

"A WALK AMONG THE TOMBSTONES"

screenplay by

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from the novel by

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B. ♦

**REVISED
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BLACK

We hear THE SOFT COO OF A BIRD and then...

FADE IN: CLOSE ON A PIGEON

Bathing itself, dipping its beak into the water, enjoying the quiet sunny day. We begin ZOOMING OUT so we see that...

THE BIRD IS STANDING ON SOMETHING

Something that's floating in the shimmering water that surrounds the bird. We CONTINUE ZOOMING OUT until we see that the Bird is in fact perched on the head of...

A FEMALE CORPSE

Nude. Floating face down, her long, dark hair suspended in the water around her head, a daddy longlegs follows the crook of an arm. We CONTINUE ZOOMING OUT so we see now that THE WATER is actually...

A SMALL LAKE

That sits in the middle of...

A CEMETERY

With hundred-year-old crypts and markers set amongst low hills. We finish our long ZOOM OUT at the top of one of those hills as we now reveal BROOKLYN over the stone walls and then, finally, the STATUE OF LIBERTY rising across the harbor. We then...

FADE OUT.

And HEAR A PHONE RING OVER as a garage door is lifted and light spills into FRAME revealing A WOMAN standing there, backlit, so we can't see her face. She gets into a car, starts the engine.

KENNY KRISTO (VO)

Hello?

EXT. HOUSE - BAYRIDGE (BROOKLYN) - DAY

As a BLACK BMW backs out, leaving a white Cadillac in the two-car garage attached to the modest mock-Tudor home.

A MAN (VO)

(singing)

Hey, Carrie Anne, what's your game? Can anybody play?

As the BMW drives off down the street we PULL BACK TO REVEAL our POV has been from...

INSIDE ANOTHER VEHICLE

Parked across the street. We can't see what make it is or who's in it. It pulls away from the curb now and follows the BMW.

MAN (VO)

She never came home, did she?

KENNY KRISTO (VO)

Who is this?

CLICK. And the LINE GOES DEAD.

INT. BMW - SAME

As the woman behind the wheel pops a tape into the dash and a moment later we hear CLASSICAL MUSIC OVER. And now we see...

QUICK CUTS OF THE WOMAN -- VARIOUS PARTS OF HER

Her dark skin. Her hands. Her feet. Her jade-colored eyes. All of this as she puts a cigarette in her mouth, runs a hand through her hair. Lights the cigarette, then reaches down to scratch a bare ankle with a red-polished fingernail.

INT. KENNY KRISTO'S GARAGE - DAY

As he lifts the door, stands there, backlit, looking at the empty parking space.

EXT. D'AGOSTINO'S MARKET - DAY

As the woman gets out of the BMW and goes through the glass doors into the market, the doors close, we glimpse her reflection for a second, no more. We then see the reflection of A POWDER BLUE VAN as it cruises past on the street behind her, a large FACE in the passenger window: dark sunglasses over pale-white skin.

INT. KENNY KRISTO'S HOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS

Plush and over done with expensive art and fine furnishings. We glimpse the now panicked KENNY in the mirror squares on the wall or reflected off the chrome coffee table as he comes in from the garage and calls out...

KENNY

Carrie!

EXT. D'AGOSTINO'S MARKET - DAY

As the woman exits the market with a BAG BOY, passing THE BLUE VAN now parked out front, TWO MEN beside it, their backs to us, looking at a CLIPBOARD.

She opens her trunk, her face obscured by the lid, and the bag boy loads the groceries inside. She shuts the lid, and passes him a nice tip.

BAG BOY

Thank you...
(noticing)
...very much.

EXT. THE ARABIAN GOURMET - DAY

The woman pulls the BMW to the curb across from the market. She crosses the street to the store and we PAN TO where the blue van pulls into a loading zone behind her car.

INT. KENNY KRISTO'S HOUSE - DAY

Kenny turns and looks at the PHONE. He wills it to ring...

EXT. ARABIAN GOURMET - DAY

As the woman emerges from the market with her purse over her shoulder, plastic bag in one hand, her car keys in the other.

EXT. KENNY KRISTO'S HOUSE - DAY

The PHONE RINGS, Kenny picks it up...

KENNY

Hello?

EXT. ARABIAN GOURMET - DAY

WE FOLLOW BEHIND THE WOMAN as she crosses the street to her car. The rear doors of the van are now open; inside, a yawning pitch-black space.

VOICE

Mrs. Kristo?

The woman turns, sees A ROUND MAN standing in the glare of the morning sun. Something FLASHES in his hand.

CARRIE

Yes?

A face appears in the dark of the van and a hand goes over her mouth. She struggles. A STUN GUN is jammed into her ribs and next we hear a sizzling ZAP as it's fired.

CUT TO: A MAN'S LIPS

Blurry, distorted, in tight CLOSE-UP...

MAN

We got your wife, fucko.

INT. KENNY KRISTO'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

As the LINE GOES DEAD and Kenny hangs up. He turns and looks at A PORTRAIT of Carrie hanging over a fireplace. She's beautiful, dark, and young, no more than twenty-five-years-old.

KENNY

Jesus...

The PHONE RINGS AGAIN. Kenny looks at the CALLER ID box; it reads PAYPHONE followed by a NUMBER. He picks up the phone, writes the number down on his hand...

KENNY

What do you want?

CUT TO: A BLURRY IMAGE OF A MAN

This voice calmer, more cultured than the first guy who called. A well-trimmed goatee frames a doughy mouth...

SECOND MAN

I want to help you get your wife back.
If you want her back, that is.

KENNY
Of course I want her--

SECOND MAN
Then keep the line open, Mr. Kristo. And please don't call the police. I'll be in touch. Very soon...

INT. KENNY KRISTO'S HOUSE - DAY

And again the line goes dead. Kenny hangs up the phone. Starts pacing the room. He stops in front of the MIRROR, takes a deep breath to calm himself and we get a good look at the tall, well dressed man in his forties.

His expression goes from panic to resolve as he turns from the mirror and sits down in a chair next to the phone. It doesn't take long for it to RING. The CALLER ID box reads: PAYPHONE. Kenny writes this new number down on a pad.

KENNY
(picks up)
Please, just tell me what you want.

FIRST MAN
What do you think we want? We want money.

It's the first man again. The not so "polite" one.

KENNY
How much?

FIRST MAN
We want a million dollars, fucko. How's that strike you?

KENNY
That's ridiculous. Look, I can't talk to you. Have your partner call me. Maybe I can talk to him.

FIRST MAN
Hey--

And this time Kenny hangs up. He gets up, calmly walks into...

THE KITCHEN

Where he starts to fix himself a cup of coffee. We hear THE PHONE RING. He lets it ring a few more times, PAYPHONE and a NUMBER showing on the CALLER ID BOX while he pours the coffee into a small cup. He makes a note of the NUMBER on the pad.

THE LIVING ROOM

As he sits back down. Takes a breath. Answers the phone.

SECOND MAN
You upset my friend. He's difficult to deal with when he's upset.

KENNY

I think it would be better if you made the calls from now on. That way we can get this thing handled instead of getting all hung up in drama. Now, he mentioned a million--

SECOND MAN

What does your wife weigh, Mr. Kristo? One ten, one twenty, somewhere in that neighborhood? Something like... fifty kilograms we might say?

Kenny takes a sip of coffee, doesn't answer.

SECOND MAN

So let's see, fifty keys at twenty a key, well, run the numbers for me, why don't you, Mr. Kristo. Comes to a mil, doesn't it?

KENNY

What's the point?

SECOND MAN

The point is you'd pay a million for her if she was product, Mr. Kristo. You'd pay that much if she was powder. Isn't she worth as much in flesh and blood?

KENNY

I can't pay what I don't have.

SECOND MAN

What do you have?

KENNY

(beat)
Four hundred.

SECOND MAN

Five.

KENNY

I'm not bargaining. I gave you the top figure right away. It's four hundred.

There's a pause on the other end, then A SIGH. Then...

SECOND MAN

Ah, well, if that's the best you can do.

KENNY

Before I give you anything, I want to make sure my wife is all right.

SECOND MAN

That's impossible. She's at a safe house. I'm at a payphone.

KENNY

How do I even know you've got her in the first place?

SECOND MAN

(beat)

Are you familiar with her tits?

KENNY

Excuse me?

SECOND MAN

They're quite nice. Would you recognize one of them? That would be the simplest way. I'll cut one of them off and leave it on your doorstep. Would that put your mind at rest?

KENNY

Jesus, don't say that.

SECOND MAN

Then let's not talk about proof, okay?

(then)

Get the money ready. We'll be in touch.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

As Kenny moves behind the water heater, crouches down and turns the dial on a FLOOR SAFE this way, then that way, then this way. He opens the door, stares a moment at the BRICKS OF HEROIN that are stacked up inside. He removes several, then reaches behind them and starts pulling out rubber-banded stacks of CASH...

INT. KENNY'S KITCHEN - LATER

Where he sits at the table now covered with the money. He counts a stack, then tosses it into A LAUNDRY BASKET. THE PHONE RINGS. He picks it up from amongst the cash and answers it.

SECOND MAN (PHONE)

Have you got the money?

KENNY

Yes.

SECOND MAN (PHONE)

Put it in two hefty bags. Then go to the phone booth on the corner of Ocean Avenue and Farragut Road...

EXT. PAYPHONE - NIGHT

The PHONE IS RINGING as Kenny pulls up in his Caddy.

SECOND MAN (VO)

Be there at eight-thirty or she's dead.

He gets out and quickly answers phone.

KENNY

Hello?

SECOND MAN (PHONE)
Very good. Now, go to the corner of
Veterans Avenue and East Sixty-sixth
Street.

KENNY
Where is that?

INT. KENNY'S CAR - NIGHT

As he drives through the dark streets of Flatbush.

SECOND MAN (VO)
Take Farragut to Flatbush, Flatbush to
Avenue N. That'll run you right into
Veterans....

He sees the payphone through the windshield...

EXT. VETERANS AVE. PAYPHONE - NIGHT

As Kenny gets out of the car and the PHONE RINGS. He hurries
over to it, answers it...

SECOND MAN
Where's the money?

KENNY
In the backseat, in the bags like you
said.

SECOND MAN
Good. Now leave it, walk up Sixty-sixth
Street to Avenue M.

Kenny looks around the neighborhood, the dark storefronts, but
can't see anybody.

KENNY
And then what?

SECOND MAN
Wait on the corner of Avenue M for five
minutes. Then walk back, get in your car
and go home.

KENNY
What about my wife?

SECOND MAN
She'll be in the car waiting for you.

EXT. STREET - TWO BLOCKS AWAY - NIGHT

As Kenny paces back and forth. He checks his watch, looks down
the street, then quickly starts back the way he came...

EXT. STREET - KENNY KRISTO'S CAR - NIGHT

As Kenny now runs to the car...

KENNY
Carrie!

He whips open the door, but THE CAR IS EMPTY. He stands there a moment, looking around.

KENNY
Fuck this shit...

He takes out his keys and opens the trunk. It's empty as well. And now we hear THE PAYPHONE RING ACROSS THE STREET. He slams the trunk and runs to it. Picks it up...

SECOND MAN (PHONE)
Go home. She'll probably get there before you do.

INT. KENNY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Kenny bursts through the door.

KENNY
Carrie!

Kenny throws open a door, calls up the staircase. He knows she's not here. He stands there a moment, then suddenly PUTS HIS FIST THROUGH THE WALL. Then his OTHER FIST.

He sees himself in the MIRROR and smashes both of his hands against it, shattering the glass. He steps away; his hands are striped with BLOOD.

THE PHONE RINGS. Kenny grabs it on the first ring.

KENNY
Where is she?'

SECOND MAN (PHONE)
My apologies. There was a slight change in plans.

This time the CALLER ID BOX reads UNKNOWN CALLER.

KENNY
Where is she?

SECOND MAN (PHONE)
Shhhhh. She's just around the corner from you, on, uh, Seventy-ninth Street. I believe it's the south side of the street, three or four houses from the corner--

KENNY
What?

SECOND MAN (PHONE)
There's a car parked illegally at a fire hydrant. A grey Ford Tempo. Your wife's in it.

KENNY
She's in the car?

SECOND MAN (PHONE)
She's in the trunk.

KENNY
You put her in the trunk?

SECOND MAN (PHONE)
Don't worry. There's plenty of air. But it's cold out tonight so you'll want to get her out of there as soon as possible.

KENNY
Is there a key? How do I--

SECOND MAN (PHONE)
The lock's broken. You won't need a key.

KENNY
Whatta you mean? If the trunk's not locked, why can't she get out?

But the LINE GOES DEAD. Kenny drops the phone, looks at his hands, both are now covered with blood from the broken mirror. He wipes them on his pants, SMEARING THE PHONE NUMBERS he had earlier written across his palm.

EXT. SEVENTY-NINTH STREET - NIGHT

Where a battered Tempo sits parked at the curb. The windshield is starred and the passenger door is deeply dented. Kenny now moves INTO FRAME and approaches the trunk and hesitates -- THE LOCK IS MISSING ALTOGETHER. He flings the lid open.

An AUDIO CASSETTE is taped to the underside of the trunk lid. He glances at it, then looks inside the trunk and begins to shake.

KENNY
No...

INSIDE THE TRUNK

Are dozens of PACKAGES. Bundles of various sizes wrapped in BLACK PLASTIC and secured with freezer tape.

KENNY
No, no, no...

He grabs one of the parcels from the trunk, takes a jackknife from his pocket and cuts away the tape...

KENNY
No, no, no...

A bit of BLOOD runs from the packet and he quickly drops it back into the trunk and starts backing away as he now notices several thin streams of BLOOD running from many of the bundles...

A HIGH ANGLE OF KENNY KRISTO

As he throws his head back and cries out like a gutshot animal and we now...

FADE TO BLACK

And ROLL TITLES. We hear A HORN SOUND, then...

CUT TO: A STREET - (BLACK & WHITE) - DAY

And now we see AN EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD DOMINICAN BANGER sprinting across a busy street for an alley. As his hands pump up and down, we see that he carries an automatic pistol in one hand.

INT. ALLEY - (BLACK & WHITE) - SAME

As the kid runs up the alley, right for us, we hear a loud BOOM and he's blown off his feet, so that now we see A MAN in a suit and tie standing at the far end, slowly walking this way, a big gun in his hand. The young thug starts to crawl away...

MATT (VO)

It was summer nine years ago...

INT. BAR - (BLACK & WHITE) - DAY

As Matt sits in the dark establishment, at the end of the bar, hidden behind a newspaper.

MATT (VO)

I was off duty at this bar in Washington Heights where cops didn't have to pay for their drinks--

From behind the paper we see him knock one back, then set AN EMPTY SHOTGLASS down on the bar beside two more empties.

MATT (VO)

--when two kids came in to rob the place.

And now LIGHT SPILLS INTO THE BAR as the door is opened and we see TWO FIGURES in leather coats, gold chains, standing there, the door closing behind them, once again bringing darkness.

MATT (VO)

I didn't even know it was happening until they shot the bartender--

VOICE

Kay passo, Homie?

BOOM. It happens. The barman's head snaps back. MATT SCUDDER, with his tired eyes and world-weary face swivels in his chair in time to see the two figures run out the door.

EXT. STREET - (BLACK & WHITE) DAY

Out of the darkness and into the BRIGHT SUNLIGHT as Matt runs out of the bar, his gun in his hand...

MATT (VO)

I chased them both out into the street.

Up the block, Matt sees them get into a primed-up CAMERO.

MATT (VO)

I identified myself as a police officer and told them to stop.

That may be what we hear, but what we see is Matt simply taking a step into the street and firing a shot through the windshield of the car as it passes, killing the driver. The other thug jumps out and takes off running. The car now rolling along on its own.

MATT (VO)

I shot one dead, chased the other one...

INT. ALLEY - (BLACK & WHITE) - DAY

As the second thug is blown off his feet. The same shot we saw a moment ago.

MATT (VO)

Caught him in the leg.

We see Matt now walking up the alley. The thug crawling along, his leg roaring with blood. He gets up and Matt SHOOTS HIM IN THE LEG AGAIN. But the guy keeps crawling...

Matt catches up, walks alongside him. But the guy keeps crawling along like Matt's not there. Determined...

The thug reaches out with a shaky hand for his GUN which had apparently slid away from him. Matt steps on his wounded leg. And the thug screams.

MATT (VO)

He won't ever walk right again.

Matt then puts his own gun to the thug's head.

MATT

Close your eyes.

THUG

(grabs the cross around his neck)

Please...

MATT

Close them.

The guy does. ~~Waits.~~ ♦ We hear a CLICK. And when the thug opens his eyes we see that Matt's CUFFED HIM to A GAS METER. The thug looks back and sees Matt walking back out of the alley...

EXT. STREET - (BLACK & WHITE) - DAY

As Matt comes out of the alley and takes in the chaos all around, the runaway Camero has jumped the sidewalk and is nosed into a storefront. A CROWD gawks at the dead thug behind the wheel...

WOMAN (OS)

Shhhh.... shhh.... shhh...

Matt sees A WOMAN sitting on the curb away from the crowd rocking her child back and forth, comforting her. Matt holsters his gun, comes over and crouches down. He touches the back of the girl's head, the little RIBBON there...

MATT

It's okay, sweetie. It's all over...

Matt looks into the eyes of the woman who just rocks the kid as COLOR NOW SEEPS INTO FRAME and we see THE PURPLE RIBBON holding up the little girl's hair...

WOMAN
Shhh... baby... shhh...

MATT (VO)
I stopped drinking that day.

CUT TO: MATT - NOW

Nine years older. A little greyer.

MATT
It just wasn't as much fun after that.
We hear SOFT LAUGHTER at that, and now...

WIDEN TO REVEAL: A MEETING HALL

Matt standing at his chair addressing the group. Among them sits A MAN who, aside from the long hair and glasses, is a dead ringer for Kenny Kristo.

MATT
And now I'm nine years sober. And... I
uh, well, I guess I'm just grateful for
these meetings. That's all. Thanks.

Matt sits down and A WOMAN down the row stands up...

WOMAN
My name is Denise, and I'm an alcoholic-
addict...

MATT/EVERYONE
Hi, Denise!

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

As Matt comes out of the building, starts up the street...

VOICE
Matt?

Matt stops and turns as THE MAN WHO LOOKS LIKE KENNY KRISTO walks out of the building. And now as he comes over to Matt we can see that this man's clothing is more downscale than Kenny's. This man wears jeans, worn boots and a sweatshirt. He's clearly nervous.

MAN
It's me, Peter-- Peter Kristo.

MATT
Oh. Peter. Hi.
(then)
Do I know you, Peter?

PETER
I led a meeting a few weeks ago.

(explaining)
I'm a painter, got hooked on smack in Art School...

MATT
You're the one did the Jackson Pollack number on the wall a the john with the blood from your syringe.

PETER
(looks around)
Yeah, that was me.

MATT
I enjoyed your story.

PETER
I enjoyed yours, too. I guess you got fired for that, huh?

MATT
I got a Commendation, and then I quit.

PETER
Oh...

Matt watches Peter glance this way and that.

MATT
Something wrong, Peter?

PETER
It's my brother.
(then)
He needs your help.

MATT
Your brother. The dealer?

PETER
Kenny, yeah.

Peter looks around, smiles at someone leaving the meeting.

MATT
You give me some idea exactly what kind of help he needs?

PETER
I think it would be better, you came out to Bay Ridge, we talked about it there.

MATT
Bay Ridge...

PETER
My brother'll pay for your cab out and back. And your time. Whether you take the job or not.

(then)
He'll pay you whatever you want.

Matt can see that Peter's not in good shape.

MATT

It's faster, we take the subway.

EXT. SUBWAY - BAY RIDGE - NIGHT

We CRANE UP as Matt and Kenny walk up from the subway and start off towards the nicer neighborhoods nearer the water.

EXT. KENNY KRISTO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Matt starts up the steps with Peter.

INT. KENNY KRISTO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Matt steps inside and freezes. He sees Kenny Kristo. Peter's twin. Unlike Peter, his hair is short, he's dressed in expensive slacks and a button-down shirt.

KENNY

Something tells me Peter never said he was a twin.

MATT

No. He didn't mention it.

KENNY

He says everything else about me at those meetings.

(extends his hand)

Kenny Kristo...

MATT

Matt Scudder.

KENNY

Can I get you something to drink? Not a drink drink. I know you know Peter from AA, but there's coffee made or I can offer you a soda...

Matt sees that Kenny's hands are bandaged. The pile of BROKEN GLASS in a corner. An overturned chair.

MATT

Coffee's fine.

As Kenny pours a cup, Matt looks through the doorway, can see that the entire house is a mess, looks like it's been tossed.

KENNY

So, you're a detective, is that right?

MATT

Unlicensed.

KENNY

What's that mean?

MATT

It means that sometimes I do favors for people and sometimes they give me gifts.

KENNY

Gifts. Uh-huh. But you used to be a cop, right?

MATT

I was with the Sixth Precinct in the village for a while, and before that I was over here with the Seventy-eighth.

KENNY

So why'd you quit?

MATT

I didn't like the hours.

KENNY

What, the corruption get to you?

MATT

Not really. It would've been hard to support my family without it.

Kenny glances at Peter, leaning in the doorway, uncomfortable.

KENNY

Look, Matt-- can I call you that?

(Matt shrugs)

What I need to know is whether I can tell you something without worrying about who you're gonna tell it to.

MATT

Well, legally, I don't have the status of an attorney. Meaning whatever it is you have to say isn't privileged information.

KENNY

That's not very reassuring.

Kenny looks at Peter. Matt catches the look, puts down his coffee cup.

MATT

Maybe I should go...

PETER

Just tell him, Kenny.

KENNY

No, he's right. I'm sorry we dragged you all the way out here for nothing...

Kenny takes a roll of bills from his pocket and peels off a hundred, extends it across the table to Matt.

KENNY

Here. For your cabs out and back, and for your time, Mr. Scudder.

MATT

Keep your money. We took the subway.

KENNY
You came out here on the fucking subway?
Didn't my brother tell you to take a cab?

PETER
I told him, but--

MATT
Look, Kenny, can I call you that?
(then)
How 'bout you don't tell me how to get
around town and I won't tell you how to
sell crack to schoolchildren? How's that
strike you?

KENNY
Jesus-- *how's that strike me...*

Matt starts for the door.

KENNY
That's what that guy on the phone said.
*I want a million dollars. How's that
strike you?*

MATT
(pauses)
What guy was this?

PETER
For Christ's sake, tell him, Kenny.
Kenny falls back into the chair, rubs his face with his hands.

KENNY
I'm sorry. I've been under a lot of
strain.

Matt notices the HOLE Kenny had earlier punched in the wall.

MATT
There's a lot of that going around.

KENNY
The other day, a couple guys kidnapped my
wife, cut her up in little pieces wrapped
in plastic and sent her back to me in the
trunk of a car.

He looks up at Matt now, his eyes wet.

KENNY
Maybe that's the same strain everybody
else is under. I wouldn't know.

Matt sits back down at the table.

MATT
Start at the beginning.

And we hear A WOMAN SCREAM OVER as we now...

CUT TO: A DARK GARAGE SOMEWHERE - DAY

The windows are grimed over, so it's hard to see much beyond. There's a van in here and two FIGURES are busy hosing it out.

We hear THE WOMAN'S VOICE begging, pleading. Other MALE VOICES. We can't quite make out what they're saying, the VOLUME IS SO HIGH, the words are distorted.

The SOUND BLASTS THROUGH THE SPEAKERS in the van. A TAPE plays in the deck on the dashboard, a stack of other cassettes sit on the seat beside a pair of KITCHEN KNIVES.

One of the men grabs the knives and wipes the blades down with a cloth. As the WOMAN'S SCREAM CARRIES OVER TO...

INT. KENNY KRISTO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Where Matt now sits on the couch in the living room, his notebook open in his lap.

KENNY

The cassette was taped to the trunk.
With a note said, "For your listening
pleasure."

MATT

Can I hear it?

KENNY

Trust me. You don't want to.

MATT

Can I see the note?

KENNY

It's uh, with the body.

MATT

And where is that?

When Kenny doesn't answer right away, Matt looks up from his notebook as Peter and Kenny exchange nervous looks.

KENNY

We uh, well, Peter and I, we've got this
cousin, he's a veterinarian. Anyway,
he's got this oven he uses for cremating
animals he puts to sleep--

MATT

You cremated her?

The two brothers just look at him. Uh, yeah.

PETER

You think we did the wrong thing, Matt?

MATT

I think it was illegal.

KENNY
Yeah, well, I wasn't too worried about
that aspect of it.

Matt looks at the PHONE.

MATT
You have Caller ID?

KENNY
Yeah, I wrote the numbers down.

He hands Matt a slip of paper:

KENNY
These're the numbers they called from.
All payphones.

MATT
Except for the last one.

KENNY
And these here are the locations of the
phones they sent me to up in Flatbush.

Matt slips the paper into his notebook, then...

MATT
You remember anybody hanging around the
neighborhood the last few weeks? Maybe
somebody didn't belong?

Kenny shakes his head.

MATT
You ever done time?

KENNY
I've never even been arrested.

MATT
But you've been looked at?

KENNY
A few months ago I had a feeling. I'd go
out, I'd see a sedan in the rearview.
Hear little clicks on the phone. But
nothing ever happened.

MATT
Can I ask, what exactly it is that you're
moving?

KENNY
Does it matter?

PETER
Heroin.

KENNY
Properly speaking, I'm not a dealer.

PETER
(heard this before)
He's a trafficker.

KENNY
You understand the distinction?

MATT
Sure, traffickers live in nice houses--
(indicates the room)
--got nice art on the walls.

Kenny turns, looks at Matt a moment, then gets up and moves to the fireplace where the PORTRAIT OF CARRIE hangs above it. She lies on a chaise looking at us (or the artist) with a playful smile and lively eyes.

KENNY
Peter did this one for me, two years ago,
for my birthday. She was twenty-four.

Matt looks at Peter and sees he can't bring himself to look at the painting. Kenny reaches into a bag, tosses TWO BRICKS OF CASH onto the table in front of Matt.

KENNY
That's ten thousand dollars. Consider it
my "gift" to you.

Matt looks at it, but leaves it where it is, stands up.

KENNY
You get another ten, you find these two
fucks.

MATT
I have to think about it.

KENNY
If it's not enough--

MATT
It's plenty.

KENNY
(beat)
Ah. I see. You don't like what I do.

MATT
It's a factor.
(then)
Say I find these guys, what are you
planning on doing with them?

KENNY
You know the answer to that.

Kenny gets up, looks at the portrait.

KENNY
They took my wife and they tortured her
and they turned her into some kind of a
joke. I have to do something.

MATT
Something I'd be an accessory to.

KENNY
The kind of guys who'd do this, you
really care what happens to them?

Matt stares at all that CASH on the coffee table.

MATT
I still have to think about it.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL HOTEL - NIGHT

Midtown. Not all that run down, but not all that nice either.
Matt hurries through the RAIN, goes inside the glass door.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

As Matt walks to the elevator, HOWIE, the desk clerk, in his
twenties, shaved head, pierced ear, nose and eyebrow looks up
from his comic book. He tips back in A WHEELCHAIR.

HOWIE
Scudder.

MATT
Hello, Howie.
(indicates the chair)
Hurt yourself?

HOWIE
(pops a wheelie)
Found it out back by the dumpster. Mrs.
Dahlgren in 202 left it there when Mr. D
stroked out last week.

Matt tries not to shake his head, give any kind of reaction to
that one at all. Instead, he smiles the best he can and asks:

MATT
Any messages?

Howie rolls over to the message boxes, then stands up out of the
chair to reach Matt's box on the top row, takes down a slip and
squints at it.

HOWIE
Sol Edwards.

Howie hands Matt the slip, sits back down in the wheelchair.

MATT
Sol Edwards...

HOWIE
He said he was a cop, but I think the guy
was fucking with me.

MATT
Sol Edmunds?

HOWIE
 Could be. I was watching *Sponge Bob* and
 could've maybe heard wrong. Anyways...
 (pops another wheelie)
 He said to call him at some hospital.

MATT
 Some hospital?

HOWIE
 Westland or Westside. One of those.

MATT
 Which is it, Howie? One's on Long
 Island. The other one's in Harlem.

HOWIE
 (shrugs)
 Guess you'll just have to call 'em both.

MATT
 Howie, you gotta write this stuff down.
 Howie looks back down at his comic book. Matt shakes his head,
 moves to the elevator, then turns and looks back at Howie.

MATT
 Why'd you think he wasn't for real?
 Howie looks up. Huh?

MATT
 You said the guy told you he was a cop,
 but you thought he was fucking with you.

HOWIE
 Oh, not about that, about your son.

MATT
 (stops the elevator door)
 My what?

HOWIE
 Yeah, that's what I said-- no way
 Scudder's got a fucking kid!

INT. HOSPITAL E.R. - NIGHT

As an AMBULANCE pulls up, the doors burst open and the ATTENDANTS
 OFFLOAD what looks like a GUNSHOT VICTIM. Matt slips past them,
 grabs the first NURSE he sees.

MATT
 My name's Scudder. My son is--

VOICE
 Matt...

He turns as a young uniformed cop approaches, hand extended.

COP
 Sol Edmunds.

He sees the look on Matt's face and smiles.

COP/SOL

You thought it was my old man called...
He's dead, five years now. Colon cancer.
Shit he ate, it's no wonder--

MATT

About my son--

SOL

Oh, yeah, he's okay, a little banged up
is all. He's right over here...

Matt hesitates, then starts to follow the cop down a row of
curtained-off beds...

MATT

Which one is it, Mike or Andy?

The cop looks at him.

MATT

The message I got was a little vague.

SOL

It's Michael. He and a buddy borrowed a
car, took it for a ride until they ran a
red light, bounced off a sanitation truck
into a basketball hoop at Linney Park.

MATT

They hit anybody?

SOL

They were lucky. It was after dark,
nobody's around.

Sol leads Matt, stops, pulls back a curtain and we see a FIFTEEN-
YEAR-OLD BOY lying on a gurney, eyes closed, a gauze bandage on
his forehead, an ace around his wrist. Matt stares at him...

SOL

They got him sedated.

Matt moves around the gurney, stares down at the kid lying on the
bed.

MATT

You call his mother?

COP

My partner did, but she was up in Nyack.
At a wedding or something. That's when I
remembered the name, and thought how many
Matt Scudders could there be--

The kid opens his eyes. Blinks at Matt.

KID

Who are you?

MATT

Matt.
 (then)
 Your father.

And now the kid sits up.

KID

Am I dying?

Before Matt can answer a rush of people enter the room, including ANITA, Matt's ex wife and her HUSBAND, both of them dressed up.

ANITA

(hurries to the bed)
 Michael-- what happened?

MICHAEL

I'm sorry, Mom... I screwed up...

She sits down on the bed, holds him, now sees Matt standing there in the corner with the young cop. She freezes. Now the husband turns, sees him, too.

MATT

Hello, Anita.

ANITA

Matt...

MATT

(before she can ask)
 Officer Edmunds called me. I uh...

He cuts a look at the husband.

MATT

I was just leaving.

Matt walks to the door, leaving the group huddled at the bed, Michael now crying into his mother's arms, apologizing. Matt stops in the doorway and looks back at the group. The family he's no longer a part of. Sol comes up to him...

SOL

I'm sorry, Matt, I didn't realize what the situation was--

MATT

Forget it.

And he turns and walks out.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

As Matt comes down the steps, but stops halfway, oblivious to the RAIN that falls all around him. He turns and looks back at the hospital, up at the LIGHTED ROOMS.

INT. MATT'S HOTEL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

As Matt walks up the hall, we hear the sounds of televisions and music and arguing and so on coming from the various rooms. Matt takes out his key and pauses: A MANILA ENVELOPE sticks out from under his door.

INT. MATT'S ROOM - SAME

Spartan, bordering on Monastic: A bed. A chair. A TV with a cheap boom box on top. A closet-sized john opening off to one side. Matt sits down on the bed and opens the envelope. He takes out a PHOTOGRAPH OF CARRIE KRISTO and looks at it...

He then tips the envelope and dumps A CASSETTE TAPE onto the mattress.

Matt slides to the edge of the bed, slips the cassette into the boom box player. We hear nothing for a moment. Just silence...

And then, gradually, we become aware of the sound of BREATHING. A Man's hurried, excited breaths. And then, a WHIMPER.

VOICE

SHHHHH!

And then more breathing. The breaths become more hurried, not louder, just faster, and then a long, raspy sigh. A chuckle. Then...

VOICE

(singing)

Hey, Carrie Anne... what's your game...

(chuckle)

You know what, Carrie? You're so fine,
you're gonna get a chance...

And now we...

CUT TO: A MAN'S ROUND FACE

Blurred, but speaking... the mouth hideously close...

ROUND MAN

We're gonna let you live.

ANOTHER FACE, this one WHITE AS A DINNER PLATE, appears just over his shoulder, leans down and does something we can't see with his mouth. We hear A WHIMPER OS...

ROUND MAN

You're so special. You've got the best
set of tits on the street. Do you like
'em, Carrie? Are you proud of 'em?

CUT TO: MATT

Sitting on the bed. Listening to this. We begin MOVING IN...

ROUND MAN (VO)

Which one's your favorite? Come on, eeny
meny miney mo, pick one, Carrie.

(singsong)

Hey, Carrie Anne, pick a titty.

CUT TO: THE ROUND MAN

As the blurred face smiles in the dark...

ROUND MAN
Which one's your favorite?

And now we see he's got something in his hand, a LOOP OF WIRE, it looks coppery in the dim light.

ROUND MAN
Pick the one you want to keep, Carrie.
One for you and one for me, that's fair,
isn't it? You can keep one and I'll take
the other one. Carrie's choice. But
you better pick one or I'll take them
both.

CUT TO: MATT

Staring at Carrie's photo as we MOVE IN CLOSER...

ROUND MAN (VO)
Look at that, look at that, I touch them
and the nipples get hard, you get hot
even when you're scared, even when you're
crying, you little cunt, you.

CUT TO: CLOSE ON CARRIE KRISTO

Her mouth TAPED. She doesn't move. Can't move. Just stares
through tears at his blurred face hovering above her like some
kind of horrible moon.

ROUND MAN
Pick one, Carrie. Which one will it be?
This one? This one? What are you
waiting for, Carrie? Pick one...

CUT TO: MATT

As we move right up to his face, the anger building inside,
seizing his body, twitching his muscles.

ROUND MAN (VO)
Are you trying to stall? Are you trying
to make me angry? Come on, Carrie. Come
on. Touch the one you want to keep.

CUT TO: CARRIE

As the woman touches herself...

ROUND MAN
That one? Are you sure, Carrie?

She just closes her eyes. The other man's face appears again
beside the round man, staring down at her...

ROUND MAN
Well, I think it's a good choice, an
excellent choice...

CUT TO: MATT

As we move right up INTO HIS EYES...

ROUND MAN (VO)
So that one's yours and this one's mine
and a deal's a deal and a trade's a trade
and no trades back...

We're so close that we SEE THE IMAGE OF CARRIE'S FACE IN THE DARK OF MATT'S PUPIL.

ROUND MAN (VO)
(singing)
Hey, Carrie-Anne...

She SCREAMS, the sound baffled by a blast of THUNDER, we then...

CUT TO: KENNY KRISTO'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Kenny opens the door to see Matt standing there in the rainy dark.

MATT
I don't make reports. I don't check in.
I'll work the case until I find them or I
decide it's a waste of time, which, by
the way, could be an hour from now.

Kenny nods, widens the door...

KENNY
I'll get your money.

INT. ST. PAUL'S CHURCH - DAY

As Matt drops one of the stacks of bills he got from Kenny into the POOR BOX. He starts for the door, pauses, goes and LIGHTS A CANDLE. He closes his eyes and says the name:

MATT
Estrellita Rivera.

And then he walks out of the Church.

EXT. SEVENTY-NINTH STREET - DAY

It's RAINING as Matt walks over to the curb where the Tempo was parked, bends down and picks up a shred of torn plastic from a bush. A piece of grey DUCT TAPE is still stuck to it.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

As Matt crosses to the booth where Kenny got his first call. He goes inside, takes out his notebook and writes down the number.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - FLATBUSH - DAY

As Matt does the same thing at the second booth. As he's writing down the number, THE PHONE RINGS and Matt looks at it, then picks up.

MATT
Hello?

But the line goes dead. Matt then steps out of the booth, looks at the neighborhood around it. Looks at the storefronts, at the houses up the side street. A group of kids play in the street.

EXT. D'AGOSTINO'S - DAY

As Matt talks to the BAG BOY who helped Carrie out to her car.

BAG BOY

She tipped me two dollars, which is twice what anybody else tips, if they even tip at all.

MATT

You said something about a van?

BAG BOY

Yeah, it was parked right there. Two guys got out of it...

QUICK CUT TO: THAT DAY

A BLURRY IMAGE of two guys in coveralls, some kind of uniform, dark sunglasses looking at a clipboard. The men are moving in FAST MOTION as they get out of the van, then the images SLOW as they stop and look at Carrie...

BAG BOY (VO)

I remember they checked her out pretty good. They were both in some kind of uniform.

CUT BACK TO: MATT & THE BAG BOY

As The Bag Boy points...

BAG BOY

They pulled out after Mrs. Kristo, right in front of a Mercedes, almost got hit.

CUT TO: THE STREET

As we see the van pull out in FAST MOTION, then FREEZE as we hear A HORN honk and a Mercedes stops inches from the van.

CUT BACK TO: MATT & THE BAG BOY

MATT

You remember what the van looked like?

BAG BOY

Yeah, it was light blue...

QUICK CUT TO: A GARAGE - RIGHT NOW

Dark, but we can see the two guys in here, each with a SPRAY GUN, PAINTING THE VAN. WHITE.

BAG BOY (VO)

Definitely light blue.

INT. D'AGOSTINO'S - DAY

As Matt shows Carrie's photograph to a CASHIER.

CASHIER

I could tell she was a good cook, which is rare for young women her age. Nothing frozen her cart, only the very freshest ingredients. Anyway, she asked me if we had any foul madamas and I sent her over to the Arabian Gourmet.

EXT. ARABIAN GOURMET - DAY

As Matt talks to a man wearing a nametag that says "ROLAND" and below that "MANAGER."

MANAGER

The van was parked across the street. I thought they were making a delivery...

INT. ARABIAN GOURMET - DAY

As Matt talks to a TEENAGE CASHIER...

TEENAGE CASHIER

I don't remember a van, but I remember Mrs. Youness came in with some story about three people robbing the place...

INT. SMALL HOUSE - DAY

As Matt sits at a table, some sort of STICKY DESSERT in front of him. He's talking with MRS. YOUNESS, a woman in her eighties. She speaks in Arabic. A NEIGHBOR translates...

NEIGHBOR

She saw two men and a woman run across the street away from the store...

EXT. ARABIAN GOURMET - (FLASHING BACK)

As we see two BLURRED FIGURES rush Carrie Kristo across the street...

NEIGHBOR (VO)

...and leap into a truck.

As they all pile into the back of the van and the van blows right by CAMERA... the FRAME REVEALING MRS. YOUNESS watching it squeal around the corner...

NEIGHBOR (VO)

She thought they had just robbed the store...

EXT. D'AGOSTINO'S - DAY

As Matt scribbles in his notebook...

BAG BOY

I think it had the name of some TV repair place on the side. Two initials like...

INT. GARAGE - DAY

As the two men paint over the stencil on the side of the truck.

BAG BOY (VO)
B & R TV...

EXT. ARABIAN GOURMET

As the manager closes his eyes...

MANAGER
R & L Stereo.

EXT. THE SMALL HOUSE - DAY

As Mrs. Youness looks right at Matt, says in English...

OLD WOMAN
B & A Appliance.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

As the two men step back and admire the freshly painted truck. It's now PAINTED WHITE with no initials anywhere. One man is very TALL, the other shorter, ROUNDER. They stand with their backs to us. We see no faces just yet.

EXT. MEETING ROOM - A WINDOW - NIGHT

Looking in through a rain-streaked window. An AA MEETING. Matt sits at a roundtable. We hear HIS VOICE just over the rain...

MATT
...I chased them out into the street,
shot one dead, caught the other one in
the leg. He'll never walk right.

He pauses, looks at his rapt audience, then...

MATT
I quit drinking that day. It just wasn't
as much fun after that.

And, as usual, right on cue, they all laugh. We SLOWLY BEGIN TO BOOM DOWN TO...

THE ENTRANCE

As Matt comes out of the building, starts up the street. We see A LITTLE GIRL, no coat on, her hair in her face, standing in the rain. The hood falls, and we see THE PURPLE RIBBON in her hair. Matt watches as she disappears around the corner.

INT. A DARK KITCHEN - NIGHT

Same as it was in the early seventies. A formica table with red-aluminum and vinyl covered chairs. The short, round man prepares a meal. He chops vegetables while a pot simmers on the stove. No mess anywhere. Every surface, though old, is very clean.

A rag hangs over his shoulder. And as he cooks, he fastidiously cleans up after himself. A small drip on the counter, out comes the rag.

Behind him, we see into a dark den, the flicker of a television, the back of a very tall man's head watching Sally Jessie Raphael.

The Round Man grabs a stack of old FILES from the countertop and sits down at the table, hastily wiping some spilt milk with the rag, frowning at the back of the tall man's head as he does so. Then, as he opens a file from the stack, we catch a glimpse of three letters stamped onto the front cover: D.E.A.

A TIMER SOUNDS and the Round Man calls into the other room:

ROUND MAN

Dinner.

And we then FADE OUT.

FADE IN: THE PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

As Matt, the rain beating against the window beside him, sits at a microfiche station scrolling through old editions of the New York Times. He stops at a KIDNAP STORY, scans it, and moves on.

We hear SOMEONE COUGHING OS. Matt stops to read another story. We hear MORE COUGHING OS and now Matt peers over the top of the microfiche machine at...

A NEARBY TABLE

Where someone, back to us/Matt, bundled up in a down jacket leans over a piece of paper, intensely working on something. Dozens of pages are scattered about the table. The person COUGHS, resumes his frantic scribbling...

Matt continues going through the back issues when now we hear A COUGHING FIT and Matt looks over the microfiche machine, then watches as the person in the down jacket walks out of the room. The PAGES REMAIN ALL OVER THE TABLE.

Matt watches the coughing person go into one of the restrooms, then, his curiosity getting the best of him, gets up and walks over to the table.

Matt looks down at dozens of cartoon-like drawings of some sort of mythical figure in a white cape. In the unfinished drawing, the figure is fighting another muscular figure in a red cape, a half moon or sickle-like shape on his chest.

We hear COUGHING OS and Matt looks to where we see the down-hood of the coughing person now rising above the microfiche machine.

Matt walks back over to the machine, taps the person sitting in Matt's chair on the shoulder. A BOY -- black, fifteen, skinny, intelligent eyes -- turns and looks Matt up and down.

BOY

You five-oh?

MATT

Am I what?

BOY

Cop.

MATT

Nope.

BOY

You sure? You got that look.

MATT

I work private.

BOY

Yeah? Like Sam Spade?

MATT

Yeah, just like him. You think I could have my seat back, partner?

The kid buried inside the down jacket, shrugs and gets up.

BOY

What I'm sayin', I've read about him. And Marlowe, too. I read all them guys.

MATT

You spend much time in here?

BOY

When it rains. I like the sound it makes, you know?

VOICE

TJ, you cannot sleep in here tonight.

Matt and TJ both look over at the LIBRARIAN, a heavysset woman, who now wags a finger at the kid.

BOY/TJ

(glances at Matt)
I wasn't gonna.

LIBRARIAN

You hid in here last night, I know you did, because Mr. Keyser says you left a God awful mess in the men's room, not to mention the mess you left right over there. Now, I want you to go and--

MATT

He'll clean it up. Later. Okay? Right now he's helping me out with something.

She looks at Matt. He smiles pleasantly. She looks at the two of them, then moves on. Matt looks at the kid.

MATT

TJ? That short for something?

TJ

Yeah, it's short for TJ.

Matt looks at the kid, considers him a moment, then holds out his hand.

MATT

Matt.

TJ

Short for Matthew.

(sits down)

What am I helping you with, Matthew?

EXT. BRIGHTON BEACH STREET - DAY

POURING RAIN NOW. An attractive WOMAN, in her early thirties, driving a big black Mercedes, stops for a red light.

INT. MERCEDES - SAME

RAIN POUNDS the roof of the car as the woman adjusts the rearview mirror to check her lipstick.

IN THE MIRROR, we see THE GRILL OF THE WHITE VAN pull up to the light behind her. On the seat beside her, a DOG, a Rhodesian Ridgeback, raises its head and looks out. Smelling something...

TJ (VO)

These guys we looking for, they be like
real seven-thirty, or just like thugs?

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

As TJ now sits at the microfiche machine beside Matt scrolling away. TJ's jacket is now draped over the back of the chair. He wears a skullie on his head and a wuwear T-shirt, an animated character on the front that looks a lot like TJ.

MATT

Like real what?

TJ

Seven-thirty. Time they give out the
meds in the mental ward.

MATT

Ah, right. Seven-thirty. From the Latin
mental. Yeah, these guys are real seven-
thirty.

Matt stops at an article. A photo of A YOUNG WOMAN looking back at him from a newspaper article. TJ leans over and looks at it.

MATT

Marie Gotteskind--

TJ

Child of God.

(off Matt's look)

Gotteskind. Means Child of God.

(then)

It's German.

INSERT - NEWS PHOTOS

As Matt scrolls through, we see images of a PUBLIC GOLF COURSE, COPS everywhere. A BODY IN THE ROUGH COVERED WITH A SHEET, A LENGTH OF CRIME SCENE TAPE STRETCHED BETWEEN TREES.

MATT (OS)

Her body was found dumped on a golf course.

QUICK CUT TO: THE GOLF COURSE (NIGHT)

As A BODY in a PLASTIC BAG is thrown down a hill toward CAMERA:

BACK TO THE LIBRARY

As Matt scrolls down further to a later article...

MATT

Witness says Gotteskind was grabbed off the street by two men in a van...

EXT. STREET - DAY

As MARIE GOTTESKIND starts to cross the street, we hear

VOICE

Excuse me, Miss?

She looks to where we see A FIGURE IN A VAN, the glare of the sun washing out his features as he holds something SHINY in his hand.

BACK TO THE LIBRARY

As Matt stares at the photograph. He takes out a PHOTO OF CARRIE KRISTO and holds it up to the screen. The TWO WOMEN LOOK ALIKE.

MATT

Keep looking. Not just kidnappings. But for any body dumped in a public place...

INT. THE WHITE VAN - DAY

Two dark figures inside. We can hear the staticky voices from A POLICE RADIO as they follow the Mercedes. The smaller, ROUNDER MAN in the passenger seat has a worn FILE open in his lap...

INSERT - FILE

A long lens surveillance shot of a black Mercedes. The same tag number as the car in front of them.

ROUND MAN

It's raining, it's pouring...

He HUMS the rest of it as he now flips through the file. The TALL MAN behind the wheel snaps his gum, blows a bubble. The ROUND MAN frowns at him, turns back to...

THE FILE

Where we see pictures of a BALD MAN coming out of a bar with several other men in what looks like RUSSIA. And then...

A blurry photograph of a WOMAN, presumably the one in the car in front of us, pregnant, standing beside the Russian Man, holding his hand. The round man looks up from the file at the car in front of them.

ROUND MAN
*...bumped his head against the bed and
 couldn't get up in the morning...*

He clutches the file to his chest. We see the DEA INSIGNIA on the front.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

As Matt and TJ scroll along. Suddenly, TJ stops. Sits up.

TJ
*When you say public place, exactly what
 kinda public place do you mean?*

MATT
Golf courses, parks, playgrounds...

TJ
What about cemeteries?

Matt looks over at the screen...

INSERT - SCREEN

A black & white photograph of the huge, stone entrance to GREENWOOD CEMETERY. Several NYPD blue & whites parked out front.

TJ
*Yesterday, the body of Leila Alvarez, a
 twenty-year-old Interior Design major at
 Brooklyn College was found at Green-Wood
 Cemetery.*

QUICK CUT TO: THE CEMETERY

The GROUNDSKEEPER, his back to us, wades out into the water with a RAKE, reaching for the body...

TJ (VO)
*Alvarez had been missing three days when
 she was found by James Loogan, a
 groundskeeper at Green-Wood...*

QUICK CUT TO: A STREET

As LEILA ALVAREZ gets into the back of a van and the DOOR SLAMS and we see A MAN'S FACE in the window of one of the doors.

TJ (VO)
*Witnesses say she was last seen getting
 into a grey van with three men...*

BACK TO THE LIBRARY

As Matt leans over and looks at the screen where we see a photo of a PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN smiling back at us.

MATT
*Earlier, she'd met her fiancée, Reuben
 Quintana for lunch on Prospect Avenue...*

TJ
Says she was "subjected to sexual assault and sexual mutilation." What's that mean exactly, "Sexual Mutilation?"

MATT
Means the cops didn't want the paper to say exactly what happened.

Matt looks at A PHOTOGRAPH OF A GROUP OF COPS. We PUSH IN ON ONE OF THEM.

TJ
So what, I get a badge now?

MATT
Yeah, and a decoder ring.

TJ
Cool.

TJ pulls a bottle of WATER from his backpack and takes a long drink.

MATT
You hungry? I know a place not too far, makes a good hamburger.

TJ
I don't eat meat.

MATT
Oh. Okay.

TJ watches as Matt prints the article, gets his things together.

TJ
What I'm sayin, I don't care none about cows, you know, I just care about what I put inside my body. No meat. No soda. No Pringles. None a that shit.

Matt nods, grabs his coat, starts to go.

TJ
But... I was thinking about maybe getting a little eat on myself.

MATT
Cool. So we can both get our... eat on's together.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE - BRIGHTON BEACH - NIGHT

As the Mercedes pulls into the driveway. The woman gets out of the car, grabs a couple of grocery bags, and then leads the big DOG to the front door.

As she goes inside, THE WHITE VAN cruises past the house to the end of the block, then makes a u-turn and doubles back, parking across the street. A WHITE FACE appears in the driver's window.

INT. VAN - SAME

As the two men watch the house. We hear the crackle of the police radio under the Round Man's constant HUMMING.

The Tall Man behind the wheel works on a LOOP of PIANO WIRE. He slips a wood handle on the bottom, looks through the loop at the house... his face is framed by it...

He watches the woman THROUGH THE LOOP as she comes back out and grabs a last grocery bag. He then pulls on the wood handle and the loop CONSTRICTS TO NOTHING.

INT. "THE FLAME" COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

As Matt, a cup of coffee in front of him, watches TJ wolf down a plate of pancakes. He notices TJ's worn out Timberland boots. His ragged clothing underneath the jacket.

MATT

Where do you sleep when you can't sleep in the library?

TJ

I got a bed over at Covenant House. This shelter over at Times Square.

MATT

What happened to your parents?

TJ

(beat)
You don't gotta feel sorry for me.

MATT

I don't.

TJ

Good.

TJ puts down his fork, sits back in the booth now.

TJ

You could hire me, though, make me your partner.

MATT

I don't think so.

TJ

Why not? You don't think I got what it takes, be a good detective?

MATT

I'm sure you do. I'm just not the partner type.

TJ nods, goes back to eating, pauses...

TJ

What does it take to be a good detective?

MATT
A strong bladder.

TJ
Come on.

MATT
I don't know what it takes. Takes a lot of things. Instincts. Patience. Blind luck mostly.

TJ
And a good name. One with real flavor. Like Sam Spade or Phillip Marlowe.

MATT
What's wrong with the name you got?

TJ waves him off, looks out the window a moment, then...

TJ
I'm thinking something like maybe...
Daunte Culpepper.

MATT
Quarterback for Minnesota?

TJ
It's a good detective name, but a lame-ass name for a guy plays football.

MATT
Daunte Culpepper.

TJ
Daunte Culpepper. Private Eye.
(then)
Yeah, I'm feelin' that.

TJ drinks down a glass of water, signals to the waitress for more.

WAITRESS
Sure you don't want a soda or something, honey?

TJ looks up at her.

TJ
I know you'd just love to get a young black man like me to drink one of your sperm killer sodas. But no thank you, ma'am. I'll stick with water.

TJ sees Matt looking at him and leans across the table.

TJ
They sell cheap sodas to low income people, got these chemicals in 'em. Sterilize you. I only drink water. Gallon a day. Keep myself hydrated.

MATT
And you don't eat meat.

TJ
You got a problem with that?

MATT
Not at all. Woman I see's a vegetarian.

TJ
What's the matter?

Matt looks at him.

TJ
Something about the way you said "Woman."
Like there's a problem.

Matt can't believe this kid. TJ leans forward waiting.

MATT
I'm thinking about breaking it off.

TJ
What's wrong, she a clucker?

MATT
A what?

TJ
A chicken. Only feels cats give her nice
rings and shit. You ain't bling blingin,
you ain't nothin'.

MATT
(beat)
Can't you fucking speak English?

TJ
I hit a nerve. Sorry.

Matt throws some cash on the table, gets up.

MATT
Nice meeting you, TJ.

TJ nods, watches Matt get up. He calls after him.

TJ
You need me, son'

EXT. BUILDING - UPPER EAST SIDE - NIGHT

As Matt crosses the street to the building. The DOORMAN comes over, unlocks and opens the door for Matt. He looks anxious...

DOORMAN
Matt-- She expecting you?

MATT
She home?

DOORMAN
Uh, yeah, but...

Matt walks past the doorman to...

THE ELEVATOR

Where a WELL-DRESSED MAN, waits with his umbrella. Matt gets on, realizes how soaked he is, and nods to the guy.

MATT
Helluva night.

The Man smiles pleasantly. The DOORMAN cuts an anxious look at Matt, then says extra loudly to the man...

DOORMAN
Eight you said?

MAN
Yes, please.

The doorman cuts another look at Matt, then pushes that button. Only that button. The two men are going to the same floor.

INT. EIGHTH FLOOR VESTIBULE

As the doors open and Matt watches the well-dressed man step off and walk to a door and knock.

MATT
You know what, Hugh, I forgot my--

DOORMAN
Yeah.

The doorman hits the lobby button as we hear...

WOMAN'S VOICE (OS)
Hi.

MAN (OS)
Elaine. Sorry I'm late.

ELAINE (OS)
No worries....

A WOMAN, in her thirties, a knockout wearing only a bathrobe sticks her head out the door as the ELEVATOR DOORS CLOSE.

INT. LOBBY - SAME

As Matt exits the elevator without a word to the doorman, and steps out into the wet night.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE - BRIGHTON BEACH - EARLY MORNING

The MERCEDES is parked out front. The ground is wet from the rain the night before. We see the WOMAN come out in her coat, start down the walk...

WIDEN TO REVEAL: OUR POV IS INSIDE THE VAN

As the two Mutt 'n' Jeff figures in the front seat watch her. We can see their breath as the shorter consults the DEA FILE in his lap. Looks at the PHOTOGRAPH of the bald man in Russia holding hands with the woman, HER FACE BLURRED...

The Round Man looks up, watches as the Woman bends down to pick up the paper, then turns and goes back into the house. He sees that she wears WHITE TENNIS SHOES. He reaches for the door...

ROUND MAN
I'll be right back.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE - SAME

As the man moves through the shadows at the side of the house. He approaches a WINDOW, peers inside.

THE ROUND MAN'S POV - INSIDE THE HOUSE

A BALD MAN sits down at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee. It's the "Russian Man" from the file. A DOG lies at his feet.

In comes the woman now who hands the newspaper to the man who nods, then takes off her coat and we see she wears A NURSES UNIFORM beneath it. She moves off down the hall, her white tennis shoes squeaking on the wood floor...

EXT. TOWNHOUSE BRIGHTON BEACH - SAME

The Round Man climbs atop a meter, wipes the rain away and peers in through another window at...

A BEDROOM

Where we see ANOTHER WOMAN lying in the bed, her long hair fanned on the pillow, her arms limp at her sides. She stares blankly at the ceiling.

THIS is the woman from the file, the one the Russian Man was holding hands with.

And now the Nurse comes into this room, puts some eye drops into the prone woman's eyes, then sets about fluffing the pillows...

INT. VAN - MORNING

As the Round Man comes in, shuts the door, sits there a moment. He looks at the file, at the woman with the man in Moscow. He chuckles.

ROUND MAN
I wonder, you think he'd pay as much for the nurse?

TALL MAN
Nurse? What're you talking about?

ROUND MAN
It seems we've made a mistake.
(closes the file)
Let's go.

The Tall Man starts the engine. The Round Man shakes his head, then watches as the front door opens again we see THE DOG come out attached to an extension leash. He starts down the steps. And now we see an arm holding the leash inside a RED SLICKER.

ROUND MAN

Wait--

And now we see A FIGURE in the hooded slicker holding the leash as the figure comes out after the dog and starts down the walk. And as the figure walks by the front of the van, the hood falls and we see the face of A FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD GIRL beneath it.

ROUND MAN

(smiles, sings)
Hey, there lonely girl... lonely girl,
don't you know this lonely boy loves
you...

EXT. MIDTOWN NORTH STATION HOUSE - DAY

As Matt walks up to the precinct house. We hear someone COUGH and he turns just as a FIGURE ducks into a doorway. Matt waits, then goes into the precinct house.

INT. MIDTOWN NORTH - DAY

As Det. JOE DURKIN, at his desk, in the middle of cleaning up a spilled Big Gulp, picks up a soggy report...

DURKIN

I reach for the phone, whole fuckin soda
goes right over.

MATT

Probably a sperm killer anyway.

DURKIN

(beat)
What brings you here, Matt?

Matt sits down watches as Durkin takes an old sweatshirt from the empty desk beside his and uses it to wipe up the soda.

MATT

I had the urge to commit a felony.

DURKIN

I know the feeling. There's hardly a day
goes by that I don't get the urge myself.
You got any particular felony in mind?

MATT

I was thinking of a Class D -- Something
like Two Hundred Point Zero Zero of the
Criminal Code.

DURKIN

Bribery in the third degree.

MATT

That's the one.

DURKIN
You sure you wouldn't prefer to violate
Section Two Hundred Point Zero Three?

MATT
What's that?

DURKIN
Bribery in the second degree. It's the
same as your Class D, only for Bribery
two the gift you confer's in excess of
ten thousand dollars.

Matt drops a few bills into Durkin's wastebasket.

MATT
I think class D is my limit.

DURKIN
(kicks the basket under the
desk)
I was afraid of that.

MATT
Leila Alvarez.

Durkin looks at him. His smile fades. He knows the name.

MATT
Brooklyn Homicide caught it, but Alvarez
grew up in Midtown. I thought somebody
around here might've done background.

DURKIN
What gave you that idea?

Matt then unfolds a xerox photo of the CEMETERY CRIME SCENE. We
see now that the cop in the background is Durkin. Matt's drawn a
MOUSTACHE AND BEARD on Durkin's face. Durkin nods.

DURKIN
It's an improvement.

MATT
There was a case in Queens, little over a
year ago. Two men grabbed a woman named
Marie Gotteskind off Jamaica Avenue in
Woodhaven and left her on a Golf Course
in Forest Park.

DURKIN
And you've got reason to think it was the
same people did both women?

MATT
Let's just say that I have reason to
believe that whoever did Gotteskind
didn't stop at one.

Durkin tosses the sweatshirt, sits back, considers Matt a moment.

DURKIN
What's your interest in this?

MATT
I can't say.

DURKIN
Well, Jesus Christ, Matt. You want it
all flowing in one direction, don't you?

MATT
I have a client whose wife got grabbed
off the street by a couple of guys in a
van.

DURKIN
He report it?

MATT
No.

DURKIN
Why not?

MATT
(beat)
He's in the country illegally.

DURKIN
So what? Half the city's in the country
illegally.

Matt doesn't say anything. Durkin studies Matt a moment, sighs.

DURKIN
The wife come back dead?

MATT
Among other things.

DURKIN
(beat)
Gimme a day.

EXT. FOURTH AVENUE - BROOKLYN - DAY

As Matt comes up from the subway, starts up Twenty-fifth Street.
The sky is greying over, threatening rain.

EXT. GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY - DAY

As Matt walks up the driveway, through the huge iron and stone
gates. The place has an odd, yet imposing majesty that only an
old graveyard can provide.

Matt stands at the top of one of the hills, looking over the wall
at the Statue of Liberty beyond. Just as we did in our opening
shot. He looks down at the small lake at the base of the hill,
surrounded by crypts and markers. A GROUNDKEEPER rides a power
mower around the perimeter...

ON THE GROUNDSKEEPER

As he leans to this side then that side as he steers the mower in and around the markers when he sees Matt standing in his way and stops the mower. He's a stocky man with ruddy complexion.

MATT
James Loogan?

GROUNDKEEPER/LOOGAN
Yes?

MATT
You're the gardener here?

LOOGAN
I'm the *Groundskeeper*, can I help you?

MATT
I'm Matthew Scudder. I spoke with your boss, he said you might be able to tell me something about Leila Alvarez?

LOOGAN
Oh...

Uncomfortable, the guy takes off his cap, rubs his scalp with it as he scans the darkening horizon.

LOOGAN
I don't have a lot of time. I'd kinda like to get the mowing done before the rain starts.

MATT
You found the body?

LOOGAN
Wasn't much of a body.

MATT
How do you mean?

He puts his hat back on and looks out at the lake.

LOOGAN
It was the bird, caught my attention. The pigeon. I keep a coop on my roof, and this was a gray. And it was alone, which is unusual on account they usually-

MATT
Mr. Loogan--

LOOGAN
She was face down. In the water.

He glances at Matt. Takes a breath.

LOOGAN
She was floating right out there...

He points to the water and we...

CUT TO: OUR OPENING SHOT

Of the corpse floating in the middle of the lake, the pigeon bathing on the head.

LOOGAN

First, I thought it was a tree branch...

And now we see Loogan wading into the water with a rake. As he reaches for the body, the PIGEON takes flight and Loogan falls back with the shock of recognition as we then...

CUT BACK TO: THE PRESENT

As Matt tries to picture it...

LOOGAN

She was uh, pretty hard to look at. They had to be real careful moving her.

MATT

Why's that?

LOOGAN

There wasn't much holding her together.

The guy looks at Matt, then at the water, as if the body was still floating out there.

LOOGAN

Both her feet were gone. And they--

MATT

And they what?

The guy turns away.

LOOGAN

Jesus, I'm sorry, but I haven't thought about her for a long time. Thanks for bringing it all up again.

MATT

They did something else to her, didn't they?

LOOGAN

I really can't help you. I'm sorry.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BROOKLYN - DAY

As a MAN, Latino, handsome, in sweats stops at the foot of the stairs, catching his breath. A tiny yip of a DOG tugs at a red extension leash. He turns and sees Matt leaning against a car. The dog goes for him.

MAN

Mookie-- no!

(then)

I help you with something?

The man reels in the leash as Matt comes off the car.

MATT
I'm looking for a guy lives here, Reuben Quintana.

MAN
(fey beyond belief)
I haven't seen him. But if I do, who should I say--

MATT
Matt Scudder. I'm a private investigator.

The man watches as Matt quickly opens and closes his wallet, making a big show out of showing him nothing. He smiles.

MAN
(normal voice)
Okay. I'm him. I'm Reuben.
(smiles)
I had you fooled, didn't I?

MATT
Yeah, I'm... very gullible that way.
Listen, Reuben, I was wondering if I could talk to you about your fiancée?

REUBEN
Claire? Is something wrong?

MATT
(beat, realizes)
I'm sorry. I guess I meant your... previous fiancée. Leila Alvarez?

REUBEN
Oh. Leila. Sure. Come on up.

INT. QUINTANA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Matt follows Reuben into the open studio, begins appraising the nice surroundings. A bed over in one corner. An open kitchen. He stops, looks at a little STONE WATERALL by the window.

REUBEN
I get you something to drink?

MATT
No, thank you.

Reuben grabs a bottle of Evian from the Subzero, takes a drink.

MATT
Must be nice, have the time to go for a jog in the middle of the day.

REUBEN
I'd rather be working.
(announcing)
I'm an actor.

MATT

Yeah, I thought you looked familiar.
Have I seen anything you've been in?

REUBEN

I did a Stetson commercial, ran during
the Stanley Cup finals a few years ago.

MATT

Huh. Missed that one.

Matt watches as Reuben fills the dog's water dish from the bottle
of Evian.

MATT

Look, I apologize if I cover the same
ground the homicide guys did, but I'd
like to hear your answers for myself.

REUBEN

I don't know that I can help you.

MATT

Leila went to Brooklyn College, is that
right? Studied decorating?

REUBEN

Interior Design.

MATT

Right. She ever talk to you about anyone
following her...

(Reuben shakes his head)
...harassing her at school?

REUBEN

No.

MATT

Nothing strange or out of the ordinary
happened right before she was killed?

REUBEN

No.

MATT

You sure? You answered that pretty
quick.

REUBEN

I'm sure.

MATT

You saw them grab her?

REUBEN

I was at this Coffee place on Prospect.
She used to meet me there every day...

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

As Reuben looks out the window as LEILA ALVAREZ starts to cross
the street. A GREY VAN pulls to the curb...

REUBEN (VO)

I look out the window, see her start to cross the street when two guys get out of a van and say something to her.

MATT (VO)

What'd they look like?

REUBEN

I couldn't really see their faces. They were holding clipboards. One was really tall. Like taller than the van...

They say something to Leila and she walks around to the back of the van with them. Reuben bolts for the door...

REUBEN (VO)

Next thing I know, she's getting into the back of the van with them...

EXT. COFFEE HOUSE - DAY

As Reuben shoves his way through several customers trying to get into the coffee house. He makes it out the door onto the street just as the van rounds the corner. He stands there horrified...

REUBEN (VO)

That was the last time I saw her.

INT. REUBEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Matt nods, turns and looks around the apartment, takes in the remodeled kitchen, the expensive appliances.

MATT

You've had some work done on the place.

REUBEN

Uh-huh.

MATT

First class job.

REUBEN

Thank you.

MATT

Leila do the... design?

REUBEN

Yeah. She did the drawings for the kitchen, the bathroom in the back.

MATT

Must've cost at least, what, fifty/sixty grand, do it right.

REUBEN

I guess. About that. Little more maybe.

Matt nods, smiles at Reuben.

MATT
You don't deal, do you, Reuben?

REUBEN
What?

MATT
You heard me.

REUBEN
You asking, am I drug dealer?

MATT
Unless you prefer *trafficker*. Or maybe
you wanna tell me you made the fifty G
pedaling cologne on ESPN.

REUBEN
I got a trust fund.

MATT
From your rich family up in the Bronx.

REUBEN
My mother won a lawsuit a few years ago.

MATT
Hey, come on, Reuben, not even the dog's
dumb enough to buy that one.

The guy looks pissed, but doesn't have quite what he needs to
take a swing at Matt. Matt knows this, stays where he is.

MATT
Look, I don't care one way or the other
how you earn your living. But the guys
who grabbed Leila? They might have.

REUBEN
(beat)
How do you mean?

MATT
They asked for money, didn't they?

Reuben stands there for a while. He finally looks away.

MATT
How much?

REUBEN
(finally)
A hundred grand.

MATT
You pay them?

Reuben, shakes his head, looks away.

MATT
Why not?

REUBEN
You kidding, I didn't have a nickel. It was all in this fucking kitchen Leila had to have.

MATT
But they thought you had it?

REUBEN
Look, I don't deal any more, and when I did, I only sold to my friends. So how these guys got onto me I couldn't say.

EXT. PRIVATE SCHOOL - SLOW MOTION - DAY

As a group of GIRLS in uniform exit the school. We pick out one of them as she waves to her friends and walks to the curb, where she gets into the Mercedes with the bald Russian Man.

MATT (VO)
They've done it before.

REVEAL - WE'RE INSIDE THE VAN

The two shadowed figures watching from a side street. As the car passes the windshield, the DOG sticks it's head out the back.

MATT (VO)
And they're gonna do it again.

EXT. KENNY KRISTO'S BACKYARD - DAY

Matt watches while Kenny works in the garden behind the house. Kenny doesn't know what he's doing.

MATT
Before they do, I think you should call up anybody you know in the business and tell them what happened to Carrie.

KENNY
What for?

MATT
Dealers -- excuse me-- traffickers make good targets. They're not gonna call the cops and they've got lots of cash on hand.

Kenny begins ripping at the greenery.

KENNY
Carrie loved to work out here, grew a lot of the stuff she cooked with.
(then)
I should just pave over all of it. Dig a fuckin jacuzzi or something.

MATT
What's wrong, Kenny?

KENNY

(beat)

I always figured another couple of years,
a few more deals, a little more money in
the offshore account.

He sits down in a lawn chair, shakes his head.

KENNY

I got almost five million socked away. I
could've given those fucks what they
wanted. But I didn't. I didn't wanna
touch my fuckin nest egg.

MATT

She was already dead. And if she wasn't,
they would have killed her anyway.

(turns to go)

Call your friends...

KENNY

Peter stole something from me.

(Matt pauses)

Some product came in couple days ago.
Coke, this time. I got a guy who--

He stops, knows Matt doesn't want to hear this.

KENNY

Anyway, how long's Peter been clean, a
year?

MATT

Something like that.

KENNY

You think he could make it that long, he
could make it forever.

MATT

A day's the most anyone can make it.

EXT. MATT'S HOTEL - NIGHT

An AMBULANCE is parked out front. Matt walks past the building,
then ducks into an alley. A moment later, a HOODED FIGURE WALKS
past. Matt grabs the figure by the hood and yanks him into the
alley, revealing TJ's startled face buried in the jacket...

TJ

Yo, Matt, what the dealie?

MATT

Hello, TJ.

TJ

I been shadowing you.

MATT

No kidding.

He makes a big show of taking out a notebook, one just like
Matt's, and starting to read:

TJ
I followed subject back from dinner to a meeting at some church, then back to a shitty ass hotel on 57th.

TJ glances at the hotel, then continues.

TJ
Subject came out of said shitty ass hotel one hour later, then walked around for an hour or so, then went to another meeting and then another church where he sat in the back for six minutes, then went up and lit a candle and said the name--

MATT
I know where I was, TJ.

TJ
You made me, didn't you?

MATT
I made you back in Brooklyn.

TJ nods, puts the notebook back in his backpack, several of his DRAWINGS scatter and TJ goes after them.

TJ
Shit...

As he gathers them all up, Matt notices the HANDLE OF A GUN sticking out of the backpack. TJ looks at Matt.

TJ
This book I'm reading says a foot tall's hard to do on account of they're so easy to spot.

MATT
That they are.

TJ
They say it's better to use three guys, two alternating behind, another guy on the other side of the street.

MATT
Be good, you had three guys.

TJ
You go to a lot of those meetings.
(then)
You used to drink some, huh?

MATT
Only on days ended with a "y".

TJ nods, then looks at Matt.

TJ
Who's Estrellita Rivera?

MATT

None of your business. Tell me, TJ, what have you got there in your backpack?

TJ looks at his pack....

TJ

Just my notebook, some twizzlers, unless you talking about my pencils...

MATT

No, I'm talking about the black Beretta 9 with the taped grip you got tucked beside your water bottle.

TJ looks at Matt, moves back into the doorway, then reaches into his backpack and pulls out a black 9mm.

TJ

You mean, this? My new jammy?

Matt looks at the boy now casually holding the gun in his hand like it's a frisbee. Matt keeps his voice calm, leads TJ over between two buildings. He looks at the pistol, nods...

MATT

That's a nice one. What're you planning on doing with it?

TJ

It's for protection. I'm gonna be a detective, I'm gonna need a piece.

MATT

Uh huh, where'd you get it?

TJ

I'm taking a nap in this alley, I hear some footsteps, see this kid I know works as a lookout for some ballers, I see him drop this bag in a dumpster, then split.

MATT

You stole someone's stash?

TJ

I left the money and the rock where it was.

MATT

They're gonna come back for the piece.

TJ

Nah, they in the wind, Matthew. Cops clipped their ass.

TJ turns away to cough and Matt considers him a moment, then...

MATT

You know how to use that?

TJ
(gimme a break)
Shit...

MATT
Point it at me, like your gonna shoot me.
TJ looks at him.

MATT
Go ahead.

TJ hesitates, then holds it up, points it at Matt, but keeps it sideways the way the gangbangers all think is so cool.

MATT
That the way you hold a gun?

TJ
That's the way I hold it, yeah.

MATT
You know how to jack the clip? Empty it?
Clean it?

Matt reaches out and quick as a flash takes the gun from him and pops the clip, snicks out the bullets one by one into his palm.

MATT
But the gun's still not empty. You know
that, right? You know there's still a
round left in the chamber here...

He opens the breach and shows TJ the last round. No, TJ didn't know that. Matt then hands him the clip and the bullets.

MATT
Now put it back together.

TJ takes the gun, puts the few bullets back in the clip, replaces the clip, looks up at Matt and smiles.

MATT
Caress it. Rub it. Like it's part of
you.

TJ rubs the gun, nods, likes the feel.

MATT
Feels good, doesn't it?

TJ
It's all oily...

MATT
Turn off the safety.
(TJ does)
Now cock it...

TJ racks the slide, looks up at Matt.

MATT
Now put it to your temple and pull the
fucking trigger.

TJ
What?

MATT
You heard me. Shoot yourself in the
head.

TJ just stands there looking at Matt.

MATT
Might as well get it over with now,
because you walk around with a gun,
sooner or later, it's gonna happen
anyway.

And now TJ stares at the gun in his hand.

MATT
No rewind. No going out for popcorn and
then coming back to the show. It's just
you with that gun in your hand, a stupid
look on your face and your hash all over
the wall.

TJ
You don't ever carry?

MATT
No... anybody's gonna shoot me, they're
gonna have to bring their own gun. You
take it easy now, TJ.

And with that, Matt turns and walks back to his hotel. TJ stands
there staring at the oily black Beretta in his hand.

INT. LOBBY - SAME

As Matt walks to the desk. Howie, the desk clerk, pulls down a
message.

HOWIE
Michael Scudder called.

He hands Matt a slip, looks at Matt.

HOWIE
Any relation?

Matt doesn't answer the moron, just stares at the slip. At his
son's name. We hear A CHIME as the elevator arrives, then...

VOICE
Coming through...

Matt turns as two AMBULANCE ATTENDANTS wheel an ELDERLY WOMAN off
the elevator. Howie shakes his head as they pass...

HOWIE
They're dropping like flies.

INT. MATT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Dark. Matt comes in, but doesn't turn the light on. He moves to the phone and dials.

WOMAN (PHONE)

Hello?

Matt just stands there in the dark. We see him looking at THE LITTLE GIRL WITH THE PURPLE RIBBON. She stands there on the other side of the room. Silent. Just looking at him.

WOMAN (PHONE)

Hello?

MATT

(turns away from her)

Yeah... Anita. It's me.

WOMAN/ANITA (PHONE)

Oh. Hi. Uh--

MATT

Mike called--

ANITA (PHONE)

Yes, I know.

MATT

Is he--

ANITA (PHONE)

I'll go get him.

MATT

Thanks.

We hear her set the phone down, then call for Matt's son. Matt waits, looks back to where the little girl still stands, silent.

MICHAEL (PHONE)

Hello?

MATT

(turns away)

Mike. How you doin'?

EXT. LONG ISLAND - NIGHT

As Matt walks through his old neighborhood....

MICHAEL (VO)

Good. Listen, you know the pancake place we used to go to?

MATT (VO)

Sure.

Matt enters A PANCAKE HOUSE...

MICHAEL (VO)

Can you meet me there in an hour?

INT. PANCAKE HOUSE - NIGHT

As Matt enters the near-empty diner, walks to the back where MICHAEL, his sixteen-year-old son sits in a booth. The kid wears a letter jacket, and sports a bandage on his forehead just above one eye.

MATT
Hey, Mike.

MICHAEL
It's Michael now.

MATT
Okay.

MICHAEL
You used to have a mustache.

MATT
Long gone.

MICHAEL
That's probably why I didn't recognize you, you know, the other day in the--

MATT
No problem.
(indicates the cut)
How's your head?

MICHAEL
It's fine. It's nothing. It was a stupid idea.

The WAITRESS appears and smiles at the two of them.

WAITRESS
Hi, guys.

MICHAEL
I'll have a coke, please.

MATT
You want anything else? A hamburger or something?

MICHAEL
No thanks.

MATT
(to the waitress)
Just coffee for me.

She moves off and Matt studies him a moment.

MATT
How's your brother?

MICHAEL
The same. A pain in the ass.

Matt nods, watches as the kid glances about the coffee shop.

MICHAEL
Mom thought we should talk. You know,
before I left.

MATT
Where you going?

MICHAEL
I got accepted at Tulane.

MATT
(beat)
You're kidding.

MICHAEL
Yeah, I got a scholarship.

MATT
Football?

MICHAEL
Baseball.

Matt nods, takes this in a moment, doesn't know what to say. The kid sits back as the waitress sets down the soda. Michael stares at the liquid a moment. Looks at Matt. Then...

MICHAEL
You know, I... don't ever remember you
being drunk.

MATT
(beat)
That's because I never was.
(then)
But I was always drinking.

MICHAEL
Scotch?

MATT
Bourbon mostly. With coffee.

MICHAEL
Coffee to speed things up. Bourbon to
slow them down.

MATT
Something like that, yeah.

MICHAEL
It was Vodka did it to me.

Matt pauses mid-sip, looks across the table at the kid.

MICHAEL
I'd pitch nine innings drunk off my ass
and no one would know.

Matt puts his cup down. Michael looks him in the eye.

MICHAEL

I've been going to meetings. A year now.
Mom's been wanting me to tell you...

Matt says nothing. Doesn't move. Doesn't blink.

MICHAEL

The thing with the car the other day... I
uh, I slipped.

MATT

It happens.

MICHAEL

I know. But now I'm going away to
fucking New Orleans.
(then, for the "f-word")
Sorry.

MATT

It's okay. And you'll be fine. They got
meetings down there, too.

The kid just nods. Matt considers him a moment, then...

MATT

You could call me.
(then)
If you wanted to.

The kid nods, keeps looking at him, smiles now.

MICHAEL

You remember the Blumes across the
street?

MATT

The old couple. Sure. Max... and what
was her name, Jane?

MICHAEL

Joy.

MATT

Joy. Right. What about them?

MICHAEL

Remember how you look in their windows,
they'd be sitting on the couch in front
of the TV, each one hooked up to their
own oxygen tank.

MATT

The truck came twice a week.

MICHAEL

Max finally died a couple years ago.

Matt nods, not all that sure where this is going, but enjoying
the reminiscing nonetheless; glad for his son's apparent effort
to reconnect. He doesn't want to jeopardize it, so he keeps his
mouth shut.

MICHAEL

Few weeks after that, I see Joy out in the garden. Working. Pushing a wheelbarrow. No oxygen tank. A month later she's going to Yoga class with Mom. A year later, she meets some guy and moves down to Ft. Lauderdale with him. We got a Christmas card, picture of her and the guy swimming with the fucking dolphins.

(then)

Sorry.

MATT

It's okay.

Matt turns, looks around the restaurant, suddenly aware of what Michael is trying to tell him. He turns to his son and smiles.

MATT

You're telling me you don't need me.

MICHAEL

I'm telling you maybe I never did. So maybe you don't have to feel so guilty about, you know, walking out.

MATT

You're letting me off the hook.

MICHAEL

Exactly.

MATT

Well. Uh... thanks.

Except that Matt doesn't feel so much left off the hook as cut off. The kid finishes his coke, then checks his watch...

MICHAEL

I promised Mom I'd be back by ten.

The kid slides out of the booth. Matt holds out his hand.

MATT

Good luck, Michael.

MICHAEL

(shakes it)

You too, Dad.

Matt watches the boy walk out of the restaurant and get into a minivan that's parked at the curb. And now Matt couldn't look more alone as he then watches his son carefully check over his shoulder before pulling away into the night. We then...

CUT TO BLACK

We hear the SQUEAK of A DOOR BEING OPENED and then DIM LIGHT spills into the back of what we now see is A VAN. A plastic-covered MATTRESS is shoved into the back. A STUN GUN is then tossed onto the mattress before the door is then slammed shut.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Where Matt sits on a bench with Durkin, a file open in his lap.

DURKIN
Gotteskind. What's that mean anyway, God is kind?

MATT
Child of God.

DURKIN
That's good, because God sure wasn't kind to Marie.

He hands Matt a photo...

INSERT - A CRIME SCENE PHOTO

A BODY, nude, half-hidden by bushes...

DURKIN (OS)
Report says that death came as a result of multiple stab wounds to the chest and abdomen, any several of which would have been fatal.

MATT

Stares at the photo...

DURKIN
There were traces of semen in her anus, her vagina and her mouth, as well as in one of the knife wounds, indicating two attackers. The thumb and forefinger of her left hand were severed, coroner found one digit inside her vagina, the other--

He stops, realizes A WOMAN is standing nearby with a stroller. She gives Durkin a look and moves on.

MATT
Reuben Quintanna said it was three guys in a van, took Leila.

DURKIN
Yeah, I know that, but it could've been an illusion. You know...

EXT. STREET - DAY

As two figures get in the back of the van with Leila.

DURKIN (VO)
He sees the two guys get in the back with Alvarez and then the van pulls away.

PULLING BACK

As now we see A MAN we can't make out behind the wheel...

MATT (VO)
Except that he saw a third guy behind the wheel.

REVEAL: REUBEN INSIDE THE COFFEE HOUSE

Getting up from the table....

DURKIN (VO)
From across the street, inside a crowded coffee house.

EXT. PARK - DAY

As Matt reaches for the file...

MATT
I'll go back and talk to him again.

Durkin shuts the file.

DURKIN
You know I can't sit on this. Not if it's a series... and that's what it's starting to look like.

MATT
Give me one week. And then I give you everything I have, make you look smart. Just like the old days.

DURKIN
I notice you didn't say good old days.

MATT
I don't remember them one way or the other.

DURKIN
Maybe you just don't remember them, period.

Durkin sits there a moment, then grabs the files and gets up.

DURKIN
Seventy-two hours. And then you turn over everything you have. To me.

MATT
Thanks, Joe.

DURKIN
Don't thank me.
(walking away)
We never had this conversation.

INT. REUBEN QUINTANA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Matt stands with Reuben in the middle of the apartment.

REUBEN
I know what I saw: There was a third guy behind the wheel.

Reuben grabs his car keys and a leather jacket.

MATT

They knew she was going to be walking by, which means they had to've been watching her for a while.

REUBEN

So?

MATT

So there's a chance you might've seen them before.

(looks at his notebook)

You said that you were meeting Leila at the coffee house; that you met her there every day.

REUBEN

Not every day. Just when she was at school. It was on her way home.

(checks his watch)

Look, I got an audition in an--

Matt looks at Reuben.

MATT

She walked home.

REUBEN

That's right.

MATT

From Brooklyn College?

REUBEN

Yes. Now if you don't mind--

MATT

What is that, about five, six miles from here? Leila must've been quite a walker.

Reuben looks at Matt. ◇ Closes his eyes. Tries to remain patient.

REUBEN

We weren't living here then on account of the remodel. We were staying in my other place over on Vaughan.

MATT

Your other place?

REUBEN

Yeah, I keep it as an office, place to go when I wanna cool out.

MATT

Where is it?

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - BROOKLYN - DAY

As Matt goes inside a more modest building than the other one.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

As Matt follows the LANDLADY in her bathrobe down the hall...

LANDLADY
I see everybody goes in and out. I would've remembered anybody strange hanging around. I certainly woulda remembered a guy seven feet tall...

She stops at a door. Looks back at him.

MATT
Can you open it up for me?
(smiles)
It's okay with Reuben.

LANDLADY
Reuben's a famous actor. I have to protect his privacy.

MATT
Reuben's a shitbag, deals crank. Probably out of this very apartment.

LANDLADY
(beat)
Who the hell are you again?

MATT
Private Investigator.

LANDLADY
Which gives you about as much legal authority as a mailman.

He looks at her. Understands. He takes out a twenty.

LANDLADY
Twenty bucks. Yippee.

He frowns, takes out another twenty. Then another.

LANDLADY
I'll get the key.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

As Matt walks through the one room mess. Clothes are strewn all about. The landlady takes a FLASK from her pocket, looks at it all with disgust.

LANDLADY
Fuckin animal. Lookit this mess...

He peers in at the bedroom. The blankets are pulled back off the bed. A can of whipping cream is on the floor. A porno cassette box is on the TV. Matt looks at it, shakes his head.

LANDLADY
Hey, Mannix? How much time you gonna need?

MATT
I'm almost done.

He looks out the window at the building across the way. AN OLD WOMAN rocks in a chair by the opposite window. Matt watches her, turns to go. We hear THUNDER and Matt glances up at the sky.

MATT
Thank--

He freezes. Stares up at the building across the way. Up at the roof. Where we can see...

A PIGEON COOP

Straight across from where Matt stands right now.

MATT
Oh, man...

EXT. BUILDING - SAME

It's raining again as Matt hurries down the steps, runs across the street to the other building.

INT. ENTRANCE HALLWAY - SAME

As Matt moves to the mailboxes, starts looking at them. He sees the name LOOGAN on one. Just as we see James Loogan himself coming up the outside steps. Matt senses something, looks over, quickly crouches behind the stairs just as...

Loogan enters the building, goes to his mailbox. Matt doesn't move, hears the MAILBOX CLOSE, sees LOOGAN'S BOOTS pass inches from his face. Matt waits a moment, then stands, looks up the stairs, LOOGAN'S FOOTSTEPS echoing in the stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL - SAME

As Matt climbs the stairs, stops at a floor...

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

As Matt moves to an apartment door and listens. We hear MUFFLED VOICES, James' and an OLDER WOMAN'S along with the television. Matt then walks back to the stairwell and starts UP...

EXT. ROOF - DAY

As Matt comes out of the stairwell onto the roof. He walks to the COOP and stares inside, a dozen birds stupidly staring back at him.

He moves to the edge of the roof, looks down at the apartment building across the way, the height advantage providing an A-1 view down into Reuben Quintana's place. He watches Reuben, on the phone now, pace back and forth.

Matt turns, looks around, sees A SHED on the far side of the roof. Matt walks over to it and sees the door is PADLOCKED. Matt gives a shove, rips the latch from the rotted wood, and opens the door.

INT. SHED - SAME

As Matt stands in the doorway, RAIN PELTS THE METAL ROOF. He looks at the bags of BIRDSEED, some TOOLS, and some OLD BOOKS that sit on top of a sagging COT. Matt examines the books, all of them PSYCHOLOGY TEXTBOOKS.

A CARD TABLE is set up in a corner with a folding chair. AN OLD TYPEWRITER sits on the table. Matt rolls the sheet of paper out of it and reads:

MATT

...he carried her through the field, the dandelions and cattails still wet with the morning dew, and set her down by a stream, whispering through the strands of her fine, yellow hair, "You're safe now. You're safe."

(then)

All right...

Matt turns and moves the junk from the stained mattress, lifts it up. He stands there, staring at a few dozen POLAROIDs spread out across the springs. He picks one up and sees.

Leila Alavarez. Getting dressed by the window. Another shows Leila sunbathing on the roof. In another she brushes her hair. In another one she and Reuben, both naked, embrace on the bed.

Matt picks up another polaroid and now frowns...

MATT

Whoa...

It's a self-shot of Loogan, wearing camouflage fatigues, holding a HUNTING KNIFE in one hand and a BARBIE DOLL in the other.

In another shot, Loogan holds up a doll for the camera. We see A PIN is stuck into the doll. FAKE BLOOD roars from the "wound." Matt grabs a pile of similar photos and rifles through them.

MATT

Good Christ...

In all of the polaroids Loogan poses with Barbie Dolls, many of them are decapitated or dismembered, with fake blood painted on them. Matt looks away and something under the scattered photos catches his eye. He reaches down and picks up...

A BARBIE DOLL. Hundreds of pins sticking out of it. The doll's eye sockets are stuffed with them. BOTH FEET ARE CUT OFF. It's this particular detail that Matt's just now examining when...

JAMES LOOGAN appears in the doorway behind him and THE RAIN STOPS PINGING THE ROOF OF THE SHED. Matt senses something, turns...

MATT

James...

Matt turns all the way around, the Barbie doll in his hands, and faces Loogan. Stays calm.

MATT

You caught me.

Loogan says nothing, looks at the overturned mattress.

MATT

You gave the cops a different address, didn't you? That's why they never put you across the street from Leila.

LOOGAN

(beat)

This is my mother's building. I live in Sunset Park, but I'm not allowed to keep my birds there, even though there's room on the roof. That bothers me.

MATT

Your mom home right now? Maybe we could go down and talk, have a cup of coffee.

LOOGAN

I can't let you leave here.

And now we see THE KNIFE in his hand, the same one in the polaroids.

LOOGAN

They'll kill me if I do.

MATT

Who's "they", James?

LOOGAN

The other two.

Loogan starts to come forward. Matt looks at the knife.

MATT

So what, you gonna stab me now, with that knife?

LOOGAN

It's gonna bother me, too. For a long time. I know it will...

MATT

How much is it gonna bother you, I take that knife away, stick it in your neck?

LOOGAN

(beat)

Could you really do that?

MATT

Yes, I really could, James.

(then)

But I'd rather not.

Loogan looks at Matt, believes him. Matt holds out the DOLL.

MATT

How 'bout instead we trade?

LOOGAN

Okay.

Loogan bends at the knees and sets the knife down on the roof. Matt steps on the blade, hands Loogan the doll.

LOOGAN

It's called a Safe Hate Object.

(then)

I take out my anger and frustration by punishing a fetish representative of something I aspire to, but can never have. They're just fantasies, though.

MATT

Until someone real comes along, like Leila, and all of a sudden, Barbie doesn't do it for you anymore.

LOOGAN

I never laid a hand on Leila. But the other two-- there the one's you better worry about.

MATT

What other two?

LOOGAN

They're not human. It's not just they've got a lot of hostility toward women, it's the superiority, the grandiosity about it that scares me. People like that, down deep, they really feel inadequate, have to take it all out on other people.

MATT

You've done some reading.

LOOGAN

I'm trying to unbother myself.

MATT

How'd you meet them?

Loogan turns away, reaches into one of the coops, strokes one of his birds with a finger.

LOOGAN

There's this video store near my house. They have this basement where they keep some more of their... specialized stuff.

CUT TO: A BASEMENT "VIDEO STORE"

Light floods around high windows blocked off with brown paper. MEN avoid eye contact with each other as they browse the metal racks full of underground videotapes.

LOOGAN (VO)

They always came in together.

We hear a DOOR OPEN and TWO FIGURES start down the wooden steps. Their faces are barred in the shadow of the stairwell.

LOOGAN (VO)
I called them Laurel and Hardy on account
of one was tall and the other one was
short and round.

BACK TO SCENE:

As Matt takes out his notebook.

MATT
Can you be any more specific than that?

LOOGAN
Well, the one guy was like really tall.
Taller than you...

CUT TO: THE BASEMENT "VIDEO STORE"

As the tall one emerges into the dim light...

LOOGAN (VO)
Like near seven feet with pale skin. And
he had eyes that were dark, like a bug.

And now the other one emerges a few steps behind the first...

LOOGAN (VO)
And the other one had scars on his face,
little ones, like he had bad acne when he
was a kid.

BACK TO SCENE:

As Loogan sits down on a stool near the coop, looks at his birds.

LOOGAN
I remember one of them, the short one,
was called "Ray." I don't recall the
other one's name. If he even has one...
(then)
They loved that I worked in a cemetery.
They wanted to buy me drinks...

CUT TO: A BAR

A dark shit hole. A BURST OF LAUGHTER comes from the back where
Loogan and the other two sit at one of the three rickety tables.

LOOGAN (VO)
So we went to this bar, the middle of the
day, drank Rum and Coke, talked about the
different videos we liked.

MATT (VO)
And what'd they like?

Another ugly burst of laughter. Loogan looks uncomfortable.

LOOGAN (VO)
Everything. It was all one big laugh to
them, watching all the drug addicts fuck
each other.

BACK TO SCENE

As Matt looks up at Loogan.

MATT

What do you mean, drug addicts?

LOOGAN

They didn't do drugs, but they were like obsessed with that whole world: dealers, addicts, the different kinds of drugs... They told me they worked with the DEA.

MATT

They were cops?

CUT TO: A HAND RADIO

Clipped to a belt.

LOOGAN (VO)

They had a police radio. One of those handheld units. And they had all these files on drug dealers, with DEA stamps on them.

WIDEN SO THAT WE CAN SEE:

It's clipped to the round man's belt. He's showing Loogan a bunch of file folders that he's spread open on the table...

BACK TO SCENE

MATT

You told them about Reuben?

LOOGAN

No, I told them about Leila, about how I was gonna save her from Reuben. Then we came here and watched them for a while.

He looks off towards their building.

LOOGAN

They really liked her. They said they wanted to help her, too.

MATT

So you followed her.

(Loogan nods)

You picked her up off the street.

(another nod)

Then what?

Loogan turns to Matt. He looks lost.

LOOGAN

We drove around with her...

QUICK CUT TO: THE BACK OF THE VAN

More laughter. Ray, the round man, is laughing at something OS.

LOOGAN (VO)

In this van they have. Got this mattress
in the back, all covered up with plastic.

He's watching the tall man on top of the girl. Loogan is at the
wheel, glancing back. He sees the girl's face... she looks back
at him... her mouth duct-taped shut...

LOOGAN (VO)

She was really scared.

BACK TO SCENE:

As Loogan stokes one of the birds through the bars, with a long
finger...

LOOGAN

They loved that. They kept talking to
her, kept asking her how much money her
boyfriend had. They thought he was rich.

MATT

Why?

LOOGAN

Her engagement ring. They were all into
it. They wanted it. But when they cut
it off...

MATT

Cut the ring off?

LOOGAN

Her finger.

We hear A WOMAN SCREAM OVER as we now...

CUT TO: THE LOOP OF WIRE

As it's held up, flashing in the light...

LOOGAN (VO)

That's when I got out of there.

Suddenly one of the DOORS opens and light floods into the van.
We can see LOOGAN running away from the van, his fleeing form
disappearing into the bright, white light of the day as we go...

BACK TO SCENE

As Loogan moves back to Matt...

LOOGAN

We were somewhere in Brooklyn and I just
jumped out and ran. And then, two days
later, I found the body...

He takes a breath, stares at the doll in his hand.

LOOGAN

What are you gonna do now?

MATT

We're gonna go see a friend of mine, and you're gonna tell him what you just told me. Okay?

LOOGAN

(beat)
Will I be gone a long time?

MATT

A while. Yeah.

LOOGAN

Can I feed my birds first?

Matt nods, watches as Loogan reaches into a bag of seed, pulls out a plastic cupful of seed and starts walking to the coop.

MATT

Something I've been wondering about. How did they get Leila to get in the--

Matt stops talking as James Loogan calmly walks off the edge of the roof and drops from sight. We hear TIRES SCREECHING ON THE STREET BELOW. Followed a moment later by A WOMAN'S SCREAM.

EXT. LOOGAN'S BUILDING - DAY

As Matt comes down the front steps and starts off down the street, away from the CROWD that now gathers around something that nobody wants to see, but all of them look at it anyway.

INT. AA MEETING - DAY

Matt sits at the back half-listening to the speaker. As he lifts a Styrofoam cup of coffee to his lips, we see that his HANDS ARE SHAKING.

He turns, looks to the aisle and sees A LITTLE GIRL, only top of her head visible as she slowly walks down the aisle for the door. A PURPLE RIBBON the only thing visible.

Matt lifts up in his seat to get a better look and she's GONE. But he sees TD standing in the shadows of the vestibule at the back, watching Matt. He starts COUGHING, turns and walks out.

INT. MATT'S HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

As Matt comes in, Howie takes down several message slips.

HOWIE

Joe Durkin.
(the next one)
Joe Durkin.
(another)
Joe Durkin.
(then)
And Ellen.

Matt takes the slips from the idiot clerk.

MATT

Elaine?

HOWIE
Nice voice.
(winks)
Said she'd be up late.

INT. MATT'S ROOM - NIGHT

The PHONE IS RINGING when Matt comes in and answers it...

MATT
Scudder.

INT. MIDTOWN NORTH - SAME

As Joe Durkin glances around the squad room.

DURKIN
Where the fuck have you been?

INTERCUTTING THE TWO OF THEM:

MATT
Joe. What a nice surprise...

DURKIN
Hey, Matt? Don't. Okay? Let's just
talk about this afternoon.

MATT
What about it?

DURKIN
Pal a mine, Brooklyn South tells me that
a fella named James Loogan took a header
offa building out there.

Matt looks out the window.

MATT
Wow, that's too bad.

DURKIN
Yeah, well, it turns out this Loogan was
a gardener at Green-Wood cemetery, place
Leila Alvarez got dumped.

MATT
Groundskeeper.

DURKIN
What's that?

MATT
He was the groundskeeper, not the
gardener.

DURKIN
Yeah, well, now he's plant food.

MATT
The great circle of life.

DURKIN
Funny. Guess what else? It turns out
the roof he stepped off of was across the
street from the victim's old apartment.

Matt sees TJ sits at the curb across the street, DRAWING.

MATT
You're kidding.

DURKIN
Of course, you don't happen to have any
idea why the man killed himself?

MATT
I'm guessing he was depressed.

DURKIN
Yeah, that's what the note said.

MATT
There you go.

DURKIN
One line. Typewritten.

MATT
Sounds pretty open and shut to me.

DURKIN
A typewritten suicide note? You don't
find that a little bit unusual?

MATT
Maybe he couldn't find a pen.

DURKIN
My pal dusts the machine, I wonder whose
prints he's gonna find on the keys?

MATT
Probably nobody's.

DURKIN
That's what I thought you'd say.
(then)
For Christ's sake, what happened, Matt?

MATT
Guy walked off the roof.

DURKIN
Matt--

MATT
Loogan didn't kill anybody.

DURKIN
If he was some kind of material witness,
or in any other way involved...

MATT

I have two more days, Joe. If you wanna help me, reach out to the DEA.

DURKIN

What the hell for?

MATT

These guys seem to have a thing for dealers.

DURKIN

So what?

MATT

So all three women got into the van without a fight.

DURKIN

So it's three now--

MATT

(ignores him)
I think what they do is they badge 'em, tell 'em they're some kind of Fed.

DURKIN

Doesn't have to be a real badge.

MATT

They've got files, radios--

DURKIN

Come on, Matt, you honestly don't think these assholes are on the job?

MATT

No, probably more like informers or wannabes -- you know, guys wanna be feds, but don't have what it takes to actually be one.

DURKIN

I didn't realize it took much.

MATT

Two more days, Joe.

Matt hangs up. He starts to dial another number, when he looks to the corner where he sees the little girl in the purple ribbon, sitting in the chair, hands folded in her lap. Matt hangs up, turns and walks out of the door.

EXT. MATT'S HOTEL - NIGHT

As Matt starts walking up the street. TJ puts his drawing away, gets up and follows.

TJ

I don't have the gun no more.

MATT
(keeps walking)
What'd you do with it?

TJ
Threw it in the river, with all the other
guns.

Matt stops. Turns back. TJ stands ten feet away.

MATT
Why aren't you over at Covenant House?

TJ
They close up at midnight. Trustees over
there are worse than the fucking guys at
juvie. But not as bad as the fuckers in
the group home. Man, that's where you
really learn to fight. Some of those
places are worse than Rykers.

TJ looks at Matt. Comes closer now.

TJ
Don't feel sorry for me.

MATT
I don't.

TJ
You want my ass off the street, give me a
task to do.

Matt looks at TJ a moment, then starts walking, the kid falls in
with him.

MATT
The only contact the kidnappers had with
Kenny Kristo was over the phone. They
made four or five calls to his house in
Bay Ridge.

TJ
And this Kenny, he don't got caller ID?

MATT
They were all payphones. Which would
tell us something.

TJ
Like what?

MATT
Like where they live. The neighborhood
anyway. I'd be willing to bet that all
the phones are in the same area. And if
they're gonna leave the woman to make a
call, they're not gonna go far.

TJ
So we just need to get the addresses of
the payphones.

MATT
That's it. Except that payphones aren't
always listed in a reverse directory.

TJ
A what?

MATT
A reverse directory. It's organized by
phone numbers instead of names.

TJ
Why waste time with that shit when I can
get you the locations of the phones in a
fuckin half hour with a computer.

MATT
Except that I don't have a computer.

TJ
I didn't figure you did. No cell phone.
No beeper. No computer. Fuckin Amish
got more technical flavor than you do,
Matthew. Stead a being a detective, you
should be making furniture or some shit.

MATT
You've got one?

TJ
I got access.

MATT
Okay...
(stops walking)
There's your "task."

TJ
You just meet me at that Greek place at
eight o'clock a.m. tomorrow. I'll have
what you want...

EXT. ELAINE'S BUILDING - UPPER EAST SIDE - NIGHT

As the DOORMAN gives Matt a big smile.

DOORMAN
She said go right on up.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

As Matt rides up alone. He looks at his reflection in the door,
runs a hand through his hair, checks his shirt.

INT. ELAINE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A big place with an A-1 view of the city. Well-chosen antiques
sit side-by-side with expensive contemporary art pieces. Matt
stands at the window, staring into the glass, watching ELAINE's
reflection as she moves about the kitchen making coffee for the
two of them.

ELAINE
So this drug dealer, he wants you to find
these men so that he can... what exactly?

MATT
Trafficker.

ELAINE
What?

MATT
Kenny Kristo prefers to call himself a
trafficker and not a drug dealer.

ELAINE
Oh, yeah. And I'm a *Paid Companion* and
not a hooker.

Matt turns and looks at her as she carries two mugs over to a
white couch and sits down. He stays where he is.

MATT
Listen, Elaine I think we--

ELAINE
I'm moving.

He stops.

ELAINE
To Seattle.

MATT
When?

ELAINE
Soon.

She sits back on the couch, tucks her legs underneath.

MATT
You gonna trick in Seattle?

ELAINE
I'm buying an art gallery.

MATT
With what?

ELAINE
With the four million I put away.

MATT
(beat)
I thought you were gonna stop working
when you got to one, one in a half?

ELAINE
I was.
(then)
I could've stopped two years ago.

MATT
Why didn't you?

ELAINE
Because you weren't ready for me to stop.

MATT
What's that supposed to mean?

ELAINE
It means you like me this way. You must
or--

MATT
Or what?

ELAINE
Are you ready to move out of your hotel,
Matt? Are you ready to move in with me?

He doesn't say anything.

ELAINE
It would be nice if you wanted me, Matt.
Only not in the way my clients want me.

MATT
You think I use you that way?

ELAINE
I know that you like me. I know that you
find me agreeable and understanding... as
only a whore can be.

MATT
Don't, Elaine--

ELAINE
I think at first, what I did was part of
the attraction. But now, it bothers you.

He turns back to the window, says to the skyline:

MATT
I ask you to stop, what does that give
you the right to ask me?

ELAINE
I don't know. Do you love me?

He doesn't answer, just watches the lights.

ELAINE
You realize, these last four years, we've
managed to avoid using that word. That's
gotta be a record.

MATT
I think that's what we feel for each
other.

ELAINE

What we feel for each other? Jesus, Matt. We've never talked about getting married or even moving in together. Why is that?

MATT

I was married once before and I wasn't very good at it. I'm not really sure what Anita and I gave each other.

ELAINE

Two sons.

MATT

Who wouldn't recognize me if we bumped into each other on the street. I like being alone, Elaine.

ELAINE

So that's why we don't talk about it?

MATT

I've thought about it. I know you have, too.

ELAINE

But we don't talk about it.

MATT

I guess it's the thing we don't talk about.

ELAINE

You mean when we're not talking about love or about what I do for a living.

MATT

We're talking about it now--

ELAINE

Matt, you're not sober.

He turns around, faces her across the room.

ELAINE

You haven't dealt with anything. You go to meetings, and you tell your story over and over and think that's gonna make you feel better. But you don't tell all of it, do you?

(then)

You may have stopped drinking, but you're not sober.

CUT TO: A MAP OF BROOKLYN

A scrap of paper on top, several addresses scrawled on it.

MATT (VO)

Seven calls, each from a different phone.

INT. "THE FLAME" COFFEE SHOP - EARLY MORNING

As Matt sits with TJ in a booth. They both stare at a piece of paper full of numbers on the table between them.

MATT

No, wait I'm wrong-- they used one phone twice, for calls two and seven.

TJ

I don't get it. They're all payphones, so why use different ones?

MATT

In case they were traced. By keeping the calls short and moving around a lot, they were covered.

TJ

But they got loose on the last call.

MATT

They felt safe. By that time Kenny had done everything they asked him to without getting cute.

TJ

Too bad they didn't feel safe enough to call from home. We would've had them.

Matt puts a finger on the map.

MATT

The phones aren't that far apart. They're all in the same general area, on the west side of Brooklyn, north of Kristo's house in Bay Ridge and south of Green-Wood Cemetery.

TJ

Where they dumped Leila Alvarez.

MATT

None of these phones are within walking distance, which means they had to leave the house and drive around to make the calls.

TJ

So you think I'm right, they live around there?

MATT

Probably not too far from the phone they used twice.

TJ

Why you say that?

MATT

It's all over and done, it's Miller Time,
all they gotta do is tell Kenny where to
find his wife, rub salt in his wounds, so
why drive ten blocks out of the way if
you didn't have to? Why not use the
handiest payphone of the lot?

TJ

(looks at the map)
This one here, on Fifth between Forty-
ninth and Fiftieth.

CUT TO: A STREET SIGN - FIFTH AVENUE - BROOKLYN

We then CRANE DOWN TO REVEAL:

EXT. 24-HOUR LAUNDROMAT - DAY

As Matt and TJ go inside...

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

As two WOMEN look up from magazines as they come in and spot the
PAYPHONE at the back. Matt looks around, then drops a quarter in
the slot. Dials. Then:

ELAINE (PHONE)

Hello?

Matt hangs up. Sees TJ staring at him.

MATT

It... works.

TJ nods. Matt looks around.

MATT

Do all Laundromats have telephones?

TJ

How should I know?

MATT

What I mean is, if you needed to make a
phone call, you wouldn't first think of a
laundromat--

TJ

Unless you lived close by, and already
knew it had a phone.

MATT

Or unless they all had phones.

TJ

I don't know. I send my stuff out.

Matt shakes his head, starts out of there.

MATT

Let's walk the neighborhood.

EXT. PARK - BRIGHTON BEACH - DAY

We hear someone WHISTLING "HOW MUCH IS THAT DOGGIE IN THE WINDOW" as the young GIRL walks the Rhodesian Ridgeback along a wrought-iron fence that rings the park. She stops at a locked gate and takes a key from her jacket. The WHISTLING STOPS, then...

VOICE

Excuse me...

She squints against the sun, sees A MAN, short, heavysset, standing beside a VAN, one back door open. He carries a clipboard. We can see his breath as he speaks...

MAN

Am I on West Shanah Street?

GIRL

No, this is East Shanah. West is that way, on the other side of the park...

The man scratches his head, looks at the clipboard.

MAN

Can you show me?

He starts to take a step forward, but the dog GROWLS and he stops. He looks at the dog, puts a hand in his coat pocket causing the dog to BARK NOW...

GIRL

Watson! no!

But the dog pulls at the leash, tries to get at the van. We see two black boots on the ground behind the one open door. Someone standing there, hidden on the other side.

MAN

Easy there, fella...

Unseen by the girl, the man pulls A STUN GUN partway out of his coat pocket and takes a step towards the dog, who now BARKS OUT OF CONTROL, pulling at the leash. The man hesitates...

GIRL

I'm sorry-- I don't know what's wrong with him... Watson!!

She pulls the dog towards the gate and the man turns and looks across the street where he sees SOMEONE IN A WINDOW watching. He smiles at the girl, calls out...

MAN

Thank you anyway.

We see the feet behind the back door move away as the heavysset man shuts it, then walks around and gets into the van a moment before it pulls away. The girl watches from safely inside the locked park, the DOG now growling softly as the van passes.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Matt and TJ sit on the curb near the booth. Matt studies a map while TJ eats an apple.

MATT

The next one's only a mile or so away,
but there's not many houses around...

TJ

You know, I'm inside the phone company
last night, I decide to check out what
kinda service you got...

MATT

Where's that printout with the
addresses...

TJ reaches into his backpack, hands Matt a sheet of paper.

TJ

You got a pretty basic service, Matthew.
No call forwarding. No caller ID. You
didn't even have call waiting.
(takes a bite of his apple)
Course you got all that now.

Matt looks at him.

TJ

And I switched your long distance from
MCI to Sprint.

MATT

Does it make a difference?

TJ

It does when it's free.

Matt shakes his head, looks at the printout, notices there's a
DRAWING on the back.

TJ

While I was in there, I also saw you made
lots of calls to this one number on the
Upper East Side. Quick ones. No more
than four, five seconds each.

Matt keeps his eyes fixed on the drawing.

TJ

Like maybe you called then hung up, the
person answered.

TJ waits for an explanation, but instead Matt holds up the
drawing: A MYTHICAL LOOKING FIGURE IN ARMOR.

MATT

Who's that?

TJ

(sees Matt isn't going to
respond, so...)
That's Rapid John, the Knight of Ceylon.
He lives on this floating city called Neo
Troy...

TJ reaches into his backpack and pulls out a drawing of the city. It's detailed, drawn with the fluid hand of a true artist.

MATT

Rapid John...

TJ

Yeah, now the Knight of C was this normal kid, started having these strange dreams, one morning he wakes up, this jewel is left to him in his bed, grants him these powers. There's a war going on on his planet and he's trying to stop it...

He hands Matt another sheet, takes a drink from his water bottle.

TJ

These guys are the Jubilant Ghosts, the ones in White, see, right here...

(another drawing)

And these are the Half Moon People, the one's in Red. The Ghost's have started to mass on the border and the Half Moons are flipping out, starting to change in shape... citizens are all trying to get off the planet, creating this big traffic jam.

MATT

Which side is Rapid John fighting for?

TJ takes the drawing of the teenage king and looks at him as he explains...

TJ

He's fighting for himself. Fighting to save the planet. The war makes him feel bad, like the soldiers are all inside his head, inside his bones, trying to break out with a sledgehammer.

Matt nods, watches as TJ puts the drawings away and gets up.

TJ

Okay, son. Now where do we go?

Matt stands up, reaches into his coat and pulls out a wad of bills and fans them on the map in front of TJ.

TJ

What's that?

MATT

Your fee.

TJ stares at the cash, afraid to touch it.

TJ

How much is it?

MATT

A thousand.

(off TJ's look)
 About what I would've had to pay somebody
 at the phone company for the same thing.
 (then)
 Go ahead, take it.

TJ reaches out, tentatively takes the bills. He's clearly never held this much money in his hand at one time.

MATT
 Go get a place to stay.

TJ looks at the money, then looks up at Matt.

TJ
 All this walkin' we been doin', checkin'
 out phones and such, we didn't really
 need to, did we?

MATT
 It's good to know where they called from.
 Like I said, maybe they live nearby.

TJ
 Yo, Matt? Bullshit.

He holds the money out to Matt.

TJ
 I ain't stressin' for loot. Hell, If I
 wanted a fuckin' handout, I'd be on the
 deuce in a doorway with a fuckin' cup in
 my hand.
 (then)
 I wanna earn my money, Matthew. I wanna
 come with you, do the work.

MATT
 (doesn't take the money)
 No, these guys are gonna move again soon.
 I can feel it. I don't want you anywhere
 nearby when--

TJ
 Fuck, man, you don't gotta worry about
 me. These streets don't beast half as
 much as the deuce. I just want you to
 teach me, be a good detective.

MATT
 You're already a good one.

Matt looks at TJ a moment, realizes the kid isn't going to budge.

MATT
 I can't teach you anything.
 (starts walking)
 Don't follow me anymore.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

As Matt rides along. He sees the PURPLE RIBBON on the head of a kid down the car and closes his eyes.

MATT (VO)
My name is Matt and I'm an alcoholic,
twelve years sober...

INT. AN AA MEETING - DAY

As Matt tells his usual story...

MATT
I was off duty, in this bar in Washington
Heights where cops didn't have to pay for
their drinks...

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - DAY

It's raining as Matt stands on a corner looking off. The rain suddenly stops as we begin CIRCLING AROUND HIM, the COLOR now DRAINING FROM FRAME, until we're behind him, looking over his shoulder at...

THE BAR

we saw in the earlier sequence. Matt stands there, twelve years later, staring at it. We see a CAMERO pull to the curb and the two thugs swing out of it...

CUT TO: ANOTHER MEETING

MATT
I didn't know what was happening until
they shot the bartender in the heart--

EXT. BAR - WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - DAY

As we hear a GUNSHOT and we see the door bursts open, we keep circling around Matt as we hear VOICES YELLING, another SHOT.

CUT TO: ANOTHER MEETING

MATT
I chased them both out into the street...

EXT. BAR - WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - DAY

As we spin around Matt, see the CAMERO ROLLING DOWN THE STREET. A dead man slumped behind the wheel. People screaming as Matt watches himself fire his weapon twelve years earlier... at the other thug as he runs into an alley...

CUT TO: STILL ANOTHER MEETING - NIGHT

MATT
I shot one dead, caught the other one in
the leg.

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - DAY

As Matt blows the kid off his feet in the alley.

CUT TO: ANOTHER MEETING

MATT
He's never gonna walk right...

We hear SOMEONE SCREAM OS...

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - DAY

As we keep spinning around Matt, we see a group of people crowded around something on the sidewalk. The Matt from twelve years earlier runs out of the alley and over to the group just as...

A LITTLE GIRL with a RIBBON in her hair pushes through the crowd, starts walking away from the group, THE COLOR FLOODING back into FRAME so that we see the PURPLE color of the ribbon. Matt calls to her, but we hear no sound. We then...

CUT TO: ANOTHER MEETING

MATT

I stopped drinking that day. It just wasn't as much fun after that.

As he gets his usual laughter, we then go back to...

EXT. WASHINGTON HEIGHTS - DAY

As the COLOR RETURNS along with the sounds from the present day, and Matt stands on the corner opposite the bar, staring at it as the RAIN falls all around him. We hear A PHONE RING OVER...

EXT. TIME SQUARE - NIGHT

As TJ walks along wearing new clothes, new boots, and a bright red cell phone clipped to his belt. The icy WIND picks up and RAIN starts to fall.

A BLACK LINCOLN NAVIGATOR pulls to the curb and TWO BALLERS jump out and now fall in step behind TJ.

BALLER #1

Yo, son, those new timbos?

TJ keeps walking.

BALLER #1

Yo, son, I'm talkin to you...

TJ stops, turns around and looks at the trouble that now stands a few feet away on the sidewalk. One of them now opens A KNIFE and they shove TJ into the dark space between two stores.

BALLER #1

You got somethin', doesn't belong to you.

TJ

I don't know what you talkin about.

The other baller steps up, puts the knife under TJ's chin.

BALLER #1

You got my jammie, son. My favorite piece.

TJ

I don't got it no more! I threw it in the fucking river!

The two thugs look at him, take him down to the ground, and tear into his backpack. They dump out bags of dried fruit, sunflower seeds, bottles of water.

BALLER #2
Fuckin Sierra sprout ass motherfucker...

As baller #1 yanks pages of TJ's drawings from the backpack and lets them scatter in the wind.

BALLER #1
What's all this cartoon shit?

But then the kid finds what's left of THE MONEY Matt gave him, looks at TJ.

BALLER #1
Yo, son, where you get this loot?

He grabs TJ by the collar...

BALLER #1
You sold my fuckin jammie!

BALLER #2
I'm gonna take them Timbos...

They move to pull TJ's boots off. TJ kicks #2 in the face...

BALLER #2
Motherfucker!
(kicks TJ in the side)
Man, let's dead this cat! Let's rip his fuckin wig off!

EXT. STREET - ACROSS FROM THE ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

As the kids kick TJ over and over, then run off into the night. The rain falling like knives all around.

EXT. COVENANT HOUSE - NIGHT

It's POURING RAIN now as TJ, in his socks, his face cut and bleeding, stands at the entrance, a two-hundred plus pound TRUSTEE (a homeless person who works there) mans the door.

TRUSTEE
You just missed curfew, son.

TJ
Fine, I'll sleep on the floor.

TRUSTEE
(closing the door)
You know the rules, doors close at twelve.

TJ
Look, I can't be out in the rain, I can't get wet...

TRUSTEE

What are you, like fuckin Broom Hilda?
You gonna melt you get wet?

The guy shuts the door in TJ's face. TJ looks up at the pouring rain, hurries across the street to a PAYPHONE. He fumbles in his pockets for change. Starts to dial, but he starts coughing so hard now, he has to double over.

INT. MATT'S HOTEL - NIGHT

Howie sleeps with his head on the desk. Matt comes in bangs the BELL and nearly launches the clerk out of his chair.

MATT

Any messages?

HOWIE

Uh-- JR called.

Matt looks at him, gets on the elevator.

MATT

TJ?

HOWIE

Whatever.

MATT

He leave a message?

HOWIE

Uh, let me think...

(then)

Oh, yeah. He's at Bellevue.

Matt stops the doors with his foot.

INT. BELLVUE ER - DAY

As Matt comes through the doors. He sees TJ sitting in a plastic chair, shivering.

MATT

What happened? Who did this?

He looks at Matt, his teeth chattering, but he can't speak. A MALE NURSE comes over with some hot towels and begins to drape them over TJ's legs..

MALE NURSE

Here you go, sport.

MATT

What's with the towels?

MALE NURSE

Said he had some pain in his legs. Looks like someone worked him over pretty good.

MATT

Why's he shaking so bad?

MALE NURSE
Detox.

MATT
What?

Matt looks at TJ who has trouble focusing on Matt now.

MALE NURSE
He comes in, first thing he asks for some
demoral or a phentinel patch.

MATT
So?

MALE NURSE
The junkies all do that, come in here,
think they can get free morphine.

MATT
Look... nurse... the kid's not an addict.
Hell, he won't even drink a can of soda.

MALE NURSE
I'm sorry, and you are?

MATT
Right now I'm the one telling you to go
get a fucking a doctor over here. Now.

MALE NURSE
He's underage, and he won't tell me who
his parents are. By law I have to call
Social Services. Let them decide what to
do with him. Now if you'll excuse me...

MATT
Hey--

He turns to walk away, Matt grabs the guy and pulls him back by
his white coat.

MATT
You don't wanna walk away from me.

CUT TO A CURTAIN BEING PULLED BACK

As a young DOCTOR turns and faces Matt.

DOCTOR
He got worked over pretty good, but he
was also out in the rain. Either one
could have triggered the crisis.

MATT
Crisis?

DOCTOR
He's a Sickler.
(then)
He's got Sickle Cell Anemia.

Matt looks at the curtain.

DOCTOR
You didn't know that?

MATT
No...

DOCTOR
Oh. Well, a sickler gets a cold or a chill, anything that makes a normal person's blood cell count go up -- anytime the body gets ready to fight something, the red blood cells panic, take on a sickle shape... actually creates a jam in the arteries, the blood gets really thick. Suddenly you're not getting any oxygen...

Matt looks at the curtain...

MATT
The half-moon people all trying to get off the planet at once.

DOCTOR
Excuse me?

MATT
Nothing. What're you doing for him?

DOCTOR
Well, the blood gets thick like that, it can be pretty painful, so we're hydrating him to help thin it out, giving him demoral for the pain. He knew the drill, got in here early enough, so I don't think it'll go on for too long.

Matt nods and then moves behind the curtain, takes in TJ lying there in the bed. TJ turns and looks at him standing there.

TJ
Don't feel sorry for me.

MATT
I don't.

TJ
How long I gotta be here?

MATT
Depends on how quick the Jubilant Ghosts and the Half Moon People take to chill out.

TJ looks at Matt.

TJ
My mom said one time I got special blood, that I can never get Malaria.

MATT
Really.

TJ
That's how Sickle Cell got started. In Africa. As a defense against Malaria.

MATT
Where is your mother, TJ?

TJ
Why aren't you a cop no more?

MATT
(beat)
You first.

TJ shrugs, looks up and says to the ceiling:

TJ
I had a crisis one time, I was about eleven. She took me to the hospital, but never showed up to check me out. I guess she thought if she left me there, they'd put me with a nice family. Little did she know. I saw her a few times on the street after that, but that was a while ago.
(then)
I guess she had some issues.

He turns and looks at Matt.

TJ
Your turn.

MATT
I was off duty one night in the summer. I was in a bar in Washington Heights where cops didn't have to pay for their drinks.

TJ
Wait a minute--

MATT
Two kids held up the place. On their way out they shot the bartender in the heart. I chased them out into the street and shot one dead and caught the other one in the thigh.

TJ
I heard this already--

MATT
No, you didn't.
(then)
See, one shot, well, the bullet took a bad hop ...

EXT. THE ALLEY - DAY

As Matt gets to the mouth of the alley, sees the crowd standing there, the WOMAN SCREAMING, cradling a limp body in her arm, a single tiny SHOE on the ground at her feet. Matt drops his gun.

MATT (VO)
It hit a seven-year-old girl in the eye,
killed her instantly.

Matt drops down beside the woman who now rocks the girl back and forth. Matt tries to see the child, but the woman pulls away...

MATT
Ma'am--

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

As TJ looks at Matt...

MATT
An inch higher and it would have grazed
her head, left a nasty scar, that's all.

TJ
And so they quit your ass?

MATT
No. They gave me a commendation. But
then I resigned. I just didn't want to
be a cop anymore. Or a husband. Or a
father.

TJ stares at him. Takes Matt's hand. Matt looks at the kid.

MATT
Don't feel sorry for me.

TJ
I don't.

EXT. HOUSE IN BRIGHTON BEACH - NIGHT

As the rain comes down hard now.

INT. GIRL'S ROOM - SAME

As the Girl reads on her bed, the dog at the foot. The NURSE sticks her head into the room, says something in RUSSIAN.

GIRL
Okay.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

As the NURSE comes out of the house in her raincoat, gets into the Mercedes and pulls out, drives past the WHITE VAN.

INT. VAN - SAME

The sound of A POLICE RADIO. The two figures inside. The tall one reaches for the door, but the Round One holds him back...

THE ROUND ONE

In a minute.

INT. BELLEVUE - NIGHT

As TJ quietly slips out of bed, keeping an eye out so that nobody sees him. The rain pounds the window as he starts to put on his ripped clothes when he sees a SHOPPING BAG beside the bed.

Scribbled in pen on the side of the bag is: "TO: D. CULPEPPER, PI."

TJ opens it and takes out some NEW TIMBERLANDS, A PAIR OF JEANS, WU-WEAR T-SHIRT and a CELLPHONE.

INT. HOUSE - BRIGHTON BEACH - MOTHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

As the young girl, the DOG behind her comes into the room. She leans over and drops some EYEDROPS into her mother's open eyes, then sits down beside her mother's bed and starts to read. The dog lays down at her feet.

A moment of just the rain on the roof, and then THE DOG BEGINS TO GROWL. He gets up and leaves the room...

GIRL

Watson?

And now we hear THE DOG BARKING LIKE MAD. And then a loud ZAP! Followed by silence.

GIRL

Watson?

She gets up and we follow her into...

THE OTHER ROOM

As she moves to the front hall, stops cold when she sees the DOG LYING ON THE FLOOR, shaking. The door is AJAR. She gasps, runs back to her mother's bedroom, stops cold as...

The Tall Man appears in the doorway, soaking wet. Before she can scream, he holds out THE STUN GUN and fires a taser at her.

As the Tall Man bends down to pick her up, we see the Round Man sitting by the bed looking at the girl's mother. He drops some drops into her eyes, then leans over and whispers in her ear...

ROUND MAN

You don't know how lucky you are.

INT. MATT'S HOTEL - EARLY MORNING

As a tired-looking Matt comes inside, heads for the elevator. The PHONE RINGS and Howie grabs it.

HOWIE

The Northwestern.

(then)

Hey, Matt--

(holds up the phone)

For you.

Matt walks to the desk, takes the phone from Howie.

MATT
Scudder.

KENNY (PHONE)
Where the hell have you been?

MATT
(tired)
What's wrong, Kenny?

KENNY (PHONE)
You gotta come out to Brighton Beach.
And for Chrissake, take a fucking cab.
Nobody's got time to dick around with
subways today.

MATT
Yeah? What's in Brighton Beach?

KENNY (PHONE)
A whole lot of Russians.

MATT
Excuse me?

KENNY (PHONE)
One of them, a friend of mine, just
called to say he's going through business
difficulties similar to what I went
through.

MATT
(waking up)
His wife?

KENNY (PHONE)
Worse.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE - DAY

The one Ray and his partner were staking out. Matt gets out of a cab, sees Peter standing there, his hair a mess. His clothes all with that slept in look. His eyes red and gone.

MATT
Hello, Peter.

PETER
Matt.
(then)
I had kind of a relapse.

MATT
It happens.

PETER
Kenny's inside.

They walk to the entrance where two thick bodied RUSSIANS in tweed jackets and caps immediately brace them.

PETER
It's okay... I'm Peter Kristo. This is
Mr. Scudder. Mr. Landau's expecting us.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Where Kenny stands with YURI LANDAU, a big man, broad in the chest with a face straight off one of those Socialist Realist murals of the idealized worker. The Russian man of Ray's DEA file.

YURI
Where the fuck am I going to get a
million dollars?

He stops, turns as Matt and Peter get off the elevator now.

YURI
You're the detective.

MATT
Matthew Scudder.

Yuri catches sight of the big guy who came up with them.

YURI
Dani, that's a good boy. Go back down to
the lobby and keep an eye out.
(then)
Now I post guards. The horse is stolen,
so I lock the barn. For what? What can
they take from me now? She's fourteen-
years-old...

And now we see the woman from the Mercedes come into the room.
It's clear she's been crying all day.

YURI
This is Anna, the nurse.

Matt nods to her. She can barely look at him. She rubs the back of the dog, looks away. Matt looks at A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE GIRL. He stares at it as Yuri goes on...

YURI
They took her last night. Call us this
morning, tell us not to call the police.
I remember Kenny calling me up the other
day, put two and two together--

MATT
Mr. Landau, what's your daughter's name?

YURI
Ludmilla. But she calls herself Lucia.

MATT
You have to know that the men who took
her have already killed at least two
women in addition to Kenny's wife.

Matt lets that sink in, then...

MATT
As things stand, they haven't got the slightest intention of releasing your daughter alive.

Yuri looks at him, horrified.

MATT
In fact, there's a strong possibility that she's already dead.

YURI
No...

MATT
If she's alive we still have a chance. But you have to decide how you want to handle this.

YURI
What do you mean?

MATT
(beat)
Let me deal with them from here on.
(then)
Let me get your little girl back.

YURI
If she's still alive.

Yuri looks at Kenny who nods reassuringly.

YURI
All right.

MATT
I need to make a phone call.

YURI
There's a phone got its own line in my daughter's room.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME ◇

As Matt moves down the hall, pauses in a doorway....

INT. WIFE'S ROOM - SAME

The wife in bed. Staring up at the ceiling. Yuri moves up beside him.

YURI
The sixteen years we've been married, I don't ever remember her even having a cold. Then one morning, she wakes up, says she can't smell anything.

Matt looks at him. Yuri gestures...

YURI
Lucia's room is there.

INT. LUCIA'S ROOM - DAY

As Matt moves to the phone, picks it up and dials. He paces, looks around the room at the posters of In-Sync, Brittany Spears and so on. He looks at the FAMILY PHOTOS on the chest, the pretty face of Lucia staring back at him. He turns away.

TJ (PHONE)
Culpepper Investigations. Daunte speaking.

MATT
Give me a fucking break.

TJ (PHONE)
Matthew. You just wake up or something?

MATT
The hospital said you left.

TJ
Didn't want some Social Services person come haul my ass away to a foster home. Those places are worse than juvie.

MATT
Ready to go to work?

TJ (PHONE)
I'm feelin' that.

MATT
You remember the Laundromat, the one in Sunset Park?

TJ (PHONE)
Sure.

MATT
Think you can detect your way over there?

TJ
R train to Forty-fifth, a block to Fifth Avenue, four five blocks from there.

MATT
Go right now. And call me when you get there at this number. It's--

TJ
I got the number right here, son, on my caller ID.
(then)
Thank you.

MATT
Get moving, TJ.

Matt comes out of the bedroom and we HEAR THE PHONE RING and everybody freezes. Yuri picks it up.

YURI
Hello? Yeah, this is Landau.

(then)
I want to talk to my daughter. You've
got to let me talk to my daughter...

Matt walks over and motions for Yuri to give him the phone.

MATT
I hope the girl's alive.

Silence on the other end. Then...

VOICE
Who the fuck are you?

MATT
I'm the best chance you've got, you wanna
get your money. But you better not hurt
the girl because she's gotta be alive and
all in one piece for any kind a deal to
happen. You hear me, rape-o?

VOICE
(beat)
Fuck this shit.

And the line goes dead.

YURI
I can't believe you talked to him like
that--

KENNY
He knows what he's doing.
But then he looks at Matt, "don't you?"

MATT
The important thing right now is to keep
Lucia alive. That means these guys have
to know they can't get a nickel out of
you until we first know that she's okay.

YURI
But if you make them mad...

MATT
They're already mad.

YURI
But you'll give them an excuse to kill
her.

MATT
They don't need an excuse. They're gonna
kill her anyway.

Yuri turns away, Matt puts a hand on his shoulder.

MATT
What they need, Yuri, is a reason to keep
her alive.
(then)
We're going to need cash.

YURI
I got damn little right now. Do the bastards want cocaine? I got fifteen kilos of slab ten minutes from here.

KENNY
I got maybe a hundred in the safe. Time comes I'll run back to the house and get it.

YURI
You know I'm good for it.

KENNY
Don't worry about it.

Yuri nods, touched by the kindness of his fellow drug dealer.
THE PHONE RINGS and Yuri picks it up.

YURI
Hello? Just a minute.

He hands the phone to Matt.

MATT
Yeah.

ANOTHER VOICE (RAY)
I understand we have a new player in the game. I don't believe we've been introduced.

MATT
I'm a friend of Mr. Landau's. My name's not important.

CUT TO: AN EXTREME CLOSE-UP OF RAY'S MOUTH
As he speaks into the receiver.

RAY
One likes to know who's on the other side.

INTERCUTTING THE TWO OF THEM:

MATT
In a way, we're on the same side, aren't we? We both want this to happen.

RAY
Then all you have to do is follow instructions.

MATT
No, it's not that simple.

RAY
Of course it is. We tell you what to do and you do it. If you ever want to see the girl again.

MATT
You have to convince me she's alive in
the first place.

RAY
You have my word on it.

MATT
That's funny.

RAY
It's not good enough?

MATT
Let's just say you lost a lot of
credibility when you returned Mrs. Kristo
in poor condition.

A pause on the other end.

RAY
There were special circumstances with
Mrs. Kristo. Her husband tried to
haggle. He sliced the price, and we in
turn -- well, you can finish that thought
yourself, can't you?

MATT
We're not gonna argue the price.

RAY
You'll pay the million?

MATT
For the girl alive and well.

RAY
I assure you she's both.

MATT
Your assurance means nothing to me. Put
her on the phone, let her father talk to
her.

RAY (PHONE)
I'm afraid that won't--

RECORDED NYNEX VOICE
Please deposit sixty-five cents.

MATT
Out of quarters? Give me your number.
I'll call you back.

Ray laughs. CLICK. He hangs up. Matt does the same.

MATT
He'll be moving to another payphone.

EXT. LAUNDROMAT - SUNSET PARK

As TJ crosses to it and goes inside.

INT. YURI'S CO-OP - DAY

As the PHONE RINGS. Matt picks it up.

RAY (PHONE)

I'm afraid the girl cannot come to the phone. That's out of the question. How else can we reassure you of her well-being?

Matt covers the mouthpiece, looks at Yuri.

MATT

Something your daughter would know.

Yuri looks at the DOG lying on the floor.

YURI

The dog's name?

MATT

Have her tell you-- no, wait a minute.

(covers the phone again)

They could know that. They've been following her for a week or more. They know your schedule, they've probably seen her walking the dog, heard her call him by name. Think of something else.

YURI

We had a dog before this one. A little black and white one, it got hit by a car. She was just a small thing herself when we got that dog.

MATT

But would she remember it?

YURI

I think so. She loved that dog

Matt takes his hand away from the phone.

MATT

The dog's name. And the name of the dog before this one. Have her describe both of them.

RAY (PHONE)

(amused)

One dog won't do. It has to be two.

MATT

Yes.

RAY (PHONE)

So that you may be doubly reassured. I'll humor you, my friend.

MATT

(hangs up)

And now we wait.

They all stand there a moment. Kenny starts for the door...

KENNY
I'm gonna run out to Bay Ridge, get the cash.

He looks at Yuri.

KENNY
I know we're gonna need it.

Yuri nods. Peter doesn't want to be standing around, follows.

PETER
I'll go with you.

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

As TJ rides along, anxious. He takes a long swig of water from his bottle, then leans back. He looks up at the graffiti on the ceiling. There it is again: "WE ARE PEOPLE, TWO."

INT. YURI'S TOWNHOUSE

Matt and Yuri sit listening to the tick of the clock. Yuri looks at Matt.

YURI
You were a policeman?

MATT
That's right.

YURI
You deal with situations like this?

MATT
No.

YURI
Your gut must tell you something, no?
(then)
What does it tell you now? Is she alive?

MATT
I don't know.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

As TJ stares at someone's wash going round and round in the dryer. We see THE REFLECTION OF RAY in the glass and TJ feels himself shiver as he slowly turns around and watches the man walk over to the payphone.

INT. YURI'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

As Matt looks at the woman lying in the bed. He looks at the photographs above the fireplace of the family before the stroke. The woman and the little girl. The father and the little girl. THE PHONE RINGS and Matt comes over and picks it up.

RAY (PHONE)
I'd still like to know how you figure in this.

MATT
You were going to answer some questions.

RAY (PHONE)
I wish you'd tell me your name. I might recognize it.

MATT
I might recognize yours.

RAY (PHONE)
(laughs)
Oh, I don't think so.

MATT
What's the dog's name?

RAY (PHONE)
Ah, well, let's see, what are the old standbys? Fido? Towser? King. Rover, that's always a popular favorite, isn't it? Or Bingo...

Matt reacts, looks at Yuri who sees his expression and lets out a breath.

RAY (PHONE)
(sings)
I had a dog and Bingo was his name-o, B-I-N-G-O... B-I-N-G-O...

Ray LAUGHS and Matt closes his eyes. She's dead.

RAY (PHONE)
How about Spot? ~~Run~~, Spot, run! That's not a bad name for a Rhodesian Ridgeback.

Matt opens his eyes.

RAY (PHONE)
The dog's name is Watson.

MATT
Watson.

Across the room, the big DOG LIFTS HIS HEAD at the sound of his name. Yuri nods.

MATT
And the other dog? The one before?

RAY (PHONE)
You want so much. How many dogs do you need?

INT. LAUNDROMAT - SAME

Ray's back to us. TJ looking at him out of the corner of his eye from the dryer.

RAY

She couldn't tell me what breed the other dog was. She was young when it died. They had to put it to sleep, she said. Silly term for it, don't you think? When you kill something you ought to have the courage to call it that. you're not saying anything. Are you still there?

INT. YURI'S APARTMENT - SAME

As Matt and Yuri stare at each other.

MATT

I'm here.

INTERCUTTING THE TWO OF THEM NOW:

RAY

I gather it was a mongrel. So many of us are. Now the name's a bit of a problem. It's a Russian word and I may not have it right. How's your Russian, my friend?

MATT

A little rusty.

RAY

Rusty's a good name for a dog. Maybe it was Rusty. It's hard to get a laugh out of you.

MATT

I'm a captive audience.

RAY

Ah, too bad you're not. We could have a very different conversation under those circumstances, you and me. Ah, well. Some other time perhaps.

MATT

We'll see. ♦

RAY

Indeed we will. But you want the dog's name, don't you? The dog's dead, my friend. What good is his name? Give a dog a dead name, give a dead dog a bad name--

MATT

Tell me--

RAY

I may be saying this wrong.
(then)
Balalaika.

MATT

Balalaika.

And Yuri nods unequivocally, turns and hugs Anna.

YURI
She's alive...

RAY
It's supposed to be the name of a musical instrument, or so she tells me. What do you say, does it strike a chord?

He laughs at his own joke while, Matt, feeling lightheaded, leans against the wall and closes his eyes...

RAY
You have two hours to get the money together.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - DAY

As Ray hangs up, walks right past TJ and out the door. TJ waits a moment, then goes out the door after him.

EXT. YURI LANDAU'S CO-OP - NIGHT

As Peter and Kenny pull up out front in the Caddy. Kenny pulls a large satchel from the back seat.

INT. YURI LANDAU'S CO-OP - NIGHT

As Peter and Kenny come into the room, Matt looks off to where Yuri is in the kitchen with Anna, holding her.

MATT
How much have we got?

KENNY
A little over four. Less than half.

MATT
That's not enough. They already know what four looks like.

YURI
I've got an idea...

He grabs his coat as the PHONE in the other room RINGS. Matt walks back into...

INT. LUCIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

As Matt picks up the phone.

TJ (PHONE)
Man was just here.

EXT. LAUNDROMAT - SAME

As TJ talks on his cell phone out front.

TJ
You look at him and you know you're looking at evil.

INTERCUTTING THE TWO OF THEM:

MATT
You sure it was him? I hung up with him
fifteen minutes ago.

TJ
I followed him.

MATT
What?

TJ
What? You think I'm gonna run the minute
I see him? I didn't walk out arm in arm
with the man, I gave him a minute and
then I slipped out after him. I did it
just the way you taught me. Behind and
to the side.

MATT
TJ, the man's a killer.

TJ
And that's supposed to impress me? I'm
on the Deuce every day of my life. You
can't walk down the street without
following some killer or other.

We see Kenny and Peter come into the house through the door, Yuri
now telling them that his daughter's alive. Kenny hugs him.
Matt closes the door a bit so that he can hear TJ...

MATT
Where'd he go?

TJ now takes out his notebook, one exactly like Matt's.

TJ
Subject turned left, walked to the
corner.

MATT
Forty-ninth.

TJ
Then he walked across to the deli on the
other side of the avenue.

EXT. 49TH AVENUE - NIGHT

As we see Ray go into the deli. TJ moves into FRAME, watches the
entrance.

TJ (VO)
...went inside, stayed a minute or two,
came out again with what looked like a
six-pack.

And now we see Ray come out of the deli carrying a bag. He walks
right past TJ who shivers, steps back, watches as the man crosses
fifth avenue and heads back to the Laundromat.

TJ (VO)
I thought he was going back to the
laundry place, but he got into a car...

And now we see Ray as he gets into a grey Honda Civic...

INT. LUCIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

As Matt watches Peter come out of the bathroom, his eyes red.

TJ (PHONE)
I tried to stay with it but there was no
way. I was laying half a block back, not
wanting to tag him too close on his way
back to the laundry, and he was in the
car and out of there before I could do
anything.

EXT. LAUNDROMAT - NIGHT

As TJ runs up into FRAME, watches the Honda disappear around the
corner.

MATT (VO)
But you got a good look at him.

TJ takes out his notebook again, starts scribbling...

TJ (VO)
Man's five-eleven, one hundred-seventy
pounds, light brown hair, glasses with
brown plastic frames. Wearing lace-up
shoes and navy pants and a blue zip-up
jacket...

And now we see that TJ is SKETCHING THE MAN in his notebook.

TJ (VO)
And about the lamest fuckin sport shirt
you ever saw. Blue and white checks.

INT. LUCIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

As Matt smiles. ♦

TJ (VO)
The car was a Honda Civic, sort of blue-
grey and a little beat up.

MATT
I'm impressed.

TJ (VO)
He snatched somebody, didn't he?

MATT
Yes.

TJ
Who?

MATT
A fourteen-year-old girl.

TJ (PHONE)

(beat)
I should've run faster.

EXT. YURI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Yuri and Dani get out of the Mercedes, go around and open the trunk. They each take an old Pan Am flight bag.

YURI (VO)
We're in business.

INT. YURI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As Yuri opens one of the bags and spills its contents, banded stacks of hundreds, each wrapper bearing the imprint of Chase Manhattan Bank.

PETER
What'd you do, rob a bank?

Yuri hands Kenny a stack of bills. Kenny slips them from their wrapper, looks them over.

YURI
How's it look?

KENNY
Very nice. Paper's good. Ink looks right. Nice used bills. Must have soaked them with coffee grounds, ran them through the Maytag. What's the discount?

YURI
Sixty percent in quantity.

KENNY
(whistles)
I should've been a counterfeiter.

YURI
Good stuff doesn't come cheap. But this is a loan. No charge if we recover it and bring it back. Otherwise I owe for it. Forty cents on the dollar.

KENNY
That's very decent.

MATT
We'll repackage them slightly. We'll use the Chase wrappers, but we'll take six bills out of each stack and replace them with real ones, three on top, three on the bottom. What's this make the count?

YURI
Let's see, two hundred fifty thousand in the schlock. Dani's got a little over sixty in the other bag...

KENNY

Puts us right around eight hundred.

The PHONE RINGS.

MATT

That's good enough.

Matt answers the phone..

EXT. YURI'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

As Peter slips outside and lights a cigarette. Takes a deep drag. We see Matt on the phone in the window upstairs.

INT. YURI'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

As Yuri and Kenny get the bills ready, Anna moves about the kitchen fixing them all something to eat.

MATT

We have to meet face-to-face. You have to have an opportunity to inspect the money and we have to be able to assure ourselves that the girl is all right.

EXT. PAYPHONE - NIGHT

Ray's back to us.

RAY

And then you people come down on us.

INT. YURI'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

As Anna hands Matt a plate of food. He smiles, sets it down.

MATT

You'll have the girl covered.

RAY (PHONE)

A knife at her throat.

MATT

If you want.

RAY (PHONE)

The edge of the blade up against her skin.

MATT

Whatever. We give you the money. One of you holds the girl while the other makes sure the money's all there.

RAY (PHONE)

I don't like this face-to-face business.

MATT

We'll set up fifty yards apart. You'll be in place first, you'll see us arrive. You show the girl, then I come over with the money.

RAY (PHONE)
By yourself?

MATT
Yes.

RAY (PHONE)
Unarmed.

MATT
I'll have a suitcase full of money in
each hand, a gun won't do me much good.

RAY (PHONE)
Keep talking.

MATT
You check the money. When you're
satisfied, you let the girl go. She
joins her father and the rest of our
people. Your man takes off with the
money. You and I wait until you feel
good. Then you take off and go home.

RAY (PHONE)
You could grab me.

MATT
You'll have that knife you keep talking
about, a gun, too, if you want one.

RAY (PHONE)
You'll see my face.

MATT
Wear a mask.

RAY (PHONE)
Cuts the visibility.

MATT
(beat)
I already know what you look like, Ray.
Silence on the other end. Kenny looks over from the table.

RAY
What do you know?

MATT
I know your name. I know about the women
you killed. I know your last name, too.

RAY (PHONE)
Prove it.

MATT
Look it up for yourself. It's right
there on the calendar.

RAY (PHONE)
Cute. Who are you?

MATT
Nobody important.

RAY (PHONE)
You sound like a cop.

MATT
What kind of cop plays it this way?

RAY (PHONE)
You're in Landau's pocket?

MATT
I'm married to his cousin.

Matt looks at Yuri, shrugs.

RAY (PHONE)
I should bail out now. Cut the bitch's
throat and get the hell out.

MATT
Then you're dead.

RAY (PHONE)
Oh?

MATT
Yeah "oh." Hear me on this one, Ray.
You kill this girl and I'll find you,
wherever you are, and I'll put a bullet
into your fucking mouth. That goes for
you and your rape-o pal. You hear me?

And now all three men are looking over from the table.

MATT
But if you do this deal, I'll sit on what
I know. You can go set up shop on the
other side of the country. There's
plenty of dope dealers in L.A.. Plenty
of fine looking women out there, too,
love to go for a ride in a pretty new
truck.

RAY (PHONE)
Where do you wanna do it?

MATT
(beat)
I was thinking Green-Wood Cemetery.

RAY (PHONE)
I think I know where that is.

MATT
You should, that's where you dumped Leila
Alvarez.

RAY (PHONE)
Right.

MATT

There are two entrances on the Fifth Avenue side, one around Twenty-fifth Street, the other ten blocks south of there. Take the Thirty-fifth Street entrance and head north about twenty yards inside the fence. We'll enter at twenty-fifth and approach you from the north.

Matt looks at the clock.

MATT

Say ten-thirty. That gives you over an hour to get there. Alright?

And now we...

CUT TO: CLOSE-UP OF RAY

As he smiles...

RAY

Leila Alvarez. Haven't thought of her in a while. She was really nice. Choice.

Matt doesn't say anything.

RAY

Lord, she was frightened. Poor little bitch, she was really terrified.

Matt hangs up, his hands shaking. He sees the other guys looking at him.

MATT

Yuri, have you got a rifle?

Yuri looks at Dani who nods.

MATT

Is he a good shot?

YURI

During the day maybe. Dani's a little nearsighted...

KENNY

Peter can shoot. He was a marksman in the service.

They all look at him. Him? Seriously?

PETER

Was a while ago.

EXT. KENNY'S CAR - NIGHT

Kenny and Matt ride alone.

KENNY

This kid we're picking up. How's he fit into the picture?

MATT

I met him in the library, got an IQ of about two hundred, but he lives on the street. Got it in his head he wants to be a detective.

(then)

I just don't want him wandering around after the exchange while Callander and his buddy are on their way home.

KENNY

Speaking of which...

He leans across Matt, pops the glovebox so that we see a 9mm sitting inside.

KENNY

Help yourself.

EXT. LAUNDROMAT - NIGHT

As the Caddy pulls to the curb and TJ steps out of the shadows and gets inside. The Caddy pulls out again...

INT. CADDY - SAME

As TJ sits back...

MATT

TJ this is Kenny Kristo.

TJ

Man we working for.

Kenny exchanges a look with Matt, then looks at TJ in the rearview.

KENNY

Nice to meet you.

TJ

(hands Matt a sheet)

That's the guy on the phone.

Matt looks at TJ's drawing of Ray. It's dead-on.

MATT

The cemetery's just up here on the right.

TJ

We goin' in a cemetery?

KENNY

You can stay in the car if you'd rather.

TJ

What for?

KENNY

If you'd be more comfortable.

TJ
 Son, I ain't gonna bug over a few dead people. Dead people don't bother me none. It's some of the livin' ones that worry me.

EXT. GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY - NIGHT

As the Caddy drives through the big stone gates and on up to where Yuri's car is parked, the trunk already open. Yuri and his bodyguard carry the money.

Matt gets out, watches Peter as he pulls A RIFLE from the trunk and examines it with shaky hands.

MATT
 You gonna be okay with that?

PETER
 I'll be fine.

And as Kenny shuts the trunk, we...

CUT TO: THE CEMETERY - NIGHT

The tombstones, dark shapes in the moonlight. Now we see TWO FLASHLIGHT BEAMS play over the top, the figures of Matt and Kenny followed by the others now coming into view.

We TRACK WITH THEM as the seven move through the dark cemetery, TJ anxiously looking this way and that. Peter holding on tight to the big gun in his hands.

They walk silently past the markers and crypts. Further down the hill, we can see the MOON reflected in the small lake where Leila Alvarez was found.

Matt looks at the wall, at the street signs on the other side and slows down so that the others can draw closer. He then gestures for them to fan out a ways without advancing any further south.

That done, Matt turns and faces the pitch-black area where Raymond Callander is supposed to be waiting and points his flashlight in front of him, triggers three flashes.

For a long moment the only answer is darkness and silence. Then THREE FLASHES OF LIGHT blink back at him, from a little right of dead ahead.

Matt takes a breath and starts walking flanked by Kenny and Dani, each carrying a suitcase containing the money.

ON PETER

As he kneels down behind a marker, using it as a shooting stand for the rifle. He wipes his sweaty hands on his pants.

ON MATT

As he and Kenny and Dani get halfway there when we hear:

RAY (OS)
 That's far enough.

Matt nods to Kenny and Dani who move off, leaving the suitcases for Matt. Matt looks at where Callander is supposed to be, but sees only dark shapes.

MATT

Come out where I can see you. And show the girl.

They move into view. Two forms... and then, as the light gets better, we see that one form is made up of two persons; one of the men has the girl in front of him.

RAY

I've got a knife to her throat. If my hand slips--

MATT

Let's hope it doesn't.

RAY

Then you better bring me the money.

Matt turns and hefts the suitcases, looks back at the others, then starts to slowly approach Ray and his partner.

RAY

That's close enough. Put the bags down.

Matt looks from Ray and the girl to his partner, the taller one. He wears no jacket, just a flannel shirt and jeans, points a gun at Matt's face. Ray calls from behind him...

RAY

Open the bags.

MATT

Let the girl go.

RAY

The money first.

Matt looks at the guy, then kneels down and unfastens the straps on one of the cases, lifts the lid to show the money.

MATT

Now let her go.

(stands up)

Then you can examine it.

Nobody moves.

TALL MAN

We oughta shoot this cocksucker, Ray.

RAY

Another time.

The guy puts the gun right in Matt's face now.

ON PETER

Watching through the scene through the gun scope, his hands shaking like mad, so that...

THE VIEW THROUGH THE SCOPE

Jittery, back and forth. Hard to see anything.

ON MATT

Staring back at the guy with the gun, his hand drifting behind, toward his own gun tucked into his pants.

MATT

Don't change the rules now, Ray. Let her go.

Ray looks down at the girl, sighs.

RAY

Ah, sweet Lucy. I hate to say good-bye, child.

He lets go of her. Even in the darkness the girl looks pale and drawn, her hands clutched together at her waist, her arms tight against her sides.

MATT

Come here, Lucia.

She doesn't move.

MATT

Your father's over there, sweetheart. Go to your father. Go ahead...

She takes a step and then stops. She's unsteady on her feet and she grips one hand tightly with the other.

CALLANDER

Go on. Run!

She looks at him, then at Matt. Her eyes are vacant and unfocused.

MATT

Yuri. Call her.

YURI

Luschka! Luschka, it's Papa! Come to Papa!

She recognizes the voice, but doesn't move. Yuri replies with something in Russian and the girl unclasps her hands and takes one step, then another.

MATT

What's the matter with her hand?

RAY

Nothing. She's right as rain...
(gives her a shove)
Go on, kid...

As she draws alongside Matt, he reaches for Lucia's hand. She snatches it away, but we can see that TWO FINGERS ARE MISSING. Matt stares coolly at Ray Callander.

RAY
Before you set the terms.

There's another burst of Russian from Yuri, and now she's moving faster, but hardly running. She can't seem to manage more than an awkward shuffle.

She gets to her father and he gathers her up in his arms. He holds onto her for dear life. He looks back at Matt...

MATT
Go on, Yuri, get outta here.

Matt watches them a moment, then turns back and faces TWO GUNS pointing at him as now Ray holds one as well.

RAY
I liked her. She was nice.

Matt looks at him a moment, his expression like he's just bitten into an aspirin, then opens the second suitcase and steps back a couple of paces. Ray steps forward, flips through half a dozen packs, but doesn't count any of them. He then closes the cases.

RAY
Take them to the car.

TALL MAN
Don't tell me what to do, Ray.

But the tall man picks up the cases anyway and starts off with them. Ray watches him a moment, then looks at Matt.

RAY
Sorry about the finger.

MATT
Fingers.

RAY
As you prefer. He's difficult to control sometimes.

MATT
You're the one, likes the wire.

He considers Matt a moment, then...

RAY
I appreciate the week's lead time. I think it's time to try a new climate.
(then)
I don't think Albert will want to come with me.

MATT
You're gonna leave him here?

RAY
In a manner of speaking.

MATT
How did you find him?

RAY
Oh, we found each other. People with...
specialized tastes often find each other
like that.

MATT
Can I ask you a question?

RAY
Go right ahead.

MATT
Why do you do it?

RAY
Take a psychiatrist to answer that one,
wouldn't it? Something buried in my
childhood. Isn't that what it always
turns out to be?

MATT
That's not what I meant. I really don't
give a shit how you got this way. As far
as I'm concerned you're just some kind of
genetic fuck up, can't help himself. All
I want to know is why you do it.

RAY
You think I have a choice?

MATT
I don't know. Do you?

RAY
Why aren't you afraid? I've got a gun on
you and you act like it's a fucking water
pistol.

MATT
I don't know. Maybe I don't care if you
shoot me or not. Or maybe there's a high
powered rifle trained on you right now...

Ray looks around as we now...

CUT TO: PETER

As the rifle in his sweaty hands slips off the tombstone and into
the grass. He fumbles for it.

PETER
Shit...

ON MATT & RAY

Ray looks back at Matt.

RAY
I could still kill you.

MATT
I'm right here. Some ways, you'd be
doing me a big favor.

RAY
And let Albert keep everything? No, I
don't think so. But I do think it's time
for me to melt into the shadows. Turn
around, start walking back toward your
friends.

Matt does as he's told. After a moment.

RAY
They're not real.

Matt turns back, sees the form of Ray now dark in the shadows.

RAY
The women I mean. When you have a
hamburger are you eating a cow? Of
course not. You're eating a hamburger.

He steps forward so that his face emerges from the shadows.

RAY
Walking down the street she's a woman.
But once she gets in the truck that's
over. She's just body parts.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

As Matt slowly walks into the light where Kenny and Peter wait
under a light rain beside Kenny's car. Matt looks at Peter.

MATT
You all right?

Peter nods and Matt looks into the backseat.

MATT
Where's TJ?

KENNY
I thought he was with you.

MATT
No...

Matt looks off towards the dark graveyard, concerned.

KENNY
Maybe he ran off. He did seem a little
spooked by the place.

MATT
He can't be out in the rain.
(starts walking)
We have to find him...

KENNY
Matt--

(Matt pauses)
He's got a phone, right?

MATT

Yeah...

Kenny takes out his cell phone, holds it out for Matt.

KENNY

What's the number?

INT. RAY & ALBERT'S HONDA CIVIC - SAME

As the two men drive in silence. We then BOOM DOWN to the back seat where we see TJ lying on the floor. And now we PUSH IN ON THE PHONE CLIPPED TO HIS BELT...

EXT. CEMETERY - SAME

As Kenny listens, then takes the phone from his ear, looks at it.

KENNY

No signal...

Kenny takes a few paces, tries to find a better signal...

INT. CAR - SAME

As the two men have a mumbled conversation we can't make out. TJ sweats it out on the floor.

EXT. CEMETERY - SAME

As Kenny stops walking, checks his phone...

EXT. A HOUSE IN SUNSET PARK - SAME

Even in the moonlight we can see the place has been neglected; the clapboard needs painting, the shrubbery overgrown. A half-flight of steps leads to a screened-in porch that sags in the middle.

EXT. CEMETERY - SAME

As Kenny steps up onto a grave marker, checks the phone.

KENNY

Here we go...

EXT. HOUSE IN SUNSET PARK - SAME

The Honda turns up a driveway, concrete patched here and there with blacktop that runs along the side of the house to a detached two-car garage.

INT. HONDA - SAME

As the two men get out of the car.

EXT. CEMETERY - SAME

As Matt and Peter walk over to Kenny...

KENNY
It's ringing--

INT. HONDA - SAME

Through the back window, we see Albert, the tall one, reaching for the garage door, pulling it down just as TJ'S PHONE RINGS, the SOUND OF THE SLIDING METAL DOOR OBSCURING THE PHONE AS...

TJ
(whispers)
Hello?

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

As Kenny nods to Matt, then...

KENNY
Where are you, kid?
(then)
Oh, fuck.

MATT
(takes the phone)
TJ?
(listens, then)
Listen to me-- get outta there. Now.

INT. GARAGE - SAME

As TJ peers through a grimy window out at the street.

TJ
Shhhh. Calm down, Matthew. It's cool.
I'm in the garage. They're inside the house.

INTERCUTTING MATT & TJ:

MATT
Which is where?

TJ
Good question...

MATT
Can you leave without them seeing you?

TJ
I think so...

He slowly raises the metal door, it SCREECHES...

EXT. CEMETERY - SAME

As Matt hears it and winces...

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - SAME

As Ray drops the money bags down on the table. Albert goes into the john off the kitchen, starts to pee with the door open. Ray shakes his head, kicks the door shut.

EXT. GARAGE - SAME

As TJ slides under the space between the bottom of the door and the driveway. Albert's head in the window above him as the man takes a leak. TJ stays low all the way out to the street. He looks back at the dark porch...

TJ
I can't see a number...

MATT
Try next door.

TJ
(looks)
694.

MATT
Okay, now walk away from the house, go to the nearest corner.

TJ
In motion...

TJ gets to the corner and looks up at the sign.

TJ
Fifty-first Street.

MATT
Sunset Park...

They all start walking back for the car.

TJ
I'm gonna keep an eye on 'em, make sure they don't--

MATT
No, TJ, you stay put. You hear me? Just wait for us on the corner. Understand?

But the phone's lost its signal.

MATT
Shit.

Matt runs for Kenny's car now.

EXT. HOUSE IN SUNSET PARK - NIGHT

A few lights are on in the house. TJ steps into FRAME, moves slowly up the driveway. He sees light coming from a basement window and moves to it.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

As Ray stands at the kitchen counter, rhythmically dipping an Oreo into a glass of milk, his eyes gazing into the distance. Albert comes in, takes the two cases off the table...

ALBERT
I'm counting it this time.

INT. THE BASEMENT - SAME

As TJ comes in through the window in a far corner, behind a workbench and a King-size MATTRESS that leans up against the wall. TJ sees a STUN GUN on the workbench, is reaching for it when suddenly Led Zeppelin begins blasting.

TJ drops, peers around the bench and sees Albert sitting in a chair at a ping-pong table, starts pulling the money from the cases.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Ray stares at the BASEMENT DOOR. Jimmy Page's guitar like fingers on a blackboard.

He finishes the cookie, rinses out the glass. He looks out the window and pauses.

WHAT HE SEES - THE GARAGE DOOR

Partly open. MUDDY FOOTPRINTS leading from it. Ray turns away from the window, looks once more down into the basement.

INT. BASEMENT - SAME

The MUSIC IS BLASTING as Albert counts the money. We see Ray coming down the stairs, the wire loop now in his hand...

TJ backs into the corner, presses up against the mattress. His face next to a rather recent-looking DARK-STAIN...

Albert sees THE MATTRESS MOVE over the top of the tool cabinet and starts to rise as now Ray comes up behind him and puts the loop over his head and tightens it.

TJ peers around the corner, Ray garroting his partner. Albert SEES TJ, but he can't speak, because Ray's got the wire around his throat. He pulls Ray with him over to the workbench, grabs the stun gun, but Ray hauls back harder on the wire and...

Albert finally goes slack and Ray gently leads him back down in the chair. He then turns off the stereo and goes back upstairs. With the two suitcases. As he does...

TJ once more peers around the corner, sees Albert slumped at the ping-pong table, face swollen grotesquely, the color of a bruise, eyes bulging from their sockets. The STUN GUN in his dead hands.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

As TJ pulls himself through the window and takes off running across the yard. He looks back at the house, runs smack dab into: MATT. He starts to scream, but Matt covers his mouth.

MATT

Guess we're in the right place.

CUT TO: WINDOW POV - THE KITCHEN

Where we see Ray just below us sitting at the table opening each stack of money, counting the bills, and writing the numbers down on a piece of paper. Kenny jumps down.

KENNY

The fat one's in the kitchen counting the money. I didn't see a gun anywhere.

CUT TO: THE FRONT DOOR

As Peter gets ready to break the glass.

CUT TO: THE BACK

As Matt boosts TJ up to look in the window.

CUT TO: PETER

Breaking the glass.

CUT TO: THE KITCHEN

Ray doesn't hear a thing, keeps counting.

CUT TO: TJ

As he looks at Matt gives him a thumbs up.

INT. HOUSE - SAME

As Matt now comes through the front door followed by the others. Each of them, except for TJ, with a gun in their hand. Matt and Kenny come to the kitchen door, and stand there. Ray is seated so that we see him in profile, a stack of bills in one hand, a pencil in the other.

After a moment, he senses something and slowly turns to face them. He says nothing at first, but then...

RAY

You said a week. You promised.

Matt and the others ignore him, come into the kitchen and start to gather up the money, jam it into the suitcase. Ray doesn't move, just watches.

MATT

We'll need the other suitcase.

Nobody moves. Nobody really wants to go down there.

TJ

I'll go get it.

INT. BASEMENT - SAME

As TJ starts down the stairs in the dark. He covers his nose and mouth with his shirt to filter the stench and walks straight for the suitcase, trying hard not to look at Albert. He sees all of the knives on the workbench. A stun gun. A cleaver. He backs away, bumps into Albert, jumps, and runs back up the stairs...

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

As TJ returns a moment later with the bag and they fill it. Ray looks at Kenny.

RAY
You're the husband.

KENNY
So?

RAY
I was just wondering.

They finish filling the suitcase and Matt looks at Ray.

MATT
Ray, where's the money you got from Mr. Kristo. The four hundred thousand?

RAY
We divided it. I don't know what Albert did with his half. I know it's not in the house.

MATT
And your half?

RAY
Safe deposit box. Brooklyn First Mercantile New Utrecht and Fort Hamilton Parkway. I'll go there in the morning on my way out of town.

KENNY
You will, huh? That's nice of you.

RAY
I can't decide whether to take the Honda or the van.

MATT
Were you just going to leave Albert down there?

RAY
Albert? No, I was going to tidy up a bit before I left.

MATT
What would you do with him?

RAY
Cut him up. Wrap him. There's plenty of Hefty bags in the cupboard.

KENNY
And then what? Deliver him to somebody in the trunk of a car?

RAY
No, that was just for you. But it's easy. You spread them around, put them in dumpsters, trash cans. No one ever notices. Put them in with restaurant garbage and they pass for meat scraps.

MATT
You've done this before?

RAY
Oh, yes, there were more women than you
know about.

He looks dreamily at TJ.

RAY
One black one I remember. She was just
about your color.
(sighs)
I'm so tired...

KENNY
He's a little whacked, isn't he. Anyway,
the half in the bank we can forget about.
Albert's half, I don't know, we could
turn the house upside down but I don't
think we're gonna find it, do you?

MATT
No.

KENNY
Probably buried it in the yard along with
a couple of bones. Fuck it, I'm not
supposed to have that money. I knew that
all along. Let's do what we gotta do and
get outta here.

MATT
You have a choice to make Kenny.

KENNY
How's that?

MATT
I can take him in. There's a lot of hard
evidence against him now. He's got his
dead buddy in the basement, and the van
in the garage is going to be full of
fibers and blood traces and God knows
what else that'll tie him to your wife or
Leila Alvarez or Marie Gotteskind. He
oughta be looking at three life
sentences, plus an extra twenty or thirty
years tacked on as a bonus.

KENNY
Can you guarantee he'll do life?

MATT
No. Nobody can guarantee anything when
it comes to the criminal justice system.
My best guess is that he'll wind up at
the State Hospital for the Criminally
Insane at Mateawan and that he'll never
leave the place alive. But anything
could happen. You know that.

KENNY

Going back to our deal, our deal wasn't about taking him in.

MATT

I know. That's why I'm saying it's your choice. But if you make the other choice I have to walk first.

KENNY

You don't want to be here for it.

MATT

No.

KENNY

Because you don't approve.

MATT

I don't approve or disapprove.

KENNY

Because it's not the kind of the thing you would ever do.

TJ looks at Matt.

MATT

No, that's just it, I have done it. It's just not something I want to make a habit of. And there's no reason why I should in this case. I could turn him over to Brooklyn Homicide and sleep fine.

KENNY

(looks at Ray)
I don't think I could.

MATT

That's why it has to be your decision.

KENNY

Yeah, well, I guess I just made it. I have to take care of it myself.

MATT

Then I guess I'll be going.

KENNY

Yeah, you and everybody else. It's a shame we didn't bring two cars. Matt, you and Peter take the money to Yuri.

MATT

Some of it's yours--

KENNY

Separate it out at his place. It got all mixed up with the counterfeit when this dickhead here counted it.

RAY

Counterfeit? What counterfeit?

MATT
How much time you gonna need?

KENNY
Pick me up on the corner two hours from now. C'mon, we'll take these out to the car. Matt, watch him, huh.

Matt is once again alone with Ray as Kenny and Peter carry the bags outside.

RAY
You're going to leave me with the dope dealer and he's going to kill me.

MATT
Yeah.
(looks at him)
I am.

EXT. SUNSET PARK HOUSE - NIGHT

As Matt and Peter walk out to the car where TJ waits. Matt looks thoughtfully back at the house, then gives TJ a key.

MATT
You can crash at my place. Peter'll give you a ride back.

PETER
Where you going, Matt?

MATT
I'm gonna catch a meeting somewhere.

EXT. HOUSE IN SUNSET PARK - NIGHT

The lights on. The decrepit structure standing there like one of the old tilted markers at Green-Wood.

INT. AA MEETING - BROOKLYN SOMEWHERE - NIGHT

As Matt takes his seat in the back. A YOUNG GIRL, pretty, the face of an angel, no more than nineteen, stands up to read THE TWELVE STEPS.

GIRL
Step one. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.

Matt stares at the girl as she speaks.

GIRL
Step two. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity...

CUT TO: THE HOUSE IN SUNSET PARK

A light GOES ON in the basement.

GIRL (VO)
Step three. Made a decision to turn our
will and our lives over to God as we
understood him.

CUT TO: THE GIRL AT THE MEETING

GIRL
Step four. Made a searching and fearless
moral inventory of ourselves...

ON MATT

Troubled. Listening to the words, as if for the first time.

GIRL (OS)
Step five. Admitted to God, to
ourselves, and to another human being the
exact nature of our wrongs...

CUT TO: THE HOUSE IN SUNSET PARK

A shadow cuts across a window.

GIRL (VO)
Step six. Were entirely ready to have
God remove all these defects of
character.

CUT TO: MATT

Listening, now looking away, thoughtful.

GIRL (OS)
Step seven. Humbly asked him to remove
our shortcomings.

CUT TO: THE GIRL

As she tosses her hair back, continues reading...

GIRL
Step eight. Made a list of all persons
we had harmed, and became willing to make
amends to them all.

CUT TO: MATT

As he looks around the room now, uncomfortable...

GIRL (OS)
Step nine. Made direct amends to such
people wherever possible, except when to
do so would injure them or others.

And now Matt stands up at the back of the room as we...

CUT TO: THE HOUSE IN SUNSET PARK

As we hear SOMETHING BREAK INSIDE.

GIRL (VO)
 Step ten. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

CUT TO: THE AA MEETING

As Matt walks up the aisle for the door, the girl reading at the front of the room behind him. He bursts through the doors...

GIRL
 Step eleven. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him...

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

As Matt runs down the stairs...

GIRL (VO)
 ...praying for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

EXT. HOUSE IN SUNSET PARK - NIGHT

As inside we hear A MAN SCREAM.

GIRL
 Step twelve. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps...

CUT TO: THE GIRL

GIRL
 ...we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principals in our affairs.

She then sits down as we...

CUT TO: THE HOUSE IN SUNSET PARK

As Matt steps into FRAME. He stands a moment there looking across the street at the house, then crosses to it.

INT. HOUSE - SAME

As Matt slowly opens the front door. Stands in the doorway. Staring down the hall. Listening. IT IS DEADLY SILENT. He draws his gun and steps inside, the door closing behind him.

MATT

Kenny?

We hear only the occasional creak of a floorboard as Matt now starts down the hall for the lighted kitchen. He gets closer, and we see A BLOODY HANDPRINT ON A WALL, and then. He quietly moves into the doorway and freezes.

WHAT HE SEES

Blood everywhere. On the floor. On the walls. A smear of blood leads to the doorway to the basement. Matt cautiously moves to it, looks down the stairs at...

A BODY

Face down, at the bottom of the staircase. As if it had fallen down the stairs. Or had been thrown down. Matt moves down the stairs, slips in the blood and slides to the bottom next to the man lying there.

It's Kenny Kristo. Eyes wide open, but empty. His head turned at an impossible angle, looking back. Matt looks to where his arms end in a pool of blood on the floor and we see that both of his hands have been cut off.

Matt looks down into the basement. It's dark. We see the figure of Albert still sitting in the chair by the ping-pong table.

Matt picks himself up, starts back up the stairs. He nearly gets to the top when we HEAR A THUMP IN THE DARK BEHIND HIM. He stops and looks down into the dark basement. He then stands there in silence, his gun pointed into the darkness, watches as Kenny's body slowly slides in its own blood down another step, his foot THUMPING on the step. Matt lowers his gun as...

The figure of Ray now appears behind him, at the top of the stairs, A WIRE IN HIS HANDS. He raises it, Matt turning just as Ray slips the wire over Matt's head.

Matt instinctively puts his gun between his neck and the piano wire, momentarily stopping the wire from biting into his flesh, but he then also inadvertently pulls the trigger, the explosion blinding him while the bullet grazes his cheek, leaving a faint RED LINE along Matt's jaw line on its way up into the ceiling.

Matt tries to reach back for Ray with his other hand while Ray tries to get his own hand on Matt's gun, Ray jams the muzzle up into Matt's chin, Matt yanks the gun and the wire comes out of Ray's hand, but the gun flies with it up into the kitchen.

Ray makes a move for it and Matt grabs him from behind, slipping in the thick blood on the stairs and the two men go sliding down, right over Kenny Kristo and into the dark basement.

Ray grabs a hammer from the workbench and immediately brings it down on Matt's shoulder. Matt topples backwards, falling over the dead Albert in the chair and collapsing the ping-pong table.

Ray steps forward and kicks Matt in the face, brings the hammer down again, this time on Matt's hand as he tries to roll out of the way. He sees THE STUN GUN in Albert's hands, in his lap.

Ray now grabs a bloody cleaver from the workbench, takes a step towards Matt and raises it over his head. Matt yanks the STUN GUN from Albert's hands and jams it into Ray's belly. We hear THE LOUD ZAP and Ray folds up and goes down.

Ray doesn't move for a moment. Matt lies there on the floor beside him, breathing hard. He finally sits up and ZAPS HIM AGAIN. Matt then gets up, walks back up the bloody stairs.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

As Matt grabs his GUN from the top step and slowly starts back down into the basement...

INT. BASEMENT -- SAME

As Ray struggles to his knees. Matt walks up to him. Puts the gun to his forehead.

MATT
Close your eyes...

RAY
Please... we had a deal...

MATT
Close them.

And Ray does. Matt leans close... whispers...

MATT
You're not real...

Ray looks up, starts to say something when MATT SHOOTS HIM.

MATT
You're just body parts.

Matt SHOOTS HIM AGAIN.

EXT. HOUSE IN SUNSET PARK - DAWN

Now a major crime scene, blue & white, yellow tape everywhere. Matt stands across the street watching Durkin talk to several DETECTIVES. Durkin says something and they all look at Matt. Durkin then crosses to him. They stand there a moment.

MATT
You want my statement.

DURKIN
Eventually.
(then)
Go home.

And with that, Durkin turns and walks back across the street.

INT. ELAINE'S APARTMENT - DAWN

As Elaine opens the door to find Matt standing there, his clothes ripped, blood on his hands and face. All of him now soaking wet.

ELAINE
Matt, what happened--

He pulls her to him, holds onto her, tight, doesn't let go.

ELAINE
What's wrong?

She looks at him and he kisses her, hard on the mouth. Clings to her even after they finally part.

She studies him a moment, then takes his hand and leads him down the hall into the bedroom where she sits on the bed, falls slowly onto her back, drawing him down with her.

He keeps kissing her, running his hands inside her robe, hungry and in a hurry to be all over her at once. We hear him WHISPER.

ELAINE

What is it? Tell me...

He opens his eyes, buries his head in her hair, whispers...

MATT

I'm sorry...

ELAINE

It's all right...

He stares past her to where we see the little girl, ESTRELLITA RIVERA STANDING BESIDE THE BED. He says again:

MATT

I'm sorry... I'm sorry...

ELAINE

It's all right...

And the little girl mouths the words as Elaine speaks them:

ELAINE

I forgive you.

And as the little girl FADES AWAY, the PURPLE RIBBON the last to disappear, Matt closes his eyes and wraps himself around Elaine, trying to make himself a part of her. We then...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MATT'S HOTEL - MORNING

An AMBULANCE just pulling away as Matt crosses to the building.

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT - MORNING

As Matt comes in and takes off his coat. He pauses as he sees TJ sleeping on the couch, a half-dozen pages of his drawings on the floor beside him. Matt pulls a blanket off the bed and covers the boy with it. ♦

He picks up one of the drawings, then sits down in the armchair and examines it...

INSERT - TJ'S DRAWING

The defeat of the red *Half Moons* by the white *Jubilant Ghosts*.

MATT

Looks up from the drawing to the sleeping TJ, Matt's own eyes getting heavy now as he smiles to himself and watches the boy sleep, the drawing slipping from his hands to the floor as we then...

FADE OUT.