



BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT

by

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The pure products of America go crazy.

--William Carlos Williams

Blackness. The wind moving, cursing, in soft, drawn-out phrases.

A CEMETERY IN NEW ENGLAND - LATE AFTERNOON

Two figures, both in black, stand next to a grave. The sky is a harsh grey-blue, typical of a New England early spring, the ground a mixture of rocks and intermittent patches of dead brown grass and dirt.

One figure, A PREACHER, is singing Christian hymns, his voice and the moving wind the only sounds. The other figure is a woman, LINDSAY DEMPSTER, 27, her face veiled. She is not crying but rather simply staring into the grave in front of her. She is beautiful in a dark sensuous way. Her eyes are big and frightened, with dark crescents under the lower lid. Her skin is white, ghostly.

INT. APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING

The middle-of-the-road voice of Monty Hall hosting the game show "Split Second" can be heard.

Video tapes on a bookshelf, hundreds, row after row. All labeled and given a catalog code number. The titles are a variety of news stories: Chernobyl news footage; the Kennedy assassination, John, PBS special; the Kennedy assassination, Robert, PBS special; the Son of Sam murders, news footage; Iran Contra hearings, complete; Cable News Network.

Aside from the video equipment, the house is stark and bare. Much of the furniture is used or of the plastic K-Mart, put-together type.

On the floor in the corner, the massive, black, furry bodies of two muscular 150-pound Ratweilers lie sleeping.

A small calico cat jumps up onto a 25-inch Sony television. Monty Hall is on the screen.

Lindsay Dempster, still in black, still veiled, sits catatonically watching "Split Second," her jaws locked, her lips pursed tight. Her frail, thin, pale hands lie limp in her lap.

Suddenly the raspy churning of huge metal motors, like the sound of 30 or 40 sewing machines working at once, gradually grows in volume, louder and louder, until:

SMASH CUT TO:

Hundreds of sheets of paper riffle out of a large, high-speed printer. A mechanical claw rips the computer-processed paper into individual envelopes. The envelopes are shot like a stream of water into an aluminum stacker, where they are quickly tied into neat bundles. One bundle is pushed away; another replaces it. The corner of the top envelope of the stack reads, "THE JURY COMMISSION" and under that, "Jury service...A privilege and your duty."

EXT. NORTH HAMPTON, MASS - AN APRIL MORNING

A warm, sun-filled New England spring morning. Lindsay slowly marches past the stark, white-washed church that stands in a small park in the center of town. Behind her she pulls a housewife's shopping cart filled with 40 or 50 books. Her pale green, full-length wool coat is buttoned up to the very bottom of her chin. On the hand pulling the cart, she wears a thick, black rubber gardening glove to protect her from blisters.

INT. POST OFFICE

TIGHT on bundle of jury notices. The bundle is cut, and a postal worker begins sorting them into their respective zip codes.

EXT. NORTH HAMPTON - DAY

A college town with every blade of bright green grass in place.

The streets are bustling with students. Lindsay passes a college drug store appropriately named "The College Drug Store." The small old owner of the store, PINKY SELMER, 73, is washing the windows. He stretches to reach the top of the glass.

TYSON SKEET, 28, throws down his backpack filled with books and grabs Pinky from behind, picking up the old man, jokingly helping him wash the windows. Although Tyson is incredibly good-looking, almost an Elvis with blond hair, there is something completely out of control about him, like a pinball violently hitting random barriers, lighting up everything it touches.

Smith campus kids making their way to class, hippy and preppie alike.

Amherst campus kids on the huge lawn in front of the library, smoking, drinking coffee.

A recently washed yellow school bus moves through the suburban streets, pausing to pick up groups of children quietly waiting with their aluminum lunch boxes in hand.

A woman's book store, its window filled with hand-done Xeroxed signs.

In "THE WOMAN'S COFFEE SHOP" a group of bohemian-looking women sit, having coffee inside the small store front, its window also filled with notices and signs.

Another woman's book shop, same as the other one, less grass-roots, modern, more customers.

INT./EXT.

The hands and uniformed arms of postmen sliding the jury notices into mail boxes. One after the other, again and again. Poor neighborhoods, rich neighborhoods, rural, city, indoor and outdoor mail boxes. Faster and faster. Hundreds of notices.

INT. FRONT HALL, YWCA

A Xeroxed sign, "WOMEN'S RAP SESSION" and another, "BOSOM BUDDIES DATING SERVICE," and another, "ADULT EDUCATION, WOMEN'S SELF-DEFENSE CLASS."

INT. GYM

A large woman, 230 pounds at least, with a bush of red hair and dressed in a judo kei with a black belt, is standing amidst a circle of women in sweats.

INSTRUCTOR

A key or a pen can save your life.
Or prevent you from being raped!!
Ms. Dempster, would you assist me?

Lindsay swallows hard, trying not to show fear. The instructor bear hugs her and effortlessly drops her on her back onto the floor. She spreads Lindsay's legs, getting her into the missionary position. Lindsay is dying. The woman is twice her weight.

INSTRUCTOR

If the attacker closes his eye,
the point of the pen or the edge of
the key can penetrate the lid,
puncturing the eyeball and causing
extreme pain and blindness. Now,
Ms. Dempster, practice the gouge,
using the judo scream for power.

Lindsay mocks gouging into the instructor's eye with the pen, screaming a pitiful scream.

INSTRUCTOR

Gouge!

LINDSAY

Argh!! Argh!!!

INSTRUCTOR

Again, louder!!! Gouge!!!

LINDSAY

Argh...gha...hah...hah...hah...

Lindsay starts to gag. The instructor gets up and shakes her head in disappointment.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

Lindsay is dressing. Two hefty women walk by, birthday-suit naked, one playfully slapping another on her behind. Lindsay looks down at the floor in complete shock and, embarrassed, she quickly buttons up her double-thick white blouse to the neck and pulls her cart out of the locker room.

INT. SMITH COLLEGE LIBRARY

Lindsay pulls her cart through the front door book detector, which buzzes for a moment. This library is a huge, modern complex filled with millions and millions of volumes of information, stored in books, periodicals, films, videotapes and microfilm.

She leaves the books at the check-out counter where there are several young girl students that work in the library with Lindsay.

LINDSAY

Andrea, take care of these please.

As Lindsay walks away, she hears the girl giggle at some private joke about her. This hurts her, but she ignores it.

INT. SMALL CLASSROOM

DEVIN LAWLER, 49, a chubby-faced man, is talking with his students about Albert Camus' "The Stranger." Tyson Skeet comes into the classroom and sits down. Devin gives him the required disapproving glance for being late. Tyson seems to smile to himself as he pushes his long bangs back out of his

face, revealing a pair of blue eyes that seem to shimmer as he glances around the classroom.

INT. LIBRARY

Lindsay is at the computer, tracking down lost books and periodicals. She is intent, her eyes focused on the monitor in front of her. Her small white hands fly over the keyboard with the grace and speed of a concert pianist.

Lindsay is suddenly startled to see that Bridget, a big-boned Irish girl, has been staring at her as she works. Lindsay gives her a brief look, then awkwardly goes back to her work.

BRIDGET

Where have you been?

Lindsay stops typing and looks at the ground.

LINDSAY

I've been fine. Do you have a list of the missing books that I could use to send the notices with?

Lindsay gets up and heads down the long, carpeted hall. Bridget watches her.

INT. WOMEN'S ROOM

Lindsay is in front of the mirror, her jaw locked, her fist tight around a paper towel.

BRIDGET

Normal people have a telephone, and these normal people use their telephone to call their friend. It's been a week. I deserve an explanation.

Bridget is staring at Lindsay and sees that Lindsay's eyes have filled up with tears.

BRIDGET

What's wrong?

Bridget turns Lindsay towards her, and as she does Lindsay breaks down for the first time.

BRIDGET

Oh, baby, what happened?

LINDSAY

My father died...

Lindsay sobs onto Bridget's shoulder. Bridget holds her in her arms.

INT. WOMEN'S ROOM - LATER

Bridget is standing outside one of the stalls. We hear Lindsay throwing up on the other side.

BRIDGET

Are you okay?

The stall door opens, and Lindsay comes out. Bridget puts her arm around her and leads her to the sink where she wets some paper and gently wipes Lindsay's face, cooling her.

BRIDGET

Nothing wrong with throwing up.
Over the years you drink and drink
and then throw up. I've grown to
kinda like it. It's the body's way
of saying "Bridget, the party's over."

Bridget opens her purse and takes out an antique flask.

BRIDGET

Take a sip.

LINDSAY

I just vomited.

BRIDGET

There's nothing like a little good,
clean, crystal clear, pure vodka
to relax the stomach. They even use
it in hospitals.

LINDSAY

You're lying.

BRIDGET

Trust me, Lindsay. It'll do you good.

Bridget helps Lindsay swig. Lindsay swallows. She is looking into Bridget's eyes, relieved.

BRIDGET

Feeling better.

Lindsay smiles.

EXT. FIELD IN FRONT OF THE HUGE LIBRARY

A game of ultimate frisbee (basically soccer with a frisbee) is going on. Tyson, in shorts and a grey jersey

covered in mud, catches a frisbee. His body is lean and long, very muscular and very wet with perspiration. His wild, long hair is held back with a piece of thick cord.

EXT. ANOTHER NORTH HAMPTON SUBURB

The bright yellow school bus pulls up to a beautiful large home. The doors open, and a chubby adolescent, MARSHALL LAWLER, 14, makes his way up the blacktopped driveway. He sees someone running in shorts and a jersey up the street. Marshall smiles and yells.

MARSHALL

Tyson! You fag!

Tyson doesn't hear him and continues running. Marshall walks up the granite steps that lead to the front door.

INT. LAWLER HOME

Marshall closes the door, drops his back pack and heads to the kitchen.

TIGHT on Marshall's Reboкс squeaking across the white linoleum. He steps on a small dried puddle of rust-colored liquid in the shape of a footprint.

He opens the refrigerator door and takes out the milk. He looks around to see if his mother is watching and then takes a huge gulp from the container. He looks around again.

MARSHALL

Mom?

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL

Marshall flushes the toilet and comes out of the bathroom. As he is heading back into his room, he notices a thick piece of rope lying on the carpet. It snakes around the corner into his parents' bedroom. He picks up the end and follows it around the corner.

INT. LAWLER BEDROOM

He looks up to see his mother, naked, on her stomach, her hands handcuffed to the front bars of a brass bed. The rope around her neck is taut, arching her body back and tied to the back bars of the bed. It then runs off the bed onto the floor and up into Marshall's hands.

Her throat is slit. The dried blood has dyed the coordinated blue sheets a multi-shaded brown.

Marshall tries to speak. The whisper of the word "Mom" dies, leaving his lips. His head starts to shake.

The rope limply slips out of his hands and falls to the carpet.

EXT. DRIVEWAY IN FRONT OF LAWLER HOME

A half-hour has passed. There are several police cars, an ambulance. Across the street, there are already news crews with videocameras.

Marshall is kneeling in the grass crying wildly. Devin has his arms around him, trying to get him into the house.

DEVIN

Just go into the living room, Marshall.

MARSHALL

No. Everyone get away from me.

Devin stops trying. He looks at the people around him. He begins to break down. DETECTIVE BAIRD, 55, and CHARLES KEENE, 58, a friend and head of the English department, help Devin to his feet.

DEVIN

Get me my phone out of the car.

Devin goes back to his son.

DEVIN

Listen to me. I'm going to call Aunt Helen. We'll go there tonight.

Keene hands Devin the cellular phone. He begins to dial.

BEVERLY NORVIN, 44, pushes through the police line at the bottom of the driveway.

BEVERLY

(to a cop)

They're my friends!!

She goes to Devin and puts her arms around him, then sees Marshall and hugs him. Her eyes are filled with tears and confusion.

Devin tries to pull himself together as he talks into the telephone.

DEVIN

Helen... Thank God you're home.
Marshall and I are going to come over.
I can't talk now.

The press starts to arrive en masse. Several policemen push them back. DETECTIVE BOCHMAN, 33, interrupts Devin.

BOCHMAN

I just want to get clear who Mr.
Tyson Skeet is.

DEVIN

He's a student that does some work
for me and my wife. Can this wait?

KEENE

Please leave Mr. Lawler alone for a minute.

Bochman begins to argue with Keene. Beverly starts screaming about attorneys and lawsuits. The press begins yelling questions from across the street.

Devin quietly puts his arm around his son and begins to cry in the midst of the chaos.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING ENTRY HALL

Lindsay comes in from the cold and opens her mailbox. She takes out the mail and reads it as she heads up the stairs. She stops at one letter. In the top corner, it reads "JURY QUALIFICATION NOTICE."

INT. LINDSAY'S APARTMENT

Lindsay delicately hits the large "Record" button on one of her two industrial VCRs. On the large Sony monitor, we see the local anchorman.

ANCHORMAN

Gilda Lawler, from the east suburb
of North Hampton was found dead by
her fourteen-year-old son late today
in her home. She was strangled and
stabbed. Tyson Skeet, a student at
Amherst University, was arrested
moments ago and charged with the crime.

Lindsay is fascinating and absorbed in the broadcast. There is a picture of Tyson on the television. Lindsay, deaf to the broadcast's words, stares at Tyson's young, sad face, drawn to it.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

A feminist is fervently speaking at the podium, raising her fist in the air, in defiance and strength. Lindsay watches, enveloped not so much in her words but in her force.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE AUDITORIUM

Lindsay is standing with a cup of tea and piece of cake in her hands. Many women are talking around her, but nobody seems to see Lindsay. She looks terribly out of place in her long coat and top-buttoned blouse. She realizes no one is going to speak to her. Abruptly and awkwardly, she puts down her cake and tea and walks out of the building.

INT. LINDSAY'S LIVING ROOM

Lindsay is at a small desk, filling out the jury qualification questionnaire. Her pen puts a firm check in the box marked "single."

INT. LINDSAY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lindsay is in a full-length, long-sleeved flannel nightgown. The book cart is half full. The rest of the books are scattered over the bed. We see her reading, her hand running over each page of dense type in seconds. She finishes a book and puts it into the cart. She picks up another, reading as fast as she can turn pages.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The cart has been refilled with the now-read books. Lindsay lies in bed in the dark.

Suddenly she sits up and opens the drawer in her night table. She takes out a box of Sleep-Eze and a pair of night blinders. In the drawer there is a small chrome Junior Colt .22 handgun.

She lies back on the bed, pops the pills in her mouth, chews them and swallows. After a moment, she takes off the blinder. There are tears in her eyes.

LINDSAY

Teenie... Weenie... Heathcliff.

She waits and then yells.

LINDSAY

Teenie!!... Weenie.

Suddenly the two Ratweilers are in the doorway. They jump up onto the bed. Heathcliff the cat comes prancing in and sits on a chair in the corner.

Lindsay hugs Weenie hard around the neck. Her breathing is easier, and the tears slowly subside with this little bit of warmth and love. Lindsay's eyes close.

EXT. NORTH HAMPTON - EARLY MORNING

Lindsay is again walking in front of the large white church that sits in the midst of the town common. Her face is tight, her lips again pursed. Her blouse is buttoned to the bottom of her chin. She is stoic.

INT. LIBRARY

Lindsay, still in her coat, strides across the huge main floor of the library, pulling her cart behind her. She is headed for Bridget.

Bridget looks up at Lindsay cruising towards her. Lindsay stops in front of Bridget, a little out of breath. And then, awkward yet determined, asks:

LINDSAY

Bridget, would you go with...

BRIDGET

Hello, Lindsay. Good morning. How are you? Good. That's nice.

LINDSAY

Stop it.

Pause.

LINDSAY

Bridget, would you go with me to my father's house tonight? There are some things that I have to get. And then would you go out for a drink with me?

BRIDGET

Sure. That would be nice.

The two women stare at each other.

LINDSAY

Okay.

Lindsay turns and strides away. Bridget is left shaking her head.

INT. COLLEGE DRUGSTORE - EARLY EVENING

Lindsay and Bridget are at the counter. Pinky is behind the counter. Lindsay is paying for a flashlight that Pinky puts in a paper bag.

BRIDGET

How's your wife?

PINKY

The stroke made it so she can't talk. I gotta run back and forth between here and the house. She hates nurses.

LINDSAY

What's this?

Lindsay picks up a can on the counter with a picture of Tyson on the front. Scrawled on the outside in crayon is, "TYSON SKEET DEFENSE FUND, DONATIONS."

PINKY

He's a good kid. I'm helping him out.

Lindsay is looking into the old man's eyes. There is a deep sadness there, and a truth.

Lindsay drops some change into the can.

BRIDGET

Do you have some diaphragm jelly, Pinky?

Lindsay looks down at the ground, completely embarrassed. She turns and sees another woman customer looking at them.

PINKY

Cream or clear?

EXT. LINDSAY'S FATHER'S HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

The house is huge, three stories, and old, with weathered grey, Gothic architecture. It's remote. There are no other houses around, and the driveway is well off the road.

Lindsay and Bridget get out of their cars and walk up the long, overgrown, slate walkway. Lindsay stops. Bridget turns and looks at her.

LINDSAY

I grew up here.

Bridget seems to understand.

INT. BEDROOM

Bridget and Lindsay are stripping the bed where Lindsay's father died. There is a lone candle and a flashlight illuminating the room.

This is very hard for Lindsay, who seems to be holding back her emotion more than ever.

Bridget finds something in the bundle of sheets.

BRIDGET

Who's this?

Lindsay comes over to Bridget and holds the flashlight on a photo of a woman bare from the shoulders up. She is dark with large eyes. There is a single strand of pearls around her neck. The picture seems to be from the late fifties.

BRIDGET

Who is it?

After a moment, Lindsay answers softly.

LINDSAY

That's my mother.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF LINDSAY'S FATHER'S HOUSE

There are a dozen candles lit and dripping all over an old wooden table. Bridget and Lindsay have both been drinking. There is a long, thick, wooden cross over the fireplace.

BRIDGET

So your father was a repressive, neurotically religious asshole who drove your mother away. That's no reason to lose sight of good old materialistic values.

LINDSAY

I couldn't live here. Do you know how long my father locked me in the upstairs bedroom, forcing me to read and do a book report on each chapter of The Ascent of Man?

BRIDGET

Get a Jacuzzi. You could put it out on the deck. Look, your father would have never got a Jacuzzi, right?

LINDSAY

He wouldn't know what a Jacuzzi was.

BRIDGET

Make it your own.

LINDSAY

Bridget, look at that cross. Do you think there's escape from a cross that big?

Bridget goes to the cross and picks it up. Drunkenly, she staggers to the large glass doors that lead out onto the deck. One of the wings of the cross breaks a pane of glass.

BRIDGET

I'm sorry.

LINDSAY

What are you doing?

Bridget opens the door and heads out onto the deck that overlooks the back woods. She hurls the cross off the edge of the deck, into the woods.

LINDSAY

No!!...

Bridget dusts off her hands and comes back into the living room.

LINDSAY

Bridget, what did you do?

BRIDGET

It was causing problems...

INT. EDDIE'S BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Bridget and Lindsay both knock back shots of Jack Daniels. Both are drunker than before.

LINDSAY

All right, I will. I'll move in. I'll keep the house. But you got to help me. I'll have a wild party, and I'll get a Jacuzzi. But you got to help me. 'Cause, Bridget, I don't really know what a wild party looks like.

Pause. Bridget stares at Lindsay, trying to understand this girl.

BRIDGET

Have you ever gotten high? No, I mean not just high but really stoned? I think you need to get stoned.

Then Bridget sees a man at the bar, talking intimately to a woman, his hand sliding up and down her back.

BRIDGET

I got to talk to this guy.

LINDSAY

Who is he?

BRIDGET

That's my boyfriend.

Bridget leaves. Lindsay's attention is caught by the television over the bar. There is a picture of the outside of the criminal courthouse. Lindsay goes to the bar and talks to the woman bartender.

LINDSAY

Could you turn up the volume?

The woman gets on a stool and does this. From the journalist in front of the courthouse:

TELEVISION REPORTER

Tyson Skeet was released on bail today. Among other interesting aspects of this case is the fact that Tyson Skeet is a published novelist and writer of children's books. He has even won the Edenbury Award for children's literature.

On the television, Tyson is coming down the steps of the Courthouse and walking into a close-up. Lindsay, again deaf to the monotone of the reporter, looks at Tyson's face as if they were the only two people in the room. Her trance is broken when:

BARTENDER

He's cute.

LINDSAY

He's looks sad.

BARTENDER

He still looks cute, even when he's sad.

And then, quietly, Lindsay speaks as if a thought was suddenly, mysteriously shot into her head.

LINDSAY

He's innocent...

BARTENDER

I wouldn't mind.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - SUMMER DAY

It's hot and bright. Lindsay and Bridget are moving Lindsay's furniture off a U-Haul.

EXT. DECK - MORNING

Several construction workers are cutting a hole in the wooden deck floor.

EXT. DRIVEWAY IN FRONT OF LINDSAY HOUSE

Bridget and Lindsay are struggling with Lindsay's television, lifting it off the truck and into the house.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

Bridget and Lindsay are carrying box after box of Lindsay's videotapes into the house out of the U-Haul.

BRIDGET

Why do you keep all these sick things, "The Ted Bundy Murders," "The Patty Hearst Case?" It would give me nightmares forever.

LINDSAY

I like them.

BRIDGET

Ask a sick person, get a sick answer.

EXT. DECK - LATER IN THE DAY

The construction men lower the plastic, form-fitted Jacuzzi into place. Bridget couldn't be happier. Lindsay is worried.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Lindsay is scrubbing the stove. Suddenly, she looks up and Bridget is holding a gift-wrapped box. Lindsay is confused. Bridget hands it to her. Lindsay slowly opens it up, and there is a brand new AT&T phone.

Lindsay is silent. She looks up at Bridget. There are tears in her eyes. It's been a long time since anyone has ever given her anything. She puts her arms around Bridget and holds her very, very tightly.

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

A warm summer night. Bridget and Lindsay are both in the Jacuzzi. Bridget is lighting a joint. Lindsay watches as her friend deeply sucks in the smoke. She hands it to Lindsay, who just looks at the burning, drug-filled cigarette.

BRIDGET

If your father could see you now.
In his own house.

Lindsay starts to smile.

LINDSAY

He would have beaten me.

She laughs.

BRIDGET

Don't take this wrong, but have
you ever had a man?

Lindsay laughs, trying to hold in the smoke.

LINDSAY

Not really.

BRIDGET

What do you mean, not really?

LINDSAY

I had sex once. In college. I was
determined to lose my virginity.
It was the most awful four minutes
of my life.

BRIDGET

I think you need to begin smoking
pot as a habit. It's very therapeutic.

LINDSAY

Where's Brian tonight? He could
have come over.

BRIDGET

Lindsay, show me the trick with
the book.

Bridget hands Lindsay a romance novel from her purse that is lying next to the Jacuzzi. Lindsay speed reads the first couple of pages.

LINDSAY

This is easy.

She closes the book.

LINDSAY

Helen, the protagonist, is going to end up finding out who killed her father and fall in love with Keeler. But she'll have an affair with Edward along the way. Have you read the end?

BRIDGET

You're right. It's amazing. But let me tell you something. I got a philosophy on smoking that will apply. Here you have a joint, right? You see that joint, and you know that you're going to get high. So, you know the end of the book, so to speak. But it's what happens to you when you're high that matters. You see what I'm talking about?

Both ladies in their stoned stupor nod slowly in agreement.

LINDSAY

That's really brilliant.

BRIDGET

I made that up myself. It's what happens when you're high that matters. Always remember that, and relate it to every single aspect of your life.

LINDSAY

Wow...

INT. LINDSAY'S HOUSE

Everything is in its place now. There is a life to the old house. The television is on, Teenie and Weenie are devouring two beautiful pieces of steak, Heathcliff is asleep on a chair.

On the television is a newsclip of Tyson walking with an older gentleman in a suit.

Lindsay is sitting on the floor, putting stick-em letters on the outside of the video box. There are over fifteen two-hour VHS cassettes, all chronicling Gilda Lawler's murder, all labeled and dated.

Lindsay, without stopping her work, turns up the sound on the television. The reporter's disembodied monotone fills the room as Tyson makes his way across the screen.

TELEVISION REPORTER

In a new development, Tyson Skeet will be represented by Joshua Hillel, the prominent attorney from Boston. Hillel was, you remember, instrumental in getting Jonathan Gunther off in the North Cambridge case.

Lindsay stares at Hillel--at his old face, his immaculate white suit, the thin wooden walking stick he carries.

EXT. NORTH HAMPTON - DAY

Lindsay is sitting in a little coffee shop across from the college drugstore. She is going through her mail. Outside, there are men putting up Fourth of July signs.

Her nimble fingers stop on the notice to report for jury duty. She opens it and reads.

Slowly, she smiles and gently folds the document.

EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING

The dark stone building with huge slate steps that lead down to a knoll is the center of town. All the main stores face this building.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING SCREENING ROOM

In a burst of light, a huge image of Socrates appears. It's a slide. Lindsay sits, nervously taking notes.

A cassette deck plays a marching band soundtrack in accompaniment with an enthusiastic narrator.

NARRATOR

A trial by a jury of one's peers is the cornerstone of our nation's judicial system. It should be honored and respected. One man judging another...

Lindsay is completely taken with the propaganda of the tape, totally enveloped in its authority.

INT. EDDIE'S - NIGHT

The place is much different, alive and very crowded. At a large circular table in the back, Lindsay is sitting with a group of Bridget's friends. All except Lindsay are smoking. Bridget is the center of attention, her arm around BRIAN. Lindsay stares awkwardly into the drink in front of her. All are talking and drinking. PHIL, a big man, is being especially talkative with Lindsay.

Lindsay suddenly gets up.

LINDSAY

Excuse me. I have to go.

PHIL

We just sat down. Come on, stay a while.

Lindsay stares at Phil a moment. His smile is warm and friendly.

LINDSAY

I really have to get home.

Phil doesn't push.

PHIL

Nice to meet you.

LINDSAY

Nice meeting you, and all of you...
It was a nice meeting.

BRIDGET

I'll walk you out.

Bridget and Lindsay make their way away from the table.

BRIDGET

You all right?

LINDSAY

Yeah...just groups of people. You understand.

BRIDGET

Yeah.

LINDSAY

I'll see you tomorrow.

Lindsay walks off. Bridget stares at her friend, feeling bad for her.

INT. LINDSAY'S HOUSE

It's dark in the large living room. The only light is the blue flicker of the television screen. The sound is off. Lindsay sits slouched in a chair, staring at the screen, the dancing blue light making bizarre patterns on Lindsay's face. The motion on the screen stops and then quickly goes in reverse. Then we see Tyson coming out of the courthouse. He walks down the steps and into a close-up. Lindsay slowly crawls closer to the screen.

Her finger hits the slow-motion button.

The image on the screen moves in a blurred, poetic rhythmic manner. Tyson again comes into close-up.

Lindsay hits the pause button.

Tyson's face, sad and distraught, stays frozen on the screen, slightly shaking. Lindsay's face is inches away from his. She reaches out to touch him, her fingertips coming to rest so gently on his cheek.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING

Lindsay is sitting in the jury stands with fourteen other jurors. A blubberous old judge is giving the jury its instructions with the same enthusiasm an airline steward gives the safety instructions at the beginning of a flight.

JUDGE

If you are excused, it's not personal,
it's merely a decision one of the
lawyers has made to help his client.

He look up over a pair of bifocals and sees that Lindsay has her hand up.

JUDGE

What is it?

LINDSAY

I can't sit on this jury.

The judge lets out an impatient sigh.

JUDGE

Would counsel please approach the
bench? And you, too?

Lindsay makes her way up to the bench. The judge whispers to her out of earshot of the other jurors.

JUDGE

What's the problem?

LINDSAY

You said this was a car robbery case. Well, my car has been robbed four times. It would be difficult to judge this criminal fairly.

The judge explodes, all the time whispering.

JUDGE

First of all, he's not a criminal. He's a defendant. Second, you will probably be called to serve on another jury. You realize that, don't you?

Lindsay nods her head yes.

JUDGE

And, third, he did not take the contents of the vehicle. He stole the whole car. Would that make a difference?

Lindsay is not a good liar.

LINDSAY

No.

JUDGE

Dismissed. Bailiff, chose another juror.

EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING

Lindsay pulls out of the parking lot in her 1961 Oldsmobile. The car pulls through the picturesque main streets of Northhampton. She stops for a light along with the surrounding traffic and flicks on her left blinker.

A group of mothers push their baby carriages across the street. Lindsay watches them.

The light turns green.

The car in front of Lindsay makes a left turn, and Lindsay sees that Tyson Skeet is behind the wheel.

Lindsay's mouth hangs open. She is frozen, shocked that this man is actually in her presence. A jarring honk from the car behind hers frightens Lindsay. She pulls forward, making a left.

She drives far behind Tyson, frightened to pull closer. Slowly she inches towards Tyson's car. They come to a light. Lindsay is almost on top of him.

She watches his face and eyes in his rearview mirror. The light changes and both cars pull away slowly. Lindsay begins to smile. She is enjoying the sneakiness of the situation.

A blue Impala passes Lindsay on the right and pulls in between her and Tyson. Lindsay is infuriated. She pulls out and passes the Impala. She pulls in behind Tyson, feeling satisfied in her covert driving skills.

The blue Impala again pulls by Lindsay on the right, the driver holding his hand up to the window, extending his middle finger. Lindsay is taken aback. As soon as the Impala has passed Tyson, Lindsay meekly holds up her middle finger. Lindsay watches Tyson's eyes as they drive. They're sad, distant, day-dreaming eyes. Lindsay feels badly for him.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DUSK

Lindsay is still behind Tyson, who seems to be going right to Lindsay's home. They pull over an old steel bridge that runs over a small creek.

Lindsay is trying to keep a reasonable distance. They come to the fork in the road. Lindsay watches him, waiting. He goes left, toward her house. Lindsay continues to lag behind.

Tyson is coming up to Lindsay's house. She slows down. Her heart is in her mouth. Lindsay watches as Tyson pulls up to then passes her driveway.

Lindsay continues up to her driveway. She watches Tyson's car disappear down the road. She starts to follow and then suddenly screeches to a halt. Lindsay smiles, shakes her head and whispers to herself.

LINDSAY

You have got to be out of your mind.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING

All the prospective jurors are sitting in the lounge, smoking, reading. Lindsay is watching an old black-and-white Zenith on which an effeminate chef is showing how to make a duck dinner for four for under twenty dollars.

Lindsay looks away from the television set and at a black woman court officer who is standing next to a coffee machine in the doorway to the lounge.

Lindsay walks up to the coffee machine and slides in her quarter.

LINDSAY

That Lawler murder case is going on here, right?

The officer nods her head.

LINDSAY

That must be keeping things busy.

Pause.

LINDSAY

Where is it going to be? The big room?

Pause.

OFFICER

The old courtroom, down the hall.

LINDSAY

Really? That's exciting.

Pause.

INT. OLD COURTROOM

An old room with wooden doors, floors and seats. Lindsay and the thirty other jurors are sitting in the spectators section.

Hillel sits in an all-blue suit, one hand leaning on his cane. Tyson, unshaven and in a shirt and tie that are obviously not his own, stares down at the floor in front of him. His hair hangs over his eyes.

JUDGE TRISTRAM, 54, a tired-looking woman with a long, gray face, sits watching the bailiff rotating a large cage-basket filled with the names of the jurors.

Hillel speaks to Tyson, who remains motionless.

TIGHT on a woman's hand drawing the press pictures of Tyson.

The bailiff reaches into the mesh basket and pulls out one of the names.

Lindsay is watching, the leather strap of her purse wound tightly around her hand.

The bailiff lifts the small piece of paper and reads.

BAILIFF

Miss Sadie Bucknell.

Lindsay's face drops. SADIE, 67, gets up and heads over to the juror box.

Again the bailiff's hand goes into the small mass of papers. Lindsay is watching his every move.

TIGHT on the bailiff's lips.

BAILIFF

Miss Lindsay Desma Dempster

TIGHT on Lindsay as she stands up suddenly and lets out a small, high-pitched squeak. Several other potential jurors look at her as she makes her way to the front of the courtroom and up into the jury box. She sits down and looks up with a silly, giddy, shy smile into the eyes of Judge Tristram.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Is everything all right?

Pause.

LINDSAY

Sure... Yes, Your Honor.

INT. COURTROOM

The full complement of fourteen chairs has been filled by the mini-lottery. Judge Tristram speaks sternly to the new jurors.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

You cannot speak with anyone about this case. You cannot talk to husbands or children about this case. You may not talk among yourselves until deliberation begins. You have all sworn an oath. If you perjure yourself while under this oath, it is a crime...a serious crime. Is this understood?

Some of the jurors meekly say yes.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

I can't hear you!

ALL THE JURORS

Yes.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Good! This should be a fulfilling experience for all of you. Mr. Quinn, let's start.

INT. MAIN COURTROOM - LATER

Tyson sits with a box of paper clips, making a chain that hangs down in front of the defense table. Lindsay is watching him.

RAFFERTY QUINN, 39, walks back and forth in front of the group, looking into each of their eyes. He stops in front of Lindsay.

QUINN

I'm the district attorney. My name is Rafferty Quinn. The assistant district attorney is sitting at the prosecution table. His name is Joseph Kilinsky.

Quinn is pointing at KILINSKY, 31, a balding man with bright red hair and a face full of freckles.

QUINN

Ms. Dempster, there has been quite a lot of publicity in this case. Could it influence you?

Lindsay looks over at Judge Tristram, who is watching closely, always scrutinizing.

Lindsay barely is able to manufacture a whisper.

LINDSAY

No...

Hillel leans forward in his chair. Lindsay starts to squirm.

QUINN

Have you watched much of the news coverage of this case?

Pause.

LINDSAY

Well, to tell you the truth, I find this case, and most cases of murder, to be handled in a very sensational way. I don't like sensationalism.

QUINN

Thank you.

Quinn continues to stare at her, judging her. He knows that she's lying, but her prejudices could help him.

Hillel watches from the defense table. He slowly gets up and makes his way across the room. He stops in front of Lindsay, looks into her eyes and smiles. There is something frail about him.

HILLEL

Hello. How are you?

LINDSAY

Fine, thank you.

HILLEL

Do you believe in the death penalty?

LINDSAY

No.

HILLEL

Is this a political viewpoint?

Lindsay is touched with Hillel's gentleness.

LINDSAY

No. I just feel it. It's an emotional viewpoint.

HILLEL

Thank you.

Hillel smiles an old, tired smile and slowly walks back to his chair, Lindsay watching him the whole time.

INT. BRIDGET'S APARTMENT

Bridget is on the phone. A young frat boy is asleep, naked, on the bed in the background. As Bridget talks, she devours a pint of Ben and Jerry's Coffee Heathbar Crunch ice cream.

BRIDGET

Lindsay, most people spend their lives trying to get out of jury duty.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING LOBBY

Lindsay is in a phone booth.

LINDSAY

Bridget, you don't understand. I did it. This is the case of the decade in Northhampton, and I'm not just looking at it. I'm part of it. I'm part of the process. I'm part of the machinery of justice.

Pause. Bridget eats Ben and Jerry's.

BRIDGET

Hey, Linds, whatever turns you on.

EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BUILDING PARKING LOT

Tyson pulls out of the parking lot.

Lindsay, who has been sitting in her car waiting for him, closes her book and pulls out behind him. Both turn right and come to a stop at the light. Lindsay pulls out a small notebook and begins writing.

TIGHT on the pencil-written words: "SKEET LEAVES COURTHOUSE, 4:18."

Jarred by the ear-smacking sound of the driver behind her, Lindsay looks up to see that the light has turned green and Tyson is far ahead of her now.

She quickly pulls up to him.

EXT. OLD STEEL BRIDGE - LATER

Tyson pulls across the bridge. Lindsay is behind him by sixty yards, an "oldies" station playing in the background. As she follows him, Tyson pulls past her driveway. Lindsay slows down, then rolls by her house and continues to follow him.

Then quietly on the radio the song "Secret Agent Man." Lindsay starts to sing softly, all her attention focused on Tyson.

EXT. NORTHERN ELLENVILLE

An area as rural as that of Lindsay's father's house. Tyson pulls into the driveway of an old, white Colonial home. As Lindsay passes by the home, she sees Pinky out on the lawn setting up a small card table.

Lindsay drives past the house, slowly pulls the Oldsmobile over to the side of the road, waits a moment, then makes a U-turn and heads past the house again.

As she passes by, she sees Tyson easily carry Pinky's wife in a wheelchair down the brick steps of the house then push her across the lawn over to the card table that now has an assortment of picnic foods on it.

Lindsay is touched by this different view of Tyson.

INT. COURTROOM

The old room is packed with reporters and spectators, all sweating and fanning themselves. Rafferty Quinn is at the front of the room standing before the jury. He's a no-nonsense rural attorney.

QUINN

I am being completely honest in saying that in all the cases that I have tried, I have never been given such an overwhelming amount of evidence that would support a conviction. I will show that this man, Tyson Skeet, brutally raped and murdered Gilda Lawler. The facts...listen to this: One, his fingerprints all over the scene of the crime and all over the body. Two, blood and semen found...Tyson Skeet's blood and semen found inside Gilda's body. Three, a footprint in blood...Tyson Skeet's footprint in blood.

There is a murmuring in the crowd. Quinn continues.

QUINN

Four, a sample of Gilda's skin found under Skeet's fingernails. And this list, as you will soon see for yourselves, goes on and on. This man Tyson Skeet...

(Quinn moves over
behind Tyson across
the room)

is guilty of slitting a woman's throat. A wonderful mother and wife brutally murdered, killed in a long and horrifying act of violence, and he did it.

Quinn moves back to the jury, closer and closer, until he is leaning against the wooden rail in front of the jury box.

QUINN

This is not the news. You can't turn it off. He did it. Him. And you are the only people that can bring justice to bear. You will return a guilty verdict, and you will do it with a vengeance.

TIGHT on Lindsay, her eyes shifting back and forth from Quinn to Tyson, who continues to stare at the ground.

.INT. COURTROOM - LATER

The room is silent, the air heavy and hot. The slight squeak of a chair. Hillel gets up, slowly makes his way across the room and stands in front of the jury, watching them. He speaks in a soft, weak voice, the voice of an old man.

HILLEL

My name is Joshua Hillel. I'm representing Mr. Skeet. My client seems to be ready for hanging from the opening statement Mr. Quinn just gave.

There is small laughter from the courtroom.

HILLEL

There are three things I want to say. The first is that the lawyers can say whatever they please during these opening statements, and there is no way to stop them from stretching the truth. I can't object. The judge can't say, 'Mr. Quinn, you're out of order.' Nothing. So my first bit of advice is don't believe what either of us lawyers say here. Use the trial. Judge for yourselves what's right and fair.

Hillel begins moving down the line, making intimate eye contact with each of the jurors.

HILLEL

Mrs. Lawler was brutally murdered. You know that. Mr. Quinn told you that thirty or forty times.

There is more laughter from the crowd.

HILLEL

What he didn't tell you was that there was no murder weapon. And although my client's fingerprints were all over the room--Mr. Quinn will tell you that a couple of hundred times before this trial is over--

More laughter. Hillel is in front of Lindsay, his tired, old blue eyes focused on her.

HILLEL

His prints were not found on a knife, and she died from having her throat cut. It's not a big point, but it would be the type of evidence necessary to say this man did it. Quinn doesn't have it. He would have told you if he did. But the singlemost important fact in this case, the fact that will make it clear that my client did not commit this crime, is that at the time of her death he was somewhere else with many witnesses, and that's all there is to it. If I prove, which I will, that Tyson Skeet was somewhere else when Mrs. Lawler's throat was cut, how can you convict him of murder? How? You can't. And you won't. Why? 'Cause it would be wrong. That's the whole story. Don't lose that thought. Tyson Skeet was somewhere else at the time. Thank you.

EXT. PARKING LOT - 6:30 P.M.

The sky is black with clouds. Huge walls of rain wipe across the parking lot. Tyson's car pulls out across the lot. After a moment, we see Lindsay's car follow. Both cars leave the lot and head to the stoplight.

TIGHT on Tyson's tires, screeching to a halt at the crosswalk.

Lindsay slams on the brakes. Her car doesn't stop. It aquaplanes across the pavement.

TIGHT on Tyson's fender as Lindsay's car finally stops, inches from Tyson's bumper.

Lindsay tries to catch her breath. She watches Tyson pulling away. Then, again, the jarring honk of a car behind her. Lindsay takes a left and heads down the road behind Tyson.

EXT. OLD STEEL BRIDGE

Tyson's '73 Barracuda pulls across.

The brown water rushes madly below in the creek.

After a moment Lindsay's Oldsmobile comes across.

Tyson passes Lindsay's driveway and continues up the road.

TIGHT on Lindsay's foot going down easy on the brake. Her car comes to a stop. Lindsay sits on the shoulder of the road a moment and watches the blurry image of Tyson's car moving through the downpour.

Tyson's car suddenly turns down a different road.

TIGHT on Lindsay's foot, slowly easing down on the gas. She squints, trying to see where Tyson went.

Her car comes to the small road that Tyson disappeared down. She turns down it.

TIGHT on Lindsay wondering what Tyson is doing there. The foliage is hanging above the car, making the path dark. The windshield wipers are no match for the rain. The silence of the pavement is broken as the car pulls onto dirt.

Tyson's car is nowhere in sight.

Lindsay realizes she should leave. She puts the car into reverse and starts to edge backward down the road.

Suddenly the soul-shaking sound of a car horn sounds behind her, and the bright, eye-like headlights of a car shine behind her.

Lindsay slams the car into forward.

TIGHT on the tires spinning in the mud.

TIGHT on a hand in the rain, opening a trunk and taking out a crowbar.

Lindsay's foot floored on the gas.

The tire sinking into the mud.

Lower half of a body walking to Lindsay's car, the crowbar in hand.

Abruptly, Lindsay's car lurches forward and streaks down the dirt road, weighted branches slapping against the windshield. Lindsay gasps, trying to keep the vehicle under control.

She spins the wheel. The road runs out. A dense forest straight ahead. The front end of the car catches a pine tree, the tail spinning around. The sound of wood ripping.

And then, silence. The rain, monotonous. Lindsay catches her breath. She realizes she is not hurt but knows how alone she is. In a burst, she slams her hand over the locks on the doors.

Silence.

All of a sudden, a tremendous pounding on the driver's side window.

Outside the car, Tyson is slapping the window hard with his open palm. The rain pours down the outside of the glass, making it impossible for him to see inside. He desperately tries to push the water away to see inside. His voice is vicious and insane, his accent deep rural southern, very guttural and animalistic.

TYSON

Who are you?!!

Inside the car, Lindsay tries to control herself.

LINDSAY

Calm down. Keys...use your keys.

OUTSIDE

TYSON

Open the fucking door, or I'm going to break the glass... Do you hear me? Hey!!...

Tyson is knocked back as the driver's side door springs open. He slides backward through the mud.

Lindsay is out the door, running like a wild animal, the rain pouring down on her. Her heel sinks into the mud. She takes off her shoes.

Tyson is up and after her, charging through the trees.

Lindsay slides as she's running on the edge of the stream. She sinks up to her thighs. She claws her way out of the water and starts running again. Her knees are bleeding, her face scraped from running through the low tree limbs. She keeps pushing on.

Tyson jumps into the stream and wades across.

TYSON

Stop!!

Lindsay comes to a small rock formation. She starts to climb it. Tyson is behind her. He grabs her. She slides down the rock, cutting her hands and face. Tyson is heaving, trying to catch his breath. Lindsay is left face down in the mud. She sobs into the wet, brown leaves.

TYSON

In the rain? In the rain? You had
to make me run in the fucking rain?!!

Lindsay continues to sob. Tyson goes over to her and turns
her over. She covers her face with her hands.

TYSON

Who the fuck are you?

He pries her hands off her face and recognizes her from the
jury.

TYSON

I don't believe it. My life watched,
I'm thrown out of my apartment,
my phone is tapped, and what
the fuck is this? I get a jury
member that's allowed to follow
me home. What the fuck is it?!!

She just continues to cry, the rain still pouring down.

TYSON

Get up!! Get up, dammit!!

Tyson lifts Lindsay by the arm and slams her body into the
rocks. She starts to cry.

TYSON

What's your name?

She just cries. He takes her by the arm and starts leading
her back across the stream.

As they get to the edge:

LINDSAY

I'm not going back in there.

Tyson just looks at her and then, in one motion, pushes her
into the water. She screams.

Tyson wades across the stream.

TYSON

Is it cold?

LINDSAY

Yes.

TYSON

Does it hurt?

LINDSAY

Yes.

TYSON

Good!

He pushes her so she falls into the water again.

INT. CAR

Tyson pushes Lindsay into her car. He gets in after her and pushes her over. They sit there a moment in the silence, water dripping off Tyson's chin. He sees her purse and grabs it. He goes through it and flings her credit cards and papers all over the car until he finds her license.

TYSON

Lindsay Desma Dempster. I won't even comment on what a stupid name Lindsay is.

He puts the license into his pocket.

LINDSAY

Give me my license back.

TYSON

Wait. What was that? "Give me my license back?" Is that what just hit my ears? Look, you are in contempt of court, and, worse, you got me wet and mad. And I hope when I show this to the judge tomorrow, they throw you in jail and you die of cancer in there.

LINDSAY

Yeah, well I hope--

TYSON

Shut up. Why were you following me? Are you a cop?... What kinda question is that?

LINDSAY

I could be a cop.

TYSON

You're no cop. Trust me. Why were you following me?

Pause. He grabs Lindsay around the throat and pushes her head into the glass.

TYSON

Why were you following me?

LINDSAY

I was just curious.

TYSON

Just curious? My life is being
fucked out right from under me, and
you want to follow along to watch?!!

She starts to cry. Tyson gets out of the car and shuts the door. Lindsay sits there a moment and wonders if he is gone.

Suddenly, the door opens again.

TYSON

Just in case you thought that you
could break the law and get me wet
without some kind of immediate
punishment...

Tyson grabs the car keys and walks away from the car.

TYSON

Walk the fuck home in the rain.

Tyson throws the keys into the rain. He comes back to the car and takes her purse and takes her house keys.

TYSON

And so you don't forget when you
get home, I'll insure that this
day will continue to suck for you.

He throws her house keys into the woods.

TYSON

Bye-bye. Have fun crawling through
some fucking basement window and
bumping your head, Lindsay...

He leaves and then is back in the doorway of the car.

TYSON

And I'll say it. Why not?
Lindsay is a stupid, pseudo-English,
bullshit name. Hey, I know it's
just my opinion. Take it for what
it's worth.

He is gone. Lindsay is left with her mouth hanging open.

He starts his car and pulls away. Lindsay is left alone
with the rain.

INT. COURTROOM

Lindsay is sitting with the rest of the jury. Tyson is not with Hillel at the defense table. Lindsay is constantly blowing her nose, wiping it with a large, white handkerchief that she holds in her scratched hands. Her face is scratched as well.

EDWARD WITHER, a juror in the row behind Lindsay, whispers with CONRAD NAKIN. She turns slightly and sees that they are talking about her wounds. She hears the words:

NAKIN

It must have been a dogfight...

She ignores them and waits for Tyson and the judge to appear and take her away.

Tyson comes running into the courtroom and sits with Hillel. Both men begin to confer.

BAILIFF

The Honorable Judge Tristram
presiding. All rise.

Everyone in the courtroom stands. Tristram bangs the gavel and sits.

Lindsay closes her eyes and waits for the judge to cut into her.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

I apologize for my tardiness...
Mr. Quinn, I believe that you are
going to begin calling your first
witnesses today.

QUINN

Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Let's begin, then.

Lindsay looks over at Tyson, who again seems removed from the trial, sitting and staring at the legal papers on the table in front of him.

QUINN

The State calls Detective Bochman.

Lindsay can't believe that nothing has happened to her. She continues to watch Tyson. A sneeze suddenly comes upon Lindsay. All eyes for a moment are on Lindsay. She is embarrassed and drops her purse.

SADIE

God bless you.

LINDSAY

Thank you.

SADIE

You must have been out in that rain.

LINDSAY

No!... Yes, not really. Just a little, really.

As Bochman is being sworn in, Lindsay looks up and is staring right into Tyson's harsh, blue eyes. She can't take it. She turns away and tries to focus in on the testimony, while still wiping her nose.

INT. LINDSAY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Lindsay is soaking in the tub, slowly, her eyes closed. She tries to calm herself from the past two days' events.

INT. LINDSAY'S KITCHEN

A hot-air popcorn maker is making popcorn.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Lindsay hits Play on the remote control of the VCR. The opening title of "Casablanca" starts. Lindsay watches, at ease and at home with the romance of the film. A timer goes off.

INT. KITCHEN

Lindsay comes into the kitchen and picks up the bowl of popcorn.

TAP, TAP, TAP... Lindsay looks up, and there, at the sliding glass doors that lead out to the back deck, is Tyson, who raps quietly with two fingers on the glass.

Lindsay drops the bowl and starts to scream.

TYSON

Please... Please stop... I'm not going to hurt you...

EXT. SIDE OF HOUSE

Teenie and Weenie in the pen begin barking and jumping when they hear Lindsay scream.

INT. LINDSAY'S KITCHEN

TYSON

Please stop it.

LINDSAY

If you break the glass, I'll scream.

TYSON

You're already screaming.

LINDSAY

I'm dialing the phone... Nine...One--

TYSON

Don't do that.

LINDSAY

If you break the glass, I'll dial the next one.

TYSON

Just let me come inside and talk to you. Just for a minute.

Tyson slides open the door.

LINDSAY

Don't do that.

TYSON

I didn't break it. I just opened it.
(pause) If I was going to hurt you,
I could have done it yesterday.

LINDSAY

What's that?

Tyson has a Tupperware container in his hand.

TYSON

It's soup.

The dogs are going nuts outside.

TYSON

Let me come in one minute, say what I have to say, and I'll be gone.

Pause.

LINDSAY

Come in, and leave the door open.

He does.

LINDSAY

What do you have to say?

TYSON

I'm sorry about the way I came down on you. I don't know what the fuck you were doing, but... Here, I'm sorry I pushed you in the water.

He hands her the soup.

TYSON

I'm not going to tell the judge. It would just mean a retrial. The whole thing would start over, and my bail would probably be revoked. Nobody would believe that you followed me and I roughed you around, 'cause they'll think I harassed you. Would you do that? I don't tell, you don't tell.

LINDSAY

That's all you want?... I don't get contempt of court?

TYSON

Yeah.

LINDSAY

All right. Now go.

Pause. "Casablanca" is playing in the background. The dogs are quiet. Tyson looks through the kitchen door at the television. Lindsay does as well. Rick has just seen Elsa for the first time.

Lindsay turns back to Tyson, and there is an empty doorway. He's gone. She closes the door and goes into the living room.

Lindsay slowly sits down on the couch and tries to gather her thoughts. On the screen is the part of "Casablanca" where Elsa comes to Rick, and she sends him away. Lindsay watches it with glazed eyes.

Suddenly, a desperate pounding on the front door. Lindsay goes to open it but keeps the chain on. Tyson is there.

TYSON

Open the door! There's a cop pulling up and turning into the driveway.

Lindsay looks and sees the headlights of a car approaching.
Pause. And then, softly, from Tyson:

TYSON

Please.

She opens the door. Tyson comes running in.

LINDSAY

Where's your car?

TYSON

I parked it on the fire road where
you followed me and came through
the woods. You got to hide me.

There's a knock on the door. Tyson starts to go upstairs.

LINDSAY

Don't go upstairs.

Tyson dives under a tablecloth-covered table. The knocking
continues. The dogs are barking. "Casablanca" continues to
play on the television.

TYSON

Answer the door.

LINDSAY

No, he'll go away.

TYSON

Answer the fucking door!

Lindsay goes over to the door.

LINDSAY

Hello?

COP

This is Officer Brangton. Could I
talk with you?

LINDSAY

What do you want?

COP

Could you open the door?

Lindsay opens the door.

COP

There was a complaint that your
dogs were barking. Is everything
all right?

LINDSAY

Yes. Definitely.

COP

You sure?

Pause. He doesn't believe her.

COP

If there is any problem, give us
a call.

LINDSAY

Okay.

Lindsay closes the door and whispers.

LINDSAY

Mr. Skeet, would you please get out
of my house right this minute?

Tyson comes out from under the table.

TYSON

Sure. Thank you.

LINDSAY

I did that for myself, Mr. Skeet, so
I wouldn't go to jail. Please go.

Tyson goes to the window and looks out in the driveway.

TYSON

Fuckin' guy is still out there.
He's sitting by the road.

LINDSAY

Please don't repeat the word over
and over in my house.

TYSON

Fuck?

LINDSAY

Yes.

TYSON

Fuck, fuck, fuck!

LINDSAY

Thank you. That was very nice.
I asked very nicely.

TYSON

That was a joke, like in laugh, like
in have a fucking sense of humor.

Lindsay goes over to the window and looks out.

TYSON

I need to stay until that guy leaves.
Is what all right?

LINDSAY

Considering I could go to jail if
you're found here, I don't have
much choice.

They stand facing each other.

TYSON

Well, what are we going to do?

LINDSAY

I don't know.

TYSON

We could sit and watch the movie.

Lindsay is skeptical.

LINDSAY

Okay....

Lindsay and Tyson move over to the couch and sit. Tyson
begins eating some of the popcorn, Lindsay watching his
every move.

In the film, Sam is playing "As Time Goes By."

TYSON

I love the music in this film. Do you?

LINDSAY

Yes, very much so. I do. I love
movie music more than anything.

Slowly she stops watching Tyson and turns towards the
television.

INT. LINDSAY'S HOUSE - LATER

On the television, Bogart and Raines are walking across the
foggy airport. And then Bogart's line:

BOGART

Louie, I think this is the beginning
of a beautiful friendship.

Lindsay and Tyson are staring at the screen. The movie is
over. Both washed away with the romance of the movie, they
turn towards each other. There is something very vulnerable

about Tyson. He looks away. Lindsay suddenly is back to herself.

LINDSAY

I'm sure he's gone. You're going to have to leave now.

Tyson nods his head yes, heads into the kitchen and out the back door. Lindsay goes and watches him walk out the door.

LINDSAY

Good luck with your trial.

TYSON

Have a good life.

LINDSAY

Thank you.

Pause.

LINDSAY

How will you get your bowl back?

TYSON

I don't need it.

Pause.

LINDSAY

It could be evidence that you were here. I think you should come and take it back.

TYSON

Sometime.

He turns and heads into the night. Lindsay stays at the door long after he is gone.

INT. LINDSAY'S BEDROOM - 2:30 A.M.

Lindsay suddenly sits up in bed. The phone is ringing.

INT. LINDSAY'S KITCHEN

Lindsay turns on the light. She is afraid of the phone. It could be Tyson harassing her. She answers it. And then from the receiver:

BRIDGET

Lindsay...

Bridget is sobbing.

LINDSAY

What is it? (pause) Sure, sure.

INT. BRIDGET'S APARTMENT - 3:00 A.M.

Lindsay and Bridget are sitting on the couch. Bridget holds a glass of Johnny Walker. Lindsay is holding her hand.

BRIDGET

I don't mind that he left. I
just am scared, more scared than
anything in my life, of being alone.

She continues to sob. Lindsay puts her arms around her and strokes her hair.

LINDSAY

I'm here... I'm with you. You're
not alone.

INT. COURTROOM - NEXT DAY

Devin Lawler sits, his chest sunken, his hands politely clasped in his lap, Beverly Norvin on one side of him, Charles Keene on the other.

Detective Bochman is on the stand, Quinn in front of him. Lindsay intermittently glances at Tyson, who, as always, seems removed from the proceedings.

QUINN

What were the events that led to
arresting Tyson Skeet?

BOCHMAN

Marshall Lawler, the victim's son,
had told us he was seen running
away from the crime.

QUINN

That was all?

BOCHMAN

At first. Then by the time we
brought him in, we had fingerprints
from the body and the surrounding
area of the scene of the crime. Then
we felt we should arrest and charge
Mr. Skeet with the murder. Also,
there was a footprint that was in
blood that matched Mr. Skeet's foot.

QUINN

Then.

BOCHMAN

Well, then the forensics report revealed that she had small amounts of his skin under her nails. His blood and semen were found inside the victim. Mr. Skeet's hands were scarred with fresh cuts. It was clear what had happened.

QUINN

No further questions.

INT. THE DELIBERATION ROOM

All the jurors are drinking coffee, smoking and chatting. Sadie is talking with Lindsay and Conrad.

SADIE

That Hillel. There is something so relaxed and precise about him. It's very attractive.

Lindsay smiles. Conrad scolds Sadie.

CONRAD

We're not supposed to discuss the case, or were you listening?

SADIE

I'm sorry.

CONRAD

It shouldn't be my responsibility to tell you. We should all watch ourselves. Self-control.

This hurts Sadie. Lindsay wants to say something but can't.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Bochman is still on the stand. Hillel is resting one hand on the stand, the other on his cane.

HILLEL

Mr. Lawler told you that Tyson Skeet was working for his wife?

BOCHMAN

She had had a problem with her back.

HILLEL

So it's not too odd that his fingerprints would be found anywhere around the house.

BOCHMAN

Not really. Unless they're on the body.

HILLEL

There are situations where fingerprints could be found on the body and not come from the cause of death.

BOCHMAN

If the people were intimate with each other.

QUINN

Objection. This is purely speculation.

HILLEL

Asking if another scenario is possible is essential to my client's defense.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Overruled.

HILLEL

You said that Tyson Skeet's blood and semen were found inside the victim.

BOCHMAN

Yes, but...

HILLEL

You said it. But isn't it true that you can only determine semen and blood type?

BOCHMAN

Yes...

HILLEL

A horrible bit of misinformation. You said that my client's footprints were found in dried blood.

BOCHMAN

Yes.

HILLEL

So whoever this killer was must have been barefoot.

BOCHMAN

No.

HILLEL

Well, then how do you have a footprint?

BOCHMAN

It was the same pattern on Skeet's tennis shoe.

HILLEL

You're going to tell this jury that my client could go to jail for life 'cause he has the--

BOCHMAN

It was the same size as well.

HILLEL

Oh, so now my client will go to jail 'cause he has the same size foot as the killer.

There is laughter from the public section and the jury.

HILLEL

Isn't it true that a quick conviction in a case of this order could lead to a promotion for you?

QUINN

Objection!!

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Mr. Hillel, if you ever make a statement like that again, I'll have you in a cell in nothing flat. Don't ever try that in my court. The jury will ignore that statement. Strike it from your minds.

In the midst of the commotion, Lindsay looks at Tyson, who will not look at her.

HILLEL

Your honor, I am a responsible man and would like the opportunity to defend my question. I have an inter-office memo from Detective Bochman to all officers concerned with the investigation of the Lawler murder. May I read it?

QUINN

Objection.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Overruled.

HILLEL

(reading from memo)

"To all officers and department heads involved with the Lawler case."

(Quinn looks up)

I'm quoting now.

(begins reading again)

"Full effort will be given to quickly tie this case up. Let's work together. We could all come out looking very good."

Silence.

HILLEL

No further questions.

Lindsay continues to look at Tyson, who doesn't seem to notice her.

INT. LINDSAY'S BEDROOM

Lindsay is dressed for bed in a floor-length, long-sleeved flannel nightgown which flows around her like a large cloth bell. She is looking at herself in an old wooden, full-length mirror. She holds the garment tight around her stomach. She stares at the shape of her body, a voluptuous female body. She runs her hand down her back, all the time pulling the cotton tight, slowly revealing her shape.

INT. LINDSAY'S BEDROOM - 3:30 A.M.

Lindsay is asleep. She has taken off the flannel nightgown and lies naked, with only a sheet covering her.

Then in the doorway, silently, Tyson Skeet appears, barefoot and with no shirt. He watches her breathe. He moves to the bed and slithers under the sheet with Lindsay. His body touches hers. Her back faces him.

Lindsay eyes open, and it feels good. She is not afraid. He holds her with his whole body. Lindsay has never felt anything like this. Tyson pulls the sheet around her shoulders to shield her from the cold summer night air.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. LINDSAY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Lindsay lies in bed, somehow lost from the feeling of the dream. She is dressed in the flannel nightgown.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Lindsay puts the last pin into her hair, keeping the tight bun on the back of her head in place. She looks at herself, then undoes the top three buttons of her blouse so that it doesn't surround her neck but lays flat like a collared shirt. She continues to look at herself in the mirror.

INT. COURTROOM

Lindsay is sitting in the jury box. She has her hair down around her shoulders, another button or two open on the blouse, and the smallest hint of lipstick and eyeliner. Wither leans forward on his chair to get a better look at Lindsay.

Lindsay occasionally takes her eyes off the stand to look at Tyson.

Quinn has the forensics man, Dr. Sapphire, on the stand.

QUINN

The time of death then, in your estimation?

Q

DR. SAPPHIRE

Between quarter of three and three-thirty.

QUINN

You can be that exact in your conclusion?

DR. SAPPHIRE

If a doctor has an opportunity to examine the body within a few hours of the time of death, it can be a fairly exact science.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Hillel has Sapphire on the stand.

HILLEL

Dr. Sapphire, you're not the county coroner, are you?

DR. SAPPHIRE

No.

HILLEL

Why would the prosecution bring in an outside forensics expert in a case like this when the regular county coroner, Dr. Haft, is available.

DR. SAPPHIRE

For the same reason you were brought
in from Boston to defend Mr. Skeet.
In a small town, cases of this
nature are rare, and a more experienced
individual is called in...like yourself.

HILLEL

You are very qualified, aren't you?
You have testified in over seventy
cases all around Massachusetts,
outside your own county.

DR. SAPPHIRE

I don't know the exact number

HILLEL

Where did you go to school?

QUINN

Objection!

HILLEL

Your Honor, I am only trying to
determine this expert gun-for-hire's
qualifications.

QUINN

Objection? Please, Your Honor!

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Strike Mr. Hillel's comment from
the record. If your case is
weak, Mr. Hillel, do not try
tricks in my courtroom.

HILLEL

I think the question is a valid
one, Your Honor, but I apologize
for the description of Dr.
Sapphire's practices.

Judge Tristram watches Hillel.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

The witness may answer the question.

DR. SAPPHIRE

Hinsdale University.

HILLEL

Isn't Hinsdale a city college?

Pause.

DR. SAPPHIRE

That's the proper name.

Lindsay looks away from the witness and sees Tyson staring at her.

Tyson is shocked at even this subtle change in her.

HILLEL

One more question. You said that there can be accuracy in determining the time of death if the expert can examine the body shortly after the time of death.

DR. SAPPHIRE

Yes.

HILLEL

You were brought in on this case days after the fact. How could your examination be better than Dr. Haft's?

DR. SAPPHIRE

I didn't say mine was better. But to answer your question, I used Dr. Haft's notes, which were very good, to come to my conclusions.

Hillel stares at Dr. Sapphire. He doesn't like him.

INT. LINDSAY'S HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

The summer sun still has not set. Still looking the way she did in court, Lindsay sits reading at the kitchen table next to the door that leads out to the porch where Tyson had come in several nights earlier. Occasionally, she looks out the window into the woods, waiting.

INT. LINDSAY'S KITCHEN -LATER

It's night. The sky is black. Lindsay is still reading, still in the heels and skirt. She looks at her watch.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

Lindsay's hair is losing its shape. She gets up, tired of waiting. She fills a kettle and sets it on the stove, and leaves the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - STILL LATER

The kettle is boiling. Lindsay comes in, having changed into her old pink robe, her hair pulled back into a pony tail.

TAP, TAP, TAP. Lindsay looks up and sees Tyson at the window. She screams.

EXT. HOUSE, DOG RUN

Teenie and Weenie start barking.

INT. KITCHEN

Tyson puts his finger to his mouth, indicating Lindsay should be quiet.

LINDSAY

Get away!

TYSON

You said I should come back. (pause)
Just to get the bowl.

Lindsay opens the door.

LINDSAY

Come in, get the bowl and then leave.

TYSON

I just want you to hear something.

Tyson has a record under his jacket.

TYSON

Let me just throw this on, you'll
listen and I'll go.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Tyson drops the needle on the old record.

TYSON

Sit down. Listen to this.

Lindsay sits, and "As Time Goes By" starts to play. It's the original version from the film. Tyson sits next to her. He looks into her eyes. There have never been blue eyes like his.

TYSON

You like it?

Their faces are inches apart. Lindsay is hesitant. And then slowly she nods her head yes, and her eyes close. Tyson smiles, thinks and then leans in and kisses her on her mouth softly. That is all it takes. Lindsay melts. She's his.

TYSON

I have to go.

Pause. Lindsay is disappointed and then recovers.

LINDSAY

You should leave. Get out.

He starts to head back into the kitchen and out onto the deck.

TYSON

I'll see you in court.

He is gone into the night. Lindsay is crushed. And then softly:

LINDSAY

Don't come back here again.

EXT. BRIDGET'S APARTMENT ABOVE COLLEGE DRUG STORE - 1:30 A.M.

Lindsay walks by the college drug store and presses Bridget's downstairs buzzer.

INT. BRIDGET'S APARTMENT

Bridget sits naked with a blanket around her shoulders. Lindsay passes back and forth in front of her.

LINDSAY

All right, let me ask you. What if there was somebody you weren't supposed to see and you wanted to see them?

BRIDGET

I'd see 'em.

LINDSAY

Like it was against the law if you saw them.

BRIDGET

Like a married man?

LINDSAY

Yeah, yeah, like a married man.

BRIDGET

I'd see 'em.

A male voice from the bedroom:

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Bridget, come on back in. I wasn't finished.

BRIDGET

(shouting towards
bedroom)

Finish yourself.

LINDSAY

What if you would go to jail for seeing this man?

BRIDGET

How good-looking is he?

Pause.

BRIDGET

Are you in trouble?

Lindsay stares at her friend.

LINDSAY

I don't know.

INT. MALL - DAY

Lindsay is looking at a particularly attractive black skirt.

INT. COURTROOM

Lindsay is wearing the skirt, her ivory top buttoned to her collarbone.

Tyson is staring at Lindsay, taken with her beauty.

Lindsay looks away and then around to see if anyone was watching.

BAILIFF

The state calls Devin Lawler to the stand.

Devin walks up and takes the stand.

Lindsay watches his every step. She doesn't like him. There is something incredibly soft and vulnerable about this man.

BAILIFF

Please, place your hand on the Bible. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

DEVIN

I do.

TIGHT on some of the artists from local newspapers quickly sketching Devin's face.

QUINN

Devin, I know that this is hard for you. If you wish to stop and break, please say so, and I'm sure the Judge will give you a few moments.

DEVIN

I'll be all right. Really.

Lindsay steals a look at Tyson, who blinks both his eyes at her. She is shocked and glances around to see if any of the other jurors saw. She looks back at him angrily.

Tyson smiles and quickly blinks at her again.

She looks away, her mouth forming the words, "Oh, my God."

QUINN

When did you meet Gilda, and how long were you married? How was your marriage? Let the jury have some background.

DEVIN

We met here in North Hampton. I was at Amherst. She was at Smith. And we've been married for eighteen years. We loved each other very much.

QUINN

Were there problems?

DEVIN

Problems, good times, everything

QUINN

Tyson Skeet is a student of yours?

DEVIN

Yes.

QUINN

Why did you hire him?

DEVIN

Gilda had two discs removed from her back and needed help around the house. I put an ad in the paper, and Tyson answered. I hired him.

Tyson looks up from the paper clip chain he is making. Devin's said something that interests him.

QUINN

What did you pay him?

DEVIN

Eight or nine dollars an hour.

Tyson looks at Lindsay.

Lindsay seems to be watching Devin on the stand. But then out of the corner of her eye, she spots Tyson staring at her and blinks at him.

Tyson doesn't smile. He's not impressed with her.

EXT. WOODS BEHIND LINDSAY'S HOUSE

Tyson moves through the trees. He stares up at the large house. All the lights are out.

He comes up the stairs and moves to the back door. He taps softly on the glass.

He reaches down and turns the handle. The door opens. He thinks and then finally moves into the kitchen. He listens. Silence. He walks into the living room and sees:

Lindsay is sitting on the couch, still wearing the black skirt and ivory blouse, a little more unbuttoned. In addition, there is a black velvet bow around her neck. An open bottle of wine is in front of her.

The logs in the fireplace are smoldering grey and orange.

And then flatly:

LINDSAY.

Oh, my God. You've broken into my house.

Tyson shakes his head at the silliness of the situation.

TYSON

Yeah, I guess I have.

LINDSAY

I'll call the police.

TYSON

Go ahead.

Lindsay picks up the phone and starts dialing.

Tyson heads over to the record player and takes out a record from the bag he is carrying. He puts it on the turntable. His fingers turn the volume loud.

TYSON

You don't have to dial all those numbers. Nine-one-one will get you there. I thought you might like this.

The needle drops.

He moves to the couch next to Lindsay, who stares at him defensively. She swallows, holds the receiver limply in her hand, then lets it drop. A recorded voice is saying, "If you'd like to make a call..."

The music starts--"Tara's Theme" from "Gone with the Wind." The violins sweeping, the sound huge, filling the room. Lindsay looks as if she might cry.

Tyson reaches up to her neck. Lindsay for the first time is frightened, but the music is loud enough to drown out any of her screams. Her jaw begins to shake with fear.

Tyson's lips are parted, his eyes focused on her neck.

TIGHT on Tyson's fingers, grabbing the bow and firmly beginning to pull. Lindsay lets out a gasp. The velvet unties, and the ribbon slides off her throat. Tyson hands slide around her neck. He might strangle her.

But instead he pulls her into him and kisses her hard. Her whole body becomes limp, her fear giving way to passion.

Slowly, her hands start to move over his back and then up into his hair.

The music is blasting away. Heathcliff is sitting on a chair, his head cocked to one side, watching them. The phone is making its wretched off-the-hook sound.

Tyson is on top of Lindsay. Their bodies roll off the couch and onto the floor with a thump. Lindsay's leg pushes the table, and the wine bottle tips and begins to drain on the rug. Lindsay see it, then is drawn back into the wave of passion.

Tyson pulls off his shirt, ripping off some of the buttons. He pulls Lindsay's skirt off and begins frantically undoing her blouse.

Suddenly she pushes him away.

LINDSAY

Stop...

Tyson stops. Both of them are on the floor, heaving.

LINDSAY

I can't do this. I don't know
you. I don't know what I'm
doing... This is insane.

She turns away from him and hangs up the telephone receiver.

Tyson looks at her, a bit angry, a bit dismayed.

He puts his hand on her shoulder.

Lindsay freezes again, afraid.

TYSON

It's all right. I know something
else, something that can...
substitute. And they deliver.

INT. LINDSAY'S HOME, A LITTLE LATER

TIGHT on a white carton of "orange beef," then moving through string beans and broccoli in garlic sauce. Tyson's fingertips grab a portion of cold noodles out of the carton and bring them to his mouth. He savors the bite, devouring it, the sauce all over his mouth and lips, his eyes closed.

Lindsay is across the table, still in her slip. Tyson is bare-chested. His eyes open, and he nods his head for Lindsay to take some food. She picks up the smallest nibble of orange beef and pops it into her mouth, then quickly wipes her hands.

Tyson laughs at her.

Lindsay is disappointed.

LINDSAY

It's greasy. I don't like it on my
hands.

Tyson stops smiling.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

A fat, dark woman with a large mole on her neck is in the witness box. Quinn is questioning her.

QUINN

Mrs. Decini, you worked for the Lawler family for over three years. What was Gilda Lawler's relationship with Tyson Skeet during the last three months of her life?

Lindsay, looking very feminine, glances over at Tyson, who continues to stare straight ahead.

HILLEL

Objection. The witness is being asked to give pure speculation.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

I'll have to agree with that.

QUINN

Your honor, I will not be presenting hearsay to this court or this jury. Please, your honor.

HILLEL

(under his breath
to Tyson)

Talk to me. What is she going to say?

Tyson just continues to stare straight ahead.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

If I let you continue and this is just hearsay, I'll call a mistrial.

HILLEL

I request a recess.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

We'll recess when I say! Mr. Quinn, please continue.

QUINN

Mrs. Decini, what was Mr. Skeet and Mrs. Lawler's relationship?

MRS. DECINI

They were lovers.

A murmur ripples across the room. Several reporters bolt from the back of the courtroom.

QUINN

Why would you say that they were lovers?

MRS. DECINI

You could tell. I knew a long time. But what really made an impression on me was when I came into the house one day, and I started doing the dishes. The kitchen looks out the back window, and Tyson and Mrs. Lawler were making love, near the pool. They didn't know I was there.

QUINN

Right out in the open, they were making love? What exactly were they doing?

Pause.

QUINN

You have to tell the truth.

MRS. DECINI

I know. It's just that Tyson was a friend of mine. I would tell him stories of my family, and he would write them down...

QUINN

Please answer the question.

MRS. DECINI

It was rough sex--S and M.

QUINN

But what exactly were they doing?

MRS. DECINI

He was behind, you know, and she was on her knees, and he had a rope around her neck and was pulling it, and talking to her.

Lindsay is shocked. Instinctively she reaches up and grabs her own throat.

Quinn goes to the evidence table and lifts the rope that was found around Gilda's neck.

QUINN

Could this have been the rope?

MRS. DECINI

It could have. I'm not sure.

QUINN

Thank you.
(to Hillel)
Your witness.

HILLEL

Thank you. (pause) Mrs. Decini,
how long did you watch the couple?
Let me remind you, you're under oath.

MRS. DECINI

About two minutes.

HILLEL

Why so long? You knew what was
going on in five or ten seconds.

MRS. DECINI

I don't know.

HILLEL

Were you jealous?

MRS. DECINI

No.

HILLEL

You would talk with Mr. Skeet for
hours, as you just said. You
didn't have a crush on him? Have
you ever slept with Tyson Skeet?

MRS. DECINI

No!

Pause.

HILLEL

No further questions, your honor.

Lindsay is scared.

EXT./INT. HILLEL'S CAR IN FRONT OF COURTHOUSE - DAY

Hillel and Tyson are in a white Mercedes. Hillel
manipulates the car through the crowd in front of the
criminal courthouse.

HILLEL

Look, you either begin helping me
in this trial or I'll leave it.

TYSON

Why? So you can make a deal so I'll
sit in jail for 17 years instead of 25?
Fuck it. You're not going to leave.
You're getting paid far too much.

INT. LINDSAY'S HOUSE

Lindsay is in the living room, on the phone. Bridget's
message machine can be heard over the receiver. Lindsay
hangs up the phone. She really is afraid.

EXT. BACK OF LINDSAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

TIGHT on a hand turning the knob on the back door. It's
locked.

INT. LIVING ROOM

TIGHT on Lindsay's face as she hears the rattle of the door.
She gets up and heads over to the kitchen door.

TYSON

Lindsay.

Lindsay waits, and then finally:

LINDSAY

You can't come in anymore. This
is insane.

Silence. Then softly:

TYSON

Please?

Silence. Lindsay steps into the kitchen and sees Tyson at
the back door. He has an album under his arm, and a bottle
of champagne.

She slowly shakes her head no.

Tyson's hand rams through the glass frame of the back
window.

LINDSAY

Stop it. I said no.

His hand comes through and unlocks the door. He walks
through the kitchen past Lindsay.

LINDSAY

This is not a joke. I'll call the cops.

TYSON

Tonight is it!

He throws on the record and drops the needle.

TYSON

This is romance.

LINDSAY

It's not a game. I'm calling the police.

Tyson goes after Lindsay.

LINDSAY

You're scaring me!

He takes her in his arms. The music begins, the first horn parts of the beginning of "2001: A Space Odyssey."

Tyson kisses Lindsay. She resists and resists, then finally she relaxes. Their bodies melt to the floor, the music climaxing. They begin rolling, ripping the clothes off each another. Tyson pulls off her dress and then rips open her blouse. Their flesh touches. Lindsay sighs, and then slowly she turns away from Tyson and begins to cry.

TYSON

I thought you liked movie music?

She draws her knees up to her chest and sobs.

Tyson, in a fit of frustration, grabs Lindsay's nearby shoe and hurls it at the record player, stopping the overly dramatic music. He watches Lindsay, still trying to catch his breath from his passion.

LINDSAY

I've never made love...

Tyson doesn't know what to say.

TYSON

Have you ever had Indian food?

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

The table is covered with assorted Indian dishes. Lindsay and Tyson are eating silently.

Lindsay begins to smile to herself.

TYSON

What is it?

LINDSAY

It's ironic, isn't it?

(starts to laugh)

I'm eating this stuff, trying
to experience this Chicken Kurma,
and...I'm sitting with...

She stops, realizing what she is going to say.

TYSON

With a sick, vicious murderer?

LINDSAY

No...

Pause.

TYSON

If I am going to be here, it's
separate, this world, this
relationship.

LINDSAY

I wouldn't say this is a relationship.

TYSON

It's going to be separate. I will
not discuss the trial. And if you
want me to leave, if you truly want
me to leave, bring up the trial and
I'll go.

Lindsay watches Tyson, who begins to eat.

TYSON

Do you like basketball?

Lindsay doesn't know what to say.

INT. COURTROOM - NEXT DAY

The courtroom is hot. Legal pads and newspapers are being
used as hand fans.

Sweat rides down the side of Judge Tristram's temple.

Hillel's jacket is open, his sleeves rolled up.

Marshall Lawler is on the stand, his cheeks flushed. Hillel
is questioning him.

HILLEL

You've told the court and the jury that you saw Tyson Skeet jogging away from your house just before you found your mother dead. Let me ask you: How far away was Tyson when you saw him jogging?

MARSHALL

A hundred yards.

HILLEL

And he was jogging away from the house?

MARSHALL

Maybe it was fifty yards.

HILLEL

How did you know that it was him if his face wasn't towards you?

Pause.

MARSHALL

I know his clothes.

HILLEL

You know his clothes?

MARSHALL

It was him!

HILLEL

You are a very angry young man. I was like that myself when I was your age. Let me ask you: How was your relationship with your mother?

MARSHALL

Fine... I loved her.

HILLEL

Isn't it true that at a Christmas party you told your mother, and I quote, "Fuck off"?

QUINN

Objection!

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Overruled. Answer the question.

MARSHALL

Yes.

HILLEL

Isn't it true that you sent your mother to the hospital with a split lip three weeks before you found her dead?

QUINN

Objection.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Is this leading anywhere?

Pause.

HILLEL

No further questions.

MARSHALL

It was him running away from my house.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

That's enough, young man. The jury will ignore that statement, and it will be erased from the record.

TIGHT on artists drawing an overly tortured picture of Marshall on the stand.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

LANCE POTTER, a blue-eyed, blond frat brat, is on the stand. Quinn is questioning him.

QUINN

You're the captain of the intramural frisbee team that Mr. Skeet played on.

LANCE

Yes.

QUINN

On March sixth, what time did the game take place?

LANCE

Roughly from twelve to three.

QUINN

Did Mr. Skeet play in that game?

LANCE

I don't remember him being there.

QUINN

(to Hillel)

Your witness.

Hillel gets up and heads over to the witness box. Lance glances over at Tyson, who sits with one fist on the table. Judge Tristram turns towards the witness.

Tyson lets his middle finger extend so that Lance is staring right into it.

Lindsay sees this.

The finger retracts.

HILLEL

Mr. Potter, you didn't play in the game that day, did you?

LANCE

No.

HILLEL

How many men play this sport?

LANCE

Eleven.

HILLEL

Total, or eleven a side?

LANCE

Eleven a side.

HILLEL

So, twenty-two total. Isn't it possible that he was there, and you didn't see him?

LANCE .

I don't think so.

HILLEL

But is it possible?

LANCE

I guess.

HILLEL

One more question. Did you like Mr. Skeet?

LANCE

I hated him, and he hated me.

QUINN

Objection!

JUDGE TRISTRAM

You missed your chance, Mr. Quinn.

HILLEL

Thank you very much, Lance.

INT. LINDSAY'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

TIGHT on a beautiful black and orange rack of ribs.

Lindsay and Tyson are eating, again half dressed, ripping the meat from the bones, the sauce covering Lindsay's face.

TYSON

Joyce.

LINDSAY

I love Joyce!

TYSON

Dickens.

LINDSAY

Oh, my God! On a cold night, I love Dickens.

Pause.

TYSON

I've wanted to ask you what you thought of my writing.

LINDSAY

It scares me.

TYSON

It scares a lot of people. And the children's books?

LINDSAY

They're beautiful.

Tyson reaches over to Lindsay and lifts her hands to his mouth. He lets her fingers go into his lips. He licks them.

LINDSAY

You don't want to win the case?

Tyson stops, letting go of Lindsay's hand. He looks into Lindsay's eyes. She has never seen such sadness.

TYSON

There is nothing to live for...
That is not a figure of speech.
It is just the result of my life.

Pause. Lindsay takes his hand.

LINDSAY

Would you do me a favor? I bought
a record today, and I would like
to waltz with somebody to it.

INT. LINDSAY'S BEDROOM

Lindsay opens a large wooden closet and runs her hands
across several of her father's old suits. She pulls one out
for Tyson.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The doors to the porch are open, a breeze whirling through
the room. All the furniture has been pushed back to the
walls. Two bottles of champagne and a little candelabra sit
on one small table in the center of the room.

Lindsay is in her old long gown. Tyson is in an old pair
of tails, the pants far too short, revealing his white socks.

LINDSAY

I know you think there's no passion in
me, but there is passion in this music.

The needle drops and Sinatra's "Strangers in the Night"
begins, in all its melodrama.

Lindsay looks at Tyson. Tyson is holding back a smile.
They join hands and begin to waltz around the huge room.
Tyson picks up the open bottle of champagne and drinks it
from the bottle. Lindsay does the same. Both spinning
and whirling to the enchanting music.

INT. LINDSAY'S LIVING ROOM - NEXT MORNING

The sound of scratching.

Tyson is asleep, still dressed in the tails. Several empty
champagne bottles are on the floor next to his head.

Lindsay is curled up on the couch, also still dressed in her
gown. Slowly her eyes open. She looks up at:

Tyson, who slowly raises his head. He lets it drop, hitting
the wooden floor with a thud.

Lindsay gets up and opens the door to the kitchen, letting Teenie and Weenie in.

Teenie goes over to Tyson and begins licking his forehead.

TYSON

Lindsay!

Lindsay comes in from the kitchen and sees the dog still licking Tyson's head.

LINDSAY

Yeah?

TYSON

Two favors. You have to do them now! I did the dancing shit. One, make coffee, pots and pots of coffee--ground, instant, all you got. And then tea. And then Coke...and Pepsi. I want every milligram of caffeine in this house in my bloodstream. And then there's something else you got to do for me, something I need, something to release me. You got it?

TIGHT on Lindsay, worried.

INT. BIG JOHN'S SPORTING GOODS STORE - A LITTLE LATER

Lindsay is confused. In her hand is a big shiny orange basketball. She is looking up at:

A long row of basketball backboards in every shape and price range available.

INT. LINDSAY'S LIVING ROOM

TIGHT on Tyson's hands securing the backboard to the wall. Lindsay is standing in the kitchen doorway watching, still confused.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Tyson dribbles and then is up and shoots. SWISH. A perfect shot. He is dressed in a new pair of trunks that Lindsay bought him, his chest bare. He dribbles again, his form perfect. He spins around an imaginary person and lays the ball into the basket.

Lindsay sits on the floor watching, fascinated.

Tyson's playing becomes faster, reckless, sweat pouring off his body. He grunts as he plays, somehow exorcising some evil from his body. His face is red, his body out of control. Pure instinct, and still the shots are falling into the basket.

Lindsay is beginning to breathe heavily, her eyes wide and afraid. And yet she is turned on. She watches:

Tyson's leg muscles, glistening and taut, working, absorbing shock, moving and bouncing to a rhythm that his whole body is synced to--his shoulders, his neck, his lats. His eyes are bright blue and angry.

Lindsay is rocking to the rhythm of the banging ball, one of her hands unconsciously running over her own thigh. She can't hold on any more. She moves to him, is up and onto his back, running her hand over his sweaty skin. He turns to her and kisses her. He releases her skirt.

His hands slip between her underwear and the smooth skin of her ass. He lowers her onto the floor.

She pulls down his shorts, her toes pushing them over his feet. She is wild for the first time, releasing herself to her own needs.

They make love.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lindsay and Tyson lie between two comforters in the middle of the room.

TYSON

I was thrown out of Emory 'cause I got into a fight with a professor, Dick Bow, 'cause I called F. Scott Fitzgerald a fag. He slapped me, and I accidentally poked his eye out. Turned out he was gay. Just can't put a hillbilly in society and expect him to fit.

LINDSAY

What about your family?

Tyson laughs.

TYSON

I know after people have sex they talk and do the bullshit, but my family is not polite conversation.

LINDSAY

Come on.

Long pause.

TYSON

Lindsay...my brother is also my nephew. That's the kind of world it is... It's remote.

Pause.

TYSON

Like I said, it's not polite conversation.

Pause.

TYSON

When I got the kids' books published and then my novel, it was like there really was this tiny pinprick of light at the end of the tunnel. And then Devin Lawler starts writing me letters inviting me to Amherst. Escape the mountain, escape the South itself.

LINDSAY

Devin was writing to you? Why?

TYSON

He liked my work. The guy was really into the novels.

LINDSAY

He said he didn't meet you until you were a student at the university.

TYSON

Yeah, I know. The asshole won't even admit he likes my work now that he thinks I killed his wife.

This means something to Lindsay.

INT. COURTROOM - NEXT DAY

Hillel is questioning Beverly Norvin.

NORVIN

They were absolutely not having an affair.

HILLEL

Were you attracted to Tyson?

NORVIN

He used to stand around without his shirt doing rope tricks. He was trying to turn us on.

HILLEL

Were you turned on?

NORVIN

I don't go for pool boys and neither did Gilda.

HILLEL

What about Devin Lawler? Did you go for him?

NORVIN

Enough to kill his wife?

She is smiling.

HILLEL

I never mentioned killing his wife.

NORVIN

I never had an affair with Devin.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Quinn has IRVING SEGAL on the stand.

QUINN

You publish Mr. Skeet's work?

SEGAL

My company does.

QUINN

I'm going to read to you, and you tell me if this is Mr. Skeet's work.

TIGHT on Hillel whispering to Tyson.

HILLEL

Talk to me, goddammit. What is he doing?

Quinn reads from a book.

QUINN

"Frazier held the girl's throat in his hand, her fist wildly crashing against his eyes and face. He began pulling her trachea apart from the rest of her throat."

HILLEL

Objection! This is fiction. We are here to deal with facts.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Overruled.

HILLEL

On what grounds?

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Overruled.

HILLEL

Because my client has written about a murder, he can be convicted of it?

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Once more and it's contempt.

Lindsay's eyes turn away from the argument and focus on Devin Lawler, whose fat, soft hands are nervously balling up a piece of Kleenex.

QUINN

(continuing to read)

"Frazier remembered his teenage thoughts of needing to kill another human...one time... simply to know the feeling, to truly be a man by a definitive show of power, the power to destroy a life equal to his own."

(to Segal)

Was this written by Tyson Skeet?

SEGAL

Yes.

Quinn faces the jury and then thoughtfully, not reading but from memory:

QUINN

"Needing to kill another human...one time...simply to know the feeling, to truly be a man by a definitive show of power, the power to destroy a life equal to his own."

(pause)

Your Honor, the prosecution rests.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Lindsay walks past several of the girls who usually mock her. All notice the change in Lindsay.

INT. LIBRARY - LATER

Lindsay is at the computer, her hands working quickly.

TIGHT on the screen. The name "DEVIN LAWLER" comes up in bright green letters.

Lindsay hits a key, and we find out that Lawler has three overdue books.

Lindsay types "LIST ALL PERIODICALS SINCE 1984."

After a beat, the screen is filled with a list.

She types "PRINT."

The printer begins spewing out pages and pages of paper--a very long list of periodicals Devin has taken from the library.

Lindsay is running through the library.

Lindsay is at the microfilm viewer reading what Devin took out.

The computer list is next to her. All the first entries have been crossed out.

INT. LIBRARY - LATER

The library is closed. Lindsay sits surrounded by stacks of magazines, several cups of coffee around her.

TIGHT on the magazine Lindsay is reading--a list of book reviews, one of them reviewing Tyson's book.

INT. BRIDGET'S APARTMENT - FOUR O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

Bridget answers the door, half asleep. Lindsay bursts in, her hand filled with Xeroxes.

LINDSAY

Bridget, I'm sorry. I need your help.

BRIDGET

What's the matter?

LINDSAY

I'm looking into this case, and you know what I found out? Devin Lawler says he met Tyson when he came here. I found out that this guy was obsessed with Tyson's writing a year before he came to school here. Obsessed. He read every little piece of criticism and biographical material ever put out on Tyson.

BRIDGET

What are you saying?

LINDSAY

I'm not sure. But he's lying.
Devin Lawler is lying.

BRIDGET

Wouldn't this guy's own lawyer
do this?

LINDSAY

I think Tyson doesn't care. He's
resigned to the fact that he's
going to prison. But, look, what
I need you to do is get Edna
Glickman to help me. I need to get
into the records in the Admissions
Department.

BRIDGET

You're being neurotic.

LINDSAY

No, I'm not.

INT. LINDSAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Tyson is on top of Lindsay, violently making love to her,
pounding into her. He screams like an animal, his body red,
shaking back and forth.

His hands run up her neck. She stiffens.

TYSON

If you want to, go ahead...scream.
Scream!

Lindsay starts to scream. It's weak at first and then
starts to happen.

TYSON

Scream!

She does, her whole body shaking with an orgasm. Tyson is
suddenly off her. Both lie in the dark, naked, desperately
trying to catch their breath.

INT. LINDSAY'S HOUSE, ATTIC

Tyson sits on an old trunk, smoking a joint. He is naked.
Lindsay is running her hand over a rack of clothes, old
dresses from the fifties.

LINDSAY

He bought them all for her. I never realized how she broke his heart.

TYSON

What did he do to her?

LINDSAY

He did let her be what she was...she was very passionate...wild.

TYSON

What's her name?

LINDSAY

Desma... It's my name, my middle name.

TYSON

I like that. What is that?

LINDSAY

It's Greek. My father met her in Greece when he was in the Navy. He brought her here...and she just kinda suffocated.

TYSON

Can I call you that sometimes...Desma?

LINDSAY

It means having a bond with the truth.

Pause.

INT. BAR - THE NEXT NIGHT

Lindsay, Bridget and EDNA, a short, tough-looking, boisterous woman, are all drunk and laughing.

LINDSAY

So will you do it?

The mood sobers a little. Edna is judging Lindsay.

LINDSAY

I'll give you a hundred dollars.

Edna bursts out laughing.

EDNA

Shit, you don't have to give me a hundred dollars. I'll do it just to fuck 'em.

INT. ADMISSIONS DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

Edna opens the door with her key. All three women enter giggling. They bump into something in the dark.

INT. ADMISSIONS DEPARTMENT - LATER

Edna is asleep in the corner. Lindsay, completely sober, has several cardboard file boxes on the floor. Lindsay finds the file she wants and reads it.

BRIDGET

What's it say?

LINDSAY

Devin wrote several letters urging the Board to invite Tyson to attend graduate school here.

BRIDGET

What are you saying?

LINDSAY

What if Devin found in Tyson's writing, and in his life, a person that he could frame...a person he could make so guilty looking, a person who wouldn't really have the facility to defend himself well.

BRIDGET

Lindsay, did you ever see the show "Fantasy Island"?

LINDSAY

I'm not saying Devin knew he could do it. It was a plan that could work...and did work. Only it took two years to orchestrate all the elements of that day. And if it didn't happen, no harm done. All he's done is invite a new writer to the school.

BRIDGET

Why are you so desperate to save this man?

INT. LINDSAY'S HOUSE - LATE AT NIGHT

Lindsay comes in the front door. She walks into the dark living room. Tyson is in a chair staring out the window. She can't see his face.

LINDSAY

Tyson?

She walks closer. She reaches out and touches him.

TYSON

Get away from me.

She puts her arms around him. He violently pushes her away. She falls back onto the floor. They stare at each other.

TYSON

When I met you, there was nothing I cared about. I could have cut off my own hand and been drinking a beer an hour later when the bleeding stopped. All I wanted was to seduce you and fuck with you and scare you...and hurt you.

Tears well up in Tyson's eyes and pour down his face. He begins to weep hard.

TYSON

And you made me care. You made me want to live. And I can't live 'cause I'm going to jail... I don't want to go to jail. I just want to be with you.

She goes to him and holds him. He continues to weep.

LINDSAY

I know you're innocent, and I'm going to prove it. I promise, baby.

INT. COURTROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Hillel has DR. EDWARD HAFT, the county coroner, on the stand.

HILLEL

You are the regular county coroner?

DR. HAFT

Yes, for the last thirteen years.

HILLEL

To get to the most critical issue, when did Gilda Lawler die?

DR. HAFT

Between twelve-thirty and one o'clock. I saw the body at four. There is no way that she could have been dead less than an hour, and any testimony to the contrary is absurd.

HILLEL

Where did you go to school?

DR. HAFT

Harvard.

INT. LIBRARY

Lindsay has several law journals out, with articles by Josh Hillel. She is reading them intently.

INT. LINDSAY'S BEDROOM

Lindsay is under the covers, watching Tyson pass back and forth as he dresses.

LINDSAY

I read up on Josh Hillel. He's a good lawyer.

Tyson just looks at Lindsay, now for the first time colder.

LINDSAY

You should be very glad that Pinky helped you get him.

TYSON

You want to know what Pinky does? He goes to Atlantic City and buys seventeen-year-old whores.

This hurts Lindsay.

LINDSAY

I would like you to get some evidence to Hillel.

TYSON

Why? 'Cause you're getting laid for the first time in your life, and you don't want to lose it?

LINDSAY

'Cause I believe you're innocent.

TYSON

Convict me, Lindsay. I'll kill myself before I leave the courtroom cell. As a matter of fact, I want to talk to you about doing some of your famous research about what the best available poison is. I think that poison is the best...

Lindsay breaks down into tears.

Tyson stops and watches her sob.

EXT. PARKING LOT, CRIMINAL COURTHOUSE

Lindsay watches Hillel get out of his car and head up the steps that lead into the huge building.

She gets out of her Oldsmobile and goes by Hillel's Mercedes. The window is down about an inch. She moves to the vehicle and jams a small manila envelope into the window, then heads over to the courthouse, her eyes wildly darting around her to see if she was watched.

INT. COURTROOM

Lindsay is the last juror to arrive. Hillel takes notice of this, although it means nothing to him at this point.

INT. UPSTAIRS OF THE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

Hillel slams the door just moments after Tyson is in the room.

HILLEL

Either you're stupid or insane. Why won't you help me? Can your own life be that unprecious to you?

Tyson smiles at Hillel.

HILLEL

Sit down! Over ninety-nine percent of the cases that reach trial, the defendant is guilty. I've gotten guilty men off, but I have never had an innocent man convicted and I don't intend to. There's going to be a push for the death penalty in this case...a big push! I need to know if you are innocent.

Tyson looks at him.

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

TIGHT on a box of "No-Doze."

Lindsay sits among the microfilm machines, wired, her eyes wide.

On the screen is a blurred newspaper picture of a couple getting married. The caption reads: "GILDA JENKINS FROM NORTH HAMPTON WEDS DEVIN LAWLER FROM BRONX, NEW YORK. THE COUPLE WILL BE SPENDING THEIR HONEYMOON IN PARIS AND THEN RETURN TO NORTH HAMPTON TO FINISH THEIR STUDIES."

INT. LIBRARY - LATER

Lindsay shakes three more "No-Doze" out of the box, puts them into her mouth and finishes the last sips of Coke.

On the screen, a picture of several men gathered around a woman at a groundbreaking. The caption: "WILHEMINA JENKINS DONATES ONE AND A HALF MILLION DOLLARS TO BEGIN WORK ON SMITH'S NEW AQUATIC CENTER."

INT. LIBRARY - THE NEXT MORNING

Several students are around.

The sun is shining through the window in the background.

Lindsay, almost catatonic, sits in front of the microfilm machine.

On the screen is an obituary: "WILHEMINA JENKINS, 81, DIES IN A SCUBA DIVING ACCIDENT. SHE IS SURVIVED BY HER ONLY DAUGHTER, GILDA LAWLER....," etc.

LINDSAY

Who scuba dives when they're
eighty-one?

And then in a whisper.

LINDSAY

Devin and Gilda killed her mother
for the money...and then Devin
killed Gilda.

INT. COURTROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Lindsay is strung out, her eyes fire red, her skin blotchy.

Hillel has a college student on the stand.

HILLEL

Did Tyson Skeet play frisbee from one until three-fifteen?

COLLEGE STUDENT

Yes, he did.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Hillel has another student on the stand.

COLLEGE STUDENT

Yes, he was playing frisbee with us for about two-and-a-half hours.

And another student.

COLLEGE STUDENT

Yeah, he was there the whole time.

INT. COURTROOM

A thin, masculine-looking woman college professor is on the stand.

WOMAN PROFESSOR

He assisted in teaching my class that day from eleven to one.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Devin Lawler is on the stand. Hillel is standing only a foot in front of the witness box.

HILLEL

I apologize for having you return to the stand. (beat) Where were you between noon and two o'clock on the day your wife was murdered?

QUINN

Objection! Mr. Lawler isn't on trial here.

HILLEL

Your Honor, I wasn't making an accusation. I just want to show the jury that any number of people could have killed Mrs. Lawler.

DEVIN

I'll answer the question...

QUINN

I would like to have a word with my--

DEVIN

I was in class from eleven until five. The police asked me that question. There's nothing to hide.

TIGHT on Charles Keene, who suddenly takes an interest in Devin's statement.

INT. UPSTAIRS ROOM IN CRIMINAL COURTS HOUSE BUILDING

Hillel is very excited.

HILLEL

We got a real chance here. But you're going to have to go on the stand. I don't think that Quinn will be able to hurt you on the cross-examination. The jury needs to see what kind of a person you are. You can't just be a name. But you're going to have to tell the truth, about everything.

TYSON

Tell me very honestly. Do I really have a chance to win?

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Lindsay drops another package of evidence in a half-opened window of Hillel's car.

TIGHT on the package: in cut-out, pasted-on letters it reads "DEVIN'S MOTIVE."

TIGHT on the court building, the shadow of a figure watching, Lindsay's silhouette leaving the evidence.

Lindsay begins to move away from the car.

The dark figure begins walking towards Lindsay.

Lindsay, hearing the footsteps and too frightened to look up, puts up the hood on her windbreaker. She comes up to her Oldsmobile and decides to pass it so she can't be connected with a license plate.

TIGHT on the feet of the shadowy figure, with its slender walking stick.

HILLEL

Please stop. I can't run, and I
would like to not chase you.

Lindsay freezes, then in a burst pulls off her heels and starts running.

Hillel, who still doesn't know her identity, begins to move after her. He is too weak to make it and goes back to his car.

Lindsay cuts onto the empty main street of town.

Hillel pulls out of the lot and is after her.

Lindsay slips between two parked cars. She waits, desperately trying to keep her deep breathing quiet. She's not used to this kind of pressure. She looks down at her feet, which are badly cut.

Hillel squints over the windshield, staring between the parked cars, looking for Lindsay.

Lindsay covers her head with her hands in fear. She hears the motor of the approaching car.

Hillel opens the glove compartment and takes out a flashlight. He shines it inbetween the vehicles.

Lindsay sees the tires of Hillel's car pull up in front of her. The light flashes across her. She is up and running along the sidewalk.

Hillel cruises down the street next to her. He is about to get a good look at her when:

Lindsay cuts into an alley.

Hillel brakes, reverses and heads into the alley. He turns the corner, and comes face-to-face with a brick wall. He brakes. The car bumper crashes into the wall with a thud.

Hillel sees Lindsay's silhouette slipping away down a two-foot-wide passageway.

INT. PARKING LOT

Lindsay runs to her car, looking around. There is no one in sight. She gets in, turns the key. It doesn't start. She tries again, the engine turning over but not kicking in. She is breathing out of control, hyperventilating. She turns the ignition again, frantically. The car starts. Lindsay backs out, pulls out of the lot and is off into the night.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

The Oldsmobile comes hurtling across the steel bridge near Lindsay's house.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Lindsay is speeding along the highway to her house. The pressure is too much. She begins to weep.

EXT. LINDSAY'S HOME

The Oldsmobile comes to a stop, the back end sliding. Lindsay is out of the car.

INT. LINDSAY'S HOUSE

She opens the door.

LINDSAY

Tyson!

No answer. And then quieter,

LINDSAY

Tyson...

INT. UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

Lindsay turns on the light, and there is Tyson sitting on the bed. He is hiding something near his leg, only she doesn't notice yet. Lindsay is still shaken.

LINDSAY

I was followed by Hillel. He could have seen me...

She notices that Tyson is hiding something.

LINDSAY

What do you have there?

Tyson slowly brings out the silver Junior Colt .22.

LINDSAY

What are you doing with that?

TYSON

When I get sentenced, I want it.
I'm going to take Devin with me.

LINDSAY
You're not going to jail. I'm not
going to vote guilty...

TYSON
You hang the jury, and I'll be
retried and convicted.

She goes to him.

LINDSAY
I'll get more evidence. You're
not...

He violently pushes her away and is out of the room.
Lindsay is left on the floor.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Tyson comes down the stairs and heads to the back door in the
kitchen. Lindsay is behind him.

LINDSAY
I just want to hold you. Don't
push me away...

She grabs him. He shakes her off.

The phone suddenly rings. Lindsay picks up the receiver and
hears the loud sobs of Bridget.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. PHONE BOOTH OUTSIDE OF EDDIE'S

BRIDGET
Lindsay! Brian left me, in
front of all our friends.

Lindsay explodes.

LINDSAY
Damn it, Bridget. Not now.

BRIDGET
But I need you...

LINDSAY
I can't...not now.

Lindsay slams down the phone. And then to Tyson.

LINDSAY

Please let me try...

EXT. LIBRARY - LATER THAT NIGHT

Lindsay, emotionally and physically empty, squints up at the monstrous building.

INT. LIBRARY

Lindsay is in front of the computer. The huge room on the main floor is deserted.

TIGHT on the screen as she types "LIST ALL CHECK-OUTS: DEVIN LAWLER."

TIGHT on the printer spewing out a long list.

INT. LIBRARY STACKS - LATER

Lindsay is pushing a wheelbarrow-like book cart through the maze of book shelves. She stops, looks at her list and then takes a book from the shelf.

INT. LIBRARY - MAIN FLOOR

Lindsay is among hundreds of books. She is separating them into piles.

TIGHT on one stack of books, the titles telling the whole story: "THE PERFECT ASSASSINATION;" "UNSOLVED MURDERS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY;" "THE PHILOSOPHY OF KILLING, AN EXAMINATION OF THE MEN WHO KILL, FROM HITLER TO DEER HUNTERS."

Lindsay stares at the pile of nearly a hundred books.

She turns and looks at another pile, twice as high as the first. All are fiction: "MURDER IN SPAIN," "MURDER IN RIO," "THE BOARDWALK KILLER." And the authors are Agatha Christie to Dick Tracey comics. Hundreds and hundreds of books, paperback to hard cover, dime novels to best sellers.

Lindsay's eyes have dark crescents under them. Her skin is grey and blotchy. She sits down at the table and takes one of the books off the nonfiction pile, opens the cover and begins reading, her fingers quickly running over the first page of the book.

INT. LIBRARY - EARLY MORNING

The sun is coming in the windows. The pile of books is now noticeably smaller. Lindsay looks up, and walking towards her is Bridget.

Lindsay smiles, a smile of relief. But Bridget completely emotionless, walks by Lindsay silently. Lindsay is crushed, but remembers she must keep going and turns back to the reading.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The room is filled. The entire back row is standing-room only. Several reporters either whisper into hand-held pocket tape recorders or scribble notes onto a small notepad.

INT. DELIBERATION ROOM

Lindsay is standing frozen in front of the coffee machine, taking cup after cup. She is still dressed in her clothes from the night before. And then from across the room:

WITHER

Lindsay, please, a cup for me.

Lindsay looks at Sadie, who is watching. Lindsay can't be bothered with this now. She pours the coffee, then mindlessly brings the styrofoam cup over to Wither.

INT. COURTROOM

The jury is settled. Judge Tristram is there, looking particularly mean.

HILLEL

The defense calls Tyson Skeet.

Tyson walks up and takes the stand. He places his hand on the Bible.

BAILIFF

Do you swear to tell the whole
truth and nothing but the truth,
so help you God.

TYSON

I do.

Tyson looks like he is being choked in the suit and tie, his blue eyes not shining at all.

HILLEL

I will go into a little history about you, but first I would like to ask you several basic questions. Were you having an affair with Gilda Lawler?

TYSON

Yes.

TIGHT on Lindsay. She always knew this was probably the case but to have Tyson say it is jarring.

HILLEL

What was the nature of this relationship?

TYSON

It was very odd. Within the first hour I was working for her, it was apparent that she wanted to have sex with me. And we did. The first day.

TIGHT on Devin's sad, frail face, not reacting.

TYSON

It was really absurd. She wanted sex constantly, three or four times every single day.

HILLEL

Go on.

TYSON

Then I realized that there were other men, not just me. Several others. It was clear that Devin knew. It seemed that he was having affairs as well, and it was just something that each of them tolerated.

HILLEL

Their relationship seemed very odd.

TYSON

I began to suspect that Devin was in the house, watching us.

HILLEL

You could have just been frightened.

TYSON

No, not that he was going to catch us, but that he was doing it for pleasure.

HILLEL

That day, the day that Mrs. Lawler was killed, did you sleep with her?

TYSON

At about ten-thirty. She said I had to do it to her every morning. It helped her wake up. And then I went to the class that I was an assistant teacher in, and then I played frisbee.

HILLEL

Marshall Lawler said he saw you leave the house at three.

TYSON

I wasn't there. The game let out around then. There were twenty other guys wearing a uniform same as mine at that time.

HILLEL

Even if you were there, when Marshall said he saw you, the woman would have been long dead. You couldn't have killed her. (pause) Isn't it true that Devin Lawler wrote you for over a year, asking you to come to Amherst? And that he did not run an ad in the newspaper to find you? You were his find...a budding new literary talent, untrained, perfect for his purposes.

Tyson is silent. He wants to go to Lindsay. He looks at her.

HILLEL

You were perfect for his purposes?

TYSON

Yes.

Lindsay cannot stop herself from looking into Tyson's eyes. Finally she turns away and looks face to face with:

Assistant district attorney Joseph Kilinsky, whose grey, cold eyes seem to cut into her. He must know.

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

Quinn is having his shot and is pushing Tyson as hard as he can.

QUINN

You came back to the house and
killed Gilda.

TYSON

No.

QUINN

You killed her because you wanted
her to leave Devin, and she wouldn't.

TYSON

No...

Tyson looks like he might cry.

QUINN

And this affair was your doing.
You didn't care that the man that
was your greatest fan and who
wanted to help you...you stabbed
him in the back.

TYSON

He was using--

QUINN

Come on, Mr. Skeet. You said
yourself you slept with Gilda Lawler
the first day that you met her.

Tyson glances over at Lindsay.

TIGHT on Hillel, watching closely.

QUINN

Let the record show that the
witness refuses to answer.

INT. LIBRARY

Lindsay is alone in one of the conference rooms. She is
reading a small dime novel paperback book with a fifties
cartoonish drawing on the cover, appropriately named "Murder
on Campus." Her face turns from passive to interested.
She's found something.

And then in a whisper, reading from the book:

LINDSAY

The Professor returned home in
the ten-minute interval between
classes, the precision of the
crime excited him...

INT. LIBRARY, COMPUTER ROOM

Lindsay is at her computer.

She types on the screen: "TEACHING SCHEDULES, SEMESTER TWO,
1987, LAWLER, DEVIN, J."

The screen goes blank, and then after a moment Devin's
schedule gradually appears on the screen.

Lindsay's finger runs down the times of the classes: 12:00
to 12:50, 1:00 to 1:50.

INT. LIBRARY, LOBBY

Lindsay comes running toward the front door, "Murder on
Campus" in hand. She runs past the book detectors and
crashes into a small aluminum standing ashtray. She bends
over in pain.

LINDSAY

Goddam this fucking thing.

Several people stare at her. Several of the girls who
usually make fun of her stare in disbelief at what she said.

Lindsay is embarrassed, then notices something. She walks
back to the book detector and holds the copy of "Murder on
Campus" in front of it. There's no alarm. She looks at the
book.

INT. BIKE SHOP

Lindsay is buying a bicycle.

EXT. AMHERST CAMPUS

Lindsay is on the bicycle in front of one of the school
buildings. She looks at her watch and then begins peddling.

EXT. NORTH HAMPTON

Lindsay is making her way through the suburban streets, the
bike badly wobbling.

EXT. LAWLER HOME

Lindsay brakes the bike with a skid and looks at her watch.

LINDSAY

She looks up and is face to face with Hillel.

She doesn't know what to do. She sees a stopwatch in Hillel's hand. He's been doing the same thing as she has.

Hillel turns away from her, gets into his car and drives away.

EXT. DOWNTOWN NORTH HAMPTON

Lindsay is on the phone with an operator.

LINDSAY

Yes, it's very important. Josh Hillel. Josh Hillel. Room three-twelve.

OPERATOR

Thank you.

Pause.

OPERATOR

That's four-oh-four, for Mr. Hillel.

She got what she wanted.

LINDSAY

Four-oh-four. Whatever. Just connect me.

The phone begins to ring. Lindsay hangs up.

EXT. NORTH HAMPTON HOTEL

A huge building that looks more like a state capital than a hotel.

Lindsay walks through the sparkling white-pillared door.

INT. HOTEL

Lindsay heads past the concierge.

INT. HOTEL, UPSTAIRS

Lindsay walks down the hall, looking at the numbers on the door. She spots 404.

She takes out the copy of "Murder on Campus" and slides it under the door.

INT. NORTH HAMPTON HOTEL - LATE NIGHT

Hillel opens the door to his room. He bends down and finds "Murder on Campus." He looks at it over his bifocals.

The red light on the phone is blinking. Hillel picks up the receiver.

HILLEL

Four-oh-four. My messages, please.

OPERATOR

There's one message here from someone called "your friend"...It says, "Read page sixty. It's where he got the idea, and the method." Is that right?

HILLEL

Yes. What else does it say?

OPERATOR

"Mr. L. must have kept the original copy. This is not a library copy. Find the person with the library copy, and you have your man."

HILLEL

Is that it?

OPERATOR

Yes.

HILLEL

Was it a man or a woman who called.

OPERATOR

I'm not sure. I didn't take the message. Would you like me to find out?

HILLEL

No, thank you.

INT. COURTROOM

As always, the place is packed and hot.

Hillel and Quinn come out from Judge Tristram's chambers. Quinn is mighty pissed off. He goes over to Devin and whispers into his ear. Devin doesn't seem to care.

Lindsay watches intently and knows something is wrong. Suddenly she realizes that Hillel is looking right at her. Instinctively she turns away.

BAILIFF

The Honorable Judge Julia Tristram
presiding.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Mr. Hillel, call your first witness.

HILLEL

The defense calls Mr. Charles E.
Keene.

Keene sheepishly walks from the back of the room, through
the small wooden swinging doors that lead to the Judge's
bench. He sits in the witness chair.

BAILIFF

Do you swear to tell the whole
truth and nothing but the truth,
so help you God?

KEENE

Yes.

HILLEL

Mr. Keene, let's get to the point.
It has been stated in a number of
testimonies by Devin Lawler that
he was in class the entire day
that his wife was killed. He also
gave that report to the police.
Is that true?

KEENE

(quietly)

No...

HILLEL

Mr. Keene, you are here to tell
the truth. Please tell it with
significant volume.

KEENE

No. I drove him back to his house
at ten to two. He had forgotten
some tests.

HILLEL

Are you good friends with Mr. Lawler?

KEENE

Very close friends.

HILLEL

Thank you.

Lindsay is smiling.

Quinn gets up.

QUINN

Mr. Keene, how long was Mr.
Lawler in the house?

KEENE

Not more than thirty seconds.

QUINN

Thank you.

HILLEL

Your honor, in light of this new
evidence, I would like to
call Devin Lawler to the stand.

QUINN

Objection...

JUDGE TRISTRAM

That's silly, Mr. Quinn.
(to Hillel)
Call him.

INT. COURTROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Devin is on the stand. Hillel leans on the wooden railing
in front of him.

HILLEL

Why did you lie and say for the
last six months since your wife's
death that you never returned to
the house?

DEVIN

Very honestly, I had forgotten
until today.

Lindsay is looking at Tyson. He is looking back at her, a
little glint of hope in his eyes for the first time.

Lindsay looks down at her own hand, which rests on the
railing in front of her. Her fist is formed into a subtle
thumbs-up sign.

HILLEL

You forgot that you were at the
scene of the crime approximately
when the murder could have taken
place? I have a copy of the
police report right here.

Hillel opens his coat and takes out the police report, but what he really does it let Devin see that he has the false library copy of "Murder on Campus" in his pocket.

Devin sees it. His eyes meet Hillel's. For the first time he is scared.

DEVIN

You don't have to read it. I said I hadn't returned. I simply forgot. You can believe it or disbelieve it.

The reporters in the back of the room are all madly scribbling on their pads.

HILLEL

Didn't you go home and kill your wife yourself.

QUINN

Objection!

DEVIN

I'll answer it! If you think that I chased my wife around the house, tied her up and slit her throat all in thirty seconds, then you are building a case weaker than the cheapest dime novel.

There is a wave of laughter from the gallery.

Hillel knows he's lost this battle.

HILLEL

Would you at least agree that it would be difficult to believe any of your testimony given your lapse of memory on this most important issue.

DEVIN

The jury can believe what they want.

INT. LINDSAY'S HOME - LATE AT NIGHT

Tyson and Lindsay are both in bed, naked. Lindsay is on top of Tyson. They are looking into each other's eyes.

TYSON

This could be the last time.

LINDSAY

I won't allow a conviction.

TYSON

If it's eleven to one, I want you
not to hang the jury. Convict me.

LINDSAY

No.

TYSON

Listen to me. It'll just keep going
on and on. They'll retry it, and
they'll get me in the next round.
It's time for me to have some peace.

LINDSAY

I don't want to hear this.

TYSON

Then make love to me, Desma, please.

Lindsay begins to move on Tyson, their eyes never leaving
each other's.

INT. COURTROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Hillel is in front of the jury.

HILLEL

. What I told you in the beginning
still holds true. Tyson was
somewhere else during the time when
the murder could have taken place.
You'll hear from the Judge about
reasonable doubt. Well, this is not
within reasonable doubt. In fact,
it's not within any doubt at all!
There is no doubt that Gilda was
killed between twelve-thirty and
two-thirty. And there is no doubt
that Tyson was somewhere else at
the time.

INT. COURTROOM

QUINN

The only doubt that cannot be
doubted is if you see it yourself.
And since that cannot happen, we
must use the evidence presented to
us to make our decision. As the
Judge will tell you, you can assume.
You can make the reasonable jump in
logic to say that if Tyson's blood
type was found under the nails of

(CONTINUED)

QUINN (Cont'd)

the victim, he was involved in a violent altercation with her. He was having an affair with the victim, which gives us a motive. He was seen running away! Aside from a movie of Tyson Skeet killing Gilda Lawler, how much more evidence do you need? You can bring a conviction. You have a moral responsibility. Don't you dare let a murderer walk. Make the justice system work for once. Make it work for the safety of others and make it work for the Lawler family. Convict Tyson Skeet!

INT. COURTROOM - LATER

JUDGE TRISTRAM

You can convict somebody by circumstantial evidence. For example, if you go home and go to sleep, and the next morning you wake up and there is snow all over, you can safely and reasonably assumed that it snowed. If there are footprints in that snow, you can assume that somebody walked there... And, finally, above all, take your time.

Judge Tristram turns to the court.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

As a precaution, Mr. Skeet's bail will be revoked.

HILLEL

Objection!

Lindsay looks at Tyson, for the first time realizing that they could be kept apart.

HILLEL

This gives the jury the assumption that my client is guilty.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Overruled. Court is adjourned until the jury has reached its verdict.

The courtroom erupts, reporters pushing towards Devin.

REPORTER

Would you witness the execution if Skeet is convicted?

DEVIN

Shut up.

Devin sees Keene, who looks away. He goes to him and puts his arm around him.

DEVIN

Help me get out of here, would you?

Devin, flanked by Keene and Beverly Norvin, fight their way out of the courtroom.

For the first time, Tyson is being handcuffed and led into a cell that, ironically, shares a wall with the deliberation room. He doesn't care any more. He stares openly at Lindsay, their separation hitting him hard for the first time. Both are pulled away from the other by their court officers.

INT. DELIBERATION ROOM - LATER

Nakin and Wither are arguing with Sadie.

Lindsay is trying to pull herself together.

NAKIN

All we're saying is we want this to go in a quick, efficient manner.

WITHER

I'm going to need some coffee, Lindsay.

Lindsay goes and takes a cup and fills it from the large tarnished dispenser.

SADIE

That's exactly what the Judge told us not to do. We have to take our time.

WITHER

Enough talking, all right? Let's just vote and see if we already have a conviction.

Lindsay places her coffee cup precariously on the edge of the table, in front of Wither.

SADIE

I wasn't done.

WITHER

I'm pushing this forward...

Lindsay's voice suddenly comes out different, strong and angry.

LINDSAY

We have all heard from you for far too long. Mrs. Bucknell will speak.

WITHER

Don't talk to me like--

LINDSAY

She will speak as long as she likes, and you and Mr. Nakin not only will let her but will listen to her.

WITHER

I don't want to get you upset, Lindsay...

Lindsay slams her fist into the table, causing the coffee to topple into Wither's crotch.

WITHER

Jesus Christ! Cold water.

LINDSAY

Ms. Dempster is my name.

Nakin hovers around his friend's crotch, fanning it with some spare coffee filters.

LINDSAY

I believe we should select a foreman. If that's all right with everybody, let's take a vote.

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - DAY

There is a crowd in front of the building. A woman reporter is giving her on-location report into a video camera.

REPORTER

After an eleven-day deliberation in the Gilda Lawler murder case, the jury has reached a verdict.

INT. COURTROOM

Tyson, now in prison clothes with a beard, visibly disturbed by his incarceration, sits next to Hillel.

Judge Tristram bangs on her gavel.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Come to order. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, how say you through your foreman? Is the defendant Tyson Skeet guilty or not guilty of the charge of murder in the first degree?

The foreman stands up, a small plump woman, MRS. KEIFFER. Her hands shake as she reads the small piece of paper she holds.

MRS. KEIFFER

We find Tyson Skeet not guilty of murder in the first degree. We find him not guilty of any charge.

Again another mad rush to the doors, reporters flying out of the room.

Lindsay turns to Tyson, who smiles and begins to breathe easier for the first time.

Devin sits startled, his eyes blinking slowly in disbelief.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Order! Order! I can still hand out contempt charges.

Hillel is in shock. He didn't think he'd get it.

Tyson suddenly realizes the scope of what has just happened. He starts to cry. He turns and hugs Hillel.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Does the state want the jury polled?

QUINN

No.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Then the clerk will enter "not guilty" on all counts against the defendant.

JUDGE TRISTRAM

Thank you all for your time. Your service on this jury is the fabric of our judicial system. You have judged your neighbor fairly and you should feel proud. You may go home.

Several of the jurors are crying. There are tears in Lindsay's eyes.

EXT. COURTROOM

Quinn is trying to get up the stairs to his office.

There are seven or eight reporters following him.

REPORTERS

Will there be charges brought against Mr. Lawler?

QUINN

There will not. It seems even
the press has fallen for the
sensationalist twisting that the
defense presented...

He walks away. All the reporters continue to scream
questions at him.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTHOUSE - LATER

Tyson is getting back his personal property and is being
processed to be released.

He looks up and there is Lindsay in front of him, as well as
Sadie and Mrs. Keiffer. They stand there like a small fan
club, waiting to say hello to him. They approach him.

SADIE

Judge Tristram said we could
say hello to you if we wanted to.

Tyson feels awkward. He doesn't know what to say.

TYSON

Hello.

SADIE

We just wanted to wish you luck.

MRS. KEIFFER

We didn't want to bother you.
You must have a lot to do.

Tyson is staring at Lindsay.

TYSON

I'm sorry. What are your names?

Tyson is finally at ease, his southern lilt coming out, soft
and smooth.

SADIE

Sadie.

MRS. KEIFFER

Leila.

LINDSAY

Lindsay Dempster.

Tyson shakes hands with Lindsay.

TYSON

It's very nice to meet you.

INT. LINDSAY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

On the television, the woman reporter we have seen several times speaks on the Courthouse steps.

REPORTER

In a shocking turn-around, Tyson
Skeet was found innocent by--

Lindsay stops her VCR from recording. She ejects the tape, her interest in collecting gone.

The phone rings. Lindsay picks it up.

LINDSAY

Hello.

TYSON

Come over.

LINDSAY

I don't think it's...

TYSON

It doesn't matter. There's nobody
here. There's nobody watching!

LINDSAY

I can't.

TYSON

Do it!

EXT. PINKY'S HOUSE

Lindsay's car pulls into the driveway. She looks around to see if there is anybody watching.

INT. TYSON'S ROOM

Tyson is standing in the middle of a clean, small upstairs bedroom. There are cartons all over, half packed with books.

TYSON

This is it. This is where I pined
over you, dreamed about being with you.

Pause.

TYSON

Lindsay, let's pack up and get out
of here. We'll go West. Nobody will
know us. We could start a normal life.
I never wanted a normal life.

LINDSAY

I can't leave. Somebody could be following us. We can't take a chance now. Not after all this..

TYSON

I want to be outside with you, breathe fresh air with you, go to a restaurant and a movie. Do you know what I would give to go to a movie with you?

LINDSAY

We can't.

TYSON

Let's go to Boston for a few days! We could be together there. Nobody would know us!

Lindsay looks into Tyson's eyes.

TYSON

Please.

LINDSAY

Okay.

EXT. PINKY'S - NIGHT

Tyson, Lindsay and Pinky are filling Tyson's Barracuda with books, trunks and boxes.

EXT. BOSTON - NIGHT

Lindsay and Tyson are walking along the Harvard Square.

INT. NORTH END ITALIAN RESTAURANT

Lindsay and Tyson are each pulling apart a huge ball of fried calamari.

INT. HOTEL

Lindsay and Tyson are furiously making love under a massive lace canopy.

The room is filled with boxes and suitcases.

INT. AQUARIUM

Tyson and Lindsay are looking at a long, ugly green moray eel.

EXT. BOSTON HARBOR

Lindsay and Tyson reenact the Boston Tea Party by throwing a fake package of tea off the boat.

INT. HOTEL ROOM

Tyson and Lindsay have just had sex. He gets out of bed, his tight body glistening, and goes into the bathroom. The shower is turned on.

The room is a mess. The boxes are opened and their clothes thrown everywhere.

Lindsay gets out of bed, dripping with sweat. She looks through her open suitcase on the floor. She can't find what she wants. Then in a box of Tyson's she sees what she's looking for: a robe. She pulls the balled-up garment out of the box and puts it on.

Then from the bathroom:

TYSON

We should see if the hotel has a ticket service, go see a show.

LINDSAY

Whatever you want.

Lindsay is putting the clothes she took out of the box back in when she sees several books in the bottom of the carton. She looks at them a moment and then freezes. Her skin goes white, her eyes glaze over in disbelief. She slowly reaches into the box and takes out:

A torn, beaten copy of "Murder on Campus." She opens it. There is a white square and a rip from where the library card was taken out.

She riffles through the pages and finds a blue-highlighted paragraph.

She reads in a whisper, in shock.

LINDSAY

The professor returned home in the ten-minute interval between classes. The precision of the crime excited him...

She stands up and awkwardly backs her way to the door. She opens the door and runs out of the room.

She gets half way down the hall and then realizes she's forgotten the keys to the car. She runs back to the room.

She enters the room, her eyes flying around, trying to find the keys to the car. She frantically begins searching through the mess, going through the pockets of Tyson's pants.

The running shower water stops!

She goes through another pair of pants, then sees the keys on the night table. She grabs them and is out the door.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

Lindsay runs through the gaudy lobby barefoot and heads down into the garage. She sees Tyson's car. She tries to get the key into the lock. It's stuck. She tries another door. It opens.

Lindsay gets in and starts the car, slamming it into gear frantically. She turns to back out. The car jerks forward a foot into the cement wall.

Lindsay desperately squints in the dark basement, trying to see the markings to shift the car into reverse.

A hand comes in the open driver's window and grabs Lindsay's shoulder.

Lindsay screams. The car flies into reverse, out of the parking spot.

A parking attendant stands there a moment, dumbfounded.

PARKING ATTENDANT

I was trying to see if you were
all right, lady.

Lindsay's car screeches forward and is up and out of the garage into the daylight.

Lindsay speeds through the Boston streets.

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Lindsay is screaming along the highway, the road black and empty.

Her foot bears down on the gas, harder and harder.

The car starts to skid. She jerks the wheel.

The car spins around and around. Lindsay lets go of the wheel and screams, her hands covering her head. The car comes to a stop. She didn't have it in her to drive fast. After a moment she begins to weep softly, alone on the deserted highway.

EXT. NORTH HAMPTON - LATE AT NIGHT

Lindsay cruises through the town. There's not a soul on the street. She stops in front of the college drugstore, gets out and heads into the small foyer. She buzzes Bridget's intercom.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. BRIDGET'S APARTMENT

Lindsay is yelling into the small microphone.

LINDSAY

Bridget, open up! Please!

Bridget hears Lindsay's voice coming through the small speaker. She stops and considers her options.

LINDSAY

I need you, Bridget, please...
Are you home? Answer!

Bridget stands there and then turns and goes into her bedroom. She shuts the door.

Lindsay stops buzzing and realizes she has no one to turn to.

EXT. BRIDGET'S APARTMENT

She slowly walks back to her car. When she turns and looks at the drug store she's hit with a realization, another piece of the puzzle has fallen into place.

INT. LINDSAY'S HOUSE

She opens the door and runs into the darkness. She picks up the phone and dials.

LINDSAY

Hello...I'd like the number for
Joshua Hillel.

OPERATOR

What city?

LINDSAY

Boston.

OPERATOR

One moment..

And then a voice:

TYSON

Don't do that.

Lindsay jumps away from the phone. Tyson has been sitting in an oversized chair with his back to Lindsay.

TYSON

Please don't do this.

LINDSAY

Would you please leave my house?

TYSON

We have so much. I can't lose you.

LINDSAY

Get out of my house! You bastard!

And then like a little boy.

TYSON

I don't want to go. I miss you.

OPERATOR

I don't find a listing. Could it be in Cambridge?

Pause.

OPERATOR

Miss...

Tyson turns and leaves. He shuts the front door behind him.

LINDSAY

Hello, miss...

LINDSAY

I'm not sure. Could you check?

OPERATOR

Please hold. I'll have to transfer you.

The call-waiting signal interrupts. Lindsay pushes down on the hang-up buttons.

LINDSAY

Hello.

A male voice can be heard on the line.

MALE VOICE

Hello, Miss Lindsay Dempster?

LINDSAY

Yes.

MALE VOICE

This is Joseph Kilinsky. I'm assistant district attorney under Rafferty Quinn. I sat next to Mr. Quinn during the trial.

LINDSAY

Yes?

KILINSKY

It's come to our office's attention this afternoon that you might have had contact with the defendant, Tyson Skeet, during the trial.

Pause.

KILINSKY

Miss Dempster, I'd like you to answer some questions for me first thing tomorrow morning.

Lindsay's eyes are on the shadows under the front door. There is movement there of Tyson's feet.

LINDSAY

Look, okay, I did have contact. I did. But I need a police car now. You see, Tyson and Devin did the murder. They did it together. Tyson tied up Gilda and left her there, and then Devin just walked in and slit her throat when he got the tests.

KILINSKY

Miss Dempster, I'm not exactly sure I understand you.

LINDSAY

It was perfect to make Tyson look like he had to have done it, only give him an alibi that he was somewhere else at the time.

KILINSKY

Are you drunk, Miss Dempster?

Lindsay turns into the kitchen and there at the back window is Tyson, standing, not moving, staring at her

And in his hand is a long, coiled, thick rope.

Lindsay drops the phone and backs out of the kitchen.

Kilinsky's voice continues to come out of the receiver:

KILINSKY

Miss Dempster! Miss Dempster!...
Answer me!

She runs to the front door and opens it.

There in front of her is Devin Lawler, and in his hand is a cellular phone. It's been Devin on the phone the whole time, masquerading as Kilinsky.

DEVIN

Miss Dempster! Miss Dempster!
Who killed Gilda Lawler?

Lindsay can't even scream. She backs away from the front door, and there, behind her, is Tyson, rope in hand.

Devin hangs up the phone.

DEVIN

I needed to find out what you knew.
This was truly a literary battle.
I used literature to research my
methodology. You used it to
uncover me.

He sees the copy of "Murder on Campus."

DEVIN

I never thought that anyone would
equate my crime with the plot of
that silly book. I'd even forgotten
that's where the whole idea originated.

LINDSAY

So I was right?

DEVIN

Yes. Two men did it. One, Tyson,
was made to look undeniably guilty,
and yet he was simply somewhere else
at the time of death. No way a
court could convict him. Shouldn't
have even come to trial. The other,
myself. It always seemed too far-
fetched. How could I kill a woman
in the twenty seconds when I returned
home to pick up my tests, with a
witness sitting in the car outside.

LINDSAY

So Tyson made love to Gilda in the
morning in a sado-masochistic way
and just left her tied up and gagged.

DEVIN

I came home and cut Gilda's exposed throat, then grabbed the pile of tests next to the door.

Devin signals Tyson to move behind Lindsay.

DEVIN

Now with your death it will be a truly perfect crime.

LINDSAY

It wasn't perfect, was it, Tyson? You wanted to stop it. That's why you went back later that afternoon.

DEVIN

I think he went back because he needed to be closer to it, to feel it viscerally. He wanted to experience the death, just like his book.

LINDSAY

Why did you do it, Tyson? Was it an experience? Are you the devil himself, killing people for the fun of it?

TYSON

I did it for the money!

Both Devin and Tyson begin to move closer to Lindsay.

DEVIN

Come on, Tyson. Be honest. Why not? You have a budding literary career. You don't need the money.

(to Lindsay)

Although he does end up getting quite a lot.

They are on her.

LINDSAY

There are others who know.

DEVIN

Who?

LINDSAY

Pinky knows! In order for this to work, it was essential that Tyson get off. Otherwise if he went to jail he could turn on you. So you

(CONTINUED)

LINDSAY (Cont'd)
needed the best lawyer money could
buy. And you needed a go-between
for the money...Pinky. If I'm
dead, he'll know.

Tyson is behind Lindsay. He slides the noose open.

DEVIN
He's an old man, who doesn't
understand what happened.

Tyson is about to slip the noose over her head when Lindsay
bolts down to the basement.

Devin smiles.

DEVIN
It'll be fun. Let's chase her.

Devin is after her, down the steps to the basement, Tyson
right behind him.

INT. BASEMENT

Lindsay squeezes through the window that leads outside. She
is out of control, breathing heavily, whining with fear,
and, as always, running away.

Devin sees her disappear outside. He climbs up after her,
his head through the frame. Suddenly:

Lindsay's fist plows into his face, her keys sticking out
between her knuckles, each embedding itself into Devin's
face. He screams and falls backwards into the dark basement.

EXT. BASEMENT WINDOW

Lindsay runs up to the drive and is about to get into
Tyson's car when she sees the hood ajar and the battery in
the driveway.

She looks at the road. She could run into the night but
they would catch her. Then she looks at the open door to
her own house. She runs inside.

INT. HOUSE

She runs in and hears Devin come upstairs. She picks up an
old porcelain vase from the table and waits for Devin to
walk through the basement door.

But this time his head doesn't come first. Instead his hand grabs hers. She drops the vase, her face inches away from his.

He smiles. She leans into his cheek and bites a chunk of it off. He screams in horror. She spits the piece back at him.

He lets go and Lindsay races up the stairs. Tyson reaches up and grabs her. She falls as he pulls her down the steps. She is wildly kicking him to release her feet, and, then, catching Tyson in the face, she kicks him again and again.

LINDSAY

Bastard!!!

EXT. LINDSAY'S HOUSE, DOG PEN

Teenie and Weenie begin jumping wildly around their pen, hearing Lindsay's screams.

Teenie throws herself against the thick wire.

INT. HOUSE

Lindsay is upstairs, running frantically down the dark hall to her room. She can hear the men coming up the stairs.

She goes to her night table and finds the small nickel-plated Junior Colt .22. Tyson and Devin, both bleeding, are at the door.

TIGHT on the gun muzzle pointing straight at Devin's heart.

He backs out of the room as soon as he sees the weapon.

DEVIN

(to Tyson)

You go. She'll never shoot you.

Tyson looks at Devin, then slowly begins to make his way into the room, until he is face to face with:

Lindsay, who is sweating, not moving, concentrating on her aim.

Tyson takes a step forward.

TIGHT on the hammer. Lindsay clicks it quickly back, the gun ready, a spring-release away from firing.

DEVIN

Keep going. She'll never shoot.
You've given her too much.

Tyson steps forward again, his bright blue eyes never leaving Lindsay's. They seem to be aching for her to pull the trigger.

He's closer. He could grab the gun.

Lindsay's whole body starts to shake.

TIGHT on her finger squeezing the trigger.

Tyson steps closer, the barrel against his stomach.

Lindsay can't do it. She can't kill him. She starts to cry.

LINDSAY

You lying son of a bitch!

Her hand flies up, catching him on the side of the face. She holds onto his face, her fingers, like rodent's, searching for his eyes.

Tyson slaps her. Lindsay screams in rage.

EXT. DOG PEN

In the pen, Teenie and Weenie are going crazy, barking and pacing back and forth in front of the steel fence. Teenie is biting the metal, her gums bleeding.

INT. LINDSAY'S BEDROOM

Lindsay goes nuts, slapping and punching Tyson, who tries to hold her arms. Her screams are harsh and high, the shrill pain of betrayal.

EXT. PEN

Teenie jumps, twisting her body. She is up and over the fence. Weenie tries it. She is up and lands on the top, her back leg scratching wildly to get her over. She makes it, falling to the ground with a thud.

EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE

Teenie is in the open front door, into the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Teenie is flying up the stairs. Lindsay screams louder. The black skin of Teenie's lips is retracted, revealing a wall of canine fangs.

INT. LINDSAY'S BEDROOM

Tyson is on top of Lindsay, trying to control her. Teenie's growls can be heard coming down the hall. Devin steps out of the way because it is clear that Teenie is going after Tyson.

Tyson's eyes widen as Teenie jumps from the door straight to the bed. Tyson tries to block her, but Teenie avoids his arm in mid-air and locks her jaw firmly into Tyson's neck.

The animal twists, pulling Tyson's whole body onto the floor. And then suddenly from nowhere, Weenie is in the room. She grabs Tyson's skull, both dogs fighting wildly to rip Tyson, the snarls and growls fierce and huge, almost lion-like.

Lindsay is screaming.

LINDSAY

Stop!!! Stop!!!!!! Teenie, Weenie.
Get off him.

Lindsay tries to grab Weenie off Tyson, whose body seems to have become limp. Suddenly the dog goes wild and, completely out of control, snaps at Lindsay, then turns back, bent on ripping Tyson apart.

Lindsay is touched from behind almost tenderly by Devin. He slowly leads her out of the bedroom and into the upstairs hall. She screams softly for the dogs to stop. Devin closes the bedroom door. The sound of the animals is now muffled, not as frightening. Lindsay just continues to stare at the shut bedroom door.

Lindsay can't cry. She is just a shell. Devin is behind her. He takes out the long, thin fish knife that he used to kill Gilda.

The muffled sound of the animals frenzy continues.

DEVIN

When you called him the devil, you were very accurate. The thing that makes him the devil is his inability to love. Once he loves, he's just another angel. That's why I picked him, because he couldn't love, especially a spinster librarian like yourself...

He brings the knife to her throat.

In a huge burst the door flies open and Tyson stands there, blood pouring out of several large wounds on his body.

The dogs are behind him, limp, on the floor.

TYSON

That's a lie.

A huge explosion. Tyson has fired the bullet, hitting Devin square in the eyes.

DEVIN

My eyes. My God, my eyes--

Tyson is limping down the hall towards Devin. He fires again. Devin's body contorts as the bullet enters him.

TIGHT on Tyson's face. bleak, empty, and yet enraged. He fires again and again, Devin's body violently jerking with the impact of the bullets.

Silence.

TYSON

That's a lie.

Lindsay looks at Tyson, who sinks to the floor, the .22 still in his hand.

Their eyes meet, saying it all.

Lindsay starts to move towards Tyson. He stops her.

TYSON

Call the police.

Lindsay hesitates. Tyson looks at her, at peace, calm. He tries to smile, but it's weak, sad.

TYSON

Desma...call them.

Lindsay sees he's losing blood fast and runs down the stairs.

INT. KITCHEN ENTRANCE TO LIVING ROOM

Lindsay dials 911. It rings.

And then from upstairs, a shot. The burst echoes in the large living room. Lindsay starts to shake. She knows it's over. He never would allow himself to be incarcerated.

The 911 operator answers.

OPERATOR

Hello. Is this an emergency?
Hello. If you can't speak, try
to give me your address.

Lindsay is alone in the huge, quiet, dark empty house. She lets the phone slide away from her ear and slowly starts to cry.

EXT. NORTH HAMPTON - WEEKS LATER, EARLY MORNING

The summer is over. School is back in session. College kids fill the streets, walking, riding bikes.

INT. CRIMINAL COURTHOUSE

Lindsay sits in a small room at a long wooden table, looking out the window at the kids going back and forth in the street.

Hillel comes in and sits with her. He speaks softly, kindly.

HILLEL

There will be no charges brought against you. Rafferty Quinn needs your explanation of the events. It was a good deal. (pause) If there is anything I can do.

Lindsay is staring out the window at the kids, lost.

EXT. NORTH HAMPTON - WEEKS LATER

There is a briskness in the air, the sky bright blue. Lindsay is coming out of the animal hospital.

Teenie and Weenie are both alive but with huge, silly-looking bandages around their legs and heads.

EXT. NORTH HAMPTON

Lindsay wears a huge, light tan pancho. It blows softly about her like a cape as she walks down the picturesque street. She turns into the college drugstore.

INT. COLLEGE DRUG STORE

Lindsay puts several items on the counter. Pinky takes them, not looking at her.

PINKY

Is that it?

LINDSAY

That's it.

PINKY

Sometimes you make mistakes,
you know.

He rings up the items on the old brown cash register, and then looks at her.

PINKY

Four seventy-eight.

LINDSAY

Sometimes you have to.

Pinky smiles an old, tired smile.

EXT. NORTH HAMPTON - A DAY LATER

The streets are filled with students . Lindsay sits at a diner window, not reading but writing in a small, cloth-covered diary. A half-eaten plate of eggs sits in front of her.

Lindsay looks up, and there in front of her is Bridget. They exchange a few words, and then there's an awkward pause.

Finally, Lindsay gestures for Bridget to sit down. Lindsay smiles, relieved to have her familiar friend talking to her.

INT. DINER

BRIDGET

You quit! I can't believe you quit!

LINDSAY

I'm thinking of going to Europe...
Greece...trying to find my mom maybe.

Pause. The friends just look at each other.

A sudden rapping on the window. Bridget and Lindsay look up, and there is Bridget's clan waiting for her on the street. All hold cups of hot chocolate. Phil, the big one, looks at Lindsay and takes a small flask of Peppermint Schnapps from under his coat, holding it out invitingly.

BRIDGET

He likes you.

Lindsay looks at Bridget.

BRIDGET

Hey, I gotta go. We're going
to the football game.

Pause.

BRIDGET

Lindsay, come with us.

Lindsay shyly shakes her head. Bridget leans over to her and kisses her goodbye.

BRIDGET

Call me, all right?

LINDSAY

Yeah, I will.

Bridget is gone. Lindsay sees her outside the window, joining the gang. She waves to Lindsay and then disappears into the sea of students.

Lindsay goes back to her writing. She swallows hard. And then in a burst she throws on her coat and is out the door.

The waitress looks at the girl behind the cash register.

WAITRESS

She didn't pay.

EXT. STREET

Lindsay runs through the crowd. She sees Bridget. She runs up behind her, her arms wildly going around Bridget's shoulder. Several of the others turn and are glad to see Lindsay.

Phil puts a cup into Lindsay's hand and fills it with Peppermint Schnapps and hot chocolate. Bridget's arm goes around Lindsay. They toast one another with their styrofoam cups.

We FREEZE on the picture of these two friends, their eyes alive, their smiles shining.

THE END