BLACKWATER

screenplay by

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story by

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EXT PARK - SAN FRANCISCO DAY

A child's balloon floats in a storm-clouded sky in the middle of a park in San Francisco. A hand reaches up and tries to catch the balloon's string. The hand misses, and the balloon floats on. The hand tries again, popping up into frame as the child jumps. Missed again.

A VOICE comes over as the hand keeps up the chase.

DUNCAN (v.o.)
I haven't slept through the night in two years. I've tried everything. Pills, booze, a joint before bed -- those all kill the dreams, but then it's like I haven't slept at all. It doesn't matter how tired I am, the second I hit the sheets I'm wide awake again. If I close my eyes the dreams come rushing out from behind the rocks like they were waiting for me.

A man's hand reaches up, closes around the string, and pulls the balloon down. DUNCAN PAYNE, mid-thirties, is good looking but gaunt, close-cropped hair and bloodshot eyes. He holds the balloon out to HENRY, a four-year-old.

DUNCAN
Hold on tight.

HENRY
I will!

He takes the balloon and runs away, rejoining his MOTHER, who we see from a distance. Duncan watches her as she takes Henry's hand and leads him over to the swings. They play, dodging the raindrops that are just starting to fall. Duncan stares, eyes fixed on the mother and child.

DUNCAN (v.o.)
I dream about Blackwater. Always the same dream, but it never finishes. Maybe I'm lucky. The end of that nightmare is the last thing I want to see. Fuck it. If I have to, I'll stay awake forever.

He pulls a bottle of eyedrops out of his pocket, tilts his head back, and squeezes a few drops into his reddened eyes. The drops roll down his cheeks, he blinks and focuses on the sky --

EXT PARK DAY

-- which is suddenly bright and cloudless, a different day. Duncan, in different clothes, sits on the same bench, face tilted up to the warm sun.

He has a notebook in his lap. He is just putting his pen to it when he spots something across the park. Henry is back, with his mother again. They're playing in the sand this time.

Duncan watches them. He gets up and walks closer to them. He sits on another bench, still watching.

SANDRA PRITCHETT, Henry's mother, is a few years younger than Duncan. She's an eccentric dresser, full of life, with the nervous air of the perpetually late.

She glances up and sees Duncan watching them. She smiles. Duncan looks away, back to the notebook in his lap. Its pages are almost indecipherable, covered with intense scribble.

He goes back to his work, whatever it might be.

EXT PARK DAY

A thick fog rolls in over the same park, yet another day. Sandra, in an overcoat now, buys a hot dog from a VENDOR. She hands it to Henry.

SANDRA
Here you go, ketchup only. I'll carry your Coke.

Moving around her, we suddenly notice Duncan, standing right beside her, looking at her. Sandra jumps, startled.

DUNCAN
I'm sorry, did I scare you?

SANDRA
(yes, you did)
No, I just -- I didn't see you in the fog, is all.

HENRY
Can I eat by the fountain?

SANDRA
Yes. Don't climb on it and don't feed the pigeons.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Henry takes his hot dog and climbs over a stone wall that encircles an old fountain, long out of use and starting to fall apart. One or two pigeons poke around at its base.

Sandra notices Duncan is still looking at her.

SANDRA (cont'd)
Are you, uh... okay?

DUNCAN
I'm going crazy, to tell you the truth. I know I've seen you before and I can't figure out where.

SANDRA
Here. The park. I'm here all the time.

DUNCAN
I know, but other than that.

SANDRA
Oh. Do you get up early?

He looks at her quizzically.

SANDRA (cont'd)
I do the morning news on channel five.

DUNCAN
Sandra Pritchett!

SANDRA
I didn't think anybody actually watched channel five.

DUNCAN
No no no, I mean, Sandy Pritchett! We went to the same --

SANDRA
(points at him, remembering)
Duncan?

DUNCAN
(points to himself)
Payne.

SANDRA
From high school Duncan Payne?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DUNCAN
Thank God, I feel so much better! It was like not being able to sneeze.

She laughs. At the fountain behind them, Henry breaks off bits of hot dog and bun for the pigeons, which cluster around him.

SANDRA
This is incredible! You live near here?

DUNCAN
Yeah, over on Beckett. You?

SANDRA
Couple blocks. How've you been? Man, I haven't heard your name in years.

DUNCAN
Okay, I'm okay.

SANDRA
You look -- different. I didn't even recognize you, your face seems...

DUNCAN
Yeah, I had to have some, uh, surgery.

SANDRA
Oh.
(that's a bit awkward)
Well, you look good. You look great, actually.

Her eyes dart down to his left hand. He wears no wedding ring.

Behind them, word has gotten out to the pigeons that there's a free lunch to be had, and they're starting to congregate around Henry.

SANDRA (cont'd)
Is that a diary?

DUNCAN
Huh?

She points to the notebook he's holding.

CONTINUED: (3)

DUNCAN
Oh. No, just stories.

SANDRA
Short stories?

DUNCAN
Sometimes. A book or two, when I'm lucky.

SANDRA
That's great. So that's what you do, you're a writer?

DUNCAN
Better than heavy lifting.

SANDRA
Anything I might have read?

DUNCAN
I don't know, do you read a lot of worthless shit?

SANDRA
Tons of it. You write worthless shit? Wow, I'm impressed...

He laughs. Suddenly, a high pitched SHRIEK comes from the fountain behind them. Sandra turns and sees her son --

-- engulfed by a large swarm of pigeons.

They circle his head, hop around his feet, flap crazily to get at the hot dog in his hand. Duncan leaps over the cement perimeter of the fountain in a single stride, SHOUTING and waving his arms. The pigeons leap into the air and Duncan sweeps the terrified boy up into his arms.

SANDRA (cont'd)
Henry!

DUNCAN
He's okay, he's fine, they just scared him, that's all.

Henry lunges to her shoulder from Duncan's.

SANDRA
It's okay, honey, it's okay, shhhh, you're okay...

CONTINUED: (4)

Duncan seems inordinately pissed off.

DUNCAN
Damn birds. Those God damn birds.

He picks up a rock and chucks it at the cluster of pigeons, which takes off again.

SANDRA
Thank you.

DUNCAN
I just wish I'd been there sooner.

SANDRA
(thinks, then:)
Do you want a cup of coffee?

DUNCAN
I, uh... I don't think I should.

SANDRA
Come on. Coffee never killed anybody.

CUT TO:

INT SANDRA'S APARTMENT DAY

Sandra and Henry live on the first floor of a Victorian with stuff crammed into every corner, a comforting mess. A bird, a dog, a gerbil, and a cat coexist almost peacefully. Sandra searches the kitchen cupboards for something; Duncan rolls a toy car back and forth across the table with Henry.

SANDRA
I like everything about the news except the hours. Crawling out of bed at four in the morning is not my idea of a good time, and finding a baby-sitter who'll show up before dawn is no party either, let me tell you. I'm thinking of going on leave for a while to be home with Henry, but TV is so cutthroat I'm afraid if I step out I'll never get back in. Not to mention I'd be broke in about three days. Uh, bad news, I don't have any coffee. I never drink it, caffeine and I are not really a good idea together.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANDRA (cont'd)
I just liked the way it sounded, you know, "You want to have a cup of coffee?"

DUNCAN
I like your place. It's neat.

SANDRA
(now searching the refrigerator)
You makin' fun of me, buddy?

DUNCAN
No! Warm, is what I meant. You can tell people live here.

SANDRA
Yeah, sloppy people. I can't believe this, I don't have beer or anything. You want a, um, juice box? Apple cherry.

HENRY
Have grape. It's more better.

DUNCAN
Got any grape?

SANDRA
Always got grape.

DUNCAN
I used to go out with your older sister, remember? Allison, right? How is she?

SANDRA
(quickly)
Married.
(recovering)
I mean, you know. Married. Terrific husband, they're really in love.

DUNCAN
That's great, good for her.

Sandra pulls a plastic straw packet open with her teeth, jams the straw into a grape juice box, and holds it out to Duncan.

SANDRA
Sip before you squeeze.

CONTINUED: (2)

Duncan takes the box. The juice sprays out through the straw and onto his shirt.

SANDRA (cont'd)
Told you.

HENRY
(cracking up)
That's good comedy!

Sandra grabs a towel and wipes off his shirt.

SANDRA
A juice box, this is so lame. Typical me. Hey, food!

INT KITCHEN NIGHT

Dinner is over, and it looked good. Henry is telling Duncan a story while Sandra nurses a glass of wine.

HENRY
But then the alligators? With the big teeth and the noses? They go --
(sniffs twice)
-- and they get the little girl.

DUNCAN
The alligators got the little girl?

HENRY
Yeah, the little girl, and the mouse too. And then they come get me. At night always, they come get me and they bite me..

DUNCAN
Oh, in dreams, you mean? You have nightmares about alligators? What a bummer.

SANDRA
We were watching one of those nature videos, and it was about baby kangaroos, right?, cute as hell and everything, but then I stepped out of the room for like thirty seconds, and when I came back it had turned into this predators of the Amazon thing and they were taking down some poor caribou or something. So, great -- alligator nightmares for a month.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HENRY
I'm scared to go to sleep sometimes. But a tyrannosaurus is stronger than an alligator, that's what Mommy says, so I have Rex, for in my bed. Watch.

He pulls one of the dinosaur's legs off and the plastic toy lets out a bloodcurdling SCREECH.

HENRY (cont'd)
He screams when you tear his legs off! Do you ever have bad dreams?

DUNCAN
Uh huh.

HENRY
What about?

Duncan looks at him. He doesn't really want to answer.

HENRY (cont'd)
What about?

DUNCAN
Oh, you know. The usual stuff.

HENRY
What usual stuff?

SANDRA
Henry.

DUNCAN
It's okay, he's just curious.

HENRY
Are they scary dreams?

DUNCAN
Sometimes.

HENRY
What are they about?

SANDRA
He doesn't want to talk about it, Sweetie.

HENRY
Then they must be very, very scary.

CONTINUED: (2)

DUNCAN
They, uh, can be. Yeah.

HENRY
Everything's going to be okay.

DUNCAN
Really? How do you know?

HENRY
It's only six more days to Halloween.

Duncan laughs. He looks over at Sandra, catches her staring at him. She smiles and looks away.

CUT TO:

EXT SANDRA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Duncan and Sandra stand in front of her door, which is slightly ajar. They stand close, the attraction mutual. They keep their voices low, as Henry is just inside.

SANDRA
I'm trouble.

DUNCAN
I don't scare easy.

SANDRA
I mean it, this isn't a cute thing, it's not a joke. My life is kind of a train wreck right now. You know what you'd do if you were smart? Run from me.

DUNCAN
Look, I don't want to get competitive on you, but you think you've got problems? I've got worse. The hell with 'em, whoever or whatever they are. Nothing can be that bad, what with Halloween just six days away and all...

SANDRA
I take him trick or treating on Castro Street, you know, the block they close down? Drives his Dad crazy, I think that's why I do it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNCAN
I want to see you again.

She looks at him for a second, then takes his notebook and pen, scribbles her phone number, and gives it back to him.

SANDRA
Don't ever say I didn't warn you.

He smiles. She goes back inside and closes the door. Duncan turns and walks down the steps.

ON THE SIDEWALK,

a Lincoln Town Car pulls up and stops at the curb. The back door opens and BRUCE RICKETS gets out -- tall, well-dressed, fortyish. He and Duncan almost bump into each other at the foot of the stairs. Bruce looks Duncan up and down quickly.

BRUCE
Usually she likes 'em taller.

DUNCAN
(did I hear that?)
What'd you say?

BRUCE
Nothin'.

He goes up the stairs. Duncan heads across the street, to a coffee house. He looks back, over his shoulder, at Bruce. He frowns, seems to recognize him.

INT SANDRA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Sandra opens the door for Bruce. She does not smile.

SANDRA
(cold)
Hi.

BRUCE
(colder)
I'm late.

SANDRA
Henry! Your dad is here!

HENRY (o.s.)
Just a second!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bruce comes into the kitchen, barely. He closes the door behind him. Sandra and Bruce wait, silently, the tension thick between them. Sandra starts clearing the table, doing her best to ignore him.

Bruce watches her. He notices the dirty plates. Three of them. He disapproves. MACK, the dog, comes bounding down the hall and jumps all over Bruce. Mack loves Bruce. Bruce hates Mack.

BRUCE
Off. Off, hey, Mack, off. Go lie down and get heart disease like a good dog.

Sandra goes to the doorway.

SANDRA
Hen-ry! Do you need help?

HENRY (o.s.)
I'm making pee-pee!

They wait. Bruce gestures to the door.

BRUCE
Who's Mr. Lucky?

SANDRA
My lawyer said it's better if I just don't talk to you.

BRUCE
(raises his hands in surrender)
God forbid.

Finally, Henry comes into the room.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Ah hah! A friendly face! You ready, Buddy?

Henry mutters something.

BRUCE (cont'd)
What?

Henry goes to Sandra and repeats it, to her, but we still can't hear it.

CONTINUED: (2)

BRUCE (cont'd)
What did he say?

SANDRA
He says he doesn't want to go.

BRUCE
Oh, come on, Henry. We're going to have a great time.

HENRY
I want to stay here.

BRUCE
Remember the last time we went? We got to sit right down front, on the court, practically? You had a great time.

HENRY
I want to stay home with Mommy.

BRUCE
Henry. Come on. Today is Wednesday, remember? That's one of the days I get to be with you.

SANDRA
Come on, sweetie. It's time to go.

She starts to push Henry gently toward Bruce, but Henry wraps his arms around her legs. Bruce looks at his watch. He's starting to sweat.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Don't do this, okay? Not now. Let's go. Please.

Henry says nothing. Bruce looks at his watch, third time in a minute.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Kiddo, we really do not have time for this. I'll get you a big bag of M&Ms as soon as we get to the arena, I promise.

SANDRA
Oh, that's good.

BRUCE
Please.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SANDRA
Why don't you just offer him money?

BRUCE
Why don't you remember what your lawyer told you?

SANDRA
Maybe if you took him somewhere other than work once in a while...

BRUCE
Thanks a lot, your advice and opinions are so important to me.

SANDRA
Come on, Henry, time to go, before Mommy throws something sharp at Daddy.

BRUCE
Very nice. Where's a court reporter when you need one?
(to Henry)
Up you go.

He pries Henry from Sandra and lifts him up, onto one hip. Henry SCREAMS and holds his arms out to Sandra.

SANDRA
Bruce, don't force him!

BRUCE
He's only like this for five minutes, until you're out of the picture, and then he's fine! We're fine!

But Henry doesn't seem fine, he's SCREAMING out his objections.

SANDRA
Why don't you just leave him home, he doesn't want to go!

BRUCE
Then he won't want to go next Wednesday either! You'd love that, wouldn't you?

HENRY
PUT ME DOWN!!

CONTINUED: (4)

Bruce makes his way to the door with the squirming Henry. As he tries to open it, Henry thrashes and hits his head on the wall. Now he <u>really</u> screams.

SANDRA
(to Bruce)
What is the <u>matter</u> with you?!

She rushes forward.

EXT STREET NIGHT

Across the street, Duncan comes out of the coffee house, carrying a styrofoam cup of coffee. He hears the shouting and looks up. Bruce and Sandra are standing in her open doorway, Bruce trying to haul the now-frantic Henry out to the car.

Sandra is shouting at Bruce, Bruce is shouting at Henry, Henry shouts at everybody.

Duncan looks up and down the block. NEIGHBORS and PASSERS-BY stare, but no one dares get involved. Duncan starts across the street.

Duncan reaches the far side and comes to the base of the steps just as Bruce starts down the steps, the screaming Henry in his arms.

DUNCAN
Is everything okay here?

SANDRA
(embarrassed as hell)
Oh, Duncan, no, please --

BRUCE
Yeah, we're having a party.

DUNCAN
Look, maybe you should just put Henry down for a minute and --

BRUCE
I should put "Henry" down? What do you know about "Henry?"
(to Sandra)
Who the hell does this guy think he is?
(to Duncan)
Mind your own God damn business!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bruce hurries past Duncan, to the car, Henry screaming all the way. Duncan looks up at Sandra.

DUNCAN
Do you need help?

She doesn't answer, just turns away. Duncan hurries up the steps.

IN THE TOWN CAR,

Bruce forces Henry into the back seat of the car.

BRUCE
Henry, I have had it, just stop it, right now! Right now!

Henry squirms crazily as Bruce wrenches him into a car seat. It's one hell of a fight, but Bruce wins. He forces the bar down, buckling him in.

Bruce looks up, at the rear view mirror. The DRIVER is staring at him.

BRUCE (cont'd)
I'll be back in sixty seconds.

ON THE CURB,

Bruce backs out of the car and closes the door, muting Henry's cries. He looks up the stairs. Duncan is in the kitchen with Sandra, one arm around her shoulders.

Bruce starts up the steps, breathing hard.

INT KITCHEN NIGHT

Bruce comes into the kitchen. Duncan hears him and turns around, his body half in front of Sandra.

BRUCE
(to Duncan)
Sir, excuse me. Could you step outside for a minute so we can talk?

DUNCAN
(to Sandra)
Do you want me to go?

SANDRA
Just into the other room, please.

BRUCE
Well, then, what the hell, why get shy at all. Hi. I'm Bruce Rickets.

DUNCAN
I recognize you.

BRUCE
I'm Henry's father. Who are you?

DUNCAN
A friend of Sandra's.

BRUCE
No, your name. What's your name?

DUNCAN
Duncan.

BRUCE
Your whole name. What are we, playing secret agent games here?

DUNCAN
Duncan Payne. P-A-Y-N-E.

BRUCE
There, now we're all like family.

SANDRA
Just go, Bruce, Henry is sitting alone in the car --

BRUCE
When I am with Henry, I say nothing but positive things about you, what a good Mommy he has --

Bruce is too close to Sandra.

DUNCAN
Why don't you give her a little air there, Coach?

BRUCE
-- what a lucky boy he is. Can you tell me you do the same?

SANDRA
I don't make him not want to go with you, Bruce, he decides that all by himself!

BRUCE
Look me in the eye and tell me you don't talk shit about me to my son.

SANDRA
Maybe there's a reason! Maybe you know why!

BRUCE
Look me in the eye!

DUNCAN
Come on. I asked you to back off.

BRUCE
I'm talking to her, Duncan.

DUNCAN
Fine, just get out of her face.

SANDRA
Henry is sitting alone in that car, right now, crying his eyes out --

BRUCE
Answer the question!

SANDRA
-- if you want to be a good father, why don't you get your ass out there!

BRUCE
(right in her face)
ANSWER THE QUESTION!

Duncan, still holding the coffee in one hand, puts his other on Bruce's chest and shoves him backwards.

DUNCAN
I said back off!

Bruce loses his balance momentarily. His left hand flashes, knocking the coffee onto Duncan's shirt. Duncan GASPS as the scalding liquid burns him. Bruce's right hand flashes. He slugs Duncan in the gut.

Duncan crumples to his knees, the wind knocked out of him.

SANDRA
God damn it, Bruce! Get out! Get out! GET OUT OF HERE!

CONTINUED: (3)

The situation is beyond repair. Bruce turns and storms out, closing the door behind him.

INT CAR NIGHT

Bruce climbs into the back of the Town Car and SLAMS his door. Henry is still wailing.

BRUCE
(to the Driver)
America is waiting.

The car pulls away. Bruce raises a hand to comfort Henry, but Henry swats it away. Bruce feels in his jacket pocket for something. Doesn't find it.

BRUCE (cont'd)
(to the Driver)
You got a pen?

The Driver hands him one. Bruce tears the corner off a newspaper in the seat pocket in front of him and writes a name on it, last name first: "Payne, Duncan."

CUT TO:

INT OAKLAND COLISEUM NIGHT

Oakland Coliseum, where the Warriors basketball team plays its home games, is filling up for a game. Bruce comes into the arena with Henry, who has gotten over his tantrum and is eating a bag of peanut M&Ms.

Everybody in the place knows Bruce. FANS shout "Hey, Coach!," he nods, waves, signs autographs. GREG MOSS, a perpetually sweaty man in his late forties carrying a couple drinks, falls into step with him.

MOSS
Brucey, how you doin'?

BRUCE
Greg Moss, my man in blue! Carol here?

MOSS
(holds up one of the drinks)
White wine spritzer ain't for me, only your sister orders that at a ball game.
(to Henry)
Hey, Big Guy.

(CONTINUED)

HENRY
Hi, Uncle Greg.

BRUCE
Get a chance to take care of that ticket for me?

MOSS
Yeah, all done, no problem. You might try the brake pedal once in a while. It's right next to the gas.

BRUCE
That's where they hide it!

Moss laughs and heads for the stands.

MOSS
Great seats, I owe you another one!

Near the broadcast table, Bruce passes the Warriors' bench. Four PLAYERS greet him. Henry looks up at the forest of towering bodies.

PLAYER 1
Coach, come over here a second.

PLAYER 2
(low voice)
We need you back here, man, Packard couldn't coach jayvee girls.

BRUCE
Funny how as soon as they give you guys a hundred million dollars everybody else becomes an idiot.

PLAYER 1
Michaelson doesn't know about the Black Bag.

BRUCE
(to Player 3)
You don't know about the Black Bag?

PLAYER 3
C'mon, what's the Black Bag?

BRUCE
The Black Bag is everything. Black Bag is all you got.

CONTINUED: (2)

PLAYER 3
What is it?

BRUCE
What's in it, that's what counts. Your experience. Practice. Conditioning, ball skills, shotmaking, everything goes in the Black Bag, because you don't know what you'll need, until -- let me ask you a question. You're the point guard, when you bring the ball upcourt, what's in your mind?

PLAYER 3
The play.

BRUCE
Wrong.

PLAYER 3
Well, I'm makin' a plan --

BRUCE
Wrong again.

An anxious TV PRODUCER is lurking next to Bruce, holding a headset nervously.

PRODUCER
Coach, they're almost ready for us at the network.

BRUCE
(holds up a hand -- wait)
I see you've had some bad influences in the coaching department. That's a shame, it may be too late for you, but I'll try anyway. You come down that court, the last thing you want is a plan. You have a plan, somebody can find it out. When you come down that court, your mind is empty. Clear. Open to whatever possibilities the defense is about to present you.

PRODUCER
Coach, we really --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BRUCE
(intent on the lesson now)
At some point in the next twenty-four seconds, a freak of chance will open a window of opportunity, only for a split-second. The window opens, you reach into your Black Bag. In that split-second, the plan develops and is executed. It can't make sense, it can't be predictable, not even to you. Whatever the plan requires, you will have it in your Black Bag --

He reaches down and picks up Henry, putting him on his hip, and says this last to him.

BRUCE (cont'd)
-- if you are prepared. Good luck comes to the prepared.

AT THE BROADCAST TABLE,

Bruce finds a chair for Henry in front of a monitor and puts on a headset. The camera swings around to him, a bright TV light hits him, the Producer starts counting down from five. Bruce turns to Henry and winks.

BRUCE
Watch Daddy shoot his mouth off some more.

Henry watches the monitor as the image cuts to Bruce from the studio in New York. Just as Bruce grins broadly and starts talking, Henry reaches out to the monitor --

-- and switches it off.

CUT TO:

INT SANDRA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Duncan is on the couch in Sandra's living room. He looks a little green. Sandra is sitting on the edge of the couch, next to him.

SANDRA
How do you feel?

DUNCAN
Like I was in your train wreck.

SANDRA
Still want to throw up?

DUNCAN
I never wanted to throw up, it just seemed unavoidable for a while there.

SANDRA
Aren't you glad you got to know my family? You want to come back for Thanksgiving?

Duncan laughs. It hurts to laugh.

SANDRA (cont'd)
Bruce and I, we were married for a short time about five years ago. When I was six months pregnant... let me see, how can I give you the short version? He was cheating. With most of the Bay Area. Good bye. I wanted it over with, before we had the baby and things got really complicated. He didn't take it well.

DUNCAN
He didn't want a divorce?

SANDRA
(shakes her head no)
I think I was the only person that ever broke up with him. These basketball guys, they get everything they want all their lives, so when someone says no to them it's the end of the world. He tried to get custody of Henry, to punish me. He's taken me to court twice, and he's always hauling me into child services with one complaint or another. I don't think he even wants Henry that badly, it's just that he can't stand to lose. The whole marriage was like that, everything was who won and who lost. Were you ever married?

DUNCAN
(hesitates)
Once. A long time ago. We got married young.

SANDRA
What broke you up?

DUNCAN
Life. Just life.

SANDRA
Yeah. It's like that, isn't it?

Their eyes meet. There is electricity. She sighs and leans against him, laying her head on his chest.

SANDRA (cont'd)
Is this too forward of me?

DUNCAN
No...

He strokes her hair.

SANDRA
I'm sorry you had to see our George and Martha routine. How friggin' embarrassing. I can't believe I actually say "friggin'" now. I used to be colorful.

He notices something on her upper arm. He traces a long line with his finger.

DUNCAN
What's this?

SANDRA
I broke my arm once, they had to operate. Ugly, isn't it?

DUNCAN
Everybody's got a few scars.

She looks up. There never was a more natural moment for a kiss. She starts to lean forward, but he moves his head almost imperceptibly back, hesitant.

SANDRA
It's okay.

They kiss. They shift on the couch, side by side, facing each other.

CONTINUED: (3)

SANDRA (cont'd)
Making out on the couch. Just like high school.

He kisses her. There's a lot of passion lurking there, and it grows quickly. Duncan pulls back, kisses her on the forehead instead of the lips.

DUNCAN
I should be going. Before it starts to be more like college.

SANDRA
You're a decent man. Do me a favor -- restore my faith in mankind?

DUNCAN
First thing tomorrow.

CUT TO:

EXT SANDRA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Duncan leaves Sandra's apartment. He walks five or six steps down the block, then pauses, thinking. He looks both ways. The street is deserted. He doubles back, to Sandra's house.

Between her house and the one next door, there is a narrow passageway. He takes a few steps down it. One window, on the side, has a faint golden light streaming from it.

Duncan steps up, closer to the window. Through it, he sees a little boy's room, must be Henry's. Sandra comes in from the hallway. She starts getting it ready for when Henry gets home -- puts out his pajamas, turns down his bed, sets his dinosaur on his pillow.

Duncan watches.

CUT TO:

EXT DUNCAN'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Duncan walks down the street in a North Beach neighborhood. Ghostly old office buildings and warehouses have been converted to lofts and residences. He stops in front of his building, pushes open the stairway door, and goes inside.

INT DUNCAN'S APARTMENT - STAIRWELL NIGHT

Duncan starts up the steep staircase, to an apartment door at the top.

INT DUNCAN'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Duncan comes into his darkened apartment. He switches on a light, tosses his overcoat over the back of the sofa and drops onto the cushions, a million things on his mind.

From upstairs, he hears someone start HUMMING softly. He stands and looks up into the open loft space. A light from up there now falls across the floor of the living room. It seems like it wasn't there before.

He climbs the stairs.

INT DUNCAN'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Duncan comes into his bedroom. A night table light is on, the bed is drawn back on both sides. Another light shines from the bathroom. The HUMMING is coming from inside, a soft, melodious woman's voice.

Duncan stops in the middle of the room and calls out.

DUNCAN
I'm home.

The woman's voice answers from the bathroom.

MARY (o.s.)
I was just getting worried.

DUNCAN
I didn't know you were coming back tonight. I would have called.

MARY (o.s.)
Where were you?

DUNCAN
(a slight pause)
Oh, I wasn't getting anywhere so I went for a walk.

MARY (o.s.)
Long walk.

DUNCAN
I stopped for dinner at Manny's.

CONTINUED:

From the bathroom, the woman starts HUMMING again. Duncan lies on his side of the bed, fully clothed. He turns off the light. A moment later, MARY PAYNE, the same age as Duncan, comes out of the bathroom and lays down next to him. She's lovely. She lays one hand on the back of his head and starts to stroke his hair. She wears a wedding ring.

Duncan closes his eyes, guiltily.

MARY
Don't you think we should talk about it?

DUNCAN
About what?

MARY
If you've done something, just be honest about it.

DUNCAN
I haven't done a thing.

MARY
But you're thinking about it. I can see it in your eyes lately.

DUNCAN
Then my eyes are lying.

MARY
This isn't an accusation, I'm just asking. What is it you want?

DUNCAN
I want the three of us to be together.

MARY
I know.

DUNCAN
I want Sean back.

MARY
So do I. But we're not talking about Sean, we're talking about you. You can't pretend nothing's happening.

DUNCAN
Nothing is, Mary.

CONTINUED: (2)

He rolls over, away from her. She doesn't pursue it. She turns off her bedside lamp.

Duncan rolls over, onto his back. He stares up at the ceiling. Car headlights from outside play across it. He watches them.

There's a crack in the ceiling, a narrow one. Duncan stares at it. He blinks, sleepy. The crack grows longer, widens. He blinks again, heavily this time.

The crack grows still longer, the ceiling separates a good three or four feet along the fault line. Rain starts to fall through the crack, the drops splashing on Duncan's face. He closes his eyes. Night turns suddenly to day, and Duncan is --

EXT NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COASTLINE DUSK

-- lying on his back on the grass in a park. His hair is longer, he might be a couple years younger, and he's definitely healthier. Raindrops fall on his face. Mary's hand reaches in and wipes the drops away.

MARY
What a mess.

She's looking at the notebook beside him, its pages covered in indecipherable jottings. Duncan taps the side of his head.

DUNCAN
You should see what it looks like in here.

MARY
Come play with us. You're boring, you do not arouse me like this.

DUNCAN
Where's Sean?

MARY
Stealing everybody's balloons.

He sits up and looks around. The park is on a bluff overlooking the ocean, where CHILDREN and their PARENTS loaf around. Balloons and crepe paper are strewn here and there -- somebody just had a birthday. Far below, the surf pounds the rocks at the base of the cliffs. SEAN, a boy, five, races around the park collecting stray balloons, sometimes over the objections of their rightful owners.

(CONTINUED)

Duncan lays down again, picking up the notebook.

DUNCAN
You hate the ending, don't you?

MARY
I hate that the guy dies.

DUNCAN
Why? It's so romantic.

MARY
Death isn't romantic.

DUNCAN
Of course it is! "Romeo and Juliet," "Madame Butterfly," "A Tale of Two Cities" --

MARY
It's too easy to kill him.

DUNCAN
What else does he have to live for?

MARY
That's what you have to find out. Write from the heart, Bobaloo. You're always better when you write from the heart.

He tosses his notebook aside.

DUNCAN
Hopeless.

MARY
Hardly. You've just got to have a little faith in yourself.

He kisses her. The rain starts to fall harder, smearing the ink on his notebook page.

IN THE PARKING LOT,

it's nearly dark now, and the rain is really coming down. Duncan struggles with the squadron of balloons Sean has collected, trying to get them through the car door. Mary is at the driver's door, laughing, pointing a serious 35 mm camera at Duncan while the helium-filled balloons make random escape attempts.

SEAN
Daddy! The red one!

Duncan lunges and SNAPS at a red balloon's string, catching it in his teeth. Mary squeezes the shutter, SNAPPING off five shots on an autowinder.

EXT ' COAST ROAD NIGHT

Rain pelts a street sign -- "Blackwater, Pop. 2626." The car follows a winding road that runs along the jagged coastline, the scenic route back to San Francisco.

INT CAR NIGHT

Sean, in his car seat in back, looks at his parents through the red filter of his favorite balloon. A dozen more, all colors, float behind him.

Mary is driving, Duncan is on the passenger side. Mary steals puffs from a cigarette she holds out her window, open six inches.

Sean taps the red balloon, once. It floats forward, bounces off Mary's headrest, and recoils to him. He's delighted.

SEAN
Daddy, watch.

Sean hits the balloon, harder this time. It floats into the front seat. Duncan brushes it back toward Sean. A song comes on the radio, a haunting melody.

MARY
Turn this up.

Duncan does. Mary HUMS along with it -- it's the same tune she was humming in the bathroom. Duncan looks at her cigarette disapprovingly.

DUNCAN
You 'bout done with that?

MARY
I'm sorry, I'm sorry, almost.

She takes a puff and holds it out the window again.

Sean hits the balloon again, harder. It bounces off Mary's headrest and floats right back past him this time.

CONTINUED:

He cranes his neck and looks back over his shoulder -- the red balloon is in the back of the station wagon, mixed in with the other dozen.

SEAN
Daddy! My balloon!

Duncan looks back. The red one's too far away, so he stretches for a yellow one.

DUNCAN
(to Mary)
Can't you put on a patch or something?

MARY
I'm wearing a patch.

Duncan turns to give the yellow balloon to Sean, but when he looks at him --

-- his son's face is gone, there's just a skull atop Sean's shoulders. Duncan SCREAMS --

INT DUNCAN'S BEDROOM NIGHT

-- and awakens from the dream in his bedroom. He bolts out of his bed as if it were on fire.

CUT TO:

INT BRUCE'S BEDROOM DAY

The next day. The scrap of newspaper on which Bruce wrote Duncan's name sits next to a computer keyboard. Fingers on the keyboard type in a name.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN,

we're on the San Francisco Chronicle home page. A command says "ENTER KEY WORD OR PHRASE YOU WISH TO REFERENCE." Letters fill the empty space as the fingers type:

P-A-Y-N-E, D-U-N-C-A-N

After a short pause, the computer pulls up a newspaper reference to Duncan. A mouse arrow clicks on it and a photograph starts to come up, line by line. It's a picture of the aftermath of a fiery car wreck, the charred remains of the car smashed into a tree.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bruce Rickets sits back from his computer and studies it, reading with concern. He picks up the phone and dials a number. After a moment:

BRUCE
Sergeant Moss, please.
(pause)
Greg, it's Bruce. Listen, Sandy's got some new guy she's hanging around with, having him over to the house and stuff -- I think I'd better get one of your scouting reports on him.

CUT TO:

INT THE SPY SHOP DAY

An impressive array of sophisticated surveillance equipment is displayed under glass in a cramped downtown store. Duncan stands at the display case, watching while the Clerk (HARLAN) selects a short wand with an LED readout at the base.

HARLAN
This is new, you could maybe use this. A heat stalker. Detects body heat up to a hundred feet away. FBI uses it to find a guy in the dark so they don't have to turn on a light and give away their position.

He waves the wand slowly across the store. The LED flashes red as the wand passes a tall bookcase. A moment later, a CUSTOMER walks out from behind the case.

HARLAN (cont'd)
See?

The Customer, a man in his forties, glances over and recognizes Duncan. He holds the gaze a moment longer than one usually would, then turns away, awkwardly. Duncan turns away too.

HARLAN (cont'd)
What's this for? Workin' on a new book?

DUNCAN
No, same old. Still stuck on that ending.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HARLAN
What are you lookin' for?

DUNCAN
I don't know, exactly, it needs a gadget, something really incredible, and I'm sick of bugs and video cameras.

Duncan notices the Customer (FENADY) is staring at him again while checking out a taser near the front door.

DUNCAN (cont'd)
Thanks, Harlan. I'll see you around.

He heads for the door, passing Fenady.

DUNCAN (cont'd)
Will ya quit sneaking around?

FENADY
Sorry, man. I never know whether to say hello.

DUNCAN
Most people do.

FENADY
Yeah, well, you know me, Mr. Complicated. Where the hell were you yesterday, I sat there like an asshole counting my pens.

DUNCAN
I'm sorry, something important came up.

FENADY
Oooh, blonde hair, I hope. Just call me next time instead of treating me like a ten dollar WHORE! I'm joking, what's the matter with you, you're like Boris Karloff here. Everything okay? Are you getting enough sleep?

DUNCAN
Sleep's not the problem. Being awake is.

FENADY
You want me to renew your prescription?

CONTINUED: (2)

DUNCAN
What for? So I can walk around in a fog?

Fenady holds the taser out near Duncan's crotch and touches the activator button. A menacing bolt of electricity leaps out between the prongs at its tip.

FENADY
Ten thousand volts in the balls'd snap you right out of it.

DUNCAN
You really think you need one of those?

FENADY
It's a violent world.

DUNCAN
Yours too?

He leaves. Fenady follows him.

EXT STREET DAY

Fenady catches up to Duncan.

FENADY
You and I both know perfectly well why you blew me off. Every time we get close to talking about the accident, you run and hide.

DUNCAN
How can I run from something I don't even remember?

FENADY
Bullshit. Somewhere inside, you know what happened, and it's eating you alive. Why don't we take a drive up to the crash site, you've never gone back there once --

DUNCAN
Forget it.

FENADY
If you start seeing the place, the memories are gonna come pouring out, I know they will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNCAN
Just what I need. You're too morbid for me, Tom, but I'll show up next time anyway. Just don't give me any more pills for a while.

FENADY
Okay, you don't want sleeping pills, that's fine, lie awake if you want, but the other stuff --

DUNCAN
The other stuff is what I'm talking about.

FENADY
You've already stopped taking them, haven't you?

DUNCAN
What can I tell you? I'd rather feel bad than not feel anything at all.

Duncan tilts his head back and squeezes some drops into his eyes.

FENADY
Oh, for Christ's sake -- do you remember what happened last time you went off medication?

Duncan tilts his head down, blinking the drops in. He thinks for a moment, his cheeks wet.

DUNCAN
As a matter of fact, I don't.

CUT TO:

INT TELEVISION STUDIO DAY

Sandra, on a television monitor, delivers a news broadcast from an anchor desk. She's good.

SANDRA
-- through a neighbor, who reported that Mr. Gonzalvez, known to be a heavy drinker, has said he intends to kill his wife, his children, and himself if police attempt to come into the building.

CONTINUED:

ALLISON PRITCHETT, a few years older than Sandra and bearing a resemblance, steps out from behind the monitor and looks at the real Sandra, only about ten feet away here in this television studio.

SANDRA (cont'd)
Our Warren Appel is minutes away from the scene now, we'll check in with him on this breaking story right after we return.

Conversational HUBBUB rises up on the set as the monitor goes to commercial. Sandra sees Allison, smiles and waves her over.

SANDRA (cont'd)
I'm sorry we're running so late, this guy in Oakland went postal.

ALLISON
What an inconsiderate prick. I'm starving.

SANDRA
What time do you have to be in court?

ALLISON
Two o'clock.

SANDRA
Anything fun?

A MAKEUP GUY comes in and touches up Sandra's face and hair.

ALLISON
Carjacking. I can convict these jerkoffs in my sleep. Did you know they passed a law, you can shoot 'em on sight in Louisiana? Everyone should live in that state.

SANDRA
Maybe you should go without me, I could be here another hour.

ALLISON
Okay. What's the favor?

SANDRA
You know how you told me to tell you if I was going out with someone new, and you'd check them out for me?

ALLISON
Yeah?

SANDRA
I met a nice boy.

ALLISON
All right, Sandy braves the shark-infested waters! Where'd you meet him?

SANDRA
The park.

ALLISON
The park. You brought home another bird with a broken wing, didn't you?

SANDRA
You know him. You went out with him.

ALLISON
Then he's definitely a loser. Which one?

SANDRA
Forget it, I'm not telling you.

ALLISON
That'll make it easy to check him out.

SANDRA
It's Duncan. From high school.

ALLISON
Duncan? I don't --
(remembers)
My Duncan?!

SANDRA
Your Duncan? You didn't even like him.

CONTINUED: (3)

ALLISON
He was okay, he was just kinda weird. Absolutely I'll check him out, let's not give Bruce any more ammunition. I thought Duncan got married when he was in college or something?

SANDRA
They split up.

ALLISON
Yeah, he's just your type. You had a David Bowie thing when you were in high school, and Duncan's got that whole too-sensitive-to-be-of-this-earth vibe. God, what a crush you had on him.

SANDRA
I did not!

ALLISON
Oh, please, you would beg me to take you with when I had a date with him.

SANDRA
He was the one who wanted me to come.

ALLISON
Yeah, rewrite history much?

PRODUCER
We're back in ten!

SANDRA
And he would look at me while he was talking to you.

ALLISON
Hah!

SANDRA
Admit it.

ALLISON
You're sick.

PRODUCER
And five --

SANDRA
Admit it!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

PRODUCER
-- four --

ALLISON
You need counseling.

PRODUCER
-- three --

SANDRA
ADMIT IT!

PRODUCER
-- two --

Allison steps out, Sandra turns back to the camera, the light on the camera flashes red, and Sandra resumes her professional demeanor.

SANDRA
We're going to take you live to downtown Oakland, where what can only be described as a domestic tragedy is playing out in the thirty-two hundred block of --

CUT TO:

EXT DUNCAN'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Duncan walks down the street in his neighborhood, headed home. He stops, noticing something up ahead.

Bruce Rickets sits on the front steps of Duncan's building, spinning a basketball on his finger. Duncan walks toward him and Bruce stands, sheepish.

BRUCE
Before you take a swing at me, I just want to say I was out of line, and I apologize. I want you and me to start over.

DUNCAN
How did you find me?

BRUCE
I hired a private investigator. I've been having you followed. I'm kidding, you're in the book.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNCAN
Look, uh, Bruce --

Bruce holds out the basketball.

BRUCE
It's autographed. By the whole team, the year we won the championship. I only had four of those. I'm just saying. Take it, it's a present. Come on, you've got to know how awkward this is for me. Let me out of the doghouse, okay?

Duncan thinks about it, then reaches out for the ball. Bruce smiles and tosses it to him.

BRUCE (cont'd)
How's the gut?

DUNCAN
Don't be too proud. Wasn't that great a punch.

BRUCE
These custody things -- you've got no idea what they can do to you. I've always taken the high road with Sandra, I've tried like hell, anyway, but when it comes to Henry, I just -- I can't help it, I've got too much blood or something. I just feel so bad for kids these days, everything's such a mess. There's no real families any more. Kids have step-mommys and step-daddys and "mommy's new best friend" and "mommy's ex-third husband." How's a child supposed to make sense of that?

DUNCAN
It's tough.

BRUCE
See, I can't be with him all the time, so I have to be extra careful about who is.

DUNCAN
Thanks for the ball.

He starts to head inside.

CONTINUED: (2)

BRUCE
Hey, I just want to say, if you and Sandy are seeing each other now, you know, good luck to you both. She's a wonderful woman. I couldn't make it work with her, but that's probably my own fault. Anything I can do --

DUNCAN
Thanks. And by the way, I'm a big fan of yours.

BRUCE
Yeah? You like basketball?

DUNCAN
Oh yeah, I used to play. I mean, it was only high school...

BRUCE
Once a player always a player. If you and Sandy ever need tickets to a game...

DUNCAN
I'll keep that in mind.

BRUCE
Or maybe you and me. If you're going to be hanging around Henry, we should get to know each other.

DUNCAN
Uh, maybe we should. See ya around.

He pushes open the stairwell door and goes inside.

IN THE STAIRWELL,

Duncan stops, looking at the ball. What just happened?

ON THE STREET,

Bruce watches through the window in the door as Duncan starts up the stairs. He turns and walks away, whistling.

CUT TO:

EXT SANDRA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Sandra opens her front door. A cascade of noise washes over Duncan, who's waiting on the front step.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SANDRA
Almost ready, come on in, don't step in the dog crap.

INT SANDRA'S APARTMENT DAY

Duncan comes in. The TV's blaring, the dog is barking, Henry is arguing with the BABY-SITTER, the phone is ringing, and Sandra is cleaning up a pile of dogshit.

DUNCAN
Sure you want to go out tonight?

SANDRA
Desperately.
(to Henry)
No. I said one before Robin Hood, and one after. That's it. Don't give Anna a hard time. Good bye, I love you.
(to the Baby-sitter)
Thanks. I won't be late, but if you get tired you can stay over.

ANNA
Have fun!

She leads Henry into the other room. Sandra's answering machine picks up the call. SANDRA'S VOICE recites her message.

DUNCAN
Bye! See ya Henry.

They leave. As the door closes, the machine BEEPS and ALLISON'S VOICE comes over, leaving a message.

ALLISON (o.s.)
Hi, it's Allison. Listen, you-know-who that you picked up in the park? Well, he's not exactly Jack the Ripper, but -- I need to talk to you. Call me at home when you get this, doesn't matter how late.

But Sandra is already gone.

CUT TO:

EXT STREET - NORTH BEACH NIGHT

It's a pleasant summer night, lots of people out. Duncan and Sandra walk down a street in North Beach.

SANDRA
I'm reading one of your books.

DUNCAN
Oh, no.

SANDRA
No, I like it. I have a feeling something terrible is going to happen, though.

DUNCAN
Which one is it?

SANDRA
"An Ordinary Englishman."

DUNCAN
Something terrible <u>is</u> going to happen.

She hits him.

SANDRA
Don't <u>tell</u> me!

DUNCAN
Ow.

SANDRA
Are you working on a new one?

DUNCAN
Have been, for a while.

SANDRA
What's it called?

DUNCAN
"The Nightingale's Song." I'm almost done, just can't get the ending. I'm trying to kill the guy, but he doesn't want to die. Been stuck on it for quite a while.

SANDRA
What's "quite a while?"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUNCAN
'Bout two years.

SANDRA
You've been working on the ending of your book for <u>two years</u>?

DUNCAN
And you think <u>you've</u> got money problems.

SANDRA
Uh, is it too early to reveal my horrible secret?

She pulls a pack of cigarettes from her purse. His eyes dart over, noticing.

SANDRA (cont'd)
I know, I know, they're gonna kill me. You're in luck, I'm out anyway.

Duncan stops, listening to a sound somewhere in the distance -- a faint, melodic WHEEZING.

DUNCAN
Hey, you want to see something cool?

He turns sharply down a side street. Sandra looks at him curiously, then follows.

EXT SIDE STREET NIGHT

Duncan walks ahead, down this narrow, darkened street. The WHEEZING sound is a little louder. But there are no people here. Sandra follows, unsure.

SANDRA
Where are you going?

DUNCAN
(over his shoulder)
You're gonna love it.

EXT HILLSIDE NIGHT

Sandra catches up to Duncan at the edge of a rocky hillside that leads down to the darkness of the Bay. They are completely alone, and she's a little anxious. She can hear the surf below, and the WHEEZING, louder now.

CONTINUED:

SANDRA
Where are you taking me?

DUNCAN
Down there.

He wants her to follow him down the rocky hillside.

DUNCAN (cont'd)
Come on.
(holds out a hand)
Don't you trust me?

She thinks about it, then takes his hand and descends into the darkness.

EXT THE WAVE ORGAN NIGHT

Duncan leads Sandra down the base of the hillside and out onto a rocky, abandoned ruin at the edge of the bay. Slabs of concrete, broken off pillars, and dozens of pipes of all kinds stick up at odd angles, above and below the water line. The surf laps the rocks and the pipes WHEEZE gently.

SANDRA
Wow. What was this place?

DUNCAN
Maybe a pump house, part of an old hotel or something. They call it the Wave Organ now.

SANDRA
Why?

DUNCAN
You'll see. You have to wait for a set of waves, they come in threes. You should bring Henry here, he'd love it.
(pause)
I bet he'd love it.

SANDRA
You've spent a lot of time around kids, haven't you?

DUNCAN
Why do you say that?

CONTINUED:

SANDRA
That day we were in the park, when those birds were swarming around Henry. You were over that wall and had him in your arms in about two seconds. That's a reflex. You can't fake something like that.

Duncan nods. He looks away. A larger wave crashes against the rocks. The water flows over the lower exposed pipes, and the WHEEZING sound comes again, louder now, more melodious, but ominous.

SANDRA (cont'd)
Did I say something wrong?

Pause.

DUNCAN
I had a son.

SANDRA
What happened?

DUNCAN
There was a car accident. He died.

SANDRA
Oh, my God.

She looks at him, no idea what to say. It starts to rain.

SANDRA (cont'd)
How did it happen?

DUNCAN
I don't remember. Being in the car, I can picture that, some images, but the crash itself -- it's like a black hole. A hole with a thousand teeth, and I can't pull myself out of it.

He's shaking now, emotional, and she puts her arms around him. The rain falls harder.

SANDRA
Everybody. Everybody's got scars.

He kisses her, and the third wave hits, spraying seawater up around them. The Wave Organ plays its heart out.

CUT TO:

INT SANDRA'S BEDROOM NIGHT

The kiss continues. Duncan and Sandra, soaking wet, fall onto her bed, kissing and undressing each other.

OVER AT THE WINDOW,

the rain starts really coming down, pounding against the glass.

BACK IN BED,

Sandra and Duncan make love, intensely. There's a flash of lightning from outside; a second later, THUNDER rattles the windowpane. Duncan turns his head, looking over at it.

Rain runs down the glass in thick rivers. As Duncan looks at it, an image flashes through his mind:

-- His own hands, palms up, empty, lit by a flash of lightning.

Duncan turns away from the window quickly, deeply disturbed by that image. They continue to make love.

AFTER,

Sandra and Duncan lie in bed. The storm has eased, but a steady rain still falls outside.

Duncan stares up at the ceiling, deep in thought. He looks at Sandra, next to him. She's fast asleep.

He rolls over, to try to sleep himself. He stares at the red numbers of a digital alarm clock on her night table. The clock says 11:17.

Duncan blinks and looks again. The clock says 11:38.

Duncan blinks, slowly, and looks again. The clock says 26:26.

Duncan furrows his brow. That can't be right. An image flashes at him:

-- Rain, falling on the street sign we saw before: "Blackwater, Pop. 2626."

Duncan forces himself awake again, refuses to have the dream. He lies on his back. He raises his hands up in front of his face and stares at them, just looking at the palms, guiltily, as if they were evidence from a crime.

CONTINUED:

He brings them slowly down and covers his face. As everything goes black, more images spring out:

-- The hot end of a cigarette, glowing red as Mary takes a puff from behind the wheel of their car.

-- A dozen balloons, in the back of the car, all suddenly coming to life, agitated, bouncing off one another like charged particles.

-- Flames, a wall of them, rising up from under the car and consuming it.

-- Duncan, the night of the accident, his back against the night sky, staring down at his own hands in horror, his mouth open in a silent scream.

In bed, Duncan pulls his hands away from his face, jarring himself out of the reverie. He tears the blankets off and gets out of bed, breathing hard.

He looks at Sandra, hesitates for a moment, and then grabs his clothes.

IN THE HALLWAY,

Duncan is just leaving Sandra's room when he hears a MOAN from Henry's room. He stops, listens. The MOAN comes again, a frightened child's voice.

Duncan turns and pushes open the door, which was ajar.

IN HENRY'S ROOM,

Henry is asleep in bed, but fitfully, having a bad dream. Duncan stands there for a moment, watching. Henry WHIMPERS.

Duncan goes into the room. He sits at the edge of Henry's bed. Henry, still asleep, thrashes. Duncan reaches out and lays one hand softly on the child's head. He strokes the boy's hair, the same way Mary stroked his own.

DUNCAN
(a whisper)
No bad dreams... no bad dreams...

Henry calms. Still asleep, he reaches up with both hands, closes them around Duncan's hand, and pulls it down, to his heart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Cradling Duncan's hand in this way, Henry rolls over, facing the wall. Duncan looks at him, his eyes huge with sadness, as the boy drifts back into peaceful sleep.

IN THE KITCHEN,

Duncan leaves a folded note that says "Sandra" on the front on her kitchen table. Still agitated, he scoops up his overcoat and leaves through the kitchen door, closing it a little harder than he meant to.

IN THE BEDROOM,

Sandra opens her eyes at the sound. She looks around, disoriented. He's gone. She gets up.

IN THE KITCHEN,

Sandra reads the note. She's puzzled by it. She picks up her purse and pulls out her pack of cigarettes. It's empty, of course.

SANDRA
Damn.

She checks her watch. She pokes her head into the living room. The baby-sitter is still asleep on the couch.

Sandra looks at her watch again, thinking. Kind of late to be going out alone. She goes to the door and opens it a crack.

HER BLOCK

is deserted. Except for one car. Fortunately, it's a police car, TWO COPS standing beside it, having an animated discussion.

SANDRA
Thank you, Mr. Po-lice Man.

IN THE KITCHEN,

Sandra, dressed now, grabs her keys and wallet off the counter. Beside them, her answering machine light is flashing, a red number "1" is lit up. Allison's message. Sandra ignores it.

EXT SANDRA'S STREET NIGHT

Sandra comes out of her apartment and locks her door behind her. Down the block, the Cops look up at her. She waves to them. They wave back.

Sandra starts down the street, toward the amber light shining from a bodega up at the far corner of the next block.

As Sandra reaches the corner, she hears a SLAM! SLAM! from behind her. She turns around. The Cops are in their car now, and they've popped the flashing lights. They take off in a hurry, driving right past her, responding to a call.

Sandra stops, alone now. She looks back, at the door to her apartment. She looks ahead, at the lights of the bodega now only a block away.

What the hell, she's this close. She heads for the bodega.

Behind her, a DARK FIGURE crosses the street, headed toward her side. It's a man in a long black overcoat, staring at the sidewalk, his face not visible to her.

Sandra darts a glance as the Figure crosses onto her sidewalk, behind her.

She walks. So does the Figure, drawing closer. Sandra slows, turning and pretending to study something in a shop window.

The Figure passes behind her, a reflection in the window. As he passes, the Figure turns and looks at her, and in his reflection we notice something alarming.

He's wearing a ski mask.

But Sandra is looking down and doesn't see it. A moment after he passes, she looks up, in the direction the Figure went. The Figure is at the corner now. He starts to cross the street, a bus crosses behind him, and when the bus clears her vision the Figure is gone.

Sandra walks to the corner, stepping up her pace. She reaches the door to the bodega and gives it a tug. Locked. Security bars are pulled in front of it from inside.

SANDRA
Oh, come on.

She looks at her watch. It's one minute after midnight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She tugs again on the door, squinting through the glass. Through a doorway into the back, she can see a Korean Man, the SHOPKEEPER, closing up. She KNOCKS on the glass.

The Shopkeeper looks up and sees her. He shakes his head, "closed."

Sandra mouths a word, "please?" She gestures to herself, "it's me!"

He waves his arms, "no."

She folds her hands, as if praying. She makes a desperate smoking gesture.

The Shopkeeper can't help but smile. He relents, holds up a finger -- "hang on a second." He steps toward a desk in back, out of view.

SANDRA
Attaboy.

A gloved hand grabs her by the throat.

A second gloved hand stifles the scream that rises in Sandra's throat and she is pulled, violently, off the front step of the bodega and around the corner of the building.

AROUND THE CORNER,

in a narrow alley, Sandra is shoved, face first, up against the hard brick wall of the bodega.

INSIDE THE BODEGA,

the Shopkeeper picks up a set of keys from his desk in back. He walks toward the front doors, sorting through them.

IN THE ALLEY,

Sandra is pinned against the wall by the STALKER. He holds one gloved hand roughly over her mouth, the other is securely around her throat.

He leans in and WHISPERS savagely in her ear.

STALKER
Do you have any idea what you've done to my heart?

INSIDE THE BODEGA,

the Shopkeeper is at the front gate, still sorting through the keys. He finds the one he's looking for and unlocks the security gate.

IN THE ALLEY,

Sandra's eyes are wide in terror. The Stalker pushes in hard against her from behind. He tightens his fingers around her throat. Her face is starting to turn color.

INSIDE THE BODEGA,

the Shopkeeper shoves aside the security bars.

IN THE ALLEY,

Sandra's face is turning purple. She's choking to death.

The Stalker, realizing this, slips his fingers off her throat, still holding his other hand tightly around her mouth. Sandra starts to breathe in and out through her nose, sucking air as hard as she can.

With his free hand, the Stalker reaches into the pocket of his overcoat and pulls out a knife.

Sandra, regaining lucidity, catches sight of the blade and thrashes, but he holds her tight.

STALKER
I'm taking part of you home with me tonight.

INSIDE THE BODEGA,

the Shopkeeper unlocks the front door and swings it open.

IN THE ALLEY,

Sandra and the Stalker both hear the door open and turn their heads in that direction at the same time. They're only six feet from the door, but the corner of the building hides them from view.

Behind them, the Shopkeeper stands on the front step, looking both ways. Where'd she go?

Against the wall, the Stalker holds one hand tight over her mouth.

CONTINUED:

SHOPKEEPER
Hello?

Sandra tries to make a sound, but the Stalker raises the knife to her throat, pressing the blade hard against her skin.

SHOPKEEPER (cont'd)
Hello? Missy?

The Stalker presses the blade harder, a sharp indentation in Sandra's throat now.

The Shopkeeper comes all the way out of the bodega and takes a few steps toward the corner. He's only three feet from them now, but still hidden by the corner of the building.

SHOPKEEPER (cont'd)
I told you wait, I had to get the keys!

The knife point breaks her skin and a trickle of blood runs down Sandra's throat. She makes no sound.

Pissed off, the Shopkeeper turns and stomps back inside, CURSING to himself in Korean. Sandra hears the SLAM of the door, then the RATTLE of the security gate as it's shoved back into place.

Tears run down Sandra's cheek and over the Stalker's gloved hand.

He whips her around, shoving her further back into the alley. He brings the knife around to the back of her neck, slides it up along the base of her skull --

-- and slices off six inches of her hair.

Clutching it tightly in one hand, he lets go of Sandra and takes off, running away down the alley in the opposite direction. Sandra drops to the ground, her legs just collapsing under her. She half-rolls, half-crawls out of the alley and into the street.

Headlights immediately bear down on her. Sandra SCREAMS and more lights flash red and blue. It's a police car.

Sandra, sobbing, falls back to a sitting position in the middle of the street as TWO COPS get out of the car.

CUT TO:

INT DUNCAN'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Duncan comes into his apartment. He takes off his black overcoat, tosses it over the back of the sofa, and goes to the television set. He flicks it on, pushes the VCR timer off, and hits another button. A message on the blank TV screen says "REWIND."

Duncan goes into the kitchen and comes back with a glass and a half-full bottle of Scotch.

He drops into a chair in front of the TV, picks up the remote, and hits a button. The message changes to "PLAY."

ON SCREEN,

the theme music for the Channel 5 Morning News starts up.

ANNOUNCER
-- Channel 5 Morning Report, with Don Landau, Sandra Pritchett, Johnny Ling, weather, and Lou Logan, sports.

The music finishes and the camera cuts to Sandra, that morning, hair still long, sitting at the desk. She starts to read the morning news.

IN THE CHAIR,

Duncan pours himself a drink and sinks lower into the chair. He watches her.

CUT TO:

INT POLICE STATION · NIGHT

A camera flashes, three different police photographs of Sandra's bruised neck and butchered hair. Profile. Straight on. Turning her head at an odd angle to show the bruises.

IN THE PRECINCT ROOM,

Sandra is pale, frightened, missing six inches of hair but otherwise fine. She sits across the desk from a detective (TOLAND) who's taking her statement and filling out the incident report.

TOLAND
This sort of thing ever happen before?

(CONTINUED)

SANDRA
No.

TOLAND
This isn't unusual with people on TV. It's very intimate, you come right into everybody's living rooms, you're the first face they see in the morning, they watch you in their pajamas, talk to you before they talk to their wife, even. Feel like they know you. Ever get threatening fan mail, anything like that?

SANDRA
A couple letters, about a year ago. From some guy in prison.

TOLAND
Did you keep 'em?

SANDRA
Station security has them.

TOLAND
I'll want to read 'em. One problem with guys in prison...

SANDRA
What?

TOLAND
They get out. What about people you know? Anybody that might be capable of this?

SANDRA
I don't think so.

TOLAND
Anybody mad at you?

SANDRA
(thinks)
My ex-husband. Usually.

TOLAND
What's his name?

SANDRA
Bruce? He may be an asshole, but he's not a stalker.

TOLAND
He might have an idea who is. What's his name?

SANDRA
Rickets. Bruce Rickets.

TOLAND
The Coach?

SANDRA
Yeah.

Toland types it onto the report.

TOLAND
Who else? Any new men in your life?

SANDRA
Yes... sort of. I was out with him tonight. He left just before it happened.

TOLAND
Any similarities, physically, between him and the person who attacked you?

SANDRA
No. No, it couldn't be him.

TOLAND
The next thing a woman says after "it couldn't be him" is almost always the name of the bad guy.
(hands on the typewriter keys)
What is it?

Sandra hesitates.

TOLAND (cont'd)
There's nothing wrong with checking someone out. He won't even know I'm there.

SANDRA
It isn't him.

TOLAND
Look --
(checks the form)
-- Sandra.

(MORE)

CONTINUED: (3)

TOLAND (cont'd)
I work this kind of case a lot, I know how they go. I am going to check this guy out. If you tell me his name now, I won't have to wait until you're dead to do it.

TYPEWRITER KEYS

bang out eleven letters on a police report:

P-A-Y-N-E, D-U-N-C-A-N.

The report WHIZZES past, yanked out of the typewriter.

A SERIES OF RUBBER STAMPS

pound a routing classification on it:

ASSAULT/METRO-CAPS/N.B.PCT.

THE REPORT

lands in a metal in-box. Night light changes to daytime, the graveyard shift to the morning shift, and

A HAND

scoops the stack of forms out of the box. Greg Moss, the sweaty man Bruce saw at the basketball game, walks through the busy precinct house the next morning, flipping through the incident reports from the previous night. He wears a detective's badge on his belt.

He stops, staring at Sandra's report. His eyes go straight to her name.

A XEROX MACHINE

flashes as Moss makes a copy of the report.

THE REPORT,

held in Moss's hand, hurries with him down the street in an expensive part of town. Moss bounds up the steps to a nice-looking house and rings the bell.

Bruce opens the door. Moss goes inside.

INT BRUCE'S HOUSE DAY

Bruce's house is impeccably kept, a lot of beautiful, well-maintained woodwork and spare, expensive furniture.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Moss, agitated, is flicking through a Fotomat envelope with a couple dozen pictures inside while Bruce reads the report.

BRUCE
And she didn't even pick up the phone to tell me about it, can you believe that?

Moss holds up one of the pictures. It's him, in the Warriors' locker room, posing with two basketball players.

MOSS
This is a good one, can I have it?

BRUCE
Take 'em all, I made you an extra set.

Moss shoves the pictures into the breast pocket of his overcoat. He finishes a drink, Scotch. He wipes his brow, sweaty, while Bruce reads on. He seems nervous.

BRUCE (cont'd)
(still reading)
I think it's time to see what my lawyer thinks of this. Don't you?

Moss, perpetually hot, shrugs out of his overcoat. He holds up his empty glass.

MOSS
Can I get another one of these?

CUT TO:

INT DUNCAN'S APARTMENT DAY

The dinner table is set for two in Duncan's apartment. Duncan stands over it, looking down. From the kitchen, the sounds of someone cooking drift in, pots BANGING, something SIZZLING, a sauce BUBBLING. Mary, Duncan's wife, comes into the room and puts a bowl with flowers floating in it in the middle of the table.

MARY
Oh, you used those plates? Do you mind if we use the good ones?

DUNCAN
Mary.

CONTINUED:

MARY
Can we talk in the kitchen? I'm right at the tricky part.

He follows her to the doorway of the kitchen and lingers there while she cooks, finishing three things at once.

DUNCAN
I am -- involved in something that I can't control.

MARY
I think I should have pulled this out at twelve minutes.

DUNCAN
You were right. I'm falling in love with someone, Mary.

That gets her attention. She turns and looks at him for a long moment, then goes back to what she was doing.

DUNCAN (cont'd)
Aren't you going to say anything?

MARY
I think that's wonderful.

She lays a hand on one side of his face and kisses him softly on the other side. He closes his eyes. Her kiss almost hurts.

Mary goes into the dining room and picks up the every day plates, replacing them with china from a cabinet on the other side of the room.

DUNCAN
You know what it does to me to hear you say that?

MARY
It's natural. It's time. I never thought it would be any other way, did you?

DUNCAN
Yeah, I did.

MARY
No, you didn't. You may have hoped we'd be in love forever, but how could we? This is the first sign of life you've shown in two years.

DUNCAN
Stop it.

MARY
I'm sorry, but it's the truth. What do you want me to say?

He pulls her away from the table, grabbing her by the arms and pulling her close to him.

DUNCAN
(losing control)
I want you to say it's not my fault! I want you to say it didn't even happen, I want you to call on the phone and say you're going to be an hour late and can I pick up Sean from school. I want you to sneak up behind me when I'm working and scare the hell out of me for fun, I want you to bitch about your parents, I want you to tell me something Sean said that makes us laugh for twenty minutes, I want... oh, Mary, Mary, I want you, oh, God, I'm so sorry, Mary...

There is a loud KNOCK at the door. Duncan looks over.

From the kitchen, the cooking sounds stop. The sauce stops BOILING. The something stops SIZZLING.

The KNOCK repeats.

On the table, the dinner plates disappear, as does the bowl of flowers, the silverware, and everything else. Duncan wipes a hand over his face to comport himself and walks to the door. He doesn't go around, Mary, though --

-- he walks right through her. Her image falls all to pieces and disappears as well, leaving him alone in the apartment.

He opens the door. Fenady, the man Duncan saw in the spy shop, stands outside with a concerned look on his face.

FENADY
Hi.

Duncan, still emotional, just nods -- "what do you want?"

FENADY (cont'd)
Can I come in?

Duncan crosses the room and sits in a chair, pulling himself together. Fenady comes into the apartment and closes the door behind him.

FENADY (cont'd)
Hate to dog you like this, but you blew off your appointment again, and you didn't call either. What am I, your parents? Is everything okay?

DUNCAN
Everything's great.

FENADY
Uh huh.
(looks around)
You got somebody over?

A moment goes by, and Fenady lets it sit there.

DUNCAN
You heard me?

FENADY
Oh yeah.

DUNCAN
Listening at doors, now? Is that the latest psychiatric technique?

FENADY
I'd take your kindergarten teacher out and get her drunk if I thought it would tell me anything. What am I supposed to do when you shut me out?

DUNCAN
You know I talk to Mary sometimes. It doesn't mean anything.

CONTINUED: (4)

FENADY
Excuse me, do you mind? I'm the one with seven years of medical school and a doctorate in clinical psychology and I think carrying on a conversation with your dead wife is fucking weird.

DUNCAN
She haunts me. You know, unfinished business, all that shit? Don't you believe in ghosts, Tom?

FENADY
No, I don't believe in ghosts. I believe in anti-psychotic medication, but I don't believe in ghosts.

DUNCAN
I'm just pretending. I know she's not there.

FENADY
Okay, let me ask you something. When you're pretending to talk to her -- does she answer you?

DUNCAN
It's not that simple. I <u>pretend</u> she answers.

FENADY
Do her answers ever surprise you?

Duncan looks away.

FENADY (cont'd)
Not good!

DUNCAN
It helps, Tom. She shows up when I need her and -- I feel better.

FENADY
You do, huh? 'Cause you kinda sounded like the elephant man from outside.

DUNCAN
Then I guess two years of your brilliant therapy hasn't exactly done the trick, has it?

(CONTINUED)

FENADY
Ouch. Look, I know I fucked up the whole doctor/patient thing beyond recognition, but you weren't exactly a plan vanilla case, man. You got to me. What happened to you broke my heart. You think I talk to all my patients this way? I don't. Only the ones I love. I'm sorry if I let you down professionally, but personally, you gotta know how much I care about you.

DUNCAN
I'm sorry. Let me off the hook, okay?

FENADY
Look at you, man, you're a shadow, you look like you did the week before you went up on the bridge. You're acting like a guy looking for a way to die.

DUNCAN
Not any way. Just the right way.

FENADY
Keep talking like that, jerkoff, I'll have you recommitted so fast it'll-

DUNCAN
I'll see you next week. I swear.

FENADY
I've heard that before. And then two months go by before I see you again. Duncan, as long as you are the only one on the planet who knows what really happened in the accident, you're stuck. You'll never get anywhere until you face it. Until you and I get in a car and drive up to Blackwater.

DUNCAN
Maybe there's a reason I don't remember. Maybe I shouldn't remember.

CONTINUED: (6)

FENADY
We get close and then you slip away, you regress. Yes, it's okay to pretend to talk to Mary, it's called a delusion, and as delusions go it's a relatively harmless one. But when you tell me she talks back to you, I start to freak out, 'cause there's a word for that, too.

Duncan looks up at him.

FENADY (cont'd)
Schizophrenia.

CUT TO:

INT MEDIATION ROOM DAY

CLOSE ON a black and white photo of a charred car wreck, printed from a computer screen. The headline says "TWO KILLED IN WRECK," the smaller one under it "Father Survives in Third Blackwater Incident This Year." The photo is one in a stack, a hand takes the top one and passes the rest on. An unfamiliar WOMAN'S VOICE comes over the picture.

WOMAN (o.s.)
That was two years ago. Five months later --

The hand receives another stack of photographed clippings and takes the top one. In this one, rescue vehicles on the Bay Bridge tie up traffic as police lead a distraught-looking Duncan away in handcuffs. The headline is "WORKMAN SAVES JUMPER ON BAY BRIDGE."

WOMAN (cont'd)
-- somebody pulled him off the edge of the Bay Bridge.

The Woman talking is GLORIA HABER, an attorney in her forties. She's sitting next to Bruce Rickets; they're across a large wooden table from Sandra (in a new short-short haircut), Allison, and CHARLIE O'HARA, sixtyish. They're in a cramped government-issue mediation room, its walls painted a bizarre shade of green intended to soothe. It has the opposite effect. A court-appointed mediator (FRANK BASCOMBE) sits at the head of the table.

BASCOMBE
He was threatening to jump?

(CONTINUED)

GLORIA HABER
Not threatening, he did it. An electrician grabbed him just as he went over. The judge sentenced him to a year in a psychiatric facility, he was out in four months.

Sandra looks at the pictures, stunned, wordless.

BASCOMBE
Is there any violent behavior on his sheet?

GLORIA HABER
Other than to himself, no. That is, until the other night.

Charlie O'Hara speaks up. He has a mellifluous voice. Charlie got the lead in his community theatre production of "The Music Man."

O'HARA
We're not in court, Gloria, you can save the well-poisoning. We don't have any evidence that Mr. Payne is responsible for the attack on Sandra.

GLORIA HABER
We don't have any evidence that he isn't.

BRUCE
The police report says he left your house five minutes before it happened.

SANDRA
That doesn't make him guilty.

BASCOMBE
Let's not try him here, that's not what we came for.

GLORIA HABER
(to Bascombe)
Mr. Rickets feels that, at the very least, Sandra has exercised poor judgment. A suitor with a history of psychiatric problems, including self-destructive tendencies, is a nightmarish load for a single mother.
(MORE)

CONTINUED: (2)

GLORIA HABER (cont'd)
We feel Sandra's psychic energies would be better spent exclusively on her son.

BASCOMBE
Do you think this might be more than you can handle right now, Sandra?

SANDRA
Could you possibly say that in a more patronizing way?

GLORIA HABER
And we are doubly concerned, coming as this does in the wake of the marijuana incident --

ALLISON
Oh, Christ, are you <u>really</u> going to drag that out again?

BRUCE
The guy was smoking a joint the middle of the living room with Henry was in the house!

SANDRA
It was a <u>party</u>, I can't watch fifty people at once! I asked him to leave as soon as I found out.

BRUCE
He never should have been invited in the first place!

SANDRA
This is wrong, Bruce, what you're doing is wrong, you've got to stop it! I can't live under a microscope forever!

BASCOMBE
Ms. Pritchett --

SANDRA
If you study every inch of a person's life, <u>nobody</u> can hold up!

BRUCE
It's not <u>you</u>, it's the people you choose.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BRUCE (cont'd)
Read the report on this guy, he refused to cooperate with the police or the coroner's inquest after the car accident.

SANDRA
He couldn't remember anything!

BRUCE
That's convenient. Why wouldn't he even talk to them? Why? Why does a man who lost his wife and son in a car accident plead the Fifth? What did he do that was so awful?

SANDRA
This is disgusting. What are you implying?

BRUCE
There's a cloud of suspicion around this guy and he does nothing to try and clear his name. He must have something to hide. I mean, I'm not saying anything here, but his wife's family was worth a lot of money -- and he hasn't published a book in almost three years.

SANDRA
He hasn't been able to finish.

BRUCE
Or he doesn't need to.

SANDRA
What, he killed his wife and he's sitting on a fortune now? He's as broke as I am.

BRUCE
How do you know? Did you see his bank records?

SANDRA
Bank records? What are you talking about?! Do you run a TRW on every cheerleader you bang? You'd be their biggest customer.
(to Bascombe)
Why am I the one who always has to defend myself?!

CONTINUED: (4)

BASCOMBE
We're not attacking you, we're just trying to get a clear picture of the situation so I can determine whether or not there is a threat to Henry. I'm not going to recommend the judge even hear about this --

O'HARA
Then why is there a court reporter here?

Sure enough, a COURT REPORTER sits unobtrusively in the corner, taking down every word.

GLORIA HABER
So there are no misunderstandings.

O'HARA
Uh huh.

BASCOMBE
I don't think there's a person in this room who wants to go back to court. We just want to get this all out in the open and decide what's in Henry's best interests. And I'll be frank, from what I've heard so far, whether Mr. Payne is guilty or not, your continued association with a disturbed man does trouble me.

O'HARA
Could you all give us a moment alone, please?

BASCOMBE
Certainly.

Bascombe, Gloria Haber, and Bruce get up and go outside, leaving the door hanging open.

Allison and Charlie O'Hara move in close around Sandra. They lower their voices.

O'HARA
Call me paranoid, but I think they're setting us up. Gloria wanted this meeting on the record for a reason. If the police prove this man <u>did</u> attack you --

CONTINUED: (5)

SANDRA
He didn't.

O'HARA
I'm saying if. If he did, I bet they're planning to say you exposed Henry to a violent threat, haul us into court, and petition for primary custody.

SANDRA
What do I do?

O'HARA
How important is this man to you?

SANDRA
He's important.
(pause)
But not as important as Henry.

O'HARA
Then drop him. Today. A clean break. Advise the mediator, in writing, that you've done so. And then hope like hell he's innocent so this doesn't come back to haunt us.

Sandra looks out the door, at Bruce. He and his lawyer are conferring with Bascombe, explaining something to him. Bascombe seems in agreement, nodding quickly.

ALLISON
It's cold and it's cruel, Sandy. But it sounds like good fucking legal advice to me.

CUT TO:

EXT PARK DUSK

It's the same park where Duncan and Sandra first met. Duncan waits near the fountain where he rescued Henry from the pigeons. He looks up and sees Sandra approaching quickly, her hands thrust in her pockets.

DUNCAN
Hey! Great haircut!

SANDRA
Why did you leave the way you did?

(CONTINUED)

DUNCAN
I'm sorry about that -- I told you, in the note, I was upset.

SANDRA
About what?

DUNCAN
The things we talked about, they got me thinking, it wouldn't stop, it was like torn up pictures floating through my brain and I couldn't put the pieces together. I knew I was going to be up all night and I didn't want to wake you.

SANDRA
Where did you go?

DUNCAN
Home. What's wrong?

SANDRA
Did anyone see you?

DUNCAN
No, I was alone. What are you asking me this for?

SANDRA
I was attacked, Duncan, right after you left. He cut off my hair, he had a knife to my throat...

DUNCAN
Jesus Christ. Are you all right?

SANDRA
I'm fine.

DUNCAN
Who was it?

SANDRA
Why didn't you tell me about Blackwater?

DUNCAN
I did!

SANDRA
Not everything. You knew your wife was killed, you told me you "split up."

DUNCAN
How did you find out about that?

SANDRA
Why did you let me believe she was still alive?

DUNCAN
I didn't, I just didn't feel like getting into it, I don't like to talk about it, I, I can't talk about it or -- or --

Behind him, a flock of pigeons suddenly bursts into flight.

SANDRA
I would have listened.

DUNCAN
Yeah, you listen, everybody listens, and then they get as far away from me as they can. I'm the worst nightmare of anybody who's got a family. I'm God's comedian. Sometimes I can't stand to be around me, it's too fucking depressing.

SANDRA
You need help, Duncan.

DUNCAN
I've had help. Any more treatment's gonna kill the patient.

SANDRA
You told me yourself, there are things you've done that you don't remember. Maybe, the other night... I'm not suggesting...

DUNCAN
(horrified)
I would never, ever do anything to you! In two years, you're the only person in the world that I, that I even --

CONTINUED: (3)

She looks at him, torn apart. It hurts like hell to hurt him, but:

SANDRA
I can't see you any more, Duncan.

DUNCAN
What? Because I've had some problems? What are you doing to me?!

SANDRA
They're forcing me! Bruce watches everything I do, everyone I'm with, if I step one foot out of line he'll use it to take Henry away from me! Look at me, I don't have a marriage, I can barely hold my job, I lost touch with half my friends -- what I have, what I have, Duncan, is Henry. I don't need much, but I need him. I can't let them strip everything away from me.

That hits on a level he understands completely.

DUNCAN
I think I'm in love with you, Sandra. But you're right. Run from me.

SANDRA
I'm the last thing you need.

DUNCAN
You're the only thing I need.

She can't take it any more, has to get out of there. She leans in and kisses him goodbye, on the lips. He pulls her closer, for a real kiss. He whispers in her ear.

DUNCAN (cont'd)
Don't ever let go of him.

Tears burst from Sandra's eyes, Duncan rips out of her embrace and walks away, across the park.

EXT STREET DAY

Duncan keeps walking, out of the park and down the street, fast, upset.

CONTINUED:

He crosses a street in the middle, without looking. A car is right there, moving too fast to stop. The DRIVER locks up the brakes, the car's tires SCREAM --

-- and it hits him.

Duncan falls, but bounces right back to his feet, seemingly uninjured, and keeps walking. The Driver gets out, furious.

DRIVER
What the fuck is the matter with you?! Hey! HEY!

But Duncan is already across the street, still walking, ignoring the Driver's calls.

Further up the block, there is a bus bench. Weak at the knees, Duncan collapses onto it. The Driver, back in his car, ROARS past, shouting at Duncan.

DRIVER (cont'd)
Crazy motherfucker!

Duncan just sits, staring. Across the way, a STREET CRAZY is ranting to everybody and nobody. Duncan sees him. The Street Crazy spins, he SHOUTS, he tells his crazy story. As Duncan watches him, his eyes full of sympathy, the sounds of the street fade away and are replaced by a melody running through Duncan's head, the same HAUNTING MELODY Mary hummed earlier.

Duncan buries his face in his hands.

CUT TO:

INT DUNCAN'S APARTMENT NIGHT

The far side of the unfinished first floor of Duncan's apartment is devoted to work. There's a computer on the desk, papers and books stacked and scattered here and there.

Duncan sits at the desk, the cursor blinking at him. On the two walls nearest him, there are a lot of framed black and white photographs, Mary's, nicely done -- Sean as a baby, trying to put his foot in his mouth. Duncan playing softball in the park, that sort of thing.

Duncan looks at them. He takes a drink from a glass of Scotch on the desk. He sets the glass down. He looks at the picture next to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's a shot of Sean, must have been taken shortly before the accident, he looks the same age. He's standing on a bed in his pajamas, arms at his sides, posing in that stiff way kids do.

Duncan stares at the picture, long and hard. He takes another drink from the glass. He looks back at the picture.

Sean's arms are no longer at his sides, it's the same picture, but now he's holding his hands out in front of him, reaching out to the camera lens.

Duncan stares at those hands, reaching out toward him. They seem to reach closer to him, as if Sean's walking toward the camera, holding those empty hands out in front of him.

Duncan squeezes the Scotch glass until his knuckles turn white, then hurls it against the wall, at a picture of himself, a familiar moment -- he's standing next to their car, holding the string of a runaway red balloon in his teeth. Picture and glass SMASH and fall to the ground.

Duncan gets up and heads for the front door. His overcoat is draped over the sofa behind him, but he leaves without it, desperate to get out, anywhere but here.

EXT STREET - NORTH BEACH NIGHT

Seen from a distance, Duncan storms out of his building and marches away, down the block, in his shirt sleeves.

EXT ANOTHER STREET NIGHT

Two blocks away, Duncan stops, hands thrust in his pockets, shivering, CURSING.

DUNCAN
Get pneumonia while you're at it.

He turns around and heads back home, crossing his arms over his chest.

ON HIS BLOCK,

he comes around the corner and is nearing the steps that lead to his apartment when a car door opens across the street and Bruce steps out.

BRUCE
Oh, hey, hi! How ya doin'?

DUNCAN
(Christ, this guy again)
Hi.

BRUCE
I was just coming to see you.

DUNCAN
Yeah?

BRUCE
I was in the neighborhood, thought I'd see if you wanted to grab a bite. Did you eat yet?

DUNCAN
This is, uh, a bad time for me.

He starts toward his steps again. Bruce reaches out and takes his arm.

BRUCE
Please. It's important that I talk to you.

He takes his arm off quickly, respectfully.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Let's hit this place I know around the corner. The owner bet heavy the year we won it all, I made him a fortune. Crazy guy never even lets me put my hand in my pocket.

He starts off, down the block, but Duncan doesn't follow.

DUNCAN
I'm freezing my ass off out here, what do you want?

Bruce stops. He doesn't come closer, just lowers his voice.

BRUCE
I want to talk about Henry. And about you.

DUNCAN
We already had that talk, didn't we? Do I get another basketball?

CONTINUED: (2)

BRUCE
I don't know if you're aware of this or not, but Sandra was attacked Thursday night. Violently. She's fine, but we're all very concerned.

DUNCAN
She told me.

BRUCE
Well -- shit, I don't know how to do this without...

DUNCAN
I'm standing right here. If you've got something to say, all you have to do is talk.

BRUCE
You're a cards-on-the-table kind of guy, aren't you? I like that, I am too. I did some reading about you. Considering what happened, and your, well, your psychological state, do you really think you should be getting involved with anyone right now?

DUNCAN
What is this, I'm the Book of the Month now?

BRUCE
I told you, I have to take an active interest in anyone who's going to be spending time with my son.

DUNCAN
Oh, I get it, so it must have been the crazy fucker that went after Sandy, huh? What about <u>you</u>, Bruce? You're the only one I've seen get violent lately. I saw that look in your eye, the other night, right before you came after me. I knew a guy who used to get that look. He told me it's like everything turns red and he's suddenly watching himself from outside his body. That sound familiar to you? 'Course, this guy killed his wife <u>and</u> his girlfriend...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BRUCE
If you have any real feelings for Sandra, or for Henry, the best thing you could do for both of them is to stay away. Until you get some things figured out. I'm not suggesting you're hiding something, about what happened in your accident, I mean, but you have to admit it's odd that your wife was trapped in the car, you ended up thrown clear, and your son was --

DUNCAN
Say one more word and I'll push your face out the back of your fucking head.

BRUCE
See? That's not a reassuring comment. Look at this from my point of view. A mentally unstable man with a history of memory lapses --

DUNCAN
I don't have a "history of memory lapses," there's one.

BRUCE
That you know of.

DUNCAN
Get the fuck away from me.

BRUCE
Don't you think there's a chance, and I'm talking about a chance here, the slimmest possibility, that you might have done other things you can't remember?

Duncan turns around and heads back to his apartment, quickly. Bruce calls after him.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Like, Thursday, for example?

Duncan stops and turns back.

DUNCAN
No. There's no chance of that. None.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

But now the thought is in his brain, and it has clearly shaken him.

BRUCE
Well. Phew. That's a relief.

Behind Duncan, someone leaves his apartment building and comes down the steps. Duncan glances at them. Bruce leans in and lowers his voice, not to be overheard.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Now if only you believed it.

He turns and walks off, across the street.

INT DUNCAN'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Duncan, shaken, drops into the chair behind his desk again and leans back, against his forgotten overcoat.

Is it possible?

His computer is still on. Its cursor flashes on the blank screen, as if mocking him.

CUT TO:

EXT SANDRA'S APARTMENT DAY

Morning. The Sunday Chronicle sits on Sandra's doorstep. The front door opens and Sandra, in pajamas, picks it up.

INT SANDRA'S KITCHEN DAY

Henry sits at the table in a booster seat, eating a bowl of cereal. Sandra brings the paper and a cup of coffee to the table and sits down next to him.

HENRY
I think I don't want to be Mr. Tomato Head.

SANDRA
Potato Head.

HENRY
Potato Head. I think I want to be a dinosaur, like Jackson.

CONTINUED:

SANDRA
A dinosaur would be cool, but that's Jackson's costume, don't you want to be your own thing?

She opens the paper and an envelope PLOPS onto the floor. She picks it up. No name on the front. She opens it.

HENRY
Um, I could be... a blue crayon!

She pulls a typed sheet of paper out of the envelope.

HENRY (cont'd)
What about a blue crayon, Mommy?

SANDRA
I think Mr. Potato Head scores you more candy. You'd better decide soon, honey, Halloween's only --

She trails off, reading the letter.

DEAR SANDRA,

it begins, innocently enough.

EVER WONDER WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE IF YOUR SON WAS DEAD?

She gasps, putting a hand to her mouth.

START WONDERING.

HENRY
What's the matter, Mommy?

Sandra's eyes zip down to the bottom of the page, where the signature is neatly typed -- DUNCAN.

CUT TO:

INT DUNCAN'S APARTMENT DAY

From offscreen, we hear the sound of a demonstration in the streets, cars HONKING, people SHOUTING and CHANTING. Duncan is asleep on his couch, still dressed in last night's clothes. A repeated KNOCKING on his door awakens him.

CONTINUED:

He gets up, blinking sleep out of his eyes. He turns off the TV, which must have been on all night, and goes to the door. He looks through the peephole. A policeman's badge is shoved in front of it.

Duncan opens his door. Detective Toland, the policeman who took Sandra's statements on the night of the stalking incident, waits on the landing.

TOLAND
Duncan Scott Payne?

DUNCAN
Yes?

Toland walks past Duncan and into the place. FOUR UNIFORMED COPS wearing surgical gloves are right behind him, carrying plastic bags and manila envelopes.

DUNCAN (cont'd)
Hey, wait a minute...

TOLAND
Detective Michael Toland, San Francisco P.D. CAPS unit.

DUNCAN
What?

TOLAND
Crimes Against Persons.

Toland tears the first page off a four-page document and hands it to Duncan. The four Uniforms spread out and start taking the place apart.

TOLAND (cont'd)
This is a search warrant, the face sheet is your copy. We are authorized to search your premises for evidence relating to suspicion of assault, making terrorist threats, and felony stalking against the person of Sandra Lynn Pritchett.
(tears off another sheet)
This is a Ramey Warrant, in the event we find corroborating evidence of these crimes, we will be placing you under arrest at this time. Will you have a seat in the chair while we do our work, please?

CONTINUED: (2)

Duncan, stunned, just stares at the paper in his hands, not noticing the chair has been brought over from his desk and placed behind him by one of the uniformed officers.

DUNCAN
Wait a minute, what kind of-

TOLAND
Just sit in the chair, please.

The Uniform pushes the chair forward, into the backs of his knees, and Duncan sinks onto it. Duncan's mind races, trying to figure this out.

While the Uniforms search the place, there is a cacophony of HORN BLASTS from the street below. Toland rubs his brow, a headache already today. He goes to the window and glances out.

IN THE STREET BELOW,

there is a major demonstration taking place. THOUSANDS OF BICYCLISTS jam the block, snarling traffic and proud of it. CYCLISTS and CAR DRIVERS face off, SHOUTING at each other in the street.

TOLAND
I can't stand these Critical Mass idiots.

IN THE APARTMENT,

Toland turns to Duncan.

TOLAND
Like traffic isn't bad enough...

DUNCAN
Shouldn't I -- should I have a lawyer here?

TOLAND
I don't know, did you do something you need a lawyer for?

UNIFORM 1
I found one, Detective.

Toland turns. One of the Uniforms is over at the desk, disconnecting Duncan's computer.

CONTINUED:

TOLAND
You like to write letters? You like to express your inner self, keep in touch with your friends?

DUNCAN
Where are you taking that?

He starts to stand, but Uniform 2 puts a hand on his shoulder, gently pushing him back into the chair while Uniform 1 carries his computer out the door.

TOLAND
Relax. Sit down. Nobody's in a rush. If you've got nothing to worry about, don't be worried.

ACROSS THE ROOM,

Uniform 3 opens the bottom right drawer of the desk. He shuffles some papers around, finds a false bottom with a finger hole in it, the kind you slide back to store stationery under. He slides it back, and his eyes widen at what he sees under it.

Sandra's hair, neatly bound in a pony tail, lies on the bottom of the drawer, next to the ski mask the Stalker wore the other night.

From out in the streets below, a ROAR of angry shouts rises up, followed by the BANG of a baseball bat on a car hood. Sounds like a riot starting.

BEHIND DUNCAN,

Uniform 2 hears the commotion and instinctively moves to the window and looks down.

Duncan looks down, at his feet. He's only wearing his socks. He looks to the right. His shoes are right next to him, at the foot of the couch. He feels behind him. His black overcoat is still draped over the back of the chair. He squeezes his fingers into it, getting a grip.

IN THE STREET,

twenty or thirty Cyclists have surrounded a Mercedes and are rocking it violently. The driver, inside, is SCREAMING at them as he tries to climb out.

IN THE APARTMENT,

UNIFORM 2
One of us should go down there.

Uniform 3 calls out.

UNIFORM 3
Detective.

They turn. Uniform 3 turns away from the desk, holding the ski mask and the six inch bunch of Sandra's hair out in front of him.

Duncan sees it and his eyes widen. Toland turns, following Duncan's line of sight, and sees the evidence too.

TOLAND
Okay, Mr. Payne, you have the right to remain --

He stops in the middle of his sentence, because he's looking at an empty chair. Duncan is gone. Uniform 2, drawn away from his post by the demonstration below, is already racing across the room, toward the open doorway.

TOLAND (cont'd)
THE FUCK WERE YOU DOING OVER THERE?!

He takes off.

INT STAIRWAY DAY

Duncan flies down the stairs four at a time, shoes and coat in hand. He reaches the bottom, BANGS into the door --

EXT STREET - DUNCAN'S APARTMENT DAY

-- and it SMACKS into Uniform 1, who is just returning from having put the computer in his squad car. Duncan hurdles right over him.

In the street, it is utter chaos. Cheering Cyclists have gridlocked the downtown area. Duncan races into the thick of them, knocking some over, but this is barely noticed, as the Demonstrators rocking the car are in a shouting match with the ENRAGED DRIVER, who waves a crowbar.

Toland and the Uniforms race into the mayhem on the street, guns drawn, but Duncan is already lost in the flood.

CUT TO:

INT BRUCE'S HOUSE DAY

Bruce sits in his living room, a cup of coffee on a saucer next to him. Detective Toland sits opposite him.

BRUCE
I asked Sandra, repeatedly, to be as selective as she could about who she spent time with, but she wouldn't -- have you ever been divorced?

Toland smiles ruefully and holds up two fingers.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Well, then you know -- if I say it, she won't do it.

TOLAND
Any reason to think Mr. Payne might come here?

BRUCE
No, I don't think so. Sandra's the one he's obviously obsessed with.

Toland stands and heads for the door.

TOLAND
Well, until we bring him in, you should keep your eyes open. And of course call us if he -- oh, while I'm here, just as a formality, could I ask where you were the night Ms. Pritchett was attacked?

BRUCE
Where I was?

TOLAND
Yeah, so I can type it into the thing..

BRUCE
Thursday, I was... in Boston. Warriors played the Celtics, I did the game. It was network, I'm sure they have tapes of that. You could call them --

TOLAND
Won't have to, now that I think about it.

BRUCE
Why not?

TOLAND
I watched that game. How do you like that? The investigating officer is your alibi.

CUT TO:

EXT SKYLINE DUSK

The sun sets on the city, bringing out the nocturnal animals. Duncan, cold, hands shoved in his pants pockets, walks quickly down an alley in the business district.

Rain starts to fall. He shivers. He pulls his overcoat in tight around him.

INT PARKING GARAGE NIGHT

Tom Fenady, Duncan's psychiatrist, walks alone across a nearly-empty parking garage. He reaches his car, a Honda Accord parked on the far side of the garage. He unlocks the driver's door and gets in.

INT CAR NIGHT

Fenady closes his door and tosses his briefcase onto the passenger seat. It CRUNCHES. Curious, he picks it up. There's broken glass on the seat.

Fenady looks up, at the passenger window. It's broken.

DUNCAN (o.s.)
Hello, Tom.

Fenady nearly jumps through the roof. Duncan is in the back seat.

FENADY
MOTHER <u>FUCKER</u>! Don't <u>DO</u> that!

DUNCAN
I'm sorry about your window.

FENADY
Are you all right? I've been worried out of my mind. The police were just upstairs, they're looking for you.

DUNCAN
How did they know about you?

FENADY
I testified at your hearing, it was in the court records. Duncan. Did you do what they said?

DUNCAN
I don't think so.

FENADY
What does that mean?

DUNCAN
Is it possible that I'm -- could I be doing things I don't remember?

FENADY
Yes. It's possible.

DUNCAN
Even -- violent things?

FENADY
Only you know that answer.
(sniffs the air)
Since when do you smoke cigars?

DUNCAN
I don't remember. Do I?

In spite of themselves, they laugh.

DUNCAN (cont'd)
Christ, Tom, I don't know what to think anymore, it's like I don't know how to think. I'm tired, I can't hold on to a thought... everything's cloudy, something keeps coming in and stirring it all up.

FENADY
I wonder what that something is.

DUNCAN
What?

FENADY
You know what you gotta do.

DUNCAN
Go to the police?

FENADY
Before that.

DUNCAN
What?

FENADY
Bullshit me, Duncan, but not yourself.

DUNCAN
I don't know.

FENADY
You can't get a handle on the present 'cause you won't let yourself remember the past. Unlock it, let the monster out and you'll be able to think again. What is it they say at the CIA? "The truth will set you free."

DUNCAN
I think that's the Bible, Tom.

FENADY
Close enough. It's time you got this over with. Hop in front, we're going for a drive.

CUT TO:

INT SANDRA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Sandra opens the front door of her apartment. Allison is on her front step, dressed in her work clothes, a terrible-news look on her face. She holds up a legal document.

ALLISON
Bruce filed for sole custody. We're going back to court tomorrow.

INT SANDRA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Allison and Sandra are in the living room, talking in hushed whispers while Henry watches a video in the background.

SANDRA
I can't go through this legal stuff again, Allison, I can't do it! If this isn't double jeopardy, I don't know what is!

ALLISON
It's called a change in material circumstances, the judge has an obligation to hear the motion. It's just what Charlie predicted, they're saying you exposed Henry to a violent threat.

SANDRA
We don't know where that letter came from. Duncan's name isn't even signed at the bottom, it's just typed, anybody could have --

ALLISON
On his computer? With your hair in his desk drawer?

SANDRA
What's the worst that can happen?

ALLISON
Custody is Charlie's area, not mine.

SANDRA
Come on, you've been at every hearing for four years, you've read every motion --

ALLISON
If the judge buys the immediate threat argument she might grant an emergency change of custody.

SANDRA
I wouldn't do it. I'd take off with Henry first.

ALLISON
You're freaking out about something that hasn't even happened yet! Charlie thinks the odds are we can --

SANDRA
You and Charlie O'Hara can figure the odds until you're blue in the face, but tomorrow afternoon I'm the one who has to walk into that courtroom and give my son away!

CUT TO:

INT FENADY'S CAR NIGHT

Duncan and Fenady are in the car, driving up the coast road. The rain has started to fall, in through the broken passenger window, and the drops fall across Duncan's face.

Duncan stares at the road, expressionless. They pass a road sign:

Blackwater, Pop. 2626

Duncan sees it. Fenady does too.

FENADY
You okay?

Duncan doesn't answer. Trembling, he stares out the windshield at the S-shaped road ahead. There is a flash:

-- and he sees the same road, on a different rainy night, as Duncan and Mary's car races down it.

Duncan, in the present, blinks. The memories are returning.

Fenady slows the car, its headlights playing across a gnarled old tree in a curve up ahead.

A shadow catches Duncan's eye and he looks to his left. A yellow balloon drifts toward him from the back seat of Fenady's car. Duncan stares at it. The balloon passes right in front of his face, everything turns hazy yellow for a second --

INT DUNCAN & MARY'S CAR NIGHT

-- and the yellow fades over the inside of Duncan and Mary's car, two years ago. Mary is driving, Duncan is on the passenger side. Younger and long-haired again, Duncan is at the moment he left the dream earlier, holding the string of a yellow balloon. He turns and holds the balloon out to Sean, who is in his car seat in back.

SEAN
I don't want that one, I want the red one!

He bats the yellow one away, it's completely unacceptable.

DUNCAN
(settling back into his seat)
Can't reach it, Buddy.

SEAN
I want the red one.

DUNCAN
As soon as we get home.

Sean, exasperated, twists and stretches an arm into the back of the car. Can't quite get the red balloon. He looks down, at the buckle that holds him in his car seat. He looks up at his parents. Very quietly, he unclips himself. He pushes the car seat's bar up over his head.

In front, Mary sees the movement of the bar in the rear view mirror.

MARY
Sean.

Duncan turns around. Sean is out of his seat, reaching into the back of the car.

DUNCAN
Get back in your seat right now, Sean.

Sean stretches for the red balloon's string. He teeters over the seat back, almost falling into the rear of the car. Duncan SIGHS and unfastens his own seat belt.

DUNCAN (cont'd)
Come on, Sean, in your seat when the car's moving, you know that.

SEAN
I almost...

Duncan twists around and gets hold of Sean's belt. He starts to pull him back, which pulls Sean away from the red balloon's string.

SEAN (cont'd)
Hey! Wait! I have to do something!

CONTINUED: (2)

Sean thrashes, and Duncan has to lunge to hold onto him with both hands. He twists further, putting his foot on the dashboard for leverage.

From above, Mary hears a WHIRRING sound. She furrows her brow, doesn't know what it is. She looks at her cigarette. Instead of getting sucked out the window, as it was a moment ago, the thin plume of smoke is now being pulled back into the car.

All the way in back, the dozen balloons start to bop around, agitated, bouncing into each other, stirred by something.

Mary looks up. The sunroof is opening. She looks down at the dashboard., The toe of Duncan's shoe is pressing the button.

MARY
Hey, Duncan --

In back, Sean finally clasps his hand around the red balloon's string.

SEAN
Got it!

All at once, the dozen balloons in the back seat come to life, sucked toward the front by the current of air streaming out the sun roof. They fly into the front seat, bouncing around crazily, blocking Mary's view of the road.

MARY
Woah, woah, woah-

EXT CLIFF ROAD NIGHT

From above the car, a few balloons ZIP out of the open sun roof. Ahead of the car, the road takes a sharp turn to the left.

INT CAR NIGHT

Mary's view out the windshield is completely obscured by the frantic balloons. Blinded, she stomps on the brake, but it has little effect on the slick road.

ABOVE THE CAR,

Mary misses the curve and the car continues straight on. There is a large tree in the curve, planted ten feet from the cliff's edge.

IN THE BACK SEAT,

Duncan senses the impending crash. He grabs hold of Sean.

The car hits the tree.

Mary, secured by her seat belt, is SLAMMED into the steering column by the collapsing front end. Duncan and Sean, unbelted, are propelled forward, over the front seat. They CRASH through the windshield, Duncan's back taking the brunt of the impact, as he still cradles Sean in his arms.

EXT CLIFF'S EDGE NIGHT

Mary's camera flies out the windshield too and lands next to Duncan and Sean, who CRUNCH to the ground on a hard, rocky surface. They roll. Duncan holds onto his son's arm with one hand.

Sean drops away, out of view, and as Duncan comes to a stop, he turns and looks down.

Sean is hanging over the edge of the cliff.

Duncan blinks, badly bloodied and disoriented by the crash. He holds onto his son's hand with what little strength he's got left. Sean dangles, eyes closed, unconscious.

DUNCAN
Oh God... oh God...

UNDER THE CAR,

Mary's cigarette, still lit, rolls under the car into a puddle of liquid that drips from a rupture in the car's undercarriage.

ON THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF,

Duncan, badly hurt, struggles to bring himself up to his knees, pulling Sean up a few feet. Behind him, he hears a low WHUMP. He turns, looking back over his shoulder.

The puddle under the car has burst into flame. Duncan looks at Mary in panic. She's trapped behind the wheel of the car.

She looks back at him, then at the steering wheel that is pinning her in the car. Blood streams down her forehead, she's confused, she tries to move but can't.

CONTINUED:

MARY
Duncan?!

Duncan looks back, at Sean, still dangling over the edge of the cliff.

UNDER THE CAR,

the fissure in the car's gas tank splits wide open.

A SHEET OF FLAME

bursts up around the car. Mary SCREAMS.

AT THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF,

Duncan whirls and reaches for her, an instinctive, almost involuntary movement. He pulls his now-empty hands up in front of him and stares at them in abject horror. He SCREAMS, realizing that if both hands are empty, he has lost hold of his son.

ABOVE THE CAR,

the dozen balloons, freed from the car but trapped in the branches of the tree, POP one by one as the flames rise up and touch them. One single balloon, the red one, works its way free of the branches. It rises up on the flames' hot air and floats away into the darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT FENADY'S CAR NIGHT

Fenady has stopped the car at the accident site. Duncan is slumped forward in his seat, sobbing into his hands. For a long moment, they just sit there.

Finally, Duncan sits back, completely drained.

DUNCAN
I should have gone with them.

FENADY
But you didn't. You lived. It's time to stop saying you're sorry. Stop looking for a way to die.

DUNCAN
Just the right way.

CONTINUED:

Fenady makes a face, leans over and sniffs Duncan's overcoat.

FENADY (cont'd)
And Jesus, will you put that fuckin' thing in the trunk? I try to take care of this car, you know, five minutes with you and it's got a broken window and reeks like cigars.

Duncan raises the sleeve of the coat and smells it.

DUNCAN
It does.

FENADY
Do you really think you need another vice?

DUNCAN
(looking at it)
This isn't my coat.

FENADY
I mean, they're your lungs...

DUNCAN
This isn't my coat.

He starts searching the pockets. They're all empty, except for the inner jacket pocket. In that, there's an envelope from the Fotomat. They look at it.

FENADY
Open it.

Duncan does. There are a couple dozen pictures inside. He starts flipping through them. We've seen these pictures. They're shots from the locker room of the Warriors basketball team.

DUNCAN
What the hell is this?

FENADY
You know 'em?

DUNCAN
Wait a minute.

He stops and flips back to a picture. It's Greg Moss, Bruce's brother-in-law, posing with two of the Players.

CONTINUED: (2)

DUNCAN (cont'd)
This guy, maybe, but where did I..?

He flips to the next picture. It's a shot of three people, Bruce, a basketball player, and Moss, all with their arms around each other, grinning at the camera. Moss has a cigar in one hand.

Duncan looks up, startled. He has a memory flash:

-- of a man walking out of his apartment building, the other night, while Bruce was distracting him. The man is briefly lit by a streetlight, and Duncan sees his face. It's Moss.

Back in Fenady's car, Duncan looks up.

DUNCAN (cont'd)
That's why Bruce didn't want me to go back into my apartment.

FENADY
What?

DUNCAN
And the guy grabbed my coat by mistake.

FENADY
Duncan, whatever this is, let's take it to the police. If you're innocent, you've got nothing to worry about.

DUNCAN
Last time I heard that, they tried to arrest me.

FENADY
What else can we do?

DUNCAN
You can give me a ride back to town. And your wallet.

Fenady just looks at him.

DUNCAN (cont'd)
You've been a great shrink, Tom. Be a good friend too, okay?

CUT TO:

INT BRUCE'S HOUSE NIGHT

Duncan's black overcoat, identical to Moss's, lies over the back of a chair in Bruce's house. Greg Moss sits in the chair, smoking a cigar. He moves a piece on a chessboard, playing a game with Bruce.

Bruce watches the move, curious.

BRUCE
You'll lose your queen.

MOSS
Really? Ah, shit.

He finishes his drink. He's already had several. Bruce looks at him.

BRUCE
If you want to go, Greg, you can just say so.

MOSS
What?

BRUCE
That's the dumbest move you've made in six years. Are you letting me win?

MOSS
Of course not.

Moss pours himself another drink. Bruce looks at the bottle.

BRUCE
Is it that hard to live with?

MOSS
Look, you said you didn't want to be alone tonight, so I'm here, okay? But let's just keep it friendly, keep our minds off it, or I'm gone, all right?

BRUCE
Little late for a guilty conscience, isn't it?

MOSS
Yeah, well, we're not talking about me fixing a couple traffic tickets here, this one went right the fuck out of bounds.

BRUCE
Nothing is out of bounds. My SON is stuck with a mother who doesn't deserve him. She wanted to kill him. She did, first instinct when she got pregnant, I had to talk her out of it. I saved the little bastard's life! And now she tells him lies about me. Poisons him against me. I'm fighting a father's rights battle, that's what I'm doing. Anything goes. He's not just my son, he's me, and she's turning him into something I don't even recognize. I will do anything to protect that kid. Anything.

MOSS
Can we talk about something else?

BRUCE
You think I enjoy all this?

MOSS
I wish I knew.

BRUCE
You're in no position to cop that attitude. I'm not the one who used the knife on her. Tell the truth, Greg. Did you get hard?

MOSS
Fuck you.

He gets up, grabs his overcoat.

BRUCE
Oh, what are you, a Catholic schoolboy? So she got a haircut, she's all right. What else could you do? You and Carol were in a jam, you helped me out, now your money problems are over. Congratulations, you did a good thing for your family. Go home and sleep well.

MOSS
Is this where it ends?

BRUCE
It is for you.

MOSS
What if tomorrow -- what if it doesn't go your way?

BRUCE
It will.

MOSS
What if you lose?

BRUCE
What are you trying to ask me?

MOSS
Why did you want the guy's shoes, Bruce?
(no answer)
The other night, when I was in his apartment, why did I have to steal a pair of his shoes?

BRUCE
Just a little something for the Black Bag.

MOSS
What the fuck does that mean?

Bruce looks at him.

BRUCE
Greg. You broke and entered. You planted evidence. You committed assault. You're in this for the duration, so think hard before you ask me that again. Do you really want to know?

Moss looks at him for a long moment --

-- then shrugs into his overcoat and leaves, closing the door behind him.

Bruce looks back to the chessboard. He reaches out and flicks Moss's queen over on her side.

CUT TO:

INT HENRY'S ROOM NIGHT

The middle of the night. Henry is asleep again, in his bed, dinosaur safely tucked under one arm. Sandra sits in a chair on the other side of the room, watching him.

Moving around Sandra, we see out the window next to her. Duncan is watching her from just outside. He taps on the glass. She turns.

She's surprised, but does not seem frightened. She holds up a hand -- "wait there."

She gets up and leaves the room.

INT SANDRA'S BEDROOM NIGHT

Sandra comes into her own bedroom. She takes a chair from a desk, opens the closet door, and climbs up on the chair. On the top shelf of her closet, there is a locked strongbox.

She takes a key from under a pile of sweaters, opens the strongbox, and takes something out.

It's a .38.

She shoves it into the back of her pants, pulls her shirt down over it, and hops off the chair.

EXT SANDRA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Sandra comes out a side door, into the alley that runs between her house and the next. Duncan steps forward, from the shadows. It's a gusty night; the wind billows their hair and clothes.

DUNCAN
It wasn't me.

SANDRA
Why should I believe you?

DUNCAN
You wouldn't. Yet. Oh, God, Sandy, your whole long life, all you finally remember is the times you did nothing. I'm not going to let it happen again.

He takes a step toward her. She pulls the gun out of the back of her pants. She holds it at her side. He stops.

SANDRA
There's a police car right in front.

DUNCAN
I want you to tell me where Bruce lives.

SANDRA
Why?

DUNCAN
I'm not the one doing this, you know that, in your heart you know it, you'd be screaming for the police right now if you didn't believe it.

He takes a step toward her again. She raises the gun, pointing it at him. He stops.

SANDRA
Oh, Christ, can I pick 'em. You're either going to turn out to be some kind of guardian angel, or the latest in a long line of...

DUNCAN
Sandy. Please. You've just got to -- you've got to have a little faith in yourself.

She's torn, but she keeps the gun in front of her.

SANDRA
What are you going to do?

DUNCAN
Prove what we both know is true.

She thinks. Finally:

SANDRA
515 Mission Street. He's taking me back to court tomorrow. At four o'clock. He won't be home.

DUNCAN
Thank you.

SANDRA
Restore my faith in mankind, okay?

DUNCAN
First thing tomorrow.

CUT TO:

INT SPY SHOP DAY

Duncan is in the spy shop, the same one he came to earlier. Harlan, the owner, places the heat stalker (the wand with an LED readout display at the base) on the counter.

DUNCAN
What's it called?

HARLAN
A heat stalker.

DUNCAN
And the gloves. And something to get through a door lock.

Harlan looks at him suspiciously.

HARLAN
This is just for research, isn't it?

DUNCAN
Absolutely. Almost got that ending, Harlan.

CUT TO:

INT COURTHOUSE DAY

A clock on a wall says it's 3:47. Sandra and Allison wait on one end of a corridor outside Family Court, conferring quietly with Charlie O'Hara.

On the other end of the corridor, Bruce waits with his lawyer, Gloria Haber. He looks up and makes eye contact with Sandra.

She does not look away. Neither does Bruce. The courtroom's big brown doors swing open and a BAILIFF steps out.

BAILIFF
All persons having business with San Francisco Municipal Family Court, part seventeen, please step inside.

SANDRA
(a nervous glance at the clock)
Already?

INT COURTROOM DAY

The courtroom is huge, but there are only half a dozen people in it, all clustered up at the front. No spectators allowed. The BAILIFF calls out again.

BAILIFF
-- Judge Rosemary Ellison presiding. Respondents, please draw nigh and you will be heard.

JUDGE ELLISON has a seat behind the bench. She has a cold. Sandra, Bruce, and their lawyers stand at opposing tables.

ELLISON
Please sit down. I cannot describe how it breaks my heart when I see familiar faces in here.
(to Sandra)
How's Henry?

SANDRA
Fine, thank you.

ELLISON
Good.
(sneezes)
I've read the motion, what does everybody have to say? Let's hear from the petitioner first.

Gloria Haber stands up.

GLORIA HABER
Your honor, as much as it upsets you to see this matter reopened, it wounds us even more.
(MORE)

GLORIA HABER (cont'd)
The last thing we want to do is disturb the relative tranquility that Bruce and Sandra's wonderful son has in his life. Unfortunately, that tranquility has already been shattered.

She picks up a piece of paper, to continue.

CUT TO:

EXT BRUCE'S HOUSE DAY

A lock pick slides into the doorknob on the front of Bruce's house. Duncan, wearing thin black gloves, works the pick.

INT BRUCE'S HOUSE DAY

Duncan steps carefully into the house and looks around. He flips on the heat stalker. The LED readout sits at zero.

He waves it slowly across the first floor. No response. Nobody home.

CUT TO:

INT COURTROOM DAY

Charlie O'Hara is on his feet, wrapping up his argument.

O'HARA
-- that your honor quash the motion, preserve the living arrangements as they exist now, and not punish both mother and child for a situation over which she had no control. Thank you, your honor, and may God guide you in your deliberations.

He sits.

ELLISON
Very generous offer.

She SNEEZES. O'Hara stands.

O'HARA
God bless you.

ELLISON
Give it a rest.

The lawyers begin to pack up their things.

ELLISON (cont'd)
I won't need a recess for deliberation, I'm ready to rule now.

They all stiffen, attentive. Ellison looks down at the motion, reading through it one last time. It seems to take her forever. Finally:

ELLISON (cont'd)
I agree with counsel for Ms. Pritchett and I am going to quash the motion for change of custody.

Allison throws her arms around Sandra. Charlie O'Hara nods wisely, he expected it all along. Bruce just stares, stunned.

ELLISON (cont'd)
I don't feel this situation can be blamed on Ms. Pritchett, her lifestyle, or her moral character. She has taken every possible step to safeguard Henry's well-being, and the police are actively pursuing the matter, including providing protection for her. As for you, Mr. Rickets, I am increasingly annoyed by your constant appeals, and if you continue to plague this court with motion after motion, I will consider limiting your access to Henry even further. This matter is closed, do you understand?
(bangs the gavel, turns to the Bailiff)
I'm going home.

Chairs SCRAPE as everyone gets up, but Bruce just sits there, staring straight ahead. Gloria Haber's hand drops onto his shoulder, cold comfort. Bruce doesn't seem to even feel it.

CUT TO:

INT BRUCE'S HOUSE DAY

Duncan creeps up the stairs in Bruce's house. They CREAK under his feet.

UPSTAIRS,

he waves the wand slowly across the upper floor. As it passes a slightly open doorway, the LED readout leaps into the red. The device emits a piercing BEEP --

-- and a cat bounds out of the room, HISSING at him as it bolts down the stairs.

Duncan takes a breath, regaining himself.

DUNCAN
(to the wand)
You beep? You BEEP?!

He looks at the side of the wand and finds a sound switch. He flicks it off, then points the wand at himself. This time, the lights light up but there's no beep.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE DAY

Outside the courtroom, Allison, Sandra, and Charlie O'Hara are giddy with victory. Bruce walks out of the courtroom, staring at Sandra, cold as ice. Sandra looks up at the clock on the wall, nervously. It's four fifteen.

ALLISON
Charlie, you are so corny, but it actually works! I'm impressed!

O'HARA
Well, why not let me buy you a drink at Houlihan's?

ALLISON
Okay, but don't come on to me.

O'HARA
Then I'm not paying.

Their words fade as Bruce heads down the corridor, livid.

DOWN THE CORRIDOR,

there is a large crowd filing into the courtroom next door. Someone in the crowd recognizes Bruce, calls out the familiar "Hey Coach!" Heads turn.

It seems to Bruce like all the faces are turned toward him, people are elbowing and pointing.

(CONTINUED)

Bruce tries to keep moving, he's incredibly upset and now he's got to deal with this?

FAN
Coach! Can I get an autograph?

Bruce reaches out for a pen and paper. The Fan searches for one, making Bruce wait. Bruce looks around, feels like a freak. As he finally gets the pen and signs an autograph, a TALL MAN looks at him strangely.

TALL MAN
Uh, Coach, I -- I think you're bleeding.

The Man gestures to his mouth. Bruce touches his own and pulls his fingers away bloody.

BRUCE
(mumbles)
Must have bit my lip.

He forces his way through the crowd, a little too roughly, and heads for the men's room.

INT MEN'S ROOM DAY

Bruce goes to the sink and looks in the mirror. Blood is running down his chin. He opens his mouth and pulls back his lip. He did, in fact, bite right through it.

He sinks to the floor, overcome, face pressed against the wall, blood smearing the white tile.

He hears a SQUEAK and the door opens. Another FAN comes in, holding a pen and paper, a goofy grin on his face. The grin fades as the Fan stares at the Coach, crumpled in the corner, blood smear on the wall next to him.

Bruce, humiliated, drags himself to his feet and wipes his face. He looks at the Fan, who's still holding the paper, frozen in the same posture.

BRUCE
Well?

FAN
N-Nothing. I'm sorry.

He turns and heads for the door. As he's leaving, he tosses this back over his shoulder:

FAN (cont'd)
Happy Halloween.

BRUCE
What?

FAN
You know -- it's Halloween. I'm sorry if I, uh --

He leaves, tail between his legs. Bruce just stares after him, thinking about what he's said. Bruce goes over to the sink, fixes his hair and face. He looks into the mirror, thinking. As he stares, he starts to breathe harder, everything he sees slowly changes color.

He cups his hands, runs some water into them and drinks it. He spits it out. Water mixed with Bruce's blood swirls down the drain as everything goes red.

CUT TO:

INT BRUCE'S BEDROOM DAY

Duncan creeps into Bruce's bedroom. He looks around, not sure what for. He goes to Bruce's dresser and searches through the drawers. Nothing.

Next to the dresser, he notices something strange in the woodwork. There's a line running down it, a crack that runs up to about three feet and then over. He runs his finger along it, thinking.

Duncan presses on the wood and releases. The lines mark the edges of the door, to a cabinet built into the wall. The door pops open a few inches and he pushes it the rest of the way.

He gets down on his hands and knees and peers into the cabinet. It goes back a ways, it's mostly computer boxes and stuff like that.

EXT STREET DAY

Bruce, headed home, rounds a corner in his neighborhood.

INT BRUCE'S BEDROOM DAY

Duncan's about to close the cabinet when he notices a small black leather bag tucked neatly in among the boxes, near the front.

CONTINUED:

He sets the heat stalker down on the floor next to him, pulls the bag out, and unzips it.

EXT BRUCE'S HOUSE DAY

Bruce comes up the front steps of his house, unlocks the door, and goes inside.

INT BRUCE'S BEDROOM DAY

Up here, Duncan can't hear the front door open. He reaches into the Black Bag and pulls something out. It's an old pair of tennis shoes. He stares at them, incredulous.

DUNCAN
These are mine?

INT BRUCE'S LIVING ROOM DAY

Downstairs, Bruce paces, MUTTERING to himself. We can't make out what he's saying.

UPSTAIRS,

Duncan keeps searching, unaware. He pulls something else out of the bag, a leather notebook. He opens it. It's filled with times and dates, column after column, page after page. Sandra's comings and goings?

DOWNSTAIRS,

Bruce takes deep breaths, trying to calm himself. He goes into the kitchen and takes a bottle of vodka out of the freezer. He pours himself a tall glass, at least three ounces. His hands are shaking.

BRUCE
A job to do. A job of work.

He drinks. He winces from the booze, almost throws up. He pours himself another two ounces and drinks that too.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Court of last resort.

He leaves the kitchen.

IN THE BEDROOM,

Duncan pulls one more thing out of the bag. It's a white box, about eight inches long, with a red cross on the front.

Duncan opens the box. An eight inch butterfly knife is inside, with a long, triangulated blade, grooved blood gutters down the sides. A very serious piece of hardware.

DUNCAN
Holy...

Next to him, the heat stalker is still on the floor, pointed at the hallway. The LED readout suddenly jumps to life, pushing all the way up into the red.

Duncan doesn't see it. And the beeper's off.

ON THE STAIRS,

Bruce reaches the top of the stairs and nearly steps on the cat. It MEOWS angrily and darts into the bedroom.

IN THE BEDROOM,

Duncan sees the cat race out of the hall and under the bed. It draws his gaze past the heat stalker. It's still lit up, all the way into the red. He looks at the cat, under the bed. He looks at the wand, pointed the <u>other</u> way, toward the hall.

His eyes pop wide.

IN THE HALLWAY,

Bruce is two steps from the bedroom.

IN THE BEDROOM,

Duncan moves fast and silently. He tosses everything back into the Black Bag, zips it closed, shoves it into the cabinet, closes the door, steps into Bruce's louvered closet --

IN THE CLOSET,

-- and Bruce walks into the room. Duncan freezes, watching Bruce through the slats in the closet door.

Duncan lowers his eyes, noticing something on the floor through the louvers. It's the heat stalker. He forgot to bring it in with him. Too late now.

Through the louvers, Duncan sees Bruce strip off his shirt, drop to the floor, and start to do push-ups, like a machine.

Duncan looks at the heat stalker again, fully exposed.

Bruce pops up right in front of the closet, sweating. He wipes his face with his shirt and tosses it aside. It lands on the floor, partially obscuring the heat stalker. Small miracles.

Bruce opens a dresser drawer, pulls out a black long sleeve tee-shirt, and pulls it on. He sits on the edge of the bed, pulls the phone into his lap, and dials a number.

BRUCE
(very calm, pleasant, even)
Hey, hi, Greg, it's me. Are you and Carol taking the kids out trick or treating tonight? Would you mind if I was with you guys tonight? I just, things didn't go my way today and, you know, I just -- want to be with family. Great. I'll take a shower and be over in about an hour? Thanks, man.

He hangs up. He sits at the edge of the bed for a moment, taking a deep breath. He gets up and goes into the bathroom.

IN THE BATHROOM,

Bruce turns on the shower. He flicks the nozzle around, wetting the shower stall. He grabs a towel, drops it on the floor of the shower, gets that wet too, then turns off the shower and hangs the towel. It drips on the floor.

IN THE CLOSET,

Duncan sees Bruce come back into the bedroom. He passes out of Duncan's line of sight for a moment. Duncan hears a cabinet open and close, and then Bruce leaves.

DOWNSTAIRS,

Bruce goes out the front door.

UPSTAIRS,

Duncan tumbles out of the closet. He goes to the wall, opens the built-in cabinet, and looks at the space between the empty computer boxes.

Bruce's Black Bag is <u>gone</u>.

DUNCAN
Oh, my God.

EXT BRUCE'S HOUSE DAY

Up the block, Bruce reaches a corner and turns. A moment later, Duncan bursts out the door of Bruce's house. He looks up and down the block, in both directions, but he can't see Bruce anywhere.

INT SANDRA'S APARTMENT DAY

In Sandra's kitchen, Henry has settled on a Mr. Potato Head costume. Sandra (dressed as a wood sprite) and Allison are taking pictures of him, laughing it up. Henry's VOICE, very small and indignant, comes from inside the costume.

HENRY
(muffled)
Stop laughing at me!

SANDRA
We're not laughing at you, honey, you're just adorable, that's all.

HENRY
I want to go trick or treating <u>now</u>.

SANDRA
Okay, let's go.

EXT STREET DAY

Duncan spots a pay phone on the corner. He races over to it and pulls out his wallet. He fishes out a ragged edged piece of paper torn from his notebook and checks a phone number, then digs in his pocket for change.

INT SANDRA'S APARTMENT DAY

In Sandra's kitchen, they're heading out. Allison is wearing jeans and a pair of large plastic ears.

SANDRA
What are you supposed to be again?

ALLISON
I'm a woman with really big ears.

SANDRA
Wow. Been workin' on that one all week?

ALLISON
Less is more.

They leave, closing the door behind them. A few moments later, the phone RINGS.

EXT STREET DAY

Sandra's answering machine message starts to play in Duncan's ear. He SLAMS the phone down and takes off, running down the block.

EXT SANDRA'S APARTMENT DAY

Sandra, Henry, and Allison are at the curb in front of her house. Sandra notices Detective Toland, the cop who took her statement and later tried to arrest Duncan, parked in front. She goes over and leans in the window.

SANDRA
Stay close, okay? Halloween is nut night.

HENRY
(from inside the costume)
Mommy! Come on!

TOLAND
I'll be the guy dressed as a cop.

Sandra smiles and heads off down the sidewalk with Allison and Henry. Toland gets out of his car and follows them on-foot at a discreet distance.

EXT STREET - NORTH BEACH NIGHT

Duncan runs through the streets. A cab passes him, he tries to hail it, but it's rush hour and the streets are jammed anyway, a crush of cars with a wasplike cloud of cyclists buzzing in between. He keeps running.

EXT STORE NIGHT

DUNCAN'S TENNIS SHOES walk quickly down the aisle in a cheap downtown drugstore. Bruce, wearing the shoes, stops in the back, next to a row of plastic Halloween masks.

He looks up, into a big curved mirror, to see if he's being watched. He's not, there's a commotion in the front of the store; people going crazy as the Halloween sun goes down.

CONTINUED:

Bruce pulls a mask off the rack (a Flesh Eater), shoves it into his Black Bag, and hurries out the back door.

EXT ALLEY NIGHT

In an alley, Bruce pulls the knife and the mask out of the Black Bag. He shoves the knife in his pocket, pulls the mask over his head, and tosses the Bag high in the air.

It lands in a dumpster in the alley. Pulling back, we see it's just one of twenty or more dumpsters behind a large hotel.

Bruce walks off, into the night.

EXT SANDRA'S APARTMENT NIGHT

Duncan, breathless, POUNDS on the front door of Sandra's apartment. No answer. He pounds again. A VOICE calls from behind him.

VOICE (O.S.)
There's nobody home.

Duncan turns around. Half a dozen TRICK OR TREATERS are working the block.

TRICK OR TREATER
We just tried that one. They already went out.

Duncan looks at their costumes. His eyes light up as he remembers something.

DUNCAN
Castro Street.

CUT TO:

EXT CASTRO STREET NIGHT

Halloween Night on Castro Street is a sight to behold, everybody's inner longings bared for the world to see. This year there is a bumper crop of Princess Dianas in the large crowd, along with the usual Marilyn Monroes and Walking Undead. Apartment and homeowners on either side of the street get into the spirit too; the place is decorated within an inch of its life.

A tall FLESH EATER in a black long-sleeve shirt appears at the end of the street. Flesh Eater walks through the thick of the crowd, searching.

ELSEWHERE IN THE CROWD,

Sandra, Allison, and Henry are already there, stopping at every door for Henry.

BEHIND THEM,

Bruce, wearing the Flesh Eater mask, spots Sandra. He looks up, ahead of her, in the direction she's going. Half a dozen doors up is the darkened marquis of an old, abandoned movie palace. He heads for it.

AT THE BEGINNING OF THE BLOCK,

Duncan races around a corner, out of breath, and sees the crowd.

DUNCAN
Oh, shit.

He dives into the thick of it, calling Sandra's name.

AT THE MOVIE PALACE,

Bruce reaches the entry way of the movie palace. It's a large, dark cocoon, right off the street. The ticket booth is thirty feet inside, and beyond it there is a long walkway that leads to the main doors. Perfect.

Bruce walks out to the opening and looks up the block. Sandra is now only four doors away.

FOUR DOORS AWAY,

Henry races back to Sandra from a successful trick-or-treat.

SANDRA
What'd you get, let me see, let me see!

HENRY
Milk Duds!

SANDRA
Milk Duds, yeah!

HENRY
Milk Duds, yeah!

ALLISON
Can I do some with you, Henry?

HENRY
Yeah, come on! It's easy!

Allison takes Henry's hand and they head for the next door. Sandra follows them, smiling. Faintly, from across the crowd, she hears something that sounds vaguely like her name. She turns, but doesn't see anything.

ACROSS THE CROWD,

Duncan is calling her name, to no avail. His eyes search the crowd, the faces are nightmarish, painted and masked as if to intentionally conceal her from him.

He continues the search.

BEHIND SANDRA,

Toland catches a glimpse of Duncan. His eyes widen. Was that him? He pulls away from Sandra and changes course, toward Duncan.

AT THE MOVIE PALACE,

Bruce can see Sandra, wandering ahead of Allison and Henry. Alone now. Two doors away. She'll pass right by him.

He looks down, at a mud puddle near the edge of the sidewalk. Deliberately, he steps in it, leaving very clear muddy footprints in Duncan's shoes.

He reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out the butterfly knife. He flicks it, snapping its blade into place.

IN THE THICK OF THE CROWD,

Duncan finally spots Sandra, now just one door from the movie palace. He takes off toward her, running through the crowd.

BEHIND HIM,

Toland gets a good look at Duncan. He knows it's him. He walks faster.

AT THE MOVIE PALACE,

Flesh Eater's face just pokes out into the light at the front of the movie palace.

CONTINUED:

Henry and Allison go to the final door before the movie palace. Sandra walks on ahead of them, closer to Flesh Eater.

SIX DRUNKEN PRIESTS surge in front of Duncan when he's just ten feet from Sandra, and by the time they clear his line of vision --

-- Sandra is gone.

Duncan whirls, looking everywhere, but can't see her.

BEHIND HIM,

Toland is drawing closer. He draws his gun, but almost immediately, two COPS ON HORSEBACK see him.

COP
HEY!

They kick their horses to life, cutting in front of Toland. Toland tries to dig his badge out.

TOLAND
P.D., P.D., GET OUT OF THE WAY!

IN THE ALCOVE,

a set of muddy footprints leads from the sidewalk into the darkened alcove. Bruce, one hand around Sandra's throat, drags her in, along that trail.

Sandra flails, trying to get her fingers in her attacker's eyes. She only manages to tear off Bruce's mask.

BRUCE
I gave you a son. All you did is take from me.

He hurls her to the ground behind the ticket booth. They're only thirty feet from the crowd on the street, but hidden behind the booth, the footprints are the only sign that they're there.

Sandra opens her mouth to scream, but Bruce clamps a hand over her mouth, turning her head to the side.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Now you'll be nothing but a memory to him.

CONTINUED:

He raises the blade to her throat. With her head turned to the side, Sandra can see her purse, just inches from her left hand. The top is open. The butt end of her gun is just visible.

BRUCE (cont'd)
And after he listens to my side of the story for the next twenty years --

Sandra stretches her fingers toward her gun.

BRUCE (cont'd)
-- you'll be a bad memory.

Sandra grabs the gun and starts to bring it around toward Bruce, but he sees the motion and slashes her arm with the knife. She drops the gun.

ON THE STREET,

Duncan is right at the front of the movie palace, but can't find Sandra. He looks down and sees the trail of muddy footprints that leads into the darkened alcove.

BEHIND HIM,

the Cops on horseback clear, but now Toland has lost sight of Duncan.

IN THE ALCOVE,

Bruce raises the knife again, this time he starts to bring it down toward Sandra's unprotected throat --

-- but Duncan flies in from the side, knocking him off of her. Bruce's hand hits the concrete, the knife bounces free.

Duncan rolls off of him, scrambles to his feet.

Bruce picks up the gun, rolls over onto his back, pointing it at Sandra.

Duncan lunges in front of her. For a moment, they stand there, a face off. Bruce points the gun at them, his hand shaking, his mind racing.

DUNCAN
Nice shoes.

BRUCE
Don't move, either one of you!

CONTINUED:

DUNCAN
This wasn't in the plan, was it? Think, Bruce. Think hard.

He takes a step forward.

BRUCE
I said don't move! I gotta figure this out...

Duncan keeps walking toward Bruce, staying between Sandra and the gun.

SANDRA
Duncan!

DUNCAN
What are you gonna do, shoot me?

BRUCE
You're God damn right I am!

Sandra looks to her left. Bruce's knife is eight or nine feet away from her. She edges toward it.

DUNCAN
(still walking)
I killed her, then I shot myself? In the chest?

BRUCE
(to Sandra)
I said don't fucking move!

She darts back away from the knife.

DUNCAN
From six feet away?

Duncan keeps walking, fearless.

BRUCE
Not one more step!

He tightens his finger on the trigger.

DUNCAN
Or what?

BRUCE
You're gonna die!

CONTINUED: (2)

DUNCAN
I don't care.

He reaches out, to take the gun from Bruce's hand.

But Bruce FIRES. The slug hits Duncan in the chest and he staggers backwards.

SANDRA
NOOOOO!

Bruce fires again, this one punches Duncan right in the midsection. He falls back and hits the ground.

OUT ON THE STREET,

the gunshots, amplified by the confined space, echo down the street. People SCREAM and panic, anybody near the entrance to the movie palace takes off running.

Toland and the Cops on horseback whirl around.

IN THE ALCOVE,

Duncan writhes on the ground. Bruce walks quickly over to him.

Sandra lunges for Bruce's knife and scoops it up.

Bruce points the gun at Duncan's head.

Toland and the Cops appear at the mouth of the alcove, but it's too dark inside, they can't see what's going on.

TOLAND
LIGHT!

Bruce squeezes the trigger, just as --

-- Sandra plunges the knife into his calf.

The Cops switch on their flashlights.

Bruce SCREAMS and the gun twitches up, BLASTING a shot into the ceiling.

The Cops direct their flashlight beams at the source of the gunshot, illuminating Bruce, gun in hand.

TOLAND (cont'd)
LOSE THE GUN!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bruce starts to turn, aiming the gun at the Cops --

-- and they open fire. They dump six slugs into him.

Bruce hits the ground.

Sandra crawls over to Duncan.

The Cops rush forward.

Bruce stares up at the ceiling, eyes wide. Dead.

Sandra, trembling, puts her hands over Duncan's wounds to staunch the bleeding. He looks up at her, trying to talk, but he can't. Sandra is overcome with emotion.

SANDRA
I knew, I knew it wasn't you, I knew...

Duncan tries to say something.

SANDRA (cont'd)
Shhh... Shhh... it's okay... it's okay...

Duncan gestures to Sandra to lean in close. She does, putting her ear right next to his lips. He can barely manage a bloody whisper.

DUNCAN
I'm not afraid...

SANDRA
Don't be. Don't be afraid.

He shakes his head, he's not finished.

DUNCAN
I'm not afraid... to sleep. Anymore.

He sags back.

SANDRA
No, no, no, NO!

But Duncan is letting his body go, sinking back into the floor. He looks up at Sandra, above him, the Cops' flashlight beams silhouetting her head in a brilliant white light as she recedes from him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He closes his eyes, everything goes white --

CUT TO:

INT CAR NIGHT

-- and then it turns black. For a long moment, we only hear the HUM of a car engine and the HISS of tires on a wet road. And, faintly, a woman's soft HUMMING.

Duncan opens his eyes. He's in the passenger seat of his and Mary's car again, the one in which they had the accident. But he's not the healthy, long-haired Duncan from his dreams, he's the current one, close-cropped hair, gaunt face. He looks around, confused.

Mary is driving. She watches the road, HUMMING softly to herself, holding a cigarette out her slightly open window. Stunned, Duncan says nothing.

Duncan turns. Sean, his little boy, is strapped in his car seat, clutching the string of his red balloon. There are a dozen more balloons bouncing gently in the back of the car.

DUNCAN
Sean?

SEAN
Um hm?

Duncan can't reply. He turns back to look at Mary again. He reaches out and lays his hand on the side of her cheek, to feel if she's real. She smiles and tilts her head into his caress.

DUNCAN
Where am I?

MARY
In the hospital. You're in a coma.
Oh, look. I think the rain stopped.

She turns off the wipers and pushes a button, opening her window all the way. The soft wind rushes in.

MARY (cont'd)
God, will you feel that air?

She puts out her cigarette and leans her head toward the window. Her hair billows. Duncan watches her, enraptured.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARY (cont'd)
Ah.

She notices something up ahead and touches the brake. The car slows.

DUNCAN
Don't stop.

MARY
I have to. This is where you get out.

Duncan looks out the window. She has stopped the car at the site of the accident.

EXT CLIFF ROAD NIGHT

Duncan gets out of the car. He walks past the street sign ("Blackwater, Pop. 2626") and past the tree, blackened and charred, as if the accident just happened.

Duncan looks up. A few tongues of flame still lick here and there in the branches. The balloons that escaped from the car's sunroof are still stuck up there.

Duncan goes to the edge of the cliff. He looks down, at the water and the rocks far below. He turns. Mary stands with Sean, a few feet behind him.

DUNCAN
Was I crazy? You were never there, were you?

MARY
Of course I was.
(taps the side of his head lightly)
Here. But I wasn't the ghost. You were the one with things unfinished.

His eyes fill with tears.

MARY (cont'd)
Ohhhhh.

She hugs him and whispers in his ear.

MARY (cont'd)
Don't cry. It was only a change of plans.

(CONTINUED)

SEAN
Daddy.

Duncan looks down. Sean blows him a kiss.

SEAN (cont'd)
Put that in your pocket and don't lose it, okay?

Duncan pretends to catch the kiss and put it in his pocket. He picks up Sean and hugs him, tightly. Mary puts her arms around both of them.

MARY
Go back, Bobaloo. Let your character live, it's a good ending. I told you, you're always better when you write from the heart.

Duncan closes his eyes, holding them as tightly as he can for as long as he can. In the distance, he hears a car door SLAM, he opens his eyes --

-- and they're gone.

He watches their car pull away, down the road again, heading off into the darkness. He reaches in his pocket, pulls out Sean's "kiss," and opens his palm.

He raises his eyes, following the imaginary kiss as it drifts up, out of his hand, and into the night stars.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT HOSPITAL ROOM DAY

Duncan opens his eyes in a hospital bed, bandaged, IVs dripping into him. He blinks, disoriented. The first thing he sees is Henry, sitting in a chair across the room.

Sandra is in the chair next to him, curled up, asleep. Fast food wrappers on the table next to them show it's been a long vigil.

Duncan stares at her until she opens her eyes. She looks at him, sees he is awake. She chokes up, relieved and grateful.

Henry notices too. He gets up, walks over to the bed and looks at Duncan.

CONTINUED:

HENRY
Did you sleep well?

Duncan nods. Henry lowers his voice, as with a mutual secret.

HENRY (cont'd)
No bad dreams?

Duncan manages a whisper.

DUNCAN
No bad dreams.

FADE OUT.