

American Pastoral

screenplay by John Romano

from the novel by Philip Roth

Lynda Obst Productions
Paramount Pictures

ROUGH draft, October 1, 2001

TITLE FADES IN OVER BLACK:

1943

...Fade out.

SOUND in gradually: A *snare drum*, rapping out a *rhythm*: rolling, infectious, like a marching-band...

FADE IN (*quick, incoherent glimpses*):

CLOSE-UPS IN A FOOTBALL HUDDLE. Muddy uniforms. The players are high-school boys. Huddle breaks up...

Hut, hut...

Ball's snapped...

ONE TALL BLONDE BOY ("SWEDE" LEVOV at 17) springs into motion across the backfield...

...As he strides past us, he WIPES THE SCREEN TO BLACK.

Drums continue over.

FADE IN (*more quick glimpses*):

SPIKES DIG INTO THE MUD, BODIES CRASH, GRUNTS...

THE STANDS ARE EMPTY, it's a practice scrimmage, but there are spectators: Boys, girls... CAMERA PICKS UP: NATHAN ZUCKERMAN at 10, watching... ADORING...

SWEDE, running with the ball, deftly side-steps a tackle... Shakes off another...

NATHAN and the other boys, staring, wide-eyed, AS...

CAMERA swivels to SWEDE'S POV, RUNNING, HAND-HELD: Clear field before him... Green, open field...

...Fade again to BLACK.

Drum CONTINUES: rhythm, rhythm...

And now, gradually: GIRLS' VOICES, CHEERLEADERS, in time to the rhythm...

SWEDE Le-VOV,
 RHYMES with the LOVE,
 SWEDE Le-VOV,
 RHYMES with the LOVE...
 (continues...)

FADE IN: CHEERLEADERS, FOUR HIGH-SCHOOL GIRLS in coats and scarves, leaning together against the November cold...

SWEDE, RECEIVING A LONG PASS... lopes, loose and easy... Tall frame, easy power...

REACTION: NATHAN and the other boys... CLOSER: Their "ethnic" faces, long-ago faces...

CAMERA goes in for a CLOSER LOOK AT THE SWEDE: fair-haired, blue eyes, face of strength and goodness... as we HEAR THE VOICE of GROWN-UP NATHAN, recollecting...

NATHAN (VOICE-OVER)

"The Swede."
 During the war years, this was a magical name in our Newark neighborhood. His athletic prowess, in every sport. His anomalous face. Of the few fair-complexioned students in our mainly Jewish public school, none possessed anything like the Viking mask of this blue-eyed blond, born into our tribe as Seymour Irving Levov...

CUT TO:

EXT. BUSY STREET IN THE JEWISH NEIGHBORHOOD ("WEEQUAHIC") - DAY

GIRLS DOING THE "SWEDE" CHEER... this time in front of a delicatessen with Hebrew lettering in the window... a dress

shop... a store selling yahrzeit candles, menorahs...

REVEAL that they're doing the cheer because the SWEDE is going past, with his family: father LOU, mother SYLVIA, and brother JERRY, bright red hair, 10. They're small, ordinary-looking people seen beside Swede. Who smiles at the girls as he passes...

NATHAN (V.O., CONT'D)

Watching him, we could forget the
way things actually worked.
We could forget the war.

One of the girls can't stand it. Cries out, comic/passionate --

GIRL

Come back, come back, Levov of my life!

She fake-swoons... Swede waves, good-natured... and heads with his family up the steps of the old Temple B'nai Abraham...

At the top of the steps, CAMERA PICKS UP YOUNG NATHAN running from his family to join the Levovs and his friend Jerry...

NATHAN (V.O., CONT'D)

I was privileged. As his brother Jerry's one and only friend, I got closer to the Swede than any of the other kids ever dreamed of. I could even go to the Swede's house, on Keer Avenue, where the rich Jews lived...

EXT. LEVOV HOUSE - DAY

Shade trees over a modest neighborhood house of the period... Nathan and Jerry run in through the front door...

Of course, the price was having to play ping-pong with Crazy Jerry in the Levovs' finished basement...

INT. LEVOV'S BASEMENT - ANGLE ON JERRY

SMASHING SHOT AFTER SHOT OF THE LITTLE WHITE BALL DIRECTLY AT NATHAN'S TERRIFIED HEAD...

To Jerry the purpose of ping-pong wasn't winning. It was murder.

CUT TO:

INT. "NEWARK MAID" LEATHER GLOVE FACTORY - DAY

LOU LEVOV in shirt-sleeves, among his (mostly black) WORKERS on the floor of his factory: Two hundred sewing machines humming, whirring, as Lou hustles about... Voice-over continues...

Sometimes I'd go with Jerry to the family's glove factory, where Lou Levov had his desk right in the middle of everything, just to make sure his people weren't costing him money by not using every scrap of the precious leather...

Finding a piece of leather under a worker's table, Lou thrusts it in the worker's face...

LOU

Look at this! This is money! This is money I could put in my pocket!

Nathan and Jerry run by, playing at being soldiers... Lou shouts (as always)...

LOU

Hey you kids! Be careful!

Nathan steals a look, AT: the Swede, working one of the machines...

NATHAN (V.O.)

On weekends the Swede himself was there, learning the business from the bottom up. But that was only when he wasn't winning for Weequahic in football... or baseball...

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY - SWEDE

At the plate, Swede cracks a line drive down Third. Third basemen ducks out of the way...

Or basketball...

INT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT - SWEDE

Swede pivots under the basket, lays up a soft finger-roll. Crowd lights up...

CUT TO:

INT. LEVOV'S HOUSE - CORRIDOR - ANGLE INTO: SWEDE'S BEDROOM

NATHAN, as he passes, looks into the Swede's room, tentative...

It never crossed my mind that the
Swede noticed me hanging around...

Pennants on the wall, 78-rpm playing. Nathan's awe-struck...
SWEDE has his back to the door, he's curling a free-weight in one
hand while doing homework with the other. Turns to see if
someone's there...

But Nathan's gone. Swede goes back to his book.

Then one unforgettable day...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - A PERFECT FALL DAY

The golden light of afternoon floods the field, sparkles off the
Swede's helmet... He's on kick-off return, the ball's kicked, it
lofts on high....

Swede snatches it out of the air, digs in and heads downfield...

But... REACTION NATHAN on the sidelines, AS...

THE ENTIRE OPPOSING SQUAD COLLAPSES ON SWEDE. One player on top
of another. Swede is flattened beneath.

Nathan and the others, watching... worried...

One by one the opponents peel off the pile, as... the COACH BLOWS
THE WHISTLE for the end of practice...

COACH

That's it, hit the showers!...

As the others hurry off, Swede sits up. Gets to his feet.
Tentatively flexes an elbow, half-running, half-limping off the
field... He spots NATHAN among the other kids. Smiles and calls
to him, without stopping...

SWEDE

Basketball was never like this, Skip!

ON NATHAN... surprised, dazzled...

NATHAN (V.O.)

The Swede... had called me by my nickname! The God himself! I was thrilled...

SWEDE, continues to run past...

The generosity of it, the princely graciousness! The self-pleasure so abundant that a portion could be freely given to the crowd, to me...

NATHAN watching from a distance, SWEDE laughs with his teammates, removing his helmet...

If at that moment someone asked me to predict the Swede's future, I would have had no problem: Our gifted, clear-eyed hero was going to march through life, carrying all before him...

EXT. PENNSYLVANIA STATION, NEWARK - DAY

SWEDE at 20, in the uniform of the United States Marines, gets off a train with other servicemen... briskly steps toward his waiting parents on the platform...

And so it seemed in the years that followed. He went off to the Marines, just missed the end of the fighting... But best of all was the girl he came home to when the war was over...

Swede frees himself from his mother's embrace to rush to... DAWN DWYER at 20, petite, blue-eyed, dressed up to greet her guy...

Miss Dawn Dwyer, a blue-eyed Irish-American beauty from Elizabeth...

They KISS as Jerry and NATHAN look on admiringly.... holding up a WELCOME HOME SWEDE! sign...

INT. MISS AMERICA PAGEANT - ATLANTIC CITY - DAY

DOWN THE FAMOUS RUNWAY comes DAWN, in a white one-piece "Catalina" bathing suit, the words MISS NEW JERSEY on a purple sash draped across it, smiling at the crowds -- and especially at SWEDE, in the throng nearest the runway, he's applauding madly --

Dawn Dwyer, the milkman's daughter
who made it all the way to the
finals of the Miss America pageant
in Atlantic City...

Off Swede's cheering applause, Dawn throwing him a proud look...

Swede married her. He married a
shiksa! He'd done it!

EXT. SNOWY DAY, COLLEGE CAMPUS -- NATHAN at 20

Runs across the Ivy-League "quad" into a building, which is...

INT. CAMPUS POST OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Nathan, entering, pounds snow from his gloves...

When I went away to college and my
own life began, my parents still
wrote to me about the Swede...

Nathan pulls a letter from his P.O. Box on the wall of
combination boxes... tears it open, reads...

...How these days he commuted every
day to his father's factory from a
house he'd bought way out past the
suburbs... way out in wealthy,
rural Old Rimrock...

EXT. OLD RIMROCK, N.J. - SUMMER DAY - FROM A MOVING CAR

SWEDE in his late 20s, driving his 1955 "Olds 88", coming home
from work...

HIS POV - ESTABLISH: HAMLIN'S GENERAL STORE/POST OFFICE

On the one and only main street. A Sunoco pump out front, signs
for soft-drinks, old-fashioned tubs and washboards for sale...
and the AMERICAN FLAG high on its flag pole above it all...

INT. HAMLIN'S GENERAL STORE/POST OFFICE - DAY

The Post Office part's in the back, just one window beside the
combination boxes. RUSS HAMLIN, 50, is at the cash register.
Seated at the counter is FRED CONLON, family doctor, 30s, sipping
coffee. Swede enters in a hurry, greets...

SWEDE

Russ... Dr. Fred...

DR. CONLON

How you doin'? Family good?

SWEDE

Swell, thanks.

Swede grabs a newspaper from a pile of reserved copies: THE NEWARK EVENING NEWS. INSERT: His copy's marked in the corner: "Levov."

SWEDE

See you tomorrow, Russ.

And goes...

EXT. SWEDE'S POV - FROM HIS MOVING CAR AGAIN...

PASSES, the Congregational Church, the schoolhouse...

PASSES, country road, white pasture fences, cows... to...

EXT. SWEDE'S AND DAWN'S HOUSE (hereafter: "OLD RIMROCK HOUSE")...

SWEDE pulls up the gravel & dirt driveway. Stone house, 300 years old, surrounded by fields.

AN ANCIENT OAK TREE, from which a swing hangs, with a little girl in it: **MERRY LEVOV** at 3. DAWN comes out the kitchen door to greet her husband...

NATHAN (V.O.)

Perfect house, perfect wife --
perfect baby --

Merry gets off the swing, runs to the Swede...

MERRY

Daddy!

NATHAN (V.O.)

-- When I heard about the Swede's great life, I'd think, Of course. That's the way it had to be. Perfect everything. He was the Swede. I was sure of it. I'd bet anything.

INTERCUT: Swede lifting little Merry into the air... Younger Swede playing football, leaping gracefully to snatch a pass from mid-air... Merry again, laughing, as Swede swings her through the air... Swede's own handsome face as he does so, grinning with the plenitude of his satisfaction...

I was wrong.
Never more mistaken about anyone in
my life.

Fade to BLACK.

FADE IN: Gradually: AN OMINOUS FIGURE IS MOVING IN DARKNESS.

INT. A ROOM WE DON'T RECOGNIZE. CAN'T SEE.

Boxes, crates. Hands fumble in the dark, attempting to clear a path to the wall. Having to move out of the way: what looks darkly like postal equipment, rolls of automatic stamp ribbons, parcel envelopes stacked waist high, mail sacks...

The person doing all this, age and gender and features indiscernible, the awkward angles...

Suddenly there's a SOUND of FOOTSTEPS. The mystery-person stops. Footsteps continue... then retreat. And a door closes.

Silence.

The mystery-person resumes. Crouches. Goes obscurely to work.

EXT. HAMLIN'S GENERAL STORE/POST OFFICE - DIM LIGHT, EARLY MORNING - A CAR

An unwashed but new 1968 BUICK: pulls to a stop by the outside mailbox, beside the flagpole.

Man gets out of the car with letters to mail: Dr. Fred Conlon, 40s (10 years older than when we saw him). He leaves his car door open, so that we HEAR its AM radio, music of the era, the Beatles' "I Am the Walrus..."

Dr. Fred puts his letters in the mailbox, gets back in his car. In the dull morning breeze, the Flag flaps once above.

CAMERA DROPS BACK. Empty moments. Then:

K-BOOM.

K-BOOM!

Post office, general store, Fred Conlon and his car, the flagpole, the gravel. The very AIR.

In the after-shock, a conflagration.

All is wrecked and burning. Burns.

On the quiet street.

Fade to **BLACK.**

TITLE FADES IN OVER BLACK:

1962

...Fades out.

FADE IN: INT. BARN - EARLY MORNING - ON:

"COUNT:" A STUD BULL. 2000 pounds, beautiful prize-winner, white with brown spots. Tended by...

Dawn. In her Upsala College sweatshirt. Face smudged. Glances at her watch...

INT. OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENT LATER

Swede at the table, cup of coffee. Handsome, in weekend clothes, he's on the phone...

SWEDE

(into phone)

Dad, calm down! I stopped by the tannery on the way home from work, I talked to Milton... He's not cheating you...

(listens, protests)

Milt Keller is not stealing from you, he's known you a hundred years! I'll show you the paperwork when you get here...

Looks up as... Dawn enters from outside. He leans away from the phone, kisses her as she passes...

SWEDE

'Morning...

DAWN

'Morning...

SWEDE

(into phone)

Yes that's Dawn, Dad...

DAWN
(exiting room, calls)
"Good morning, Lou!"

SWEDE
(into phone)
Dawn says Good morning. What time
are you and Mom getting here
anyway?...

INT. MERRY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

ENTER with Dawn. She opens the shade, lets in morning light.

PICTURES OF AUDREY HEPBURN on the wall. Ballet slippers hang
nearby. And an old pennant of the Swede's: "WEEQUAHIC HIGH."

Dawn sits on the edge of the bed. Bends and strokes: the heavily
sleeping head of MERRY at age 11. Lightly asks for --

DAWN
A sign of life?

Merry motionless. Again --

DAWN
Merry? A sign of life, please?

Merry moves a little finger. Eyes still shut.

DAWN
Another sign?

Merry wrinkles her nose. Sighs. But that's all. It's a game.

Another beat, and Dawn's hands "attack" Merry's middle, tickle
her. Merry fights a laugh, but begins to smile... But still keeps
her eyes closed. Buries deeper beneath blankets.

ANGLE -- SWEDE is in the doorway. Taking in his wife and
daughter. His happiness.

CUT TO:

EXT. PORCH - OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - LATER THAT DAY

FOURTH OF JULY BARBECUE in progress...

MERRY
Lady J-J-Jane's g-gonna have a c-c-

cuh-calf, G-Grandpa, I hope it's a heifer...

LOU

What's a heifer, sweetheart? You gotta remember, you're talking to a guy from Newark...

MERRY

It's a g-g-g-g-girl, G-Grandpa...

DAWN

(passing a plate)

Have some corn, Lou...

Both Levov grandparents are there... also JERRY LEVOV, now a doctor in his 20's... also BILL AND JESSE ORCUTT, Swede's WASP neighbors, the wife a horsy blond type, the husband a big-faced golfer in a Madras shirt... while MERRY CONTINUES excitedly...

MERRY

I b-b-bet it's g-gonna have b-b-buh-brown spots just like C-Count... That's who umumum-mount-m-mounted her...

LOU

Mounts? That's a way for a girl to talk?

JERRY

What's she supposed to say, Dad, make love? It's a cow...

LOU

And what does my son need with cows?

SWEDE

Dad, we don't need them, we like them...

ORCUTT

From what I hear, Dawn's got dairy-farming in her blood, just like you folks have the glove business...

JERRY

(corrects)

Like *they*'ve got the glove business. My brother and my father. Not me.

LOU

Dairy farm is one thing, but what do they have to be this far from civilization? No offense to you locals, Mr. Orcutt, but let's be candid, we're out in the middle of nowhere here. This is Ku Klux Klan country...

MERRY

(tugs his sleeve)

G-Grandpa!...

SWEDE

The Klan doesn't exist anymore, Dad...

LOU

Doesn't it. Let's be candid. This is all rock-ribbed Republican, am I right?

JESSE ORCUTT

That's true, that's so...

MERRY

(persists)

G-grandpa...

LOU

What, sweetheart.

MERRY

C-come to the barn, Grandpa, I want to show you C-Count, he's so b-buh-beautiful, wuh-wait til you s-s-s-s-s-s-suh-suh-

Dawn stops passing the food, her glare on Merry... Merry feels it, but continues struggling...

MERRY

S-suh-suh-suh-SUH-SUH-SUH-See.

Looks at her mother: A little triumph. While...

SWEDE, in his barbecue apron, has risen, CLINKS A SPOON on his glass, signals for a toast...

SWEDE

Everybody! Jerry! Dad!

(raises a glass)

I'm not a religious man. But

looking around the table tonight, I
know that something is shining down
on me. On all of us.

He drinks. So do they all... And as the CAMERA TRAILS THE TABLE,
THE FAMILY, THE FIELDS, THE HOUSE... Over which...

NATHAN (V.O.)

Our super-ordinary Swede. How could
he have known that the price for
living a life of total goodness was
going to be so high? He was really
living it out, his version of
paradise. God was smiling down on
him...

CAMERA MOVES IN ON MERRY...

But nothing was smiling down on
anybody... and already everything
was beginning to change...

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - HARD BRIGHT SUN - THE JERSEY SHORE - DAY

Swede carrying umbrella, blanket, beach bag, etc... as he and
Merry and trudge across the sand toward the cottage...

Hot sand scalds her feet... She runs mincingly...

MERRY

Ouch Ouch Ouch Ouch Ouch...

SWEDE

(laughing)

I told you to put on your sandals!

MERRY

You d-d-d-d-didn't tell me exactly
how h-h-h-hot the sand was! Ouch
ouch ouch...

SWEDE

You want me to measure it with a
thermometer?

MERRY

(sarastic)

Th-th-thu-thu-that would be very
nice, thank you!

Still laughing, he picks her up under one arm, lugs her with the beach equipment accross the sand towards the cottage... She squeals happily under his arm...

CUT TO:

INT. SEASIDE COTTAGE - THAT NIGHT

Under lamplight: Merry's wet head, after a bath. She's in her pajamas. Cutting from a copy of Life Magazine... A PICTURE:

AUDREY HEPBURN posing for photographers outside a theater. Merry studies the pose. Imitates it.

MERRY

Do I l-look like Audrey Hepburn?

Swede's at the table, working on some papers. Barely glances.

SWEDE

Better. You look like Meredith Levov.

She's pasting the picture in a big scrapbook, along with other pictures of Audrey Hepburn...

MERRY

Do you m-m-miss um-um-um-mother?

SWEDE

Sure I do.

MERRY

M-m-muh-me too.

SWEDE

She couldn't come with us this weekend. Lady Jane's gonna have that calf any day now.

(looks up)

Have you had a good time here?

MERRY

W-wu-wu-with you? Terrible.

He throws a crumped sheet of paper at her. They both go back to what they're doing. Only this time, unself-consciously...

MERRY (SINGS)

Moon ri-ver,
Wi-der than a mile,
I'm crossing you in style, some day...

Dream-maker... (etc.)

Without stuttering.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH HIGHWAY- NEXT DAY

Hot warp of sun off the asphalt. A breaker-wall of dark boulders line one side.

On the other side: Pounding surf. Something hostile, unwelcoming about that sea.

Cruising by: a white 1960 MG CONVERTIBLE. Top down. Swede and his young daughter Merry. Trunk strapped down to contain bulging bags, suitcases.

INT/EXT. CONVERTIBLE

They're driving home in their bathing suits. Merry, dopily sun-drunk, leans her tan cheek against Swede's bare shoulder as he drives. Turns up her face to him.

CLOSE ANGLE: She gazes up adoringly at her loving father. Then, half-innocent, half audacious...

MERRY

Daddy? Kiss me the way you k-k-kiss
umumumumother.

She's playing. But Swede's uncomfortable. In the heat of the sun. Squints.

His POV: Merry's bathing-suit strap has slipped off her shoulder. Nub of her pre-pubescent breast shows.

MERRY

(playing at being older)
Daddy k-k-kiss me...

SWEDE

(suddenly harsh, mocking)
N-N-N-No.

Mocking her, unexpectedly. She's shocked. He adds:

SWEDE

And fix your suit.

Hurt, silent, she obeys. Then he's guilty --

SWEDE
I'm sorry, cookie --

MERRY
(mad at herself)
Oh I deserve it. It's the same at
school with my friends. I get
started with something and I go t-
t-too far, I get c-c-carried awuh-
awuh-awuh-awuh-awuh --

As she goes on, stammering painfully, lips turning white... the
Swede's wracked with guilt, can't believe he made fun of her...

MERRY (CONT'D)
(tears coming --)
Awuh-awuh-awuh - AWUH - AWUH -

Her face, neck twisting, as she struggles to get out the word...

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S (SHEILA SALZMAN'S) OFFICE - DAY

SHEILA, 32, glasses, pretty in a sweater-wearing grad student sort of way. Dipping a tea bag as --

SHEILA

I adore Merry. I think she's very special.

SWEDE

Thank you. We all do.

A beat.

SHEILA

When she's here, I sometimes ask her, "Merry, what terrible thing do you think would happen if you stopped stuttering?" I ask her, "How do you think your father or mother would feel about you if you just stopped?"

Swede's puzzled at this.

SWEDE

But she can't stop.

She looks at him, pities his lack of understanding. Spells out:

SHEILA

I think Merry's stuttering is a strategy, Mr. Levov.

SWEDE

A strategy. For what?

SHEILA

(speculates)

Oh -- for avoiding competition with the beautiful mother, the beautiful Miss New Jersey mother... For winning the handsome father...

SWEDE

(doubtful)

This is about our looks? Doctor --

SHEILA

"Sheila."

SWEDE

-- Stuttering isn't something Merry chooses. It makes her suffer --

SHEILA

Maybe the benefits outweigh the suffering.

SWEDE

But it's killing us to see her stutter, it's killing her mother --

SHEILA

Maybe that's one of the benefits.

She smiles at her own cleverness, goes on...

Have you thought about how difficult it must be for Merry? To grow up the daughter of somebody who had so much attention for such a, a trivial thing as beauty? Maybe she stutters to stop people from asking, "Do you want to be Miss New Jersey, just like your mommy?"

SWEDE

(exasperated)
Who asks her that? Nobody asks her that! My wife isn't Miss New Jersey, she's her mother!

SHEILA

But you do see how in a highly pressured, perfectionist family she might adopt a stutter to --

SWEDE

We're not "high-pressured!" And she hasn't "adopted" anything!

(trying to calm --)

Look, what about the, the physiological basis for her stuttering --

SHEILA

Oh I can give you organic theories if you want. But that isn't the way I've found I can be most effective.

Off Swede, frustrated --

CUT TO:

INT. "NEWARK MAID" LEATHER GLOVE FACTORY - FLOOR - DAY

The floor's noisy and humming, as a busy Swede in shirtsleeves passes through among his workers, down the LONG ROW OF SEWING MACHINES -- His father Lou keeps pace, impatient as ever --

LOU

A psychiatrist? A head-shrinker?
There's nothing wrong with that
little girl!

SWEDE

Dad...

LOU

Her mind... on her
tongue, that's all... I just
saved you the money you give to the
shrink, because that's all it is...

SWEDE

We just want to help her, Dad...

LOU

She's gonna make you proud someday.

SWEDE

I know that.

Then Swede HALTS as he passes one of the machines. Stops by it,
asks the WORKER, FREDDY...

SWEDE

What do I hear, Freddy? Something
wrong with your machine?

FREDDY

Not much. Every now and then she
kicks...

SWEDE

That's no good, you'll be throwing
stitches. Send it down to the shop.

Lou, to VICKY (the black shop forewoman) -- he's proud --

LOU

He's got the ear. Picks out a bad
machine in a hundred.

VICKY
Gets it from you, Lou.

INT. SWEDE'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

As Swede and Lou enter... Swede closes the door...

SWEDE
How you feeling, Dad? You don't
need to come every day anymore...

LOU
Who comes every day. I don't.

But his gaze goes out the window, down to the street...

LOU'S DOWNWARD POV

On Central Avenue, Newark's old street of factories. Group of
BLACK MEN, all ages, standing around in the street, smoking,
drinking beer from paper bags, outside a deserted factory...

LOU
Look at that. Men outa work. Never
used to see that, not in Newark...

A COP moves along the black men, who resist mildly, then
disperse, as Lou watches... Lou shakes his head, sadly...

LOU
Used to be a dozen glovemakers, up
and down the street. Gloves,
brewers, sheet metal...

SWEDE
Just a few of us left.

LOU
Because the factories are moving.
To the Philipines, Puerto Rico...

SWEDE
(likes the sound of:)
Puerto Rico. That's where we open curs.

Lou looks at him, instantly furious...

LOU
That's why I retired? so you can
move Newark Maid outa Newark?

SWEDE

I'm saying we open a second plant,
that's all...

LOU

In Puerto Rico? There are cutters
down there? Real cutters, like the
Czechs and Italians in the old
days?

SWEDE

These aren't the old days. We train
them now. I did some projections...
Bottom line? We're making five
dollars a dozen here, down there we
can make ten.

Ten. Lou's impressed. Swede smiles at him, reassures...

SWEDE

Nobody's closing the factory, Dad.

Under which: Door opens and VICKY enters, stack of cards. Both
guys hurriedly, guiltily drop the subject... which she notes...

VICKY

Got the time-cards here..

SWEDE

Thanks, Vicky.

She drops them on Swede's desk. Then asks --

VICKY

How's that bright little girl of
yours?

Off which, Swede smiles --

CUT TO:

INT. OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Merry in her pajamas. On the floor, writing in a big red loose-
leaf binder.

Nearby, on the TV: "THE CBS EVENING NEWS, WITH WALTER CRONKITE."
Swede watches from the couch, Dawn brings him coffee...

With a sigh, Merry closes the big red book...

MERRY

F-finished with my stu-stuttering book. Do you w-want to check?

DAWN

Not if you say you've finished.

MERRY

My tuh-teacher in school never b-b-buh-believes me unless she checks.

Dawn pauses. "While we're on the subject --"

DAWN

Your teacher in school says you have a stubborn streak.

At which Merry makes a face, conspiratorially, to her father. A funny face that cracks the Swede up. But he asks, dutifully --

SWEDE

Merry? Why does she say that?

MERRY

B-because of the homework.

DAWN

The class had to write an answer to the question: "Why are we here?" And Merry wrote...

SWEDE

Merry can tell me herself.

MERRY

"W-wuh-wuh-why are apes here?"

SWEDE

(resists a smile)
That's it? One sentence?

DAWN

She made her rewrite it.

MERRY

S-so I wrote, "Why are k-kuh-k-kangaroos here?"

Another conspiratorial daughter-to-Dad grin. But there's more...

DAWN

And then last week, the question

was, "What is life?"

SWEDE
This is what they ask in school?
Whatever happened to the state
capitols?

MERRY
I kn-n-ow the state c-capital...

SWEDE
"What is life." What did you
answer.

MERRY
I d-d-d-don't r-r-r-r-remember.

SWEDE
(firm, when he has to be)
Yes you do.

MERRY
(She yields.)
"Life is just a short space of life
in wuh-which you are alive."

Swede, for a sec, is disturbed by the answer. Merry watches him.

MERRY (CONT'D)
Daddy do you un-un-un-un-unuh-

Swede waits patiently.

MERRY (CONT'D)
Do you un-un-

ON THE TV: MAP OF VIETNAM... Walter Cronkite begins a story... as
Merry finally gets it out:

MERRY (CONT'D)
-- understand?

SWEDE
I think I do.

Under which, the TV behind her, comes into focus...

ON THE TV -- A dusty street somewhere in ASIA. It WAVES IN THE
HEAT. CAMERA FINDS A GROUP OF SAFFRON-ROBED MONKS, squatting in
the stopped traffic for some sort of ritual...

AT THE CENTER OF CIRCLE IS AN ELDERLY MONK, graceful and shaven-

headed... As we watch, he up-ends a large plastic cannister, pouring something all over himself...

WALTER CRONKITE
In the South Vietnamese capital
today, a 70 year old buddhist monk
named Thich Quang Duc...

DAWN
(seeing what's on TV)
Oh my God what is this...

WALTER CRONKITE (CONT'D)
...burnt himself to death in protest over
the policies of President Ngo Dinh Duc...

MERRY TURNS, to see...

DAWN
Merry shouldn't be seeing this---

Swede gets up to change the channel, Merry gets in his way, to prevent him, she wants to see --

Just as, ON THE TV, the Old Monk strikes a match, and it seems suddenly as if flames, ragged flames, come roiling out of him, all at once...

MERRY
No!

ON THE TV, the Old Monk seeming almost unharmed inside his moving cloud of flame, no writhing just calmness... until he keels over, folds up... The other monks with their hands pressed together and heads bowed in a gesture of unity with him....

REACTION MERRY... horror...

REPEAT: IN SLOW MOTION: THE OLD MONK FALLING GENTLY IN THE FLAMES, the others pressing their hands and bowing in unity...

REPEAT: THE OLD MONK IN FLAMES...

REPEAT: REACTION MERRY, IN HORROR... as the Swede finally turns the television OFF.

A beat. Dawn folds her in her arms. Merry, unblinking, still stares at the shut-off screen of the TV.

CUT TO:

INT. SWEDE'S AND DAWN'S BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

Darkness -- they're sleeping. WHEN: the door opens, and Merry is standing there. Weeping so hard she can hardly breathe. Biting the air, in gulps, for breath...

MERRY

Th-th-those p-people, those gentle
p-p-people...

Dawn rushes to her, brings her back INTO BED... where they all curl up together, trying to comfort their girl...

MERRY

Wuh-why? WHY d-did that p-poor man
have to burn himself?

DAWN

Because...
(at a loss...)

SWEDE

...He was protesting against his
government. In their religion this
is something they do, I suppose...

MERRY

And doesn't the g-g-guh-government
c-care? Doesn't anyone have a c-c-
conscience? Do you have to m-m-
umelt yourself down to g-get them
to care?

DAWN

(alarmed at her passion)
Merry, don't!

They hold her tight, squeezing her between them, and she hangs on to them, but she thrashes, too, as sobs rack her body...

SWEDE

Of course people have a conscience,
Merry! Some people! You're very
lucky, you have a well-developed
conscience --

DAWN

That's right, it's admirable for
someone your age --

SWEDE
We're proud of having a daughter
who cares so much...

Merry buries her face in her mother's chest. Her parents look at each other...

EXT. WIDE - OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - SAME TIME - NIGHT

Lights on in the bedroom window.

....Fade out.

FADE IN:

INT. OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - KITCHEN - ON: CHEESEBURGERS

Sizzling in a frying pan... Scraping them, flipping them is...

MERRY at age 16. Five years later. She's different: tall, overweight, thickened at the neck and shoulders, pimples, her hair's long and unkempt, wearing workshirt and overalls... As she PLOPS the cheeseburgers onto her plate, she's **angry**, hissing and stuttering...

MERRY

F-f-fuh-fucking Madman! F-fucking
Madman Lyndon Johnson! Lyndon B-b-
baines B-b-buh-baby-burner Johnson!

(NOTE: Everything's different in the scene, the air, the color...
grown harsher and edgier with the change in Merry...)

She's shouting at PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S FACE on the color-TV, a Vietnam-War-era press conference... Swede and Dawn are at the table with their lunch, trying to watch, Merry gets right in front of the TV, swearing at it...

MERRY

You heartless mi-mi-mi-mi-miserable
m-monster! You prick, sh-sh-shut
your lying m-m-mouth!

DAWN

Merry stop, sit down...

Merry doesn't. Stands there stuffing food into her mouth, turns angrily on her mother...

MERRY

Wh-what do you care about the war?
You don't care, you're j-just, w-
what are you, c-cuh-contented
middle class people...

DAWN

Some people would be very happy to
have parents who are contented
middle-class people...

MERRY

Well I'm not b-buh-b-brainwashed
enough to b-be one of them...

SWEDE
(weary, to both)
Merry... Dawn...

DAWN
(flares at Swede)
Don't tell me, tell her! Tell her
to behave like a civilized
person...

MERRY
Don't tell me what to d-d-d-do....

DAWN
I can tell you and will tell you
what to do...

SWEDE
(had enough)
I'm turning this off...

MERRY
Sure, t-turn it off, you don't c-
care about the news... The D-d-
democratic Republic of Hanoi c-
could just bu-burn down and M-mom
w-would just g-go on worrying about
her c-c-c-cows!

DAWN
I can't stand this! You're not
anti-war, you're anti-everything!

MERRY
And you're pro c-c-cow!

Swede wrestles Dawn into her seat, turns off the TV, tries
settling Merry... who swivels violently...

MERRY
D-d-don't touch me, Daddy!

SWEDE
Look, I know how you feel, but...

DAWN
She's not anti-war! If she was
she'd have gone with you to
Washington, with the, the...

SWEDE
New Jersey Businessmen Against the

War...
 (to Merry, reasonable)
 Your mother has a point. You could
 have made your ideas known, maybe
 you could have influenced Senator
 Case...

MERRY
 (ROARS, scornfully)
 "C-C-C--C-C-C-CASE!"

And she SPITS ON THE FLOOR. An ugly forceful spit: the hamburger
 meat she's eating.

Swede and Dawn are astonished. They stand there.

The PHONE RINGS, in Merry's room. Seething, she goes to get it.
 Dawn, stares at the mess on the floor... runs from the house...

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - ON DAWN

As if fleeing, strikes out across a field... Swede pursues...
 Into the field, right among the cows.

DAWN
 I can't recognize her. I thought
 she was smart, Seymour, she's
 becoming stupid...

SWEDE
 No, it's just a very crude kind of
 aggression...

DAWN
 It's because of her stuttering,
 isn't it. She's angry because she
 can't make friends...

SWEDE
 (glances back at the house, worried)
 She's made friends, alright, the
 ones she goes to see in New York...
 (shakes this off; to reassure:)
 The important thing's to keep
 talking to her. Not to capitulate,
 but not to abandon her...

DAWN
 She's even jealous of the goddam cows!

The COWS are right there around them. Having reached this point of exasperation, they can't help smiling a little...

RACK TO: ALL THE WAY BACK TO THE HOUSE...

ANGLE: UPPER STORY: MERRY, at her window, glaring bitterly in the direction of her mother and father below... We SEE, FEEL her angry look through the glint of glass..

CAMERA CONTINUES PAST, UPWARDS, INTO BLUE SKY...

Hangs there... transforming... then...

CUT TO:

EXT. CAMERA DESCENDS FROM BLUE SKY...

To the strains of old music... A swing band, and the silken voice of Jo Stafford singing, with the Pied Pipers...

Dream when the day is thru,
 Dream and they might come true,
 Things never are as bad as they seem,
 So dream, dream, dream...

CAMERA DESCENDS TO -- INT. '51 STUDEBAKER (MOVING) - SAME TIME

Swede driving, and beside him, a very pregnant DAWN, hands resting contentedly on her BIG PREGNANT BELLY...

EXT. THEY PULL UP BEFORE THE OLD RIMROCK HOUSE. STOP.

Swede turns the music OFF. Gets out, helps Dawn out: This is her first sight of the house and land.

SWEDE

Well?

DAWN

(dunno)

Long way from the Irish Social Club.

SWEDE

Long way from B'nai Shalom, too.
 I'm asking if you like it.

DAWN

(shrugs)

Anyway, you do.

He gestures for her to follow...

SWEDE

Come on.

He climbs the low ridge on which the house is set. She waddles behind. Passing the big tree beside the house, he indicates...

SWEDE

Perfect tree for a swing. For that critter you're carrying around.

DAWN

Critter? When we move to the country are you gonna start talking like Daniel Boone?

SWEDE

No. Johnny Appleseed.

DAWN

Johnny Appleseed Levov...

SWEDE

Why not?

They ridge gives on to a field: the one in TIME PRESENT, only it doesn't have cows yet, or fencing... Pristine, beautiful...

SWEDE (CONT'D)

Why the hell shouldn't this be ours? I don't want to live next door to anybody. I've done that. I don't want to see the stoop out the window, I want to see the land. I want to see the streams running everywhere, and horses and cows...

DAWN

(she laughs)

Cows...

SWEDE

(sweep of his arm)

You drive down that road, there's a waterfalls... Those hills, they turn into the Catskills, then they run all the way to Maine. That's America, Dawn... We're moving to America...

DAWN

I thought we already lived in America.

(Besides...)

Your father says they're all anti-Semites out here...

SWEDE

None of that matters. That's what the last war was about, and we won. We can live anywhere we want now, Dawnie, and no one can stop us. We did it. We're free!

She watches him. Her free man, her Swede: her Johnny Appleseed, taking in the expanse of fields and hills and trees... WHEN...

A CAR pulls up in the driveway behind them. Station wagon.

Man gets out: It's Bill Orcutt, late 20s, loud shirt, sunglasses.

ORCUTT

You the people who are buying this place?

They hesitate. He puts out a hand...

ORCUTT

Bill Orcutt. I've got the place over the hill.

SWEDE

Seymour Levov.

(shakes hands --)

"Orcutt," I saw a sign in town. Lawyer? --

ORCUTT

Not guilty. An architect. An artist, too, when no one's looking...

SWEDE

And isn't there an Orcutt Road --

ORCUTT

Family's been here couple of hundred years.

Swede's impressed. Dawn glances at the man, who's looking directly at her. She looks away. Until Swede leads him to her...

SWEDE

Bill, this is Dawn. Bill's family's
been here...

ORCUTT

Since the Revolution.

Dawn smiles... but coolly.

DAWN

Imagine that.

DISSOLVE TO:

TIME PRESENT: EXT. EVENING - SUBURBAN TRAIN STATION (MORRISTOWN)
-- THE GLARE, NOISE - ANGLE INTO THE APPROACHING LIGHTS OF A
TRAIN...

On the platform in the flood of lights, as the train grinds and
heaves to a stop, SWEDE waits. Collar of his expensive camel-hair
overcoat turned up against the cold.

Passengers exiting, flow around him. It takes a while.

He watches as the very last passenger exits.

TRAIN PULLS OUT. Swede standing there alone.

CUT TO:

THE NEXT HOUR OR SO - HE PACES

On the now-deserted platform. Dark except for track-side
lampposts. He glances at his watch...

Hears a far whistle, another train approaching...

CUT TO:

ANGLE: PASSENGERS OF THE SECOND TRAIN EXITING

Again Swede watches: the last of them: Father and two sons, with
Knicks banners, they're coming back from Madison Square Garden.
Swede overhears their patter...

BOY

Man did you see the Pearl tonight?

Boy imitates the frantic dribbling of Earl "the Pearl" Monroe.

Swede smiles at it. His smile kind of dies on his face...

When the last has passed, he leans back against a theater poster.
MAN OF LA MANCHA.

Swede closes his eyes, worn out, as lights/sound of the leaving train flash past and over him.

CUT TO:

EXT. STATION PARKING LOT - HOURS LATER

SWEDE STANDING BESIDE HIS CAR, a white '66 Buick Electra.

In the platform in deep background: Yet another train has arrived. Passengers are distantly seen exiting.

From this group, MERRY, at last. Now she's crossing the parking lot towards him. A hulking silhouette, back-lit, nearly his size. In a huge blue pea-coat with toggles for buttons.

MERRY

Hi.

He doesn't greet her or move toward the car.

SWEDE

You were supposed to be on the eight o'clock. I met every train for the last three hours.

MERRY

I'm here now, so can we just go?

SWEDE

(still doesn't move)
What do you do in New York every weekend? Who do you see?

MERRY

I d-do what everyone else does...

SWEDE

You're involved with something there. Something political.

MERRY

I don't know what you're t-tuh-talking about. Everything is political. B-brushing your teeth is political.

SWEDE

People who are against the war in
Vietnam, isn't that who you see?

MERRY

They're p-p-people, they don't b-b-
believe in the war...

SWEDE

I don't believe in the war myself...

MERRY

(smart-ass)

Then what's your p-p-problem?

SWEDE

Next time you tell me you're going
to be on a train and you're not on
it...

MERRY

Can we just go?

Swede's frustrated. He gets in the car, so does she.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

But he doesn't pull out. Won't let the subject drop...

SWEDE

Tell me who they are, the people
you see.

MERRY

Dad...

SWEDE

If you're gonna see them, I want to
know who they are.

MERRY

They're p-people! I g-go to New
York, there are people and dogs and
streets...

SWEDE

You come home with all this --
Communist material --

MERRY

Who says it's C-c-c-cuh-c-c-

communist --

SWEDE

It says on the page it's Communist!

MERRY

You g-going through my stuff now?

He doesn't answer. Just starts the car, pulls out...

ONTO THE MAIN STREET of MORRISTOWN -- From the car: Fancy shops deserted at night, streetlights... he drives in the tense silence... which Swede tries softening...

SWEDE

I don't want you getting involved.
With things that can hurt your
chances for college --

MERRY

(derisive)
C-college.

SWEDE

You're going to college, aren't
you? You don't like living here
with me and your mother, you should
be looking forward to going away to
college...

MERRY

I w-wuh-wouldn't start planning on
it.. My friends have been to
college, they had to leave because
of the way they treat students who
are against the war...

SWEDE

Is that who they are? College kids
who have gotten thrown out -- from
where, Columbia? --

MERRY

(FREAKING)

They're just my friends! Why, you
can't b-b-b-believe that I have
friends? You don't b-b-believe
that? What do you b-believe in, do
you believe in anything, Daddy?

SWEDE

Of course I believe you have friends --

MERRY

They wanted me to stay the night --

SWEDE

No! That's, you cannot stay over in New York, you're sixteen years old!

MERRY

What's the big thing you're afraid of that's g-gonna happen to me in New York? Huh? I'm gonna get raped?

SWEDE

Merry--

MERRY

(sputtering, salivating)
People get raped right here, Daddy!
Right in the little fucking t-tuh-t-towns where they live with their Daddys! Sometimes it's the D-Daddys who do the raping!

SWEDE

Stop! I don't know what you're talking about! All I know is you can never, ever even think of staying over with people we don't know or you'll never go again --

Under which he's slowing to a light, center of town...
When she bolts out of the car...

EXT. INTERSECTION - SHE'S RUNNING

The few cars around at this hour swerve past her... Swede deserts his car, leaves it right in the middle of the intersection... With his big strides he's catching up to her... WHEN A TRUCK COMES BETWEEN THEM...

It passes, he sees her retreating... Off her retreating back...

FLASHBACK TO: HIS POV: MERRY at age 11 running across the sand away from him on the hot beach on the Jersey shore, age 11...

MERRY at 11

(mincing footsteps in the hot sand...)
Hot hot hot hot hot...

RESUME TIME PRESENT: STREET - NIGHT

He catches up to her, turns her with a firm hand...

FLASHBACK: THE BEACH - SWEDE SCOOPING UP HER LITTLE BODY LIGHTLY ON THE RUN, HER LAUGHTER...

RESUME TIME PRESENT: MERRY NOW, at 16, clearly illuminated, ungainly, thick, angry...

SWEDE
(deep compassion)
Merry.

More cars SWERVE AND HONK as they speed round Swede's car...

MERRY
You d-d-didn't answer me! What do
you b-believe in? You don't b-
believe in anything...

SWEDE
This is not about politics! My
responsibility is to you and not
the war...

MERRY
Oh I know it! That's why I have to
go to New York! B-b-b-b-because
people there d-d-duh-do feel
responsible! Ab-b-bout America b-
blowing up Vietnamese villages, b-
b-blowing up little b-babies...

IN THE BACKGROUND, local police car has stopped to check out the abandoned mid-intersection vehicle... Cop sees the father and daughter arguing, approach... but Merry continues, angry, over Swede's effort to control and stop her...

MERRY
But you don't care and neither does
Mother! NO ONE IN THIS F-FAMILY IN
THIS F-F-FUCKING LITTLE TOWN DOES!

The POLICEMAN, ARRIVING, having heard this last. A beat of taking it in, but says nothing about it. Merry's a bit scared to find herself face to face with them, but doesn't back down.

POLICEMAN
Sir. Could give you a whale of a

ticket, where you left that car.

He's speaking to Swede but his glare is for Merry. He has noted her language, attitude.

SWEDE

I'm sorry, officer. We're both sorry.

Merry doesn't confirm. She walks off.

SWEDE

(tries for)

She's sixteen. If you've got any at home, you'll understand.

POLICEMAN

I don't.

No slack. Swede, re the car.

SWEDE

I'll, uh, get it out of there.

And goes. Off the cop, assessing,

CUT TO:

EXT. BERGEN AVENUE - JEWISH SECTION OF NEWARK ("WEEQUAHIC") - DAY

The STREET OF SHOPS: We saw it long ago, there are still some signs in Hebrew in the window, Kosher butcher, etc. But it's run-down now, on this quiet morning. And this morning the quiet on street is EERIE...

ANGLE: HAZE: STREET... as, approaching in FAR DISTANCE:

A CROWD OF BLACK MEN. Some on foot, some hanging out of slow moving cars. Down the middle of the street. Mostly young. Some are shouting, we can't make out what...

But even in the distance we know that they're angry, and that this is a mob...

INTERCUT: SWEDE'S CAR - STATE HIGHWAY - SAME TIME

SWEDE, stuck in traffic, listens to...

RADIO NEWS

Police and fire departments are on the ready after three nights of

violence... Demonstrators are angry over the alleged police killing of black cabdriver John W. Smith, and the protests have already claimed twelve lives...

INTERCUT: EXT. BERGEN STREET - THE MOB

...has reached the block of stores. They carry baseball bats, one has a GUN hanging freely from his hand...

STOREKEEPERS, white, bolting their doors... SUDDENLY:

THE WINDOW OF THE KOSHER BUTCHER shop is SMASHED BY A BRICK... Passersby running, screaming, black, white...

A POLICE CAR, SIREN BLARING, is SURROUNDED BY THE MOB, FOUR BLACK MEN crawl over it, pound it, SMASH at it with pipes and bats... while OTHER JEWISH SHOP WINDOWS ARE SMASHED... A chant...

DEMONSTRATORS
GET GOLDBERG! GET GOLDBERG!
GET GOLDBERG!

CONTINUES, as we OVERLAP WITH...

RADIO NEWS
...WABC News has learned...

EXT. SWEDE'S CAR - CENTRAL AVENUE

...that Governor Hughes is ordering the National Guard to full alert...

His car moves down the street, approaching his factory... POLICE CAR coming the other way, very slow... PEOPLE on the street and sidewalks, black people... watching the police car... Swede's sizing up the tension on the street, feeling it...

He sees a big Black Kid shout at the cops in their car...

BLACK KID
WHAT YOU LOOKING AT? PIGS? Y

COP CAR immediately WHIPS to the curb, Kid runs, COP pursuing on foot... ROCKS ARE THROWN, SKITTER OFF THE HOOD OF SWEDE'S CAR, another hits the wall behind the cop... There's GUNFIRE...

Swede GUNS HIS CAR down the alley beside his factory...

EXT. NEWARK MAID, LOADING ALLEY/ INT. WAREHOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

As Swede steers into the warehouse garage, and TWO OF HIS WORKERS quickly close the door behind him. Whew.

Swede gets out of the car. All look at each other. The white owner and the black workers.

CUT TO:

INT. OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - AT DINNER - THAT NIGHT

SWEDE

West Market, that's gone, all the factories hit... First, Second, it's a bombed out zone... Norfolk Street, Bergen Street, by the movie theater...

DAWN

(can't comprehend...)
We had our first date at the movie theater on Bergen Street...

Merry grunts, derisive. Dawn ignores. Asks Swede...

DAWN

Have you called Lou in Florida?

SWEDE

He's heartbroken. The old neighborhood's like a bomb hit...
(takes more food)
The Governor's called in the National Guard.

DAWN

What else can he do.

MERRY

(had enough)
He c-cuc-c-can treat black people like human b-b-beings, that's what.

DAWN

You call them black people? Is that polite?

MERRY

Sh-shut up Mom, do you even kn-n-n-now any black people?

(to Swede)
How m-many black p-police are there
in-in Newark, D-daddy? Do you know?
A hundred, out of a d-d-department
of f-fifteen hundred...

SWEDE
I don't know if these numbers are
right, where do you get these
numbers...

MERRY
The p-p-poverty, the unemployment,
d-do you even care...

SWEDE
(rises to this)
The unemployment? That part, that's
not my fault... We have eighty
percent negroes at Newark Maid,
eighty, there's a number for you...

MERRY
Oh I f-forgot, you're a hero...

SWEDE
I didn't say that. I just said...

DAWN
(over)
If you go to work tomorrow you're
not a hero, you're a fool. It isn't
safe.

SWEDE
It's even less safe if we abandon
the city, give up on it...

DAWN
But do you have to go tomorrow? You
said yourself it's like a bomb
hit...

SWEDE
(settles this)
I've got to be there.

MERRY
(smart-ass)
S-see? He is a hero.

PHONE RINGS... Swede, rises. Answers...

SWEDE

Hello...
 (reacts)
 Vicky what's wrong...

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTAL AVENUE - OUTSIDE "NEWARK MAID" - NIGHT

GO HARD IN ON SOLDIERS, a dozen or so, RIFLES (M-1s) out...
 CHARGING INTO A MOB, pushing it back... Several in the front line
 go down swinging, fighting...

THERE'S A SHOT FIRED from the roof of a tenement across the
 street: A SNIPER...

ONE OF THE SOLDIERS like John Wayne and fires
 back, automatic weapons, BULLETS ACROSS THE UPPER
 STORIES OF THE WINDOW... The noise, the SCREAMS...

CUT TO:

EXT. REAR LOADING DOCK, "NEWARK MAID" FACTORY - NEXT DAY

Quieter in the daytime. But ominous: A PLATOON OF THE YOUNG
 NATIONAL GUARDSMEN is camped out, with jeeps, weapons, riot gear,
 right there in the rear of Swede's factory.

VICKY comes out, goes among the young guardsmen, carrying
 thermoses, cups, pouring out coffee for them... She hands some
 to TWO GUARDSMEN, white boys like the others... They're surprised
 and appreciative... "Thank you, Ma'am..."

VICKY

Goin' to war, huh.

She checks out the M-1 30 caliber rifles, bayonets, helmets with
 which they're decked out head to toe. She makes a face.

YOUNG WHITE GUARDSMAN

What it is.

VICKY

No it isn't either. It's
 troublemakers. So think.

YOUNG WHITE GUARDSMAN

What?

VICKY

Think! Think before you shoot into
somebody's windows. These aren't
snipers! These are people! These
are good people who live around
here!

The men who hear her look up at the surrounding tenements, some
already burnt out by the riots, already wrecked by gunfire... but
others with black people looking out distrustfully...

VICKY (CONT'D)

People like your own mothers and
fathers, that's who lives up there!
You're here to protect them, not
shoot'em up like you're the Cowboys
they're the Indians!

With which words of wisdom, she walks over to a TANK, an actual
tank, stationed in the loading alley... bangs on the lid...

VICKY (CONT'D)

You hear me in there?

Soldier's head emerges... She goes on to him, along with the
others...

VICKY (CONT'D)

Don't go nuts! Don't go crazy!
People have to live here when
you're gone! This is their home!

And having finished her speech, she goes back inside the factory.
Passing in the doorway, having watched and heard all this...
SWEDE. She stops.

SWEDE

Tonight will be bad.

She mutters something, starts to head inside, but...

SWEDE

You should go home. Take everybody
and go home.

VICKY

You're staying, though.

SWEDE

The place'll be safer if someone's
here. I'll be fine, I've got the
walkie-talkie to the state

police...

VICKY
Then I'll stay, too.

She continues inside. Off Swede,

CUT TO:

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - THAT NIGHT

Lights ON Just Swede and Vicky -- There's sounds of sirens, from the street, people shouting, chanting -- Swede by the windows -- Now there are sounds of GUNFIRE --

VICKY
(busy at something)
Where's that coming from?

SWEDE
(can't tell)
Sounds like, South Orange Avenue...
Too close...

VICKY
Then get away from the windows.

But now she herself is going to the windows... carrying what she was busy making, a big white cardboard sign...

SWEDE
I've got that.

VICKY
Let me put it.

SWEDE
(insists)
Vicky.

She backs off, he hoists it into position... asking as he does...

SWEDE
This gonna do any good?...

EXT. FACTORY BUILDING, FRONT...

We SEE he's setting up, from within, the white sign with big lettering that reads: "THIS FACTORY'S EMPLOYEES ARE NEGROES."

CAMERA TURNS... DOWN THE STREET... INTO THE APPROACHING BATTLE...

SOLDIERS pouring out of JEEPS, rifles ready, some FIRING...

MACHINE GUN FIRE STRAFES THE GROUND FLOOR OF A BUILDING...

LOOTERS, being chased by COPS AND SOLDIERS...

Two TEENAGE GIRLS, happily scurrying by with a television set....

WHOLE FRONT OF A LIQUOR STORE SHOT UP in a blaze of gunfire,
don't even know if it's cops or rioters...

WILD BLACK GUY charges right-fucking head-first into a knot of
cops, kicking and screaming at them...

MOTHER AND CHILD crouch for cover in the alley of BAPTIST
CHURCH... A STATE COP comes to lead them under cover of his riot
shield to the safety of a doorway... when a MOLOTOV COCKTAIL
(bottle) is hurled at his feet, EXPLODES... THE COP FALLS, the
mother hesitates then rushes her girl inside to safety...

WE'RE SUDDENLY IN A HERD OF FEET, SOLDIERS charging from one side
of Central Avenue to the other... CAMERA HANGS as they pass by,
STAYS AND REVEALS:

BODY OF A TWELVE-YEAR-OLD BOY lying in a pool of blood... CAMERA
TILTS with the sick dizziness of the sight, and the SOUND pounds
with screams and shots and sirens and crashes...

CUT TO:

INT. SWEDE'S INNER OFFICE - SAME TIME

The SAME SOUND OF RIOT is constant. But Swede and Vicky sit in
stillness. Vicky with a baseball bat. Swede with nothing.

A window is SHOT OUT. He looks up. ANOTHER. There are shouts...

Vicky goes to the window, for a glimpse, which she gets just
before Swede grabs her, pulls her down to the floor...

VICKY

Not cops. Not color'boys either.
Just hoodlums, havin' a good time.

ANOTHER ROUND OF SHOOTING OUT THE WINDOWS... Most or all...

SWEDE

Just stay down. Stay down.

After a pause, the car of shouting boys is heard to pull away.

VICKY

Gonna shut this place now?

He shushes her, listens to hear if they're really gone...

VICKY

I said, you gonna shut down, and
take the whole works to Hong Kong
after this?

SWEDE

I'm not going through all this just
to shut the doors when it's over...

VICKY

Nobody'd blame you... and I damn
sure know it's what Lou wants...

SWEDE

It's not Lou's factory anymore.
It's mine.

VICKY

Mine, too. You just own it.

He looks at her. SOUND OF GUNFIRE in the distance...

CUT TO:

EXT. NEWARK MAID - CENTRAL AVENUE - IN EARLY MORNING LIGHT

The front. A beat. SWEDE steps out into the light. Vicky beside
him... They survey the street, the rubble. But it's quiet,
anyway. Baby crying someplace, but that's all...

Swede looks up at the building, old rusting NEWARK MAID sign
stretched above the factory windows, now shot to pieces.

Smile. Made it. Made it through the night.

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND ESSEX HOTEL BALLROOM, AWARDS BANQUET - NIGHT

Newark's MAYOR, HUGH ADONIZZIO at the podium... Also on the dais, PRIEST, BLACK LEADERS, RABBI, POLICE CHIEF...

MAYOR ADONIZZIO

Of course, this is not the first time Seymour "the Swede" Levov's got his name in the papers... Some of us remember when he'd be there all the time, on the Sports page...

There's LAUGHTER... CAMERA finds SWEDE, also on the dais, smiling and signalling DAWN, at one of the front tables... VICKY's there with her, too...

...But that's not why he's here tonight. He's here because when it all hit the fan -- when black and white, Catholic and Jew, we found ourselves in the middle of the riots, and so many people and businesses turned and ran -- Swede Levov kept his factory, Newark Maid Leather, right where it's been for forty years...

(BIG APPLAUSE, over which...) Kept his doors open, and his workers working... Kept his cool when so many turned to resentment and violence...

Off SWEDE, as PEOPLE STAND, DAWN STANDS... and there's MORE APPLAUSE, this time covered by... A CRASH OF MUSIC, from.... the Rolling Stones, as we...

SMASH CUT TO:

MERRY - INT. HOUSE - HER BEDROOM - NIGHT

She's thrashing around, lip-synching to Mick Jagger...

HEY! (Hey!)
YOU! (You!)
GET OFFA MY CLOUD!
...etc...

On her walls, the tokens of '60's protest culture... Rock stars, Che Guevara... She's dancing by herself, ungainly, off and on her bed: Merry the Teenager. WHEN:

There's a KNOCK at her door. She stops. Bummer.

She opens the door: Swede. Right from the awards banquet, still in his tuxedo shirt, bowtie loose around his neck... He enters.

MERRY

What are you looking for? Exp-p-pect me to congratulate you too for not sh-shooting at black people?

SWEDE

I came in to say goodnight to you, that's all.

MERRY

So goodnight. Now you've said it.

But he doesn't leave. Glances at: POSTER ON THE WALL: Handwritten in crayon on a piece of cardboard:

**"WE ARE AGAINST EVERYTHING THAT IS
GOOD AND DECENT IN HONKY AMERICA.
WE WILL LOOT AND BURN AND DESTROY."**

- Weatherman Motto

He reads it. Merry, looks at him, defiant. He says nothing...

Sits on the bed. With a groan, she accepts the dreaded but inevitable father-daughter talk, turns down the music.

SWEDE

Have you thought about what I asked you?

MERRY

(dismisses)

G-going away to private school?

SWEDE

If you don't like living here with us...

MERRY

I d-don't.

SWEDE

Okay, so, it's an option, then.

MERRY

I d-didn't say that. I j-just want to be able to go to New-New York

again on the weekends...

SWEDE

(FIRM AND CLEAR on this)

You didn't come home last time, and
you didn't tell us where you'd be.
You knew the rules...

MERRY

I n-never thought my own f-fuh-
father would keep me prisoner in my
house...

SWEDE

Merry. You want to protest the war?
Protest it right here. In Old
Rimrock.

It's an idea he's wanted to share. She stares at him...

SWEDE

Listen to me. The people here are
Republicans. They're not antiwar,
like you and me. You want to be in
opposition, be in opposition
here...

MERRY

What am I gonna do, march around
the p-post office? That's gonna
make a big difference...

SWEDE

Bring the war home, isn't that the
slogan?

(he presses)

Look, they gave me this award
tonight... I don't care about the
award, just a stupid plaque, but it
did mean one thing: When you take a
stand, people notice. It matters.
If you oppose the war, right here,
with all your strength? This is
part of America too, you know...

MERRY

Yeah. The tiniest part.

SWEDE

(persists)

I understand you're quite vocal
about the war at Morristown High

already. Why do you even bother if you don't think it matters?

MERRY

R-read Marx, revolutions don't b-b-begin in the countryside.

SWEDE

We're not talking about revolution.

MERRY

You're not talking about revolution.

Swede looks at her. Her unyielding face. Glances again at the poster. But he's still confident he's made his point. Pats her once or twice on the leg...

SWEDE

You think about what I'm saying.

And exits the room. On Merry: Looks at her leg where he touched it. No visible emotion. We HEAR:

NATHAN'S VOICE-OVER

And that was the last conversation they ever had about protesting the War in Vietnam. It worked. The Swede was firm and patient and reasonable, and it worked. Merry never went to New York again. She stayed at home, and...

INT. A ROOM WE DON'T RECOGNIZE. CAN'T SEE.

Boxes, crates. Hands fumble in the dark...

After having turned their living room into a battlefield, after turning Morristown High into a battlefield...

FIGURE IN DARKNESS moves mail sacks out of the way -- a strong female figure... then crouches, goes obscurely to work...

She took her father's advice and brought the war home to Old Rimrock.

EXT. HAMLIN'S GENERAL STORE/POST OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Dr. Fred Conlon gets out of his car, mails his letters. The Flag flaps above. Hold for a while...

People think of history in the long term. But history, in fact, is a very sudden thing.

K-BOOM.

K-BOOM! Everything explodes: Post office, general store, Conlon and his car, the flagpole, the gravel... the very air.

All is wrecked and burning. Burns.

On the quiet street.

CUT TO:

INT. OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - SWEDE AND DAWN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The PHONE RINGS beside the bed... Swede is woken, he answers...

SWEDE

Hello?...

INT. MERRY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

SWEDE rushes in... The bed's empty. On the wall's that POSTER.

CUT TO:

INT. OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Cops, FBI agents, techies swarm the rooms. Dawn stands in shock near the big white brick hearth... Dawn's zoned out, frantic...

DAWN

Dynamite? What does my daughter know about dynamite? Nothing! This can't have been her!

FBI AGENT (DOLAN)

Then where is she, Mrs. Levov?

Dolan turns to Swede. Recites:

DOLAN

"We are against everything decent in America. We will loot and burn and yadda-yadda."

SWEDE

It's probably on lots of kids' walls...

DOLAN

Not in Old Rimrock. Not in...
(reads off notes)
"This little fucking town."

SWEDE

What is that?

DOLAN

Your daughter stutters?

DAWN

(reacts, apalled...)
My God, what does that...

DOLAN

Does she?

SWEDE

What bearing can that possibly have...
(realizes)
Okay. Oh. The cop.

DOLAN

The police. Yes. In Morristown.
Officer made a note... That and a
couple of question marks raised by
her teachers at the high school...

SWEDE

Where for your information she's an
A student...

DOLAN

(corrects, off notes)
C student. She was an A student.

At that moment -- TECHIES pass through, carrying bags of Merry's
things -- books, old toys, bagged and marked --

DOLAN (CONT'D)

The man who was killed, did your
daughter know him?

SWEDE

We all did...

DOLAN
 (checks notes)
 Fred Conlon, father of three, had a
 family practice over in Mendham...

SWEDE
 We know, he's our doctor, Merry's
 doctor, for chrissake...

DOLAN
 We're trying to get a picture of
 her mental state...

SWEDE
 ...She didn't do this!

DOLAN
 You haven't convinced yourself, Mr.
 Levov, don't try convincing me.

A beat. Swede settles.

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD RIMROCK - DAY - MOVE WITH --

SWEDE -- arriving on the scene of the bombing -- coming down the
 street, the town's one main street, PASSES --

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, there are PEOPLE on the steps, huddled
 around their PREACHER, in his collar -- They turn to watch SWEDE
 striding past. He COMES TO --

THE WRECK OF CONLON'S CAR: a charred and twisted chassis, being
 lifted onto a truck bed. PEOPLE WATCH SWEDE, as he passes it by,
 continues TOWARD --

THE FORMER SITE OF HAMLIN'S STORE/POST OFFICE

A ruin. Wasted. Police pick their way through it, technicians
 etc. RUSS HAMLIN stands in the rubble.

Swede comes towards him through a crowd of townspeople, kids. As
 he does...

VOICES
 "Lived here all my life..."
 "Never saw anything like this
 before..."

Directed at Swede. He ignores. Goes directly to Hamlin.

RUSS HAMLIN

(dry)
You show up like this?

SWEDE

Yes.

Hamlin looks at him. At Swede's genuine gaze of regret. They overhear, ANOTHER VOICE...

WOMAN'S VOICE NEARBY

They had no business out here in
the first place.

Swede turns toward the voice: No telling which of an onlooking group of ten or so. Families. But the remark has tweaked Hamlin's conscience....

RUSS HAMLIN

Thanks for coming, Swede.

Swede nods, appreciative. Goes. As he does, Russ calls after...

RUSS HAMLIN

They find her yet?

SWEDE

No.

And continues off. People watching him...

CUT TO:

INT. DR. FRED CONLONS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - ON:

PENNY CONLON

(widow, 40: pretty)

I don't blame you.

The Conlons' SON, 10, is holding his mother's hand, playing with it. Swede is in an armchair, opposite. Suit and tie.

PENNY CONLON (CONT'D)

You are good parents and you raised
your daughter the way you thought
best. You didn't go out and buy the
dynamite and make the bomb. You
didn't plant the bomb. If it turns
out your daughter was responsible,
which is the way it appears...

She lets this hang, like a question... Swede says nothing.

PENNY CONLON (CONT'D)

...then she's the one I blame.
I feel badly for you and your wife,
Mr. Levov. I've lost a husband, my
children lost a father, but you've
lost a child. That doesn't heal.

Swede looks at her.

PENNY CONLON (CONT'D)

Our recovery will take time, but we
have our memories of Fred to
sustain us. You're as much victims
of this tragedy as we are, but...

(pointed:)

The difference is, we will survive.

CUT TO:

INT: ON A TV SET: A TEENAGE BOY, interviewed by...

NEWSWOMAN (ON TV)

You were Meredith Levov's boyfriend
at the time of the bombing?

Standing in front of his house, beside his dog and a lawn mower,
his name is EDGAR BARTLEY, 16, gawky, dull-eyed...

EDGAR (ON TV)

Not at the time. I used to be.

PULL BACK on the TV, we're... IN SWEDE'S LIVING ROOM...

SWEDE

(watching, fuming)

Who is this kid? I never saw this
kid!...

NEWSWOMAN (ON TV)

And when you heard the news? How
did you feel?

EDGAR (ON TV)

I never thought she'd do something
like this...

Under which, in the living room, Dawn enters, up from bed. Awful-
looking, ghost of herself... couldn't sleep...

EDGAR (CONT'D, ON TV)
She had her opinions, but... she
must have snapped or something...

SWEDE
Listen to this idiot kid, he didn't
even know her...

DAWN
Edgar. He went out with her. He
took her to the movies. Once.

SWEDE
So he's her "boyfriend?"

EDGAR (ON TV)
I always thought this was a place
where nothing bad can happen to you
but now I'm looking over my
shoulder like everybody else...

NEWSWOMAN (ON TV)
(into the camera)
We've been talking with Edgar
Bartley, friend of the Rimrock
Bomber, the sixteen-year-old girl
who according to the FBI --

DAWN
(echoes the phrase)
The "Rimrock Bomber."

Swede turns the GODDAM TELEVISION OFF. A huge SILENCE.

DAWN
Was it the stutter? Lots of kids
stutter, they don't all turn into--

He says nothing. They sit there.

DAWN
Where is she. I want her to come
home now. Now now now now now now.
I want her to come home right--

SWEDE
Go back to bed.

She reacts to his abruptness. He softens.

SWEDE
I'll be there.

She goes away, up the stairs -- ON SWEDE --

FLASHBACK: EXT. BEACH HIGHWAY - THE JERSEY SHORE - DAY

Hot warp of sun... Pounding surf...

INT/EXT. CONVERTIBLE

SWEDE and MERRY at 11, driving home from the beach that long-ago day... Merry, sun-drunk, leans her tan cheek against Swede's bare shoulder as he drives. Turns up her face to him...

MERRY

Daddy? Kiss me the way you k-k-kiss
umumumumother.

Swede's uncomfortable. His POV: Merry's bathing-suit strap has slipped off her shoulder....

MERRY

Daddy k-k-kiss me...

SWEDE

(suddenly harsh, mocking)
N-N-N-No.

Mocking her, unexpectedly. She's shocked. He adds:

SWEDE

And fix your suit.

Hurt, silent, she obeys. Then he's guilty --

SWEDE

I'm sorry, cookie --

MERRY

(mad at herself)
Oh I deserve it. It's the same at
school with my friends. I get
started with something and I go t-
t-too far, I get c-c-carried awuh-
awuh-awuh-awuh --

As she goes on, stammering painfully... the Swede's wracked with guilt, can't believe that he made fun of her...

MERRY (CONT'D)

(tears coming --)
Awuh-awuh-awuh --

Her face, neck, white, distorted, as she struggles to get out the word... ONLY THIS TIME WE STAY IN THE SCENE, TO SEE WHAT FOLLOWS...

SWEDE

Oh, cookie --

And he kisses her. On her mouth, as she stammers. On her mouth, but brief. To satisfy her.

Then he drives along, uncomfortable... but telling himself emphatically, It was no big deal...

FADE OUT.

OVER BLACK, the SOUND OF MACHINES, WHIRRING, NOISY...

FADE IN: We're --

INT. "NEWARK MAID" FACTORY - DAY

SWEDE, overseeing a couple of workers undoing a new bale of leather skins -- Vicky comes up, moves him away--

VICKY

The men know what they're doing.

SWEDE

Guess so...

She sees how worn he looks, it's all taken its toll.

VICKY

I put some coffee in your office.
Just made fresh.

SWEDE

That your cure for everything?

But in fact it sounds good. She walks with him... Then, quietly:

VICKY

What do you think she'll do.
When she wants to reach you.

SWEDE

(he's thought about it)
Not call. Phones aren't safe, she'd
know that...

VICKY

So what would she...

SWEDE

I don't know.

At the door to his office.

VICKY

Four months. How's Dawn.

SWEDE

Bad.

He goes in. Vicky turns -- SEES -- a small, frizzy-haired WHITE

GIRL, 24, with a notebook under her arm. She's smiling at everyone, wafting through. Vicky goes to her...

HOLD IN LONG SHOT, as the girl asks Vicky a question...

INT. SWEDE'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

Rita stands before him, he's reading from a letter she's handed to him...

SWEDE

Rita Cohen, from... the Wharton
School of Business...

RITA

I'm at Wharton, business school...

SWEDE

And, you're doing your thesis on...

RITA

The leather business in Newark.

He looks up, surprised.

RITA

I'd be glad for anything you can
teach me.

Swede notes her sweetness, sincerity. But...

SWEDE

Those men out front, in suits. In
case you saw them...

RITA

I didn't. The back was open...

He glances OUT THE WINDOW, checks... Sure enough, non-descript
Gov't issue CAR parked across the street, couple of guys...

SWEDE

Well they're there. Do you know why?

She shrugs No. Doesn't seem to care. Swede decides...

SWEDE

Well. It doesn't matter.
You want to know about leather..

RITA
(like, What else?)
This is a glove factory, isn't it?

She gives a bright little smile. He likes it.

INT. WAREHOUSE FLOOR - A SHEEPSKIN, BEING PULLED FROM A BALE
By workmen. It's spread out by the Swede for Rita...

SWEDE
These are sheepskins, but they're
hair, not wool. They're called
"cabretta," we bring them in from
near the Equator...

RITA
(making a note)
What happens to the hair?

SWEDE
Good question. It's a byproduct,
it's used to make carpets...

She writes carefully on a yellow legal pad... Swede watching her,
impressed by her...

SWEDE
My father's the one you should be
talking to. He's in Florida now but
he's the leather scholar. Starting
tanning hides when he was
fourteen... You've settled on an
interesting subject, young lady...

RITA
I think I have.

And as he turns from her to lead her off, something glints in her
eye, an expression...

INT. CUTTING ROOM - MEN ARE CUTTING PIECES OF LEATHER BY HAND

LONG SUNLIT TABLES. An air of craftsmanship, old world. Swede and
Rita stand by the window... She's delighted...

RITA
You're going to make me a pair of
gloves?

SWEDE

While you wait. Let's see what size you are...

Picks up her hand, holds it. Pale and small and bony.

SWEDE

Small. I'm guessing you're a four. Let's see what kind of guesser I am. Close your hand, honey...

She glances up at the "honey." He takes from a table a measuring tape with a "D" ring, measures...

SWEDE

Four it is. That's as small as ladies' come. Anything smaller is a child's.

(turns and shouts to an old man)
Harry, we're making up a four for this young lady, British tan!

(to Rita)
Harry's the best. Only been a cutter here forty years, but he works at it...

Harry and Rita smile at the little joke. Harry gets right to work... as Swede leads Rita off, keeping up the patter, enjoying himself for the first time in months... As they go...

SWEDE

Another thing, you always sort skins at the north side of the factory, away from direct light...

RITA

Wow, this is an elaborate process!

SWEDE

(He shakes his head...)
A business like this, it's gotta be in your blood, it's passed from father to son...

RITA

Does that go for your kids, Mr. Levov? If you have any?

That wierd glint in her eye again. He's thrown by the question...

SWEDE

Not, uh... interested in the

business...

They continue...

FLASHBACK - NEWARK MAID LEATHER FACTORY - EIGHT YEARS EARLIER

A "class-tour," schoolchildren led by a younger, happier Swede -- the teacher, MISS SCHULTZ -- the whole class following MERRY at Age 8, who's doing the talking, explaining noisily & busily to her classmates with her Grandfather, LOU, at her side...

MERRY

You want to make f-fuh-five dollars
a dozen, that's the t-target, isn't
that right Grandpa?

LOU

(loves this, laughs)

"Five dollars a dozen," listen to her...

MERRY

Sometimes Grandpa has to f-fire the
men for s-sitting on their asses
and st-stealing time.

(to her teacher)

D-did you know you could steal
time, Miss Schultz?

SWEDE

Merry, let Grandpa give the tour,
okay?

And he smiles at the teacher, asking forgiveness for his too-bright, too-noisy child. But Miss Schulz is only rapt in admiration of the handsome Swede... when Lou, over his shoulder:

LOU

She's gonna make you proud,
Seymour. Mark my words.

Swede smiles...

RETURN TO:

RESUME: TIME PRESENT: INT. SWEDE'S OFFICE - HE'S SEATED.

SWEDE

You're seeing a dying business,
Miss Cohen. Rita. I don't mean us,
we're doing fine, in fact, we've

opened a second factory in Puerto Rico... I mean the industry itself. Used to be a woman owned ten, twelve pairs of gloves...

RITA
(still making notes)
Imagine that.

With which, Vicky enters. Smiles at Rita...

VICKY
These are for you, Miss.

RITA
Goody...

SWEDE
Thanks, Vicky.

Watches as Rita, like a kid with a new present, excitedly pulls them on... but cautions...

SWEDE
Slowly, always slowly at first. Feel how it expands when you make a fist? That's what a good cutter does, leaves some extra stretch in the width, it's a very precise calculation...

RITA
(opening and closing her fist)
Yes, yes, it's wonderful.
God bless the precise calculators of this world.

They all three laugh. Vicky exits...

As soon as she's gone, Rita LEANS ACROSS SWEDE'S DESK: SPEAKS TO HIM LOW AND DISTINCTLY:

RITA
She wants her Audrey Hepburn scrapbook.

A beat.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEHIND THE OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - NIGHT - AS...

Swede leads an anxious Dawn away from the house...

DAWN

Talk to me...

He quiets her, keeps walking til they're clear of the house...

DAWN (CONT'D)

What did she say?

SWEDE

She wants me to meet her
tomorrow...

DAWN

Her?

SWEDE

Not Merry, this "Rita Cohen".

(can't grasp)
She looks like a kid, younger than
Merry, but I guess she's twenty or
something...

DAWN

Where?

SWEDE

The parking lot at Newark Airport.
With her Audrey Hepburn pictures...

DAWN

(dazed)

From when she was little?

SWEDE

Gave me all these instructions, go
through Branch Brook Park, make
sure I'm not followed...

(He's uncertain...)

Maybe I should tell the agents.

She reacts.

DAWN

Seymour...

But he's distracted, looks out at the pasture, noticing...

SWEDE
Where are the cows?

DAWN
What...

SWEDE
The cows. Where are they.

DAWN
("Oh.")
They're in the barn, the two that
are left.

SWEDE
The two that are left?

DAWN
I've sold them. I'm selling them all.
He looks at her. Wondering at her... disturbed by this...

SWEDE
...Why would you sell your cows, Dawn...

DAWN
(what she's thinking)
Seymour, these people, whoever they
are. They have to keep Merry.

He's stunned.

SWEDE
That's crazy...

DAWN
Why not? If they take care of
her... take her to another country
maybe until this thing is
forgotten...

SWEDE
We have to find her... we have to
find her and get her help...

DAWN
(erupts)
She's been tricked! Don't you
understand that?

He's looking at her. At her half-crazy clarity. He's thinking, I
shouldn't have told her...

DAWN (CONT'D)

She's been abducted! She's
somewhere right now being
brainwashed! Why does everybody say
that she did it? Nobody's had any
contact with her, nobody knows a
thing! A bomb?! She's not connected
with it in any way at all!

Swede looks at her... she's strained and empty...

DAWN

(pleads)

Seymour?

CUT TO:

EXT. BRANCH BROOK PARK, NEWARK - MORNING

Cherry trees. Swede by the lake. His car parked nearby.

High school boys toss a football. Sweatshirt: WEEQUAHIC HIGH.

Swede glances at his watch.

INT. SWEDE'S CAR (MOVING) - NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE - DAY

He drives. Glances in his rear-view...

Nothing. Then...

BLACK CAR with THREE BUSINESSMEN is following him. He's sweating
it...

It passes him.

He follows a sign, NEWARK AIRPORT. Peels off the highway...

INT. SEMI-UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT, AIRPORT - DAY

He's left his car. Walking, carries a shopping bag...

Crossing towards a figure in the darkness of the stairway. In a
huge blue pea-coat.

His POV: The coat: Merry?...

He doesn't even notice that a car NEARLY HITS him.

He arrives before her: It's Merry's coat, but with Rita inside.
She blandly takes the bag from him. Examines the scrapbook...

SWEDE

Surely...

(adjusts his voice, keeps calm)
Surely you can now tell me
something about Merry.

RITA

I surely cannot.

SWEDE

If not where she is, how she is.

She looks through the book, finds a picture she likes, laughs...

SWEDE

I'd like to speak with her.

RITA

Well she wouldn't like to speak with you.

SWEDE

But if she wants these things,
doesn't that mean...

RITA

She wants them because they're hers.

SWEDE

So are we hers, Miss.

RITA

She hates you.

A beat. Lightly --

SWEDE

Does she?

RITA

Thinks you ought to be shot.

SWEDE

Yes? That too?

Rita puts the things back in the bag.

RITA

Swede Levov. Seymour "the Swede"

Levov... What do you pay your workers in your factory in Puerto Rico, Swede Levov? What do you the women going blind, stitching gloves for you in the Phillipines to please the lady shoppers at Macy's? You're nothing but a shitty little capitalist, Swede...

SWEDE

You saw my factory. You saw how unhappy my employees are. That's why they've worked for me for forty years, because they're so exploited...

...But then he stares at her. This tiny thing. The sheer stupidity of it dawning on him...

SWEDE (CONT'D)

You know nothing! Who are you? You don't even know what you're talking about! You didn't know what a factory was until I showed you --

RITA

I know what a plantation is, Mr. Legree. You own your people. You own them, you use them, you sleep with them, and when you're done --

SWEDE

(losing it)

Please. Rita? I haven't too minutes interest in your cliches. Enough nonsense. I want you to tell me where my daughter is, that is all I want to hear from you. She needs help, she needs serious help, and I want you to take me to her...

RITA

Merry never wants to see you again. Or that mother.

To which Swede reacts.

SWEDE

You don't know anything about her mother...

RITA

Lady Dawn? The Beauty Queen? So
ashamed of her working-class
origins that she tries to make her
daughter into a debutante?

SWEDE

A debutante? Merry shoveled cowshit
from when she was six...

(exasperated)

This is all crazy! *Where is my
daughter?* Somebody is dead, my
daughter is accused of murder --

RITA

Do you know how many Vietnamese
have died in the time we've been
talking here...?

SWEDE

You give her back to me...

RITA

She's not a possession. You don't
own her anymore, the way you own
your factory or your Buick Fucking
Electra... Look at you...

SWEDE

(fighting for his sanity now)
Miss Cohen...

RITA

The paragon! The pride of
Weequahic! All-City, All-State,
Capitalist Criminal of the world!

Triumph is in her eyes. Her mocking eyes.

SUDDEN CUT TO:

JERRY LEVOV -- INT. HOSPITAL --

JERRY LEVOV

(non-plussed)

So where is she?

Jerry's a doctor, we're in an EXAM ROOM, door closed... Swede
doesn't answer, exactly...

SWEDE

The girl is our link, our only link

to Merry...

JERRY

I don't think you should have let her go...

SWEDE

(on his own tack)

She's a kid, she looks like an infant, if we stay in touch I can work round her to Merry, I know it...

JERRY

An infant? Are you listening to yourself? You got what, the "infant's" phone number?

SWEDE

She makes contact with me. That's the plan...

JERRY

If she feels like it. If she FEELS like it!

(realizing)

You got NOTHING! YOU GOT NOTHING!

At the yelling, DOOR OPENS, YOUNG NURSE sticks her head in, worried --

YOUNG NURSE

Doctor Levov --

JERRY

What. I don't need you.

YOUNG NURSE

But doctor --

JERRY

Go jump in a lake, Nurse. Please.

Young Nurse leaves.

Silence between the brothers. Swede is deciding...

SWEDE

What you're saying, I should have held on to her... I know you think it's for the best, but I have to keep the lines of communication

open, like Dawn says...

JERRY

(off which)

What kinda man are you, my brother?
My big brother?

Swede stares at him. He's thinking, I shouldn't have come. Starts to go... stops for...

SWEDE

Jerry. You won't tell anybody what
I've told you.

Jerry hesitates to promise this.

SWEDE

It's my life.

Jerry grabs his arm as he's at the door. But Swede is lost to him, has turned inward. Jerry sees. Jerry lets him go.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLS, FIELD - EARLY MORNING - THE BARN...

A beat. Then, approaching across the field: Dawn, in overalls...

INT. BARN - THE LONG ROWS OF COW-STALLS ARE EMPTY

But Dawn walks along them... towards...

STALL OF COUNT

The prize bull. He's still there. Dawn comes in to turn him free for a day in the pasture. Hugs him momentarily. Her sadness...
SUDDENLY, STARTLES AS SHE SEES...

A LEATHER GLOVE NAILED TO THE STALL.

Tan, ladies' small. With a NOTE beneath it. Hanging there.

CUT TO:

INT. STREETS OF MANHATTAN - SIXTH AVENUE - DAY

Swede wanders in the lunchtime crowd. In his suit, carrying a briefcase...

Passes a phone-booth... Pauses, considers...

Passes on.

CUT TO:

INT. HE'S KNOCKING AT A HOTEL ROOM DOOR: "614"

It opens. RITA opens it. Dressed in a skirt and blouse, gaudily floral bargain basement stuff. With high-heeled pumps. And make-up. Wierd look for her. At first she says nothing, then, brightly:

RITA

Do come in, make yourself at home.

He follows her in. She closes the door behind him. He's opening the briefcase...

SWEDE

I brought the money.

But she isn't even looking. Instead, she gets on the bed, props up the pillows behind her... CHANTS... LIKE THE CHEERLEADERS...

RITA

SWEDE Le-VOV,
RHYMES with the LOVE,
SWEDE Le-VOV,
RHYMES with the LOVE...

He's wierded out by the old chant, disoriented, unnerved...

SWEDE

Miss Cohen... I've brought it, the ten thousand dollars, in small bills. Now where's my daughter?...

RITA

First let's fuck.

He pales.

RITA

Didn't you hear me? Let's f-f-f-fuck, Dad.

SWEDE

If you have any feeling for what everyone is going through--

RITA

Come off it, Swede. You came here to fuck me. Ask anybody: Why does a middle-aged capitalist come to a hotel room to meet a young piece of ass? Say it, just say it, Swede, 'I came here to fuck you...'

SWEDE

Stop all this...

RITA

I'm twenty-two. I do everything, I do it all. You're not afraid, are you? Big guy like you, can't have met your match in little me. Pillar. Pillar of the Fucking Community Swede Levov. Come on, let's see the Pillar...

SWEDE

(flares angrily)

What is the aim of all this, will you tell me --?

RITA

(suddenly clear)

To introduce you to reality.
And it ain't gonna be no picnic, Jocko.

He shudders. Then:

RITA

I'll take you to see your daughter. First we fuck, then I'll zip up your little fly and take you to where she is...

SWEDE

How do I know you will?

RITA

Wait. See. The worst is you get yourself some nice young gash...

SWEDE

(revolting...)

Stop this! My daughter has nothing to do with this! With you! You're not fit to wipe my daughter's shoes! She has nothing to do with you or the bombing or --

And she spreads her legs. No underwear.

RITA (CONT'D)

-- There. Put it right there.

Sickens Swede. Angers him --

SWEDE

Miss Cohen --

Her hand goes down and OFF SCREEN, but we're on her she speaks, as she shows herself, her vagina...

He's gazing into her eyes, won't let his gaze fall... Coldly...

SWEDE

I'm a father... my daughter is missing... someone is dead...

RITA

You know what size it? Let's see what kind of guesser you are. It's a small, I'm guessing it's a four. In a ladies' that's as small as they come... Any smaller would be a child's...

She edges closer to him, on her back. Slithering, like a snake-dancer, with her legs spread...

RITA

Stick it in. But slowly, always slowly the first time...

Her eyes are glowing at him... He's refusing to look...

SWEDE

This is loathsome... This does not have to do with anything... This does not make you a woman...

OFF CAMERA, we can tell she's digging into herself with her hand... THEN...

RITA

You great big Boy Scout... You want to know what this has to do with what's happening? Here!...

And she thrusts her wet hand upward at him... to his face...

RITA
Taste it and you'll know!

He doesn't flinch, doesn't stir, doesn't breathe... as she almost grazes his mouth with her hand, her fingers...

Then, making loony, comical little circles in the air with it, she brings her hand to her own mouth. Licks it.

RITA
Know how it tastes?
It tastes like your d-d-d-daughter.

At which, overwhelmed, Swede turns and BOLTS FROM THE ROOM...

CUT TO:

STAIRWAY OF THE HOTEL...

He's running down the stairs, HEADLONG, FLEEING...

EXT. NEW YORK HILTON...

He's bursting out through the doors, seeking air and space... running out onto the sidewalk, Sixth Avenue... He staggers...

FLASH TO: RITA COHEN ON THE BED, LEERING, HER LEGS SPREAD...

RESUME..... SIXTH AVENUE... SWEDE RUNNING

Further and further down street, away from the hotel in the BG... Hustles through crowds, commuters... SIDE ANGLE as he stretches out his gait...

FLASH TO: SAME SIDE ANGLE - LONG AGO, SWEDE AT 18 ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD

Hustling through the defensive line, fleet and powerful...

RESUME..... TIME PRESENT..... CLOSER ON SWEDE... as he slows, recovering himself...

Stops. Turns. The big hotel is still in the background. He REVERSES FIELD...

FLASH TO: SAME MOVE - SWEDE AT 18 PIVOTS ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD,

REVERSES FIELD, ball tucked smoothly beneath his arm...

RESUME... TIME PRESENT... INT: STAIRWAY OF THE HOTEL as he's bolting back up...

INT: CORRIDOR... AS he charges the ROOM "614"... It's already empty, deserted... briefcase lies empty on the floor...

Swede starts to turn away, then HEARS...

THE TOILET'S FLUSHING... HE BURSTS THROUGH TO:

BATHROOM... It's empty, but finishing it's flush, like someone just left, isn't far...

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL... HE BURSTS OUT THE FRONT again...

There's a line of taxis, he quick-steps through them, ducking to see each... searches street and sidewalk, sweeping with his eyes as he moves... SUDDEN THOUGHT, side entrance...

He races around the corner onto 56th Street... ONE-WAY coming TOWARDS him... FAR END: HIS POV: Is that the pea-coat?

He sees what might be RITA COHEN, getting in a car, WHITE BEAT-UP VW VAN, heads TOWARDS him with her in the passenger seat...

He sees it coming, STEPS INTO THE STREET, into light traffic, as it approaches...

SEES THE DRIVER: Fair-skinned SKINNY BLACK KID, 20s, Afro -- GLIMPSE OF RITA, looking WORRIED for once -- Driver, SEEING SWEDE, he hits the brake, jerks, stops --

Swede hurries TOWARDS HIM --

Squeal of tires, VAN'S BACKING AWAY, backing up, whacky, THROUGH the traffic --

SEE Rita cursing, gesturing, AS VAN DIMINISHES, SWEDE'S POV, in retreat --

SWEDE POURS ON SPEED --

But the Van going backwards reaches Seventh Avenue, fishtails back INTO FLOW OF TRAFFIC, CARS JAM AND HONK -- VAN GETS TRAPPED between a parked truck and the flow of traffic, can't move -- giving Swede his chance --

SWEDE CLOSES IN -- He's coming out of the street, a few yards from the front of the van, about to get in its path, prevent its pulling out --

He and the SKINNY BLACK KID are looking right at each other -- and RITA too we SEE BUT DON'T HEAR her cursing, gesticulating -- WHEN:

THE BLACK KID floors it right AT Swede... swerves pulls the van AROUND the truck...

And the van is suddenly off and gone, flowing WITH the avenue's traffic. Swedee sprints after it... Hopeless... Heslows little by little... Gives it up.

Rests for a moment. Winded, but lightly, the way an athlete's winded. Shakes it off, turns away...

Loss and regret upon him as he heads turns back to the hotel... Athlete returning to the locker-room after a losing game...

NATHAN'S VOICE-OVER

What was it that the Swede had said
to me, that long ago afternoon?
(echoing Swede's words...)
Basketball was never like this.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM 614 - LATER

Couple of three FBI guys are all over it. Briefcase, everything else being dusted, messed with.

Dolan has Swede out in the hall.

DOLAN

What were you thinking.

Swede doesn't answer. Dolan reframes.

DOLAN

When you add it up, your daughter's a minor. She saw a psychiatrist for years, that's, evidence of mental stress... Plus, that bomb, she plainly had no intent-to-kill, not at that hour of the morning. Protecting her from us is not intelligent. It's pretty unintelligent when you think about it.

SWEDE

What do you want from me.

DOLAN

Nothing, thanks.

(looks at his notes)

The descriptions are okay.

Swede goes. As he does...

DOLAN (CONT'D)

You've done everything wrong you
could do, Mr. Levov.

Which Swede hears, but keeps going.

...Fade to BLACK.

FADE IN: -- FULL-SCREEN: TV: ON WHICH IS PLAYING...

A scene we saw before... A CITY STREET, IN VIETNAM... A GROUP OF
MONKS IN SAFFRON-COLORED ROBES, squatting...

AN ELDERLY MONK, pours gasoline over himself...

REPEAT: CLOSER ON THE TV: MONK pours gasoline on himself...

THE MONK ENCIRCLED BY A NIMBUS OF FLAME, soft flame, like a fire-
eater... He's immobile, unaffected...

CLOSER: FULL SCREEN: FLAMES, ragged flames, come roiling out of
him, all at once...

THE OLD MONK FALLING GENTLY IN THE FLAMES, the others pressing
their hands and bowing...

REPEAT: THE OLD MONK, SLOW MOTION, TURNING AND FALLING IN THE
CIRCLE OF FLAMES...

...Fade to BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. BRIGHT ROOM - DAY - FLOWERS

In a vase on a writing desk. Sun catches them. Also, framed photo of Swede and Merry -- and Dawn herself, when she was little.

It's a room we've never been in before. Dawn, clothed, is sitting up on the bed.

DAWN

I'm frightened, Seymour. I'm
frightened all the time.

SWEDE

Just breathe...

She shudders. Looks hopefully to the door, he reads her look.

SWEDE

It's not time for your medicine.

She's wearing a white oversized turtleneck, pulls it up round her neck and down around her knees, and under her, cocooning against the anxiety coursing through her... He goes on...

SWEDE

Think of the most pleasant place
you've ever been...

Her frightened eyes... she tries...

DAWN

Switzerland? Klosters, the hotel...

SWEDE

Take yourself there...

DAWN

...or Avon. My uncle's house, when
I was a girl. The lifeguards were
all Catholic boys from Fordham and
Holy Cross, they'd come down for
the summer...

SWEDE

They were all in love with you.

DAWN

(matter of fact)
I should have married one of them.

They were seriously smart, I'm sure
they're all successful lawyers by
now...

She looks out the window.

DAWN

Where are we?

(before he can react)

Don't have a shit-fit, Seymour, I
know it's a nuthouse, I mean what
town?

SWEDE

Princeton.

DAWN

The other time I was in Princeton
it was at the Governor's mansion.

SWEDE

(encourages)

Right. Just after the contest.

DAWN

Twenty-one and scared to death. His
chauffeur drove me from Elizabeth,
in my crown...

(cracked smile...)

I danced in my crown with the
governor of New Jersey --
And I end up with you?

Swede says nothing. He knows where this is going, too well...

DAWN (CONT'D)

How did this happen? How did I end
up here? You, that's how! You
wouldn't leave me alone, had to
marry me -- I just wanted to teach
music, teach kids music in the
school system, and be left alone by
boys. Never wanted to be Miss Union
County, Miss-Crazy New Jersey, Miss
America! I just wanted the
scholarship so I could get my
degree and a job and that was it.
But then you arrived! Those hands!
Those shoulders! Towering over me
with your jaw, this huge animal...
Every time I looked up there was my
boyfriend, gaga because I was a

ridiculous beauty queen! You were like some kid, you still are! You had to make me into a princess! Well look where I have wound up! In a madhouse! Your princess is in a madhouse!

Off him,

CUT TO:

LATER - DARKNESS FALLING - SHE SLEEPS.

Still cocooned in her sweater. Watched by Swede.

He lowers her into a more comfortable position. He pulls covers over her.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY OF THE SANATORIUM - NIGHT

Swede's passing through, leaving. Waiting room's deserted... Pleasant-looking nurse smiles at him...

NURSE

G'night Mr. Levov.

SWEDE

G'night.

But His eye catches a newspaper, left out on an armchair...

CUT TO:

INT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE, NEWARK - FBI OFFICE - DAY

NEWSPAPER on Dolan's desk, which Swede has put there, shows the famous bomb blast in Greenwich Village, 1969 --

DOLAN

There were three blasts. The townhouse was totally destroyed....

SWEDE

Right, but look, the two women who escaped --

(shows in paper)

-- they were young, and white -- and they disappeared --

DOLAN
(knows the question)
Is one of them Merry.

SWEDE
Or Rita.

Dolan smiles at the name.

DOLAN
"Rita Cohen." A year we're looking
for her. There's guys in this
building who think you made her up.

SWEDE
(ignores, pressing...)
And the body you found inside, the
boy, he went to Columbia, thrown
out for anti-war acticity...

DOLAN
(ahead of him)
Which is the profile of Merry's so-
called "friends..."

SWEDE
And the bombs they were making:
pipes filled with dynamite, just
like in Hamlin's. It adds up.

DOLAN
How old is your paper.
(looks at it)
Yesterday. Old.
(fills him in)
One of the missing women, we know
who she is. Her parents own the
building. Rich fucks. They're down
in the Caribbean growing a tan while
their rich-fuck daughter makes
bombs to blow people up with.

SWEDE
And the other?

DOLAN
(concedes)
We don't know. Therefore it's
Merry?

Dolan looks at him. Genuinely sympathetic now.

DOLAN (CONT'D)
You go home, Mr. Levov.
How's Mrs. Levov?

CUT TO:

INT. OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - ON TV: A PRESS CONFERENCE...

A couple, middle-class man and woman speaking to the mike --
They're the "rich-fuck" parents of the missing girl --

MOTHER
We want you home, Sarah...

ANGLE SWEDE, watching, on the floor, eating...

MOTHER (CONT'D)
(bravely fighting tears)
Sarah... All we want to say to you is...

SWEDE
(speaking for her, simultaneous)
We want to know you're safe...

MOTHER (SAME TIME)
That we love you and want you to be
safe, that's all...

SWEDE
(as before)
We can help, help you...

FATHER (SAME TIME)
Darling, what's done is done, we
are desperate to find you so we can
help...

SWEDE (SAME TIME)
We won't even ask where you are, if
you don't want to tell us, just so
you're okay...

MOTHER (SAME TIME)
Please telephone or wire or have
someone call...

SWEDE
Merry... Merry...

As if she could hear him.

CUT TO:

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S (SHEILA SALZMAN'S) OFFICE - DAY

Some months have passed. Swede sits in Sheila's office, explaining something. He's almost embarrassed.

SWEDE

Dawn read an article, when she got home from the hospital. About this doctor in Geneva.

Sheila, as ever, dipping her tea bag thoughtfully...

SHEILA

The plastic surgeon, yes. She told me.

SWEDE

It's all she's talked about, ever since... I see her at night, in the bathroom mirror...

INTERCUT: HOUSE, BATHROOM - NIGHT

DAWN -- LEANS CLOSE IN TO THE MIRROR -- USES HER FINGER TIPS TO PULL BACK THE SKIN BESIDE HER MOUTH... Swede in pajamas, watching...

SWEDE (CONT'D, V.O.)

She thinks somehow that having a face-lift... even though she's only forty-three...

RESUME: SHEILA'S OFFICE

SHEILA

(completes his sentence)

She thinks it will help her start over. And why not? Imagine what Dawn has been through...

SWEDE

I don't have to imagine.

SHEILA

Then why not give her every opportunity to start over?

SWEDE

(But...)

She read about it in Vogue...

SHEILA

She only found what she was looking for. She's been through a terrible trauma. I've seen this before, women who've lost their husbands, who've been seriously ill...

(leans forward, encourages)

What if you were to go along with her? Support her, the whole way, the trip to Switzerland, the operation... it might be a way for both of you to put the past behind you...

But that's just it.

SWEDE

I don't want to put the past behind me!

(goes on)

The past is Merry! Merry, whose name Dawn won't even say anymore! Merry's part of me, not less than before, more than before! I don't want to put that behind...

SHEILA

But Dawn does.

Which Sheila punctuates with a smile of understanding.

...And fade to Black.

FADE IN ON:

A PAINTING. MODERN, ABSTRACT.

White, smeared with grey. Big one.

Standing before it, profoundly uncomprehending... is LOU LEVOV. He moves on to another one, just like it. Before which the Swede is standing, in pretend-contemplation... We're IN:

INT. A GALLERY. GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK - DAY

LOU

(appeals to his son, re: painting)
What is it? Can you help me out?

Swede indicates he should keep his voice down. It's an opening, there are lots of people, the wine & cheese crowd...

LOU

It's like the one you got in your living room, that you paid an arm and a leg for.

SWEDE

Same artist. Bill Orcutt. Our neighbor. You've met him, he's always there Fourth of July....

LOU

You'll have to tell me why he wastes his time. He makes a living like this?

SWEDE

He's an architect. He's working with Dawn on the new house.

They look over to where -- some yards away, DAWN's talking with ORCUTT and other Gallery-opening types...

LOU

I don't care what you say, she looks like a million dollars.

CLOSER -- Dawn's face has been redone. It's tight and bright and disorienting, the eyes flash a forced-seeming cheerfulness...
BACK TO:

LOU

That girl's like herself again. Getting rid of the cows was the smartest thing she ever did. I never liked it. But thank God for the face-lift. I was against but I was wrong.

SWEDE

She's a fighter. She's fine. She's made tremendous strides.

They begin to move, SEE... SYLVIA LEVOV, Swede's mother, just

outside the door, on the sidewalk... Looking distressed. They exit to her...

EXT. GALLERY - GREENWICH VILLAGE - DAY

SWEDE

Mom, you alright?

SYLVIA

(flustered)

Nothing... it happens...

SWEDE

What happens?

SYLVIA

I'm ashamed to tell you. Sometimes I see someone walking on the street, or I'm behind someone, a girl, and if she's tall...

SWEDE

(sadly)

You think it's Merry.

LOU

She can't stop herself, your mother.

SWEDE

None of us can. I understand.

SYLVIA

And every time the phone rings.

Sylvia starts to cry... Swede, looking around...

SWEDE

It's alright, Ma...

LOU

It's not alright, she should control herself. We all gotta. Merry's gonna do what she wants, she'll come home, she won't come home, we gotta accept. She's eighteen now...

SWEDE

Twenty. Come on, Mom...

And he moves her from the door... brings her back inside...

INT. GALLERY, then hurries her to --

INT. RESTROOM

And closes the door, so she can let go a little. She cries...

SYLVIA

I was remembering the phone calls.
You'd call, you'd put her on, and
she'd say, 'Hi Grandma! Guess
what?' 'I don't know honey, what?'
And she'd tell me...

SWEDE

Ma, Dad's right, you can't lose
control. Dawn's out there, we
mustn't lose control in front of
Dawn. She's doing great but that's
not something she can handle...

SYLVIA

I look at the old snapshots...

SWEDE

Don't look at them, Ma. Me too, but
it doesn't help.

She beats back her tears. Looks up at her son. At her great
Seymour. Of whom she's proud...

SYLVIA

My big boy. You're so brave.

He dries her eyes. When: There's a tap at the restroom door -- he
opens. It's Dawn.

DAWN

Everything alright?

SWEDE

Fine, they're fine now...

SYLVIA

I had a moment. I'm feeling better.

Dawn with her shining new face. She can tell there was more going
on, but she doesn't want to hear about it.

DAWN

Good. Good.

Her new smile, direct from Switzerland.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOURTEENTH STREET - NIGHT...

Swede and Dawn, Lou and Sylvia, walking toward Swede's car...

DAWN

(social, chatty, the new Dawn)
Well I for one had enough
pretentious art-chat for one
night...

SWEDE

(encouraging her good mood)
You enjoy it. You think Orcutt's a
good artist...

DAWN

His design sense is good. We came
to show support, but the whole
scene leaves me cold...

LOU

(fair-minded, to Sylvia)
The way he paints, so it looks like
it's not even finished? He did that
on purpose, that's art. Seymour
explained to me.

They've reached the car, at a meter -- across from the Fourteenth
Street Subway Station. Swede opens the car doors, his parents get
in the back, Dawn in the front seat passengers --

As Swede's going round to his side --

HIS POV -- something register, someone -- far sidewalk,
approaching the Subway entrance --

REACTION SWEDE -- Did he see something? Looks again --

HIS POV -- Nothing. Ordinary group of downtown types --

HIS POV -- LOOKS AGAIN. THE BLACK AFRO-KID. FROM RITA'S VAN. In a
blue hooded sweater.

REACTION SWEDE -- Is it him? Is he sure?

HIS POV -- SEES THE BLACK AFRO-KID head down the subway stairs...
He turns to Dawn, in the car --

SWEDE
Take them home.

DAWN
(surprised)
What?

SWEDE
Do this-- I have to do something--

DAWN
Seymour --

SWEDE
Dammit don't argue with me --

And throwing her his keys, he CHARGES ACROSS THE STREET -- into--

INT. FOURTEENTH STREET SUBWAY STATION

And DOWN THE NARROW STAIRS -- It's a Saturday night, it's busy,
Swede stumbles, presses through the bodies --

People are jamming the token-turnstyles, there's a SUBWAY TRAIN
already in the station --

He's LOOKING OVER THEIR HEADDS FOR A GLIMPSE OF AFRO-KID, BLUE
SWEATER... Too crowded, too jammed... People stalled at the
crowded turn-style...

Swede JUMPS THE TURNSTYLE, there are people getting on the train,
the only train, he takes a chance without seeing the Kid, ENTERS
THE TRAIN as the doors close behind him...

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - UPTOWN EXPRESS - MOVING

As we MOVE WITH SWEDE, his heart pounding, through the nighttime
passengers, he's searching faces -- Lots of young black men,
afros, none are right...

ONE CAR into the NEXT...

CLOSE ON SWEDE...

NEXT CAR, there's a TRANSIT POLICEMAN... SWEDE hesitates, we see
him consider...

TRANSIT COP is wondering what the man wants...

SWEDE moves on...

INT. SUBWAY - THIRTY-FOURTH STREET STATION - FEW MINUTES LATER
ANGLE ON THE TRAIN STOPPING, doors open, crowd gets out...

SWEDE COMES OUT ONTO THE PLATFORM, watching, searching...

Flow of passengers around him, jostle him, he's stationary...
ANGLES this way and that...

HIS POV: GLIMPSE OF BLUE SWEATER, exiting turn-style...
disappearing down the pedestrian subway...

SWEDE RUSHES, goes through the turn-style... Blue sweagter lost
in the crowd, but the crowd's flowing one-way only...

He hurries...

SIGN above him says: PENNSYLVANIA STATION -- TRAINS TO NEW
JERSEY, LONG ISLAND --

INT. PENNSYLVANIA STATION (N.Y.) WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Where the pedestrian subway empties... Large room with a dozen
arched gateways to the departure platforms...

Swede hopeless, frustrated... Then:

HIS POV: THE DEPARTURE BOARD

Shows trains about to depart. His eye goes to one:

NEWARK. Gate 12.

He RUSHES to Gate Twelve... HEADLONG down the stairs...

The train has left. Its lights departing.

But standing on the platfrom, watching it depart, Swede feels he
knows something. We see him register a clear idea. Off him,

CUT TO:

INT. PENNSYLVANIA STATION, NEWARK - DAY

A very different place -- High old vaulted ceilings, now dirty

and supported with makeshift scaffolding and the whole badly in need of renovation --

Aside from a few commuters, the crowd is littered with homeless people -- and some dispirited COPS and TRANSIT PERSONNEL, putting up a front and trying to move the worst-looking sorts along...

Through this scene, his footsteps echoing... SWEDE...

NATHAN (VOICE-OVER)
From that day, the Swede began to
haunt Newark's Penn Station...

INT. PENN STATION - WAITING ROOM, ANOTHER DAY - SWEDE

NATHAN (V.O. CONT'D)
When his wife thought he was
working late, or when at work they
thought he was calling on
customers, it was there he'd be...

Newspaper under his arm, he watches as a crowd of people exit from the archway marked FROM NEW YORK...

INT. PENN STATION - TRAIN PLATFORM

SWEDE on the dark, desolate platform, watching a train arrive...

Penn Station, where as a boy he'd
go with his father to greet the
buyers from New York...

FLASHBACK: The FORTIES: TRAIN PLATFORM: **SWEDE** at 17, beside Lou, both in suits of the period, greeting a PAIR OF NEW YORK BUYERS, handshakes, Lou proudly presents his handsome son...

RESUME: TIME PRESENT: He walks the same dark platform, after the train emptied out... Hopeless...

Where he came home to after the
war...

FLASHBACK: 1946: **Swede in Marine Uniform**, disembarking from a train with others (the scene we saw before), runs to his mother and father as Jerry and Nathan look on...

RESUME: TIME PRESENT: INT. PENN STATION, CORRIDOR - SWEDE

*Now he walked its corridors,
looking for his daughter's keepers:
Having come there once, they might
pass through there again...*

INT: PENN STATION, WAITING ROOM -- Other weather, other days --
Swede waiting, walking, looking --

*Whether in hope or in despair, he
didn't know. Because he had already
learned the worst lesson that life
could teach -- that it makes no
sense.*

CUT TO:

INT. PENNSYLVANIA STATION - DAY

A busier brighter day than usual under the dismal dome... Swede looking and waiting, as usual...

NATHAN (VOICE-OVER)
And then, when he was certain that
there was no hope at all...

SWEDE SEES RITA. She's dressed quite normally, among the other commuters returning from the city, and her hair is short now, the Angela Davis afro gone... but it's Rita...

ANGLE:

SWEDE gaining on her, she doesn't see or feel him coming...

SWEDE SWOOPS HER UNDER ONE ARM, she gasps, he covers her mouth... smooth and strong, like he'd done this before... into...

A PASSAGEWAY, DESERTED, out of the flow of the passengers. Puts her against a column, flattens her, throws her against the column...

SWEDE
I could kill you.

She's surprised and frightened, but...

RITA
I'll fuck you if you let me go...

SWEDE
I don't want to fuck you, I want my
daughter.

She doesn't speak... He YANKES her, SHOWS: There's a security kiosk, hundred feet away across the waiting room floor: TWO COPS lounging by it... She SEES...

RITA
If you turn me in, she'll die.

SWEDE
How?

She doesn't answer, he turns her arm, it hurts, she gives it up:

RITA
Coker. He'll kill her.

SWEDE
Coker? the black kid?

RITA
He loves me, he'd kill her to get
even...

He stares at her, unbelieving...

RITA
Let me go and I'll tell you where
she is. Fuck, I can't take it much
more anyway...

SWEDE
(refuses)
You take me there.

He slams her again into the column. Which scares her.

SWEDE
Take me there!

RITA
I don't want to see her, I can't
take anymore of her shit!

He won't argue, starts dragging her towards the cops...

RITA
(she yields)
Okay.

He halts.

CUT TO:

INT. WHITE VW VAN (MOVING) - DAY

Swede sits. As she drives. HE'S HOLDING ON TO HER ARM WITH ONE
STRONG HAND. To which she reacts --

RITA
Ow, huh?

He doesn't care.

RITA
'Least it isn't far.

SWEDE
She's in Newark?

He's furious at the thought. Rita says nothing.

SWEDE
She's been living minutes from me
this whole time?

THEY TRAVEL ALONG --

EXT. RAILROAD AVENUE - VAN MOVING - SAME TIME

A long bleak run of train tracks, a stone featureless elevation of wall, under which archway underpasses have been cut... Dark, cavernous, forbidding underpasses, in which, as he PASSES BY, SWEDE glimpses DERELICTS, the hovels of JUNKIES... heaps of garbage.... abandoned cars...

INT. VAN

RITA turns through one of these, slowing. Swede, in horror...

SWEDE
Here?

They come out the other side, and STOP: Facing a row of burnt-out looking brick factories... Rita indicates one, over his shoulder...

RITA
That's the building.

He turns to see, she TAKES A GUN OUT from under the dashboard. Smoothly. Point blank.

RITA
Get out of the van.

Shit. He does, gets out...

EXT. STREET

Looks around, there's nothing, no one to see... Realizes: he's been brought here to this deserted place to be shot.

Instead, she speaks, indicates the building again...

RITA

There's a dog and cat hospital on the first floor, she's got a job there.

He makes a move to go, but --

RITA

No! Wait for her. If you go in, you'll make a scene, she'll be discovered. She'll never survive the FBI. Believe me, I've been doing this a while.

He looks to the building, the desolation... yearning...

SWEDE

Merry...

RITA

She's an incredible spirit, I could never resist her power... You and I were in the same boat, Swede...

This thought, this idea, staggers him...

RITA (CONT'D)

I lied to her only once. That was about what happened at the hotel. If I told her you refused to fuck me she'd never have taken the money... then she'd be back on the streets begging. I couldn't let her do that, I loved her too much...

SWEDE

Loved her?

(turning)

This is a lie, you're going to drive away, she isn't even in there...

She ignores, goes on as before, gun still levelled at him...

RITA

Your daughter is divine. You can't be in the presence of such divinity without submitting. I was nobody til I met her... but I can't take anymore. Me and Coker, we have to get away, but there's nobody I can leave her to. Except you.

SWEDE

You're lying...

RITA

Take care of her, Mr. Levov. Her name now is Mary Stoltz.

Still holding the gun on him, she drives off.

Leaves him there.

He watches the van until she's gone, back through the underpass.

Then turns and faces the building: a small, decrepit brick building, across the abandoned lot: a tire dump, patchy with tall weeds.

He leaves the sidewalk, makes his way through the tall weeds towards the building. Steps over the twisted wreckage of wire-mesh that lies tangled in the weeds, nearly stumbles... until he comes to a clearing in the lot from which he can see the doorway, on which is crudely but clearly painted:

IRONBOUND ANIMAL HOSPITAL. PLEASE RING.

He stands there, remembering Rita's words about waiting. Decides to trust them.

Stands there: a neatly manicured successful businessman in a thousand-dollar suit, standing in a desolate landscape, among discarded rubber tires, burnt-out rusted drums, rubbish.

FLASHBACK to: OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - MERRY at 8, KITCHEN TABLE...

MERRY

Daddy let's have a c-conversation.

Swede, shirtsleeves. Puts down his paper. A routine he enjoys...

SWEDE

Okay. And what shall be the subject of our conversation?

MERRY

D-daddy I'm lonesome.

He's struck. But still amused...

SWEDE

Where'd you even get a word like that?

He gathers her to him.

ON her face, glad to be held but still shadowed by a sadness...

RESUME: TIME PRESENT: THE ABANDONED LOT

SWEDE, eyes upon the lonesome building. When:

MOVING TOWARDS HIM: a WOMAN, or a SHAPE of a woman. Where'd she come from?... He turns toward her, foreboding...

WOMAN

Sir?

FOCUS... She's a huge middle-aged black woman in tight yellow slacks... tottering to him across the lot in high-heeled shoes...

WOMAN

Sir, can you tell me where the Salvation Army is?

SWEDE

Is there one? I don't know.

She's blank.

He figures what it is: she wants money. He takes bills out of his pocket, passes her some.

She takes the money lurches away toward the railroad underpass in her ill-fitting high-heel shoes.

He returns his gaze to the building. Lonelier than ever...

After a few moments, resolving, he strides toward the building, strongly but shakily... afraid of what he'll find... WHEN:

THE DOOR IS SEEN TO OPEN. He stops. Heart pounding...

No one emerges. Then someone does. Comes down the few steps... and then is approaching across the lot...

The figure is tall and thin... and definitely female, despite the draping of a man's old overcoat... She SEES him now, hesitates, then continues toward...

RACK IN... We SEE her face, it's MERRY, BUT IT'S HARD TO TELL, HER HAIR IS CROPPED AND MATTED AND BEDRAGGLED, HER LOWER FACE IS COVERED WITH A VEIL WHICH IS MERELY THE RAGGED FOOT ON AN OLD NYLON STOCKING... BUT THIS IS MERRY...

SHE IS RUNNING TOWARDS HIM NOW...

FLASHBACK TO: MERRY AT 3, RUNNING TOWARDS HIM FROM THE SWING ON THE TREE AT THE HOUSE...

RESUME: TIME PRESENT: SHE IS RUNNING TO HIM ACROSS THE LOT AND THROWS HER ARMS AROUND HIM...

MERRY
(happily, joyfully)
Daddy! Daddy!

FLASHBACK: MERRY AT 3 CLINGING TO HIS NECK...

MERRY AT 3
Daddy!

RESUME: TIME PRESENT: MERRY AND SWEDE CLINGING TO EACH OTHER...

Rocking in each other's arms, crying intensely... "Merry..."
"Daddy..." Holding and rocking and crying...

NATHAN'S VOICE-OVER
And so they clung to each other...
the dependable father whose chosen
path was goodness and certainty and
order...
And the daughter was chaos itself.

CUT TO:

INT. ANGLE ON AN EMPTY RAILROAD UNDERPASS - LATER

Hold on its desolation a moment. Angle discarded clothes, liquor bottles, an isolated bar-stool (Who put it there?)...

Then at the far end, Merry & Swede, walking towards CAMERA...

ANGLE - CLOSER ON THEM

She is leading him. Swede steals a look at her. Afraid to, but does: The dirty stocking covers her nose and mouth. He wants to ask, he wants to ask a million things...

MERRY
(catches him staring)
I've become a Jain, Dad.

SWEDE
A Jain...?

MERRY
We're a small Indian sect...

SWEDE
You're Indian? You're not Indian...

MERRY
(ignores, sweet & patient)
I wear the veil to do no harm to
organisms that dwell in the air.

He listens. Picks his way among the rubbish at his feet...
NOTICES a DERELICT slumped some yards away, asleep in a pool of
what looks like oil or vomit... Merry not noticing or not
minding...

SWEDE
Merry... do you walk this way every
night? Merry, this is loathsome...

Over which she goes on, on her own tack, patient as before...

MERRY
...which is why we do not bathe. To
do no harm to the water.

SWEDE
(staying the course, fighting panic)
You don't bathe... I understand...

MERRY
(as to a child)
Nor do we walk about after dark,
for fear of crushing some living
object. There are souls imprisoned
in even the lowest form of life...

SWEDE
(takes her hand...)
I understand...

EXT. STEPS OF A TENEMENT BOARDING HOUSE - LATER

As they walk up... the door hangs loose from its hinges. The

house is rundown, rotting, stands behind piles of junk...

Swede bracing... holding on to her hand...

INT. TENEMENT HALLWAY - *HAND-HELD*, as they travel down it...

Unlit, the walls wet and ruined... the very floor broken... Swede cringing from the smell... into...

INT. MERRY'S ROOM

They enter. It's small, no window, only a narrow transom.

SWEDE

Merry... Forgive me but how do you live here...

MERRY

Daddy, please...

SWEDE

(looks around, brokenhearted)
I mean, where's the sink, where's the toilet...

MERRY

I live.

"Okay." She's "okay." Getting hold of himself, he kneels to her bed, a grimy wooden pallet, the only piece of furniture...

And begins to read some INDEX CARDS positioned over the bed...

SWEDE

You always had things over your bed... It used to be pictures of Audrey Hepburn...

MERRY

(smiles benignly)
Those are the five vows.

SWEDE

(hesitates, but reads...)
"I renounce all killing of living beings..."

(He looks at her; resumes)
"...whether subtle or gross, movable or immovable..."

MERRY

(from memory)

"...I renounce all vices of lying
speech arising from anger... I
renounce all taking of anything not
given..."

SWEDE

Look, Merry... I have to ask you
something...

MERRY

(continues over)

"...all sexual pleasure, either
with gods or men..."

SWEDE

Merry did you do it. I must ask you
this now. Did you do it?

She's blank.

MERRY

Do what, Daddy?

SWEDE

Put the bomb in the post office.

MERRY

Yes.

Just like that.

SWEDE

You intended to blow up Hamlin's too?

MERRY

There was no other way.

SWEDE

Merry you must tell me now who made
you do it.

MERRY

Lyndon Johnson.

SWEDE

No! Answer me! Who talked you into it?

She smiles at him sadly.

MERRY

How strongly you still crave the
idea. Of your innocent child.

SWEDE

...Who was it? Was it Rita?

MERRY

Who's Rita?

SWEDE

Rita, Coker... Don't protect them...

MERRY

It's alright, Daddy, you can detest
me alone.

(off his look)

I alone am the abomination.

He gestures, choking... gestures to the filthy room...

SWEDE

And this...?

MERRY

This is how I live. The way of
Ahimsa. Non-violence.

He fights for breath...

SWEDE

May I tell you what I think? I
think you are terrified of what
you've done. I think that rather
than evade punishment you've taken
it into your own hands... I don't
believe that's a difficult
conclusion to reach, honey, I don't
believe I'm the only person in the
world who, seeing you here, would
come up with that idea. You want to
do penance. But this is not
penance. Not even the state would
punish you like this. I have to say
these things to you, Merry --

MERRY

Of course you do.

SWEDE

Just look at what you've done to
yourself! You are going to die if

you keep this up! Another year,
another month -- If you don't die
of starvation, malnutrition, filth
-- how many times do you think you
can pass back and forth beneath
that underpass without the
derelicts who live there killing
you? --

MERRY

(shakes her head no)

They won't harm me. They know that
I love them.

Love. The word sickens him...

SWEDE

You will meet a violent end,
Meredith. Maybe that's not what you
are seeking, but you will meet your
death...

MERRY

But only to be reborn.

SWEDE

I doubt that, honey, I seriously
doubt that...

MERRY

Will you admit that my guess is at
least as good as yours, Dad?

So "reasonable." He regards her... with tears/anger/love/disgust
in his eyes, his throat...

SWEDE

Will you at least take off that
mask while we're talking? So I can
see you?

MERRY

See me stutter, do you mean? I
don't anymore. My stutter was only
my way of doing no violence to the
air...

SWEDE

Then maybe you were better off with
your stutter. If you had to carry
things to this extreme to be rid of
that damn thing.

MERRY

(pronounces)

I am done with craving and selfhood.

He looks at her. Melting again.

SWEDE

Sweet, sweet child and girl.

He sits on the floor. She sits by him. Waits. Outside, it's growing dark. Then...

SWEDE

Who is Rita Cohen? The girl who came to me in your behalf. She came to my office.

MERRY

I never sent anyone to you...

SWEDE

(anger rising again)

Tell me the truth, please.

MERRY

I only speak the truth...

SWEDE

I gave her ten thousand dollars for you... Did you get that money?

MERRY

(laughs)

Ten thousand dollars? Not in this life, Daddy.

SWEDE

Are you... Was this some kind of game... were you playing with me, the two of you...

MERRY

I relinquish all cruelty. I relinquish all control, all influence over the world...

SWEDE

Do you? Do you? Well you have influence over me! You're killing me!

(and...)

You had influence over Fred Conlon, Merry! Merry that veil is utter

bullshit! You are the most powerful
person in the world!

She is silent. "Shuts out angry speech." A thought forms in him, turns in him... He hardly dares say it...

SWEDE

Were there others.

She looks at him, uncomprehending. Other --?

SWEDE

Was Conlon the only --

(He's afraid to finish.)

Where have you been, tell me that.
What have you been doing.

MERRY

I'll tell you everything. If you
wish to hear.

He isn't sure, but he nods.

MERRY

I was in Chicago. For a long while.
There was a priest in the anti-war
movement, he gave me sanctuary --

SWEDE

No, first, where'd you go first.
After Hamlin's.

MERRY

I went to Sheila's Salzman's.

He's staggered. What--?

MERRY (CONT'D)

She kept me a few days, then she
gave me bus money -- to Denver.
Denver wasn't...

She falters for the first time. Why? He looks at her.

SWEDE

What happened to you in Denver,
Merry?

MERRY

I was raped.
Daddy are sure you want to hear this?
(He doesn't answer, so:)

In a shelter, by the men who took
my money.

Swede is staring into horror... she hurries on, for his sake...

MERRY

-- But then I went to a commune in
Oregon. It was good, they were very
loving. We organized, did some
stuff about the war --

Her vagueness seems fateful. He asks, dreading the answer:

SWEDE

Were you involved in any more
bombings?

MERRY

Two.

SWEDE

You built the bombs.

MERRY

Built and planted the bombs.

SWEDE

Was anyone killed?

MERRY

Yes.

SWEDE

Who?

MERRY

People.

SWEDE

People. How many people, Merry?

MERRY

Three.

A beat.

SWEDE

You're not my daughter. You are not
Merry.

MERRY

If you wish to believe that, it may
be for the best.

Swede turns cruel, taunting...

SWEDE

Why don't you ask me about your
mother, Meredith? Or should I ask
you? Where was your mother born?
What is her maiden name? You're not
Meredith or you'd know...

MERRY

I don't want to talk about my mother...

SWEDE

Because you know nothing about her.
Tell me about the house at the
shore, or the name of your first-
grad teacher. Why are you
pretending to be my daughter?

MERRY

How much suffering do you want?

SWEDE

Oh don't worry about my suffering,
young lady. Who are you? Where is
my daughter? My daughter did not
kill four people! She wouldn't, she
didn't! You didn't! You could not
have done it... it isn't you...

And he grabs her, falls upon her on the pallet -- she doesn't
resist, he TEARS THE DISGUSTING VEIL FROM HER FACE --

Her mouth is closed -- HE FORCES IT OPEN WITH HIS FINGERS --

SWEDE

Tell me it isn't you!

WHEN SHE OPENS HER MOUTH -- TEETH MISSING, broken, her filthy
mouth --

He stares into it, as into a chasm leading to the center of the
earth, the fires of hell -- He croaks --

SWEDE

SPEAK!

And as he does so, SHOUTING into her mouth, he throws up.
In a surfeit of grief and disgust, vomits upon his daughter.

He's horrified at himself. Falls back weeping a little. She puts a hand of comfort on him, as she takes her off the over-large grimy sweater she wears, wipes herself off, him...

He stops her.

SWEDE

Come with me.

MERRY

You go, Daddy. Go.

SWEDE

Merry, leave you? You are asking me to do something that is excruciatingly painful... I just found you...

MERRY

Daddy...

SWEDE

Come home. I must see you...

MERRY

You've seen me. Please go now, Daddy. If you love me, please go.

He holds her in the most longing/painful of looks... as DARK CLOSES...

CUT TO:

INT. "NEWARK MAID" - FACTORY FLOOR - LATE THAT NIGHT
Empty. Silent. Deserted. Low security-light.

INT. SWEDE'S INNER OFFICE - SAME TIME
Sits at his desk. His face in his hands.
Dials a number. It RINGS... RINGS...

CUT TO:

INT. FACTORY FLOOR - LATER

SWEDE

(paces)

But what this girl has been through...

Swede and Jerry. Jerry in a sport coat and gold chains. Listens,
tries to listen, though he's not a patient man...

SWEDE (CONT'D)

...What she looks like, where she
lives...

JERRY

Are you done?

Swede turns to him.

JERRY

If you're done, if that's it, tell
me what you are going to do now.
What are you going to do, Seymour.

SWEDE

I don't know what there is to do.
She did it. She blew up Hamlin's,
she killed Conlon, she...

JERRY

Well sure she did it. Jesus. Who
did we think did it? Where is she
now, in that room? Then go back and
get her.

SWEDE

(But...)

She wants me to leave her alone.

JERRY

Fuck what she wants. Sedate her,
tie her up, whatever you have to...

SWEDE

That won't work. Jerry. I can't
drag her. You can't just force
somebody... There's more to this
than you understand...

(decides to tell him:)

She killed three more people.

JERRY

Fuck who she killed, what's the
matter with you? You're acceding to
her the way you acceded to
everything in your life!

SWEDE

(unhearing, obsessed...)

She was raped... She's crazy, she's
gone crazy...

JERRY

Of course she was raped! What did
you think was going to happen? Now
get off your ass and get her or
she's going to get raped again. Do
you love her or don't you?

SWEDE

(appalled...)

How can you ask that? Of course I
love her...

JERRY

As a thing, as a fucking thing! Oh
if only you, if only the Great
Swede could become conscious of why
he is doing what he is doing!
Always trying to be liberal, to
understand -- Always doing what's
right --

SWEDE

What's wrong with that?

JERRY

Nothing! Except that that's what
your daughter has been blasting
away at all her life! That's what
she goes around blowing up! You,

with your decorum and your stone house and your Miss America and your fucking wine cellar and all your fucking norms -- Look what your daughter did to your norms!

Swede can't take any more, stops him --

SWEDE

I didn't do this. I didn't make this, you forget where this began! I didn't make the Vietnam war, or Lyndon Johnson...

JERRY

No, you just made the angriest kid in America.

Swede turns from him. But Jerry goes on. Goes after him...

Swede? This country is *frightening*! You wanted the All-American pastoral fucking paradise? Well you've got it now, big brother! The reality of this place right up in your kisser! Welcome to the great American berserk! --

SWEDE

My daughter is in that room and *this* is your response?

JERRY

You should never have left her in that room!

SWEDE

I didn't want to leave her! You don't understand! Why do you say I don't love her? I gave her all I could, everything, *everything*.. Nobody could deal with this! You think I'm inadequate? If I'm inadequate, what are other people? If what I am is not enough, then, then I'm telling you -- that what anybody is is not enough!

JERRY

(suddenly calmer)

Now you're getting it. Now we're getting somewhere.

A pause. A silence between the two brothers.

JERRY

What do you want to do, Swede? Do you want to bail out on Meredith? Go ahead, anybody else would have long ago. Admit the little Jain bitch hates you and bail the fuck out. But if you're not going to, then for chrissake go in there and get her. Come on, we'll go together.

Reaction Swede: No...

JERRY

Or I'll go, how about that? I assure you, I'll bring her out, the little shit won't play her fucking head-games with me! Last chance. Last offer.

A beat. Then:

SWEDE

I don't want that. I can't have that.

JERRY

No. Of course not. Too brutal. The daughter's a murderer, but this is too brutal. You're still the hero. Prince o' Newark. You could never do a thing like that.

Jerry walks away from him. Saunters toward the door. Past the hundreds of machines, glinting in the low light... as he goes...

JERRY (CONT'D)

Okay, Big Swede. Gentle giant. I'm due at the hospital, I got patients, I got rounds... You're on your own...

And he's gone. We're big and WIDE...

CUT TO:

EXT. FIELDS - A HERD OF CATTLE - DAY

20 or so. HOLD on them in a still, wide shot.

SUDDENLY:

THE HERD DISSOLVES WHERE THEY STAND. TO ABSENCE. EMPTY FIELD.

RACK AND REVEAL... POV:

SWEDE - STANDING THERE, on the PORCH - OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - DAY

His look is impassive. The cows were there, then they weren't.

Behind him, their annual FOURTH OF JULY BARBECUE is revving up. LOU and SYLVIA are resting in the shade... and the ORCUTTS are there, JESSE looking much older and fatter and flyblown, drink clutched tightly in her hand... BILL ORCUTT approaches him...

ORCUTT

Wanna see about those steaks,
Swede? I'm getting called to
kitchen to help with the corn.

Swede turns from the fields... takes the barbecue equipment from Orcutt, walks over to the grill... Nearby Lou's reading the paper, gesturing angrily...

LOU

Nixon! Here, look, they caught him
in more tricks... In my opinion,
Nixon equals Typhoid Mary...

SYLVIA

(appeals to Swede)
Watergate, that's all I hear...
Those hearings, the TV's never
off...

But Swede's still impassive, unhearing... as they go on...

LOU

If Nixon were a Jew the whole world
would say, "See those Jews? Those
cheats? Those thieves?" Now who's
the cheat? Nixon never fooled me,
the fascist gangster...

Under which, Swede notices... SHEILA SALZMAN, friend of the family these days, coming out of the kitchen and setting out plates... Swede watches her, while his father go on...

LOU (CONT'D)

They're all the same. They're

interchangeable, Von Ehrlichman,
Von Haldeman, Von Nixon...

While... Sheila becomes conscious of the Swede staring at her.
She tries smiling. Swede turns away... She wonders what's wrong.

SHEILA

Can I help?

SWEDE

No, that's...

Her bright understanding look. Anger seizes him.

SWEDE

Come with me...

Takes her by the arm, surprising her... down the porch stairs...

CUT TO:

INT. WINE CELLAR - DARK - DAY

He closes the door. There's an elaborate MODEL RANCH HOUSE, small
scale model, elaborately constructed on a table in the center.
Swede is staring at Sheila... Sheila, re: the model...

SHEILA

Is this the house Bill Orcutt's
building for you...?

SWEDE

You bitch.

She doesn't move. Looks directly at him. He's shaking with anger:

SWEDE

You took her in!

She doesn't speak, doesn't deny.

SWEDE

You never told me. I could kill
you!

SHEILA

(realizing)

You've seen her, I can tell.

(then)

How is she? What can be done for
her?

SWEDE

By you? Why did you let her go? She went to your house... She'd blown up a building...

SHEILA

At first I didn't know about it. Then when I found out -- I couldn't believe it but -- she was in my house by then. How could I betray her? I'd been her therapist --

SWEDE

You could have called me! And said, "She's safe, don't worry," and then not let her out of your sight --

SHEILA

She was not an animal, like a cat or a bird you can just lock up --

SWEDE

She needed me!

SHEILA

("patient")

And your house was where they'd be looking! She was a troubled girl, going to jail was not what she needed--

SWEDE

You think she was troubled then? --

SHEILA

All I knew was, something was very wrong. She was talking as if she hated you, so -- Forgive me but I thought something had happened here, that she had to run away from!

SWEDE

Oh my God. Sheila. If you had only told me...

SHEILA

You keep trying to make this my responsibility...

SWEDE

What if she went on to kill

somebody else? She did, Sheila.

SHEILA

Don't say things just to torture me...

SWEDE

I'm telling you something! She killed three more people! What do you think of that?

Swede loses it, SMASHES at the house with his hands, KING KONG, rips some of the balsa-wood model and FLINGS it at Sheila...

SWEDE (CONT'D)

"What can be done for her?!"
Nothing! She's too far gone! She's been raped, she's a killer, she's a lunatic...

SHEILA

Stop it!

Sheila opens the door and runs from the room.

On Swede. HOLD.

INT. HOUSE, STAIRS - LATER

Swede stands at the bottom of the interior stairs from the wine cellar. He's holding a piece of the ruined model house, it hangs from his hand. He looks at it. Calls up the stairs --

SWEDE

Dawn.

No response.

He puts the piece aside, mounts the stairs. GO with him... Approaches the interior door to the house, enters, GO with him... Approaches the kitchen. He hesitates. Because of what he sees.

WHAT HE SEES:

ORCUTT, leaning over DAWN at the sink. Bending over her from behind. Why is his cheek pressed to hers, why are his hips and buttocks moving against hers? Dawn's breath is quick...

DAWN

Not here...

SWEDE. Withdraws noiselessly. To...

THE CELLAR STAIRS, down which he just came. Swede closes the door behind him. Rests against the wall. Rests.

HARD CUT TO:

INT. MERRY'S ROOM - LATER - HER THINGS

...are being torn, dragged, from drawer and box... and from the wall, her Weatherman poster... BALLET SHOES, RIDING RIBBONS... rock and roll albums...

Swede is loading them like a madman into an open trash bag... working furiously... panting, grunting with the effort...

Her books, and a red notebook we recognize... into the bag...

CUT TO:

EXT. LOW ANGLE ON HIS FOOTSTEPS - IN DARKNESS SOMEWHERE

He treads, a pavement, it's dark, he's walking, we don't know where, drags the bag behind him like a sack of garbage...

SWEDE'S VOICE (long ago)

Why are we here?

MERRY'S VOICE (at 11)

Why are camels here?

HIS FACE, HIS EYES... the trash bag over his shoulder now...

SWEDE'S VOICE (as before)

Why are we here?

MERRY'S VOICE (as before)

Why are kangaroos here?

REVERSE ANGLE now, through the darkness, we make out a few FIGURES, DERELICTS moving in the shadow, making way for the Swede... Glimpse of LIGHT in the distance...

SWEDE'S VOICE

What is life?

MERRY'S VOICE

Life is just a short space of life
in wuh-which you are alive.

He comes out into the light. We SEE where he is, one of the

railroad underpasses near Merry's boarding house...

CUT TO:

INT. MERRY'S ROOM - DAY

He spills out the contents of the bag at her feet. She's sitting on her pallet. She looks up benignly, examines them... The ballet shoes, a school jacket, stuffed animal... and then...

MERRY

My stuttering book.

She sets the things aside.

MERRY

Does this mean, Daddy, that you're not coming back again?

SWEDE

Is that what you want?

MERRY

I don't want anything.
I am done with craving and selfhood.

SWEDE

(says decisively)

Then it's what I want.

STAY on her, as his FOOTSTEPS ARE HEARD exiting the room, echoing in the hallway as they go away. But there is no emotion in her gone, placid eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. TEMPLE B'NAI ABRAHAM - AFTERNOON

SWEDE enters. The peace and quiet of the old temple. From a table, he takes a yarmulke, puts it on... Unfamiliar.

Heads down the long center aisle. Afternoon strains of stained-glass light, passing through the side-windows, light his way... It's deserted.

He passes into an aisle... takes a prayer book, a *siddur*. Looks through it and finds (INSERT:)...

KADDISH

A Prayer for Mourners

He reads...

SWEDE
Yitqadal v'yitkadash...

He struggles... it's been too long. Reverts to the English.

SWEDE
Magnified and sanctified be His
great name in the world which He
created according to His will...
And may he establish His kingdom...

CAMERA PULLS BACK... the rows of aisles are deserted except for
Swede... His VOICE RISES...

SWEDE (CONT'D...)
During your life and during your
days, and during the life of all
the house of Israel...

CUT TO:

EXT. CENTRAL AVENUE - OUTSIDE "NEWARK MAID" - DAY

The Swede, in shirtsleeves. Street's changed since the riots.
Buildings gone or just deserted. Fewer people.

ROW OF TRUCKS. Machinery's being carted out, into the trucks.

SIGN ON THE BUILDING: INDUSTRIAL SPACE - FOR SALE OR LEASE.

Swede touches a machine as it's carted by. Sewing machine. Old
thing. Gives its worn brass handle a whirl...

...Fade out.

Over BLACK SCREEN, title fades in:

1995

...Fades out.

RESTAURANT SOUNDS, good happy sounds, especially women,
children...

FADE IN: INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Spacious, fancy, expensive family place: JOE'S STONE CRABS, Miami, Florida. AT A ROUND TABLE, SWEDE at age 68, and beside him is a woman who, though 20 youngsters younger than himself, must be his NEW WIFE... Blonde and perfect, with the Swede's two handsome, preppy young son, TERRY (17) and CHRIS, 12...

CHRIS

My scoutmaster's such a dickhead...

SWEDE'S NEW WIFE

Chris!

CHRIS

Well he is!

Also at the table is JERRY at 60 and his young wife, and a few DAUGHTERS... as Chris, carries on to his father, a bit whiny...

CHRIS (CONT'D)

He says I have to swim a mile and a half to make Eagle! In a crawl!
Dad, is that fair?

SWEDE seems at this moment out of it, distracted -- but answers:

SWEDE

If that's what the handbook says.

CHRIS

I think it sucks....

JERRY beside them, notes Swede's distraction -- To the boy:

JERRY

Eagle Scout already? You're gonna be an Eagle?

CHRIS

Were you a Boy Scout, Uncle Jer?

JERRY

A "Goy" Scout? No. Neither was your father. But he'da been a great one. The Eagle Scout of Weequahic.

(to Swede)

Hey. You alright?

He follows direction of Swede's GAZE: ON:

ANOTHER WOMAN, 40, at a table across the room: She's fair-haired, with a young son and businessman husband. She's smiling, enjoying her family...

Without answering his brother, Swede rises... who repeats...

JERRY

Swede, you alright?

Swede crosses the room... staring at the Young Woman... as if with a purpose.

HIS POV passing the WOMAN. Who notices his PASSING STARE but makes nothing of it.

Swede CONTINUES OUT OF THE RESTAURANT.

Jerry turns to Swede's New Wife, to reassure...

JERRY

He's okay.

But Jerry isn't certain...

EXT/INT. LINCOLN TOWN-CAR - PARKING LOT, JOE'S STONE - NIGHT

Moments later. SWEDE's behind the wheel. Weeping. It comes from his chest and arms and neck and stomach and shoulders...

CAMERA MOVES AROUND on him until we FIND JERRY outside the car, looking in. Taps at the window.

After a while Swede lets him in. They sit there a moment. Swede sighs from the bottom of the world.

SWEDE

I miss my daughter.

Something in his tone puzzles Jerry.

JERRY

"Miss" her? Where is she?

SWEDE

(glances at him)

What do you mean? How would I know,
I haven't seen her since I found
her...

JERRY

Bullshit, I know you see her,
you've been going to her in hiding
for years...

Swede shakes his head No.

SWEDE
She's dead.

Jerry stares at him.

JERRY
Is that true? So why are you crying
if she's really dead? Merry's dead?
The killer's really dead? Good!

Swede looks at him like he was stabbed.

SWEDE
Jerry -- don't --

JERRY
What? She should be alive? After
all this time? While everybody she
killed is still killed?

The Swede gets out of the car. Jerry follows, actually angry...

EXT. LINCOLN - NIGHT

JERRY
I don't know whether you're lying
or not, but if she is, if she's
dead, it's the best news I ever
heard...

Swede wants to walk off but can't. Jerry keeps at him...

JERRY (CONT'D)
Nobody else is going to say this to
you, they're going to commiserate.
But I talk straight to you. She did
not belong to you. She did not
belong to anything that you were.
You played ball -- there was a
field of play. She was not on the
field of play. She was out of
bounds. You are to stop mourning
for her. You've kept this wound
open for twenty-five years and that
is enough. This thing, it's going
to kill you, if you don't let it
go! Do you hear me?

Swede lifts his eyes to the Florida sky. To the stars.

CUT TO:

INT. ON JERRY - WALKING WITH ANOTHER 60-PLUS YEAR OLD MAN...

JERRY
I told him that, Nathan. I told him
it was gonna kill him. And it did.

Reaction the other man, NATHAN at 65...

INT. A BALROOM SOMEWHERE - EVENING

CAMERA TRAILS OFF A BANNER -- WELCOME BACK, WEEQUAHIC CLASS OF
1950! -- OLD COUPLES dancing, a reunion, having a good time,
UNDER --

A BEARDED YOUNG MAN PLAYING THE SYNTHESIZER is the music, a "one-
man band," in a tuxedo and wearing a bandanna -- singing old
song, "Peg O' My Heart," from the Forties... while Nathan takes
in the news:

NATHAN
The Swede is dead?

JERRY
What, did that fucking prostate
thing make you deaf? Yes, Swede's
dead. Last year. Cremated. Wanted
the ashes put in the ground, out
near his old house. Wanted to be
under a tree, this was very
important to him....

FLASHBACK TO: OLD RIMROCK HOUSE - THE TREE

SWING HANGING FROM IT... AND MERRY AT 3 ON THE SWING...

RESUME: TIME PRESENT: INT. BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS

JERRY
...but I'm bending your ear. I
can't remember if you really knew
my brother.

ON Nathan. A beat. Another beat.

FLASHBACK TO: SWEDE AT 17, TROTting WEARY ACROSS THE FOOTBALL
FIELD, BACK TOWARD THE LOCKER ROOM, THAT LONG AGO AFTERNOON --

URNS TOWARDS US, TOWARDS NATHAN, GIVES A SMILE --

RESUME: TIME PRESENT: INT. BALLROOM - CONTINUOUS - ON:

NATHAN

No.

The reunion swirls around them. Other old classmates claim Jerry. Nathan is stationary. THE BEAREDED YOUNG ONE-MAN BAND CHANGES TO ANOTHER SONG...

YOUNG MAN (SINGS)

Moo-on River...
Wi-ider than a mile...
I'm cro-ssing you in style...

Nathan turns his eyes toward the singer, hearing the song...
SINGER'S VOICE GIVES WAY TO...

VOICE OF MERRY AT 8 SINGING THE SONG as we...

FLASHBACK TO: SWEDE AT THE COTTAGE, LOOKING UP AS CHILD-MERRY
SINGS THAT SONG, on that long ago evening...

Then, VOICE OF THE CHILD-MERRY BLENDS WITH AND GIVES WAY TO...

VOICE OF AUDREY HEPBURN SINGING, as we...

RESUME: INT. BALLROOM...

NATHAN in the midst of the reunion dance-floor. Old couples dance around him, MUSIC continues, as we PULL BACK... UP AND BACK... TURNING...

FADE OUT.

ROLL FINAL CREDITS.