

AMERICA'S MOST HATED WOMAN

A True Story

Written by

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&

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EDITED DRAFT FOR TABLE READ

MUSIC UP: "The Tonight Show Theme" by Doc Severinsen

INT. THE TONIGHT SHOW SET - NIGHT

HUGE APPLAUSE as JOHNNY CARSON comes back from a commercial break in front of his trademark curtain.

JOHNNY CARSON  
Our next guest needs very little introduction. She's an outspoken advocate of First Amendment Rights, among other things. And she's the president of the infamous American Atheists. Now, I've already warned her to keep it clean. Ladies and gentlemen, may I present... Well, you probably all know her as America's Most Hated Woman.

The curtains part...

INT. BACKSTAGE, THE TONIGHT SHOW - SAME

To reveal the silhouette of a stout female backside, the blinding stage lights creating a heavenly halo around her.

As Doc's band kicks in again, they're drowned out by the audience's HISSES and BOOS. Bleeding into...

MUSIC UP: "I Feel For You" by Chaka Kahn

CUT TO:

EXT. MADALYN'S RANCH HOUSE - DAY

**TITLE: AUSTIN, 1995**

A warm fall sun shines down on a 70's brick ranch house.

ROY COLLIER snaps off the radio in his aging MG convertible.

He's African-American, in his early 30's, but clearly stuck in the 70's -- hippie-handsome with a lamb-chop Afro, flip-flops, denim and a ragged *Earth, Wind and Fire* concert shirt.

Roy shrugs it off and heads to the front door.

ROY COLLIER  
Wakey, wakey, let go of the snakey!

It creaks ajar.

ROY COLLIER  
Guys?

Somewhere, dogs BARK. Otherwise? Nothing.

ROY COLLIER  
(calling upstairs)  
Robin? Garth?

He heads into the KITCHEN.

Where he's greeted by two ill-tempered Cocker Spaniels,  
anxiously nipping at his heels.

On the table: three half-eaten breakfasts and a knocked-over  
glass of milk.

ROY COLLIER  
Madalyn?

EXT. WARREN INN - DAY

**TITLE: SAN ANTONIO, SAME TIME**

A distinctly lowbrow apartment/motel.

A black van pulls up in the deserted parking lot.

The sliding door's shoved open.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Come on.

A pair of women's sandals emerge, followed by loafers.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
Hurry the fuck up!

A pair of overstuffed orthopedic Keds clumsily navigates the  
step from the van.

MATRIARCH (O.S.)  
Don't get your panties in a bunch.  
I need my damn cane!

Three hooded bodies are pushed toward a door, hands tied.

GARY KARR, mid-30's, nudges them along. He's a greasy thug  
complete with a biker jacket to match. The hooded man towers  
over him -- but Gary has the gun.

GARY KARR  
This way.

He's joined by DANNY FRY, early 30's. With his Florida tan and fading golf shirt, he's less rugged than Gary. And obviously nervous.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WARREN INN - DAY

A shabby, furnished two-bedroom efficiency, complete with kitchenette. Bigger than a hotel suite, but designed for temporary living.

MATRIARCH  
I want to know, just who in the  
hell --

Gary uses the gun to nudge her forward.

GARY KARR  
Into the bedroom.

MATRIARCH  
I might move faster if you took off  
this gawd-damn hood!

GARY KARR  
Jesus, does she ever shut up?

A meek, lisping voice emerges from the large, hooded man.

MAN IN HOOD  
No.

Danny Fry slams the door behind them.

DANNY FRY  
We're clear.

GARY KARR  
Lock the door.

MATRIARCH  
Whoever you cocksuckers are, you  
won't get away with this!

Gary rips her hood off, revealing MADALYN MURRAY O'HAIR.

She's a stocky spitfire. Her short hair's silver -- and her face is red with rage.

MADALYN  
DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

INT. KITCHEN, MADALYN'S RANCH HOUSE - LATER

Roy Collier leads DETECTIVE BAKER and a UNIFORMED OFFICER into the kitchen with its half-finished breakfast and spilt milk.

DETECTIVE BAKER  
Mr. Collier, you said their cars  
are gone. Why shouldn't they be in  
them?

ROY COLLIER  
She's a diabetic -- she can't live  
without her insulin.

DETECTIVE BAKER  
You aren't just being paranoid?

Roy's look says *what-the-hell?*

DETECTIVE BAKER  
I'm wondering if I shouldn't have  
you piss in a cup, see if you  
aren't a little stoned.

ROY COLLIER  
The door was open, breakfast on the  
table... And they'd never leave  
their dogs.

DETECTIVE BAKER  
Okay, okay.

He pulls out a notepad.

DETECTIVE BAKER  
So this woman lives here with her  
son and his daughter.

ROY COLLIER  
Yes. No. The granddaughter's from  
her other son.

DETECTIVE BAKER  
Kind of a strange living  
arrangement.

The uniformed officer notes a SNAPSHOT of Madalyn stuck to the refrigerator.

UNIFORMED OFFICER  
Wait a minute. Madalyn Murray  
O'Hair. This is who we're talking  
about?

The officers share a look.

DET. BAKER  
You think this is just another one  
of her publicity stunts?

ROY COLLIER  
Christ. Aren't you even gonna take  
fingerprints?

DET. BAKER  
Look, Mr. Collier, this is Texas.  
It's not against the law to be  
missing here.

If Baker weren't a cop, Roy would throttle him.

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - NIGHT

The hoods are off, but Madalyn and her family are locked in.  
She sits on the bed with her granddaughter, ROBIN, a pretty  
if plainly-dressed mid-20's redhead with a serious air.

MADALYN  
How long we been in here, honey?

ROBIN  
I don't know. One, two hours?

Madalyn's son GARTH, 30's, paces. A heavy 6'2", he's more  
awkward than imposing. And his heavy LISP doesn't help.

MADALYN  
For fuck's sake, sit down, Garth!  
You're wearing me out!

GARTH  
Good.  
(Under his breath)  
You old cunt.

MADALYN  
I HEARD THAT!

She limps to the door, POUNDING.

MADALYN  
Jesus Christ, people, you don't let  
me out soon, I swear I'll piss on  
the gawd-damn carpet!

Garth tries to calm her.

GARTH  
Mother...

MADALYN  
Don't you fucking touch me!

ROBIN  
Shhh! Please...

She puts her ear to the door.

GARY KARR (O.S.)  
Easy, he said. There's no way it's  
gonna be easy dealing with that fat  
bitch, I can tell you that much...

INT. LIVING ROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

Gary Karr paces as he rants. Danny Fry stands at the window,  
keeping a look-out.

GARY KARR  
I mean, can we trust this guy?  
Really, Danny. What the fuck do we  
know...

DANNY FRY  
Gary, he's coming. He's coming!

There's a light KNOCK on the door.

Danny takes a breath and unlocks the door to reveal...

DAVID WATERS, 30's, slick black hair and chiseled striking  
features. But oh-so-hard.

DANNY FRY  
Hey, boss...

David immediately puts a finger to his lips, shushing him.

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

Madalyn presses her ear up even harder against the door.

MADALYN  
(whispers)  
I knew they had to be working for  
someone.

INT. SECOND BEDROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

DAVID WATERS  
(whispers)  
You have all three?

GARY KARR  
Sure. If you can count Madalyn as  
one.

DAVID WATERS

Just do everything I say, Gary, and keep your mouth shut with them about me. We'll have this wrapped up in a couple days.

GARY KARR

Whatever.

DANNY FRY

It's okay, David. We can handle this. Just... what's the next step?

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - MOMENTS LATER

MADALYN

It's too quiet.

She starts POUNDING and SCREAMING again.

MADALYN

WHAT THE FUCK IS GOING ON OUT THERE? WHO THE FUCK ARE YOU TALKING TO?

The door swings opens -- Gary Karr holds his gun on them.

GARY KARR

Calm down.

MADALYN

Calm down? Hey, shit-for-brains, in case you haven't noticed, you've got a gun trained on us.

GARY KARR

Lady, are you listening to me?

The gun's in her face. She stares him down, then reluctantly backs up and sits on the bed.

GARY KARR

Thank you, Ms. O'Hair.

(beat)

Now, all we need for you to do is write us a little check. Then, believe me, we'll be more than happy to get you the hell outta here.

Madalyn sizes him up.

MADALYN

How much?



GARY KARR  
A million bucks.

MADALYN  
Excuse me?

DANNY FRY  
(acting tough)  
You heard him.

MADALYN  
(chuckles)  
You haven't done your research,  
boys. I run American Atheists. And  
it's a non-profit.

Garth stands between them, putting on his own tough act.

GARTH  
That means no profit.

GARY KARR  
What?

GARTH  
(enunciating)  
That means no profit.

GARY KARR  
Pwofit?

GARTH  
Profit. Profit!

Gary turns to Danny, confounded.

MADALYN  
There's no money! Okay?

A smug smile creeps across Karr's face.

GARY KARR  
Maybe you should look at those bank  
accounts in New Zealand. I hear  
you've got plenty of cash down  
there.

Madalyn's eyes narrow. Gary SLAMS the door.

GARTH  
How the hell did they know about  
that?

Robin's still shaking.

ROBIN  
Oh God.

EXT. AMERICAN ATHEIST HEADQUARTERS, AUSTIN - AFTERNOON

A plain cement building which needs its barbed-wire fence: it sits in a neighborhood nicknamed Crime-on-the-Hill.

INT. ROY'S OFFICE - SAME

Roy Collier closes his office blinds - shutting out a group of STRESSED-OUT ATHEISTS arguing in the conference room across the hall. And dials a number.

BILL, JR. (O.S.)  
Hello?

ROY COLLIER  
Bill? It's Roy. Roy Collier.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BILL MURRAY'S OFFICE - SAME

**TITLE UP: WASHINGTON, D.C.**

A panelled room with an old desk and a portrait of Reagan.

Also Republican are BILL MURRAY JR.'S red tie and dark suit, though he's likely owned them for a while. He's mid-40's. Handsome with an intense, super-serious look.

ROY COLLIER  
Bill? It's Roy. Roy Collier.

BILL, JR.  
What do you want?

ROY COLLIER  
It's your mom. And Robin and Garth. They've disappeared.

BILL, JR.  
And you're calling me because?...

ROY COLLIER  
Austin P.D. says that in order for them to officially be considered "missing," they need someone from the immediate family to file a report.

BILL, JR.  
Oh, come on.

ROY COLLIER  
This is serious, Bill. Your own daughter -- you don't care where she is?

BILL, JR.  
You know they're not part of my life anymore, Roy. And I'd like to keep it that way.

He hangs up. Leaving Roy at a loss.

INT. SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS NEWS - LATER

In a cubicle that feels like a cage, pugnacious JOHN MACCORMACK, 30's, types away at his computer. He may be young, but when it comes to journalism, he's old-school -- the kind who doesn't understand "no."

His editor, FRED BONAVIDA, throws the latest edition on his desk.

BONAVIDA  
Nice writing on that Alamo anniversary story.

MACCORMACK  
It should be. I write the same thing every year.

BONAVIDA  
I need 600 words on the school board elections by tomorrow.

MACCORMACK  
(sighs)  
On it.

Bonavida heads off. The phone RINGS.

MACCORMACK  
John MacCormack.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ROY'S OFFICE, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - SAME

ROY COLLIER  
This is the reporter?

MACCORMACK  
On a good day.

ROY COLLIER  
(whispering)  
Somebody gave me your number. I'm  
calling because... Madalyn Murray  
O'Hair and her family -- they've  
disappeared.

MacCormack's confused by Roy's strange, mysterious tone.

MACCORMACK  
Okay.

ROY COLLIER  
I tried the cops, but they couldn't  
give two shits.

MACCORMACK  
Look, I'm not sure...

ROY COLLIER  
And there are a lot of people who  
want them dead.

MACCORMACK  
Who is this?

There's a KNOCK on Roy Collier's office door.

ROY COLLIER  
I have to go. Meet me at 545  
Greystone Drive tonight at eight.  
I'll tell you everything.

CLICK. He's gone.

MacCormack hangs up the receiver, baffled. But intrigued.

INT. LIBRARY, SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS - LATER

MacCormack opens a folder on Madalyn Murray O'Hair. And  
begins to read...

MUSIC UP: "Come On-A My House" by Rosemary Clooney

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. AMERICAN BARRACKS - NIGHT

**TITLE: ROME, 1945**

The beds and furniture are pushed against the wall. Soldiers  
and nurses and a few Italian women mill about, drinking too  
much wine and dancing sloppily to the phonograph.

MADALYN, age 26 and in a WAC's uniform, sips punch quietly in the corner.

Another WAC stumbles by, hand-in-hand with a DRUNK SOLDIER.

WAC  
Come on Maddie, live a little.

Madalyn shrugs it off. Then notices a handsome soldier smiling at the edge of the makeshift dance floor. WILLIAM MURRAY, 29.

Seizing the moment, William approaches Madalyn.

WILLIAM  
You aren't dancing.

MADALYN  
Not really my thing.

WILLIAM  
Oh? And what is your thing?

MADALYN  
(raising her drink)  
Bushmills on ice.

WILLIAM  
You pick that up in Catholic school?

MADALYN  
I was raised Presbyterian. The Catholics used to pick on us.

WILLIAM  
Well, I promise not to pick on you.

MADALYN  
(laughing)  
Don't worry. I always give as good as I get.

WILLIAM  
(laughing along)  
William.

She takes his outstretched hand.

MADALYN  
Madalyn.

Madalyn smiles, downs the rest of her whisky in one quick slug.

WILLIAM  
So. Bushmills. What other things  
you got?

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BROOM CLOSET - NIGHT

The door crashes open, and in falls a drunken Madalyn, in the throes of passion with William.

William unbuttons her uniform, kisses her hard.

WILLIAM  
Tell me you love me.

MADALYN  
What?

WILLIAM  
Tell me you love me.

MADALYN  
I... Um, I love you.

William unzips his trousers and their bodies collapse into each other.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. ITALIAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

Madalyn and William tumble to the ground behind a clump of bushes. As soldiers and Wacs skinny-dip in a river in the near distance.

WILLIAM  
Say it.

MADALYN  
I love you.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BARRACKS - NIGHT

The place is empty as Young Madalyn falls into her cot, William on top of her again.

MADALYN  
I love you!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. VICTORY CELEBRATION - NIGHT

Fireworks explode in the sky as soldiers and Wacs wave victory flags. Young Madalyn and William can't be bothered, as she is slammed half-naked against the wall of a shed.

MADALYN  
I... LOVE... YOU!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CANTEEN - DAY

**TITLE: THREE MONTHS LATER**

A much more civilized gathering of soldiers.

Young Madalyn sips coffee, anxiously looking at her watch. She brightens as she sees William heading for her table.

MADALYN  
Where have you been? I was just  
about to --

WILLIAM  
I got called into the Lieutenant's  
office.

MADALYN  
Don't tell me he's got you boys  
chasing down more Italian hookers  
for him.

Madalyn chuckles. But William's not laughing.

WILLIAM  
I got my papers. I'm going home.

Madalyn's caught. A deer in the headlights.

WILLIAM  
Did you hear me, Maddie? I'm going  
home!

MADALYN  
That's... nice.

WILLIAM  
What's wrong? This means you'll be  
getting your papers in no time.  
We're all going home.

MADALYN  
I suppose you'll be... well, you'll  
be going back to your wife. And  
kids.

WILLIAM  
Maddie, we talked about this.

MADALYN  
William, I'm pregnant.

WILLIAM  
Oh God.

Now William's a deer in the headlights.

WILLIAM  
What are you going to do?

MADALYN  
What do you mean?

WILLIAM  
(under his breath)  
You can't keep it.

MADALYN  
But you can't expect me --

WILLIAM  
Maddie... Okay. Do what you want.  
But... Well, I don't know what to  
say.

Madalyn stares right through him. She pushes her chair back  
with a LOUD SCREECH. Officers turn their heads.

MADALYN  
William, I'm keeping this child.

William feels all eyes on him.

MADALYN  
At the very least, it'll remind me  
not to fuck any more Catholics!

She storms off, head held high.

MUSIC UP: "Winter Wonderland" by The Andrews Sisters

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

**TITLE: BALTIMORE, 1954**

Holiday decorations everywhere. A mid-30's Madalyn has eight-  
year-old BILL MURRAY, JR. at her side.

At a nearby cash register, two well-dressed 50'S HOUSEWIVES  
catch sight of her and whisper amongst themselves.



A SALESPERSON approaches.

SALESPERSON  
Hello! Looking for a gift for your  
husband?

In the mirror, Madalyn catches the housewives SNICKERING at the cash register.

MADALYN  
No thanks.

She grabs her son's hand.

MADALYN  
Come on, Bill.

She heads for the entrance, avoiding eye contact with the stuffy housewives.

EXT. MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

A modest two-story row house in downtown Baltimore, a Christmas tree lit in the window. A light snow falls.

INT. DINING ROOM, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Madalyn cuts up a piece of chicken for Bill, Jr. at the cramped dinner table.

Her mother, LENA, 51, dishes up potatoes across from her. She's a classic 50's mother -- hair in a bun and horn-rimmed glasses, she likes to keep the peace.

She passes the bread to Madalyn, who breaks off a hunk and takes a bite. Her portly, gruff father, PUP, 56, looks perturbed from the head of the table.

PUP  
Madalyn?

As Pup and Lena bow their heads in prayer, Madalyn sighs. Loudly.

PUP  
Bless this food to our use and us  
to thy service. Amen.

LENA  
Amen.

Madalyn starts to dig in.

MADALYN

If there's one thing we should be  
praying for, Dad, it's heat. Do you  
have to keep turning down the gas?

PUP

As long as you're under my roof,  
waste not, want not, Madalyn.

MADALYN

(to Lena)

Ha. How do you tolerate him,  
Mother? Is the sex that good?

LENA

Madalyn.

PUP

The question is, how do I tolerate  
you? Living here for free...

MADALYN

Here we go again.

Pup is starting to lose his patience with her.

PUP

And bringing a bastard into my  
house!

LENA

PUP!

PUP

Sorry, Billy-boy. I'm just trying  
to make a point about your Mama...

MADALYN

You know, I have a point I want to  
make.

PUP

What else is new?

MADALYN

No, no. This is important. I've  
got an announcement.

Pup eyes her curiously, not sure where this is going.

MADALYN

You're getting another grandchild.

PUP

Excuse me?

MADALYN

That's right. Your precious little daughter got knocked up again. And I'm not marrying this one's dirtbag daddy, either.

Pup drops his silverware.

LENA

Oh, honey, no.

MADALYN

Let me tell you it's a small price to pay for this lay. Huge, this guy was, HUGE! And not so bad in bed either...

PUP

MADALYN!

He slams his hands on the table.

PUP

I pray for you, Madalyn. I pray for you every night.

He storms out.

MADALYN

MERRY FUCKING CHRISTMAS, DAD!

Madalyn seems pleased with herself. But her mother's sad expression squelches the victory.

INT. KITCHEN, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE -- NIGHT

Madalyn stands at the sink, washing dishes, lost in her thoughts. Lena enters with the silverware.

MADALYN

I'm sorry, Mother.

LENA

Madalyn...

MADALYN

What am I supposed to do? The only thing I seem to be good at is getting pregnant.

LENA

Well, we reap what we sow.

MADALYN

I've got to get out of Baltimore.  
All these boring, identical women  
with their boring, identical homes  
and boring, identical lives. I  
can't live like that.

LENA

(under her breath)  
Obviously.

MADALYN

There has to be something more...

LENA

I don't know what to tell you,  
honey.

MADALYN

Lie. Tell me everything's gonna be  
okay.

Lena relents, wraps her arms around her daughter.

MADALYN

Has anyone ever been such a  
glorious failure?

MUSIC UP: "Memories are Made of This" by Dean Martin

INT. FRIENDLY'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A slightly older Madalyn is at a booth with a gangly 14-year-old Bill, Jr., who chomps down on grilled cheese, buried in a Superman comic.

6-year-old GARTH colors on a placemat and picks at a plate of fries.

Madalyn has the newspaper splayed out in front of her, circling jobs in the want ads.

MADALYN

Jesus, the only jobs for women are  
secretaries or receptionists.

YOUNG BILL JR.

(not looking up)  
You could sell Avon, like Mrs.  
Wright.

MADALYN

(rolling her eyes)  
Jesus. Great idea, Bill.  
(sighs)

(MORE)

MADALYN (CONT'D)  
I'm just too smart for these gawd  
damn hicks.

YOUNG GARTH  
Momma, I want ice cream!

MADALYN  
Mommy doesn't have money for ice  
cream, Garth.  
(beat)  
I promise, as soon as I get a job,  
we'll celebrate with the biggest  
banana split you've ever seen!

PROTESTORS (O.S.)  
We will fight! We will fight!  
We will fight for our civil rights!

Black PROTESTORS are shouting at the White Tower hamburger  
joint across the street. It has a big "WHITES ONLY" sign in  
the window.

YOUNG GARTH  
What's going on?

MADALYN  
Some sort of antidiscrimination  
march or something.

YOUNG GARTH  
What's anti... discrim...

YOUNG BILL, JR.  
Discrimination.

MADALYN  
Unfortunately, Garth, some people  
in this world, they just don't get  
the same treatment as everyone  
else.

YOUNG BILL, JR.  
The owners of the White Tower don't  
like Negroes.

MADALYN  
They're just ignorant like everyone  
else in this Gawd-damn town.  
(beat)  
A shame. And I'd be willing to bet  
the owners of the White Tower call  
themselves "Christians."

YOUNG GARTH  
Grandpa says you might find a job  
if you started going to church.

MADALYN

HA! That's a load of crap. Your grandfather's answer for everything is God.

(beat)

The only real way to change something is to go out there and do it yourself, Garth.

YOUNG BILL, JR.

(mumbling)

You're the one full of crap.

She rips the comic away.

MADALYN

*Excuse me?*

YOUNG BILL, JR.

You're always lecturing us about what's right and what's wrong. But that's all you do. Complain.

Madalyn considers him for a moment. Then:

MADALYN

Come on.

She picks up Garth and grabs Bill, Jr. by the hand, dragging him out of his seat.

EXT. WHITE TOWER RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Madalyn hurries her boys across the street and approaches an ORGANIZER with a stack of signs.

MADALYN

You mind?

The organizer gives her a sign.

YOUNG BILL, JR.

What are we doing?

Madalyn hands him a sign, raising her own over her head.

MADALYN

We will fight! We will fight!  
We will fight for our civil rights!

A nearby PHOTOJOURNALIST sees the unusual sight of Madalyn and her two children amongst these protestors, and can't resist.

He snaps their photo with a FLASH!

CLOSE ON: The black-and-white photo emblazoned across the front of the Baltimore Sun.

PUP (O.S.)  
What are the neighbors going to say?

INT. LIVING ROOM, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

Pup is looking at the newspaper, aghast. Lena paces behind him, wringing her hands. A rainstorm beats against the windows, thunder rumbling in the distance.

Madalyn's reclined comfortably on the couch -- eating up the publicity and her father's reaction.

MADALYN  
You're telling me you really care what Mrs. Moseley thinks? That old bitch already hates me.

PUP  
You do this on purpose.

MADALYN  
You are one selfish SOB, you know that?!

PUP  
May the Lord have mercy on your soul, Madalyn.

LENA  
I've got some cold cuts in the fridge. Why don't I just...

MADALYN  
THE LORD? Where was the Lord when I got pregnant? Where was he when I was abandoned by Bill's father? Garth's father?

Madalyn flings open the front door and steps outside into the pouring rain.

MADALYN  
You hear me, God? I hate you! I HATE YOU! If you're really there, strike me down! Strike me down!

Soaked to the bone, she collapses. Crying.

MADALYN  
STRIKE ME DOWN!

A RUMBLE of THUNDER bleeds into...

BACK TO:

INT. WARREN INN LIVING ROOM - EVENING

**PRESENT**

Garth sits in the living room on his huge old cell phone. He hangs up and Gary grabs it back from him.

GARY KARR

So?

GARTH

I can only get at \$600,000. That's what's in our personal account.

DANNY FRY

What? Where's the rest of it?

GARTH

Dummy trusts.

GARY KARR

Dummy *twusts*?

Garth glares.

GARTH

We can't access it directly. But they can wire the 600,000 next week.

DANNY FRY

Next week!?

GARTH

And I have to sign for it in person.

Gary Karr stands up, his finger on his trigger.

GARY KARR

You better not be lying, Garth.

DANNY FRY

Gary. I'll go call the boss.

Gary sits back down.

GARY KARR

You gotta work on that lisp, Garth. It makes you sound like a fucking retard.



INT. POODLE DOG BAR - EVENING

David Waters sits at the dimly-lit dive bar chatting up a YOUNG WOMAN, when his mobile phone RINGS.

DAVID WATERS  
What's up?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SECOND BEDROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

Danny speaks quietly into the bedside phone.

DANNY FRY  
Um... We have a little problem.  
They can only get 600 grand, and  
it's gonna take a week. And  
Gary... Boss, he's really on edge.

DAVID WATERS  
Goddam fucking....  
(beat)  
Okay, okay. Change of plans.

EXT. MADALYN'S RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

All the lights are on as John MacCormack steps up to the front door. He KNOCKS lightly, and the door CREAKS open.

MACCORMACK  
Hello?

He steps inside...

INT. FOYER, MADALYN'S RANCH HOUSE - SAME

Where's suddenly attacked by the two YAPPING Cocker Spaniels.

MACCORMACK  
Jesus!

ROY COLLIER (O.S.)  
Shannon! Gannon! Here!

INT. LIVING ROOM, MADALYN'S RANCH HOUSE - SAME

As MacCormack enters, the dogs heel obediently at Roy's feet.

It looks like it's been hit by a hurricane. Books, papers and photos litter the floor.

ROY COLLIER  
Mr. MacCormack? You don't look  
much like a reporter.

MACCORMACK  
You sure look like an atheist.

Roy puts out a hand.

ROY COLLIER  
Roy Collier.

MacCormack shakes it. Roy goes back to rummaging through the  
drawer of a hutch as MacCormack checks out the surrounding.

ROY COLLIER  
I wasn't sure if you were gonna  
make it.

Above the mantel, MacCormack notices a picture of Madalyn,  
Robin and Garth at the pyramids.

MACCORMACK  
So all three of them lived here.

ROY COLLIER  
They were inseparable.

MACCORMACK  
Nobody thought that was a little...  
weird?

ROY COLLIER  
There were much weirder things  
about the Murray-O'Hairs. Trust  
me.

(beat)  
Mr. MacCormack...

MACCORMACK  
John.

ROY COLLIER  
John, I really think something  
bad's happened. But nobody seems  
to believe me.

MACCORMACK  
Not even the people at American  
Atheists?

ROY COLLIER  
Their official story is Madalyn's  
out of town.

Roy sizes MacCormack up. Decides he can trust him:

ROY COLLIER  
Madalyn was putting money from  
American Atheists into a personal  
account in New Zealand.

MACCORMACK  
Embezzlement?

ROY  
Or creative accounting. Depending  
on who you talk to.

MACCORMACK  
And they think she may have left  
the country.

ROY  
For good.

MACCORMACK  
I'd be inclined to believe them.

ROY COLLIER  
Man, I knew her better than any of  
them. That woman was not ready for  
retirement!

One of the Spaniels WHINES.

ROY COLLIER  
And they'd NEVER leave these dogs.

MACCORMACK  
Look, Roy, I'm not sure where you  
got my number or why you called me.  
This isn't exactly my area of  
expertise.

ROY COLLIER  
Then why did you show up?

MACCORMACK  
Thought there might be a story  
here. Now I'm not so sure.

Something in the drawer gets Roy's attention.

ROY COLLIER  
Dude.

He pulls out three U.S. passports, waving them at MacCormack.

ROY COLLIER  
Jackpot!

MACCORMACK  
Still doesn't prove they didn't  
flee the country.

He takes them from Roy, opens one to find a photo of Madalyn  
staring back at him.

MACCORMACK  
Okay, let's say you're right.  
Let's say they've been kidnapped.

ROY COLLIER  
Or worse.

MACCORMACK  
What about Robin's father?

ROY COLLIER  
Bill, Jr.? I already called him.  
He could care less. They haven't  
talked in years.

MACCORMACK  
So he should be at the top of your  
list.

ROY COLLIER  
No. I know Bill. Madalyn may have  
hated him, but... It was complex.  
He'd never do anything like this.

MACCORMACK  
If not him, then who?

ROY COLLIER  
Are you kidding? You know how many  
death threats she gets in a day? I  
mean, they don't call her  
"America's Most Hated Woman" for  
nothing.

MUSIC UP: "Pennies from Heaven" by Louis Prima

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. CHILDREN & FAMILIES AID SOCIETY - SAME

**TITLE UP: BALTIMORE, 1960**

Madalyn now works in a cramped cubicle, a desk littered with  
papers. A young AFRICAN-AMERICAN PREGNANT WOMAN sits across  
from her.

MADALYN  
Is there any way you could stay  
with your parents?

## PREGNANT WOMAN

Momma's dead. My father... Only  
the devil knows where he is.

(beat)

Miss Murray, you don't how hard it  
is being a single mother.

Madalyn eyes her sympathetically. Of course she knows how  
hard it is.

## MADALYN

Let me see what I can do.

## INT. LIVING ROOM, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - MORNING

The ROAR of a televised preacher. Pup sits in front of the  
television, blaring at full volume. Bill stands at the door,  
a bookbag slung over his shoulder.

## YOUNG BILL, JR.

Mom, I'm gonna be late!

## MADALYN (O.S.)

Just a sec.

## INT. KITCHEN, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - SAME

As Lena puts a plate of syrupy Eggos in front of young Garth,  
Madalyn pours herself a cup of coffee.

## MADALYN

This country's a mess. All tract  
houses and TV dinners. Meanwhile,  
there's no money for this poor  
girl, no place to put her up,  
nobody to listen.

## LENA

Such a shame.

## YOUNG BILL, JR. (O.S.)

MOTHER!

## MADALYN

Jesus, Mary and Joseph. I'M COMING  
YOU LITTLE SHIT!

Madalyn gives young Garth a peck as she heads for the door.

## MADALYN

Be good for Grandma, Garth.

EXT. WOODBOURNE JR. HIGH - MORNING

Madalyn pulls up outside the main entrance in a worn old VW bug. Sullen Bill, Jr., sits beside her.

The bell RINGS from inside the school.

YOUNG BILL, JR.  
Told you. I'm gonna get in trouble again.

Madalyn groans, turns off the engine.

MADALYN  
Okay, okay. I'll talk to the teacher.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - MORNING

Bill, Jr. leads his mother towards his classroom. A soft MURMUR of adolescent voices echoes through the empty hallway.

As Madalyn and Bill, Jr. get closer, the murmur takes shape. It's eerily familiar.

STUDENTS (O.S.)  
Our Father, who art in Heaven...

MADALYN  
What is that?

STUDENTS (O.S.)  
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come...

MADALYN  
Don't tell me that's the Lord's Prayer?

YOUNG BILL, JR.  
Yep.

MADALYN  
You've got to be kidding.

YOUNG BILL, JR.  
They make us say it every day.

INT. CLASSROOM - SAME

MRS. LUTZ, a prim teacher, stands in front of an American flag, leading the JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS in the prayer.

MRS. LUTZ/STUDENTS  
For thine is the Kingdom, and the  
power and the glory forever --

MADALYN  
What the hell is going on here?

MRS. LUTZ  
Pardon me?

MADALYN  
If I wanted my child to learn the  
Lord's Prayer I'd have sent him to  
a gawd-damn Catholic school!

An audible GASP from the students.

MRS. LUTZ  
Mrs. Murray...  
(under her breath)  
It's required for everyone. By the  
school board.

MADALYN  
The school board can't tell me how  
to bring up my son. Mrs... Lutz, is  
it?

MRS. LUTZ  
But it's the law.

MADALYN  
Honey, the school board can take  
their law and shove it up their  
ass. I do not want my son taught  
any gawd-damn prayers in school!

Mrs. Lutz stares her down.

MRS. LUTZ  
So sue them.

Madalyn smiles -- not a bad idea, actually.

MUSIC UP: "At Last" by Etta James

INT. KITCHEN, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

**TITLE: BALTIMORE, 1962**

Madalyn's at the kitchen table, law books sprawled in front  
of her, making notes. Lena busies herself at the counter.

LENA

I still don't understand why those children can't say one little prayer.

MADALYN

It's the First Amendment, Mother. "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

LENA

Okay, Maddie. But why... why does this have to be...

MADALYN

Because now that I've lost my job, I have the time to fight this.

LENA

If you ask me, you lost your job because of this.

MADALYN

I couldn't get crap done there anyway. At least nothing important. And this... *this* is important.

EXT. MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

Bill Jr. steps away from the school bus, a group of ROWDY BOYS on his tail.

ROWDY BOY

(shouting after)

Your mama's a slut.

Bill, Jr. doesn't even turn around.

YOUNG BILL, JR.

Oh, go fuck yourself.

The rowdy boys look to each other -- did he just say what they think he said? And they tear off after him.

INT. KITCHEN, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

Madalyn opens another law book.

LENA

I just worry about Pup. His health isn't what it used to be.



MADALYN

Well, gawd-damn it, he better start a-praying. Because I've found a lawyer who says we'll take this all the way to the Supreme Court if we have to...

Suddenly a CRASH!

Madalyn and Lena rush into...

INT. LIVING ROOM, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - SAME

Bill, Jr., huffs and puffs at the door. The front window smashed. A shaken Pup stands over a brick and a floor littered with glass.

VOICE (O.S.)

GO TO HELL, COMMIES!

Madalyn picks up the brick and rushes to the window, tossing it at the kids.

MADALYN

THAT'S RIGHT, RUN HOME TO YOUR MOMMIES AND DADDIES, YOU LITTLE PRICKS! YOU THINK I'M SCARED OF a BUNCH OF GAWD-DAMN TWELVE-YEAR-OLDS?! COME BACK WHEN YOUR BALLS DROP! THEN WE'LL TALK!

She turns to face Lena, who's white as a sheet.

PUP

I don't blame them for hating you.

He heads out.

MADALYN

Some days, Dad, I wish you'd drop dead!

Madalyn takes a deep breath. Then looks to Bill, Jr.

MADALYN

You okay?

BILL, JR.

Sure.

BACK TO:

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - NIGHT

**PRESENT**

A STRIKE of LIGHTNING. Madalyn lies back on the lumpy double bed, taking in the Texas rainstorm.

Robin and Garth sit on the other bed, playing gin with a worn deck of cards.

ROBIN  
I'm worried about the dogs.

MADALYN  
Garth, I hope you didn't leave your  
bedroom windows open again.

GARTH  
Mother, how many people know about  
that money?

MADALYN  
I don't know.

GARTH  
(muttering)  
Liar.

MADALYN  
Gawd-damn it, you never, NEVER talk  
to your mother like that! I swear  
to God, you push me Garth, and I  
will fuck you up!

GARTH  
Oh yeah? Bring it, Mother. BRING  
IT!

ROBIN  
STOP IT! BOTH OF YOU!

Suddenly, the door swings opens. Revealing David Waters.

DAVID WATERS  
Hello, Madalyn.

She sneers and eyes him with the look of a jilted lover.

MADALYN  
I should have known it was you.

Garth and Robin are silent with shock.

EXT. AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

John MacCormack is waiting outside the bland, beige facade of Police headquarters as Detective Baker exits with some colleagues.

MACCORMACK  
Detective Baker!

MACCORMACK  
John MacCormack. San Antonio  
Express-News. I wanted to ask you  
a few questions about the Madelyn  
Murray-O'Hair disappearance. I  
understand you were first on the  
scene?

DETECTIVE BAKER  
Nobody's considered "missing" until  
someone from the immediate family  
files a report. Case closed.

MACCORMACK  
There's a rumor she may have left  
the country. But you know she and  
her family left their passports  
behind. You don't find that at all  
suspicious?

DETECTIVE BAKER  
There are plenty of people who  
would just assume that woman never  
returned to Texas.  
(beat)  
And that was off the record!

INT. SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS NEWS - LATER

As MacCormack heads to his cubicle, Frank Bonavita calls out  
from across the room.

BONAVITA  
Still waiting on that school board  
story.

MACCORMACK  
Working on it, Fred.

MacCormack falls down in his chair. He opens a folder. A  
picture of Garth, Robin and Madalyn, cradling the Cocker  
Spaniels as if they were babies. And standing in front of  
the pyramids in Egypt.

The image gnaws at him. He picks up his phone and dials.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ROY'S OFFICE, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - SAME

ROY COLLIER (O.S.)  
Hello?

MACCORMACK  
I spoke with the police.

ROY COLLIER  
Useless, right?

MACCORMACK  
Roy... You're absolutely certain  
they didn't call anyone to take  
care of those dogs?

Roy smiles with relief. He knows MacCormack's hooked.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WARREN INN - EVENING

Not a shade of vulnerability in Madalyn now, as she pushes  
past David.

MADALYN  
(to Gary and Danny)  
You two realize you're working for  
a certifiable douchebag.

Danny looks to Gary -- he can't believe she's dressing down  
the boss.

DAVID WATERS  
You haven't changed a bit.

MADALYN  
Neither have you, David. Usually,  
people are determined to make me  
into a martyr. You just want to  
keep ripping me off.

DAVID WATERS  
Garth, lost a few pounds? Looking  
good.

GARTH  
Um... Thanks?

DAVID WATERS  
And, Robin, delighted, as always.

ROBIN  
(steely)  
It's not mutual.

DAVID WATERS  
 Hey, I'm with you. I want this  
 little reunion to be as short as  
 possible. But with the situation  
 as it stands - everybody just  
 better get comfortable, 'cause it  
 looks like we're stuck with each  
 other for a few days.

MUSIC UP: "Blowin' in the Wind" by Peter, Paul and Mary

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. FRONT STEPS, SUPREME COURT - DAY

**TITLE: WASHINGTON, D.C., 1964**

Police are in full force, attempting to control a large crowd  
 in full demonstration mode. Most of the people hold signs  
 with slogans like: "KEEP COMMIES OUT OF OUR SCHOOLS" and  
 "PRAY FOR OUR STUDENTS."

PROTESTORS  
 ONE NATION, UNDER GOD!  
 ONE NATION, UNDER GOD!

The other side is smaller but present...

SUPPORTERS  
 SEP-A-RATE. CHURCH AND STATE.  
 SEP-A-RATE. CHURCH AND STATE.

Madalyn, 10-year-old Garth and a 17-year-old, beleaguered  
 Bill Jr. appear on the steps with some lawyers. A loud mix  
 of CHEERS and JEERS as she nervously approaches the podium.

MADALYN  
 Well... When I sued the city of  
 Baltimore to keep prayer out of  
 school, I sure didn't think it  
 would lead to the steps of the  
 Supreme Court. But I couldn't be  
 happier with their decision. This  
 is a momentous day in the battle to  
 uphold the First Amendment. And  
 hell if I won't keep up the fight  
 for the total separation of church  
 and state!

Protestors HISS. Somebody HURLS an apple. She kneels down  
 to pick it up.

MADALYN  
 Keep the faith, people... Just keep  
 it to your gawd-damn selves.

She takes a big BITE and chucks the apple back at the them.

The FLASH of a camera brings us to...

CLOSE ON: Madalyn on the cover of the Washington Post.

The headline: "SUPREME COURT OUTLAWS PRAYER IN PUBLIC SCHOOL."

EXT. MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

A crisp fall day in Baltimore. Madalyn grabs the newspaper from the porch. Bill, Jr. and Garth drag their inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - SAME

MADALYN  
Mother? Take a look at this!

Madalyn finds her mother sitting in the dark. She's obviously been crying.

MADALYN  
Mother?

LENA  
You got your wish, Madalyn.  
(off her look)  
Your father's dead.

Bill puts on a brave face. Garth shrinks back behind him. Madalyn is stoic.

MADALYN  
Well, I'll be...

Lena looks up, confused by her tone.

MADALYN  
Where's the stiff?

Lena begins to cry.

MUSIC UP: "Walk On By" by Dionne Warwick

INT. LIVING ROOM, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Lena, dressed in black, somberly greets guests at the door with Bill, Jr. beside her.

Madalyn stands back from the crowd of mourners at the wake -- whatever new-found celebrity she has means little here.

She spots a pudgy Garth at the food table. He tries to spoon a devilled egg and it squirts onto the ground.

MADALYN  
Oh, Garth.

She picks up the egg with a napkin and heads into...

INT. KITCHEN, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - SAME

To grab a towel. Two NEIGHBORHOOD WOMEN stand at the sink, their back to Madalyn, whispering conspiratorially.

WOMAN 1  
I mean is it any wonder he died?

Madalyn pauses momentarily to listen in.

WOMAN 1  
What with Madalyn and this awful  
cause of hers... She might as well  
have just killed him herself!

Madalyn coughs.

MADALYN  
Excuse me...

The women turn around, eye each other nervously. For a moment, it seems as if Madalyn might lay into them.

But she forces a smile and leaves, holding back tears.

BACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, WARREN INN - MORNING

**PRESENT**

Madalyn sits at a small table near the kitchenette, checking her insulin levels.

At the other side of the room, Gary, Robin and Garth swallow down spoon-fulls of Frosted Flakes. It might as well be the morning after a friendly sleep-over -- if it weren't for the gun in Gary's lap.

They're watching Judge Judy on the television.

GARY KARR  
(mouth full)  
Judge Judy's full of shit. She's  
too emotional. You ask me, women  
shouldn't be judges.

MADALYN

Gary, did it ever occur to you that your purpose in life might be to serve as a warning to others?

GARTH

Ignore her.

David Waters enters from the second bedroom, a cigarette hanging from his lips...

MADALYN

Jesus Christ, you know I hate gawd-damn cigarettes.

He takes a long drag and blows it right into her face.

DAVID WATERS

This isn't your office, Madalyn. You know, that place where you pay people so you can shit on them?

MADALYN

David, if you're trying to pick a battle of wits with me -- don't. I will not fight an unarmed man.

(beat)

You tried to screw me over before and didn't get away with it. I don't know what makes you think you'll pull it off this time.

DAVID WATERS

You got lucky last time, Madalyn. This time, I'm hitting you in your soft spot. You won't go to the police because the last thing you want is the IRS to get involved.

MADALYN

This isn't even about the money, is it? You're just trying to get even.

DAVID WATERS

No. It's about the money. But watching you squirm certainly makes it all more fun.

GARTH

Oh no. My neck! Oh, shit, no!

Robin gets up behind him -- obviously she's been through this before.



ROBIN  
I got it, I got it.

Robin massages his right shoulder and neck.

GARTH  
Yes, oh yes. Almost there...

Gary watches Robin, slightly turned on.

GARY KARR  
Are you two fucking each other?

ROBIN  
Jesus. You're sick, you know that?

GARY KARR  
I've seen worse in prison.

MADALYN  
Gary's been to prison. Didn't see  
that one coming.

She pulls a beer from the fridge.

GARY KARR  
Goddamn it, Madalyn! That's my last  
Lone Star!

MADALYN  
Well, get me some gawd-damn  
Bushmills and I'll stop drinking  
your gawd-damn beer!

Gary draws his gun.

DAVID WATERS  
Gary!

Madalyn pops open the can defiantly and lets the foam run  
out.

MADALYN  
Go ahead. Shoot me. I'm an awful  
big body to hide.

She takes a big gulp and wipes her face.

DAVID WATERS  
Gary, put that fucking gun away and  
buy yourself another six-pack.

ROBIN  
Gary. Please.

Gary looks to Robin, finally drops his gun. Storms out.

Garth grabs Madalyn and pulls her into...

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

GARTH  
(whispers)  
Mother, did you ever stop to think  
that if they kill one of us, they  
have to kill us all?

MADALYN  
This is bullshit, Garth. We can't  
let him do this!

GARTH  
David's right. If we get the  
police involved, the IRS is gonna  
follow.  
(beat)  
Look, what they want -- it's a drop  
in the bucket. Let's play their  
game for now and we'll figure out a  
way to nail them later.

Garth is making sense for once. She sighs. To Garth, it's a concession.

GARTH (CONT'D)  
Thank you.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

Danny Fry appears with a bag of groceries, clearly nervous.  
He looks to David.

DANNY FRY  
Um... David? We need to talk.

They head into the second bedroom. Robin watching  
suspiciously.

INT. BACK BEDROOM, WARREN INN - NIGHT

Buried on the third page of the San Antonio Express News, a  
picture of Madalyn and a story by John MacCormack:

"MURRAY-O'HAIR'S DISAPPEARANCE SPARKS RUMORS. Famous Atheist  
and Family Missing."

DANNY FRY  
This is bad.

DAVID WATERS  
It's fine. They think they're in  
New Zealand.

DANNY FRY  
You said two days, tops, and that  
woman, she's wired so damn tight,  
what's to stop her...

DAVID WATERS  
Shut up, Danny. Madalyn's a  
cripple. She's not going anywhere.  
Robin would never leave her. And  
Garth... well, he can't piss  
without his mom holding his dick.

DANNY FRY  
Right.

DAVID WATERS  
Six days. We get the money, then  
head to Mexico. In the meantime...

David reaches into his pocket and tosses Danny a set of keys.

DAVID WATERS  
Get rid of their cars. Just to be  
safe.

INT. SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS - DAY

John MacCormack dials a number and kicks his feet up on his  
desk.

BILL, JR. (O.S.)  
Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BILL MURRAY'S OFFICE - DAY

The San Antonio Express article is already spread out in  
front of Bill, Jr.

MACCORMACK  
Mr. Murray, John MacCormack, San  
Antonio...

BILL, JR.  
Yes. I read your story.

MACCORMACK  
You did? So would you... would  
you care to comment?

BILL, JR.  
Not really.

MACCORMACK  
Have you had any contact...

BILL, JR.  
My mother's done this before,  
vanished for weeks at a time. It's  
one of her fund-raising ploys.

MACCORMACK  
Roy Collier seems to think this  
time it's different. And Austin  
P.D. won't investigate unless...

BILL, JR.  
I've heard all the rumors. It  
wouldn't surprise me if they *had*  
fled to New Zealand. But I also  
wouldn't be surprised if my mother  
was sitting frozen in the back of a  
van on Mount Kilimanjaro. She was  
obsessed with preserving her body  
through cryogenics, you know.

MACCORMACK  
What about your brother? And  
daughter?

BILL, JR.  
Can I give you a piece of advice,  
Mr. MacCormack? Don't pursue this  
story. You don't want to look like  
a fool when they suddenly turn up.

MACCORMACK  
(baffled)  
I guess I won't waste any more of  
your time then.  
(beat)  
There is one last thing you should  
know. Something I didn't include  
in the story. The dogs. They were  
left behind.

MacCormack hangs up, frustrated.

But Bill, Jr. seems strangely troubled by that last  
revelation.

MUSIC UP: "Wouldn't It Be Nice" by The Beach Boys

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. RECORD STORE - DAY

**TITLE: BALTIMORE, 1966**

Bill, Jr. flips through the bins in the cramped and crowded shop. He's finally filled out, now a handsome young man.

As he walks and scans the back cover of "A Hard Day's Night," he runs into a young woman and her friend. Singles hit the floor.

BILL, JR.

Sorry...

He kneels down to help the girl pick them up.

This is SUSAN ABRAMOWITZ. She's a looker. And barely 17.

SUSAN

Aren't you that guy who doesn't  
believe in God?

Bill's uncomfortable at first. But when Susan smiles, he does the same.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

Young Garth is glued to *American Bandstand* on the TV.

The doorbell RINGS. He opens the door. The POSTMAN drops a huge bag of mail right in front of him.

A surprised Garth grabs it, awkwardly dragging it inside...

INT. KITCHEN, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - SAME

Madalyn sits at the table with Lena, clipping articles from piles of newspapers.

MADALYN

Oh, get this one: "The next thing  
you know, the country will have to  
eliminate 'one nation under God'  
from the pledge of allegiance!"  
(considers it)  
Actually, not a bad idea...

LENA

We should be clipping coupons, not  
articles.

Garth arrives with the huge bag of mail.

LENA

That's the largest yet!

Madalyn takes the bag from Garth.

MADALYN  
Thanks, sweetie.

She rips open the first envelope, holding her nose.

MADALYN  
Pee-ew!

It's a picture of Madalyn smeared with feces. She reads the note underneath.

MADALYN  
"Here's shit in your eye, Godless  
whore."  
(to Lena)  
They got wit. I'll give them that.

LENA  
Let me get rid of it.

MADALYN  
No, no. It's actually not a bad  
photo.

Madalyn rips open another envelope.

LENA  
Madalyn, don't...

MADALYN  
Mother, it's not all hate mail.

This time, it's a card: "THANK YOU."

MADALYN  
See?

As she holds it up, a hundred-dollar bill drops out.

MADALYN  
Well, Gawwd will provide!

LENA  
That'll buy a lot of groceries.

Madalyn pics up the bill, her mind at work.

MUSIC UP: "Subterranean Homesick Blues" by Bob Dylan

INT. BASEMENT, MADALYN'S PARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Madalyn pins a newspaper clipping up on a wall in her new make-shift office. Then places a little placard at the front of the desk.

It reads: *PRESIDENT. American Atheists.*

EXT. BALTIMORE UNIVERSITY - DAY

Madalyn speaks from a makeshift platform to a smattering of PEACENIKS and RADICALS and bell-bottoms and unwashed hair.

MADALYN

Why did we want the Bible out of public schools? Because we don't believe it's holy.

(beat)

Holy?! Have you ever read the Bible? It's a gawd-damn bestial book full of rape and slaughter and incest!

The crowd laughs.

MADALYN

And the cross? Well, you know, what that really symbolizes? It's a limp penis with scrotum on both sides.

More laughter. Madalyn looks to Bill, Jr., below the podium, sharing a joint and a kiss with new girlfriend Susan.

MADALYN

The hat, Bill. The hat!

Much to the annoyance of Susan, Bill obediently picks up a hat and heads into the crowd.

MADALYN

American Atheists can't fight the oldest, most powerful, richest group in the world -- organized religion -- without your support!

INT. MADALYN'S PARENTS' BASEMENT - EVENING

Madalyn cuts an article from the Baltimore Sun and tacks it up on her wall, now half-full with clippings.

The headline: "ATHEIST ASKS SCHOOL BOARD TO DROP 'UNDER GOD' FROM PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE."

10-year-old Garth slits open an envelope and finds a piece of notebook paper emblazoned with cut-out letters: DROP DEAD BITCH! Without blinking, he tosses it in the garbage.

From another envelope he pulls a check made out to American Atheists for twenty dollars. He tosses it in a wire basket, on top of more checks and cash.

EXT. MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - SAME

An Oldsmobile rocks back and forth in the drive.

Inside, Bill, Jr. and Susan are both half-naked, screwing intensely.

But when Bill sees the lights in the living room turn on, he ducks down.

BILL, JR.

Shit!

SUSAN

Billy! You can be such a mama's boy sometimes.

It stings. After a breath, Bill, Jr. just starts pumping away again. Harder than ever.

EXT. SPROUL HALL, BERKELEY -- NIGHT

**TITLE UP: BERKELEY, 1967**

A poster advertising "Madalyn Murray O'Hair" hangs amidst handbills for anti-war protests and sit-ins, as hippies and intelligentsia crowd into the auditorium.

MADALYN (O.S.)

You know, some people think that as an Atheist, I have no beliefs. But that's not true.

INT. SPROUL HALL AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

It's her biggest crowd yet.

MADALYN

I believe people can worship God if they want to. Everyone has a right to be insane! Just so long as they're not hurting another person.

Garth watches from the sidelines. Jaded Bill Jr. is with Susan again -- but now they have a newborn. ROBIN.



MADALYN

I believe that a hospital should be built instead of a church. That a deed must be done instead of a prayer said. That we all must strive to conquer disease, poverty, war...

A LONG-HAIRED STUDENT shouts a question.

LONG-HAIRED STUDENT

What about free love, Madalyn?

MADALYN

All for it. I don't see why I need a license from the church to fuck!

Cheers and howls from the audience. Madalyn grins and winks at a TV news camera at the back.

EXT. SPROUL HALL, BERKELEY - NIGHT

RIOT POLICE hold back the mob surrounding Madalyn and her family as they attempt to get to their car.

Madalyn comes face-to-face with a JESUS FREAK.

JESUS FREAK

Jesus loves you, Madalyn.

MADALYN

Yeah. So does Santa Claus.

Suddenly somebody shoves the Jesus Freak into a cop and all hell breaks loose.

SCREAMS and panic as Garth steps in to protect his mother, looking panicked for once, as she's tussled back and forth.

BILL, JR.

Here! This way!

Bill, Jr. quickly hunches over a SCREAMING Susan, cradling their baby. He rushes them to the open door of the car.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Madalyn lies in a hospital bed. She's got a bruise or two, but otherwise, she's quite cheery, as Bill, Jr. hands baby Robin over to her.

MADALYN

(cooing)

How's my little Redhead?

(MORE)

MADALYN (CONT'D)  
Did those gawd-damn dirty Christers  
scare you?

(to Bill Jr.)  
I should have raised you and Garth  
Mormon. With all those wives --  
we'd have hundreds of grandkids  
running around!

BILL, JR.  
(cautiously)  
Mother, Susan and I have been  
talking...

MADALYN  
No.

BILL, JR.  
What do you mean, no? You haven't  
even heard what I'm going to ask.

MADALYN  
You want to move out. You want to  
abandon me.

BILL, JR.  
Mother...

MADALYN  
Look at me! Some Jesus freak put me  
in the hospital, Bill!

BILL, JR.  
Come on. You're fine.

MADALYN  
They're treating me for nerve  
damage!  
(beat)  
You and Susan aren't ready to be  
parents on your own.

Bill looks at the floor sheepishly.

MADALYN  
Besides, look at what we've  
created. I couldn't have done any  
of this without you.

She leans into him.

MADALYN  
I need you.

BILL, JR.  
(under his breath)  
I know.

MADALYN  
I didn't hear you.

BILL, JR.  
I know.

There's a knock on the door, and a nurse pops her head in.

NURSE  
(bewildered)  
There's someone from Playboy  
magazine here to speak with you?

MADALYN  
I was wondering when they were  
gonna show up.

The PLAYBOY JOURNALIST appears at the door -- exposing a bit  
too much of his chest hair.

PLAYBOY JOURNALIST  
Mrs. Murray... I'm sorry. We can  
do this another time if you want.

MADALYN  
Hell no! I'm hoping this interview  
will get me laid.

Madalyn hands Robin back over to Bill, Jr. as he gets up to  
head out.

MADALYN  
Thank you, Bill.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - SAME

An anxious Susan takes the baby.

SUSAN  
So?

Bill shrugs sheepishly.

SUSAN  
Jesus, Bill.

BILL, JR.  
Susan...

But it's no use, as she turns on her heel and stomps down the  
hallway, leaving Bill, Jr. to stew.

INT. BASEMENT, MADALYN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

ATHEIST VOLUNTEERS are everywhere stuffing envelopes and making calls. A mix of freaks and radicals, it resembles a demented Noah's Ark.

Bill Jr. cranks out mimeographs of the "American Atheist Newsletter." He takes a break to sneak a drink from a flask.

Not far off, Lena feeds baby Robin with a bottle.

Garth arrives to dump a load of PLAYBOYS in front of his mother. He grabs for one, but she SLAPS his hand.

She whips through the first one and rips out a page. Adding it to the clipping wall, which is now covered from top to bottom.

CLOSE ON: A Playboy magazine photo of Madalyn, branded with the words:

"AMERICA'S MOST HATED WOMAN."

BACK TO:

INT. OFFICE, SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS - MORNING

**PRESENT**

MacCormack enters editor Fred Bonavita's office.

MACCORMACK

Can you take me off the Riverwalk article? This Madalyn Murray-O'Hair disappearance...

BONAVITA

I ran your first piece. It's old news now.

MACCORMACK

I have a fresh lead.

BONAVITA

I don't care about leads. I want stories.

MacCormack hands over a form.

MACCORMACK

Robin's Porsche just turned up. Abandoned at the airport.

Bonavita looks it over carefully.

MACCORMACK

Garth's car is missing, too.

BONAVITA

I don't get you, MacCormack.  
You're probably the only person in  
the state of Texas who cares about  
these people's disappearance.

MACCORMACK

And I may just be the only person  
who can find them.

BONAVITA

I can't control what you do in your  
free time. I still want the  
Riverwalk story tomorrow.

(then)

But if you can get me a front page  
out of this -- I might just start  
lightening your load.

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - MORNING

Light streams through the crack in the ratty curtain. Madalyn  
wakes to CLATTER and CHATTER in the living room.

Robin enters.

MADALYN

What's going on?

ROBIN

The money made it out of New  
Zealand.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

Madalyn hobbles in to find David Waters tossing keys to Gary  
Karr.

MADALYN

Well, it's about damn time!

David ignores her, directing Gary.

DAVID WATERS

The rental's the blue Lincoln.

Gary grabs his gun. David turns to Danny.

DAVID WATERS

You got my gun?

DANNY FRY

Sure.

Danny hands it over. David turns to Garth, holding the gun up.

DAVID WATERS

Garth, you try anything -- *anything*  
-- Madalyn and Robin will get it.  
You got that?

GARTH

I got it. I got it.

Garth looks pleadingly to Madalyn: please behave?

GARY KARR

Let's do this, Mama's boy.

He and Garth head out. Madalyn plops down on the couch, unimpressed by all of this.

MADALYN

You realize those bills will be marked.

DAVID WATERS

They're getting a cashier's check.

MADALYN

And then what?

DAVID WATERS

They're changing it into gold coins. Something that can't be traced.

Madalyn stews.

DAVID WATERS

I'm not as stupid as you think I am, Madalyn. And I can be a helluva lot meaner than you, if I'm pushed.

(beat)

What can I say? You taught me well.

She lets him have the last word for once.

INT. BILL MURRAY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Bill Murray's at his desk, as a secretary drops a copy of the San Antonio Express-News in front of him.

A picture of his daughter Robin on the front page.

The headline: "O'Hair Mystery Deepens; Granddaughter's Car Found Abandoned at Airport."

He swallows hard.

MUSIC UP: "Born Under a Bad Sign" by Cream

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BACKSTAGE, PHIL DONAHUE SHOW - DAY

**TITLE UP: DAYTON, 1968**

Madalyn peeks through the curtain at the LIVE AUDIENCE, which is mostly Dayton, Ohio's most-polyestered housewives.

MADALYN

Ugh. Where's your brother?

GARTH

Finding Mr. Donahue, I think?

MADALYN

Garth. Jesus. Could you back off a little?

PHIL DONAHUE and a skittish PRODUCER approach.

PHIL DONAHUE

Madalyn, thanks so much for doing this.

MADALYN

You got a piece of gum or something? I vomited earlier.

PHIL DONAHUE

You aren't nervous are you?

MADALYN

Yesterday I was nervous. Today I'm hung over. And where is my son?

They begin to motion to Garth...

MADALYN

Not him. The smart one.

PHIL DONAHUE

Why don't you wait in your dressing room. I'll have someone track him down.

Garth smiles apologetically as he follows his mother out.

PRODUCER  
Are you sure about putting this  
crackpot on?

PHIL DONAHUE  
You'll thank me when you see our  
ratings.

INT. DRESSING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Bill, Jr. sits staring at himself in the mirror. Well-dressed, but weary. Madalyn and Garth enter.

MADALYN  
Where the hell have you been?  
Leaving me to deal with these  
sickos all on my own...

BILL, JR.  
Susan's filed for divorce.

MADALYN  
Hallelujah! I knew it was gonna  
happen. I just knew it!

BILL, JR.  
Mother...

MADALYN  
Aw, come on, Bill. You were over  
her a long time ago.

BILL, JR.  
But Robin...

MADALYN  
Don't you worry about her. We'll  
get custody.  
(beat)  
Bill, Mama's gonna take care of  
everything. And now that that  
little whore is out of your life,  
all you gotta worry about is taking  
care of me. And "the cause," of  
course.

Bill looks her in the eye. Does she have any idea how  
horrible that sounds?

INT. ON STAGE, THE PHIL DONAHUE SHOW - DAY

Madalyn sits across from Phil.



PHIL DONAHUE

Madalyn, you manage to stir up quite a bit of controversy wherever you go...

MADALYN

Oh, I don't know about that. I'm just an old fat broad from Baltimore who likes to tell the truth. I don't know what should be so controversial about the truth.

PHIL DONAHUE

Well, I think some might dispute your claim to the truth.

MADALYN

Nothing good has ever come out of religion. The so-called Christian God is sadistic and brutal.

The audience GRUMBLES.

MADALYN

And I'm not fighting a "god" which does not exist! I'm merely trying to free the human mind of unnatural restrictions which have been placed upon it.

The crowd BOOS.

DONAHUE

Obviously we have a disagreement here.

Donahue picks up his microphone, heads into the crowd.

DONAHUE

Maybe we should hear from the other side.

The cameras scramble to follow him as he shoves the microphone in front of an eager housewife.

HOUSEWIFE

If there's no God, then where did you come from?

MADALYN

Lady, do I have to explain the whole damned birds and the bees?

An audible GASP! as Donahue smiles at his producers, loving this. The audience is in an uproar.

Garth and Bill, Jr. watch offstage. Bill, Jr. pulls out his flask and raises it to Garth with a scowl.

BILL, JR.  
Here's to the fucking "cause."

MUSIC UP: "Life in the Fast Lane" by The Eagles

EXT. AMERICAN ATHEIST HEADQUARTERS - DAY

**TITLE UP: AUSTIN, 1979**

A ribbon-cutting ceremony for Madalyn's new headquarters: her little cause is now a major operation. The paint's fresh and so is the high fence protecting the parking lot.

ATHEISTS SUPPORTERS are gathered and drinking. If it weren't for the acid washed jeans and feathered haircuts, one might mistake it for a 60s love-in.

ATHEISTS  
(chanting)  
We are the Atheists,  
We you can't control!  
We have no god,  
Devil's in our soul!

ON THE SIDEWALK

A small band of CHRISTIAN PROTESTORS march back and forth. Nobody seems to mind them -- at this point they appear to be more a fact of life than any sort of real threat.

INT. RECEPTION, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - DAY

Garth sits at a make-shift reception desk making name tags with a young Roy Collier. Other new employees scurry back and forth.

Madalyn's at a mirror using tweezers to pluck her nose hairs. A REPORTER at her side.

REPORTER  
Mrs. O'Hair, why'd you leave  
Baltimore?

MADALYN  
Well, my mother died. And that city  
drove me fucking crazy! All they  
cared about were God and the  
Orioles.

REPORTER  
Then why bring American Atheists to  
Austin, of all places?  
(MORE)

REPORTER (CONT'D)  
All they care about here are God  
and the Longhorns.

MADALYN  
I thought Texas could use a little  
shaking up.  
(beat)  
Just because I'm older, doesn't  
mean I've given up fighting. With  
this new center, I'm gonna hit this  
town with a gawd damn two-by-four!

Madalyn looks at her watch.

MADALYN  
Where the hell is my son?

GARTH  
I think he's finishing programs in  
the back.

INT. PRINTING ROOM, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - DAY

Bill Murray, Jr., now in his 30's, is passed out in the  
corner with a bottle of Jack Daniels.

Madalyn storms in, a small entourage on her tail, not all  
that surprised by her drunken son.

MADALYN  
(to Roy)  
Get me some water.

Roy rushes off as Madalyn approaches Bill.

MADALYN  
Ladies and gentlemen, may I present  
the reason we're all here...  
(beat)  
My darling little Bill. It's true.  
If it weren't for him, none of this  
would exist.

Roy arrives with a pitcher of water. Madalyn takes it -- and  
pours it over Bill's head.

BILL, JR.  
Jesus... What the hell!?

MADALYN  
(truly hurt)  
All I wanted was for you to be up  
there with me today. But you  
couldn't even give me that?

BILL, JR.  
I'm sick and tired of being your  
prop, Mother.

GIRL  
Daddy?

ROBIN, age 17, appears. And we have the feeling she's been  
through this before.

BILL, JR.  
Robin, could you get your Daddy  
some water?  
(feeling his wet hair)  
To drink. Water to drink?

MADALYN  
Forget about your father, Redhead.  
He ain't exactly with us today.

She pulls a somber Robin away.

EXT. AMERICAN ATHEISTS - DAY

Madalyn and Garth watch proudly as young Robin uses the  
scissors to cut through the big bow sealing the entrance.

MADALYN  
That makes it official!

As the crowd cheers, a queasy-looking Bill pushes through --  
trying to get out unnoticed.

MADALYN  
Before I go, I want to leave you  
with one last thought...  
This isn't just about fighting  
religion, you know. It's about  
doing what's right. About doing  
what's good.

Bill, Jr. turns around momentarily. It's almost as if she's  
addressing him.

MADALYN  
We have to live now. No one gets a  
second chance. There is no heaven,  
no hell. You either make the best  
or worst of what you have now, or  
there is nothing... So laugh at  
life. Hug it to you. Drain it.  
Build it. Have it.

The crowd applauds. Bill, Jr. smirks and slips away. Madalyn  
steps away from the microphone and turns to Robin and Garth.

MADALYN

Thanks, you two. Besides me, you're  
the only people in this family  
worth a warm bucket of shit.

INT. ON STAGE, PHIL DONAHUE SHOW - DAY

A smiling Madalyn sits across from Phil Donahue and  
razzmatazz evangelist REV. BOB HARRINGTON, 50's, who holds up  
a Bible.

REV. HARRINGTON

I *believe* in the power of Jesus  
Christ to anoint this poor  
sinner...

PHIL DONAHUE

Madalyn, I'm guessing you have  
something to say about that?

MADALYN

Oh come on. Sin? B.S. Just another  
lame attempt at mind-control.

Garth and Robin offstage, watching as the crowd HISSES and  
BOOS.

INT. SEEDY APARTMENT - SAME

Bill Murray, Jr. is slumped on a messy bed, drunk, watching  
Madalyn on TV in the dark.

MADALYN (ON TV)

It's hard to think about the  
psychological damage religion has  
inflicted on generations of  
children who might have grown up to  
be healthy, happy, productive human  
beings!

Bill takes a huge swig of Jack.

BILL, JR.

Fucking hypocrite.

He grabs a gun from the side table.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME

A YOUNG WOMAN POUNDS on an apartment door.

YOUNG WOMAN

Bill? Bill, you in there?

INT. SEEDY APARTMENT - SAME

Bill, Jr. ignores her... Aims the gun at the screen.

MADALYN  
(on television)  
When will you get it through your  
thick heads -- all churches are  
leeches on society, people! These  
preachers are buying Mercedes with  
your hard-earned cash!

BANG! The television SHATTERS! Outside, the young woman  
SCREAMS.

INT. ON STAGE, PHIL DONAHUE SHOW - NIGHT

As the crowd HOWLS, Reverend Harrington looks to the skies.

REV. HARRINGTON  
Oh heavenly Father!

PHIL DONAHUE  
More from Madalyn and Reverend  
Harrington when we return...

The cameras off, Reverend Bob leans back in his chair laughs.

REV. HARRINGTON  
You and I? We could make money with  
this.

MADALYN  
I do okay, thanks.

REV. HARRINGTON  
Sure. We both do okay. But  
together, we could do a helluva lot  
better.

Madalyn's mind's at work. It's certainly tempting.

EXT. SEEDY APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Bill, Jr. is handcuffed. A cop pushes his head down so he  
can tumble into the back of a squad car.

INT. POLICE CAR - SAME

As the cop SLAMS the door shut, Bill remains stoic.

But as the siren wails and the car takes off, he slowly crumbles, the red and blue lights reflecting off his tear-stained face.

MUSIC UP: "When the Saints Go Marching In"

INT. OLD SCHOOL REVIVAL MEETING HOUSE - NIGHT

On stage, a church choir finishes SINGING -- a packed auditorium CLAPS to the end.

Rev. Bob Harrington raises his Bible to quiet the crowd.

REV. HARRINGTON

Ladies and gentlemen, there is a devil among us. A harlot-tongued woman who laughs at Jesus. A demon-directed damsel in need of salvation!

HOWLS of "Amen" and "Praise the Lord" RING OUT.

REV. HARRINGTON

But with your help, Almighty God, we can save her. Let us pray for the soul of Madalyn Murray O'Hair.

On cue, Madalyn storms the stage, rips the bible out of his hand.

MADALYN

Save me? SAVE ME?! Jesus couldn't even save himself!

ELDERLY WOMAN

Satan has a place for you, Madalyn!

Madalyn takes the Bible and starts ripping pages out of it.

MADALYN

This is the New Testament, people. A bunch of bull written by a load of faggots!

HARRINGTON

Almighty God, drive the devil from her!

The religious fanatics go wild: CRYING, SCREAMING, SPASMING! Harrington continues praying loudly.

MADALYN

Come on, people, everybody knows Jesus was as queer as a three-dollar-bill! And the apostles?

(MORE)

MADALYN (CONT'D)  
Just a few tricks he picked up  
along the way...

An elderly woman faints.

INT. BACKSTAGE, REVIVAL HOUSE - NIGHT

It's quiet now. Garth is hunched over a table dividing dollar bills into two stacks. Robin counts leftover merchandising.

Madalyn and Harrington appear from their dressing rooms.

HARRINGTON  
You were on fire tonight, darlin'!  
That bit with the Bible was just  
too much!

MADALYN  
I thought you'd like that.  
(to Garth)  
How many souls we save?

GARTH  
It's about 16 grand apiece.

HARRINGTON  
Not bad for a night's work. But we  
can do better.

MADALYN  
Next time I'll burn the damn book!

HARRINGTON  
Praise Jesus!

Harrington takes his stack, and heads out.

ROBIN  
(uneasy)  
You think we won anyone over today?

MADALYN  
Maybe. Probably not. Hell, I don't  
know.

Madalyn puts an arm around Robin as they head for the stage door. Garth is close behind.

MADALYN  
Cheer up, Redhead! You know what,  
when this tour is done, we'll set  
aside some money for a little  
vacation. Anywhere you want...

ROBIN  
I'm sick of being on the road.



MADALYN

Let's go to Egypt! I've always wanted to see the Pyramids. We could even stop in Israel -- tell those Jews a thing or two.

(beat)

Garth, call Roy and have him book the tickets first thing tomorrow.

GARTH

I'll get right on that, Mother.

MADALYN

Still no word from your father?

ROBIN

I'm startin' to get worried.

MADALYN

He'll turn up when he's shitfaced and needs his ass wiped. He always does.

EXT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

A few MEN stand out in the parking lot smoking. From inside can be heard "The Lord's Prayer."

GROUP (O.S.)

Give us this day our Daily Bread,  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those who trespass  
against us...

INT. COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

A group of MEN AND WOMEN sit in a circle. Scrawled across a nearby chalkboard: "ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS" -- the entire creed written out underneath.

GROUP

And Lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil...

Bill Murray, Jr. sits in the circle, praying just as hard as the rest.

BILL, JR.

For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever.

He looks up to the heavens. Emotional.

BILL, JR.  
Amen.

BACK TO:

EXT. SAN ANTONIO BANK & TRUST - DAY

**PRESENT**

Garth and Gary approach the bank.

GARY KARR  
Remember. A cashier's check. Just  
pick it up and let's get out of  
here.

The bank's SECURITY GUARD steps out the front door. Garth  
spots the gun in his holster and freezes.

GARY KARR  
Jesus, Garth. Keep moving.

GARTH  
I would prefer not to be in the  
middle of a fucking shootout.

GARY KARR  
(laughs)  
Hell, we're robbing you, not them.

Garth takes a deep breath and heads for the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WARREN INN - AFTERNOON

Madalyn shuffles cards at the table as David enters from the  
other bedroom.

MADALYN  
Gin?

DAVID WATERS  
Just like the old days.

She begins to deal.

MADALYN  
You always let me win.

DAVID WATERS  
You were the boss. I had to.

MADALYN  
I suppose that means I'm supposed  
to let you win now.  
(MORE)

MADALYN (CONT'D)

You do have the gun. Of course, we all know what that means. Compensating for a very small cock. Right Robin?

ROBIIN

Whatever you say, Grandmother.

DAVID WATERS

Come on, Madalyn. You can do better than that.

MADALYN

I don't waste my best lines on small time crooks.

DAVID WATERS

Hey, consider yourself lucky it's me. Once we get what we want, you three are walking out of here alive.

They start tossing cards in the middle of the small table.

DAVID WATERS

We're not so different, you and I.

MADALYN

Ha! The only thing you and I have in common is that we sprang from apes. You just didn't spring far enough.

DAVID WATERS

You're just as much of a crook as I am. Ripping people off in the name of your "cause." You're worse than Jim and Tammy Faye.

MADALYN

Bullcrap!

DAVID WATERS

Hey, it's the one thing I respect about you.

(beat)

But you know what your real problem is, Madalyn?

MADALYN

Can you believe this, Robin? David Waters is lecturing *me*!

DAVID WATERS

You're so full of yourself, you can't see the fucking forest for the trees. While you're busy fighting the world, you're making enemies right under your own nose.

MADALYN

If I want any more shit out of you, I'll squeeze it out of your gawd-damn head!

DAVID WATERS

Ask Bill, Jr. I bet he'd tell you the same thing.

David lays his hand on the table.

DAVID

Gin.

MUSIC UP: "Rapture" by Blondie

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - NIGHT

**TITLE UP: AUSTIN, 1980**

CLOSE ON A TELEVISION SET.

TOM SNYDER interviews Bill Murray, Jr., dressed in a crisp suit and tie, more polished and composed than we've ever seen him.

BILL, JR. (ON TV)

I had a horrible, dysfunctional family. My mother only cared about one thing -- herself.

Madalyn sits stone-faced at her desk, surrounded by Garth, Robin, Roy and various other American Atheists as they watch.

BILL, JR. (ON TV)

I'm not here to ruin her name. I just feel pity for her. I pray she finds salvation the way I have.

MADALYN

Turn it off.

BILL, JR. (ON TV)

May God look down on her and...

MADALYN

Turn it the fuck off.

Roy finally hits a button, and the screen hisses snow.

MADALYN (CONT'D)

(softly)

I tried. I sat and watched him make  
one horrible mistake after another.  
Bailed him out time and time again.  
But he sold out to the highest  
bidder. The gawd-damn church.

She storms out.

ROBIN

Grandmother!

INT. MADALYN'S OFFICE, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - MOMENTS LATER

Madalyn collapses into her chair, a photo of her and Bill on the steps of the Supreme Court in front of her. She picks it up. Throws it against the wall with a WAIL. Robin and Garth appear.

ROBIN

We're still here for you.

MADALYN

I'm sorry, honey.

She grabs her daughter's hand.

MADALYN (CONT'D)

I should have stuck a wire hanger  
between my legs thirty years ago.  
Or thrown myself down a gawd-damn  
flight of stairs!

And with that, she starts chuckling through her tears. Robin and Garth laugh bittersweetly with her.

INT. RECEPTION, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - DAY

A bust of Madalyn completes the lobby. It's now become more or less a shrine to her.

And there he is -- David Waters. Sitting quietly on a bench in a cheap, flashy suit while American Atheist employees run this way and that.

Suddenly, a YOUNG WOMAN bursts out from Madalyn's office door in tears, Madalyn's Cocker Spaniels nipping at her ankles.

YOUNG WOMAN

That stupid bitch fired me!

MADALYN

What did you just call me!?

The startled employee bolts, the dogs chasing her all the way to the door.

MADALYN

Get her! GET HER!

The employee slips out. Madalyn picks up her dogs.

MADALYN

That's right, babies... She was a bad, bad girl, wasn't she? Fuck her!

She turns to see David Waters watching.

MADALYN

Who the hell are you?

DAVID WATERS

I'm here to interview for the office manager position.

(beat)

David Waters, Mrs. O'Hair... I'm sorry, do you prefer Ms. or...

MADALYN

Honey, I take what I can get.

David follows her down the corridor. She dumps the dogs in Roy's office and sticks her head in.

MADALYN

That fat-ass leech Cynthia just quit. Make sure she doesn't get her last check.

ROY COLLIER

You got it.

Madalyn heads for her office, David on her heels.

INT. MADALYN'S OFFICE, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - DAY

Madalyn flips through David's application, grabbing a handful of popcorn out of a bowl on her desk.

MADALYN

My son Bill used to run the place until he screwed me over. I call it Oedipal -- he had no father, so instead he has to kill me. He's fucking killing me. Killing me!

(MORE)

MADALYN (CONT'D)

(beat)

I had to ride his ass every minute. He liked his Jack and Coke with his whores, if you know what I mean... Now he's the gawd-damn chairman of some fucking religious freedom foundation! Should have never let those gawd damn zombie twelve-steppers get a hold of him.

(pointedly)

Do you drink, Mr. Waters?

DAVID WATERS

I've got a few of the usual vices.

She pulls a bottle of Bushmills from her desk and two glasses.

MADALYN

Good. I don't believe in that teetotaling shit.

She pours two stiff ones.

MADALYN

That's what men do. Betray me. All of them. Fathers, sons. Don't even get me started on lovers. Makes me wish I could be a cuntlapper. Sorry. Lesbian. That's what the term they prefer, apparently.

(takes a sip)

So why American Atheists?

DAVID WATERS

Um, I don't know. Seems like the kind of place where there might be lively intellectual debate?

She stares right through him for a moment: *is he for real?*

DAVID WATERS

I remember seeing you on Carson a few years ago. I loved the way you shut Billy Graham up.

MADALYN

All those preachers do is preach. They're never used to someone answering back.

She looks down at the application in front of her.

MADALYN

According to your background check... You were in the Florida Pen?

DAVID WATERS  
Just some petty crimes. When I was  
younger.

MADALYN  
That crap is history, kiddo. Shit,  
I've got a file at the FBI that's  
twice as big as yours will ever be.

She dumps the file into the trash. Picks up her glass.

MADALYN (CONT'D)  
I'll keep your secrets...  
And you'll keep mine.

Their glasses CLINK.

BACK TO:

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - EVENING

**PRESENT**

Robin and Madalyn are tossing clothes into a suitcase on the  
bed.

MADALYN  
I hate packing dirty.

ROBIN  
I'm just glad to be getting out of  
this dump.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

Gary returns with Garth.

GARY KARR  
We got 'em! And they are beautiful.  
Genuine gold maple leaf coins.

He tosses one to David, who looks it over.

DAVID WATERS  
Where's the rest?

GARY KARR  
The trunk.

GARTH  
At least \$400,000 of it is.



DAVID WATERS  
Only \$400 grand? Gary, what the hell?

GARY KARR  
The last shipment won't come in until next week.

DAVID WATERS  
SHIT! Shit, shit, shit, shit, shit.

Madalyn appears in the doorway.

MADALYN  
Let me guess. Another hiccup.

GARY KARR  
We have to wait for one more shipment of coins.

MADALYN  
Wait? Until when?

GARTH  
Tuesday.

MADALYN  
Well, that's four more... Oh, for fuck's sake! This is getting ridiculous!

DAVID WATERS  
Madalyn, shut the fuck up! You are not fucking in charge here!

MADALYN  
Oh, I'm sorry. I forgot -- you're the boss. But gawd-damn it, David, you're fucking this job up just like everything else you do.

GARTH  
Mother!

David suddenly pushes into her, his gun in her face.

DAVID WATERS  
Do you think if I shot you in the head right now, anyone would care? Do you really? You're "America's Most Hated Woman." The state of Texas would probably give me a fucking medal! Hell, Bill, Jr. would be first in line to pin it to my chest.

(MORE)

DAVID WATERS (CONT'D)  
And I'll bet most of American  
Atheists would be cheering him on.

She's actually trembling. As are Garth and Robin.

DAVID WATERS  
You think you're so fucking  
important. But the world doesn't  
give a shit about you, Madalyn.  
Not anymore.

Madalyn slinks away, and hobbles back to her room silently.  
Robin glares at David, then rushes in after her.

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

Madalyn sinks into the bed.

ROBIN  
You okay?

MADALYN  
(sighs)  
Tuesday.  
(then)  
He better let us do our gawd-damn  
laundry.

INT. MACCORMACK'S FORD PICK UP - EVENING

MacCormack and Roy Collier drive down a well-to-do  
residential street.

They pull up in front of a two-story clapboard home. A  
Mercedes 300 SL sits in the drive.

ROY COLLIER  
That's definitely Garth's car.

EXT. SAN ANTONIO SUBURBAN HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Standing on the porch, MacCormack and Collier show real  
estate salesman MARK SPARROW a picture of Garth.

MARK SPARROW  
Nope. Didn't buy it from him.

MACCORMACK  
You sure?

MARK SPARROW  
Positive. It was a short guy. He  
was tan and wore a golf shirt.

MACCORMACK

If we sent out a sketch artist, do you think you could work with him?

MARK SPARROW

Sure. Got a good memory for faces. Used to be a cop.

MACCORMACK

Thanks, Mr. Sparrow. We'll be in touch.

He and Roy head back to his car.

ROY COLLIER

What kind of religious nuts go off and sell a stolen car?

MACCORMACK

With every lead, things get more bizarre.

ROY COLLIER

Welcome to the world of Madalyn Murray O'Hair.

MACCORMACK

What if they're not religious nuts?

ROY COLLIER

What do you mean?

MACCORMACK

I mean, Madalyn was hoarding a lot of money, right? And there's one other motive that's stronger than revenge. Greed.

INT. AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT - EVENING

William Murray, Jr. approaches a deputy sitting behind a glass window.

BILL, JR.

I'd like to file a missing person's report.

INT. SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS - NIGHT

A worn Bill Murray, Jr. sits with MacCormack.

BILL, JR.

When you told me about the dogs, I knew that something wasn't right.

MACCORMACK  
So why'd it take you so long?

BILL, JR.  
You know how many times I wrote my mother over the last few years? How many I times I tried to make amends? She never responded. She just used me for more press. She repudiated me. Said I was beyond "human forgiveness." And then she turned my own daughter against me.  
(beat)  
Maybe a part of me didn't want her to be found. But blood is thicker than water I guess. They're still my family.

MACCORMACK  
You did the right thing.

BILL, JR.  
I just hope I'm not too late.

MACCORMACK  
What did the cops say?

BILL, JR.  
I signed a few forms, and they threw them in a file. Told me they'd get back to me if there was any new information.

MACCORMACK  
You're kidding.  
(then)  
You handled your mother's finances for years, right?

BILL, JR.  
In the beginning, yes.

MACCORMACK  
Were there any accountants or lawyers involved?

BILL, JR.  
She didn't trust accountants. Everything was handled in house. That's where you need to be looking. If somebody's done something to them, I guarantee you that somebody is part of American Atheists.  
(beat)

BILL, JR.  
 It wasn't the religious nuts who  
 hated my mother the most.  
 (then)  
 It was the people that were closest  
 to her.

The words sink in with MacCormack.

MUSIC UP: "Money for Nothing" by Dire Straits

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - DAY

**TITLE UP: AUSTIN, 1987**

The staff, including David, Roy and Garth, are seated around a long table. Madalyn storms in, clipboard at the ready.

MADALYN  
 Jane, while we're in California, I  
 need you to get these financial  
 records in order.

JANE  
 I'm still working on that update of  
 the mailing list.

GARTH  
 I could stay behind and do the  
 records.

MADALYN  
 Ha! You can't even balance your own  
 checkbook.

GARTH  
 I took care of the books before  
 Jane.

MADALYN  
 I love you, honey, but when it  
 comes to numbers, you're about as  
 useful as a windshield wiper on a  
 goat's ass.

GARTH  
 (under his breath)  
 Okay, we get it, you fat twat.

MADALYN  
 I heard that!

DAVID

I did some work for a CPA a few years back. Learned a few tricks about accounting.

Madalyn's interest is piqued. Garth is annoyed: *who does this guy think he is?*

DAVID

There are always ways to beat those crooks at the IRS.

MADALYN

David, I knew there was a reason we brought you into the fold.

(beat)

You take over the books from Jane.

ROBIN

Grandmother...

MADALYN

(ignoring her)

I'll be happy to show you everything you need to know.

DAVID

I won't disappoint you.

GARTH

(under his breath)

We'll see how long that lasts.

INT. MAIL ROOM, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - DAY

Madalyn leads David into a room stacked with mail.

MADALYN

So the mail comes here first.

A volunteer pulls a check from an envelope. Madalyn snatches it from her hands.

MADALYN

Give me that.

INT. COMMONS, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - SAME

They walk past the cubicles...

MADALYN

We have an American Atheist account at the Bank of Austin.

David's eyes widen as he flips through the checks.

DAVID  
Twenty thousand dollars?

MADALYN  
In God We Trust, right?

INT. MADALYN'S OFFICE, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - SAME

Madalyn pulls out a huge log book.

MADALYN  
Now this is the official ledger.  
Where you'll be registering most of  
the payments.

DAVID WATERS  
Most?

She reaches into an open wall safe and pulls out another  
large account book. Slapping it down on the table.

MADALYN (CONT'D)  
*This* is the unofficial ledger.

Madalyn smiles proudly, giving David a wink.

MUSIC UP: "Smooth Operator" by Sade

INT. KITCHEN AREA, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - NIGHT

The place is quiet. Madalyn and David sit across from each  
other playing a game of gin, sipping Bushmill's.

MADALYN  
I think you may have me here.  
(beat)  
Nope... Not yet...

She throws down a card.

MADALYN  
You know, David, you've been doing  
a great job with the books.

DAVID WATERS  
Just here to help the cause.

MADALYN  
How's a smart guy like you end up  
in jail?

DAVID WATERS

Well... My mother was a prostitute.  
(off her look)

Yeah. I'm the product of some sleazy trick in a shitbag Florida motel room. Mom was in and out of jail so much, I did whatever the hell I had to. To survive.

MADALYN

She still alive?

DAVID WATERS

I don't know.

MADALYN

So, what? Was it a drug deal that put you in?

DAVID WATERS

Truth is... I killed somebody.

MADALYN

Murder?

DAVID WATERS

I was just a kid. Running around Orlando with this gang. You know, acting tough as shit, carrying around knives, guns... Finally had it out with some other thugs. Next thing I know... I broke. I just broke. It was like, I was someone else. I don't even remember how it happened.

(beat)

Afterward, I turned myself in. Used the jail time to work on myself. And I made a promise, I'd never lose control again.

MADALYN

You've done well, David. Hell, I wish Bill, Jr. could have turned out more like you.

Their eyes meet. An emotionally charged moment for both of them. Madalyn breaks it off, looking down at her cards.

MADALYN

Look at this! Gin!

She lays down her hand.

DAVID

Damn.



MADALYN  
You'll beat me tomorrow.

DAVID  
Sure, sure. I'll win one of these days.

BACK TO:

INT. KITCHEN, MADALYN'S RANCH HOUSE - DAY

**PRESENT**

MacCormack paces as Roy feeds Madalyn's dogs.

MACCORMACK  
I need you to get into the American Atheists' books. We need to go through all their recent tax statements, all their recent bank statements, all...

ROY COLLIER  
What?

MACCORMACK  
We need to scour their tax returns, recent banks statements...

ROY COLLIER  
Why?

MACCORMACK  
If my hunch is right, we follow the money.

ROY COLLIER  
I don't have anything to do with that. Everything's locked away in a safe in Madalyn's office.

MACCORMACK  
I'll bet you have the combination.

ROY COLLIER  
(reluctant)  
I could I sneak in after hours, but... You really think we'll find something?

MACCORMACK  
I don't know. But I think we have to try.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WARREN INN - NIGHT

Robin's kicked back on the couch, as Gary and Garth are playing a video game. Danny Fry enters with two bags of groceries.

DANNY FRY  
Got your Winston's.

DAVID WATERS  
About time.

ROBIN  
You forgot the tomatoes.

DANNY FRY  
They didn't look fresh, so I bought  
canned.

Madalyn pops her head out of the bedroom.

MADALYN  
You didn't forget me, did you,  
Danny?

Danny steps into...

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

Madalyn drops onto the bed. Danny pulls a bottle of Bushmills out of a small paper bag.

DANNY FRY  
Sorry it ain't a martini.

MADALYN  
Shit. This is the good stuff!

She pours a generous amount into a coffee cup.

MADALYN  
Though Bill, Jr. could mix a pretty  
damn good martini when he was  
young. One of the only good things  
the S.O.B. ever did.  
(then)  
To new friends.

Danny smiles. Raises the bottle.

MADALYN  
You're all right, Danny. I just  
don't get how you ended up with  
those two dipshits.

DANNY FRY  
I promised my daughter I'd buy her  
a car as soon as she got her  
license.

He digs in his wallet and pulls out a picture.

DANNY FRY  
I'm going home to Florida for her  
birthday. She turns sixteen next  
week. This job came up, and,  
well...

Madalyn stares at the picture. Her mind somewhere else.

MADALYN  
Sweet girl.  
(beat)  
In the end, all we have is family.

DAVID WATERS (O.S.)  
Danny!

DANNY FRY  
Be right there, boss.

MADALYN  
Danny... watch out for David.  
(beat)  
I trusted him once. Look where it  
got me.

Danny heads out. Leaving Madalyn to contemplate just how she  
ended up in this desperate situation.

MUSIC UP: "You Can't Touch This" by MC Hammer

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, MADALYN'S RANCH HOUSE - NIGHT

**TITLE: AUSTIN, 1993**

A brightly-lit Christmas tree littered with gifts is the  
centerpiece of a an American Atheist's party in full swing.

MADALYN (O.S.)  
What is this crap!?

In a red-and-green holiday muumuu, Madalyn grabs the CD  
changer and brings Hammer to an abrupt halt. Then:

MUSIC UP: "Happy Holiday" by Andy Williams

Clearly tipsy, Madalyn grabs Robin and begins dancing. Garth turns to the woman next to him.

GARTH  
Mother loves Christmas.

INT. KITCHEN, MADALYN'S RANCH HOUSE - SAME

David Waters, a few whiskey's in, chats drunkenly with Roy and some other employees.

DAVID WATERS  
This may turn out to be the best  
year American Atheists has ever  
had.

EMPLOYEE  
Membership is up?

DAVID WATERS  
I don't know about that, but  
money's coming in hand over fist.

Roy is noticeably uncomfortable with David's loosening lips.

DAVID WATERS  
Don't get me wrong! It's a helluva  
way to make a living -- and she's  
doing it better than a goddamn  
televangelist, that's for sure.  
(beat)  
You just gotta wonder what's gonna  
happen to this place when she's  
gone. I mean, is Garth gonna take  
over? He's so fucking weak!  
(mocking)  
Hewwo people, time to stawt  
fighting fow the fweedom of  
wewidgion...

Roy and the other employee are horrified -- both by the joke and because Madalyn has walked in.

MADALYN  
You're not funny, David. Do you  
see anyone laughing?

She swipes his glass.

MADALYN  
No more drinks for this one.

As she heads back into the party, David BOILS. The rest of them may be used to this kind of treatment -- but not him.

INT. MADALYN'S OFFICE, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - DAY

Madalyn sits behind her desk buried in paperwork, when David taps on her door. She looks up at him.

MADALYN

Save your excuses. Right now, the only thing I want out of you is breathing. And very little of that.

DAVID WATERS

I was stupid. And maybe a little drunk.

MADALYN

I'm busy getting ready for the convention, David. Speaking of, I want you to stay behind.

DAVID WATERS

I thought Garth was...

MADALYN

I've decided to take him.  
(ice cold)  
Besides, you're the office manager. Somebody needs to stay and watch the office.

DAVID WATERS

Sure.

As he steps outside, that killer smile fades into a look of pure hatred.

MUSIC UP: "All Apologies" by Nirvana

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - EVENING

Once again, the place is quiet. David Waters sits at his desk, poring over ledgers. Roy Collier sticks his head in.

ROY COLLIER

See you on Monday, Dave.

EXT. NEW JERSEY HOTEL - EVENING

A crappy Marriott with a great view of smog and Newark. The hotel's marquee reads: *Welcome American Atheists*. An obvious comedown from the glory days.

A tiny band of protestors march on the sidewalk, as a black town car pulls into the drive.

INT. BLACK TOWN CAR - SAME

Madalyn, Robin and Garth squeezed into the back. The Cocker Spaniels in their arms.

INT. DAVID'S OFFICE, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - SAME

David stands at his door, scanning the building to make sure it's totally empty. It is.

He goes to his desk and pulls a small slip of paper out of a drawer.

EXT. NEW JERSEY HOTEL - SAME

The driver opens Madalyn's door and the protestors out front become more aggressive.

They're barely held back by out-of-shape hotel security.

INT. MADALYN'S OFFICE, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - SAME

David uses a key to slip inside. He moves to the closet and opens the door, revealing a safe.

He takes out the slip of paper, and kneels before it.

EXT. NEW JERSEY HOTEL - SAME

Madalyn steps out, trying to ignore the protestors.

But then she sees him.

Bill, Jr. right there with them, holding a sign: "In God We Trust."

Their eyes meet.

And Madalyn's heart drops.

INT. MADALYN'S OFFICE, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - SAME

David finishes dialing off the combo and pulls open the heavy door of the safe.

EXT. NEW JERSEY HOTEL - SAME

Madalyn's still frozen, as Robin steps out of the car.

An awkward moment between father and daughter.

Then Madalyn yanks Robin by the arm and rushes her into the hotel without looking back.

Bill, Jr.'s heart broken by the moment.

INT. MADALYN'S OFFICE, AMERICAN ATHEISTS - SAME

David gazes into the safe with smug confidence.

Stacks and stacks of SAVINGS BONDS sit there for the taking.

EXT. AUSTIN COURTHOUSE - DAY

**TITLE UP: THREE MONTHS LATER**

A red-faced Madalyn stands in front of a phalanx of REPORTERS, surrounded by her lawyers and family. A familiar scene.

MADALYN  
Another great example of Texas  
justice! This assface steals from  
me, and he gets a slap on the  
wrist! No jail?

A smiling David exits the courtroom with his lawyers. Madalyn makes sure he doesn't escape her wrath.

MADALYN  
He's a murderer, people! A  
convicted murderer and a gawd-damn  
assface!

David Waters tries to maintain his cool as his lawyers pull him towards his car.

MADALYN  
I'm sure he gave them the same sob  
story he gave me... I didn't have  
anybody to raise me, boohoo, so I  
had to rob and cheat and steal from  
Madalyn Murray O'Hair! That's  
right, people, his momma was a gawd-  
damn whore who couldn't give two  
shits about him. ASSFACE!

DAVID WATERS  
Fuck you, Madalyn!

Waters breaks free from his lawyers and LUNGES for her! His arms reaching for her throat...

MADALYN  
Oh God! OH GOD!

She tumbles to the ground, David on top of her. Officers pull him off and hand him back to his lawyers. Madalyn gets to her feet and screams after him:

MADALYN  
You started at the fucking bottom,  
David Waters. And it's been  
downhill ever since!

Red with rage, David stares at Madalyn as he's pushed into his car.

BACK TO:

EXT. AMERICAN ATHEIST HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

**PRESENT**

With its broken streetlights and deep shadows, American Atheist Headquarters almost looks like a prison.

Roy Collier punches the alarm code at the front door and hurries into John MacCormack's car. A printout in his hands.

ROY COLLIER  
Check it out. \$625,000 is missing  
from the New Zealand account. The  
statement says it was wired to the  
U.S.

MacCormack looks at Roy, gravely.

MACCORMACK  
\$625,000 is a lot of reasons to  
kill someone.

CLOSE ON: SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS NEWS

Another front page headline: "\$625,000 Reported Missing  
Along with Madalyn Murray O'Hair."

GARY KARR (O.S.)  
Shit.

INT. SECOND BEDROOM, WARREN INN - MORNING

Danny and Gary are in a panic. But David Waters maintains his cool.

DANNY FRY  
I say we take the coins we have and  
get down to Mexico.



DAVID WATERS

They've got nothing. If anything,  
this is just more proof that  
Madalyn took the money and ran.

GARY KARR

I dunno, David...

DAVID WATERS

We've only got a couple more days  
before the shipment comes through.  
And we've come too far to let a  
stupid news story get in our way.

Gary and Danny are still on edge. But they realize they  
don't have much of a choice in the matter.

INT. AUSTIN POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

Bill Murray, Jr. is in Detective Baker's office, the San  
Antonio Express spread out in front of him.

BILL, JR.

Are you ready to open an  
investigation now?

DETECTIVE BAKER

This doesn't mean anything to me.

BILL, JR.

What more do you need? The money's  
gone, their cars have turned up in  
random places, they left their  
passports behind...

DETECTIVE BAKER

I have a theory about that. They  
most likely obtained fake passports  
-- taken on a new identities -- and  
jumped on a plane...

BILL, JR.

You actually think my mother could  
just slip away under a fake  
identity? She takes two airline  
seats wherever she goes and she  
uses the F-word in every sentence  
that comes out of her mouth.

DETECTIVE BAKER

Mr. Murray, right now this is not a  
criminal investigation. And  
nothing here indicates foul play.

CLOSE ON: A large painted portrait of Madalyn.

INT. LIVING ROOM, MADALYN'S RANCH HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A dour Bill Jr. sits with Roy and the dogs, going through a pile of American Atheist rosters.

ROY COLLIER  
What about Theresa Platt? Works on  
the newsletter. I think she  
threatened Madalyn once...

BILL, JR.  
I don't know, Roy. There were so  
many people she fired, sued, hated.  
There's no way we can investigate  
each and every one of these people.

Bill throws the papers to the table, exhausted.

BILL, JR.  
I don't even know why I'm doing  
this right now! I'm the last  
person she'd want looking for her.

ROY COLLIER  
I've got something to show you.

INT. MADALYN'S BEDROOM, MADALYN'S RANCH HOUSE - SAME

Roy leads Bill, Jr. inside. But Bill, Jr. is cautious -- as if he's expecting Madalyn to jump out and start dressing him down at any moment.

Then he sees it. Sitting on the nightstand next to the bed, a single framed photo. Of Bill, Jr. and Madalyn in better times.

He sits down on the bed and picks it up.

ROY COLLIER  
She talked about you all the time,  
you know. Not in the most glowing  
terms, of course. But I think,  
deep down, she always missed you.

Bill, Jr. is speechless. But the moments quickly interrupted by the yapping of the dogs.

MACCORMACK (O.S.)  
Roy?

INT. LIVING ROOM, MADALYN'S RANCH HOUSE - SAME

Roy and Bill, Jr. enter to find MacCormack fending off the Cocker Spaniels once more. But he's too excited to care. Waving a manila envelope.

MACCORMACK

I finally got it! The sketch of the guy who sold Garth's car. If it's any good, one of you should be able to recognize him, and we'll have our man.

Roy and Bill, Jr. tremble with suspense as MacCormack unlatches the envelope.

He pulls out the sketch.

It's a dead-ringer for Danny Fry.

But Roy and Bill, Jr. stare back at the drawing blankly.

ROY COLLIER

Who the fuck is that?

INT. LIVING ROOM, WARREN INN - NIGHT

Gary Karr is on the sofa, tequila at his side, gun in his lap. The only light a cool glow coming from a wrestling show on television.

He unfolds a little magazine packet and lays out a line. Rolls a bill and SNORTS it up. Danny steps out of the back bedroom, alarmed.

DANNY FRY

Gary?

GARY KARR

We're about to be fucking rich, dude. Ain't that worth a celebration?

DANNY FRY

I can't sleep. Gonna take a little walk.

GARY KARR

(beligerent)  
You do that.

Danny heads out.

Suddenly, a NOISE from the O'Hair bedroom. Gary gets up and peeks through the cracked door.

A stream of pale moonlight falls on Robyn, half-naked, pulling a T-shirt over her panties.

Robin turns around. Sees Gary there, leering at her. He smiles, steps away.

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

Robin shuts the door and lies down next to a distant Madalyn.

ROBIN  
Gary's really giving me the creeps.

MADALYN  
I'm sorry about all of this, honey.

ROBIN  
It's not your fault.

MADALYN  
No, no. I shouldn't have hired that  
cocksucker in the first place.

Robin snuggles in under the covers, closes her eyes.  
Madalyn's still lost in thought.

MADALYN  
You ever miss your father, Redhead?

ROBIN  
Sometimes.

MADALYN  
Me too.

ROBIN  
Really?

MADALYN  
I haven't exactly let you or Garth  
live your own lives.

ROBIN  
Grandmother...

MADALYN  
But I don't know what I'd do  
without you. You understand that,  
don't you?

Robin wraps an arm around her grandmother. Madalyn pulls her  
in tight.

INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - NIGHT

Danny pulls up to a mailbox. Holding a stamped letter in his  
hand. He considers for a moment, then makes a decision.

Danny dials a number on his mobile phone. After a couple  
rings we hear the muffled voice on the other line greet him.

DANNY FRY  
Bob! How you doing? Listen. I'm  
mailing you a letter...

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

Madalyn snores next to a wide-eyed Robin. Garth, in the other twin bed, is snoring too.

But that's not what's keeping Robin awake. She's still perturbed by her last encounter with Gary.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WARREN INN - NIGHT

Danny Fry enters to find Gary Karr on the couch, doing another line.

DANNY FRY  
You should slow down with that  
shit, Gary. We gotta big day  
tomorrow.

GARY KARR  
Don't tell me what to do.

DANNY FRY  
Goodnight.

After a beat, Robin ducks out of the O'Hair bedroom in her nightshirt. She tries to ignore Gary as she moves to the refrigerator.

Karr's watching her every move.

As Robin pulls out a carton of milk and begins pouring herself a glass, she feels something on her neck.

Without warning, Karr has slid up behind her.

GARY KARR  
You liked me watching you get  
dressed, didn't you?

Robin is stoic, her breath growing more labored.

GARY KARR  
Didn't you?

ROBIN  
No.

Robin tries to move around him to get to the refrigerator, but he has her cornered.

GARY KARR  
I'm going to miss you, when you're  
gone, Redhead.

ROBIN  
Don't call me that.

He uses the gun to caress her neck.

GARY KARR  
You going to miss me?

ROBIN  
Goddamn it.

His other hand reaches down and lays it on her thigh. She  
pushes him back. He grabs her harder now. Puts the gun to her  
head.

Robin's frozen with horror.

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

Slumbering Madalyn barely stirs as we hear a MUFFLED SCREAM.

BLACK.

INT. SET, AMERICA'S MOST WANTED - NIGHT

**TITLE UP: A FEW MONTHS LATER**

The familiar graphics and somber theme music. The STAGE  
MANAGER cues JOHN WALSH.

JOHN WALSH  
When Madalyn Murray O'Hair, her son  
Garth and her granddaughter Robin  
disappeared from their home in  
Austin, Texas, some thought they  
had fled to New Zealand. But this  
reporter isn't buying any of it.  
What makes you so much smarter than  
the police, John MacCormack?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS - NIGHT

Via remote, MacCormack forces a smile.

MACCORMACK  
Not smarter. Just stubborn.

JOHN WALSH  
Like Madalyn.

MACCORMACK  
Some might call her that.

JOHN WALSH  
Some might call her a lot worse!

MACCORMACK  
She had a lot of enemies, no doubt about that.

JOHN WALSH  
And no doubt a lot of people don't want "America's Most Hated Woman" to be found. Why are you so intent on doing it?

MACCORMACK  
I've wondered a lot about that, believe me. But I've come to know her over the course of this investigation. And despite all of Madalyn's faults, she always stood up for what she believed in. For what was right when it came to the Constitution and the law. She really wanted to make the world a better place. And I think we owe her for that.

JOHN WALSH  
Let's give our viewers the clues so they can help find her.

A picture of Garth's Mercedes appears.

MACCORMACK  
An unknown man sold Garth's car for far below blue book.

That sketch of Danny Fry is flashed onscreen.

INT. LIVING ROOM, FRY HOME, FLORIDA - NIGHT

BOB FRY, 40's, stares at the sketch on-screen. He's the spitting image of his brother, Danny, down to the perennial sunburn and Florida golf shirt.

MACCORMACK (O.S.)  
We also found Robyn Murray's Porsche abandoned at the San Antonio airport.

His wife comes in to hand him a beer.

WIFE  
Everything okay?

It's obviously not.

INT. KITCHEN, FRY HOME - DAY

A stained Formica table with worn padded chairs dominates the room. John MacCormack sits across from a devastated Bob Fry.

BOB FRY  
Right before Danny disappeared, I  
got a call. He told me he was  
sending a letter. Didn't want me to  
open it unless I stopped hearing  
from him. After a few weeks and no  
word... Well, the first line was,  
"If you're reading this, I'm  
probably dead."

(beat)  
Said he and a guy named Gary Karr  
were in on a kidnapping scheme.  
Brought in by somebody called David  
Waters.

MACCORMACK  
David Waters?

BOB FRY  
Danny said these people they took  
were expecting to come out of it  
alive. But he wasn't so sure.

MACCORMACK  
Can I see the letter?

BOB FRY  
I burned it.

MACCORMACK  
What? Why didn't you go to the  
police?

BOB FRY  
I called Waters up, looking for  
Danny. He made up some excuse. And  
he threatened to kill my family.

MACCORMACK  
You think Danny's dead.  
(beat)  
You prepared to go on record?

Bob Fry hesitates, then nods.



INT. SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS - DAY

Bonavita stands over MacCormack at his cubicle.

CLOSE ON: A front-page headline slapped down on a desk.  
*O'HAIRS KIDNAPPED, LIKELY DEAD.*

BONAVITA  
You outdid yourself this time  
MacCormack.

MacCormack picks it up and admires his work.

BONAVITA  
Before you start getting a big  
head, I got another story for you.  
Need you over at the FBI field  
office, ASAP.  
(beat)  
They just arrested David Waters and  
Gary Karr.

INT. FBI INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

David Waters sits with his LAWYER. Two OTHER FBI AGENTS take notes, as FBI agent DONNA COWLING, 40's, puts her tape recorder in front of him.

DONNA COWLING  
Mr. Waters, I don't like plea  
agreements. But I don't really have  
much of a say in the matter. So  
you can come clean now... Or we can  
use Gary Karr's story to send you  
straight to the chair.

DAVID WATERS  
If it weren't for that fucker, I  
wouldn't be in this mess.

DONNA COWLING  
Tell me everything.

DAVID WATERS  
It was just about the money. We  
were gonna let them go. But  
everything changed that night.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. BEDROOM, WARREN INN - NIGHT

David Waters sleeps soundly in one of the double beds in the small room. Danny Fry tosses in the bed next to him.

Suddenly, that MUFFLED SCREAM. Danny sits up in bed.

DANNY FRY

David?

David blinks awake in time to hear a CRASH from the other room. David and Danny rush into...

INT. LIVING ROOM, WARREN INN - SAME

They find a stunned and sweating Gary Karr standing over Robin, lifeless on the kitchen floor.

DANNY FRY

Jesus Christ!

DAVID WATERS

Goddamn it, Karr, what the fuck have you done?

David kneels down by the body, checks her pulse. Nothing.

GARY KARR

(babbling)

She shouldn't have fought me... She shouldn't have fought me!

DANNY FRY

Jesus! David! Jesus, what are we gonna do?! What the hell are we gonna do?

DAVID WATERS

Keep it down. Everybody...

DANNY FRY

SHIT! I knew something like this was gonna happen! I fuckin' knew it!

GARY KARR

Fuck you, you little fuck! It's that stupid cunt's fault!

DAVID WATERS

(under his breath)

Stop it!

(to Gary Karr)

Drag her into our bedroom. They can't know.

Suddenly a WAIL. Madalyn stands in the doorway, horrified.

MADALYN

No, no, no, no, no...

She limps to Robyn's body. Danny tries to calm her.

DANNY FRY  
Madalyn...

MADALYN  
Help her, help her... Somebody  
help her. HELP HER!

Garth appears in his boxers and undershirt.

GARTH  
Oh my God.

As Gary aims his gun at Madalyn, Garth TACKLES him!

The pent up rage of years unleashed as Garth starts beating on Gary.

MADALYN  
Help her...

David jumps on top of Garth, trying to wrestle him off Gary.

GARY KARR  
DANNY!

Danny's hyperventilating -- no way he'll be of any use.

Gary and David manage to pin Garth to the ground. David has his hands around Garth's throat.

Garth struggles for breath, as his face goes red.

GARTH  
Mother...

He finds his mother's gaze. She reaches for her cane.

MADALYN  
Damn you!

David snatches a plastic bag from the nearby table. Struggles as he wraps it over Garth's head. Madalyn struggles to her feet.

MADALYN  
DAMN YOU!

She takes her cane and SLAMS David with it repeatedly. Trying her best to save her son.

But it's not much more than an annoyance to David as he and Gary keep the squirming Garth down with the bag wrapped tightly around his face.

Gary Karr cinches the bag around Garth's face one more time.

And Garth's movement stops. He goes limp.

Gary pulls the bag off. Garth's lifeless eyes meeting Madalyn's. She reaches out to touch him.

In the end all we have is family.

MADALYN

Garth...

She looks up at David Waters, towering over her with a gun trained on her head.

She closes her eyes, accepting her fate.

MADALYN

Go ahead.

David takes a deep breath, finding his own courage.

MADALYN

Do it, you fucking bastard.

That familiar rage returns to David's face...

Danny turns his head.

David pulls the trigger.

BANG!

EXT. CAMP WOOD, TEXAS - NIGHT

A dim flashlight illuminates a body in a bloody sheet being dragged through Texas brush.

DAVID WATERS (O.S.)

We did what we had to do.

EXT. CAMP WOOD, TEXAS - NIGHT

A sweating, panicked Danny watches in horror as Gary takes out a hacksaw. David holds the flashlight, calm and cool.

DONNA COWLING (O.S.)

What about Danny Fry? What happened to him?

DAVID WATERS (O.S.)

He was a mess. Couldn't trust him to keep his mouth shut.

As Gary fumbles with the arm, trying to hold and saw it, he motions for Danny to help.

At first Danny refuses, but finally closes his eyes and takes the arm.

David and Gary share a look -- they're going to have to do something about this.

EXT. CAMP WOOD, TEXAS - NIGHT

Gary tosses the last of the body parts into a shallow grave, then picks up a shovel.

Danny squats a few feet away, averting his eyes.

Gary steps up behind Danny and with a ferocious swing, brings the shovel down HARD.

BACK TO:

INT. FBI INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

David's tired now. Donna's gaze bores into him.

DAVID WATERS

I never wanted to kill her.

(beat)

But I can't say that I'm sorry that she's dead.

EXT. CAMP WOOD, TEXAS - DAY

A desolate cattle ranch dotted with scrub and mesquite. No other buildings for miles.

Forensic anthropologists dig barren earth. A shackled David Waters watching in his orange jump suit.

MacCormack and Roy Collier are amongst the news crews and spectators, watching from the sidelines.

One of the anthropologists carefully extracts a leg bone from the dirt.

Roy holds back tears as MacCormack puts a reassuring hand on his shoulder. He nods at the hovering news helicopters above.

MACCORMACK

At least she didn't go unnoticed.  
She would have appreciated that.

MUSIC UP: "I Wish I Knew How It Would Feel to Be Free" by Nina Simone

As JOHNNY CARSON continues his interview with Madalyn from the opening.

JOHNNY CARSON (O.S.)  
Does it worry you that when you die  
you won't reach... nirvana... or  
whatever you might call it?

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The Texas sky is gray for once, looming over three funeral attendants, walking through the rows of crumbling tombstones. In the distance, three caskets spaced evenly apart. Three open graves waiting to be filled.

MADALYN (O.S.)  
When I die, I don't want some  
religious nut to shove a rosary up  
my ass or a communion wafer down my  
throat. But I wouldn't mind a  
small corner of the outdoors. Where  
the sun will filter through the  
trees and lay a gentle hand on my  
face.

Bill Murray, Jr. stands there alone. Waiting to say good-bye.

MADALYN (O.S.)  
And perhaps three words on my  
tombstone. Anarchist. Atheist.  
And woman. I've loved being a  
woman. I've loved being a mother.

Bill watches two attendants begin to lower the first casket. The third bows his head as if to pray. Bill stops him.

BILL, JR.  
Please, no prayers. She wouldn't  
have wanted that.

MADALYN (O.S.)  
But as an Atheist, I'm only  
concerned with the present. Not  
rewards waiting in some mythical  
afterlife.

INT. THE TONIGHT SHOW SET - NIGHT

In a plain silver tent dress, Madalyn banters with JOHNNY CARSON.

MADALYN

Today is what's important, Johnny.  
We should live a rich, full,  
beautiful, kind, love-filled life  
to the best of our ability.

(beat)

And this is sufficient. For me,  
being alive... can be quite  
wonderful.

A smattering of applause.

The familiar BOOS and HISSES.

BLACK.