

DREAMSCAPE

by

David Loughery

FADE IN

EXT. / DESERT HIGHWAY / DAY / POV SHOT

Traveling down a strip of DESERT HIGHWAY at incredible speed. Overhead, a SKY of dark and threatening CLOUDS.

A magnificent modern CITY appears on the HORIZON ahead.... a CITY in the middle of nowhere.

As speed increases, the scenery on either side begins to blur. Suddenly....a blinding EXPLOSION and the CITY ignites like the head of a match!!

A shimmering wave of ATOMIC HEAT rolls out as a SCREAM fills the soundtrack.

CUT TO

INT. / BEDROOM / NIGHT

The DREAMER is jolted from sleep....his SCREAM echoing through the dark BEDROOM.

He is a frightened middle-aged MAN in striped PAJAMAS.

Beyond the bed, a door cracks open, letting in a shaft of harsh light. A MAN in SHIRTSLEEVES appears.

MAN

You okay?

The DREAMER nods.

DREAMER

I'm fine. Just a bad dream.

MAN

You've been having a lot of those lately.

DREAMER

It's nothing.

(slightest beat)

Good night, Fred.

MAN

Good night, Mr. President.

He closes the DOOR. The PRESIDENT of the UNITED STATES lies back and stares at the ceiling.

His eyes are wide with terror.

CUT TO

INSERT / NEWS CLIPPING

A Chicago Sun-Times article....yellowed with age:

TEENAGE MINDREADER
ASTOUNDS EXPERTS

Under the caption....a PICTURE of an intensely handsome fifteen year-old identified as ALEX GARDNER. The clipping is dated 1966.

INT. / OFFICE / DAY

DR. JANE DEVRIES puts the CLIPPING down on the DESK in front of her. She is in her mid-thirties....very attractive. She removes her GLASSES....rubs the bridge of her nose.

A KNOCK at the door.

JANE

Come in, Milt.

DR. MILTON NOVOTNY enters. He is sixtyish....vigorous-looking.

NOVOTNY

The abridged version. I'm in a hurry to get out of here.

JANE

Take a look.

She hands him the CLIPPING. NOVOTNY scans it.

NOVOTNY

I remember this kid. Caused a big controversy at the time. Then....right in the middle of it, he disappeared.

JANE

Why?

NOVOTNY

Didn't like being poked and prodded. Who does?

JANE

He'd be thirty years old
now.

(excited tone)

He'd be perfect, Milt.

NOVOTNY

He'd be hard to find.

(a beat)

But you're right, of course.
He would be perfect.

JANE

(pleased)

We'll find him.

NOVOTNY drops into an ARMCHAIR opposite the DESK and studies the disintegrating PICTURE of ALEX GARDNER.

NOVOTNY

He was a genius, this boy.
A real prodigy. Telepathy
was only one of his talents.

JANE rises and moves to the WINDOW....stares down at what appears to be a college-CAMPUS.

NOVOTNY

Fifteen years old and he
could play the violin like
Kreisler.

JANE

How does somebody like that
just disappear?

Faint VIOLIN MUSIC creeps up on the soundtrack as we:

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. / SHUBERT ALLEY / NEW YORK CITY / NIGHT

SHUBERT ALLEY on a chilly October evening where a CROWD has formed to listen to a STREET VIOLINIST play "Love Is Here To Stay".

His VIOLIN CASE sits open on the PAVEMENT....filled with change and cash. Beside it sits a BROWN DOG who appears to be enjoying the solo as much as the CROWD.

The VIOLINIST has his back turned to us as he plays with passion and expertise.

Suddenly....he turns and we recognize him as ALEX GARDNER
....the boy in the clipping....now thirty years old.

ALEX is tall....still intensely handsome....wears a black OVERCOAT and a long SCARF.

The CROWD....mostly theatre-goers....listen and watch with rapt attention. ALEX finishes the number with an impressive flourish.

The CROWD breaks into enthusiastic applause.

SEVERAL PEOPLE drop money into the VIOLIN CASE. The DOG, whose name is RAGS, wags his tail approvingly.

ALEX takes a couple of boys and pats RAGS affectionately.

A distinguished-looking OLD GENTLEMAN detaches himself from the CROWD and approaches. ALEX waves to him in recognition.

The OLD GENTLEMAN addresses ALEX fondly:

OLD GENTLEMAN

Every time I offer you a chair with the orchestra, you turn me down. It's a crime, Alex.

(slightest beat)

But I'll try one more time....

ALEX

Sorry, maestro.

(smiling)

I like being my own boss.

OLD GENTLEMAN

(nods)

You're a stubborn man, Alex....

(wags a finger at him)

....and a damned good fiddle player....so I'm not giving up.

He pats ALEX on the arm and walks off.

ALEX

So long, maestro.

The CROWD is anxiously awaiting the next number.

ALEX raises the VIOLIN to his chin and announces:

ALEX
Turkey in the Straw!

He begins to play. Within seconds, the CROWD is happily clapping along.

ALEX sneaks a peek at his WRISTWATCH....then scans the CROWD as he continues to play....looking for someone.

His attention is arrested by LINDY MEREDITH....a stunning blond. She smiles at him....and winks.

ALEX brings "Turkey in the Straw" to a premature conclusion. The CROWD applauds.

ALEX
Thanks, everybody. That's
all for tonight.

CROWD
(in unison)
Awwwwwww....

ALEX returns the VIOLIN to the case. The CROWD begs him for more.

ALEX
I'd like to but my date
just showed up.
(slightest beat)
Would you like to meet her?

The CROWD responds affirmatively. ALEX points to LINDY.

ALEX
Everybody meet Lindy....

Amused but embarrassed, LINDY covers her face and runs off.

ALEX
Sorry, folks, she's a little
shy.
(to his DOG)
Come on, Rags!

ALEX and RAGS chase after her.

EXT. / BROADWAY / NIGHT

They catch up to LINDY who is waiting for them on Broadway.

LINDY
(laughing)
That was a dirty trick,
Alex.

ALEX
I couldn't resist.

He pulls her close and they KISS. Behind them....a TAXI glides up and HONKS.

LINDY
Friend of yours?

ALEX
My chauffeur.

He takes LINDY's arm and steers her to the TAXI.

INT. / TAXI

ALEX, LINDY and RAGS pile into the BACKSEAT.

The DRIVER....a cheerful type named CARMINE....pulls into traffic.

CARMINE
Hey, Alex! So whatta we got tonight?

ALEX
Hey, Carmine! So say hello to Lindy. She's a dancer.

CARMINE
You don't gotta tell me that. I got a look at them legs and nearly died.

ALEX
The horniest cab driver in Manhattan.

CARMINE
That's me.
(slightest beat)
Your place, Alex?

ALEX
(to LINDY)
How about it?

LINDY
I'd love to see your place.

ALEX leans over and speaks to his DOG:

ALEX
She thinks we live in a dump,

MORE

ALEX

(cont)

Rags....just because we play street violin.

LINDY

Not at all. I think you're an eccentric millionaire who does it for kicks.

ALEX

Okay, smart guy, let me ask you a question. How much do you make dancing in that Broadway show?

LINDY

Five hundred a week.

ALEX

I make eight....and that's in a bad week.

LINDY is amazed.

CARMINE

And that ain't countin' what we makes playin' the ponies. You oughta see this guy.... he's practically psychic!

LINDY

Screw the theatre. I'm gonna start dancing on street corners.

ALEX

Lindy, you could stand still on street corners and make a fortune.

LINDY

You're a strange guy, Alex.
(slightest beat)
I like strange guys.

They KISS passionately. ALEX moves his hand inside her coat....

CARMINE

adjusts his mirror to get a better view of the action in the BACKSEAT.

CUT TO

EXT. / ALEX'S BUILDING / NIGHT

The TAXI pulls up in front of an attractive CO-OP on the Upper East Side....complete with uniformed DOORMAN.

INT. / TAXI

LINDY, buttoning her BLOUSE, gazes at the BUILDING.

LINDY

You live here?

The DOORMAN pulls open the TAXI DOOR.

DOORMAN

Evening, Mr. Gardner.

ALEX

Evening, Harry. What's the tab, Carmine?

CARMINE

Get outta here, Alex. For the show you put on, I oughta pay you.

EXT. / SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF BUILDING

ALEX, LINDY and RAGS step out of the TAXI. It drives off into the night.

DOORMAN

(to ALEX)

That ugly cop came by to see you.

ALEX

Stedenko?

DOORMAN

That's the one.

ALEX

(nods)

Thanks, Harry.

CUT TO

INT. / FIFTH FLOOR CORRIDOR / NIGHT

Once off the ELEVATOR....ALEX takes out his KEY and is about to stick it in his DOOR when RAGS growls.

ALEX
What's eating you?

Then....ALEX notices that the apartment DOOR is slightly ajar. He nudges it and it swings open.

INT. / ALEX'S APARTMENT

A quick glimpse of the place....spare but stylish.

An unplesant-looking MAN in a dark SUIT is seated on the COUCH....grinning at them. His name is STEDENKO.

ALEX, LINDY and RAGS enter. RAGS growls at the MAN.

STEDENKO
Teach your dog some manners.

ALEX
You could stand a few lessons yourself, Stedenko.

LINDY
(to ALEX)
Another friend of yours?

ALEX
This? This is nobody's friend.
(slightest beat;
to LINDY
Better wait for me downstairs.

LINDY
(concerned)
Alex....

ALEX
Go on.
(to RAGS)
You, too, silly.

Reluctantly, LINDY and RAGS depart. ALEX shuts the DOOR after them.

STEDENKO gets up....starts to move around the ROOM....picking objects up....putting them down.

STEDENKO
I been outta circulation for awhile....but now I'm back.
(a beat)
I need three hundred bucks.

ALEX

Who doesn't?

STEDENKO

I can make life hell for you, Alex. I can have you busted three or four times a night. I can have you in and out of the cophouse so much you won't be able to make a cent on the street.

ALEX

(after a beat)

Stedenko....kiss my ass.

STEDENKO comes across the ROOM....grabs ALEX by the lapels and slams him hard against the WALL.

Instinctively, ALEX slugs STEDENKO in the gut. STEDENKO crumples to the FLOOR....in pain.

ALEX knows he's made a big mistake.

ALEX

(to himself)

Shit.

ALEX turns and exits the APARTMENT.

STEDENKO rolls around on the FLOOR....cursing.

INT. / CORRIDOR

ALEX....moving fast now....rejects the ELEVATOR and takes the service STAIRS instead.

EXT. / BUILDING ENTRANCE

Looking worried, LINDY emerges from the BUILDING followed by RAGS.

She is surprised to discover ALEX waiting patiently beneath the CANOPY.

ALEX

Here's an idea....let's go to your place.

LINDY

How did you....

ALEX

(interrupting)

Walk real fast.

He takes her arm and they head toward MADISON AVENUE....
RAGS scampering along behind.

EXT. / MADISON AVENUE

As they hunt for a TAXI.

LINDY

Who was that guy?

ALEX

Stedenko's a vice cop. He
picks up pin money shaking
down street performers.

LINDY

Did you pay him?

ALEX

No. I hit him. Which means
I'm up shit creek.

LINDY

What're you gonna do?

ALEX

Figure something out. Mean-
time I'm the Invisible Man.
Okay with you?

LINDY

(thrilled)

Sure. I think it's exciting.
I mean you're practically a
fugitive from justice!

ALEX laughs. He steps to the CURB and forefingers a CAB.
It screeches to a stop as we:

CUT TO

INT. / SECLUSION ROOM / DAY

A dark ROOM devoid of furniture save a large, coffin-like
ISOLATION TANK.

What for a moment might appear to be Dracula rising from
his casket turns out to be DR. MILT NOVOTNY emerging from
the TANK in a BATHING SUIT....rested and refreshed.

He dries off....shrugs on a ROBE. The ROOM's DOOR opens
and JANE enters....also wearing a ROBE.

JANE

Good news. They've located
Alex Gardner.

NOVOTNY

They've actually got him?

JANE

Not in the flesh....but
they do have an address.

JANE removes her ROBE....revealing a BATHING SUIT beneath.
She opens the HATCH of the ISOLATION TANK....gets in.

NOVOTNY

I hope it pans out. He's
exactly right for this
project.

INT. / ISOLATION TANK

Once inside, JANE closes the HATCH. Everything goes BLACK.
There is only the gentle swishing of the WATER.

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. / ALEX'S BUILDING / DAY

It's the next day. Moving quickly, ALEX emerges from his
BUILDING lugging a SUITCASE and his VIOLIN CASE.

TWO MEN in casual but expensive CLOTHES block his path.
They are BABCOCK and FINCH.

BABCOCK

Mr. Gardner?

ALEX

Sorry. Somebody else.

BABCOCK

We know you're Alex Gardner.

ALEX

Cops, right? Friends of
Eddie Stedenko's?

BABCOCK and FINCH exchange confused looks....then:

BABCOCK

We're from Tannehill College
in Carlton, Connecticut. I'm
Roy Babcock and this is Larry
Finch. We have a proposition
for you.

ALEX

Does it pay money?

BABCOCK

Could. Depends on you.

Something in the distance catches ALEX's attention.

STEDENKO is coming down the SIDEWALK half a block away.
He has not spotted ALEX.

ALEX notices a STATION WAGON parked at the CURB with a
University DECAL on its DOOR. He opens the BACK DOOR
and hops in.

ALEX

Come on. I think better
in a moving car.

INT. / STATION WAGON

BABCOCK and FINCH slide into the front SEAT. BABCOCK
starts the MOTOR.

ALEX turns and peers out the REAR WINDOW.

EXT. / STREET

The STATION WAGON pulls away from the CURB and is swal-
lowed into the river of TRAFFIC just as STEDENKO enters
ALEX's BUILDING.

INT. / STATION WAGON

ALEX settles back and chuckles.

BABCOCK

How about taking a little
ride with us up to the
college?

ALEX

I've thought it over and
I'm not interested. You
can drop me at 89th Street.

BABCOCK

I know this is going to sound
a bit sinister, Mr. Gardner,
but we have instructions to
bring you back with us.

ALEX

You mean I'm kidnapped?

BABCOCK

There are some people up at

MORE

BABCOCK

(cont)

Tannehill who are very anxious
to meet you.

ALEX

What would you do if I just
opened this door and jumped?

FINCH turns around and smiles at him....then speaks:

FINCH

(mild menace)

I guess I'd have to stop you.

BABCOCK

Why don't you just sit back
and enjoy the ride. The
scenery between here and
Carlton is pretty nice....
the leaves are turning.

ALEX

The leaves, huh? Well....
when you put it like that.
(a beat)
Just tell me something.

BABCOCK

If I can.

ALEX

Am I in any danger?

BABCOCK

Not from us.

ALEX looks at FINCH who gives him a pleasant smile. ALEX
smiles back. He's not crazy to cooperate with these guys
but on the other hand, he's not anxious to stay in the
city.

He opens his VIOLIN CASE.

ALEX

How about some music?

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. / CONNECTICUT COUNTRYSIDE / DAY

The STATION WAGON winds along a scenic HIGHWAY....past
FLOWERS, FARMS and FIELDS.

INT. / STATION WAGON

ALEX....sprawled out in the BACKSEAT....plays VIOLIN accompaniment as BABCOCK....still driving....SINGS a tenor aria from "Tosca". He has a pleasant voice.

CUT TOEXT. / TANNEHILL COLLEGE / DAY

A beautiful old CAMPUS whose main BUILDINGS went up around the turn of the century. Huge old TREES....WALKWAYS. Were it not for the CARS and STUDENTS in modern dress, TANNEHILL would look exactly as it did over 80 years ago.

The STATION WAGON travels up a long DRIVEWAY toward an old three-story BUILDING identified by an ivy-draped SIGN as "HURLBUT HALL".

CUT TOINT. / NOVOTNY'S OFFICE / DAY

BABCOCK leads ALEX into a cramped and cluttered OFFICE on the SECOND FLOOR.

BABCOCK

Make yourself at home, Alex.

BABCOCK leaves.

ALEX pokes through the BOOKS and PAPERS on the DESK.... crosses to the WINDOW and peers out at the campus.

He turns in response to someone's approach.

NOVOTNY and JANE enter.

NOVOTNY

Hello, Alex. Remember me?

ALEX

(after a beat)

Novotny. I never forget a headshrinker.

NOVOTNY

This is my colleague....Dr. Jane DeVries.

JANE

Hello, Alex. I'm glad you could come.

ALEX

Your talent scouts convinced me.

(slightest beat)

I'm not interested in anything you have to offer.

NOVOTNY

Keep your pants on. Nobody's made any offers....

ALEX

(interrupting)

....yet.

(a beat)

Look, Novotny, I hung up the psychic bit when I was fifteen.

NOVOTNY

That's fine. We're not interested in parlor tricks here.

ALEX

What are you interested in?

NOVOTNY

Like the Marines, we're looking for a few good men.

(a beat)

However....you might not be good enough for us.

ALEX

(smiling)

Is that supposed to get my goat?

NOVOTNY

(shrugs)

Did it?

ALEX

Sort of.

NOVOTNY

Come on.

He puts a friendly HAND on ALEX's SHOULDER and leads him out of the OFFICE.

SMASH CUT TOINT. / STAIRWELL

A "Vertigo" shot as ALEX, NOVOTNY and JANE descend a circular STAIRCASE.

NOVOTNY
Know much about dreams, Alex?

ALEX
I have them sometimes.

JANE
You have them every time you
sleep.

ALEX
Is that what you're up to?
Dream research?

NOVOTNY
Advanced dream research.

ALEX

Studies JANE out of the corner of his eye. Very attractive....but she looks like strictly business. Still....

BOTTOM OF STAIRWELL

Where a YOUNG MAN reading a PAPERBACK sits in front of an open DOORWAY. He acknowledges NOVOTNY, JANE and ALEX as they pass by.

INT. / CORRIDOR

They walk down a linoleum HALLWAY.

ALEX
Why the watchdog? Got
something to hide down
here?

NOVOTNY
I'm a scientist, Alex. People think scientists do things to benefit mankind. Untrue. We do it for self-glorification.
(a beat)
I'm not about to let some bastard competitor beat me out on this one.

INT. / MONITORING ROOM

NOVOTNY and JANE bring ALEX into a large MONITORING ROOM.

Various VIDEO SCREENS....switches....dials....shiny sophisticated equipment. A half dozen TECHNICIANS busy watching.

NOVOTNY

Your every day sleep monitoring room.

(a beat)

We're particularly interested in nightmares.

He indicates a bank of TV SCREENS.

On each SCREEN is a different PATIENT sleeping....wired with electrodes.

JANE

We're monitoring these individuals because of their frequency of nightmare. We wire them....watch them.

(a beat)

Everything we do during the day is reflected in the things we dream.

A PHONE lights up.

NOVOTNY

Excuse me, Alex.

(picks up
the PHONE)

Novotny. No, Leon. I have no objection to that....

JANE points out one of the SCREENS to ALEX.

JANE

This young lady is just entering REM stage. Rapid....

ALEX

(interrupting)

Eye Movement.

(a beat)

When dreams occur.

(smiling)

I know one or two things, Dr. DeVries.

JANE ignores his smile and points to the other SCREENS:

JANE

The other phases of sleep help restore the body. REM sleep restores the mind.

(a beat)

Do you drink, Alex?

ALEX

Whatever you're having.

JANE

Drinking interferes with REM sleep. Alcoholics often drink to put themselves to sleep.... but few sleep soundly. That's why mental illness and memory loss often result from alcoholism.

ALEX

I'll try to remember that.

NOVOTNY hangs up and returns his attention to ALEX:

NOVOTNY

Where were we?

ALEX

I hope you were about to tell me what the hell I'm doing here.

NOVOTNY

This is the wrong place for that.

(slightest beat)

I'll bet you're hungry. We can have dinner in the village....a few drinks....

ALEX

And interfere with our REM sleep? Doctor, I'm shocked.

NOVOTNY

What've you been telling this boy, Jane?

JANE

The truth.

NOVOTNY

The truth?

(to ALEX)

Sometimes you need a few drinks to face that bastard.

On his meaningful look we:

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / VILLAGE PUB / NIGHT

A college hangout. Loud voices....pretty girls....pinball machines....beer.

Somewhere near the back we find NOVOTNY and ALEX encamped in a BOOTH....empty dishes....a half-killed bottle of SCOTCH.

NOVOTNY

(mellow)

I like you, Alex.

ALEX

(half in the
bag himself)

I like you, Milt. I like you because you're buying the drinks.

NOVOTNY

You haven't changed in fifteen years. You're still a smart-ass.

ALEX

Forget it, Milt. Over the years I've been approached by hundreds of you research yo-yos. I'm out of the game. Who wants to be a freak?

NOVOTNY

(after a beat)

Let's play a little game.... you and me.

ALEX

It's your party.

NOVOTNY

Let's pretend something crazy.

ALEX

Like me coming to work for you.

NOVOTNY

Crazier than that.

(a beat)

Let's pretend that a man.... with a little help from sci-

MORE

NOVOTNY

(cont)

ence....could psychically project himself into the dream of a sleeping person.

ALEX

Sure. Let's pretend that.

NOVOTNY

Then pretend that once inside the dream....he could become an active participant in it. Could actually be there.... right in the middle of it. Could feel the dream....experience it....even contribute to its outcome.

(excited;
a beat)

What would you say to a notion like that?

ALEX

That it's crazy.

NOVOTNY

What would you do if I told you we've done it?

ALEX

I'd give you a patronizing smile like the one I'm giving you right now.

NOVOTNY

(emphatic)

But we have done it. Not once but three times.... using a young man with abilities in telepathy similar to your own.

A long pause. ALEX smiles and shakes his head:

ALEX

Going into somebody else's dream. Right.

(a beat)

You're not doing dream research. This is a study in gullibility.

NOVOTNY

I'd make this up?

ALEX

(after a beat)

You're serious.

(NOVOTNY nods)

Suddenly I'm from Missouri.
Show me.

NOVOTNY

Not much to see. Two guys
with their heads wired up
to a machine.

(taps his
forehead)

The real trip takes place
up here.

(slightest beat)

But don't take my word for
it.

ALEX

Why me?

NOVOTNY

Because you've got a head-
start on the rest of us
mortals. You can already
worm your way into the
conscious mind when condi-
tions are right. Maybe with
a little help you can get
into the subconscious mind
....the dreamscape.

ALEX

And you've got a guy who's
done it?

NOVOTNY

You'll meet him.

NOVOTNY picks up a stack of FOLDERS from the seat beside
him and passes them to ALEX.

NOVOTNY

These are the transcripts of
the three successful dream
links. Stay awhile. Give us
a chance.

A long pause. ALEX looks at NOVOTNY....NOVOTNY's face is
full of hope.

ALEX

Well....I'm not too anxious
to get back to the city....

NOVOTNY

Attaboy.

(raises his
GLASS)

I'd like to propose a toast.

ALEX

I think you should postpone
the celebration until I've
made up my mind.

NOVOTNY

Tease.

SMASH CUT TOINT. / DORM ROOM / NIGHTIn the sanctity of a sparsely furnished DORM ROOM, ALEX,
sprawled on the bed, reads over the transcripts with
growing interest and excitement.CUT TOEXT. / CAMPUS / DAY

Morning. STUDENTS scurry to class.

CUT TOINT. / ALEX'S DORM ROOM / DAYNOVOTNY enters the ROOM, yanks the CURTAINS and floods
the ROOM with sunlight.

NOVOTNY

Rise and shine.

He nudges ALEX to consciousness.

ALEX

What time is it?

NOVOTNY

Bright and early. How'd you
sleep? Have any dreams?

ALEX

Mind if I take a piss before
I give my deposition?

NOVOTNY

Sorry. Force of habit.

ALEX staggers into the bathroom to piss.

NOVOTNY
You looked over the transcripts....

ALEX'S VOICE
Yeah.

NOVOTNY
(anxious)
Well? Any questions?

ALEX
One. Why?
(a beat)
Why are you doing this?

ALEX returns....puts on his BATHROBE.

NOVOTNY
(after a beat)
Gaining first-hand knowledge
of a patient's nightmare
allows us to better treat
his problem....
(interrupting
himself)
Look, I'm just going to level
with you.
(a beat)
I'm doing this because no-
body else has done it before.
Nobody else has even conceived
of doing it before.
(smiling)
But the bottom line is this
....I'm doing it because it's
exciting.

A pause. NOVOTNY continues to smile. Then....ALEX
smiles back. They've made a connection.

ALEX
Okay. Let's give it a
try.

NOVOTNY
Don't do me any favors.

ALEX
Knock off the hard-ass rou-
tine. I want to do it.
(a beat)
One one condition.

NOVOTNY
Which is?

ALEX

That you let me sleep another couple hours.

ALEX crawls back into bed.

ALEX

You early birds are a pain in the ass. Why do you get up so early?

NOVOTNY

It's sort of ironic. I've dedicated my life to sleep and dream research and the awful truth is....I'm an insomniac.

ALEX

That's okay. I'll bet Masters and Johnson are both lousy at sex.

NOVOTNY

I like to think so.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / LINDY'S APARTMENT / DAY

LINDY is speaking on the phone....while petting RAGS.

LINDY

When you didn't come back, Rags and I got worried.

ALEX'S VOICE

Like I said, I'm fine. Look....can you take care of Rags for awhile?

LINDY

Sure. We get along real good. Alex....this isn't a brushoff, is it?

ALEX'S VOICE

If it was I wouldn't leave my dog with you. I'm crazy about you, Lindy, but Rags is my family. Could you put him on?

LINDY puts the receiver to RAG's ear.

ALEX'S VOICE
 Hey, kid. Take care of
 Lindy for me....and keep
 your paws off her, understand?

RAGS BARKS softly....we hear ALEX LAUGH.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / DREAM CHAMBER / DAY

A dark ROOM.

Overhead LIGHTS....somber, muted....click on one by one
 until the ROOM is bathed in low, spooky light.

ALEX takes it all in as NOVOTNY moves away from the
 light switch.

The ROOM is like something out of "2001". The WALLS are
 covered with acoustic insulation. In the center of the
 ROOM are two cushioned reclining CHAIRS.

Seperating the two CHAIRS and looming over them is a
 large glistening contraption greatly resembling a prey-
 ing mantis....or some strange dentistry tool.

The FAR WALL is GLASS. Beyond it is a MONITORING ROOM.

ALEX
 (after a long
 pause; indicates
 the mantis)

Who's he?

NOVOTNY
 That's the Great American
 Dream Machine.

ALEX
 What? You're gonna hook me
 up to that piece of science
 fiction?

NOVOTNY
 It doesn't do much really.
 You're the one who'll be
 doing all the work. It
 just helps connect your
 brain waves to the dreamer's.
 (a beat)

Hopefully....once you get
 proficient at dream linking
 you won't need the mantis.

ALEX

You seem pretty confident
in my potential....

NOVOTNY

Don't let me give you the
wrong impression. It's
not a trick you can pick
up overnight. It's going
to be a long time before
you're ready.

Through the GLASS of the MONITORING ROOM Alex notices
JANE come in.

ALEX

I've got nothing but time,
Milt.

(a beat)

Now about the money....

SMASH CUT TO

A MONTAGE

DEPICTING ALEX'S FIRST WEEKS AT TANNEHILL

A DOCTOR checks ALEX's heart and pulse rates.

ALEX undergoes an EEG and CATscan.

JANE hands ALEX a beaker for a urine sample. He panto-
mimes that he may need a bigger one. JANE tries not
to be amused.

Over this:

ALEX'S VOICE

I'm not much good at mind-
tapping unless the individ-
ual co-operates. Any
resistance and....

NOVOTNY'S VOICE

Who's going to offer less
resistance than a person
who's asleep?

ALEX'S VOICE

You know, I tried it once
when I was a kid....tried
to mindread a sleeper. All
I got was a lot of jumbled
junk.

NOVOTNY'S VOICE

A matter of fine-tuning.
That's where we come in.

MONTAGE CONTINUES

ALEX under a CAMPUS TREE....eating a SANDWICH and studying the RACING FORM.

ALEX stepping into the ISOLATION TANK.

Over this:

JANE'S VOICE

First we'll get you on a regimen to sharpen up your telepathy and powers of projection....both of which I imagine are pretty rusty.

NOVOTNY'S VOICE

Once inside a dream.... you are merely to witness and co-operate. Do not interfere if you can help it. You're not there for your own amusement....like our other subject, Tommy Ray.

ALEX emerging from the ISOLATION TANK....looking relaxed.

ALEX in the HURLBUT HALL LOUNGE....chatting with STAFF.

NOVOTNY and ALEX in a dark ROOM. NOVOTNY is putting ALEX into a trance.

ALEX'S VOICE

So when am I gonna meet this Tommy Ray character?

NOVOTNY'S VOICE

He's serving a week in the local chokey on a drunk and disorderly.

ALEX'S VOICE

Is that what you do here? Drive your guinea pigs to drink?

CUT TO

INT. / DORM CORRIDOR / LATE NIGHT

Shooting down the lonely CORRIDOR of the floor ALEX lives on by himself.

We hear his VIOLIN softly playing "Beautiful Dreamer".

INT. / ALEX'S ROOM

The lights are off but MOONLIGHT illuminates ALEX in a straightback CHAIR as he continues to play the haunting melody....

INT. / JANE'S OFFICE / NIGHT

JANE at her DESK....working late.

Faint strains of "Beautiful Dreamer" can be heard through the open WINDOW. JANE removes her GLASSES and listens.... smiles.

CUT TO

EXT. / RUINS OF MANHATTAN / POV SHOT / TRACKING

After an ATOMIC HALOCAUST....

We travel over the smouldering RUINS of the once great CITY....now reduced to RUBBLE.

FIRES burn in the distance and the SKY is blood red. No signs of life....only the CRUNCH of our own bootheels as we make our way across the landscape of destruction.

From somewhere in the near distance comes the pitiful whine of a CHILD's voice:

CHILD'S VOICE

Help....Help me....

We look around. The voice seems to be emanating from behind the charred DOOR of a broken down BUILDING.

CHILD'S VOICE

Help....Help me....

SECOND CHILD'S
VOICE

Please help us....it hurts....

Slowly....cautiously....we approach the charred DOOR.

THIRD CHILD'S
VOICE

Someone please....

Our HAND reaches into frame and closes around the KNOB when....the DOOR is kicked open from within and a HALF DOZEN bloody and horribly deformed CHILDREN leap out and ravenously attack us....

The DREAMER's scream fills the soundtrack as we:

CUT TO

INT. / BEDROOM

As the PRESIDENT sits up in his bed....still screaming

with terror. The bedroom DOOR flies open and a YOUNG WOMAN in a nightgown rushes in and embraces the frightened PRESIDENT.

YOUNG WOMAN
(comforting)
Dad....Dad....it's all right.

PRESIDENT
My god....My god....

He holds on tightly to her. Slowly....he begins to calm down.

YOUNG WOMAN
What was it?
(a beat)
Dad, what did you dream about?

PRESIDENT
The bomb....my fault....

YOUNG WOMAN
It's all right. It was just a dream.

In the background....we see the outline of a MAN appear in the doorway. It is FRED....the MAN who checked in on the PRESIDENT after the first nightmare.

YOUNG WOMAN
Ever since mother died....

PRESIDENT
Bonnie, I can't go on like this. Each night is worse....

He begins to sob and shake. The YOUNG WOMAN holds him close. FRED is no longer in the doorway.

INT. / PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE / NIGHT

FRED is in the darkened PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE....dialing a number on the PHONE.

TWO OTHER MEN....obviously staff....are with him.

FRED
(into phone)
It's Fred Schoenstein. Let me speak to Blair.

He waits....exchanges a look of concern with the other MEN. All three look harried and nervous.

FRED
 (into phone)
 Bob? Fred. Yes....again.
 They're getting worse.
 (listens)
 The man's practically a
 basket case. He can't func-
 tion in his job.
 (slightest beat)
 If this leaks out....
 (listens)
 Yes, Bob....
 (listens)
 Yes, Bob....

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / TESTING ROOM / HURLBUT HALL / DAY

ALEX and JANE are seated at opposite ends of a TABLE.
 There is a DIVIDER between them.

JANE is turning over colored CARDS one by one....and
 just as quickly, ALEX....using telepathy....is telling
 her what they are.

ALEX
 Red....green....green....
 yellow....green....blue....
 red....YES!

JANE looks up in surprise.

JANE
Yes?

ALEX
 Yes, I find you attractive.
 That's what you were just
 wondering....

JANE flushes.

INT. / CORRIDOR / ENTRANCE DOORS / HURLBUT HALL

JANE and ALEX are walking down a CORRIDOR....weaving in
 and out of STUDENTS.

ALEX
 Look....I don't know why
 I should apologize. All
 I did was answer your
 question....

JANE

Let's just skip it, shall we?

Up ahead a somewhat gawky-looking YOUNG MAN is hanging around the entrance DOORS....ogling COLLEGE GIRLS as they pass on their way to class.

His hair is close-cropped and his gaunt face is pale and pockmarked. He recognizes JANE....smiles furtively as she and ALEX approach.

JANE

Hello, Tommy Ray. This is Alex Gardner. Alex....this is Tommy Ray Glatman.

ALEX

(smiling)

The Neil Armstrong of dream linking.

(extends a hand)

How are ya?

TOMMY RAY

(to JANE)

Who's he?

JANE

Alex has joined the projectin a capacity similar to your own.

TOMMY RAY

Oh.

He finally shakes hands....regarding ALEX with undisguised suspicion.

ALEX

From what I've read in the transcripts you can do some pretty amazing stuff.

TOMMY RAY

Stuff nobody else can do.

ALEX

They also tell me you're pretty modest.

JANE gives ALEX a sharp look.

TOMMY RAY

Gotta go now.

TOMMY RAY turns and exits out the entrance DOORS.

ALEX
(to JANE)
That's the guy who did the
dream links?

JANE
He's a little eccentric.

ALEX
A little?
(starts out
the DOORS)
Hey, Tommy Ray! Wait up!

EXT. / HURLBUT HALL / DAY

TOMMY RAY turns in surprise as ALEX bounds down the STEPS and joins him outside.

ALEX
Going into the Village?

TOMMY RAY
(guarded)
Maybe.

ALEX
Okay if I walk along?

TOMMY RAY
Suit yourself.

They start down a TRAIL. TOMMY RAY takes out the TRENCH-COAT he was carrying under his arm and puts it on. It is ridiculously oversized.

As they walk along....camera PANNING with them....TOMMY RAY begins to grin. He appears to be enjoying the spectacle of himself in the Bogart TRENCHCOAT.

Several STUDENTS pass by.

TOMMY RAY
(smirking)
I bet they think I'm a
private eye!

ALEX is rather amused by his behavior.

TOMMY RAY
You say your name was what?

ALEX

Alex Gardner.

TOMMY RAY

Lemme ask you something....

TOMMY RAY stops abruptly. ALEX stops.

TOMMY RAY

(after a beat)

You gonna bust my chops?

ALEX

How's that?

TOMMY RAY

You gonna gimme a hard time?

ALEX

Why would I do that?

TOMMY RAY

I'm cock of the walk back there....number one man. And number one man's gotta watch out for number two man 'cause number two man always want to be number one man. It's human nature.

ALEX

I don't want to be number one man.

TOMMY RAY

(satisfied for now)

You can say that now, Alexbut a guy can get an itch for power. I've seen it.

TOMMY RAY starts walking again. ALEX gravitates alongside him. ALEX tries not to burst out laughing.

ANOTHER ANGLE / PULLING BACK

As TOMMY RAY and ALEX stroll toward the VILLAGE....they are unaware that they are being watched by a MAN standing on the outdoor TERRACE of the STUDENT UNION BUILDING.

He is a large FAT MAN....with a thick black BEARD and horn-rimmed GLASSES.

CUT TO

INT. / DREAM CHAMBER / DAY

While tech AIDES hook up apparatus for a dream link....
NOVOTNY introduces ALEX to a tall blond MAN.

NOVOTNY

Alex meet Horst.

ALEX

Hello, Horst.

HORST

(thick accent;
friendly)

Hello, Alex. I'm der guinea
pig today.

NOVOTNY

We use Horst in these try-outs
because he can reach deep
sleep faster than anyone I've
ever met.

(smiling)

That's because he's Swiss.

HORST and ALEX laugh.

SMASH CUT TO

DREAM CHAMBER / HALF AN HOUR LATER

HORST and ALEX are stretched out on the reclining CHAIRS
....hooked up to the PREYING MANTIS-LIKE MACHINE.

HORST is asleep.

NOVOTNY stands beside ALEX....who has begun to do a
series of breathing exercises.

CLOSE ON ALEX

Electrodes wired to his skull....eyes closed...breathing
and concentrating.

DARKNESS

A swirling, pulsating VOID of blackness. Then....almost
imperceptible at first....light....flickering light.

Out of the VOID colors begin to float toward us....then
rush at us.

A sound begins....steadily increasing. It is the sound
of wind....and suddenly it is howling with storm-like
fury.

CLOSE ON ALEX

No longer wearing electrodes. As the howling wind continues to rage....he opens his eyes....and blinks.

WHAT HE SEES

A blurred POV SHOT of the SWISS ALPS....viewed from the summit of one of them. The image begins to fade.... then comes back into focus....then fades again.

ALEX

concentrating....trying to remain in the dream. Sleet pelts his face.

WHAT HE SEES

A goggled MOUNTAIN CLIMBER suddenly pulls himself up in front of us and grins. He begins to fade....but before the image goes to black....the CLIMBER pulls off his GOGGLES and we recognize him as HORST!

The sound of the wind fades....everything goes black.

CLOSE ON ALEX

In the reclining CHAIR....wearing electrodes. He is returning to consciousness.

NOVOTNY'S VOICE

It's okay, Alex. Come on out....

THE SWIRLING VOID

As NOVOTNY's face begins to appear through it.

DREAM CHAMBER

As ALEX opens his eyes....NOVOTNY standing beside him. Excited, ALEX grips NOVOTNY by the arm.

ALEX

Milt....I think I did it.
For just a couple of seconds
....I kept slipping in and out.

(smiling)

It had to do with a mountain!

NOVOTNY turns to the tech AIDES beside the still-sleeping HORST:

NOVOTNY

Bring Horst out.

ALEX yanks out his electrodes and swings himself off the reclining CHAIR. He and NOVOTNY go over to HORSTwho is just waking up.

NOVOTNY

Horst....

HORST

(sitting up)

Yah?

NOVOTNY

Horst....do you remember what you dreamed?

HORST

(nods)

I vas mountain climbing.

(slightest beat)

Und Alex vas dere, too!

NOVOTNY and ALEX look at each other. Unable to contain themselves they start laughing and hugging like players on a winning team.

NOVOTNY

Congratulations....you're the second man to ever do it, Alex.

(a beat)

But don't let this go to your head....you've only just taken your first baby steps....

ALEX smiles triumphantly.

CUT TO

INT. / LOUNGE / DAY

At a TABLE in the building's LOUNGE....a middle-aged MAN and his attractive WIFE chat over coffee. We cannot hear them but we can hear:

JANE'S VOICE

His name's George Webber.... that's his wife. He's an out-patient with us....erratic sleep habits....

(a beat)

Milt and I think he'd be perfect for you.

Camera PULLS BACK to reveal:

JANE and ALEX observing through a ONE-WAY MIRROR.

ALEX

Perfect for what?

JANE

For an extended dream link.
We think you're ready.

Pleased, ALEX smiles....then looks back through the MIRROR. The WIFE gives WEBBER an affectionate KISS.

CUT TO

INT. / CORRIDOR / DAY

ALEX rounds a corner....excited by the good news.

He rounds another corner and comes upon NOVOTNY conversing with a tall, handsome man in his late thirties....
BOB BLAIR.

ALEX

(interrupting)

Jane just told me....

NOVOTNY

Alex, take a minute out of your busy schedule and meet Bob Blair.

BLAIR flashes a winning smile and gives ALEX a firm handshake.

ALEX

How are you?

BLAIR

Pleasure, Alex.
(slightest beat)
Milt tells me you've been making straight A's.

NOVOTNY

Bob works for the government....our backers.

ALEX

(smiling)

Then maybe he could see his way to giving me a raise....

NOVOTNY

Money he wants. Where else
can you get paid for sleeping
on the job? Alex, you should
pay us.

Everybody shares a laugh.

A slight pause....then:

BLAIR

(to ALEX)

We should talk, Alex....you
and I.

(slightest beat)

Soon.

ALEX

All right.

There is something about this MAN that makes ALEX ill
at ease.

ALEX

I ought to be runing along.

ALEX moves on down the CORRIDOR.

We hold for a moment on BLAIR as he watches ALEX leave.
We notice a coldness in his EYES.

CUT TOEXT. / HURLBUT HALL / NIGHT

An ESTABLISHING SHOT of the BUILDING framed against the
NIGHT SKY.

INT / DREAM CHAMBER

ALEX's big night!

Tension and expectation in the air as TECH AIDES scurry
about....double-checking equipment....setting dials.

GEORGE WEBBER....attended by TECHNICIANS....is already
in his reclining SEAT....already asleep and wired. A
soundproof GLASS CONE is lowered over him.

MONITORING ROOM

Where JANE....the stage manager for this little drama....
is giving last minute instructions. She appears anxious
....checks her WATCH against the WALL CLOCK.

DREAM CHAMBER

NOVOTNY and ALEX enter. NOVOTNY starts doing a mad scientist routine:

NOVOTNY
 (ala Karloff)
 Send up the kites! The monster will walk tonight!
 (and cackles)

Tension breaking laughter from the CREW.

NOVOTNY
 (after a beat)
 All right....let's get this show on the road.

ALEX slides onto his reclining CHAIR as tech AIDES attach the electrodes.

MONITORING ROOM

JANE checks the various tracking SCREENS. She looks out through the GLASS at NOVOTNY and gives him the thumbs up signal.

DREAM CHAMBER

NOVOTNY draws a CHAIR up alongside ALEX.

NOVOTNY
 How do you feel, kid?

ALEX
 I've got a little stage fright.

NOVOTNY
 (chuckles)
 Good. Start your breathing.

ALEX closes his eyes and relaxes....begins to take a series of breaths.

MONITORING ROOM

JANE observes the VIDEO SCREEN close-up of WEBBER....as his eyelids begin to flutter.

RAPID CROSS CUTTING

between ALEX's face and WEBBER's face....then:

SUDDEN DARKNESS

And the swirling, pulsating VOID....suddenly beseiged by rapid hazy IMAGES....faces....voices....

SMASH CUT TOALEX

opening his eyes....no longer wearing the electrodes.

INT. / CAR / DAY

ALEX finds himself sitting in the passenger SEAT of a moving CAR.

The DRIVER beside him is none other than GEORGE WEBBER.

WEBBER

(tense)

Ever been married?

ALEX

(after a beat)

No....

WEBBER

Well, it's no ballgame let me tell you. You gotta keep your eye on 'em every minute.

ALEX is absolutely astonished.

He looks out the front WINDSHIELD. They are traveling down a residential STREET in a quiet suburban NEIGHBORHOOD.

EXT. / STREET

WEBBER pulls the CAR over and parks.

WEBBER

My house is a couple more down. I didn't want to give her a headstart....know what I mean?

WEBBER gets out. ALEX does likewise....looking around in all directions....can't believe he's actually done it.

WEBBER starts down the SIDEWALK....looking tense and determined. ALEX catches up with him.

WEBBER

Okay now....here's the plan
of attack....

They stop in front of a large two-story HOUSE.

WEBBER

You go around and use the
backdoor. I'll take the
front. And remember....no
prisoners.

ALEX

(confused)

Right....

WEBBER looks at him.

WEBBER

Well?

ALEX nods and starts around the side of the HOUSE.

BACK OF HOUSE

As he walks around to the back, ALEX stops....bends
down and tears up a handful of GRASS.

It looks real....feels real. He tosses it aside and
grins....approaches the back SCREEN DOOR.

He stops in front of it....after a hesitation, he gives
it a nudge. It swings open and he steps inside.

INT. / KITCHEN

ALEX finds himself in a perfect Betty Crocker KITCHEN.

Then....the sound of a WOMAN's shriek.

STAIRS

ALEX comes out of the KITCHEN and runs up the STAIRS
to the second FLOOR where sounds of an angry argument
are coming from.

BEDROOM

ALEX enters the BEDROOM and stops abruptly.

WEBBER is standing at the foot of the BED in which his
WIFE clutches the COVERS to her naked self....her
LOVER cowers behind a couple of PILLOWS.

WEBBER

With my own brother yet!!

BROTHER

(meekly)

Hi, George....

WEBBER

And in front of the kids!!

TWO PRE-SCHOOLERS seated in CHAIRS look on with disinterest from across the ROOM.

WEBBER turns to ALEX:

WEBBER

Check the closet!

Obediently, ALEX opens the closet DOOR. There stands a MIDDLE-AGED MAN in his undershorts.

WEBBER

With my boss, too!

BOSS

(angry)

Webber, you're supposed to be in Miami handling the Palmer account!

WEBBER bends down and peers under the BED:

WEBBER

Phil....Dave....I see you.
Get out of there.

TWO half-naked MEN crawl out.

WEBBER

Some poker buddies you guys are!

WEBBER runs over and yanks back the DRAPES to reveal a POSTMAN and the local PREIST.

WEBBER

(incensed)

Everybody out of here!!

The LOVERS and CHILDREN rush past ALEX and out the DOOR. WEBBER goes over to the BUREAU....pulls open a DRAWER.

The WIFE slides out of the bed.

WIFE

George....I did it with them because they all reminded me of you....

WEBBER takes a GUN from the DRAWER and points it at her.

WEBBER

Bitch!!

WEBBER fires the GUN....

The WIFE's chest explodes with blood and she is sent sprawling across the BED.

WEBBER prepares to shoot again when ALEX tackles him from behind. They roll to the FLOOR....fighting for the GUN.

WEBBER

I'll kill you, too!!

ALEX

(struggling)

You're having a dream! Wake up, goddamit!

WEBBER

A dream?

(réalising)

I am....oh god....

The SCENE begins to fade....replaced by:

THE SWIRLING VOID

SMASH CUT TO

DREAM CHAMBER

As ALEX and WEBBER awake simultaneously. Both are lashing out....struggling....

NOVOTNY restrains ALEX.

NOVOTNY

Easy, Dorothy. You're back in Kansas now....

Tech AIDES restrain WEBBER.

ALEX sits up and looks around....realizes he's back. He looks at NOVOTNY with excitement in his eyes.

ALEX

It worked, Milt! I was there the whole time!

NOVOTNY

(ecstatic)

I knew you could do it!

They grab each other and hug. ALEX gazes past NOVOTNY's shoulder and toward the GLASS of:

THE MONITORING ROOM

Where JANE waves happily to him and smiles. She has a great smile.

CUT TO

INT. / NOVOTNY'S OFFICE / EVENING

ALEX is stretched out on the FLOOR....from where he's been telling the events of the dream over and over.

NOVOTNY is behind his DESK....sucking on a PIPE. The wheels of a TAPE MACHINE turn behind him.

ALEX

(tired)

That's the tenth time I've told it....mercy.

NOVOTNY

Enough for now.

(cuts off the
TAPE MACHINE)

We'll go over it again tomorrow.

ALEX

(after a beat)

Just one thing....I couldn't wake up until he woke up.

NOVOTNY

We'll work on that.

ALEX

(stands)

I've gotta get out of here and do something normal.

NOVOTNY

Good idea.

(a beat)

And Alex....thanks and congratulations.

ALEX smiles and leaves.

CUT TO

INT. / JANE'S OFFICE / NIGHT

JANE is at her DESK....going through some PAPERS.

ALEX appears in the open DOORWAY....he's all spruced up and looking handsome.

JANE
(without
looking up)
Hello, Alex.

ALEX
Hello, Jane.

She continues her work.

JANE
Bored, Alex?

ALEX
Bored, Jane.
(slightest beat)
What time do you knock off?

JANE
I'm afraid I don't. I've
got a pile of paperwork to
get through.

ALEX
How about you break for dinner?
I found this great place
in the Village....

JANE
I don't think that would be
a good idea.

ALEX
You're a hard nut to crack,
Jane.

JANE
The hardest, Alex.

A pause. JANE removes her GLASSES and finally looks up at him. ALEX smiles hopefully.

JANE
We work together. That's as
far as it goes.

ALEX
All work and no play makes
Jane a dull girl.

JANE

I'm going through a real
ordeal at the moment.

(a beat)

I'm in the middle of a
pretty ugly divorce.

ALEX

I didn't know you were....

(slightest beat)

Whattaya say we add some
fuel to the fire....really
give your husband a case to
take to court....

JANE

Look, Alex, I don't know
what kind of women you're
used to....

ALEX

Actresses....and dancers.
I'm mostly used to actresses
and dancers....

(a beat)

And singers.

JANE

Well, I'm none of those. I
have a job to do and I take
it very seriously.

(a beat)

Now....if you don't mind....

ALEX

I do but we'll skip it.

ALEX hesitates in the doorway.

ALEX

Look, Jane, I'm sorry. I'm
just bored and away from
home.

JANE

(doesn't look up)

I understand.

ALEX turns and leaves.

JANE notices that she's gripping her PENCIL too tightly.

CUT TO

INT. / VILLAGE PUB / NIGHT

ALEX is on a BARSTOOL....nursing a BEER.

The steady whump of some pop song on the JUKEBOX....the cling-cling of a PINBALL MACHINE.

ALEX watches the COLLEGE KIDS passing by....then happens to look into the MIRROR behind the BAR.

In its reflection, he notices a MAN further down the BAR regarding him with interest.

It is the FAT MAN with the BEARD and GLASSES who was observing ALEX and TOMMY RAY the other day. His name is CHARLIE PRINCE.

He salutes ALEX.....climbs off his STOOL and walks over....slides onto a STOOL beside ALEX.

The MAN is pretty drunk.

CHARLIE

(friendly)

You work with Milt Novotny.

ALEX

Milt who?

CHARLIE

Right....Milt Who.

(extends a
hand)

Charlie Prince.

ALEX hesitates....then shakes. CHARLIE signals the BARTENDER:

CHARLIE

Another beer for the
Monsignor here.

ALEX

You look familiar....

CHARLIE smiles and gets off the STOOL. As ALEX watches he rummages around in a pile of BOOKS some COLLEGE KIDS have left in a BOOTH.

CHARLIE

Let's see....gotta be one
in here someplace....

(then)

Aha.

He returns to the BAR with a dog-eared PAPERBACK which he hands to ALEX.

ALEX looks at it.

INSERT / PAPERBACK

A garish cover proclaims "HATCHET MAN by CHARLES PRINCEA MASTERPIECE of MODERN HORROR....The NUMBER ONE BESTSELLER".

ALEX flips it over. On the back cover is a picture of CHARLIE PRINCE at his typewriter.

BACK TO SCENE

ALEX grins at him.

ALEX

You write all those horror books....

CHARLIE

I'm the one, boy. Am I ever.

ALEX

What're you doing here?

CHARLIE

Research.

(smiling)

I'm working on a new book.... it's got to do with dreams.

ALEX

(barely reacts)

Sounds like another winner.

A slight pause....then CHARLIE leans closer:

CHARLIE

Look....I know what's going on in Hurlbut Hall. I know all about this dream link business....and I know you're a part of it.

ALEX

Then you know as much as I do.

CHARLIE

(with meaning)

Maybe I know more.

ALEX

Look, I'm half in the bag
so if you have a point to
make, I wish you'd make it.

CHARLIE

I assume you've run into an
Ivy League type who calls
himself Blair?

(ALEX nods)

Guess what he does? Go on
....guess.

ALEX

He's with the government.

CHARLIE

(laughs)

He's a Presidential advisor
no less. On....get this....
mental health.

(a beat)

Novotny. He told you all
about how this technique
will some day be able to
help tortured types with
their nightmares, right?

ALEX

Something like that.

CHARLIE

Okay....just pretend you're
smart for a minute and con-
sider this. Consider all the
deep dark secrets people hide
away in their minds. Then
consider that those secrets
are bound to come out in their
dreams.

(a beat)

Occurs to me that a technique
for diving those secrets
would be of enormous interest
to certain intelligence groups.

ALEX

Wait a minute....

CHARLIE

Great idea for a book, huh?

CHARLIE tosses some money on the BAR and gets up.

CHARLIE

Of course, I'm just a writer
with a writer's imagination.
I take a given thing and blow
it out of proportion. It's
my job.

(slightest beat)

Still....you remember what
they say is stranger than
fiction....

CHARLIE smiles....gives ALEX a pat on the shoulder and
weaves toward the EXIT.

ALEX watches him go....he seems confused.

ALEX turns to the BARTENDER and orders another BEER.

EXT. / VILLAGE STREET

CHARLIE PRINCE comes out of the PUB and turns his collar
up against the cold night. He crosses the lonely street
to his parked CAR.

He gets in and starts the MOTOR.

PULLING BACK

We realise that we are watching this through the front
WINDSHIELD of another parked CAR.

TWO MEN sit in the front SEAT....observing CHARLIE....
their faces hidden in the dark.

PASSENGER'S VOICE

No great loss to planet
Earth.

DRIVER

Okay.

The PASSENGER has a paperback copy of CHARLIE's book
"HATCHET MAN" in his gloved hands....open to a speci-
fic page.

He tears the page out and hands it to the DRIVER.

PASSENGER

This might give you some
ideas....

We see CHARLIE's CAR pull out onto the STREET.

The PASSENGER steps out of the other CAR.

EXT. / STREET

As CHARLIE drives away....the DRIVER of the other CAR pulls out and follows.

The PASSENGER remains on the SIDWALK in darkness.... watching the TWO CARS disappear down the STREET.

He steps back into a pool of light cast by a STREET-LAMP....and we see that the PASSENGER is BOB BLAIR.

SMASH CUT TOINT. / MONITORING ROOM / DAY

ALEX peers through the GLASS of the MONITORING ROOM at a nine-year old BOY asleep in one of the reclining CHAIRS in the DREAM CHAMBER....wired and monitored.

ALEX

Who's the kid?

JANE is beside him.

JANE

His name's Buddy Elliott
....he has nightmares.

ALEX

(smiling)

You're gonna put me in a
kid's nightmare?

NOVOTNY has entered the ROOM.

NOVOTNY

It'll probably just be an
ordinary dream.

TECH AIDE

(nearby)

Nearing REM....

INT. / DREAM CHAMBER

ALEX settles back in his recliner. An AIDE starts to attach the electrodes.

ALEX

Milt....

NOVOTNY

(nearby)

What is it?

ALEX
I don't think I need you to
help me with the breathing.

NOVOTNY
(pleased)
Attaboy.

INT. / MONITORING ROOM

As ALEX begins his breathing....NOVOTNY joins JANE in
the MONITORING ROOM.

JANE
Your baby's starting to
walk.

NOVOTNY
Pretty soon he won't even
need to hook up with the
machine. He'll be able to
enter a dream totally on
his own.

CLOSE ON ALEX

breathing....concentrating.

INTERCUTTING

ALEX's face with that of BUDDY....as the BOY's eyelids
flutter.

DARKNESS

And the swirling void....flashes....voices....

CUT TO

ALEX

without the electrodes....opening his eyes.

INT. / LIVING ROOM / NIGHT

ALEX finds himself standing in a typical LIVING ROOM.
We can hear wind and rain outside.

BUDDY ELLIOTT scampers past him and hides behind the
window DRAPES.

ALEX
Hey....Buddy....

From behind the DRAPES comes the BOY's frightened voice:

BUDDY

Who're you?

ALEX

My name's Alex....I'm a friend.

BUDDY peeks out.

BUDDY

You the babysitter?

ALEX

(shrugs)

Sure. I'm the babysitter.

BUDDY ventures out a couple of steps.

BUDDY

Most time they just leave me here all alone.

ALEX

You don't have to be afraid of me.

BUDDY

You know the Rat Man?

ALEX

The who?

BUDDY

(drawing closer;
scared)

The Rat Man.

ALEX

Oh....like the Boogie Man?

BUDDY

He's big....and he's a rat
....only he wears clothes.

(a beat;
spooky)

He's outside and he wants to come in and get me.

A sudden KNOCK at the front DOOR. Both jump.

BUDDY

The Rat Man!!

BUDDY runs over and hides behind the DRAPES again.

ALEX
(amused)
It's okay....I won't let
him get you.

Another KNOCK.

BUDDY
Please don't answer it.

ALEX heads toward the FOYER:

ALEX
I'll bet it's not even him.

FOYER

ALEX approaches the front DOOR. Hesitates.

We hear the symphony of wind and rain outside.

ALEX puts his hand on the KNOB....turns it....and yanks
the DOOR open.

No one there.

He shuts the DOOR and returns to the LIVING ROOM.

LIVING ROOM

Where BUDDY peeks out at him from behind the DRAPES....
shivering with fear.

ALEX
(reassuring)
Nobody there.

BUDDY is about to step out from behind the DRAPES when....

CRASH!!

A huge hairy rat's hand breaks through the GLASS behind
him and grabs the BOY around the neck!!

BUDDY lets out a scream of terror.

ALEX nearly jumps out of his skin....manages to get hold
of himself....leaps forward and yanks BUDDY out of the
RAT MAN's grasp.

Then....the RAT MAN's other hand smashes through another
PANE of GLASS and clasps its CLAWS around ALEX's face!!

ALEX cries out in pain and pulls free....his face scratched and bleeding.

He grabs BUDDY by the hand and together they run out of the ROOM.

Something huge crashes through the WINDOW and lands in the middle of the ROOM. All we are able to glimpse is its TAIL....a scaley rat's TAIL as long as an elephant's trunk!!

DINING ROOM

ALEX and BUDDY stumble into the dark DINING ROOM.

A stern-faced MAN seated at the TABLE looks up from a meal and regards them with disinterest.

ALEX is about to warn the MAN when BUDDY suddenly yanks on his sleeve.

BUDDY

That's my Dad....he won't help us.

MAN

The little bastard's got a point there.

The MAN goes back to his meal. ALEX and BUDDY hurry on to other parts of the HOUSE.

STAIRWAY

ALEX and BUDDY leave the DINING ROOM and start up a tall spiral STAIRCASE.

From the DINING ROOM behind them comes the MAN's terrifying scream. ALEX and BUDDY stop and whirl around. The RAT MAN has come upon BUDDY's FATHER.

ALEX and BUDDY are frozen as they listen to the screams. The sound of the TABLE being knocked aside....then a gnashing, rending, chewing sound....and the sound of appendages being torn from the body.

ALEX looks at BUDDY. There is a faint smile on the BOY's face.

Suddenly....the gnashing subsides....and there is SILENCE.

From their POV we look down at the bottom of the STAIRS as the RATMAN's SHADOW is projected through the DINING

ROOM doorway and onto the FLOOR at the bottom of the STAIRWAY.

The monster is finished with Dad and is coming after them again.

ALEX and BUDDY start clambering up the STAIRS again. But since these are dream STAIRS they appear to be endless!

From behind them as they climb come the sounds of the RAT MAN slavering in pursuit....the sound of his clawed feet on the wooden STAIRS....

ALEX looks back for a second.

The RAT MAN's yellow eyes blaze out of the darkness behind them. The monster is gaining!

TOP OF STAIRS

Exhausted, ALEX and BUDDY reach the top and find themselves facing down a long narrow CORRIDOR.

CORRIDOR

ALEX grabs BUDDY and they run down the CORRIDOR.

It is illuminated by faint and flickering overhead LIGHT-BULBS which cause an eerie strobe effect.

BUDDY

I can't run no more....

ALEX

You've got to!

BUDDY suddenly trips and falls down.

ALEX bends down and scoops the BOY up in his arms. He pauses....turns and looks back down the CORRIDOR.

No sign of the RAT MAN....only the sputtering sound of the overhead LIGHTS.

ALEX

It's okay, Buddy....he's gone.

At which point the RAT MAN lunges out of the darkness and pounces on ALEX and the BOY.

DIFFERENT ANGLES / QUICK CUTS

A confusing flurry of action as they struggle.

With the lights flickering madly it is difficult to make the RAT MAN out. He is bigger than ALEX, though, and wears clothes.

However, we do not see his face....only the back of his furry rodent head....his ears....his clawed hands and feet....his bared ugly fangs....

The RAT MAN grabs BUDDY away and whips ALEX across the face with his wicked-looking TAIL. ALEX falls to the floor....momentarily stunned.

END OF CORRIDOR

ALEX staggers to his feet.

The RAT MAN carries the screaming BOY through an open DOOR at the end of the CORRIDOR.

ALEX runs after them but is too late....the heavy DOOR is slammed in his face.

DOOR

We hear BUDDY's screams of horror on the other side. ALEX throws his weight against the DOOR but it is useless.

ALEX

(trying to be heard
above the screams)

Wake up, Buddy! Wake up!!

Can't be heard.

ALEX looks down and sees....a rivulet of BLOOD seeping under the DOOR from the other side.

We hear screaming....and scuffling....then....the end of the RAT MAN's tail happens to switch under the crack at the bottom of the DOOR.

ALEX grabs the end of the tail with both hands and yanks hard. Something crashes against the DOOR on the other side. ALEX yanks and yanks again and again....harder and harder....

Suddenly there is a subhuman scream from the other side as the TAIL comes off in ALEX's hands!!

ALEX backs away in disbelief....staring at the bloody TAIL in his hands.

The RAT MAN is screaming with pain and anger on the other side.

Above the din....we hear BUDDY crying out:

BUDDY'S VOICE

Alex!!

ALEX

Buddy....for god's sake wake up!! You're having a dream!!

ANGLE ON THE DOOR

As it splinters in half and the RAT MAN crashes throughall we see are its RAZOR SHARP TEETH coming right at us....

ALEX

(screaming)

Buddy wake up!!!

QUICK CUT TO

ALEX

in mid-scream....sitting up with a jolt....popping the electrodes from his head.

DREAM CHAMBER

As ALEX jumps off the reclining CHAIR and knocks aside TWO AIDES who try to restrain him.

He runs to the nearby CHAIR where BUDDY has awakened screaming with fear....and grabs the BOY in his arms.

ALEX

It's okay, Buddy....the Rat Man's gone....

BUDDY clutches to ALEX tightly and begins to sob, his small frame shuddering.

NOVOTNY and JANE come into the CHAMBER.

ALEX continues to hold the BOY. His crying begins to subside.

ALEX

You won't see him again....
I promise.

MORE

ALEX

(continued;
after a beat)

He won't be in your dreams
anymore.

We see the terror in ALEX's face as he looks up at JANE
and NOVOTNY.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / LOUNGE / NIGHT / CLOSE ON TV SET

The evening news is on.

NEWSMAN

....even Presidents it seems
are not exempt from the flu.
The President has retired for
a few days to his Virginia
farm to rest and recuperate.

(a beat)

Finally....a tragic note.
Best-selling author Charles
Prince was found brutally
stabbed to death in a hotel
near Carlton, Connecticut.
The Murder, police report,
was similar to a fictional
one described by Prince in
his horror novel "Hatchet Man".

PATIENTS and STAFF are playing cards....sitting around
....reading....some watching the TV.

We discover ALEX off at a TABLE by himself....too far
away to have heard the news.

He is making a rough sketch of the RAT MAN....still ap-
pears shaken by his ordeal.

TOMMY RAY happens by and peers over his shoulder.

TOMMY RAY

What're you? A cartoonist?

ALEX

Huh? No....

(a beat)

I met this thing in a kid's
nightmare.

TOMMY RAY

(interested)

Yeah? That?

ALEX

Scared the piss out of me.

He wads up the SKETCH and tosses it into a WASTECAN.

ALEX

Good thing the kid woke up
when he did or I might be
spending time in a rubber
room.

TOMMY RAY

Really got ya, huh?

ALEX nods....gets up and leaves the LOUNGE.

TOMMY RAY dips into the WASTECAN and retrieves the crum-
pled SKETCH. He unfolds it....and studies it.

INT. / CORRIDOR

ALEX wanders aimlessly down one of the dark upper floor
CORRIDORS.

He spots a light coming through the open doorway of
JANE's OFFICE.

INT. / JANE'S OFFICE

ALEX appears in the doorway.

JANE is asleep at her DESK.

ALEX approaches and stands over her....admiring her
beauty.

After a moment....he sits down in a nearby CHAIR.

We move in close on ALEX as he shuts his eyes and puts
a hand to his temple. He begins to concentrate....
starts a series of breaths.

INTERCUTTING BETWEEN

JANE's peaceful sleeping face....and ALEX's face which
has begun a mask of intense concentration.

CUT TO

DARKNESS

The swirling VOID....as ALEX attempts to enter JANE's
sleep. We hear voices....flashes of light....are bom-
barded with colors and shapes....

CLOSE ON ALEX

As he opens his eyes....and blinks.

INT. / DREAM CHAMBER

JANE's dream takes place inside the darkened DREAM CHAMBER.

ALEX is surprised to find himself standing in the middle of the ROOM....totally naked.

He is equally surprised to discover JANE standing just a few feet away....also naked. The look in her eyes is impossible to misinterpret.

Without a word....ALEX and JANE move together and KISS. Their hands begin to explore one another's bodies.

ALEX lowers JANE to the carpeted FLOOR and they begin to make love....slowly, tenderly at first....then eagerly, passionately.

The lovemaking builds to an incredible climax.

As it arrives it is their own cries of ecstasy that begin to awaken them and return them to:

THE SWIRLING VOID

As JANE's OFFICE begins to come into focus....

CUT TO

INT. / JANE'S OFFICE

JANE lifts her head from the DESK and gapes at ALEX in the nearby CHAIR as he opens his eyes.

JANE....flabbergasted....cannot speak. She jumps up and runs from the ROOM.

ALEX

Jane! Wait a minute!

He jumps up and gives chase.

INT. / CORRIDOR

JANE is nearly to the STAIRS when ALEX catches up and grabs her by the arm....turns her around.

JANE
How dare you do that to me!

ALEX
All right....I admit it....
it was sort of a dirty trick.
(slightest beat)
But Jane....it was your dream.

JANE
(flustered)
I take my job very....

ALEX
(interrupting)
Seriously. Jane....there was
nothing wrong about it....
nothing to be embarassed about.

JANE
Nothing to be embarassed
about?! I have never gotten
involved with a patient or
co-worker....

ALEX
But, Jane....we didn't really
do anything.
(slightest beat)
It was just a dream.

Still upset....JANE pulls away and starts down the
STAIRS.

ALEX
Jane!!

She stops and looks back.

ALEX
All right....if you don't want
to deal with that, deal with
this....
(slightest beat)
I entered your dream without
any hook-up or help. I did
it totally on my own.

A pause. Amazement creeps over JANE's face as she real-
izes this to be true. She breaks into a wide grin.

JANE
You did....

JANE starts back up the STAIRS again....gaping at him....
but this time for different reasons.

JANE
You really did it.

ALEX smiles and nods.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / NOVOTNY'S OFFICE / DAY

Bright and early the next morning....ALEX and JANE are
in NOVOTNY's office....relating the experience of the
dream as NOVOTNY listens.

The wheels of his TAPE RECORDER turn behind him.

JANE is speaking. We notice that ALEX is looking a
bit betrayed. He'd like it a lot more if JANE wasn't
taking it so much like the breakthrough that it is.

ALEX gets up and wanders around the ROOM.

NOVOTNY
Please believe me when I tell
you that the grin on my face
has nothing to do with the
more pornographic passages
of your dream link....
(slightest beat;
excited)
I'm grinning because you've
really done it, Alex....
you've really busted through!

ALEX
(quietly)
I don't know if I could do
it again.

NOVOTNY
Why not?

ALEX
(looks at JANE)
I think it was just a one
time thing.

JANE does not meet his gaze.

ALEX turns away and stares out the WINDOW. Something
below catches his attention.

EXT. / CAMPUS BELOW / DAY / ALEX'S POV

BOB BLAIR and TOMMY RAY chat on the SIDEWALK below.
We cannot hear what they are saying.

BLAIR makes a remark and TOMMY RAY grins.

SMASH CUT TOEXT. / HURLBUT HALL / NIGHT

All the lights are off except one in ALEX'S ROOM on
the top floor.

We can hear strains of VIOLIN MUSIC....

INT. / ALEX'S ROOM

He stops playing and crosses the ROOM in response to
several loud RAPS on the DOOR.

He opens the DOOR and TOMMY RAY comes into the ROOM
....wearing his silly trenchcoat....and looking sur-
lier than usual.

TOMMY RAY

Came by to see ya.

ALEX

Come on in. Had a few
drinks, huh?

TOMMY RAY reaches out and takes the VIOLIN from ALEX'S
hand. He studies it for a moment....then:

TOMMY RAY

You play music with this
thing?

ALEX

No, I play golf with it.
(slightest beat)
What's on your mind?

TOMMY RAY

(after a beat)
You're real smooth, huh? I
mean if somebody twisted your
arm you'd probably have to
admit you're a real neat guy.

TOMMY RAY....still holding the VIOLIN....begins to
pace around in an agitated state....growing more
uptight by the second.

TOMMY RAY
 Know what I'd like to do?
 I'd like to kick the shit
 outta you.

ALEX
 I get it. You want to start
 a fight.

TOMMY RAY
 I heard you can do it with-
 out the hook-up, too.

ALEX
 Now there's two of us.

TOMMY RAY stops pacing....fixes ALEX with a look:

TOMMY RAY
 Yeah. Now there's two of
 us.

ALEX
 Is that so hard to handle?

TOMMY RAY flops down on the BED....turns the VIOLIN
 over and over in his hands.

TOMMY RAY
 (finally)
 You ever hear where Doc No-
 votny found me?
 (slightest beat)
 I was in a psych hospital.

TOMMY RAY looks up to see if this information in any
 way scares ALEX. It doesn't.

ALEX
 Why don't you go home?

TOMMY RAY
 Why don't I wrap this fid-
 dle around your head?

TOMMY RAY stands up....he and ALEX face each other
 down for a long moment.

Then....TOMMY RAY breaks into his wide foolish grin.
 He hands the VIOLIN to ALEX.

TOMMY RAY
 Here ya go. No harm done.

He crosses to the DOOR....pauses and turns around:

TOMMY RAY

Pleasant dreams....

ALEX closes the DOOR behind him....shakes his head and picks up his VIOLIN....begins to play something.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / CORRIDOR / DAY

ALEX is strolling down one of the basement CORRIDORS.... killing time, sipping on a cup of coffee. He says hello to a couple of passing TECH AIDES.

Suddenly....an AIDE comes running past him and disappears around the corner.

A moment later....BABCOCK rushes past, headed in the same direction.

ALEX

Hey, Roy....

INT. / MONITORING ROOM

ALEX follows BABCOCK into the MONITORING ROOM where all hell has broken loose.

ALEX looks through the GLASS into:

THE DREAM CHAMBER

TECH AIDES and STAFF are scurrying everywhere.

TOMMY RAY....wired and seated in one of the reclining CHAIRS....has his knees up against his chest and his arms wrapped around them. He is rocking slightly back and forth....looking dazed.

Nearby....at the second reclining CHAIR....NOVOTNY and SEVERAL STAFF are frantically giving a MAN in the dreamer's chair CPR.

JANE has already slipped an oxygen MASK over the MAN's face.

ALEX'S VOICE

What happened?

BABCOCK'S VOICE

Mr. Matusik had a heart attack....right in the middle of a dream link with Tommy.

NOVOTNY backs away from MATUSIK. It's hopeless....the MAN is dead.

JANE removes the oxygen MASK from MATUSIK....and begins to cry.

CLOSE ON TOMMY RAY

All alone while the action goes on nearby. We move in on his face and notice the trace of....a smile!

CLOSE ON ALEX

Looking through the GLASS....mystified by TOMMY RAY's inappropriate reaction to the tragedy.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / HURLBUT CAFETERIA / DAY

TOMMY RAY is seated at a TABLE by himself....wolfing down his dinner.

In the b.g. we see ALEX help himself to a cup of coffee and approach.

TOMMY RAY continues to eat....as ALEX's shadow falls over him.

ALEX
Too bad about earlier.

TOMMY RAY looks up and grins.

TOMMY RAY
Alex baby. What'd you say?

ALEX
(sitting)
Mr. Matusik....

TOMMY RAY takes a swig of COKE.

TOMMY RAY
Oh yeah. That.
(shrugs)
Guy had a bum ticker.

ALEX
You don't seem too shaken up....

TOMMY RAY
Just one of those things.
Even Novotny said so.

TOMMY RAY picks up a piece of PIE with his hand. ALEX grabs him by the wrist....prevents him from taking a bite.

The two of them regard each other coolly.

TOMMY RAY
(quietly)

Leggo.

(a beat)

Leggo or you're gonna draw
back a stump.

ALEX
The man died, Tommy....

TOMMY RAY
Everybody dies.

ALEX releases his hand. TOMMY RAY takes a big bite of PIE and slurps down the rest of his coffee.

ALEX
(after a pause)
You stink.

Disgusted, ALEX gets up and leaves the CAFETERIA.

TOMMY RAY licks his fingers....picks up ALEX's untouched cup of coffee....pours in some sugar....and drinks it down.

CUT TO

EXT. / VIRGINIA ESTATE / DAY / ESTABLISHING

A huge old Southern plantation-like ESTATE. The sound of a HELICOPTER....

EXT. / FRONT PORCH OF HOUSE

The PRESIDENT sits in a ROCKER....trying to read the newspaper. He can't seem to keep his mind on it....he notices that his hand is quivering.

In the near distance a HELICTPTER sets down on a LANDING PAD. BOB BLAIR emerges and crosses the lawn toward the HOUSE.

The HELICOPTER takes off and flies away.

BLAIR joins the PRESIDENT on the PORCH. They shake hands and exchange greetings.

BLAIR drops into a GLIDER and the PRESIDENT sits back down in his ROCKER.

BLAIR
 (after a beat)
 How're you feeling, sir?

PRESIDENT
 In the pink, Bob. How about
 yourself?

BLAIR
 Can't complain.

Long SILENCE. The PRESIDENT nods in the direction of the
 close-by PASTURES and FIELDS.

PRESIDENT
 Beautiful view.
 (a beat)
 I was born here, you know.
 Right here in this house.

BLAIR
 (bluntly)
 Tell me about the night-
 mares.

The PRESIDENT looks at him....frightened:

PRESIDENT
 Everybody has bad dreams now
 and then....

BLAIR
 Now and then, John.
 (slightest beat)
 But you've been having them
 a lot. Every night to be
 precise.

The PRESIDENT does not reply immediately. When he does
 it is with a quiver in his voice:

PRESIDENT
 I've been having them ever
 since Mary died....guilt
 dreams, I guess....
 (a beat)
 In every one....something
 goes wrong....I cause the
 destruction of the world....
 (breaks off;
 then)
 They're terrible....I think
 I'm losing my mind.

BLAIR

I seriously doubt that.

PRESIDENT

They get worse every time.
I haven't slept in weeks....
I'm afraid to go to sleep.

(a beat)

It's beginning to affect my
job....that's why you're
here, isn't it?

BLAIR

I'm here to help.

PRESIDENT

I don't know how long we
can keep up this bullshit
about the flu....sooner or
later it's going to leak....
(hollow laugh)

The President's cracking up.

BLAIR

I want you to trust me, John.

PRESIDENT

(pathetic)

Please, Bob....please help
me.

BLAIR

There's a place I know....

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / HURLBUT CORRIDOR / DAY

JANE tries to catch up with ALEX who bursts out of the
DREAM CHAMBER and stridges angrily down the CORRIDOR.

JANE

Alex, what's the matter?
What happened?

Up ahead....the DOOR to another ROOM opens and TOMMY RAY
steps out....yawning. ALEX grabs him by the shirtfront
and pins him up against the WALL.

ALEX

Sonovabitch....

TOMMY RAY regards him with a tight-lipped smile.

TOMMY RAY
 (quietly)
 Get your scummy hands offa
 me, Alex....

JANE arrives.

ALEX
 (to JANE)
 The little bastard sneaked
 into the dream....

JANE
 What?

ALEX
 The dream I was just linking
 into back there....right in
 the middle of it I catch
 sight of him sneaking around
 in the background....spying
 on me!

JANE pries ALEX away:

JANE
 That's enough, Alex. Let
 Tommy go.

TOMMY RAY
 He's fuckin' flipped out.

JANE
 (to ALEX)
 If Tommy Ray was in the
 dream it was probably be-
 cause Mr. Talmadge dreamed
 he was in it.

TOMMY RAY
 Yeah, asswipe. What would I
 want with your lousy dream
 link?

TOMMY RAY straightens his clothing. The tight-lipped
 smile remains as he walks off down the CORRIDOR.

ALEX
 (calls after him)
 Fuck off, you subnormal freak!
 And stay out of my dreams!

JANE
 Alex....

ALEX manages to calm down:

ALEX
You know, I've just about
had it with this goddamn
place....

JANE
What about the agreement
you made?

ALEX
Ask me if I care.

He stalks off down the CORRIDOR. JANE bites her lip and
watches him disappear.

CUT TO

EXT. / HURLBUT HALL / NIGHT

A light burns in NOVOTNY'S OFFICE.

INT. / NOVOTNY'S OFFICE

With only the desk LAMP on....NOVOTNY'S OFFICE takes on
an eerie dimension.

BOB BLAIR sits behind the DESK.

BABCOCK and FINCH are seated on the COUCH.

NOVOTNY paces aimlessly....looks disturbed.

BLAIR
You knew this day would come.

NOVOTNY
(adamant)
But not him.

BLAIR
I started out trying to save
the President....but now I'm
convinced it's more important
to save the country.

NOVOTNY
Isn't there a possibility the
man can be helped?

BLAIR
A possibility. No guarantee.

NOVOTNY sticks his PIPE in his mouth....chews on it.

BLAIR

There's also no time for that.

(a beat)

He has to be put away before the public gets wise. The press already knows something's wrong. They think it's medical....which we can work to our advantage.

(a beat)

We'll bring him in to undergo some tests....

NOVOTNY

(sick)

Isn't there some other way you can do this?

BLAIR

Several other ways. I just happen to think this way will work best.

NOVOTNY

I don't know if I can live with myself.

BLAIR

He's weak....he can't do his job. He has to be put away.

NOVOTNY

But....

BLAIR

(interrupting)

There are no butts, Milt.

BLAIR gets up and stretches his legs....goes to the WINDOW and looks out at the dark CAMPUS.

BLAIR

It's very simple. A dead President is better than a mad one.

(looks at

NOVOTNY)

It's out of your hands, Milt.

NOVOTNY drops into his CHAIR....puts his head in his hands. BLAIR looks at NOVOTNY....then looks over at BABCOCK and FINCH.

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. / SIDE OF HURLBUT HALL / DAY

ALEX amuses himself by throwing a rubber BALL against the side of the BUILDING and catching it on the rebound.

He hauls off and hurls it with all his might. The BALL bounces high into the air.

ALEX backs up....reaches high. Suddenly....another hand comes into frame and snags the BALL.

ALEX turns and finds himself facing BLAIR. BLAIR smiles and tosses the BALL to him.

BLAIR

Time we chatted.

EXT. / CAMPUS NATURE TRAIL

BLAIR and ALEX stroll down one of the nature TRAILS. Autumn is apparent everywhere. Leaves blow about them and there is a chill in the air.

BLAIR

There are some things you should know....and it's time that you knew them.

(a beat)

Remember Mr. Matusik? The man who died during the dream link with Tommy Ray?

ALEX

Yeah. That was too bad.

BLAIR

Tommy Ray killed him.

ALEX stops abruptly. He regards BLAIR who continues to smile at him.

ALEX

Say that again.

BLAIR

Tommy Ray went into Mr. Matusik's dream and killed him.

ALEX

Matusik died of a massive coronary....

BLAIR

Caused by Tommy Ray.

A SILENCE. ALEX can't believe he's hearing this.

ALEX
You're saying that Tommy
Ray murdered Matusik?
(stunned)

Why?!

BLAIR
Because I told him to.

ALEX
(after a beat)
Why would you do that?

BLAIR
As an experiment....to see
if it could be done.
(slightest beat)
What do you think this pro-
ject is all about anyway?

ALEX
Novotny said....

BLAIR
(interrupting)
Novotny lied.

BLAIR resumes walking. ALEX lags a few steps behind,
trying to put it all together.

ALEX
I met a guy in the Village
one night....a writer....

BLAIR
(nods)
The late Charlie Prince.
(a beat)
Alex....this project hasn't
got shit to do with "psych-
iatric breakthroughs" and
"dream clarification".
(a beat)
We can steal secrets with
this technique....and most
importantly....we can kill
with it.

(quickly)
And before you start getting
all bent out of shape about
it....let me also tell you
that it's government sanctioned.

They walk on without speaking for a moment....then:

BLAIR

Don't kid yourself, Alex.
You're part of it. You and
Tommy Ray are the vanguard.

ALEX stops:

ALEX

Who the hell are you?

BLAIR

I work for your govern-
ment.

(smiling)

In various capacities.

(a beat)

Listen to me, Alex....

BLAIR puts a hand on ALEX's shoulder. ALEX pulls away.

BLAIR

You're a very bright guy.
You've mastered an amazing
technique. Surely you can
see the possibilities....

The confusion is leaving ALEX and being replaced with
an increasing anger. BLAIR, however, remains calm and
cool.

BLAIR

The old wives tale turns out
to be true, Alex. When you
dream that you die....you
die in life at the same instant.

(a beat)

Tommy Ray found that out for
me.

(slightest beat)

During his dream link with
Matusik, Tommy Ray went after
the old man with a knife....
a dream knife. The shock to
Matusik's system caused a
coronary....and he died.

BLAIR smiles at ALEX:

BLAIR

Do you realize what that means?

ALEX does not reply.

BLAIR

It means you can go into
your enemy's dream....kill
him and make it look like
the poor bastard died in
his sleep.

BLAIR regards ALEX with a triumphant expression.

ALEX

(after a beat)

It sucks, Blair.

BLAIR

The only question on my mind
is whether or not you'll
cooperate now that you know.
I never had any doubts about
Tommy Ray....

ALEX

Why should you? He's a
fucking psychopath.

BLAIR

But you, Alex....I've got a
whole truckload of doubt
about you.

Neither speaks. A strong wind comes up rustling the TREE
braches overhead.

BLAIR

(finally)

Are you going to try to fuck
me, Alex?

ALEX

Pull your pants down, let's
find out.

BLAIR

Think over what we've talked
about.

ALEX

I don't have to think it over.

BLAIR

(a threat)

You're already up to your eye-
balls. We can coerce you.

A pause. ALEX gives BLAIR his own smile back:

ALEX
 What if I went into your
 dream, Blair? What if I
 went into your dream and
 did a number on you?

BLAIR
 (after a beat)
 You don't have it in you,
 Alex.

(a beat)
 That's why I wanted to talk
 to you....to find that out.

ALEX turns abruptly and stalks back up the TRAIL the way they came.

BLAIR watches him go. If BLAIR is worried, he does not show it.

ANOTHER PART OF TRAIL

ALEX is really pissed off....feels betrayed and used.... disgusted by the awful truth behind the project.

He rounds a bend in the TRAIL and spies BABCOCK and FINCH coming along the way. It occurs to him that they are coming for him.

Before they see him....ALEX ducks into the deep FOLIAGE along the TRAIL.

WOODS

ALEX races through the dense WOODS....headed back toward CAMPUS and HURLBUT HALL.

BACK ON NATURE TRAIL

BABCOCK and FINCH round a bend and come face to face with BLAIR....who is surprised:

BLAIR
 Where is he?!

BABCOCK and FINCH exchange looks. He's slipped them!

CAMPUS

ALEX emerges from the WOODS and head cross-campus at a fast clip.

CUT TO

INT. / NOVOTNY'S OFFICE

NOVOTNY is marking TAPES when ALEX bursts into the ROOM.

NOVOTNY
Alex....what's wrong?

ALEX
Blair told me everything!

NOVOTNY blanches. Shamed and embarrassed, he is unable to meet ALEX's accusing gaze.

NOVOTNY
(finally;
quietly)
Alex....you've got to understand the position they had me in....

ALEX grabs him by the lapels of his lab coat.

ALEX
Tommy Ray murdered Matusik!
You let it happen!
(shakes him)
What about Jane? Is she in on this, too?!

NOVOTNY
(shakes his head)
Jane doesn't know a thing.

BLAIR, BABCOCK and FINCH appear in the doorway. ALEX releases NOVOTNY and faces them.

BLAIR
I think we have a problem.

ALEX
What're you gonna do?
(smiling)
Kill me?

NOVOTNY
(to BLAIR)
You agreed to leave Alex out of this shit!

BABCOCK and FINCH approach ALEX....he begins to back up.

BLAIR
He's a risk.

ALEX
He's leaving!

ALEX turns and crashes through the WINDOW.

EXT. / LAWN OUTSIDE

ALEX lands a floor below on the GRASS....unhurt. He picks himself up and runs to the DRIVE where a STAFF MEMBER is getting into his CAR to go home.

ALEX grabs the KEYS from the STAFF MEMBER....pushes him aside, slides behind the wheel, starts the MOTOR and peels out....spewing gravel.

INT. / HURLBUT CORRIDOR

BLAIR strides purposefully down a CORRIDOR flanked by BABCOCK and FINCH.

BLAIR

I want Alex Gardner taken out of the picture.

BABCOCK

You want the police on this?

BLAIR

No. No police.

(a beat)

He'll probably go back to the city.

(slightest beat)

Contact our friend who makes it look like a ritual thing.

BABCOCK nods.

BLAIR

(with meaning)

And no fuckups.

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. / ALEX'S BUILDING / NEW YORK CITY / DAY

Against the gray sky we see HARRY the doorman out frontwhistling a tune.

INT. / HALLWAY OUTSIDE ALEX'S APARTMENT

A scroungy-looking YOUNG MAN gets off the ELEVATOR and comes down the CORRIDOR. He is in his early twentiesbearded, long wild hair. He carries a shopping bag.

When he reaches ALEX's DOOR he stops....reaches into the shopping bag and pulls out a sawed-off double-barrelled SHOTGUN.

He breaks the SHOTGUN open and loads both barrells. Then he takes a small CUSHION out of the bag.

The DOOR, he observes, is slightly ajar. He kicks it open with his foot.

INT. / ALEX'S APARTMENT

The DOOR flies open....partially illuminating the dark LIVING ROOM. A FIGURE jumps off the COUCH in surprise.

The scroungy YOUNG MAN sticks the CUSHION in front of the SHOTGUN and fires both barrells.

The blast hits the FIGURE square in the face and propels him backwards. He hits the WALL and slides to the FLOORleaving a bloody smear behind.

The scroungy YOUNG MAN walks over to the corpse....bends down and dips his finger in the blood. Straightening up he scrawls the word 'PIG' on the WALL.

Then he turns and leaves.

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. / STREET IN FRONT OF ALEX'S BUILDING / DAY / CLOSE ON FLASHING POLICE CAR LIGHT

Pulling back to reveal the parked POLICE CAR and SEVERAL OTHERS in front of the BUILDING where a CROWD has formed half an hour later.

We see HARRY the doorman to one side as a COVERED BODY is brought out on a STRETCHER.

ALEX'S VOICE

Harry....

HARRY turns in response to the voice and nearly faints when he sees....

ALEX making his way through the CROWD.

HARRY

Mr. Gardner....we thought it was you....

ALEX

Thought who was me?

HARRY

(indicating)

Him.

CLOSE ON CORPSE / ALEX'S POV

One of the arms is exposed....the SUIT is unmistakable.

ALEX'S VOICE

Stedenko....

HARRY'S VOICE

His head was mostly gone....
and he didn't have no I.D.

BACK TO ALEX AND HARRY

ALEX thinks for a split-second....then:

ALEX

Harry, don't say otherwise
to the cops. Right now
I'm better off dead.

HARRY

Sure, Mr. Gardner. What-
ever you want.

Uncomfortable with the gnawing realization that he could
be the corpse....ALEX slips away through the CROWD.

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. / EAST VILLAGE / DAY

ALEX hops out of a TAXI and enters LINDY'S BUILDING.

INT. / LINDY'S APARTMENT

RAGS....curled up in a CHAIR....responds to ALEX's RAP on
the DOOR.

He sits up and barks.

ALEX'S VOICE

Smart dog!

LINDY comes out of another ROOM....tying her BATHROBE
sash. She opens the DOOR and ALEX steps in.

LINDY

(surprised)

Alex....

ALEX

Hiya.

He gives her a KISS. RAGS bounds across the ROOM and
jumps into ALEX's arms.

ALEX

Hi, boy. Did you miss me?
Any cats in this neighborhood?

Just then....a MAN's voice calls out from elsewhere in
the APARTMENT:

MAN'S VOICE

Who is it, babe?

ALEX reacts with surprise. LINDY lowers her head.

MAN'S VOICE

It's lonely in here!

ALEX

(managing a
smile)

Let me guess. Your brother
from Omaha?

LINDY

I'm sorry....

ALEX

Forget it, Lindy. I haven't
got time to get steamed.

(slightest beat)

Thanks for taking care of
Rags. I appreciate it.

(to RAGS)

Got everything? Toothbrush?
Underwear?

LINDY

Bye, Rags....

She pets RAGS goodbye. Then....he and ALEX leave. LINDY
closes the DOOR and leans her back against it.

MAN'S VOICE

Who was it, babe?

LINDY

None of your fucking business!

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / LIMOUSINE BACKSEAT / DAY

BLAIR is sitting next to the PRESIDENT....who is looking
troubled and tired.

BLAIR

We'll run a series of tests to determine if the problem is neurological.

(slightest beat)

And don't worry....these people are the best.

PRESIDENT

I hope they can help me.

BLAIR

Don't worry, John. I feel confident your troubles will soon be over.

BLAIR gives the PRESIDENT a reassuring smile. The PRESIDENT manages a weak one in return.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / JANE'S OFFICE / DAY

JANE answers her ringing PHONE.

JANE

DeVries.

ALEX'S VOICE

Jane....

JANE

Alex, where are you? Somebody told me you broke a window and stole a car....

INTERCUTTING WITH

ALEX IN A PHONE BOOTH IN MANHATTAN

ALEX

Can you get out of there and meet me?

JANE

I guess so....

ALEX

I'll meet you at the Village Pub in say....two hours.

JANE

Alex, what's going on?

ALEX
 Don't tell anyone you're
 meeting me. Not even
 Novotny.

JANE'S OFFICE

We hear ALEX hang up.

JANE hangs up and starts to leave the OFFICE when something outside the WINDOW catches her attention.

EXT. / DRIVE BELOW / JANE'S POV

BABCOCK and FINCH wait in the DRIVE as a long black LIMOUSINE pulls up.

Its doors open and THREE DARK-SUITED MEN....SECRET SERVICE AGENTS....step out.

A moment later....BOB BLAIR and the PRESIDENT emerge and enter the BUILDING.

JANE

reacts with surprise and confusion.

CUT TO

INT. / CARMINE'S TAXI / DAY

CARMINE is yakking away about the YANKEES as he drives ALEX and RAGS to Carlton, Connecticut.

ALEX looks tense.

CUT TO

INT. / DORM ROOM / HURLBUT HALL / DAY

BLAIR brings the PRESIDENT into a specially prepared DORM ROOM on an upper floor. The SECRET SERVICE MEN hover in the b.g.

BLAIR
 It's not the Ritz but it'll
 serve your purpose for the
 short time you're here.

PRESIDENT
 (smiling)
 Like being back in college
 again....

NOVOTNY enters the ROOM.

NOVOTNY
 (friendly)
 And how's our mystery guest?

BLAIR
 (to PRESIDENT)
 John....Milt Novotny.

They shake hands.

PRESIDENT
 How are you? Bob tells me
 you might be able to help
 me with my....problem.

NOVOTNY
 We'll do our best....starting
 tomorrow. For now it's impor-
 tant that you relax and just
 take it easy.

PRESIDENT
 Take it easy? I'm the Presi-
 dent. I'm the one guy who
never gets to take it easy.

A SILENCE. BLAIR takes NOVOTNY aside:

BLAIR
 Where's Tommy Ray?

NOVOTNY
 Don't worry. He's in the
 building.

BLAIR
 Good.
 (slightest beat)
 What's wrong, Milt?

NOVOTNY
 I'm fine, Bob.

He excuse himself from the ROOM.

CUT TO

INT. / CORRIDOR

In the CORRIDOR of another floor JANE runs into BABCOCK.

BABCOCK
 'Night, Jane.

JANE

Roy....

BABCOCK

(stopping)

Yes, Jane?

JANE

What's the President doing here?

BABCOCK hesitates a moment....then:

BABCOCK

It's all pretty hush hush.
I don't know what it's all
about myself.

(slightest beat)

So not a word.

JANE nods and continues down the CORRIDOR.

INT. / NOVOTNY'S OFFICE

JANE arrives only a few moments after NOVOTNY himself
....who is pouring himself a DRINK.

JANE

What're you doing?

NOVOTNY

You'd make a lousy detective,
Jane. Obviously I'm pouring
a drink. The first of many.

JANE

What's going on around here,
Milt? First Alex runs off
....The President of the United
States shows up....and now
you're trying to get drunk.

NOVOTNY

I don't want to talk about
it.

JANE

That's not good enough, Milt.

NOVOTNY

(exploding)

Just get the hell out of here
and leave me alone!!

JANE backs away and goes out the DOOR. NOVOTNY slams it shut behind her.

SMASH CUT TO

EXT. / VILLAGE / NIGHT

An hour or so later.

CARMINE's TAXI pulls up and parks in front of the PUB. ALEX and RAGS get out.

INT. / PUB

ALEX and RAGS make their way through the CROWD of COLLEGE KIDS....and work their way to a BOOTH in the back where JANE is waiting.

Both JANE and ALEX are glad to see each other.

ALEX and RAGS slide into the BOOTH beside her.

ALEX

This is my dog....Rags.

JANE nods and pets RAGS....looks at ALEX with concern:

JANE

What's going on, Alex?

ALEX

(after a beat)

I'll tell you....but don't say anything until I'm finished....

CUT TO

INT. / PRESIDENT'S ROOM / NIGHT

Alone in his darkened ROOM....the PRESIDENT stares out the WINDOW at the dark night SKY.

He shivers.

CUT TO

INT. / NOVOTNY'S OFFICE / NIGHT

A meeting between BLAIR, BABCOCK, FINCH, NOVOTNY....and TOMMY RAY who is seated in NOVOTNY's chair with his feet propped up on the DESK....grinning.

TOMMY RAY

I don't need no hook-up.
All I gotta do is be close.

BLAIR

We're going to use the room
adjacent to his.

(a beat)

How're you feeling, Tommy?

TOMMY RAY

Never better....Bob.

BLAIR looks over at NOVOTNY who appears troubled.

BLAIR

Milt....don't worry. As
far as anyone is concerned
this is all on the up and
up. The President has come
here for some tests. His
daughter knows he's here....
the cabinet knows he's here
....the FBI knows he's here.

NOVOTNY

But what they don't know
is that you mean to assas-
inate him.

BLAIR

(calmly)

Milt....he's going to die
in his sleep. No one will
be surprised....not with
all the stress he's been
undergoing recently.

(a beat)

It's for the best.

NOVOTNY

(suddenly)

I won't go through with it!

A SILENCE.

BLAIR walks over and stands before him.

BLAIR

Milt....we can do it with
you or without you. One
way or the other....it gets
done.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / PUB

ALEX has finished his tale. JANE is stunned to say the least.

He pushes a DRINK in front of her.

ALEX

Better drink this.

She ignores the DRINK and regards him anxiously:

JANE

I don't know if it means anything but Blair's back at Hurlbut right now.... and he brought someone with him.

ALEX

Who?

JANE

The President.

ALEX

What? Of the country?

JANE

(nods)

It's supposed to be a secret. They've got him up in a dorm room on the top floor.

ALEX

(confused)

Why would Blair bring the President?

(slightest beat)

Shit. Wait a minute....

JANE

Milt was very upset....he was drinking and practically threw me out of his office.

ALEX

Where's Tommy Ray?

JANE

He's at Hurlbut, too.

(worried)

Alex, you don't think that they'd....

ALEX

I think with Blair anything
is possible.

JANE

We should call the police.

ALEX

Are you kidding? Bob Blair
doesn't answer to the police
....the police answer to him.

ALEX pulls JANE out of the BOOTH with him. Camera PANS
them through the BAR....RAGS scampering behind them.

ALEX

We've got to go to Hurlbut
ourselves and find out
what's going on.

(a beat)

I hope to hell we're wrong
about this.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / PRESIDENT'S ROOM

The SECRET SERVICE MEN leave the ROOM.

The PRESIDENT....now in his bathrobe and pajamas....is
talking to BLAIR.

BLAIR

Novotny wanted you to take
these.

He hands the PRESIDENT a couple of PILLS.

PRESIDENT

What are they?

BLAIR

A mild sedative....they'll
help you sleep.

PRESIDENT

(frightened)

I'm not so sure I want to
go to sleep.

BLAIR

(reassuring smile)

Doctor's orders.

BLAIR pours him a GLASS of WATER from a CARAFE....and
the PRESIDENT takes the PILLS.

EXT. / CAMPUS / NEAR HURLBUT HALL / NIGHT

CARMINE glides his TAXI over and parks some distance from HURLBUT HALL. ALEX and JANE get out.

ALEX

Rags....stay with Carmine.
(to CARMINE)
Maybe you shouldn't wait....

CARMINE

Take your time. I'll find me a nice ballgame.

And turns on the RADIO.

Camera PANS ALEX and JANE as they approach HURLBUT.... looming against the night SKY.

ALEX

They've probably got a few watchdogs on duty.

JANE

We'll try the loading dock around back.

INT. / BLAIR'S ROOM

The ROOM adjacent to the PRESIDENT's.

TOMMY RAY sits confidently on the BED....the back of his head leaning against the WALL....smoking a CIGARETTE.

BABCOCK is at a nearby DESK. BLAIR is in an ARMCHAIR. They are waiting.

INT. / LOWER CORRIDOR

ALEX and JANE come along a dark CORRIDOR. Sounds of approaching feet drive them into the nearest room handy....the SECLUSION ROOM.

SECLUSION ROOM

ALEX quietly shuts the DOOR. They listen as the footsteps pass by. JANE happens to look off and notice something that makes her gasp.

ALEX turns to look.

The hatch of the ISOLATION TANK is partially open and a limp human hand is sticking out.

ALEX and JANE cautiously approach.

ALEX pulls open the hatch:

JANE

Oh my God....

It's NOVOTNY....clothed and dead....apparently drowned
in the few inches of WATER at the TANK's bottom.

JANE

Alex....they must have
drowned him.

ALEX

Now there's no doubt in
my mind about what they
mean to do.

Footsteps approach and stop outside the DOOR. ALEX
moves away from JANE and secretes himself near the
DOOR.

The DOOR opens and FINCH sticks his head in. ALEX
grabs him by the neck and throws him to the ground.

ALEX lands atop FINCH and pulls a GUN from the man's
shoulder holster before he can....presses the tip of
the GUN against FINCH's forehead.

ALEX

No loud sounds, Larry....or
I'll make a louder one,
understand?

FINCH

Don't be an asshole....

ALEX cocks the trigger and pushes the GUN hard against
FINCH's forehead. FINCH grits his teeth.

ALEX

Blair's sending Tommy Lee
into the President's dream
....AM I RIGHT?!!

FINCH

....yes!

ALEX

How're they doing it, Larry?
The dream chamber?

FINCH

Alex....

ALEX

Tell me, you sonovabitch, or
I'll put your brains on the
ceiling.

FINCH

Tommy Ray is in the room
next to the President's....
when the President falls
asleep....

ALEX

(interrupting)

That's all I have to hear.

(to JANE)

We'll tie this fucker up
and lock him in the tank.

JANE

What're you planning to do?

ALEX

I'm gonna go into the dream
myself and stop Tommy Ray!

PRESIDENT'S ROOM

The ROOM is dark and the PRESIDENT is in BED. Those
sleeping pills have taken effect....the PRESIDENT has
fallen asleep.

BLAIR'S ROOM

TOMMY RAY presses the back of his head against the
WALL that separates the two ROOMS.

TOMMY RAY

He's asleep. Shouldn't
be long now.

He grins with evil anticipation.

CORRIDOR BELOW

One FLOOR down....ALEX and JANE rush down the CORRIDOR.

JANE

We'll use my office. It's
just beneath the room the
President's in. That should
put you close enough to
dream link!

PRESIDENT

His eyelids flutter as he enters REM stage.

TOMMY RAY

Smiling....closes his eyes and begins his breathing.

JANE'S OFFICE

As JANE and ALEX enter....JANE reaches for the light switch.

ALEX

No lights.

(slightest beat)

Lock the door.

BLAIR'S ROOM

BLAIR turns his attention from TOMMY RAY on the BED and addresses BABCOCK:

BLAIR

Is he in yet?

BABCOCK

Not yet....but he's getting there.

JANE'S OFFICE

ALEX clears the DESK with a sweep of his arm and climbs atop it....reaches up and presses the palms of his hands against the CEILING.

JANE

Alex, take your time.
Otherwise....

ALEX

Screw otherwise. I may be too late already.

ALEX closes his eyes and begins his breathing.

PRESIDENT

Full REM stage.

ALEX

Concentrating....perspiration breaking out on his face.

DARKNESS

The swirling, pulsating VOID....the colors....voices....
and then:

SMASH CUT TOALEX

Brightly lit....as he opens his eyes and blinks.

EXT. / RUINS OF NEW YORK CITY / DAY

ALEX finds himself standing atop the RUBBLE of a once-majestic office BUILDING. He has successfully entered the PRESIDENT's recurring nightmare.

ALEX scans the crumbled CITYSCAPE with amazement. It is a stunning vista of destruction. There is no sign of life....only the smouldering of the wreckage.

ALEX starts to work his way down through the rubble in an attempt to reach what appears to be Broadway near Times Square.

Something in the distance suddenly catches his attention.

ALEX'S POV

Several blocks over, the PRESIDENT is running for his life down the middle of a pot-holed STREET....pursued by a pack of ragged, bloody CHILDREN (the ones introduced in the earlier nightmare).

ALEX

spots a rusted SEDAN parked next to the CURB. He opens the DOOR and jumps back in horror as the SKELETON DRIVER tumbles out at his feet.

Undaunted, ALEX shoves the CORPSE aside and slips behind the wheel.

INT. / SEDAN

The KEYS are still in the ignition. ALEX turns them and, surprisingly, the MOTOR kicks over and revs up.

THE PRESIDENT

Running for all he's worth, terrified of the monstrous CHILDREN snapping at his heels and calling after him:

CHILDREN
Help us....please help us....

STREET AHEAD

ALEX screeches the SEDAN to a stop....leans over and pushes open the passenger DOOR for the PRESIDENT.

ALEX
(shouting)

Get in!!

Without hesitation....the PRESIDENT hops in and slams the DOOR shut seconds before the CHILDREN arrive and try to clamber onto the CAR.

INT. / SEDAN

ALEX stomps down on the GAS as the horrid CHILDREN attack the CAR....scrambling onto the HOOD and ROOF....grabbing the DOOR handles.

Most of the CHILDREN manage to stay on board.....some press their bloody faces against the windshield and grin.

ALEX begins to swerve the SEDAN back and forth....

STREET

Finally....all the CHILDREN tumble off the speeding SEDAN.

INT. / SEDAN

The PRESIDENT begins to calm down slightly....he tries to catch his breath.

PRESIDENT
Thanks....thanks a lot.

ALEX
Listen to me. Your life is
in danger.

(a beat)
Bob Blair is trying to kill
you.

PRESIDENT
(confused)
Bob Blair is trying to help
me.

ALEX
He's sent a man named Tommy
Ray Glatman into this dream
to assassinate you.

PRESIDENT
Did you say "dream"?

ALEX
This is a dream. Your dream.

PRESIDENT
What're you talking about?
Who are you?

ALEX
I'm here to help. Look....
all you have to do is wake
up.

PRESIDENT
How do I do that?

ALEX
Try....concentrate.

PRESIDENT
They gave me a sedative.

ALEX
Shit. We'll have to stay
here til it wears off.

EXT. / STREET

As the SEDAN rounds a corner....a scorched-looking TAXI suddenly leaps out of an ALLEY and crashes into the side of them....pushing the SEDAN onto the SIDEWALK and up against a LAMPOST.

INT. / SEDAN

Shaken but unhurt, ALEX and the PRESIDENT turn toward their ATTACKER.

INT. / TAXI

Behind the wheel of the TAXI, grinning malevolently, is TOMMY RAY. He puts the TAXI in reverse and backs up.... intent on ramming them again.

INT. / SEDAN

ALEX stomps down on the GAS. Luckily, the SEDAN is still operable. It speeds away down the SIDEWALK.

ALEX
That's him....Tommy Ray.

EXT. / STREET

TOMMY RAY comes speeding after them in the TAXI.

ALEX does his best to manuever and keep in the lead. The STREET is like an obstacle course full of fallen debris and crater-like potholes.

TOMMY RAY suddenly pulls up alongside them and begins to bash the SEDAN Ben-Hur style.

ALEX suddenly swerves the SEDAN down a convenient ALLEY....successfully ditching the TAXI.

INT. / SEDAN

ALEX and the PRESIDENT breathe a sigh of relief.

EXT. / NEXT STREET OVER

The SEDAN screams out of the ALLEY and starts down the next STREET when it is suddenly confronted by a speeding, on-coming city BUS!

The DRIVER of the BUS is TOMMY RAY!

INT. / SEDAN

ALEX tries to swerve but it's too late.

EXT. / STREET

The BUS hits them head-on and sends the SEDAN flying. It rolls two or three times across the asphalt and comes to a rest upside down.

INT. / SEDAN

Shaken but not badly hurt, ALEX and the PRESIDENT try to crawl out of the wreckage.

Through the shattered WINDSHIELD they can see the BUS back up....and then come charging at them at top speed to finish them off.

EXT. / STREET

ALEX kicks open a DOOR. He and the PRESIDENT scramble out and dive clear just as the BUS plows into the SEDAN and flattens it against a BUILDING.

ALEX and the PRESIDENT try to get a grip on themselves. TOMMY RAY hops out of the BUS and regards them.

TOMMY RAY
 (smiling)
 Hello, Alex. Come here
 often?

ALEX
 You sonovabitch....

TOMMY RAY
 It's a dream, Alex. You can
 do anything you want in here.
 Haven't you figured that out
 yet?

(no reply)
 Guess not.
 (slightest beat)
 I'll show you.

TOMMY RAY walks over to a still-standing LAMP POST.

An amazing moment. TOMMY RAY rips the LAMP POST right out
 of the PAVEMENT and easily lifts it over his head.

ALEX and the PRESIDENT are awe-struck. TOMMY RAY laughs
and hurls the LAMP POST right at them. They are able
 to leap aside in the nick of time as the LAMP POST crashes
 heavily on the ASPHALT.

TOMMY RAY
 You blew it, Alex. All the
 time you spent "observing"
 and "cooperating" in those
 dreams like Novotny told
 you to....all the time you
 were putzing around I was
 learning how to take advan-
 tage in here.

(smiling)
 In this world you're a
 nothing, Alex....and me....
 I'm God.

TOMMY RAY starts toward them. ALEX and the PRESIDENT turn
 and run for it.

TOMMY RAY laughs and calls after them:

TOMMY RAY
 Go on and run! You can't
 hide from me! I'm everywhere!
 Hear me, motherfuckers?!
Everywhere!!

EXT. / BATTERY PARK

ALEX and the PRESIDENT soon find themselves at the PIER amidst the rubble of the CIRCLE LINE.

In the near distance they see the STATEN ISLAND FERRY just beginning to pull away from the PIER.

Without any words between them, ALEX and the PRESIDENT make a mad dash for the departing BOAT....seeing it as their only hope for escape.

STATEN ISLAND FERRY

ALEX and the PRESIDENT leap the gap onto the DECK of the FERRY as it pulls away.

Once on board, they nearly collapse with fatigue.

Looming ahead in the murky distance is the STATUE OF LIBERTY....or what remains of it. The HEAD is missing but the BODY remains as well as the arm extending the TORCH skyward.

It takes the PRESIDENT and ALEX a few seconds to become aware of the fact that they are not alone on the FERRY.

Turning around they see that the BOAT is carrying PASSENGERS....all of whom are dead....horrifying rotting CORPSES of MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN....standing....sitting....frozen.

PRESIDENT

Jesus God....

He and ALEX have to turn away....revulsed.

EXT. / NEW YORK HARBOR / HIGH ANGLE SHOT

We see the FERRY as it chugs along....heading toward the STATUE OF LIBERTY.

DECK / ALEX AND PRESIDENT

The PRESIDENT is leaning against the RAIL....sobbing.

PRESIDENT

I did this....caused it....

ALEX

Bullshit. It's a dream.
(a beat)

I don't know what your problem is....but this is a dream. It's not real. It's all in your mind.

MORE

ALEX
 (continued:
 after a beat)
 We can beat this. All we
 have to do is survive.

PRESIDENT
 You think we can?

ALEX
 I dunno....but we've gotta
 try. Don't freak out on me.

A ROTTING HAND suddenly reaches into frame and taps ALEX
 on the shoulder. ALEX turns in response and screams.

The HAND belongs to....TOMMY RAY....who is laughing crazily....his face half rotted off.

The PRESIDENT recoils in fear....both he and ALEX are
 nearly paralyzed.

TOMMY RAY continues to laugh....and as he does his face
 and hand slowly return to normal.

TOMMY RAY
 It's easy when you know how.
 Oughta try it, Alex.
 (a beat;
 eyes narrowing)
 I'm gonna kill you first,
 Alex. Then I'm gonna
 finish him off.

TOMMY RAY takes a step toward ALEX.

ALEX turns and smashes the GLASS protecting a FIRE AXE.
 He yanks it off the WALL....brandishes it as TOMMY RAY
 approaches.

Suddenly....the FERRY lurches....and the three of them
 fall to the DECK.

EXT. / LIBERTY ISLAND

The FERRY has crashed into the DOCK.

FERRY / DECK

CORPSES come rolling and spilling down the DECK....the
 AXE falls out of ALEX's hands and is grabbed up by TOMMY
 RAY.

ALEX clammers to his feet as TOMMY RAY swings the AXE at

him. ALEX sidesteps and the AXE splinters the RAIL nearby.

ALEX backs away as TOMMY RAY advances on him. His only recourse is to run. He does.

TOMMY RAY addresses the PRESIDENT who is cowering nearby.

TOMMY RAY
(grinning)
I'll be back for you in a
minute, chickenshit.

LIBERTY ISLAND DOCK

ALEX leaps off the FERRY and onto the DOCK. Still carrying the AXE, TOMMY RAY jumps off after him....murder in his eyes.

ALEX's only avenue of escape appears to be the STATUE itself. He runs toward the MAIN DOOR....which are open.... but before he can get to them, he trips on a piece of rubble and goes sprawling.

ALEX clammers to a sitting position and finds TOMMY RAY standing over him....with the AXE....smiling.

TOMMY RAY
I don't need this hatchet.

He tosses the AXE aside.

TOMMY RAY
I know something you're
really scared of.

Right before our eyes TOMMY RAY transforms himself into the terrifying RAT MAN....snarling....saliva dripping from his horrible mouth.

ALEX cannot believe what he sees. He is petrified with terror.

The RAT MAN advances and bares his razor-sharp TEETH!

ALEX
(eyes widening)
No....NO!!

ALEX gets to his feet and runs through the MAIN DOORS of the STATUE.

INT. / STAIRWELL

Once inside....ALEX bursts through the nearest DOOR at hand....and finds himself racing up the narrow ancient stairway that winds its way up the STATUE.

Close behind him is the snarling RAT MAN....his yellow eyes flashing in the dark.

We hear the echoing of feet on the metal stair rungs along with ALEX's terrified breathing....and the RAT MAN's hideous slavering....

ALEX

Sees a DOORWAY at the top. He pushes through it and into blinding daylight.

EXT. / STATUE OF LIBERTY / LONG SHOT

ALEX has emerged onto the tiny BALCONY that runs around the STATUE's TORCH. There is no escape.

TORCH BALCONY

ALEX turns and tries to force the DOOR shut but it is smashed to bits as the RAT MAN crashes through and joins him on the narrow BALCONY.

ALEX backs away....the RAT MAN advances....then suddenly pounces!

The creature lands atop ALEX and rakes his back with his long claws. ALEX screams and tries to fight him off but it's useless.

The RAT MAN opens wide his mouth....

ANGLE

Metal gleams....the FIRE AXE slashes into frame and de-
capitates the RAT MAN in one swift motion!!

ANOTHER ANGLE

The RAT MAN's terrible head drops to ALEX's feet....spurt-
ing blood. The headless body staggers a few surprised
steps and pitches over the RAILING....plummets to the
ground below which it hits with a bone-splintering thud!

SMASH CUT TO

BLAIR'S ROOM

On the BED....TOMMY RAY's body suddenly goes into convulsions. As he dies horribly....eyes popping....BLAIR and BABCOCK look on in shock.

CUT TOSTATUE OF LIBERTY / TORCH

The PRESIDENT, slayer of the RAT MAN, drops the bloody AXE and helps the shaking, bloody ALEX.

ALEX

Thanks....

PRESIDENT

I stopped him.

ALEX

It's over. The nightmare's over.

(a beat)

Now let's get out of here.

The PRESIDENT manages a smile. For the first time he looks confident....as if a weight has been lifted.

CUT TOBLAIR'S ROOM

BLAIR and BABCOCK stand over TOMMY RAY who is sprawled out on the BED.

BABCOCK

(amazed)

He's dead....

BLAIR

What the hell happened?!

PRESIDENT'S ROOM

The PRESIDENT awakens and sits up in BED....sweating profusely. He swings out of BED and heads for the DOOR. Before he can reach it, though, it flies open to reveal BLAIR.

BLAIR

(surprised)

John....

The PRESIDENT pushes BLAIR aside and goes into the HALL.

INT. / JANE'S OFFICE

ALEX comes to on the DESK....sits up with a jolt. JANE throws her arms around him....and they cling tightly to each other.

JANE
I was so worried....

We (and ALEX) notice that she's begun to cry.

ALEX
(exhausted
but happy)
Everything's okay. I stopped
the bastard.

He moves his MOUTH to hers and they KISS.

INT. / CORRIDOR UPSTAIRS

BLAIR tries to catch up with the PRESIDENT.

Several of the PRESIDENT's SECRET SERVICE GUARDS come into the CORRIDOR to investigate.

BLAIR
(calling)
John, are you all right?
What's the matter?

Calmed by the presence of his GUARDS....the PRESIDENT whirls around and faces BLAIR.

PRESIDENT
(no fear)
Stay away from me, Bob.

BLAIR addresses the GUARDS:

BLAIR
Excuse us, gentlemen.

PRESIDENT
No, gentlemen....don't excuse us. In fact, don't leave my side for an instant.

BLAIR
(quietly)
Let's go back to your room.

PRESIDENT
I'm not going anywhere with

MORE

PRESIDENT
 (continued)
 you, you sonovabitch. You
 put that maniac in my dream
 to kill me!

The SECRET SERVICE AGENTS look confused. BLAIR steps
 closer to the PRESIDENT.

BLAIR
 (trace of a smile)
 I wonder if you know how
 crazy that sounds.

PRESIDENT
 You won't get away with
 this.

BLAIR
 (after a beat)
 Oh, yes I will. You can't
 touch me, Mr. President....
 and you know it.

From the PRESIDENT's reaction, we realize that this is
 probably true.

The PRESIDENT moves past BLAIR and addresses the AGENTS:

PRESIDENT
 We're getting out of here
right now.

The AGENTS accompany the PRESIDENT.

BLAIR is left alone in the CORRIDOR....thwarted but not
 defeated. His smile remains.

CUT TO

EXT. / HURLBUT HALL / CAMPUS / NIGHT

ALEX and JANE have sneaked out the back of the BUILDING
 and are headed down the DRIVE toward CARMINE's TAXI.

JANE
 I think we'd better get as
 far away from here as
 possible.

ALEX
 I'm inclined to agree.

ALEX and JANE are suddenly caught in the headlights of a CAR coming from behind....a LIMOUSINE.

The LIMOUSINE swerves in front of them and stops. Before ALEX and JANE can react, two SECRET SERVICE AGENTS have leaped out of the LIMOUSINE.

FIRST AGENT

Just a minute.

The PRESIDENT emerges from the LIMOUSINE....and orders the AGENTS:

PRESIDENT

Go back to the car.

The AGENTS remove themselves. The PRESIDENT takes ALEX aside.

PRESIDENT

(after a beat)

Thankyou.

(slightest beat)

I don't know how you did it but thankyou....for my life.

ALEX

I didn't do it just for you. I'm glad you're okay but Bob Blair tried to kill me, too.

PRESIDENT

Blair is very powerful.... in some ways more powerful than me. And he'll get away with this....

ALEX

(interrupting)

Where does he live?

ALEX and the PRESIDENT regard one another.

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / BUILDING CORRIDOR

We are in the bright CORRIDOR of a high security BUILDING.

BOB BLAIR is chatting with several other officious-looking MEN. They laugh at something he says....a joke presumably.

BLAIR excuses himself and walks down the CORRIDOR....
smiling.

NEXT CORRIDOR

BLAIR rounds the corner and finds ALEX standing there
...waiting for him. They are alone.

BLAIR
(surprised)
How'd you get in here?

ALEX
It was easy.

And with that....ALEX transforms himself into the RAT
MAN right before our eyes!

Before BLAIR can run, the RAT MAN pounces on him. BLAIR
lets out a blood-curdling scream of terror as the RAT
MAN slashes his throat open with a claw and we:

SMASH CUT TO

INT. / BEDROOM / MORNING

BLAIR's scream melds into the sound of an ALARM CLOCK
ringing loudly on a NIGHTSTAND.

A WOMAN sits up in the BED nearby and shuts it off.
Then she turns to the MAN sleeping with his back to
her and nudges him.

WOMAN
Rise and shine, honey.

No response. She shakes him.

WOMAN
Bob....time to get up.

She shakes him harder and his face rolls into frame.

It is BOB BLAIR. His eyes are bulging with terror and
he is dead!

Her frantic screams give way to VIOLIN MUSIC creeping
up on the soundtrack....

CUT TO

EXT. / SHUBERT ALLEY / NIGHT

We discover ALEX happily performing for a large CROWD in SHUBERT ALLEY.

RAGS is seated beside the open VIOLIN CASE as usual.... wagging his tail.

Discerned on the fringe of the CROWD is JANE. She and ALEX exchange smiles as he continues to play passionately.

The tune is "Beautiful Dreamer" and its haunting melody builds on the soundtrack as the camera begins to PULL AWAY from the scene and we:

FADE OUT