RONNA  

I need a favor.  

GAINES  

A favor? Wow. I didn't know we were such good friends, Ronna. Because if we were, you would know I give head before I give favors. I don't even give my best friends head, so the chance of your getting a favor right now are pretty fucking slim.  

(beat)  

You might try just telling me what you want to buy.  

RONNA  

Twenty hits of ecstasy.  

He takes a deep drag on the cigarette, looking at her. Blows the smoke out. He picks up a remote control and aims it at the stereo.  

CLOSE UP  

The volume meter, climbing fast.  

Out of the green, into the red.  

The MUSIC is deafening.  

ON GAINES  

On top of Ronna, face in her ear. His hand wraps around her head, holding her tight. We can't HEAR what he's saying. Ronna's eyes betray her fear.

(CONTINUED)
He backs off. She looks confused.

He nods. Do it.

The MUSIC still BLARING, she stands and slowly unbuttons her shirt. Takes it off -- very self-consciously. Pulls her t-shirt off over her head. Just her bra underneath. He motions for her to turn around. She does, then back.

Her hands are shaking. She holds them together.

Gaines aims the remote at the stereo. The MUSIC retreats.

CONT---

GAINES
You come here out of the blue asking for twenty hits. Just so happens twenty is the magic number where intent to sell becomes trafficking.

RONNA
Todd, I would never fuck you like that.

GAINES
How would you fuck me?

He climbs over the sofa to a dresser. In a drawer, he digs down through a pile of socks to find a wide-mouthed bottle. And an empty TYLENOL bottle. Blows out the dust.

GAINES
What's the occasion?

RONNA
There's this big Christmas party thing. Warehouse, you know. A bunch of us are doing sort of a pre-party thing.

GAINES
Friends of yours. You're not going to go and try to sell this on me, are you?

RONNA
No.

GAINES
You're not dealing.

RONNA
Swear to God.

He transfers pills from the big bottle to the TYLENOL bottle.

(Continued)
GAINES
This is the real thing. Pharmaceutical
grade, not that crunchy herbal rave shit.
Don't let anyone double dose or you'll be
frying eggs off 'em in the emergency room.
One hit per headbanger.

RONNA
Understood.

He snaps the cap on tight.

GAINES
Twenty at fifteen is 300.

RONNA
Fifteen? I was thinking more like ten.

RONNA
It's just that I know you charge Simon
ten.

GAINES
Inflation's a bitch.

He offers it to Ronna, who doesn't reach out for it.

RONNA
Here's the deal. There's 20 of us. I
need all of this. But I only have two
hundred. I mean, that's all I have.

Gaines undoes the cap of the Tylenol bottle, starts pouring the
pills back out.

RONNA (CONT'D)
No, hear me out. This two-hundred is like
a downpayment. You give me the stuff, I
get the extra hundred from them, then I
come right back and pay you.

GAINES
See, that would be doing you a favor, and
you know how I feel about favors.

RONNA
I could leave something with you.
Collateral.

He gives her a quick look over.

(CONTINUED)
GATNE
I already got a fucking Swatch. I need something I know you'll come back for.

[End]

looks at the Tylenol bottle in his hands. Thinking...

15 EXT. THE BEAST - NIGHT

Ronna kneels down beside the passenger window. Knocks on the glass. Claire rolls down the window. MUSIC spills out.

RONNA
Claire, could you come up with me for a sec?

16 EXT. DOORSTEP - NIGHT

The release BUZZER stops as Ronna pulls open the door to the stairs. Claire just stands there, disbelieving, making no motion to go in.

RONNA
Forty-five minutes. Hour, tops. You just have to sit there.

CLAIRE
Hello! He's a drug dealer.

RONNA
Jesus, Claire. Don't get 818 on me here. How much shit have I done for you? This is nothing.

CLAIRE
No. No! You're making me an accessory.

RONNA
Claire. That bracelet of mine you're wearing is an accessory. You are just some chick who's sitting in an apartment. That's it.

It's not just the matter at hand, but years of minor adjustment and one-upsmanship. Ronna finally drops the bravado.

RONNA
Okay, no bullshit. I need this. I don't get this money, I get evicted. My ass is out the street.

CLAIRE
You could...