

"CAPE FEAR"

Screenplay By
Wesley Strick

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Director:
Martin Scorsese

THE SCREEN IS BLACK. We hear the voice of DANIELLE (DANNY) BOWDEN, 15, reading her own words:

DANNY'S VOICE

I always thought for such a lovely river, the name was mystifying ... Cape Fear ... When the only thing to fear on those enchanted summer nights was that the magic would end soon, and real life come crashing in.

FADE UP ON:

INT. FLORIDA STATE PRISON - MORNING

The minimum security block for felons, at Raiford. CAMERA TRACKS along a row of cells. We see Prisoners lying on their cots, listening to the radio, reading comic books. The walls of every cell are decorated with girlie gatefolds. OS:

C.O.'s VOICE

Cady ... Moment you been waitin' for.

CAMERA LANDS on MAX CADY's cell as, grunting, Cady does the last of a set of fifty Marine-style pushups.

Cady's wall features four portraits, clipped from magazines: Manuel Noriega, Placido Domingo, Oliver North and a pensive fellow whom the caption identifies as Frederick Nietzsche. All four sexier to Cady, apparently, than any naked blonde.

Cady is a weathered but fit-looking forty. Not thin, but you couldn't find a gram of fat on his compact frame. His eyes have a sharp glint; prison has neither dazed nor dulled him.

Three C.O.'s enter. One is here to escort him out. Two are here to carry his books.

Cady has piles of books -- not a comic book or magazine in sight. The Art of War, Eat Right To Stay Fit, 100 Days To An Impressive Vocabulary, Nietzsche's Will To Power, the Bible.

But mostly there are law books: Legal Method, Criminal Law and Its Processes, Selected Statutes, Rules & Forms, Black's Law Dictionary and more.

CADY

I'm ready.

The odd foursome exits the cell and moves down the tier to CATCALLS, HOOTS and scattered APPLAUSE. Cady stares ahead as he takes proud, almost military strides.

EXT. RAIFORD MAIN GATE - MORNING

Cady blinks at the sun as the C.O.'s bring him out. No car waits here. No family or friends.

C.O. 1

Any people comin' for ya, Cady?

Max Cady just shakes his head. And then he starts walking.

C.O. 2

What about yer books?

Without turning or breaking stride, Cady calls back:

CADY

Already read 'em.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BOWDENS' HOUSE - MORNING

Rambling, antebellum. Set on a large, lush, well-landscaped lot -- no visible neighbors. OVER:

WOMAN'S VOICE

The idea is to resolve the tension ...

INT. KAREN'S STUDIO - MORNING

A greenhouse that's been converted to a studio. Here, KAREN BOWDEN, 40, severely pretty, freelances as a graphic artist.

At her feet is a big, dumb dog. A mastiff named HOMER.

Karen's sitting at her drafting table, which is covered with preliminary sketches.

KAREN

I need a motif that's about movement.
Not the most novel idea for a travel
agency, but what the hey.

DANNY, her daughter, stands beside her, looking at her mom's sketches. She has a pen in one hand, notebook in the other.

Danny will be a beautiful woman in a few years. Right now she mostly feels awkward. Occasionally angry, often bored.

DANNY

Uh-huh ... Like an arrow, maybe?

KAREN

Maybe ... But y'see the other aspect is stability. "A company you can trust." If you can balance those opposing ideas ... in a way that's simple and pleasing to the eye ... then you've got a logo.

DANNY

Uh-huh.

She studies the sketches some more. Then backs to the door.

DANNY

If I think of anything ...

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Danny pours herself juice, grabs a pile of Oreos and sits. Opens her notebook. Ponders. Frowns. Starts scribbling. A beat ... Then she's distracted by something outside:

WHAT SHE SEES

A middle-aged, light-skinned Cuban WOMAN steps off a bus. In a white maid's uniform, wearing a bright smile. GRACIELLA.

BACK TO SCENE

Danny slips out of her chair and dashes out of the house, to greet Graciella as the older woman moves down the driveway.

Danny immediately starts chatting at her -- though, through the kitchen window, we can't hear a word.

CUT TO:

INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON

It's sticky in here. Trailed by other lawyers, SAM BOWDEN walks out of a hearing room, and wipes his sweaty forehead with a well-used handkerchief.

Sam is mid-40's, a Democrat among Republicans, with a face you want to trust.

His footsteps ECHO heavily across the marble floor ... But now his pace quickens and lightens when he spots -- on the other side of the rotunda -- a GIRL, approaching.

This is LORI DAVIS, late 20's, thin, cute, more stylish than is typical around these parts. She sees him, and lights up. They are about to cross to each other, when --

-- Sam's boss, TOM BROADBENT, intercepts him. Broadbent has a crop of grey hair atop a big head scaled to his large ego.

They continue on together.

BROADBENT

Well ... How'd you do in there?

SAM

Judge postponed the alimony hearing
another twenty-one days.

BROADBENT

Outstanding. By Monday I should know
which S&L in which municipality my
brother-in-law stashed all that money.

Lori and Sam pass. Trade quick looks. Broadbent oblivious.

BROADBENT

Anyway I thank you. My sister thanks
you.

SAM

De nada.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - THAT EVENING

The three Bowdens stroll down Main Street, New Essex. A fine hamlet of the New South, clean and bright and modern but built on an intimate scale. A Westwood Village with one-tenth the cars, twice the humidity and some genuine charm.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - EVENING

Onscreen, a Hollywood comedy: two young stockbrokers, man and woman, trade double-entendres.

The sparse audience quietly watches.

Now a FIGURE crosses in front of the screen, to claim a seat in the middle of the row. Though he's blocking the view, the man is in no hurry to sit down. His tight Hawaiian shirt shows off his muscles. We see his profile, in silhouette.

Perhaps it's just the jutting chin and strong nose -- but even in a dark theater we sense a bestial aggression.

Finally he sits. Immediately something onscreen strikes him as hilarious. He throws back his head and happily ROARS. Then he settles in, lights a cigar. The smoke creates an infernal halo -- thick, blue, acrid -- around him.

Then it drifts back several rows, to virtually envelop the Bowdens.

Karen and Sam trade looks of distaste. Danny loudly sniffs. Sam signals her to cool it. Then he looks around, for an usher. But there's no usher. So he leans forward. Sternly:

SAM

Excuse me?

(no answer)

Excuse me --

Max Cady sits there, loudly laughing. Puffing on his cigar.

CUT TO:

INT. ICE CREAM EMPORIUM - NIGHT (LATER)

Karen spoons vanilla ice cream from a cup, as Danny orders:

DANNY

Chocolate fudge with Oreos mixed in.
Please.

(turns to Sam)

You believe that revolting redneck?
Why didn't you just punch him out?

SAM

I'm a litigator, honey, not a pugilist.

DANNY

But you boxed in college.

KAREN

Yes, about a hundred years ago.

Danny is served. Sam reaches for his wallet.

KAREN

Let's sit outside.

Danny drifts toward the bench outside the door, with her mother. As Sam starts to pay up:

CASHIER

It's taken care of.

The cashier nods at a new Ford Taurus parked across the street.

Cady sits at the wheel, sipping Evian. He was staring ahead -- but now as Sam looks out at him, Cady turns, to hold Sam's glance. There's spooky telepathy here.

SAM

(tensed)

Girls -- let's sit inside.

As he steps toward the door, a truck drives past. And when it's gone, Cady's car has disappeared as well.

CUT TO:

INT. RACQUETBALL CLUB - NEXT AFTERNOON

CAMERA FLIES toward a racquet as it SLAMS the ball ... Sam, on lunch break, plays a fast game with Lori. She's quick and graceful, but Sam is stronger and more accurate. He SLAMS one, ending the match.

LORI

Whoa. Mr. Perfect Form.

She drops her racquet and mock-throws a frustrated punch at Sam, who plays serious, guiding her shoulder and arm.

SAM

No, you lean into it. Like this --

Now, from the next court, a COLLEAGUE razzes:

COLLEAGUE

Hey, you two -- cut the horseplay!

Suddenly self-conscious, Sam and Lori move apart.

WITH SAM AND LORI

Walking toward their respective locker rooms.

LORI

... So he tells Lanier he needs a continuance. Two weeks. Lanier calls him a diletante. And Brady says, "If I'm a diletante, how come I never had no coming-out ball?"

Lori waits for Sam to laugh. He grabs two towels. As he hands Lori hers:

SAM

Lori, you know what? We should stop doing this for awhile.

Lori stops.

LORI

We're not "doing" anything.

(then, milder)

Well . Maybe you're right.

(then)

Does your wife mind?

SAM

My wife doesn't know you exist. Which is almost certainly for the best.

LORI

Why is that?

SAM

Look, I already got into some trouble with her over something ... part of the reason we moved, changed our lives ...

She sits on a bench, stares ahead.

SAM

Another time, another place and who know, Lori -- y'know what I mean?

A beat, as Lori stews. Then, with emotion:

LORI

But I like hanging out with you. I like talking about which judge is going senile and I don't even mind hearing about your family -- your family dog, even --

Sam sits beside her and nods: And I like hanging out with you.

LORI

But you're probably right. I mean I do think about you when we're not ... playing racquetball.

Both are silent for a beat. Then:

SAM

You dating? What about that guy --

Lori cuts him off with a quick smile and a tense laugh.

LORI

Let's talk about your dog.

EXT. CLUB PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Sam shuts Lori's car door for her. Then:

SAM

Tomorrow?

Lori looks surprised, and confused.

SAM
Remember? It was best of five.

LORI
(beat, then)
I remember.

He watches as she drives away. Then drifts over to:

INT. SAM'S VOLVO - SAM

distractedly slides in behind the wheel. Sticks the key in the ignition. But before he can turn it --

-- a HAND reaches in through his open window and snatches the keys. Sam whirls, and sees --

-- Max Cady, in his tight Hawaiian shirt. Sam stiffens.

CADY
Free as a bird, apparently. You go wherever you want, with whomever ... That much freedom could maybe get a fella into trouble, what do you think?

SAM
I would like my keys --

CADY
Could it be you don't remember me?

SAM
Sure. Last night. You --

CADY
I'm disappointed. Hurt.

SAM
I would like my keys --

CADY
Max Cady. You look the same. Maybe ten pounds heavier --

Sam abruptly reaches for his keys -- but Cady's faster, and the keys remain dangling just out of Sam's reach.

CADY
I read that the average man gains ten pounds every ten years till he's sixty. Me, I dropped ten pounds the first ten years of my sentence.

(beat, then)
Maybe that means I'm not average.

And now Sam remembers:

SAM

Atlanta. 1977.

CADY

July. According to the World Almanac,
this is our Aluminum Anniversary.

SAM

So. You're out.

CADY

Good behavior.

(then)

Fourteen years since I held these
things.

He rattles the keys, then hands them back to Sam. Who tries
to sound friendly.

SAM

Well you look good. Healthy ...

Cady has to agree. He lights a cigar.

CADY

You notice that? That's gratifying.
'Cause it's a struggle to stay healthy
in the joint. You're white, they stick
you with the rednecks. Comic books and
cornpone music all day. And I don't
wanna say what at night. This cigar is
my only vice. I needed a vice in the
joint, to remind me I was human.

Careful to sound utterly neutral:

SAM

So: What brings you to New Essex?

CADY

The climate. I like feeling so clammy
I could jump outta my skin. Boy, the
South ... Always loved the pace. Slow,
but anything can happen. Confederate
folk invented supermarkets, Coca-Cola,
lynchings ... I'm thinking of settling
right here in New Essex, counselor.

Sam strains to sound curious, not at all confrontational.

SAM

Have you been following me?

CADY
Small town. Everywhere I turn ...

He shrugs, in ostensible chagrin. Sam starts his car again. He wants his parting words to sound vaguely like a warning.

SAM
Take care, Mr. Cady.

Cady responds -- but what he says is drowned by the Volvo's engine. Sam thinks he heard, but he can't be sure.

SAM
-- What?

But Cady is already moving, lithe as a cat, back to his Ford.

CUT TO:

INT. BOWDEN DEN - THAT NIGHT

In the kitchen, in b.g., Karen straightens up after dinner. Danny sits on the couch, huddled over her notebook.

Sam is at the piano bench, circumspectly sounding out notes ... no melody ... just vaguely dissonant, troubling sounds.

DANNY
(finally, irritated)
Dad --?

Sam looks over at his daughter. Almost startled.

SAM
Sorry. What're you working on?

DANNY
(slightly sour)
We're supposed to read Look Homeward,
Angel by Tom Wolf --

SAM
Thomas Wolfe.

DANNY
Which is a kind of "reminiscence" ...
So ... the assignment is ...

SAM
Ah. You're writing a reminiscence too.

DANNY
(pointedly)
Trying to.

SAM
What's it about. Your reminiscence --

DANNY
The houseboat.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

They're undressing for bed. Now, a distant EXPLOSION. Sam and Karen look out to see fireworks briefly light up the sky.

KAREN
Not even July Third yet.

Which reminds Sam:

SAM
I was thinking in August ... Maybe we ought to take two weeks off and go up to Wilmington. Like old times. Dock the houseboat in some secluded cove ...

KAREN
I suggested that in June, but you said you "didn't have time this summer".

SAM
Well I probably don't, but --

KAREN
I probably don't either. And Danny's got remedial English till Labor Day.

Sam moves into:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

As he rinses his face:

SAM
Is that really so critical, that she can't miss two damn weeks --

Karen stands in the bathroom's doorframe and surveys Sam.

KAREN
Sam, the alternative was to expel her. Get that in your head.

Sam starts to brush his teeth.

KAREN
Anyway they've hired some assistant Lit professor from the College. Maybe he'll open her mind, get her excited about something.

SAM
Yeah: About him, probably.

He irritatedly tugs out a length of floss.

SAM
I still can't believe they made such a stink. In some cultures, marijuana is considered a sacrament.

KAREN
And in ours it's a misdemeanor.

She moves behind Sam and lightly massages his shoulders. And reminds him:

KAREN
They could've expelled her.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Sam and Karen are asleep. Lightly: there is a distant but disturbing series of premature FIREWORKS EXPLOSIONS -- the bedroom dimly flares; we watch Sam toss.

Now Karen awakens, a light sheen of sweat covering her face.

She groggily crosses to the air conditioner, to turn it on. Then wobbles to the open window to close it. As she reaches the window there is another EXPLOSION in the distance. And for an instant, the Bowdens' back lawn is lit a lurid red.

Karen stifles a SCREAM. Sam sits up, snaps on his lamp.

Karen has flattened herself against the wall by the window.

KAREN
-- Turn it off.

SAM
(as he does)
What's going on?

He's out of bed, crossing to Karen. In an urgent whisper:

KAREN
There's someone out there.

Sam crouches in front of the open window, straining to see out -- but all is dark and quiet now.

KAREN

I saw him when the fireworks --

Another EXPLOSION. As the yard is lit, Sam cranes to see:

IN THE BACK YARD

Cady sits atop the stone boundary wall. He stares at the house with an impassivity that is both maddening and creepy. Then the light from the explosion dies -- all is dark again.

INT. STAIRS - NIGHT

As Karen follows Sam downstairs, he murmurs:

SAM

"Loss".

KAREN

What?

SAM

This afternoon. When we spoke, he --

KAREN

You know him?

INT. UTILILTY ROOM - NIGHT

Sam grabs a rechargeable flashlight off the wall.

SAM

No ... No. But -- yes ... I defended him. Ten years ago, in Atlanta.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

With Karen behind him, Sam comes out the back door, shining the flashlight on the stone wall.

SAM

I want you the hell off my property --

Another EXPLOSION. The yard is lit up, and they see that:

KAREN

He's gone.

INT. KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT (LATER)

Sam and Karen huddle at the table, sipping Sleepytime tea.

SAM

I'd just started the car, so I couldn't hear. Later, I realized ... He'd said: "You're going to learn about loss."

KAREN

But what does that mean?

Sam shakes his head: wish I knew.

Homer drags himself over to Karen and nuzzles her legs. She affectionately scratches his head.

KAREN

Who is he? Who're his people?

SAM

Pentecostal crackers, I think ... hill people. I seem to recall Cady insisting he was better than they were, but behaving a hell of a lot worse.

KAREN

What was he in prison for?

Sam hesitates a beat. Then:

SAM

Battery.

KAREN

He beat someone up ..?

SAM

(uneasy)

Right.

Karen watches as Sam sips more tea.

CUT TO:

INT. FOYER - NEXT MORNING

Sam adjusts his tie in the front hall mirror. Danny appears behind him. Studies his reflected face.

DANNY

You look tired.

SAM

Your dad's getting old. And those jerks with their fireworks ...

DANNY

I didn't hear a thing.

SAM

Untroubled sleep of the innocent.

He turns, kisses her forehead. Moves to the door and signals with his eyes for Karen to follow him out.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MORNING

Sam stands at his Volvo.

SAM

No need to alarm her. But I'd rather she didn't wander out alone. Her soul-searching walks in the woods ..? At least till I've taken a few steps, maybe talked to the big boss man ...

KAREN

What if she brings Homer with her ..?

SAM

Let Danny take him right outside the house when he needs to go.

He kisses his wife's cheek, climbs into his car.

KAREN

She'll want to know why.

SAM

Tell her.

KAREN

She'll just fight me.

SAM

She doesn't run this house.

Sam starts the engine.

SAM

If you see him again, call the cops -- then me.

KAREN

I'm a little scared, Sam.

SAM

He's not gonna do anything. He just got out of prison, he doesn't want to go straight back.

Karen tries to look convinced. And Sam drives off. OVER:

CUT TO:

INT. LAW OFFICE - LATE MORNING.

Sam and Broadbent sit in adjacent rocking chairs.

SAM

Somebody got released. Dirtball I once defended. He's here -- in town. And he wants to start some trouble with me.

Broadbent reaches for the phone.

BROADBENT

I'll call Lee Heller. Best criminal attorney in the state.

(as he dials)

He threaten you? Karen? Danny?

SAM

Well no. He --

Aware that this might sound ridiculous:

SAM

He sat in front of us at the movies the other night. He smoked a cigar and laughed too loud ... And then after, he paid for our ice cream ...

Broadbent sets down the receiver. Frankly baffled, he studies Sam.

SAM

I know that's not exactly felonious behavior, Tom, but --

BROADBENT

You defended this fellow, right? So ... why would he intend to harm you?

SAM

Yesterday he came up to me -- said I was going to "learn about loss".

BROADBENT

What does that mean?

SAM

I don't know. I can only imagine.

BROADBENT

Sam, that sure wouldn't apply under the "terrorist threat" statute ...

SAM

In the the middle of the night last night, there he was, behind the house.

Broadbent perks up.

BROADBENT

Ah-ha: Attempted B & E --

SAM

Well, no ... He was sitting on the stone wall that bounds our property.

BROADBENT

I'm not even sure that's trespassing. What can I tell you, Sam? Get a restraining order --

SAM

I filed first thing this morning. Hearing's in ten days.

Broadbent nods. It seems there's not much left to say, now.

Sam rises. He goes to the door. Then stops. Turns.

SAM

Tom, I ... Ten years ago. This case. I'd gotten a report on the victim ...

BROADBENT

(sits up)

Was a rape case?

SAM

(nods)

Report came back she was "promiscuous". I buried it.

BROADBENT

Whew.

SAM

Yes but this guy, Cady -- he --

BROADBENT

"In all criminal prosecutions, the accused ... shall have the assistance of counsel for his defense".

SAM

I know the 6th Amendment. I believe in the 6th Amendment. It's why I had to leave the public defender's office ...

BROADBENT

Certain folks don't deserve the best defense?

SAM

Tom trust me: If you had a daughter --

BROADBENT

You buried the report. Jesus.

SAM

But Cady couldn't know that.

BROADBENT

Christ, Sam.

SAM

For starters, the man's illiterate. So -- I mean -- how could he know that?

Broadbent doesn't know how. He reaches for his donut, takes another bite.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BOWDENS' HOUSE - LATE MORNING

CAMERA lazily DRIFTS up to Danny's bedroom window as we HEAR:

DANNY'S VOICE

I'm confined to quarters today.

In t-shirt and cutoffs, she's sprawled on the carpet. Look Homeward, Angel lying next to her. She's on the phone.

DANNY

The boogeyman. I don't know. My mom won't say. "Dad'll discuss it later." We don't communicate much, Mom and me. Or Dad and me ...

Danny listens to her girlfriend and idly plays with her hair.

DANNY

I know. Who can be bothered ... I mean it's not like I asked to be born.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - MORNING - LATER

Sam's desk is covered with work he hasn't gotten to. He's on the phone.

SAM
 C - A - D - Y. It'd be a new listing.
 (beat, then)
 Alright. Thanks all the same.

He hangs up. Dials another, familiar number.

SAM
 Hi. Everything OK?

INT. KAREN'S STUDIO - SAME TIME

She's sitting at her drafting table, on the phone with Sam. The large sheet of paper on the table before her is blank.

KAREN
 Fine. So far ...

Suddenly she's nervously aware of how exposed she is in this former greenhouse, with all its glass panes.

KAREN
 Sam, why didn't we ever have an alarm system installed? Was it just 'cause we're so nice and this town's so nice and everything's so nice?
 (beat, little laugh)
 I thought so.
 (listens, then)
 I will. You too.

She hangs up. Now Danny drifts in.

DANNY
 ... How's the logo going?

Karen hopelessly gestures at the blank sheet before her.

KAREN
 Judge for yourself.
 (then)
 Any inspirations, I'm forever grateful.

Danny moves to the sketches, now tacked up on a corkboard. As she studies them, Karen encourages:

KAREN
 You've always had an excellent eye.

DANNY
 Sure, Mom.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - NOON

In the glare and heat, Main Street is deserted. Sam walks down the street, slow and watchful, a solitary figure.

He passes the ice cream emporium where he'd glimpsed Cady, the night before.

Then past the empty movie theater. And now:

WITH SAM

as, over his left shoulder, a shadow falls. Elongates ...

CADY'S CAR

noiselessly pulls even with Sam. Through the window, between sips of Evian water:

CADY

Looking for me, counselor?

Sam turns to the Ford Taurus soundlessly cruising beside him.

SAM

Maybe I was --

CADY

How can I help you?

SAM

What do you want, Mr. Cady?

But Cady is distracted by a small group of High School Kids who now emerge, laughing, from the ice cream parlor.

CADY

They're great at that age, aren't they? All those ... discoveries ahead of them. You're lucky, counselor. My own daughter ... she doesn't know me. After I went inside, her mother told her I was dead. Which I was, in a way.

SAM

I realize that you've suffered. But why me? I defended you. Why not badger the D.A.? Or the judge --?

CADY

(amused)

"Badger".

SAM

Why not them --?

CADY

They were doing their jobs.

Though his tone is offhand, his eyes are like lasers.

SAM

I pleaded you out to a lesser included offense. If they'd nailed you for rape and not battery you'd have done another seven years.

CADY

Another nine years. According to the Georgia penal code.

Cady sets his Evian in the passenger seat, pulls out a cigar.

CADY

See, I learned to read during my stretch. First Spot Goes To the Farm. Then Runaway Bunny. Then law books, mostly.

Sam turns away; the color has drained from his face.

CADY

Did you know that after I discharged you, I acted as my own attorney? Applied several times for an appeal.

SAM

(vaguely)

No, I didn't know that.

Cady lights the cigar.

CADY

So here we are: Two lawyers, for all practical purposes. Talking shop.

Sam turns back to Cady.

SAM

How much do you want?

CADY

How much do I want what? Tranquility? Fulfillment of my spiritual potential?

SAM

How much money do you want?

Cady contentedly puffs. His head is wrapped in blue smoke.

CADY

Do I look destitute to you, counselor?

Sam stops. Simultaneously Cady silently brakes. Sam moves around the Taurus, to Cady's window.

SAM

I'm willing to put a value on your time served.

CADY

A value. I see. What is that value?

SAM

I'm open to discussion. Within reasonable limits --

CADY

Counselor? Have you ever been a woman?

SAM

"A woman"?

CADY

Some fat, hairy hillbilly's wet dream?

SAM

Look, Mr. Cady: I realize you suffered in prison --

CADY

"Suffered"? No, counselor, I learned to get in touch with the feminine side of myself. The soft, nurturing side.

SAM

I'm open to discussion. On the money.

CADY

Oh, yes. So: shall we itemize? What shall be my remuneration for being held down and sodomized by four white guys? Four black guys? Shall my compensation be the same? What is the formula, sir?

SAM

How about ten thousand dollars in cash. In exchange you just move on. I think that's fair.

CADY

You don't know what's fair, counselor. But you're going to learn. So many things ...

(more)

CADY (Cont'd)

Like how to stop being so drearily "decent". There's a whole exciting side of you waiting to emerge.

Suddenly Cady "notices" the time, on his wristwatch.

CADY

But more on that soon. I'm late ...

And then he speeds away, leaving Sam in a plume of dust.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - THAT AFTERNOON

Sam is at his desk, reviewing a contract, when his secretary SHEILA buzzes.

SHEILA'S VOICE

Your wife on One.

As Sam reaches for the receiver, Tom Broadbent lopes into the office. Plops down on the couch. A self-satisfied grin.

BROADBENT

Got the bank, got the account number. We're gonna slap a writ of attachment on it before they know what's --

SAM

Great. I'll call your brother-in-law's lawyer, tell him we're going to court.

Broadbent opens his mouth, but the intercom BUZZES again.

SHEILA'S VOICE

Karen's holding.

SAM

Just a second, Sheila.

BROADBENT

I wouldn't make that call, Sam. Way I'd handle it --

Now Sheila is standing in the doorway.

SHEILA

She says it's urgent.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S VOLVO - AFTERNOON (FIVE MINUTES LATER)

Sam's face is set, like stone. He drives home, fast.

CUT TO:

INT. BOWDEN BREAKFAST ROOM - AFTERNOON

The Bowdens sit stiffly around the formica table. Karen's tone is flat, affectless.

KAREN

I noticed he was whining. I thought he needed to go out. I called for Danny. She was upstairs. Studying, I guess.

Danny stares, dull and forlorn, at her father.

KAREN

So I went to Homer. He was biting himself in the side, turning around in circles. He looked at me for help ... But when I reached out to pet him, he gnashed his teeth at me, viciously -- then he started howling. Horrible high-pitched howls. More like screams. Danny ran in, I called the vet. Then it was like he was winding down ... winding down like a clock.

Beneath her subdued speech there is a rage, percolating.

KAREN

And then he stopped. His eyes were still wide open. He died maybe a minute before the vet came. The vet took his body away ...

(a faint laugh)

He just barely fit in the back seat.

Sam is silent for a moment. Then, softly:

SAM

And the vet said --?

KAREN

Poisoning. Arsenic, probably.

SAM

(beat, then)

I told you not to let him out.

Suddenly Karen comes flying off the couch, at Sam.

KAREN
I didn't let him out!

Sam has leapt to his feet -- he grabs Karen, holds her off.

SAM
I'm sorry, I assumed --

KAREN
I didn't let him out --

SAM
Okay: then how --

Danny can't take any more of this. She jumps up -- runs out of the room. The SLAMMING door shuts her parents up.

CUT TO:

INT. DEN - THAT NIGHT

The national news is on. Mother and daughter blankly stare at the TV.

Neither has touched her dinner; the food looks repulsive to them both. Karen picks up their plates, carries them into:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sam impatiently paces as he speaks on the phone.

SAM
C - A - D - Y.
(then)
How would I know if he has an alias?

Karen moves past him, to the sink. Then notices Homer's big dish, in the corner. She stops, and looks at it. Then, on impulse, grabs and drops it, almost vengefully, into the trash. Then pauses over it, and gives it a last loving pat.

SAM
No I don't know where he lives. A motel or rooming house, I'd bet. How many could there be in New Essex?

CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

She lies in bed, staring at the ceiling. She's been awake all night. Now, in another room, she hears a phone's RING.

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Sam and Karen stir from a light sleep. Sam grabs the phone.

SAM

... Hello ...?

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

We follow Sam and LIEUTENANT ELGART down a corridor. Elgart has been around awhile and busted every kind of bastard.

ELGART

I got an English setter myself. So I don't cotton to dog-killers. Trouble is, poisoning a dog is just a fine. So what we'll do, we'll "uncover" other -- problems ... F'r instance, an ex-con on early release has to register with City Hall. Chances are Cady didn't do that. If he's unemployed, he's got to show considerable savings. Basically we find so many ways on the books to lean on an undesirable, he'll feel about as welcome here as a case of Yellow Fever.

INT. I.D. ROOM - MORNING

A small, darkened theater with a large window facing onto an adjacent room, for line-ups. Elgart takes a seat in front of the window. Unwraps a square of Beech Nut chewing tobacco.

ELGART

You'll I.D. 'im. We'll do a full body strip search. Jerk a knot in his tail.

He gives Sam a conspiratorial smile.

Sam, the lawyer, isn't entirely comfortable with the concept of an unnecessary strip search -- but he's with the program.

SAM

... Alright.

Simultaneously a door in the line-up room opens and Max Cady is hustled in -- not gently -- by two Uniformed Officers.

ELGART

That him?

Cady's eyes sweep the room and land on the window. He seems to be looking directly at Sam -- who shifts, uncomfortable.

ELGART

One-way mirror, Mr. Bowden. He doesn't know you're back here.

Sam turns away from the window, to Lieutenant Elgart.

SAM

Yeah ... That's him.

In the line-up room, they've instructed Cady to remove his clothes. He does so -- slowly, deliberately, defiantly ... but he's teasing, too, like a Chippendale's stripper. Perhaps prison cured him of his modesty, or he won't be humiliated. Either way, he has nothing to be ashamed of.

Both Sam and Elgart are quietly stunned by Cady's physique; Elgart's hand, holding the square of chewing tobacco, is frozen at his mouth.

Now, fully naked, Cady stands facing the one-way mirror. On his face is a smirk that says: "You like what you see?"

ELGART

Jeez. Couldn't hurt that with an ax.

There is a KNOCK -- a young Detective enters.

DETECTIVE

We searched Cady's apartment. Car registration's in order. No gun or other weapons ... We found these.

He hands over two items to Elgart. (Through the window, out of focus now, Cady's strip-search has begun.) Elgart grunts.

SAM

-- What?

Elgart waves Item 1: a receipt from the City of New Essex.

ELGART

He registered with City Hall.

Elgart inspects Item 2 -- a bank passbook. Then hands it over to Sam.

ELGART

He might could be better off in CD's ... but I'm afraid that's no crime.

SAM

(scans the passbook)
... Twenty-thousand dollars?

DETECTIVE

Says his mother died while he was serving. Farm got sold off, Cady got the proceeds.

SAM

So ... where does that leave us?

ELGART

Very least, we nail him for the dog. Now what happened? You let the dog out, Cady abducted 'im --

SAM

We didn't let him out.

ELGART

Well! If Cady came into your home, that's illegal entry with intent --

SAM

He didn't come into our home.

Elgart looks confused: Then how did Cady poison your dog?

SAM

I don't know how he did it. I just know he did it. Somehow.

Elgart doesn't look happy. He glances out, at Cady's strip search. Then turns back to Sam, and studies him. Finally:

ELGART

It's a holiday, Mr. Bowden ...
Shouldn't you be with your family?

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATE MORNING

The sidewalk is jammed, for the New Essex Independence Day Parade. At the moment, the county's finest vintage cars are slowly being driven down the street by their proud owners.

Karen and Sam slowly thread their way through the throng.

SAM

They said if he spits on the sidewalk it'll cost him a hundred bucks. He drives one mile over the speed limit, they'll pull him over.

KAREN

Small but if he doesn't spit or drive too fast, we have to live with --

SAM

But he will. One way or another, sooner rather than later, he'll screw up. Sheriff says they always do ... And then he'll get the message in no uncertain terms.

KAREN

Okay. Maybe that's fine. I'd still like to blast that bastard right between the eyes.

They stake out an unclaimed patch of sidewalk and watch as a Deussenberg, then a Cord Roadster, cruises by.

SAM

That's a Cord, from the '30s. See the coffin-shaped nose?

As each beauty passes, the heads of the onlookers swivel to follow, then turn back to focus on the next automobile.

SAM

A Bugatti ... and a Phaeton, I think.

ANGLE

There is one face in the crowd that hasn't turned. SLOW PUSH IN on Max Cady, looking straight ahead, seeming not even to blink. Still wearing that smirk.

BACK TO KAREN AND SAM

As they react to the Kissel car that passes.

SAM

Look: rumble seats on the fenders ...

And now he notices Cady, across Main Street, a peacock in his Hawaiian shirt, baldly staring. Sam's smile congeals.

SAM

Sonovobitch.

Now Karen sees, too. She instinctively clutches Sam.

KAREN

That's him! He's staring at us.

SAM

He's staring at you.

Not sure quite how he's going to handle this -- but sure he has to do something -- Sam disengages himself from Karen and darts across the street, in between cars, toward Cady.

Who blithely continues to stare at Karen.

Now Sam is right in Cady's face.

SAM

What do you think you're doing?

Cady casually raises his chin, just an inch, so as to peer over Sam's shoulder at Sam's wife. Sam jabs his shoulder.

SAM

Godammit I'm talking to you!

Finally Cady turns to him. With a coy, infuriating grin:

CADY

Just admiring a very pretty chassis.

And Sam snaps: He swings a fist at Cady's jaw. But Cady is quicker -- he ducks the punch, then drops into the street, curled into a ball, arms protectively folded over his head.

CADY

-- Help me!

Momentarily bewildered, Sam blinks at Cady on the ground.

Suddenly some well-meaning Spectator grabs him from behind. Sam instinctively jerks free. And Cady cries:

CADY

I didn't do anything!

Two more Spectators work to restrain a still-struggling Sam. Other concerned Bystanders help Cady to his feet. The ex-con faultlessly feigns unsteadiness and shock. Karen, meanwhile, is now grappling and pleading with the three men holding Sam.

CADY

I was just standing here ... just watching the nice parade ...

Cady is encouraged to walk away. He does so, all the while murmuring expressions of fright and dismay.

ANGLE - DANNY

notices the nearby disturbance, and is naturally drawn to it. Seeing that her parents are at the core of the melee, she breaks into a wild sprint.

As she reaches them, citizens move away and darkly mutter: Did you see? He just attacked the poor man. Almost got him killed. What is he, crazy?

As we CRANE UP and UP above the chaos, the discordant sounds slowly FADE OUT, and we HEAR, OVER:

WOMAN'S VOICE

I'm finished with married men. That sounds like I went through a busload of 'em, right? But he was my first.

CUT TO:

INT. ROADHOUSE - THAT NIGHT

A high-design honkytonk for the town's young and disaffected. A hip local band does a cow-punk ballad. The woman (at the bar, talking to CAMERA) is Lori Davis, the cute court clerk.

LORI

And lest you think I slept with this particular married man ... Un-unh.

From OFF-SCREEN we hear the person she's conversing with.

MAN'S VOICE

That's none of my business.

NEW ANGLE

Max Cady sits on the next stool. He's traded his tight Hawaiian shirt for something loose in black rayon.

CADY

... I mean, we've only just met.

LORI

Maybe that's why I'm telling you.

Cady sips his Evian. Lori appraises the attractive stranger.

LORI

Where're you from, anyhow?

CADY

Raiford. It's a prison. I just got released.

This gives Lori a moment's pause. Then she laughs.

CADY

You find that amusing?

LORI

No, it's just ... There's a joke: An unmarried woman meets a guy. He tells her he just got out of prison.

(more)

LORI (Cont'd)
"What'd you do?" she asks. "I hacked
my wife into fifty-two pieces with a
chainsaw." She says, "So, you're
single."

Cady just sips his Evian water.

LORI
Well? What did you do?

CADY
There was this protest march on this
nuclear power plant. When they came to
arrest us, some macho sheriff got a tad
rough with the lady behind me. I
cold-cocked the little bastard.

He makes a face: dumb, huh?

Lori smiles. Then turns, and signals the bartender.

LORI
Another Dixie, please.

Cady puts his hand on her arm. Gentle but emphatic:

CADY
No.

He signals same to Bartender. Lori looks at him: why not?

CADY
I think you're maybe ten sips away from
doing something stupid.

LORI
Like what?

Cady lights up a cigar.

CADY
Like taking me home.

LORI
(laughs)
Oh yeah right. I'm gonna sleep with
some ex-convict I just met in a bar?

CADY
Not if you stay half-sober ...

LORI

Hey: It's Independence Day, right?
Maybe today I don't want to abide by
someone's else's notion about what's
best for me, whattaya think of that?
(back to bartender)
I'll have that Dixie, thank you.

CUT TO:

INT. LORI'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Max and Lori are rolling on her bed, tugging at what's still
on of each other's clothes. It's very hot -- she's panting,
he's biting, and now he stops biting, and whispers, thickly:

CADY

That married guy. He hurt you like
this?

He flips her onto her stomach with stunning strength and
agility, then playfully slaps her butt.

LORI

No. I told you ... We never --

Now Cady sharply pinions both of Lori's arms behind her.

CADY

He hurt you like this?

LORI

(not amused)

No. He didn't hurt me physically --

Cady reaches into his coat, strewn on a chair by the bed. He
pulls out a pair of handcuffs.

CADY

Well me, neither. But what he did hurt
me a lot worse than this, even --

Cady snaps the cuffs onto her wrists.

LORI

That's not funny -- The fuck're you --

Cady does something more painful (that we don't see) to her.
Lori starts to SCREAM but Max claps his hand over her mouth.

EXT. LORI'S CONDO APARTMENT COMPLEX - LATE NIGHT

HOLD on the pair of scuffling silhouettes through her shades. Eerie quiet. Then we HEAR, OVER, an unsettling plunk sound.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BOWDENS' DEN - NEXT AFTERNOON

Sam at the piano again. Compulsively hitting a key, that's not sounding a proper note. Plunk. Plunk.

SAM

When did this key stop working?

Danny lies on the couch reading Look Homeward, Angel.

DANNY

I have no idea.

Sam opens the lid, and peers inside.

SAM

That's weird: the wire's missing.

INT. STUDIO - AFTERNOON

Karen has just balled up another failed attempt at a logo as Sam wanders in -- the paper sails past him into the garbage.

SAM

A piano-wire was clipped, or --

Before Sam can finish, or Karen can react, the phone RINGS. Sam reaches past her and answers it. INTERCUT:

INT. LIEUTENANT ELGART'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

Elgart sits at his desk, chewing tobacco. Into the phone:

ELGART

Mr. Bowden? Lieutenant Elgart. We might could have a li'l break here.

INT. STUDIO

Karen senses something: She spins on her chair to face Sam, on the phone. Into the receiver:

SAM

I can meet you there in a half hour.

Sam hangs up. To Karen:

SAM

Cady raped another girl.

Stunned, Karen slides off the chair and stands there.

KAREN

You said he served for battery --!

Sam is caught -- and has to explain:

SAM

Case was weak -- a "wobbler". I got the charge reduced.

He adds, a bit lamely:

SAM

I didn't want to alarm you. Or Danny.

KAREN

How old was the girl? In the case you defended?

SAM

Fifteen.

Danny has wandered in.

DANNY

Fifteen what?

Sam and Karen just blink at their daughter, unable to answer.

CUT TO:

INT. COUNTY HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - AFTERNOON (LATER)

Sam and Lieutenant Elgart head down the hallway.

ELGART

Neighbors heard screams, and called us. When the perp drove away someone made his plate. Max Cady. But we got one bitty problem: Girl's scared, she's claiming she fell down a flight of stairs. So you gotta convince her Max Cady needs to be behind bars again.

SAM

How'm I gonna do that?

Elgart stops at a door, guarded by a uniformed cop. Knocks.

ELGART
Your wallet ... You carry a picture of
your daughter?

Now they enter:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Sam stops dead in the doorway.

LORI
-- Sam.

Her face is grotesquely bruised and swollen.

SAM
My god.

Lori turns her face away; a tear spills out of an eye puffed
nearly shut.

Elgart's antennae are already up, and waving.

ELGART
You two know each other?

Sam crosses the room, to Lori's bedside.

SAM
We work together.

ELGART
I'll be outside.

Elgart slips out. Sam pulls up a chair. Lori turns away.

LORI
Don't look at me. I know ... My face
looks like a blue basketball.

Sam is so upset, he can barely speak. Throatily:

SAM
They brought me here to talk you into
pressing charges. The man who ...
Cady ... He's been hanging around,
watching me, trying to scare my family.
And I think what he -- did, to you, he
did to get at me.
(beat, softer)
As grotesque as that sounds.

A long silence. Then, softly:

LORI

I'm such a fool.

Biting his lip, Sam stares at the back of her head.

LORI

You didn't show up at the club the other day. You didn't call ...

SAM

I went looking for Cady. Try to talk some sense --

LORI

Anyway I felt so bad, I had to consider that maybe I was in love with you. By last night I was feeling reckless. Had an urge to dull the pain.

(harsh laugh)

Now look at me.

She begins to cry. Sam takes a tissue, leans over and gently dries her cheek. Then:

SAM

Cady's done this before. He'll do it again. Lori ... unless you --

LORI

(evenly)

We've both spent time in court. We know how it works -- don't we? The defense'll put me on trial. The good folks in the bar'll testify I picked Cady up. My nice neighbors'll say they heard me asking for it. I'll be called. They'll make me describe what he did in clinical detail, then make me deny that I liked it ... And they'll want every fact about my love life. They'll even ask about our lunches ...

She covers her face with her hand. We see lacerations on her wrists, where Cady's handcuffs bit into her flesh.

SAM

I don't care about that --

LORI

I'm going home, to Knoxville. As soon as I'm healed. I'm going to put everything behind me: you, what's happened ... That's just how it is.

Her tone is plain, and final. After a long beat, Sam rises.

SAM

I'm sorry.

Lori doesn't respond. Sam starts for the door. And now:

LORI

... There is one thing.

Sam stops, turns. Lori is still facing the wall. Muffled:

LORI

While he was beating me, he said ...
He said he would kill you four times.

Sam just stands there, sickened and stunned.

LORI

All night I was asking myself ... How
could anyone be killed four times?

Sam only has to think about this for a moment.

SAM

... If you had a dog, a wife and a
daughter. He already got the dog.

Shocked, Lori finally turns away from the wall to face Sam.

LORI

-- Nobody'd do that.

Sam doesn't argue. He just starts for the door again. As he
exits, Lori speaks -- but not loudly enough to be heard.

LORI

I wish I had the guts to help you.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - DUSK

As Sam emerges, there is Elgart, sitting on the hood of his
unmarked Ford Escort. He waves Sam over.

ELGART

Didn't change 'er mind, did'ya?

Sam shakes his head.

ELGART

If this is all some personal thing
between you and the girl and Cady ...

SAM

(flares)

If some maniac terrorizing your family and friends is personal -- then yes, it's personal. It doesn't get more personal.

(beat)

What're you implying, Lieutenant?

ELGART

Only that there are some matters best handled quietly -- not by the police.

SAM

What, Cady isn't your problem anymore?

Elgart smiles the easy smile of the seasoned Southern cop.

ELGART

Mr. Bowden: You're not a resident of New Essex proper. You work here, but you live in a fancy suburb ten miles from here. You pay no city taxes --

SAM

Ah. I don't personally contribute to your salary, so you could care less whether Cady winds up raping my wife.

ELGART

Whether I care or not ain't the thing. I can't bust Cady for thinking about raping your wife. You're a lawyer, Mr. Bowden. So you know that damn well.

SAM

Thanks all the same, Lieutenant.

He starts for his Volvo.

ELGART

Tell y'what I'd do ...

Sam pauses in mid-stride. Turns. Irritably:

SAM

A restraining order? I already filed.

Elgart spits out a stream of tobacco.

ELGART

Think of this fella Cady as a tiger. Trick is to get him out of the brush. How do you do that? You stake out a coupla your goats and hide in a tree.

Sam can't believe what he's hearing.

SAM

You're suggesting I use my family as bait? Lieutenant? Hope that this psychopath attacks my wife and child and then, what? Blow off his head?

Elgart grins. Shrugs.

ELGART

I'm a law officer. It'd be unethical for me to advise a citizen to take the law into his own hands. So I guess you must've misunderstood me, Mr. Bowden.

Sam is quietly indignant.

SAM

I guess I must've.

ELGART

Well, par'm me all over the place.

Sam stalks back to his car. Jumps in and pulls out, hard.

CUT TO:

INT. BOWDEN HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

Sam (shadowed by Karen) urgently moves from room to room, checking that all doors and windows are closed and locked.

Danny watches. Standing on the stair, chin on the bannister.

SAM

... Why is this house so damn rambling?

KAREN

That's why we bought it ... remember?
"Four-thousand gracious square feet"?
After that post-modern condo in Atlanta
this seemed like heaven --

DANNY

I liked that place. It was cozy.

KAREN

It was crummy. You're a lucky girl, to live here --

SAM

Yeah well there's too many windows and too many doors --

DANNY
(chimes in)
No alarms --

KAREN
I ordered one today. Top of the line.
In two weeks ...

As Sam draws all drapes, shuts all blinds, etc.:

DANNY
So we lock ourselves in for two weeks?

Sam and Karen ignore her.

With a loud sigh Danny starts back upstairs, to her bedroom.

SAM
(to Karen)
Last year we used a private detective
in a corporate espionage case.
Tomorrow I call him. Till then we lock
ourselves in.

INT. KAREN'S STUDIO - NIGHT

Sam crosses to the window to lock the sash. Karen, behind him, emits a surprised sigh. Sam turns.

SAM
What --?

Karen is staring at her drafting table. There, surrounded by various sketches for the travel agency logo, is the big sheet of paper that'd been irksomely blank this past week.

THE DRAFTING TABLE

Now the sheet has a drawing on it -- a finished logo ... and though naive, it's also elegantly simple.

KAREN
Look what Danny drew ...

BACK TO SCENE

Sam moves to the drafting table. Appraises the rendering ... not bad at all.

SAM
Hunh.

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Sprawled on her bed, she reads Look Homeward, Angel while listening to the Guns 'n' Roses ballad "Patience".

Karen lightly knocks, then lets herself in.

KAREN
... Smart solution.

DANNY
What?

Danny looks up as Karen waves the sheet of paper.

KAREN
The way you combined the motion of the arrow with the idea of equilibrium ...

DANNY
(laughs)
Thanks, Mom.

KAREN
Thank you. I can really incorporate --

DANNY
Cut it out.

KAREN
What? I mean it. It's --

DANNY
Mom, I didn't draw that.

KAREN
(knowing smile)
No, then who did?

EXT. BOWDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

We don't HEAR any more conversation -- just "Patience" as it wafts out of Danny's half-open window into the summer night.

This would be a pleasant tableau were it not for the mystery of the redesigned logo and our unsettling sense that we're seeing the Bowdens' home from a peeping tom's point of view.

SLOWLY PULL BACK ... until the house looks small and isolated and vulnerable ... and then OVER, we HEAR:

MAN'S VOICE
This isn't business, is it, Mr. Bowden?

CUT TO:

INT. KERSEK DETECTIVE AGENCY - MORNING

The office is so sterile, it might as well be a delivery room. Sam sits across a clean desk from CLYDE KERSEK, a young and purposefully bland-looking private detective -- like one of the original Mercury astronauts.

SAM

Business? No, not really. No ...

Kersek appraises the fidgety client before him.

KERSEK

Somebody's royally on your case. Tell me about him.

SAM

His name is Max Cady.

Kersek makes notes on a legal pad.

SAM

He was recently released from Raiford. He's been harrassing my family -- but cleverly, so the law can't touch him. I'd like a professional opinion as to whether he intends to do us real harm.

KERSEK

We don't read minds, Mr. Bowden.

SAM

Okay.

(then, flares)

Why can no one do anything for me? What the hell good are laws and cops and prisons and due process --

KERSEK

(softly)

Sam.

The subdued tone, and use of Sam's first name, quiets Sam.

KERSEK

The system is set up pretty well to handle generalized, routine dangers ... robbery, burglary ... crimes of greed and opportunity ... But if one lone nutcase out there targets you for some obscure reason, the system is slow, skeptical ... pathetic, even ... Which is bad for you. But fortunate for me.

His grin is modest yet supremely self-assured.

KERSEK

Now what's your connection with this fella?

SAM

I was his lawyer. His public defender.

A beat. Kersek squints at Sam.

KERSEK

But you shafted him, somehow -- yes?

SAM

Well ...

KERSEK

Look, Sam, I don't care what you did. What did he do? What was the case?

SAM

He raped a 15-year-old girl.

Kersek makes a note of this. Then looks back up at Sam.

KERSEK

You have a daughter ... about fifteen?

SAM

That's right.

Kersek nods. Sets down the notepad.

KERSEK

Here's the deal: I'll do a background check, watch him for a week. Write up a Risk Assessment.

SAM

Great. Thank you. The cops have his address --

KERSEK

I'll find him.

SAM

His name is --

KERSEK

You already told me.

CUT TO:

INT. BOWDEN DINING ROOM - THAT NIGHT

A subdued family supper. Outside the windows, all we see are trees, swaying hard. Tonight it's more eerie than pastoral.

Danny breaks the silence.

DANNY

Don't you wish we hadn't moved so high up the real estate chain?

KAREN

I wouldn't mind a nosy neighbor these days.

SAM

Hey: We now have a very adept private detective on the payroll. That should help us all breathe a little easier ...

The phone RINGS -- all three Bowdens jump in their seats.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - SAM

grabs the receiver.

SAM

Yes.

INTERCUT KERSEK, in:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

He's in his Caddy, parked on a quiet residential street just outside town. On his car phone.

KERSEK

After you left, I had an interesting conversation with a C.O. at Raiford.

Kersek keeps his eyes trained on a lit rooming house window halfway down the block, as he speaks.

KERSEK

Seems Cady was a model prisoner. They let him work in the kitchen. One hinky thing, though: This other inmate worked in there with him. Hated Cady's cigar smoke, bitched all the time. One day they found him in a drum full of boiling water. Way you'd cook a lobster.

SAM

Jesus.

KERSEK

Nobody placed Cady anywhere near the scene. Not out loud, leastwise.

The light in the rooming house goes out. Kersek starts his car -- a soft but powerful purr.

KERSEK

Throw that into the mix. 'Night, now.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT - WITH SAM

As he reenters the room:

KAREN

Who was that?

SAM

Our detective.

He crosses, and starts pulling shut all the drapes.

DANNY

I thought we were "breathing easier".

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT - LATER

Karen is on the couch in the den, nursing a glass of wine and watching PBS. She calls, as Sam starts upstairs:

KAREN

Come sit. A wonderful thing on Georgia O'Ke--

SAM

In a minute.

INT. SAM & KAREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sam quickly crosses to the phone. Takes a slip of paper from his pocket and dials the number scrawled on it. Then, sotto:

SAM

Yes. Room 112 please.
(waits, then)
It's me. I'm not calling to change your mind. Just to see how you are.

Sam listens to Lori's reply. Then:

SAM

Look, Lori ... I want you to know I'm real sorry you got dragged into this.
(more)

SAM (Cont'd)
If I'd dreamed Cady'd hurt you to get
to me I'd've warned you. Believe me --
(listens, then)
I know. It feels strange for me to end
it like this, too.
(sighs)
So. You're really that determined
about moving back to Knoxville ..?

As Sam listens to Lori's response, he compulsively opens the
blinds, to peer into the dark backyard. Then he startles.

WHAT HE SEES

In the window, there is a reflection --

Sam whirls --

Karen stands in the bedroom doorway.

SAM
(tries to sound blase)
I'll have to call you back.

He hangs up.

KAREN
(icy calm)
That was the girl who was beaten up?

SAM
Lori Davis. She, ah, works at the
county courthouse. A clerk.

KAREN
And, what ..? You're fucking her?

Sam gives her an incredulous look: What?

KAREN
It's why that -- lunatic chose her.
Right? Don't lie --! I heard you.

SAM
It is why he chose her. But --

KAREN
You sleazy --

Sam moves to the door.

SAM
Let's close the door. Danny's right
downst--

He glances out, toward the stairs. And sees:

DANNY

Wrong. She was just coming upstairs, to her room. Looking stricken at having been caught in the squabble, she freezes.

SAM

Hon, there's nothing the matter ...

Instinctively Danny switches into Teenage Sarcastic mode.

DANNY

I can see that.

She hurries down the hall to her room and hears, behind her:

SAM'S VOICE

You're pitching a fit about noth--

KAREN'S VOICE

You wanna see me pitch a fit --?

The bedroom door SLAMS. Danny shuts her bedroom door too.

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

She goes to her stereo, puts on that song again: "Patience". It drowns out her parents, but that's all it does. Suddenly impatient, she reaches for her telephone. Dials.

DANNY

(beat, then)

Nadine? Danny. Nothing. You?

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S BEDROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Sam has calmed Karen sufficiently that she's sitting, on the edge of the bed. Looking down at the carpet.

KAREN

... I thought we moved here to keep the family together. Wasn't that the idea? Decent clients, quiet town ...?

SAM

Didn't we? Aren't we? How much more "together" can we be?

KAREN

I just thought we left all that shit behind in Atlanta.

SAM

All what "shit"?

KAREN

(looks up)

Your slimy clients. And your "leisure activities" ... And the lies that went along with that. What a waste: all those hours with Dr. Hackett ...

SAM

(pacing)

A waste? Like Chinese water torture. We talked that one damned incident to death.

KAREN

She wasn't an "incident". She was a --
(bitter laugh)
-- "public defender".

Then something hits Karen. She stands.

KAREN

Why, were there more incidents? Other women you'd rather've discussed?

SAM

(stops pacing, turns)

What --?

KAREN

Tell me who they were, Sam. It doesn't matter now ... Friends of ours? Of mine? Or more of your esteemed colleagues? C'mon, I'm just curious --

SAM

Christ. Karen.

He grabs her shoulders.

SAM

There wasn't. Anyone else.

KAREN

It doesn't matter.

SAM

It does. And as far as Lori goes: You gravitate to people in the same world as you, professionally --

KAREN

To "people"? To women --

Sam sighs, lets go of her.

SAM

Maybe there's an element of flirtation. I'd like to think it's harmless. Even Dr. Hackett might say it's healthy ...

Karen doesn't respond; the fight seems to have drained out of her. She sits on the bed.

SAM

But I think -- and this scares me ... I think Cady knew she'd refuse to testify 'cause she knows the system. And that you'd draw the conclusion you drew, which would create a rift between us. And we'd be that much more vulnerable.

Sam sits on the bed, beside her.

SAM

So I'm grateful you let me explain. So that we can beat this thing together, as a team ...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. DEN - NIGHT - SAM

has been banished to the couch. He restlessly shifts, feet sticking out at one end, trying vainly to get comfortable.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER - NEXT MORNING

Cady, by contrast, is happy as a clam: He peruses today's paper while enjoying a light, healthy breakfast: orange juice, bowl of oat bran with berries, cup of herbal tea.

ANGLE - ACROSS THE RESTAURANT

Kersek sits, peripherally watching Cady. He's still checking the menu when a WAITRESS appears with biscuits and coffee.

KERSEK

-- I haven't ordered yet.

WAITRESS

That fellow over there sent this ... Paid for and all.

She nods at --

-- Cady's table. But Cady himself has now vanished.

WAITRESS

Must be a good friend of yours, huh?

EXT. DINER - MORNING

Kersek, quickly exiting, trips over something: Cady's shoe. The private eye nearly goes flying down three steps. But experience has taught him how to take a fall and he's regained his balance in an instant, and most of his dignity.

He turns on Cady, who's standing there "reading" the paper. The soul of innocence.

KERSEK

(quiet, threatening)

Hey.

Cady lowers the paper.

KERSEK

Cady. I've been in a real down mood these last couple days. Shame, huh?

Cady raises his eyebrows.

KERSEK

You want a tip as to how you could help brighten my mood?

Cady's look is so neutral, it's comic. Kersek, though, is clearly unamused.

KERSEK

I don't want you hanging around anymore. And I don't just mean around town. I don't want to get word you're anywhere in this whole beautiful state.

Finally Cady responds, a studied mellowness to his tone.

CADY

Are you my friend?

Kersek takes a step forward, into Cady's "personal space".

KERSEK

Now why would I be your friend, Max?

CADY

(patiently)

Because I plan my comings and goings with friends. But if you're not my friend, and you're planning my comings and goings, I'd call that presumptuous. And I'd call that rude.

KERSEK

Gosh, I'm sorry if I've offended you.

(beat)

Fuckface.

Kersek tenses, hoping Cady will take a swing. Instead:

CADY

It's not necessary, to call me a name. It could make me upset -- things could get out of hand. And then, in self-defense, I could kill you right here.

KERSEK

(easy grin)

You're welcome to try.

CADY

Are you muscling me?

KERSEK

Wow. You're a quick study, Max.

CADY

Because I'm well within my rights to be here. And if I stay here, what are you gonna do? What are you gonna do? Are you gonna arrest me? Are you a cop?

Kersek doesn't answer; his easy grin tightens, a tad.

CADY

Were you a cop? Were you not good enough to remain on the force? Because that's the feeling I'm getting, here.

Kersek looks as though he'd like to take a bite out of Cady's head. Instead he forces himself to walk away, with a final:

KERSEK

Watch your ass, Max.

Cady, unruffled, raises the paper again and resumes reading.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOWDEN BACKYARD - AFTERNOON - LATER

Danny and Graciella squat in the vegetable garden. They're picking snap beans for tonight's supper.

DANNY

Folks're at it again. The boogeyman, I guess.

Graciella smiles, confused.

GRACIELLA

"Boogey --"?

DANNY

It's not even him, actually. I think what it is, is success.

GRACIELLA

... I don't understand.

DANNY

Me neither ... Maybe it's just, these grabby corporations Dad represents ... just puts something bad into the air.

She fills a bag, starts on another one.

DANNY

Or have you noticed that when things get too good, there's a thing inside people, makes them want to wreck it?

Graciella smiles, as she rises and dusts off her hands.

GRACIELLA

Like the trouble you get into, with the marijuana.

Danny doesn't answer -- she busies herself with the beans.

GRACIELLA

Because it is easier to be unhappy ..?

Danny's quickly filled another bag.

DANNY

I don't know. Maybe ...

As they amble back to the house, she sighs:

DANNY

We were happy on the river. The Cape Fear ... We'd rent a houseboat there ... Spend a whole summer. And it was the easiest thing in the world ...

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - EARLY EVENING

The end of the work day: Sam is loading up his briefcase.

Then he notices Kersek's powerful frame filling the doorway.

KERSEK

Sucker made me. Real smart aleck, that one.

SAM

What --? He --

KERSEK

Not my damn fault ... Cady was expecting to be covered. So all I've been getting is cuteness. Last night he sends me a bottle of champagne at this fancy-ass roadhouse he frequents. Today he spends four hours at the public library ... Sucker just sat there, four hours, reading Thus Spake Zarathustra, by Friedrich Nietzsche.

Sam looks incredulous: Friedrich Nietzsche?

KERSEK

German philosopher. "God is dead."

Sam gives out with a dark laugh.

SAM

Tell me ...

KERSEK

Good news is he won't try anything while I'm watching him. Bad news is, this goes on and on -- the champagne, the library, the cuteness -- and nothing gets settled. Which quickly gets to be an exorbitant proposition.

SAM

(sighs)

Look, days I'm not so concerned about. Stay on him a few more nights, willya?

Kersek unhappily follows Sam out.

EXT. LAW OFFICE PARKING LOT - MORNING

Kersek's Caddy is parked next to Sam's Volvo.

KERSEK

You wanna resolve the situation, I can make a suggestion.

SAM

I'm listening.

KERSEK

There're guys can be hired -- by me --
to do a job on Cady. A hospital job.

SAM

-- What're you talking about?

KERSEK

I'm talking about changing his mind
with two pieces of pipe and a bicycle
chain.

Without comment -- this is beneath discussion -- Sam climbs
into his car. Starts it up.

Kersek leans into the window.

KERSEK

I'm telling'ya, Sam: He won't be scary
after that. I've seen guys as tough
turn into cute little bunny rabbits ...
Just two pieces of pipe and a bicyc--

SAM

Remember I mentioned to you I'm a
lawyer? Maybe that doesn't really mean
anything. But it's supposed to mean I
believe in the law. Don't you agree?

And Sam drives away.

CUT TO:

INT. BOWDEN DEN - THAT NIGHT

Sam, still in the doghouse, lies on the couch. Restless,
uncomfortable, vainly trying to get some sleep.

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

"Patience" softly plays. Danny is burning the midnight oil,
finishing Look Homeward, Angel in time for the start of
Special English, tomorrow.

Her phone RINGS. She picks up.

DANNY

Hello?

A beat, and then:

WHISPERED VOICE

Danielle?

She can't even discern the whisperer's sex.

DANNY

Nadine?
(then)
Who is this?

INT. CADY'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

We can't see much of it because the lights are off -- by the moonlight, the place looks sparse and clean. Cady sits just to the side of the windowsill as he speaks into the phone -- he never takes his eyes off Kersek's Caddy, down the block.

CADY

(soft whisper)

You know late at night when you get up to pee, or have a sip of water? And suddenly you stop dead -- your blood chills and your heart pounds? 'Cause at that moment you realize it doesn't matter that mommy and daddy are right down the hall. At the moment you realize that darkness reigns ...

(beat)

Well, I am darkness.

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - SAME TIME

She hangs up. And just sits there, not breathing, a statue.

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Karen tosses, in a light sleep. A HAND reaches into FRAME.

Karen jumps! Sits bolt upright. Sees Danny standing there, almost sheepish.

KAREN

Jesus!

DANNY

-- Mom ...

Karen's hand is over her pounding heart.

KAREN

Jesus Christ.

TIME CUT:

INT. SAM & KAREN'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

The women haven't even tried to get back to sleep. They've turned on the lights, and are making the best of being wide awake at 4:00 a.m.

Danny sits at her mom's vanity. Karen stands behind her, watching Danny's reflection in the mirror.

KAREN

... You'll get better with practice.

Danny is putting on lipstick, evidently for the first time.

DANNY

How do I get it off the part that's not my lip?

Karen grabs a tissue. Turns Danny to her, and lightly daubs at her lip.

KAREN

You blot, like this. I can't believe I haven't shown you this before.

As she works, she studies her daughter's face.

KAREN

You're a beautiful young woman.

DANNY

Cut it out.

KAREN

But you are.

She's carefully applying a second coat.

KAREN

You have to learn to value yourself ... accept a compliment ... Like with that logo. You --

DANNY

Mom, I didn't draw that stupid thing.

Karen smiles. Case in point. As she finishes the second coat, of "pretty pink":

KAREN

I want you to have this. I'm too old for this shade.

DANNY

You are not --

KAREN

Yes I am. And I want you to have it.

They search each other's faces. More is being offered, here, than a lipstick.

TIME CUT:

Morning. Sam stands at the foot of the bed, tightening his tie. He wears a small, almost pained smile, as he looks at:

His wife and daughter, asleep in his bed, together.

Now Sam squints, leans closer:

His sleeping daughter wears hot pink lipstick. In her sleep, she's brushed her arm against her mouth, leaving a neon smear that's almost obscene and definitely disturbing.

Also, the blanket is askew, and one of Danny's legs is exposed, up to the thigh. The leg is bare, and shapely.

Sam quickly covers it. Then backs away, out of the bedroom.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW ESSEX HIGH SCHOOL - LATE MORNING

As Karen pulls up in her Range Rover. A beat, then Danny gets out. (Note: She's now removed the lipstick.)

KAREN

I should walk you to your classroom.

DANNY

Mom, don't you dare. Look, there's like fifty kids out here ...

Fifty kids is a slight exaggeration, but the school looks safely populated on this, the first day of summer session.

KAREN

I'll be back for you at four. I'll be parked right here.

Danny is already halfway up the steps. Karen watches as she hooks up with TWO GIRLFRIENDS. When they enter the building together, Karen finally feels reassured enough to drive away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL MAIN HALL - LATE MORNING

Surrounded by other kids, Danny and her girlfriends hang.

GIRLFRIEND 1

So what was that thing with your folks at the 4th of July?

GIRLFRIEND 2

I heard they went nuts on some guy --

DANNY

Went nuts? They've been nuts --

CUT TO:

INT. LAW FIRM - LATE MORNING

With Sam and Broadbent as they move down the hall together.

BROADBENT

... Just write on the declaration that you called his lawyer's secretary and gave notice. Otherwise --

SAM

Fudge the declaration?

BROADBENT

You give notice, my brother-in-law cleans out the account and skips. Which leaves my sister half of nothing. This way you're in court lickety-split; we slap a TPO on all his assets --

They've reached Sam's office. Karen's sitting on the couch.

BROADBENT

Karen. How lovely to see you.

KAREN

(stands)

Tom.

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - LATE MORNING

Sam is surprised to find his wife here.

SAM

Tom, would you excuse us please ..?

He closes the door on his boss. Karen stands, steps forward.

KAREN

I just wanted to talk.

SAM

Good. There really was nothing --

KAREN

I know. Or maybe I don't know. But at this point I don't care. It just takes too much energy and ...

She trails off. Fiddles with a paperweight on Sam's desk.

KAREN

Sam, after we resolve this thing with this -- convict, maybe ... I dunno ... What do you want to do?

SAM

You mean ... because I was wanton enough to maybe think about sleeping with somebody other than you?

KAREN

Believe it or not there're men that want me too --

SAM

Karen, let's please not have this conversation.

KAREN

Why not? Danny's getting old enough, we don't have to keep this up for her.

SAM

That's what we're doing --?

KAREN

I don't know what we're doing. I dimly remember the plan: leave the big bad city for some picturesque town, but --

SAM

But our daughter gets caught smoking dope, and I find another bimbo -- is that the idea?

KAREN

Wasn't my idea.

SAM

Look, Karen, if I'm gonna be spending the rest of my life trying to live that down -- failing to make restitution for some terrible "lapse" ... Then yeah, I agree, that isn't a marriage. That's probation. That's purgatory. And it's true, Danny's almost a woman now -- at least she thinks she is -- and she'll survive Mom and Dad going their separate ways. She might even welcome it.

KAREN

Would you?

SAM
 Yeah maybe I would. I don't know! Am I supposed to have clarity here?
 (beat, sighs)
 Look, let's ... Like you said, let's figure this out after we get through the other thing. Okay?

She nods. He nods. They stare at each other. Then:

SAM
 You hungry?

KAREN
 (shrugs)
 I guess. You?

SAM
 'S'why I asked.

He gestures: after you. As he follows her out of his office:

SAM
 Where's Danny?

KAREN
 Summer session. Teeming with kids. She's fine.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH SCHOOL MAIN HALL - NOON

As a belltower CHIMES the hour, kids gather up their stuff.

DANNY
 ... Didn't think summer session was gonna be this crowded.

FRIEND 1
 It's not. There's a big meeting about next fall's chorus program ...

Virtually all the kids are funneling into the auditorium.

Danny waves goodbye to her friends ... Then continues to the end of the hall, through the swinging double-doors, then one flight down, to:

INT. LOWER CORRIDOR - WITH DANNY

Down here the hallway is narrower, and there are eerie GROANS through the walls: air conditioner, water pump ..

Danny is quite alone. At first this doesn't faze her: she proceeds down the long corridor with confidence, the loud, steady clacking of her heels the only human sound ...

And then she hears another sound: her song, "Patience". Not the Guns 'n Roses recording, but the melody hummed in a high, almost unearthly register.

Danny hesitates. A smile flits across her face.

DANNY

Nadine?

No answer, just this bizarrely beckoning "Patience". Danny moves, uncertain but intrigued, toward the song.

DANNY

... Sally?

Still no answer. Just the song. Danny keeps walking. As she approaches a corner, she bursts into nervous laughter.

DANNY

I swear if you don't --

Then she smells something. She stops, sniffs. Could it be? In answer, a tiny curl of blue smoke wafts around the corner.

MAX CADY

steps from behind the corner. In fuller-fitting wardrobe. He's just taken a hit off a joint. Seeing Danny, he smiles.

CADY

Uh-oh. Am I busted?

DANNY

Not by me.

She starts past him.

CADY

Wait. Are you -- down here for Special English ...?

DANNY

(stops, turns)

You're ... from the college --?

Cady smiles: the college, yes. He pulls a slip of paper from his pocket. Checks it.

CADY

And you're -- let me guess: Cecile James.

DANNY

(laughs)
Wrong. Danielle Bowden.

Cady smiles: Glad to know you. Then raises the hand that's holding the joint.

CADY

Opening night jitters.
(then)
I'm sorry. How rude.

He extends the joint. Incredulous, Danny glances around --

CADY

It's okay ...
(sings)
"I think we're alone now ..."

Danny laughs, too nervous to just say no to the joint. She takes a toke, for show. As she hands it back:

DANNY

That song you were humming before?
It's my favorite song for two years.

CADY

(nods)
"Patience". No higher virtue, no greater test.

He nods at Danny's copy of Look Homeward, Angel.

CADY

What about that? You get through it?

DANNY

It's -- very interesting. Eugene's --

She gropes for the right phrases.

DANNY

Eugene's journey at the end is mystical -- almost like a pilgrimage --

CADY

Almost like a cop-out. But those were the facts of Wolfe's life -- the novel is a roman a clef.

He has pronounced the last word "cleff". But Danny doesn't know better. As he leads her farther down the hall:

CADY
Nevertheless you can't escape your demons just by leaving home.

DANNY
I guess that's true. In fact I --
Suddenly aware that she's prattling. How uncool.

CADY
Although writers do find new freedom when they relocate abroad. Take Henry Miller ... Have you read his trilogy? Sexus, Nexus and Plexus?

The word Sexus hangs, suggestively, in the air.

DANNY
No, but I've read Tropic of Cancer.
(laughs)
Parts of it, anyway.
(admits)
I had to sneak it off my parents' shelf and sneak it back again.

Cady laughs, empathetic.

Meantime Danny is straining to match Cady's sophistication:

DANNY
Miller's images are very ... vivid.

CADY
(nods)
In one of the novels -- I don't recall which at the moment -- he describes an erection as "a piece of lead with wings on it."

Before Danny can react, he's lead her into:

INT. CLASSROOM - NOON

It's otherwise unoccupied.

DANNY
Umm ... where should I sit? Mister ...

Cady doesn't answer. Just smiles that smile.

DANNY
Sorry: I didn't get your name.

An edge of anxiety creeps into Danny's voice.

DANNY
Who are you --?

Cady is very close to her now. He whispers:

CADY
I am darkness.

A beat, and then Danny bolts for the door.

Cady is quicker: he's blocking it.

She tries to step around him. He grips her arms.

DANNY
(terrified, babbles)
Please don't hurt me, I don't think
you're a bad man --

CADY
(sardonic smile)
Just "misunderstood". Is that it?

DANNY
(fervent)
Yes. Misunderstood. I know what
that's like --

Cady softens. Almost sweetly:

CADY
Yes, I believe you do.

Danny has stopped struggling. She turns her face up to him.

DANNY
Why do you hate my father?

Her face is shining, with innocence and fear.

CADY
I don't hate him, Danielle. I hurt for
him. You see, he's groping so hard for
something -- something beyond his
prosperity, his position ... Something
to believe in. Like the Spirit. And I
suspect that a man such as me -- a man
who has gone without, who has had
nothing but his own faith to fall back
upon -- I suspect I could help him.

Cady lightly smooths Danny's hair.

CADY

He isn't happy, is he? And Karen's not happy, and you're not happy -- are you?

Danny doesn't answer.

CADY

It shouldn't be that way, Danielle. So I've come to town to change everything.

He gazes deep into her eyes.

CADY

You've been dreaming about me, haven't you?

DANNY

(hoarse)

Maybe -- in a way ... Depends what you want ...

CADY

Today? This ... Only this.

He leans forward -- and kisses her on the mouth. A kiss so intimate and tender, it's almost shocking.

When Danny breaks the kiss, Cady lets her go.

INT. CORRIDOR -- DANNY

breathlessly flies out of the classroom ... nearly tripping over her feet --

-- through the swinging door and -- BAM! A gasp! But it's just the door swinging back at her!

Running ... panting ... nothing trailing her but panic and desire.

CUT TO:

EXT. LAW FIRM PARKING LOT - EARLY AFTERNOON

The Volvo pulls in. Sam and Karen are returning from lunch, both a little tipsy. As they disembark:

KAREN

Y'know I don't even know any more what case you're working on ...

SAM

It's not a case, it's a kiss-ass chore for the boss and it's not important ...

KAREN

It is, to me -- it really is, still --

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - EARLY AFTERNOON

As they enter, Sam's secretary rises. Her face shows strain.

SHEILA

Mr. Bowden:

Sheila's tone of voice stops the Bowdens cold.

CUT TO:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON - LATER

Danny sits hunch-shouldered in the corner. All cried out.

Sam and Karen sit opposite the female PRINCIPAL. Behind the Principal stands MR. KROLL, a little ferret of a Bio teacher.

PRINCIPAL

When Mr. Kroll found her, she was irrational. After calming her, he observed marijuana on her breath --

MR. KROLL

I've been trained -- I'm certified by our local DARE program --

SAM

Look if Danny says a man accosted her and forced her to smoke some grass ...

PRINCIPAL

Your daughter was caught with marijuana, last semester, you recall --

SAM

How can I forget?

MR. KROLL

We checked the building for this "man", and didn't --

SAM

(peppery)

I guess he'd left the building while you were busy smelling my daughter's breath.

PRINCIPAL

If you believe there was a "man" --

KAREN

If Danny says a man accosted her, then yes we "really believe" that --

PRINCIPAL

Then we should call the police and have them take a statement from Danielle --

SAM

The police?
(shakes his head)
Thanks all the same.

Sam stands. Reaches out to his daughter.

SAM

C'mon, hon. We're going home.

CUT TO:

INT. KERSEK'S OFFICE - EARLY EVENING (LATER)

Kersek and two Associates are studying photos of a sleazy motel. Planning a surveillance, as the phone RINGS.

KERSEK

Kersek.

INTERCUT SAM, in:

INT. THE BOWDENS' KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Sam paces, as he speaks. In the living room, in b.g., Karen tenderly smooths Danny's hair with her hand.

SAM

Where were you? Cady came at my daughter, in her school!

Kersek gestures for his associates to clear out. Which they do, instantly.

KERSEK

You asked me to watch him nights. I'm sorry Sam, I've got a business to run. Is she OK?

SAM

Yes, thank god.

KERSEK

You phone the cops?

59.

SAM

No, I didn't phone the cops. What did you call them? "Slow"? "Skeptical"? "Pathetic" ... No, I'm phoning you.

He lowers his voice, so that Danny won't hear.

SAM

Kersek: I want you to hire those -- guys. Remember? The "hospital job".

Kersek appreciates how far Sam has been pushed, to reach this point. His response is appropriately subdued.

KERSEK

Consider it done. Sooner the better?

SAM

Yes.

KERSEK

Three men is a grand. I know that's not chickenfeed, but you don't want less than three. Better to overdo it.

SAM

You'll have the cash in the morning.

KERSEK

Then we're on for tomorrow night.
(adds)
And Sam: Feel good about this.

CUT TO:

INT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

The post-punk juke joint where Cady picked up Lori, earlier. A sepulchral Doors ballad plays in b.g. Tonight Cady sits alone, sipping his Evian and watching the hip young folk flirt, drink and dance. There is a stillness to his posture that is undeniably commanding. Now he looks up, and smiles.

Sam has crossed the dance floor to him. Tense but resolute.

SAM

I just want to tell you one thing --

But before he can continue, Cady speaks. Softly, pensive:

CADY

I worry about these young people ...
Look at them ... They're not happy.
(more)

CADY (Cont'd)

They've rejected their community, but they've found no replacement. We all need to be connected to something ...

SAM

Cady: Shut up and listen. You're not out of town by tomorrow, you are gonna be hurting like you never dreamed.

CADY

(grimly amused)

A threat?

SAM

Bet your ass it's a threat.

He starts to leave, but Cady grabs Sam's hand, keeping him.

CADY

You know I have considered relocating somewhere where I'd be appreciated. California, perhaps. I could teach earthquake preparedness ... But then it hits me: I love New Essex, counselor.

With his free hand, Cady sips his water. He swallows. Then:

CADY

Where else can I just casually confer with an old colleague ..?

SAM

(cold hatred)

We are not colleagues. Grasp that.

CADY

(almost sadly)

Still think you're better than me?

SAM

No. That's not the goddam point --

CADY

Good. 'Cause if you're not better than me, then I can have what you have.

SAM

(tenses)

And what do I have?

CADY

A wife. A daughter.

Fear and venom surge, together, up Sam's spine.

SAM
How did you get at my dog? C'mon, tell me, Cady -- how did my dog die?

CADY
(shrugs)
I guess his time had come. I guess God looks down from the heavens, and sees a dog, and just goes --

Cady taps the top of Sam's head with his forefinger. Sam slides his hand -- sweaty now -- out from under Cady's.

SAM
How could they have let you out ...?

CADY
At my hearing they asked if I felt remorse. And you know what I did?

A beat, and then Cady's eyes well up. As the tears spill down his cheeks:

CADY
You know who I was thinking about?

SAM
(edgy, softly)
Who?

CADY
You.

Sam tries to hide his disquiet with a last burst of bravado.

SAM
Remember: I warned you --

Cady abruptly leans forward, his face right in Sam's face.

CADY
Remember this: I'm the best thing that ever happened to you. I bring meaning to your spiritless life. What's the New South, anyway? It's the Old South with air conditioning instead of religion. Well you know what the Good Book says about a rich man's chance of getting into heaven ... So I've come to divest you of some assets. Remind you what "wretched" means. You are going to learn about loss, counselor ... See, I'm here to save you.

Without realizing he's doing it, Sam wipes his sweaty brow.

SAM
You were warned.

CADY
(smiles)
"You were warned." Nice, counselor. I
like this new exciting side of you.

Sam stands, starts away. Behind him, he HEARS:

CADY
By the way ... check out the Bible.
The book between Esther and Psalms.

Did Sam hear? We don't know: He just keeps grimly walking.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTHOUSE - NEXT AFTERNOON

Waves of humid heat waft across the town square as we FOLLOW
Sam into the neoclassical county courthouse.

INT. EX PARTE COURT - AFTERNOON

It's empty and silent, but for the feckless WHIRRING of the
overhead fan.

Sam hesitantly approaches the CLERK, a young man.

SAM
Yes, I'm -- here to file a motion, for
a writ of attachment ...

CLERK
You've made an ex parte application?

A beat, then Sam opens his briefcase.

SAM
It's in the declaration ...

Straining to sound casual, as he finds the papers:

SAM
Anyone heard from Lori Davis?

CLERK
Not so much as a postcard. Got any
idea what the hell happened to her?

SAM
No. None. I ...

The lie curdles in Sam's mouth just as he starts to hand over the papers. Now he stops -- puts them back in his briefcase.

CLERK

Got a problem?

Abruptly Sam is backing out of the court.

SAM

Yes. I do.

Off the Clerk's bemused look, we HEAR that unsettling plunk sound again.

CUT TO:

INT. BOWDEN DEN - THAT EVENING

Sam stands over the piano, compulsively punching the key whose wire was inexplicably clipped.

INT. HALLWAY - WITH SAM

Fidgety, he roams the house. Now, as he passes the open door to Danny's room, he hears:

DANNY

This isn't gonna work, y'know.

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - EVENING

Half-dressed, she's curled on her mattress, working on her reminiscence. Sam comes in. Stands at the foot of her bed.

SAM

What isn't?

DANNY

You floating around the house like a ghost, me staying out of school ...

SAM

You're going back to school tomorrow.
(then)

And could you wear some clothes around the house? You're not a little kid anymore.

Danny swings her legs off the bed and stands. Suspicious, ignoring Sam's last remark:

DANNY

Why am I going back to school tomorrow?
What's gonna happen?

SAM
That's not your concern.

DANNY
Dad? He only kissed me. Why is that
so threaten--

With one hand Sam grabs his daughter and pulls her to him; he claps his free hand over her mouth.

Then he lets her go, and backs away.

SAM
I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Danny ...
His daughter's eyes brim with tears.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROADHOUSE PARKING LOT - NIGHT (LATER)

Cady and a drunk, dissolute DEBUTANTE grope, against her BMW.

DEBUTANTE
... Comin' home with me, Max?

CADY
With you? You are everything I came to
New Essex to avoid. You are unclean,
you are corrupt ... When did the Bible
Belt become the Beemer Belt?

The girl thinks Cady's joking: she guffaws.

She's still guffawing as Cady climbs into his car and drives away.

CUT TO:

EXT. CADY'S ROOMING HOUSE - NIGHT

Cady pulls into his space. We see he's affixed a new bumper sticker: American By Birth, Southern By The Grace Of God.

As he climbs out of his car, a BIG MAN steps from the shadows behind him.

BIG MAN 1
Oh, Max ..?

Cady whirls -- and takes a length of pipe to the kidneys. He yelps and reels back --

-- into the grip of BIG MAN 2, who's appeared from out of nowhere. As Cady struggles to get free --

-- BIG MAN 3 materializes, snapping a bicycle chain at Cady's chest, shredding his shirt, drawing blood.

ANGLE - SAM

stands thirty yards away, half-hidden by the wall of a dark alley. He intently watches, his face a taut mask.

BACK TO THE BEATING

Cady is like a gored bull ringed by toreadors -- he staggers, bent and bloody, as the Big Men continue to punish him, their swats and wallops almost gratuitous now --

BACK TO SAM

He's watched quite enough; he starts away. But with his back turned, he doesn't see:

BACK TO THE BEATING

Big Man 1 closing in for another round with the pipe. And abruptly Cady thrusts his head forward and viciously CONKS Big Man 1 in the face, exploding his nose!

As Big Man 1 collapses, Cady wrests the pipe from his hand, gracefully spins and then brutally brings it down on the skull of Big Man 2, who instantly topples as though dead.

Which leaves Big Man 3 -- the guy with the bicycle chain -- who savagely swings his lethal metal whip at Cady --

-- and Cady, howling with pain and exhilaration, catches the end of the chain and yanks it out of Big Man 3's grip!

BACK TO SAM

Who stands frozen, shocked at this inconceivable reversal.

BACK TO CADY

He swings the bicycle chain like a lasso, whipping it down in great deadly dips at Big Man 3 --

-- who finally takes off running like a jackrabbit.

BACK TO SAM

Now it's just him and Cady alone in the night. Holding his breath, Sam starts to quickly creep away ... only to accidentally kick an empty can that's lying in the alley. The can hideously CLANGS. Sam freezes again. And HEARS:

CADY'S VOICE

Counselor ..?

ANGLE - CADY

Still twirling the bicycle chain, drunk on adrenalin ... He lurches here and there, SHOUTING:

CADY

Come out, come out wherever you are!

Assorted neighbors SHOUT for Cady to shut up -- but he's on some psycho-endorphin high and he's blissfully oblivious --

BACK TO SAM

Straining to hear Cady's footsteps ... He's coming closer, his voice much louder ... Sam clenches his fists, in case (God forbid) it should come to that --

CADY'S VOICE

Every good man's gotta wrestle with the devil!

Sam ducks behind a thick utility pole -- just as Cady starts down the alley. He finally stops twirling the chain so that he can light up a cigar.

CADY

Who'd you take me for? Jethro Bodine?
Few whacks in my good ol' boy gut and
I'm back to Tobacco Road!? Counselor,
I listen to opera, I read the
metaphysical philosophers, I drink
gallons of goddam mineral water ...!

He's so close, Sam can smell his smoke. As Cady prowls, Sam takes a step around the utility pole, adjusting the angle so he's invisible to Cady. Cady's senses are super-stimulated -- he knows Sam is right around here. He edges closer --

-- and Sam takes another step around that pole, to stay out of sight. But he doesn't see that if he takes just one more blind step, he's going to kick another empty can --

-- and Cady closes in --

-- and Sam slowly lifts his foot, to take that fatal step --

-- and then Cady chucks away his fuming cigar, and sighs:

CADY

Fuck it.

And retreats, into the dark. At last Sam empties his lungs.

CUT TO:

INT. SAM'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Sam wanders in, pale and exhausted.

SECRETARY
Clyde Kersek called --

SAM
Get 'im back for me, please.

INT. INNER OFFICE - MORNING

Sam enters to find Broadbent waiting. Expectantly grinning.

BROADBENT
So ... you get the writ?

SAM
No. We've got to get into that. But first I --

BROADBENT
What?

SAM
Tom, it's perjury what you're asking.

BROADBENT
Technically, maybe, but it's safe perjury.

SAM
It's a gross violation.

BROADBENT
If you're caught. Sam, a maneuver like this gets lost in the shuffle --

He shuts Sam's office door.

BROADBENT
Jesus, Bowden, who's gonna know? Even if they subpoenaed your phone records, you've called their lawyer a hundred times. Is it your fault his secretary failed to take note of your message? Damn, if I had a nickel for every ex parte application filed without noti--

Sam's intercom BUZZES.

SHEILA'S VOICE
I have Mr. Kersek on One.

Sam hasn't taken his eyes off Broadbent, and vice versa.

SAM

I'm not doing it, Tom. I pulled a fast one, and it's come back and bitten me on the ass in a major way --

BROADBENT

What you did was dumb. But any lawyer worth beans'll tell you what I'm asking is Standard Operating Procedure --

SAM

No, Tom: it's bullshit. Now if you'll excuse me ...

He opens his door again, an invitation for Broadbent to exit.

SAM

I've got something to take care of.

BROADBENT

I'll be in my office.

Broadbent's rage rolls off Sam's back.

SAM

Who was that top criminal lawyer?

BROADBENT

Lee Heller. We need to talk.

Sam punches the blinking button on his telephone.

SAM

Kersek?

INTERCUT:

INT. KERSEK'S OFFICE - SAME TIME

KERSEK

Sam, I'm damn sorry about last night. Way they told it, the sonovobitch'd survive a preemptive nuclear strike.

Sam grimly nods: it looked that way to him, too.

KERSEK

Trouble is, when word gets out how Cady bushwhacked those poor bastards, it'll be a bitch to line up three new guys --

SAM

I don't want three new guys, Kersek. Thanks all the same.

Sam hangs up. Then buzzes his secretary.

SAM

Sheila, get me Lee Heller, would'ya?
It'll be on Broadbent's Rolodex.

While he waits, Sam springs up, nervous energy overwhelming his exhaustion. In a moment the phone RINGS. Sam grabs it.

SAM

Yeah -- my name's Sam Bowden, I'm an attorney with Broadbent, Diemer ... Tom speaks very highly of you -- in fact he says you're the best ... and the best is what I need right now.

HELLER (VO)

(through phone filter)

Tom and I froze our butts in Korea together. How can I help you, Sam?

SAM

I have a hearing scheduled tomorrow, in New Essex. It's a simple petition for a restraining order -- my family's being harrassed, and we need relief -- but there've been complications, and this has to go without a hitch. I know it's short notice, but I've already had some setbacks, and I need this injunction ... Y'see the man who's harrassing us is an ex-convict, a one-man Ku Klux Klan called Max Cady and --

HELLER (VO)

Excuse me. Mr. Bowden?

Jittery Sam has been going full speed; he brakes to a stop.

HELLER (VO)

I'm awfully sorry.

SAM

You ... What --? Sorry about --?

HELLER (VO)

Jeez, this is awkward. But you see I can't continue this conversation.

SAM

Is there a more convenient time to --

HELLER (VO)

It's not that, Sam. The damn thing is,
I have a conflict.

SAM

Wh-- What would that --?

HELLER (VO)

See Mr. Cady has retained my services.
As of yesterday.

SAM

What?

HELLER (VO)

There's an irony for you! Guess I'll
see you at that hearing after all.

SAM

But -- the man's a psychopathic --

HELLER (VO)

Good luck, Mr. Bowden.

Sam's line goes dead. He stands there, disbelieving. OVER:

SAM'S VOICE

You're not out of town by tomorrow --

CUT TO:

CLOSE - MINI-TAPE PLAYER

As it replays the contents of a micro-cassette, and we HEAR:

SAM'S VOICE

-- you are gonna be hurting like you
never dreamed, Cady.

INT. COURTROOM - NEXT MORNING

Sam stands as both attorney and plaintiff before an elderly
JUDGE. As the tape plays, Sam looks miserable -- almost ill.

Ten feet away stands Max Cady. In an oversized suit that
minimizes his muscles. A bandaged hand grips a walker, for
balance. And he's wearing his glasses, of course. In all,
Cady looks like a shy librarian who got blindsided by a bus.

Between Sam and Cady is LEE HELLER, a bellicose, flamboyant
figure in a white cotton suit with matching white hair worn
long, like a founding father. He and the Judge trade looks
of dismay as the tape continues to play, and we HEAR:

CADY'S VOICE

A threat?

SAM'S VOICE

Bet your ass it's a threat.

The Judge has heard enough. Disgusted, he clicks off the tape. And Heller fervently petitions the bench:

HELLER

Your Honor, you only need glance at my client to know that Mr. Bowden made good on his threat!

SAM

Your Honor, Mr. Cady wouldn't have surreptitiously taped our meeting unless he knew that he'd pushed me well beyond the limit of --

The Judge holds up a palm, silencing Sam.

JUDGE

This court does not condone feuds, vendettas or vigilantism. Let me quote our great Negro educator, Mr. Booker T. Washington: "I will let no man drag me down so low as to make me hate him."

Cady vigorously nods at this; Sam impatiently taps his shoe.

JUDGE

I will grant the restraining order, not to validate the malice between you, but in the interest of Christian harmony.

Sam sighs: thank you, sir. The Judge turns to him. Firmly:

JUDGE

You may not come within five-hundred yards of Mr. Max Cady until such time as the court may lift the injunction.

Sam is too stunned for words, but Heller has plenty of them:

HELLER

King Solomon could not have adjudicated more wisely! I am so offended by Mr. Bowden's fascist tactics, I've sent a memorandum to the ABA recounting the relevant facts and recommending his disbarment. Now if you'll excuse us, my client is due back at the hospital for the results of his many x-rays.

Heller takes Cady's wrist and delicately guides him out, as one would an old crone. On the way out -- sternly, to Sam:

HELLER
You'll be hearing forthwith from the
Ethics Committee.

Sam stares, incredulous, at Heller. Then back at the Judge, who BANGS his gavel for Sam's benefit: Case closed!

CUT TO:

EXT. KERSEK DETECTIVE AGENCY - NEXT DAY

Sam, entering, spots the private detective through the half-open door of his office.

SAM
Kersek --

RECEPTIONIST
(blocking him)
Excuse me --

KERSEK
(in the doorway)
It's alright. What's up, Sam?

INT. KERSEK'S OFFICE - NOON

Sam steps into Kersek's office, shuts the door behind him.

SAM
I want a gun. I want to learn how to
use it --

KERSEK
(studied cool)
That's simple, Sam. Simplest damn
thing in the world. Here's the deal:
You don't think of it as "shooting"
someone, or trying to kill him. It's
an extension of your hand -- of your
fist. Just there to knock a man down.

SAM
Good. That's a start --

Kersek guides Sam over to his couch. As he sits him down:

KERSEK
You'll like my gun too. .38 Charter
Undercover. Small, good shot group,
altogether devastating ...
(more)

KERSEK (Cont'd)

I'll teach you how to load it, draw it, aim it ... Even take you into the woods so you can shoot hell out of a dogwood tree.

SAM

Finally -- a weapon Cady doesn't have.

He makes a fist. Kersek slaps it, hard.

KERSEK

What're you fucking nuts?

Startled, Sam stands.

KERSEK

I give you my gun, you pull it on Cady ... and then you belatedly realize that shooting a man is different than blowing holes in some tree. Next thing you know, you're not even holding my gun anymore -- Cady is.

Sam starts to interrupt, but:

KERSEK

Or best case, you manage to shoot Cady dead. "Vengeance is mine" you say, as they sentence you ... fifteen to life.

Sam bleakly stares at his shoes. In despair:

SAM

It's all topsy-turvy, Kersek ... The law considers me more of a loose cannon than Max Cady ... The ABA's Ethics Committee is convening a special session in Atlanta over the assault --

KERSEK

(stunned)

But how'd they link it to you? I was absolutely, totally discreet about --

SAM

I went to warn Cady. Thought it was the decent thing. And he was wired.

Sam looks hopeless and miserable.

Kersek, by contrast, acts surprisingly upbeat and inspired.

KERSEK

This hearing -- it's real important?

SAM

(testy)

Only if I plan to continue practicing law.

KERSEK

Cady isn't expected there, is he?

SAM

(tart)

Mr. Cady and his attorney are beyond reproach.

KERSEK

But you're required to go.

SAM

I just told you -- not if I wanna try a new field: say, welding ...

KERSEK

So Cady assumes you'll be there --?

Sam rises, tired of this game. Kersek holds Sam with a hand on Sam's shoulder.

KERSEK

-- When's the hearing, Sam?

Finally Sam realizes that Kersek is hatching a plan.

SAM

These things drag on for two days. First day they hear your version of events. Second day they hear themselves being unbiased and brilliant. The torture begins Thursday. Nine a.m. sharp.

Kersek smiles -- that's just what he was hoping to hear.

KERSEK

So actually you'd have to fly in the night before, wouldn't you?

Sam squints at Kersek: Just what do you have in mind?

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BOWDENS' HOUSE - WEDNESDAY EVENING

Sam's wife and daughter exit the house with him, and climb into the Range Rover. Sam deposits his garment bag in the trunk and slides in behind the wheel. Kersek explains OVER:

KERSEK'S VOICE

Cady's an opportunist. The fact that you're "out of town" for two nights'll be as tempting to Max as shit to a fly.

The Range Rover pulls out of the driveway, and onto the road.

INT. RANGE ROVER (MOVING) - EVENING (LATER)

Sam's on the highway now -- as he passes a sign indicating that the airport is six miles away, he checks his rearview.

KERSEK'S VOICE

If he breaks into your home, Cady can be killed -- justifiably. But he won't show unless he's sure you aren't there.

IN SAM'S MIRROR -- the highway is empty. Sam sees no one.

CUT TO:

INT. CADY'S CAR (MOVING) - SAME TIME

Cady expertly maintains just enough distance in the twilight to stay invisible to Sam, up ahead. He's got the car RADIO on -- he irritably punches past one country station to the next, growing increasingly impatient with the insipid music that dominates the airwaves until he lucks onto Verdi's "La Traviata". Cady HUMS along to the "Sempre libera" aria ...

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - EVENING

Sam kisses his wife, then his daughter, goodbye. He appears doubtful and apprehensive. But Karen and Danny offer reassuring gestures -- they survived without him before, and they'll survive the next two nights.

Finally Sam pulls himself away and -- with a last reluctant wave -- starts toward the departure gates.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - SAME TIME

Across the terminal: A Waitress throws Cady a flirtatious glance -- but Cady's peering out, observing Sam's farewell.

INT. TICKET COUNTER - 10 MINUTES LATER

The busy TICKET AGENT suddenly feels a presence. She stops what she's doing, looks up at:

CADY

I didn't miss the 7:20 to Atlanta --?

She makes a face: Sorry, but you did.

TICKET AGENT
There's an 8:20, lotta seats left.

CADY
It's not that ... I have some papers
for Sam Bowden. Was he on the 7:20?

TICKET AGENT
We can't give out that information.

CADY
That's okay ... Of course. I could Fed
Ex it to him, anyway ...

Then, upset, as he "realizes" --

CADY
But for all I know he's coming back
first thing tomorrow ...

The Ticket Agent ruefully smiles: I wish I could help you.

CADY
Don't you hate bureaucracy? A lady's
gonna lose custody of her kid 'cause
Mr. Bowden can't approve these papers
by the weekend. Everything just gets
more centralized and impersonal, huh?
And that's a crying shame, in Dixie ...

Cady sadly turns, walks away. Two beats. From behind him:

TICKET AGENT'S VOICE
... Sir?

He swivels back around. She's punched up Sam's reservation.

TICKET AGENT
He'll be back Friday afternoon.

Cady grins -- broadly. He throws her a kiss. She blushes.

CADY
Bless your heart.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BOWDENS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Where this charade began, earlier. The Range Rover returns.
Sam jarts inside first. Followed by Karen and Danny.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Once inside, Sam hunches down again, so as not to be observed from outside the house.

The lights have been dimmed in here as Kersek, in loose-fitting black clothes, lightly taps a teacup hook into the wall. As he screws it in, he notes Karen frowning at him.

KERSEK

When this is over, I plaster, repaint,
and hang all your teacups back up.

Karen manages a wan smile.

KERSEK

So how'd it go at the airport?

Tense, Sam huddles in the far corner.

SAM

We played our parts. Though for all we
know it was to an empty house.

Kersek ducks under a window and comes up the other side, to affix another teacup hook to the wall.

KERSEK

We're baiting the trap. You'll see.

From the vestibule where she lingers, holding herself apart from the conspirators:

DANNY

What if we don't want to see?

Her tone is tinged with dread, bordering on revulsion.

SAM

Danny ...

Sam instinctively rises, to go comfort her. Sharply:

KERSEK

Away from the windows, Sam.

DANNY

You're not allowed to stand up Dad --
remember?

Danny turns and hurries away -- up the stairs, to her room. Concerned, Karen follows.

Puzzled, Kersek turns to Sam.

KERSEK

Didn't Cady come after your daughter?

SAM

You have to understand: when Danny finds a palmetto bug in her room, she takes it outside. She won't kill it.

KERSEK

Even a two-hundred pound palmetto bug?

Kersek is back to tapping teacup hooks into the walls.

SAM

As a side issue, she probably feels I'm betraying everything I supposedly believe in ... everything honorable ...

KERSEK

You know the saying: "A Southerner is friendly and courteous until he's mad enough to kill."

Kersek unfurls a spool of something, and starts stringing it through the hooks.

SAM

What is that?

Kersek is running an all-but-invisible line across every door and window in the house.

KERSEK

Was in your garage. Monofilament line, for your freshwater fishing rod ... I'll know if the Holy Ghost sneaks in.

CUT TO:

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Danny lies on the bed, staring at the ceiling. Now, a KNOCK.

DANNY

-- Yes --?

Kersek sticks his head in. Painfully polite.

KERSEK

Are you ... busy at the moment?

Danny shakes her head. Kersek enters, awkwardly sits on the edge of her bed.

KERSEK

Danny, look ... Folks down here aren't expected to agree on religion, politics or barbecue. But let's not dispute Sam Bowden's right to protect his family.

DANNY

What'd this man do to us? Maybe -- maybe he poisoned mom's dog.

KERSEK

It's not so much what he's already done ... more about what he's planning --

DANNY

Which is any worse than what we're planning?

Kersek reaches over and, with his big powerful hand, gently pats Danny's delicate one.

KERSEK

I'd rather we not find out.

Danny goes over to her window. Stares out, into darkness.

DANNY

So you came up here to put a scare in me? Well, I'm plenty scared already.

KERSEK

No, I came up here to see if you had a stuffed animal I could borrow.

DANNY

(surprised, turns)
What for?

Kersek flashes a laid-back grin that gives away nothing.

KERSEK

To cuddle.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kersek fastens the end of the monofilament line around the neck of Danny's teddy bear, perched on a rocking chair.

SAM

What about booby-traps?

Sam stands hidden in the far corner. Watching, with concern.

KERSEK

What, punji sticks under the windows? Lime pit in the foyer? Booby-traps're for wanna-be's. Simpler we keep this, the cleaner. Y'only need one booby-trap, Sam, and you're looking at him.

Sam drums his fingertips on the floorboards.

SAM

You know what bothers me the most? I hate the idea -- if Cady actually comes -- I hate the idea of Karen and Danny actually hearing you shooting him dead.

KERSEK

Sam: Y'gotta steady your nerves.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Kersek fills two glasses with Jim Beam. Sam watches, leery, as he then liberally laces the whiskey with Pepto-Bismol.

KERSEK

My Dad was a cop. Used to down two of these before every stakeout. Lived to be a pretty old man, for a cop.

He clicks glasses with Sam, who tries a sip, nearly gags, and sets his glass back down on the chopping block.

Kersek smoothly drains his, then goes for a refill.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BOWDENS' HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Peaceful and silent but for the CHIRPING of the cicadas.

INT. THE BOWDENS' LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Kersek squats, combat-ready, in the center of the darkened room. He cradles his .38.

Opposite, sitting eerily upright in the pale moonlight, is Danny's teddy bear. Both Kersek and bear are utterly still.

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

The TICKING CLOCK seems intolerably loud. Karen tosses ... turns over ... opens her eyes. Sees:

Sam, intently reading a thick book.

KAREN

... What is that?

Sam bends up the dappled leather cover so she can see.

KAREN

(groans)
What ever for ..? The Bible?

SAM

Recommended reading. The book between
Esther and Psalms.

He looks over at Karen, who looks frankly confused.

SAM

The Book of Job.
(beat)
He was a good man. He believed in God.
But God tested his faith. Took away
everything he had. Even his children.

Karen doesn't speak -- she just stares.

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

She's fitfully sleeping. And then suddenly she awakens with a start, sitting up, eyes wide, scaring herself with her own urgent gasp. But there's nothing to be afraid of, is there?

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BOWDENS' HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

The sun is up and the house appears undisturbed. We HEAR the CLATTER of dishes and pans.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Danny blearily scrambles eggs.

DANNY

Mom, I can't bear this. Let's go to
the river ...

Karen is undoing the fishing line that blocks the windows and doors.

DANNY

We could get lost in any inlet --

KAREN

I know. I know ...

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Danny enters with a breakfast tray, for Sam and Kersek.

DANNY

Where're you spending the day, Dad? On the floor, or maybe your closet?

The two men sit on the carpet in the corner, on either side of the window.

SAM

(fretful)

I should be at the hearing -- or in court, at least ...

KERSEK

You should be right here, Sam.

INT. KAREN'S STUDIO - NOON - LATER

Karen is back at her drafting table. Looking for inspiration and finding only anxiety.

Now her gaze drifts to the mystery logo, pinned to the wall.

Today there is something mocking, almost sinister about that drawing -- Karen has a sudden attack of the creeps.

She goes to the wall, grabs the paper, scrunches it into a ball. Then tears the balled-up paper into little chunks.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BOWDENS' HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Danny accompanies Graciella up the driveway.

DANNY

Looks so civilized from the outside. But it's a mass freak-out in there.

GRACIELLA

"Mass freak-out". You're so funny ...

She stoops to pick up the mail and the milk. Danny goes a few steps farther, to get the can of Charles Chips.

DANNY

Really, it's the Dark Ages. Dad's turned into some medieval --

Danny's words catch in her throat. She freezes. For, a few feet from the potato chip can she notices --

-- three crushed cigar butts, fairly fresh. Somebody was standing out here, last night, for quite some time.

Danny glances at Graciella, who hasn't yet noticed them.

Filled with dread, Danny quickly kicks the cigar butts into the bushes and out of sight.

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S BEDROOM - DUSK

Sam and Kersek huddle under the window. Kersek's reading the paper. Sam anxiously stares out at the encroaching darkness.

KERSEK

Y'believe the Braves're already twenty games out?

The setting sun is a portent. Sam turns to the detective.

SAM

I don't like this, Kersek. We're laying in wait. In this state, that could be considered entrapment.

KERSEK

But it won't be -- not when the facts are presented. Neither of us'll ever be charged. I'll stake my life on it.

Sam looks dubious. Kersek reassuringly pats his shoulder.

KERSEK

Sam. Hey ... Savor your fear.

Kersek wears a tight, ironic smile.

KERSEK

The South evolved in fear: fear of the Indian, fear of the Union, fear of the Slave ... Mr. Bowden, we are part of a fine tradition here.

CUT TO:

THE BOWDENS' HOUSE - THAT EVENING

Darkness has fallen. An eerie wind whips the cypress trees.

KAREN (VO)

She's making me nervous, is all ...

INT. DEN - EVENING

Karen and Danny sit on the couch, ostensibly watching TV -- but in fact the sound is off.

Karen is actually watching Graciella, who's making herself busy in the kitchen. And she's addressing Kersek and Sam, who're under the far window, hidden from an outsider's view.

KERSEK

(patiently)

What would she normally do? If Sam wasn't around to drive her home?

SAM

Stay over.

KERSEK

Then she stays.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - KERSEK'S HANDS

as they draw the monofilament line through a teacup hook and across a window, then through another teacup hook ...

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

She sits on her bed and stares at her phone.

Suddenly, shockingly, it RINGS.

Danny dashes off her bed, to the wall. Disconnects the cord!

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Karen and Sam lie on the bed, studying the ceiling.

KAREN

I'm so dog-tired, I could actually almost fall asleep ...

EXT. THE BOWDENS' HOUSE - NIGHT

As though lofted on the wind, CAMERA GLIDES around the walls and windows of the big old home ...

CLOSE - THE TEDDY BEAR

sits up and stares. Unseeing. Unmoving.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Kersek hunches, eyes on the teddy bear. Cradling his gun.

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

She sits at her desk. By the moonlight she works, fitfully, on her "reminiscence".

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Karen lies on the mattress, staring up. Sam hasn't shifted from his spot in the corner. He watches the luminous hands of the alarm clock as they move with excruciating slowness.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Outside, the wind WAILS. Kersek and teddy bear face off ... Kersek. Teddy bear. Kersek. Teddy bear. Kersek --

-- and suddenly the teddy bear moves!

Kersek is up, .38 extended, eyes searching the perimeter ... And then he spots the living room window -- open a fraction. Just the wind! Kersek goes to it. Stands there, staring into the night as his heart rate returns to normal --

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Sam has nodded out. Now he sits up with a start, eyes wide.

SAM

I know how the dog died.

Karen, on the mattress, groggily rolls over, to face him.

KAREN

... What?

And Sam realizes he was dreaming.

SAM

Nothing, I just --

He wipes the sweat from his forehead.

SAM

I just had the weirdest feeling ...
that he was already in the house --

INT. KITCHEN - WITH KERSEK

He wanders in, then freezes: There's someone standing at the fridge! Kersek draws his gun, but --

-- the "someone" turns. It's Graciella. Luridly lit by the open fridge. Pouring herself a glass of milk.

Kersek laughs with relief. Sets down his gun, turns and starts to fix himself a Pepto-Bismol and Jim Beam.

KERSEK

It's the humidity makes you so damned parched.

Graciella finishes her milk. Then reaches into the pocket of her uniform and pulls out a wire -- the missing piano-wire.

Peripherally Kersek notices something ... in the narrow hall that leads back to the maid's quarters ... He squints ...

WHAT HE SEES

A silhouetted thing on the floor -- a foot, askew --

But in that instant of recognition --

GRACIELLA

swings the garrote over Kersek's head and yanks.

BACK TO SCENE

A thick necklace of blood instantly appears on the private eye's throat. He gags, struggles --

-- knocks off Graciella's wig in the struggle ...

It's not Graciella, it's Max Cady.

Kersek manages to grab his gun. Cady lets go of the garrote, grips Kersek's wrist and twists back his arm. BOOM! The .38 explodes right in the private detective's face.

CADY

I learned that in prison -- you like?

Cady lets the body drop, then quickly strips off the maid's uniform. Then straddles Kersek, and murmurs:

CADY

Fuckface.

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S BEDROOM - A MOMENT LATER

Both Bowdens are momentarily paralyzed with terror.

KAREN

Omigod.

Sam sprints across the room. Throws open the bedroom door.

SAM

Kersek!?

INT. STAIRCASE - LATE NIGHT

He snaps on the light. Then a creak as --

-- Danny opens her door and steps out, blinking away sleep.

SAM

-- Back in your room. Lock the door!

Karen has snapped on the bedroom light. She too stands in her bedroom doorway.

SAM
(at the top of the
stairs)

Kersek!

No answer. Then, downstairs, the front door SLAMS.

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S BEDROOM - KAREN

dashes to the window, looks out.

WHAT SHE SEES

A shadowy figure races from the house, across the lawn, into the woods.

BACK TO SCENE

Karen spins away from the window.

KAREN

-- Sam.

INT. KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT

Sam and Karen stand here, transfixed by the spectacle of Kersek's corpse. In a big puddle of blood and bourbon.

Then, behind them both, a scream. They whirl.

Danny is standing here, wild-eyed.

SAM

Don't look.

But Danny isn't looking at Kersek's body; her gaze is fixed in the other direction.

WHAT SHE SEES

Graciella's body, sprawled in the utility room.

BACK TO SCENE

Danny's lips form the name "Graciella" but no sound emerges.

SAM

Oh dear god.

Sam is morbidly drawn to the body. And then he slips on the slick mixture of gore and booze ... down on his knees.

Karen goes to her husband -- slips, too ...

KAREN

Shit --

Karen, crouched in the puddle, tries to pull Sam to his feet. But Sam is now busy prying the gun from Kersek's deathgrip.

KAREN

What're you --

SAM

Gonna kill the sonovobitch.

He struggles up. Storms past Karen, who tries to stop him --

EXT. BOWDEN HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Sam emerges, looking half-crazed in his blood-soaked clothes, amateurishly brandishing the gun.

Karen grabs his arm, Danny's got him around the waist ... the women are pulling him back in the house --

KAREN

Sam -- stop -- if you find him, you'll be dead too --

INT. KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Sam on the phone. He's recovered some degree of composure.

Karen and Danny wait nearby. Karen's gaze is shifting from Kersek's corpse to Sam. Then back to the body.

SAM

Yes: I want to report a murder, at --

KAREN

Hang up.

Sam turns to her: what? She signals: Do it. He does it.

KAREN

Kersek was wearing a black shirt.

And now Sam recognizes the bright Hawaiian shirt on Kersek.

SAM

Cady put his own shirt on him.

As he contemplates this puzzle, he raises his right hand -- considers the gun he's still clutching. Karen sees it too.

KAREN
(sick smile)
Don't you get it?

Sam's still piecing it together.

KAREN
The police'll figure you shot Kersek, thinking he was Cady. We can't stay here -- they'll arrest you, Sam --

As this hits Sam, he bursts into bizarre laughter. Karen just stares at him, horrified.

DANNY
Stop it --

INT. SAM AND KAREN'S BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

They've changed clothes. She's hurriedly packing a suitcase.

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - A MINUTE LATER

Same routine, with Danny's stuff. Jitters even more intense.

EXT. THE BOWDENS' HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

Danny stiffly sits in the back seat of the Range Rover. Gun drawn, Sam covers the driveway while Karen loads up luggage.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - EARLY MORNING

The Range Rover speeds down a quiet stretch of road. OVER:

DANNY'S VOICE
... I can never go back there.

KAREN'S VOICE
We should have done this -- just up and left -- weeks ago ...

INT. RANGE ROVER (MOVING) - EARLY MORNING

Sam drives, bleakly staring ahead. Karen continually glances back, to be sure that Cady isn't following -- but the highway is quite empty for miles and miles.

KAREN
Maybe ... maybe while we're gone they'll find him. Arrest him, and ...

SAM

And prove he did what we say he did?
Beyond a reasonable doubt?

Sam laughs harshly, then turns to her. His voice is granite:

SAM

No. If and when we come back, I'll
have to kill him.

Danny, in the back seat, lets out a muted cry --

Sam has veered off onto the strip that divides the highway.

Karen screams. Sam spins the wheel.

EXT. RANGE ROVER - EARLY MORNING

All three Bowdens are screaming as Sam wrestles the Range Rover back onto the road.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING - LATER

There are roadside stands selling homemade honeys: tupelo, sourwood, orange blossom. Beyond this reassuring sight --

-- a disquieting cross-shaped placard planted amid the wildflowers, azaleas and magnolias. Hand-painted, drips and all, it reads: WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?

Just fifty yards beyond it, a sign is painted on the side of a barn: The Cape Fear River is a hundred miles north.

CUT TO:

INT. STOP 'N' SHOP - NOON

A roadside minimart. Karen and Danny, staying close, move down the aisle ... collecting food and supplies ...

As they round the last aisle, they pass a State Trooper.

He turns and stares at the women through mirrored lenses.

Paranoid, they hurry past him ...

EXT. PARKING LOT - NOON

Sam's on the pay phone. Compulsively scanning the horizon.

SAM

Sorry, Lieutenant -- we just couldn't
stay around to answer your questions.

Karen and Danny exit the store and anxiously hover nearby.

SAM

I've taken Kersek's gun with me -- for good luck --

(listens, then)

Yeah I know how it looks ... In the law there's a thing called force majeure -- an unforeseeable act of god that cancels all promises and obligations --

We HEAR Lieutenant Elgart's VOICE over the phone line, as he indignantly responds. Sam hangs up in mid-tirade.

KAREN

What'd he say?

As the trio returns to the Range Rover:

SAM

That we're fugitives.

DANNY

What does that mean?

SAM

Who cares what it means? We're going someplace safe.

As they climb aboard, CAMERA SLOWLY DIPS DOWN.

ANGLE - UNDERNEATH THE RANGE ROVER

Something quite large is clamped on the undercarriage.

Like the Alien. Holding tight.

But it's not the Alien, it's human.

Max Cady.

We HEAR the engine HUM to life, and the Bowdens drive off ...

CUT TO:

EXT. CAPE FEAR RIVER (AERIAL SHOT) - EARLY AFTERNOON

We're above the shallow river where the waters are calm and protected, between Wilmington and Fayetteville.

SAIL over locks and dams, then DIP DOWN to the MARINA where the houseboats are rented.

EXT. DOCK - LATE AFTERNOON

JIMMY, the ancient dockmaster, helps the Bowdens with their baggage down the wharf. Then it hits him.

JIMMY

Where's that mongrel dog?

None of the Bowdens respond. Jimmy doesn't press it.

BACK IN THE PARKING LOT

Two beats. Then Cady drops onto the asphalt and rolls out from under the Range Rover.

Springs to his feet -- he's greasy and sooty -- and takes a quick look around, orienting himself.

AN OLD LADY

is standing here. Staring wide-eyed at Cady.

CADY

flashes her a grin, and a boyish shrug.

CADY

Transmission looks fine. Must be the fuel pump.

INT. MARINA MEN'S ROOM - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Cady, alone in here, has substantially rinsed off. He stands at the sink, slicking back his hair with tapwater. Arranging the strands just so, until he looks as handsome as can be.

Then he tries out, on his reflection:

CADY

Danielle, I believe we've met. Karen?
Max Cady.

Doesn't quite have the oomph. Cady fixes his hair. Then:

CADY

Ladies? Maximillian Cady.

Still a bit too courtly. A beat, as Cady reconsiders. Then:

CADY

Girls? Shall we get down to business?

EXT. WHARF - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Jimmy shows Cady the single-outboard runabouts available for day rental.

CADY

Preferably something small and quiet.

He glances at the Bowdens' houseboat, chugging downriver, as Jimmy steers him over to a spiffy 17-footer.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE HOUSEBOAT (MOVING) - DUSK

The women wordlessly watch as Sam steers around eerie little islets overgrown with cypress trees and spanish moss.

With the grey thunderheads gathering in the west, giving the water an almost charcoal hue, and bringing a sticky chill to the air, it feels just a bit like the end of the world.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - ANCHOR

As Sam drops it -- with a small unsettling splash -- into the dark water.

EXT. COVE - LATE AFTERNOON

The houseboat is hidden in a lush, secluded inlet, where 20-foot fringes of spanish moss sway in the humid breeze.

INT. CABIN - EARLY AFTERNOON

The 24-foot craft has a spartan yet homey interior. While Karen makes up the bunks, Danny fries corn fritters on the propane stove.

Now Sam enters the cabin and abruptly -- almost violently -- grabs his daughter and hugs her.

SAM

I love you, Danny.

Then he crosses to his wife. They stand together, tense and still. Finally Sam lets out a breath.

SAM

We can relax now. He doesn't know we're here.

KAREN

Right.

DANNY

He doesn't know.

TIME CUT:

That evening.

By the waxen light of a kerosene lamp, the Bowdens quietly eat their supper -- the fritters, and some canned fruit ...

SAM

Tomorrow I'll catch something. Okay?

KAREN

This is the first time in weeks I've got some semblance of an appetite --

Suddenly the trio's attention is seized by a sudden rushing sound -- they all whirl --

-- Sam is up, he's quickly crossed to the porthole --

SAM

It's only rain. A sheet of rain ...

Then the cabin rocks. Mildly, but these three have had their nerves rubbed raw.

DANNY

What is that --?

SAM

It's a squall kicking up, is all. I'm gonna tie us up a little tighter.

Danny abruptly stands.

DANNY

Don't. Dad. Not in the dark --

Sam reaches out and soothingly strokes his daughter's hair.

SAM

It's okay, Danny. We're far away from all that. We're on the river.

KAREN

He doesn't know we're here.

EXT. HELM - EVENING

Sam steps out, full of foreboding, onto the helm. He crosses to the very edge, where the shadows are deepest.

Leans down, picks up the rope.

In the stillness he HEARS the women's subdued VOICES drifting out from the cabin. The sounds remind Sam of how much he has to protect. As he works, he finds himself edgily glancing out onto the river.

There is nothing to see but the Cape Fear's swirling current.

INT. CABIN - EVENING

Danny clears the table as Karen boils water.

DANNY
Graciella ... She had family. Back in Havana ... a brother.

KAREN
(gently)
We'll get in touch with him. Somehow.

Then she calls, through the wall:

KAREN
Sam? We're making tea.

There is no response. Once again -- but tentatively, now:

KAREN
Sam?

DANNY
Dad?

Both women wait, frozen -- and finally they hear:

SAM'S VOICE
Can't hear you. Windy out ...

Karen and Danny exhale in unison. Then smirk at each other: Aren't we silly?

EXT. HELM - EVENING

Sam adroitly moves athwartships to secure more lines. And -- -- a hand reaches down from above, cupping shut Sam's mouth as it grips his jaw.

CLOSE - SAM'S FEET

Flailing, as they're lifted off the deck.

INT. CABIN - EVENING

Karen and Danny hear a KICKING sound against the cabin wall. They trade baffled glances.

Neither is looking through the porthole as one of Sam's shoes is momentarily visible, thrashing in midair.

EXT. HOUSEBOAT ROOF - EVENING

Cady, crouched atop the houseboat, has scooped up Sam with one powerful arm. Sam violently thrashes -- manages to give Cady a good poke in the eye -- but Cady's got him in a chokehold, and he finally goes limp.

Cady, cradling Sam in his arms, pats his head. Softly:

CADY

I've been worried, counselor. Worried something terrible might happen to you.

His hand finds Kersek .38 in Sam's pants. Cady clucks his tongue -- naughty boy -- as he pulls it out, examines it.

INT. CABIN - SAME TIME

Another heavy sheet of rain pelts the cabin. Karen crosses.

KAREN

Sam, you're gonna get drenched --

But just as she reaches the door Cady drops down, a spider. The eye Sam hit is bloodshot and already swelling, making Cady look even more dangerous.

Karen screams! So does Danny --

Cady improvises a little bow, and a new opening line.

CADY

Evening, ladies.

Karen backs away, instinctively shielding Danny.

KAREN

My husband has a gun --!

Cady brings out the Charter Undercover from his pocket.

CADY

Not this gun ..?

Karen flies at him, striking his chest, screaming:

KAREN

-- Where is he --?

Cady puts away the gun and turns her attack into an embrace. A beat, then he heaves her away -- across the cabin. Turns to Danny. Sounding disappointed in her:

CADY
Danielle, I told you ... You can't
escape your demons by leaving home.

DANNY
I wasn't trying to escape from you.

CADY
No?

A puckish smile forms.

DANNY
I figured you'd follow us here. And I
hoped you'd keep your promise:

Karen, catching her breath, is startled as Danny continues:

DANNY
To change everything. God knows I'm
ready.

Cady, captivated, has crossed the cabin to her. Solemnly:

CADY
Oh yes. And so am I, Dan--

Danny grabs the pot off the stove, flings the boiled water --
-- but Cady ducks in time. He looks hurt, betrayed.

CADY
Were you offering me something hot?

He steps back, toward the utility shelf. Voice like granite:

CADY
Let's understand something here.

Neither female dares to move, or speak.

CADY
I spent ten years in an eight-by-nine
cell, surrounded by people that were
less than human. My mission was to
become more than human.

Cady plucks a hand-held daytime flare off the utility shelf.
Then he ignites it. Thick orange smoke starts to billow.

CADY
You see?

CLOSE - CADY'S HAND

Once the initial burst of smoke has dissipated, we see that molten slag from the fiery flare is dripping down his hand.

BACK TO SCENE

Only the merest twitching of Cady's facial muscles betrays his pain.

CADY

Every Easter, my Grandpa handled snakes. Granny drank strychnine.

(shrugs)

You could say I had a head start, genetically speaking.

CUT TO:

CLOSE - THE ANCHOR LINE

is severed with one powerful stroke of a blade.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSEBOAT ROOF - SAM

The cool rain pelting his face finally rouses him. He blinks open his eyes. Groggily stares up.

WHAT HE SEES

Great rolling clouds, and swaying masses of Spanish moss ...

A dreamy journey ... drifting downstream ... to where --?

BACK TO SAM

As he tries to sort out where he is and how he got here --

INT. CABIN - SAME TIME

Cady advances.

CADY

Danielle ..? If you will, I'd like you to wait in the hold.

Panicked, the women back away.

DANNY

-- No! Please --!

KAREN

What're you gonna do --?

Cady yanks open the hatch. He easily holds off Karen as he tosses Danny into the hold, then latches shut the trap door.

In the instant his back is turned, Karen unhooks the kerosene lantern that was hanging over the stove. Then quickly drops her arms to her sides, lest Cady catch her --

EXT. HOUSEBOAT ROOF - NIGHT

Sam abruptly sits up. He remembers now. He feels for the gun, then murmurs a curse. It's gone, as Kersek predicted.

INT. CABIN - SAME TIME

Cady and Karen sidestep around the cabin in a tense dance.

CADY

Ready to be Born Again, Mrs. Bowden?

KAREN

No. Please -- don't do this --

CADY

Few minutes alone with me, and you will be speaking in tongues --

EXT. HOUSEBOAT ROOF - NIGHT

Sam scuttles to the roof's edge, and precariously leans over the side --

-- just as the craft strikes a bank and shudders --

-- hurling Sam into the river.

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

A beat, and Sam surfaces, gasping. He takes a ragged breath and then strokes, against the current, to the hull --

-- but can't raise himself ...

INT. HOLD - SAME TIME

Danny strikes a safety match ... In the flaring light we see what's down in this ghastly cramped space: the hot water tank, propane tank, fuel tank, furnace ... and a long, rusty, sharp fish-scaler left atop the furnace. Danny grabs it just as the match burns to her fingertips and she shakes it out.

Danny hears the footsteps of Karen and Cady, facing off. In the semi-darkness, through the cracks in the floorboards above her, she can see where they're standing, where they're moving ... though she isn't sure whose feet are whose

EXT. RIVER - NIGHT

As the craft tosses, the severed anchor line is knocked over the side. It tantalizingly dangles just out of Sam's reach.

INT. CABIN - SAME TIME

Cady lunges for Karen, ripping open her shirt. But she ducks him, stepping close to the unhooked lamp. Then Cady closes in again and Karen must abandon her position near the lamp --

INT. HOLD - DANNY

raises the knife up to the floorboards, trying to follow the shadows -- but they're moving too fast, both sets of feet are too close together, it's too risky ... then the shadows part again, and Danny thinks she knows which footsteps sounded heavier ... She carefully inserts the blade into the crack between the boards -- can she take the chance? A beat of indecision -- then she squeezes shut her eyes and whispers:

DANNY

Please god please god please god.

Then she drives the blade up through the floor --

INT. CABIN - SAME TIME

The houseboat rocks and Cady, maintaining his balance, shifts his foot and avoids the blade by an inch as it thrusts up!

Karen's eye is caught by the glint.

Cady notices her glance -- he looks down --

INT. HOLD

-- just as Danny hurriedly repositions the knife and now --

INT. CABIN - CADY

screams as the blade rips through his shoe into his foot!

Simultaneously Karen grabs the unhooked kerosene lamp and hurls it at Cady. But the effect is merely to splatter his shirt with kerosene. The lamp hits the floor, flickers out.

Cady pries his foot off the blade, grunting:

CADY

"In revenge and love, woman is more
barbarous than man." Friedrich
Nietzsche.

Then his foot is free, and he goes staggering at Karen.

CADY

Feisty little girl you got there.

INT. HULL - DANNY

desperately tugs on the knife, but it's now firmly wedged in the floorboards above her.

EXT. RIVER - WITH SAM

As the boat wildly pitches in the storm, the dangling line finally drops down into Sam's outstretched, straining hand.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Karen backs into the lower berth, then falls onto it. Cady is on top of her, eagerly groping, like a high school kid.

Meantime Karen's free hand inches toward the back pocket of Cady's pants ... the pocket with Kersek's gun stuck in it ... But just as her fingertips graze the Charter's butt --

-- Cady abruptly stands.

CADY

Excuse me, Mrs. B, but you see -- and please don't take umbrage ... but in the plan ... the plan that I have formulated ... you are basically a -- how do I put this? Warmup Exercise.

He backs to the hatch. Somewhat breathless from the clinch.

CADY

My concept is that I will -- initiate your daughter into ... the mysteries, while you watch. That okay? Or does it sound a bit on the "barbaric" side?

Karen's mind is racing.

CADY

Frankly I think you'll enjoy it. We did this a lot in prison, and it really ... really brings out the voyeur in a person, to observe two other people mating. Something very basic, very thrilling, perhaps because it's taboo.

Now, out of her mouth, just one word.

KAREN

Max:

The use of his given name stops Cady. He's intrigued.

KAREN

You're really something. More like a
-- a force of nature, than a man.

A grin of assent gradually spreads across Cady's face.

EXT. DECK - SAM

He's made it aboard! Peering through the porthole, trying to figure out his next move, he sees Cady and Karen conversing. Both look casual, almost intimate. What's going on here ...?

BACK TO THE CABIN

Cady brings out a cigar, and a lighter.

CADY

Y'know what I am? I'm the Unexpected
Turn of Events.

Karen nods: That's right, that's what you are.

CADY

Which, when you come down to it, is
life's very essence.

Karen nods again. Cady slides the cigar into his mouth and flicks on the lighter.

His kerosene-soaked shirt goes up like a torch.

Just before the flames engulf his head, Cady stares at Karen with a sad, little-boy-lost expression.

Then he bolts, afire from the waist up, out of the cabin --

EXT. HOUSEBOAT - NIGHT

-- onto the deck, from which he dives, screaming, into the dark choppy water.

INT. CABIN - SAM

races in as Karen unlatches the hatch and frees Danny ...

SAM

Are you alright --?

KAREN

You're alive --!

Sam quickly switches on the navigational lights.

DANNY

Where is he?

KAREN

Drowned, we hope --

As he crosses, to the deck:

SAM

-- I'm getting us out of here.

EXT. DECK - NIGHT - LATER

Sam steers the houseboat into the waves. Bent on getting his family home, oblivious to the lashing wind -- a hero at last.

And then something catches his eye. He turns away from his task for an instant, to grimly consider --

-- the anchor line, that had dropped over the side earlier. It's been hanging down the hull all this time, an invitation.

It makes Sam very unhappy.

At the first opportunity, he leaves the wheel to inspect the line. He bends down and, with a sense of dread, gives it a tug -- is anyone holding on below?

Sam is pleased to find that the line pulls up quite easily: nothing, nobody, is attached. He straightens back up --

-- and a gun barrel is pressed into his ear. OS, we HEAR:

CADY'S VOICE

The people call Samuel G. Bowden.

INT. CABIN - A MOMENT LATER

Cady waves the gun at Karen and Danny.

CADY

You're the jury.

In the weak, flickering light of the kerosene lantern, Cady's puffy, welted face looks especially horrific.

He pushes Sam onto a chair.

CADY

And I'm the prosecutor. How does that sound?

Everyone nervously nods at Cady: sounds fine.

Now Cady turns, and starts in on Sam with a fierce:

CADY

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

SAM

Cady: We're heading into unprotected waters. Somebody's got to man the --

CADY

(ignores; again)

Do you swear --

DANNY

(rising)

I'll do it.

Cady whirls on her, gun pointed between her eyes.

CADY

Sit, Danielle! Don't make light of your civic duty! You're the jury!

Danny sinks back down.

If only to defuse the situation, Sam raises his right hand.

SAM

Okay I swear to tell the truth. What do you want to know?

As the houseboat plunges downriver, Cady begins the "cross-examination" of his former defense attorney:

CADY

Mr. Bowden: Who was Richard Lehman?

When Sam fails to answer immediately, Cady swats the gun across his face. Sam moans. Karen and Danny both cry out.

Cady looks up, at a "judge" that only he can see.

CADY

I'm sorry, Your Honor. I agree, that was argumentative.

He turns back to Sam.

CADY

He was the investigator who wrote up a "prior sexual history" on Evelyn Drake. In connection with my defense. True?

Before Sam can answer, Cady's arguing again with the "judge".

CADY

I can ask leading questions, your Honor -- he's an adverse witness!

Then back at Sam:

CADY

And would you please tell the court what the gist was? Of this report?

SAM

That's ten years ago. How can I rem--

Again Cady rakes the gun against Sam's jaw. Sam recoils.

KAREN

He can't answer when you're beating him!

She starts to spring at Cady, but Danny holds her back.

Cady's oblivious -- he's arguing with the "judge".

CADY

Because he's perjuring himself, Your Honor! He recalls exactly what it said.

(at Sam)

Don't you?!

Now, in a monotone, as he massages his badly bruised jaw:

SAM

It said she was "promiscuous". It said she'd had three different lovers in one month alone prior to the rape.

CADY

That's right! At least three. And did you show this report to the prosecuting attorney?

SAM

No.

The houseboat shudders. Cady pays no attention.

CADY

No! You didn't! It wasn't in the file you turned over to me, either! I only discovered it after I petitioned to represent myself -- five years into my sentence! When I finally got my hands on the court file, there it was! But back in '80, you buried it, counselor. Would you care to tell the jury why?

Sam wearily turns to the "jury": his wife and daughter.

SAM

Because I knew he'd brutally raped her.

CADY

(enraged)

Talk to me! I'm standing here --!

Sam turns to Cady. No fear in his eyes now. Simply:

SAM

The fact she was "promiscuous" didn't change that. And you'd bragged to me that you'd beaten two prior aggravated rapes. You were a menace.

CADY

You were my lawyer! That report could've saved me fourteen years.

SAM

You're probably right.

CADY

You self-righteous fuck!

He goes for Sam's face again with the gun-butt. But the houseboat bumps hard against the bank, and Cady misses.

Regardless, the third-degree continues.

CADY

Counselor: Please quote for me the American Bar Association's rules of professional conduct in this area ...?

SAM

(beat, then)

"A lawyer is obligated by the rules of ethics to defend --"

CADY

"-- to zealously defend his client, within the bounds of the law." And I find you guilty, counselor!

His blistered face is turning obscenely red with rage.

CADY

Guilty of abrogating your oath! Guilty of judging me, of selling me out, and I sentence you ...

Suddenly, in his free hand, Cady is waving handcuffs -- the same heavy cuffs he'd used on Lori Davis.

CADY

I sentence you to learn about loss.

He snaps one cuff onto the pole that supports the houseboat's roof.

CADY

Loss of freedom. Dignity. Humanity.
Now you and I will truly be the same.

He yanks Sam to his feet. Confides:

CADY

Don't fret, counselor. You're halfway
to heaven.

As he starts to lock the other cuff around Sam's wrist, the houseboat slams into the riverbank, and everyone and everything (including Kersek's gun) goes flying. Cady is hit in the chest by the propane stove: he goes down! The boat pirhouettes, then continues pell-mell down the raging river.

Sam grabs Danny, then Karen.

SAM

C'mon --

He hustles the women out of the cabin, onto:

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Danny hesitates, terrified, on the heaving deck.

DANNY

I can't --

Karen pushes her daughter off, then jumps in after her. But as Sam is about to join them Cady grabs his leg! The two go tumbling back into:

INT. CABIN - CADY AND SAM

struggling for the gun, which slides across the floor -- toward one or the other -- then away, as the boat pitches!

And then as the dinky old boat hits the rapids, there's no telling which end is up. A jutting rock impales the hull, and then the rampaging tide forces the craft onto the next treacherous shoal that gives the Cape Fear River its name --

-- and suddenly Cady has the gun and he's wildly looking around for Sam, pointing the gun -- at Sam, where's Sam --?

Then a click, below him. Startled, he looks down. Sees:

Sam, crouched, has locked the other handcuff around Cady's ankle. Cady is now chained to the pole!

SAM AND CADY

For an instant, the men lock eyes.

SCENE

As Sam scuttles away, Cady fires -- but it's as wild as the waves that rock the houseboat. Then another wild shot as the hull splinters, the floorboards start to shred, then a huge rock crashes up into FRAME, knocking the gun from Cady's grip and cracking the cabin in half, as Sam is hurled out, onto:

EXT. RIVERBANK - NIGHT

Semiconscious, lolling on the muddy bank. An instant later: What's left of the houseboat is tossed by the tide onto the bank as well. And there is Cady, sprawled, still manacled to the wreckage. Now he stirs, unsteadily rises to his knees -- -- and Sam's hand, wrapped around a heavy rock, connects with Cady's face. Cady is stunned. But still he manages to jeer:

CADY
Forget about that restraining order, counselor? You're well within five-hundred yar--

Another roundhouse to Cady's face, splitting open his lip.

SAM
(pants)
Sue me.

Cady blinks and rubs his palm over his cheek, mopping blood. Then reaches for the nearest stone and jabs it at Sam's jaw.

CADY
(cackles)
So here we are, two lawyers --

Sam screams and rolls away, in the muck ... Cady comes after him again, but the breakers crash onto the bank, washing the hulk down a few feet and dragging Cady backward with it. He flings his rock, gashing open Sam's forehead.

CADY
-- working it out.

Sam, enraged, runs at Cady -- slipping in the mire, down on his knees, but swinging ... His rock rammed hard at Cady's mouth, cracking teeth. Cady topples, spits blood and laughs.

SAM
I'm gonna kill you --

CADY

(smiles)

Kill me --

Now Sam scoops a small boulder out of the mud and raises it high -- with a guttural cry he brings it crashing down --

-- just as Cady's head slips out from under ... the big rock harmlessly sinks into squishy mud as Cady is dragged by the wrecked houseboat back into the river.

And now as the houseboat starts to sink, so does Cady. He furiously paddles to the surface, gulps for air, goes down again, bobs back up ...

Sam watches, bloody and transfixed on the riverbank, as Cady -- just his head visible now -- regresses to the choir boy he once was, long ago. In a small voice, he begins to sing:

CADY

On Jordan's stormy banks I stand
Oh who will come with me?

It's a revival song from Cady's youth, and he renders it in a reedy, eerie, almost beautiful alto:

CADY

I am bound for the Promised Land
I am bound for the Promised Land

And then his mouth is under, then his nose. And now just his eyes, staring at Sam. Impossible to say what is behind those eyes. And then he's gone. Swallowed whole by the Cape Fear.

Sam dazedly watches, doesn't move for a long time. And then he notices his hands ... slick with Cady's blood.

He squats, dips his hands into the black water, to rinse.

Suddenly he is gripped by terror -- he yanks his hands out, before Cady's corpse can somehow grab him, pull him under.

The blood is still on Sam's hands. It'll be there for awhile.

Now CAMERA begins to RISE and we slowly glide upriver, as we gradually DISSOLVE TO the following DAWN, and we HEAR, OVER:

DANNY'S VOICE

It wasn't until late fall that all our bones and bruises healed. Dad says he still feels some ache now and then ...

CAMERA LANDS on:

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAWN

The storm has long since abated. It is an impossibly clear, crisp summer morning.

DANNY'S VOICE

... but I'm not sure it's physical pain that he's feeling.

On the bank, huddled and shivering, are all three Bowdens.

DANNY'S VOICE

Back home everything eventually got straightened out. Dad kept his license and I managed an A in Special English, and Mom bought herself a new dog.

Now Sam rises. Squints downriver, looking for boats ...

DANNY'S VOICE

Still, after all that happened, folks treated us differently. And I guess we are different now. But that's okay, because I think that if you hang on to the past, you die a little every day. .

Then Karen rises, too. She slips an arm around Sam's waist.

Then Danny stands. All three scanning the horizon for a boat to take them home ...

DANNY'S VOICE

And for myself, I know I'd rather live.

The End