

THE FOLLOWING

Written by

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T H E F O L L O W I N G

EXT. CROWDED LONDON STREET - DAY

An endless stream of pedestrians crossing the frame.

Cut to a shot looking through pedestrians and reflections of pedestrians of a Young Man sitting in the window of a coffee shop, looking out at the people walking past.

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

The following is my explanation...  
well, my... my account of... well,  
what happened.

The Young Man is tall and slim, mid- to late twenties, with dark, long, greasy hair and unshaven.

We cut to the Young Man outside, on the street. He is peering ahead as he walks, as if trying to spot a lost friend.

MALE VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'd, ah, been on my own for quite a  
while by then and I'd  
become...lonely...

A wide shot shows the Young Man amidst a bustling Oxford Street crowd.

MALE VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...and bored. Nothing to do all  
day, you see. That's when I began  
shadowing.

OLDER MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Shadowing?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Yeah, shadowing, following. I  
started to follow people.

The young man cuts purposefully through the crowd, in slo-mo.

OLDER MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Who?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Anyone, a stranger, I mean that was  
the whole point; following someone  
completely at random. Anyone who  
wouldn't know who you were.

The Young Man is staring at someone fixedly as he moves in slo-mo. His POV shows us a man's back dodging between other people, always threatening to lose us, still in slo-mo.

OLDER MALE VOICE (V.O.)

And then?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

And then nothing.

We SNAP INTO REAL TIME. The man's back disappears into the crowd and we cease to follow him. The noises of the city come up loud.

The Young Man has come to a virtual standstill. He watches the world washing around him.

OLDER MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Nothing?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Nothing. I'd follow somebody for a while then pick someone else and follow them or go home or whatever.

The Young Man's eyes dart about, watching the people around him. He starts to wander down the road, pulled gently by the flow of pedestrians.

OLDER MALE VOICE (V.O.)

Why did you do it?

MALE VOICE (V.O.)

How can I explain? Your eyes pass over the crowd...

We pan across endless anonymous faces.

MALE VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...and if you let them settle on a person, then that person becomes an individual...

We fix on a face, a woman hurrying along.

MALE VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...just...like...THAT...

SHOCK CUT on the sound of SNAPPING FINGERS at 'THAT' to:

INT. ROOM WITH TABLE - DAY

Close on fingers in front of the Young Man's face. He looks different: hair short, clean shaven, bruised face, a plaster over one eye. Seated opposite is an OLDER MAN.

YOUNG MAN

It just became...irresistible.

The Older Man considers this before replying.

OLDER MAN

(suspicious)

So you followed women?

YOUNG MAN

It wasn't some sex thing. I followed anyone. Just for the sake of it, just to see where they went, what they were doing.

OLDER MAN

You were playing secret agent.

YOUNG MAN

(knows its true, but doesn't like it)

No... I'm a writer- I want to be a writer. I wanted to gather material for characters, you know, to write about them. All I did was follow people- to begin with.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUSY STREET IN THE WEST END - DAY

The Young Man (long hair, unshaven) exits a café and stumbles along the road. His eye is caught by a man passing by in the opposite direction. The man is in his mid-twenties, tall, dark haired wearing a dark suit. He is carrying an overnight bag.

YOUNG MAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I spotted the dangers soon enough.  
I could tell I was hooked and I made up rules.

The Young Man turns about and starts to follow, speeding up so as not to lose the fast-moving Dark Suit.

Dark Suit weaves in and out of other pedestrians, his bag slung over his shoulder, heavy.

YOUNG MAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...I wouldn't let myself follow anyone for too long. I wouldn't follow women after dark, stuff like that, simple things just to keep in all under control.

The Young Man follows, coming up behind Dark Suit as he waits at a crossing. The lights change and they head across the road, the Young Man hanging back slightly.

Dark Suit enters Charing Cross station, the Young Man in pursuit. Dark Suit crosses the station to the left-luggage office where he hands his bag to the attendant behind the counter and takes his ticket. He heads back out of the station. The Young Man follows.

Dark Suit enters a small doorway between two shops. The Young Man hangs around nearby, before walking up to the doorway and examining the doorbells. The bells are for flats up above the shops; most of the names are not marked. He crosses the road and looks up at the windows, but can't see much through any of them. The Young Man shrugs and starts to walk away, but he hears a door open behind him and he glances back to see Dark Suit coming out of a doorway carrying another overnight bag.

YOUNG MAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The most important rule was that even if I found where a person worked or lived, I would never follow the same person twice.

Dark Suit looks about as he comes out on to the pavement and the Young Man is forced to turn back and continue to walk in the direction in which he was already headed. When he reaches the corner, he glances back down the street, but the street is empty. The Young Man looks around thoughtfully before hurrying off around the corner.

The Young Man rushes through the crowded streets, not quite running but faster than we've seen him move before.

The YOUNG MAN rushes into Charing Cross station and stands across from the left-luggage office, waiting breathlessly. Commuters stream across the station, obscuring his view of the office.

Through a gap in the flow of people the Young Man catches a glimpse of Dark Suit. The Young Man moves closer, wading through commuters to get a better look.

He sees Dark Suit hand over his ticket and pick up his first overnight bag.

Dark Suit slings one bag over each shoulder before heading off through the station towards the back entrance on to Hungerford Bridge.

The Young Man follows. They cross the footbridge, trains rumbling past on the right-hand side, the sky darkening.

They pass through the South Bank Centre and head south, entering residential streets as it gets dark. Dark Suit arrives at a small block of flats and lets himself in. The Young Man sees a light come on in a third-floor window. He makes a note of the address, turns and walks away.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

It was the most important rule, so  
it was the one I broke last.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. ROW OF TERRACED TOWNHOUSES - DUSK

The Young Man looks up at a second-floor window. His appearance is dramatically different from the preceding scene: his hair is in a short, ragged near crew-cut, and he now wears an old-fashioned dark suit and tie.

The Young Man walks past the row of houses then doubles back on the opposite side, stopping at a bus stop from which he can see the houses. He reaches into the inside pocket of his jacket and takes out a strip of passport photos. He stares at them, and we see that they are of a young blonde woman, perhaps the same woman who drew the curtains.

One of the front doors opens and the young blonde woman exits. The Young Man glances at the photos in his hand - it is the same young woman.

The Blonde comes out on to the street. She is wearing a long overcoat, a purse under her arm.

The Young Man lets her get slightly ahead before tailing her from the opposite side of the street. The Blonde strides purposefully ahead, not looking around.

As they enter a more crowded West End street, the Young Man allows himself to cross onto the same side and move ever closer.

The Blonde glides through the other pedestrians gracefully and easily behind her the Young Man bobs and weaves to keep her in sight.

EXT. SMALL ENTRANCE TO A BASEMENT BAR/CLUB - DUSK

The Young Man approaches and stops outside. The passport photos are still in his hand. He glances at them as he replaces them in his inside pocket. He looks at the stairs down into the club, looks around, rubbing his face.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. STREET IN SOHO - DAY

The Young Man walks down the street, following a middle-aged bald man. The Young Man has short hair and is wearing a suit and tie. He is wearing sunglasses and his lip looks swollen.

Baldy stops and turns into a doorway.

The Young Man comes up and examines the names by the bells. They are all companies/offices.

He looks around, crosses the road and slips into a cafe.

INT. CAFÉ - DAY

The café is empty apart from a woman on her own reading a book at one of the tables.

The Young Man buys a coffee at the counter and heads over to the table nearest the window. He sips at his coffee and glances out of the window to the building opposite.

He takes his dark glasses off and examines his reflection in the blade of the knife that was sitting on the table. His left eye is horribly bruised and swollen - it looks half-closed. There is a plaster above it, across the eyebrow. His lip is swollen and marked where it has been recently split.

The Young Man looks up and sees that the lone woman is staring at him. He puts his sunglasses back on and we:

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. OUTSIDE A BLOCK OF FLATS IN THE WEST END - DAY

The Young Man stares up at the building, perplexed.

Dark Suit comes out of the building, a sports bag slung over his shoulder. As he walks down the street the Young Man follows, the throng of people washing around them.

Dark Suit dives into a café.

The Young Man comes abreast of it and looks through the window. The café is crowded; Dark Suit has taken a table near the back, facing away from the door. The Young Man looks about, takes a deep breath and pushes open the door to the café.

INT. CAFÉ - DAY

Five or six tables, mostly occupied. Two men behind the counter making the food, one waitress squeezing between the tables.

The Young Man enters. Keeping an eye on Dark Suit's back, the Young Man slides behind a table.

WAITRESS

Yeah?

YOUNG MAN

Coffee, black.

WAITRESS

You're going to take up one of my tables over lunch with just a coffee?

YOUNG MAN

And chips.

He looks up at the waitress; she's still there.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

And an omlette... please.

The Waitress turns and leaves.

The Young Man looks over to Dark Suit. The sports bag rests besides Dark Suit's feet. Dark Suit eats, we can't see what.

The waitress brings the Young Man's food. He plays with it as he considers Dark Suit.

The Young Man gulps at his coffee. Time passes, the other tables change.

Dark Suit gets up, picks up his bag and turns around, moving towards the Young Man.

The Young Man studies his half-eaten omelette intently.

DARK SUIT (O.S.)

Mind if I join you?



The Young Man looks up; Dark Suit is at his elbow, smiling. Dark Suit sits down without waiting for a reply.

DARK SUIT (CONT'D)  
 (matter-of-fact)  
 Who and why?

The Young Man looks confused. The Waitress is at their table.

DARK SUIT (CONT'D)  
 (to Waitress)  
 Another black coffee for me and...  
 (to the Young Man)  
 ... What are you having?

The Young Man shakes his head and starts to murmur negatives. Dark Suit reaches over, picks up the Young Man's empty mug and sniffs it.

DARK SUIT (CONT'D)  
 (to Waitress)  
 And another coffee...  
 (he looks into the mug)  
 ... also black.

The Waitress leaves. Dark Suit stares at the Young Man who is having trouble returning his gaze.

DARK SUIT (CONT'D)  
 You're obviously not a policeman,  
 so who are you and why are you  
 following me?

The Young Man half-smiles as if he has not understood the question, then glances from side to side in an attempt to look uncomprehending.

YOUNG MAN  
 I'm sorry?

DARK SUIT  
 You've been following me all  
 morning... why?

YOUNG MAN  
 Following? I'm sorry but I've  
 absolutely no idea what you're  
 talking about-

DARK SUIT  
 (aggressive)  
 Don't piss me off. Who the fuck are  
 you?

The Young Man can't think of anything to say. An uncomfortable silence broken by the Waitress bringing two coffees.

DARK SUIT (CONT'D)  
 (to Waitress, eyes still  
 on Young Man)  
 Thanks.  
 (to Young Man)  
 Sugar?

The Young Man shakes his head. Dark Suit breaks eye contact to spoon two sugars into his coffee. He stirs it noisily, looking up expectantly, waiting for the Young Man to speak. The Young Man's mouth opens and closes silently several times before he speaks.

YOUNG MAN  
 Look I'm not... I haven't been following you, I just I just saw you with your bag and I thought you looked... interesting.

DARK SUIT  
 What are you, a faggot?

YOUNG MAN  
 No! No, I, I, I, I'm a... Look I saw you on the street and, and you reminded me of someone I went to school with- to tell the truth I thought you were him, so I followed you and came in here- I came in here 'cos I was hungry- but I wanted to see if it was him...

Dark Suit stares at him.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)  
 (fading)  
 ... but it wasn't.

DARK SUIT  
 Why didn't you just ask me when you saw me?

YOUNG MAN  
 I would've been embarrassed.

DARK SUIT  
 (smiling)  
 Not as embarrassed as you are now.

YOUNG MAN  
(laughing nervously)  
No, I suppose not.

Dark Suit sips at his coffee. The Young Man follows suit.

DARK SUIT  
What's your name?

YOUNG MAN  
Bill.

Dark Suit smiles.

DARK SUIT  
Well, 'Bill'... what do you do?

YOUNG MAN  
Actually, I'm kind of-

DARK SUIT  
'Between jobs right now.'

YOUNG MAN  
That's right.

DARK SUIT  
What would you do?

YOUNG MAN  
I don't know.

DARK SUIT  
(smiling)  
Don't be coy, 'Bill'. There must be  
some burning ambition eating away  
at you. You look like some kind of  
starving artist?

YOUNG MAN  
No.

DARK SUIT  
No?

YOUNG MAN  
No.

DARK SUIT  
Painter?

YOUNG MAN  
No.

DARK SUIT  
Photos?

                  YOUNG MAN  
No.

                  DARK SUIT  
Films?

                  YOUNG MAN  
No.

                  DARK SUIT  
Writer?

                  YOUNG MAN  
          (slight pause)  
No.

                  DARK SUIT  
Writer.

                  YOUNG MAN  
NO.

                  DARK SUIT  
But you write?

                  YOUNG MAN  
Not really.

                  DARK SUIT  
But sometimes?

                  YOUNG MAN  
Sometimes, who doesn't?

                  DARK SUIT  
Me.  
          (pause)  
So you're a writer.

                  YOUNG MAN  
I didn't say that. What makes you  
think that I'm a writer anyway?

                  DARK SUIT  
Educated, unemployed  
twentysomething, fancies himself a  
writer... a real leap into the  
unknown.

                  YOUNG MAN  
Well, I'm not a writer.

DARK SUIT  
But you're interested in people.

YOUNG MAN  
Yeah.

DARK SUIT  
This person?

YOUNG MAN  
I suppose -

DARK SUIT  
You haven't even asked my name.

YOUNG MAN  
What's your -

DARK SUIT  
Or what's in my bag.

YOUNG MAN  
Bag?

DARK SUIT  
(gestures at his feet)  
My bag. The one you've been staring  
at.

There is a pause during which Dark Suit stares challengingly at the Young Man, who looks thoughtfully, undecided.

YOUNG MAN  
(sighing)  
What's your name and what's in your  
bag?

Dark Suit smiles, and reaches down for his bag.

DARK SUIT  
(dumps bag on table)  
My name's Cobb. Take a look for  
yourself.

The Young Man pauses, then, eyes on Cobb, he reaches forward and pulls the bag across the table. He unzips it and peers inside.

The Young Man looks puzzled. Cobb grins.

Inside the bag are CDs. Rummaging beneath them the Young Man uncovers some jewelry and a camera. He looks up at Cobb, puzzled.

COBB  
(smiling)  
What were you expecting, drugs?

YOUNG MAN  
They're yours?

COBB  
(laughing)  
They are now.

YOUNG MAN  
Why would you take their old CDs?

COBB  
Easy to grab a load, easy to sell,  
totally untraceable. A good staple.  
The other stuff's more tricky, far  
more unpredictable.

YOUNG MAN  
You don't look like a burglar.

COBB  
Sounds like a compliment.

The Young Man shrugs and smiles, zipping up the bag.

COBB (CONT'D)  
(grinning broadly)  
Interested now?

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO A BASEMENT BAR/CLUB - DUSK

The Blonde approaches, pauses, looking behind herself as if suspicious of being followed. She goes down the stairs into the club.

The Young Man (short hair, clean shaven) approaches the entrance, pauses, uncertain. He looks about, then dives in.

INT. BASEMENT BAR/CLUB - DUSK

Three-sided bar, booths and tables, music.

The Young Man enters. The place is not full. The Blonde is seated at the bar. She watches the Young Man comes in, then looks away, uninterested.

The Young Man approaches the bar, leaning on it several places along from The Blonde, glancing at her out of the corner of his eye. She is oblivious to his presence, as is the bartender, who is on the phone behind the bar. The Young Man sneaks looks at The Blonde whilst tapping the bar, waiting for the bartender to hang up the phone. The Blonde has an elegant profile, as seen from along the bar, but she looks unhappy.

The bartender hangs up the phone, shuffles over and looks enquiringly at the Young Man.

YOUNG MAN

Beer.

The bartender grabs a bottle from the fridge, opens it and sets it down in front of the Young Man. The bartender holds up a glass and raises his eyebrows at the Young Man, who shakes his head and raises the bottle to his lips, taking a sip. The Young Man puts the bottle back on the bar and turns to look at The Blonde. He gets off his barstool and moves down towards her, sliding his beer along the bar as he goes. He stops at her side.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

Buy you a drink?

THE BLONDE

(staring ahead)

Yeah, but you can't sleep with me.

The Young Man smiles quizzically.

YOUNG MAN

Why not?

The Blonde turns to look at him, a movement of the head, nothing else, her expression hard to read.

THE BLONDE

I'm with him.

She jerks her head behind them. The Young Man turns, seeing three men seated at a table across the room, papers on the table, apparently talking business. Suits, ties, two of them young, one middle-aged and bald.

YOUNG MAN

(turning back)

Not that bald one?

THE BLONDE

He'll let you buy me a drink, but sex is out of the question.

YOUNG MAN

I see.

THE BLONDE

Still want to buy me that drink?

YOUNG MAN

No.

Right answer, The Blonde laughs. The Young Man sips from his beer.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

So what's a beautiful young woman like you doing -

THE BLONDE

In a place like this?

YOUNG MAN

- with a bald old cunt like that.

THE BLONDE

Long story. Keep your voice down, he owns this place.

YOUNG MAN

Just trying to get your attention. You're interested now aren't you?

THE BLONDE

(turning away)

No.

The Young Man is disarmed. He looks at the label of his beer for something to say.

YOUNG MAN

I'm Timothy Kerr - Tim to my friends.

THE BLONDE

(without looking at him)

So?

The Young Man opens his mouth, pissed off, but changes his mind before he speaks.

YOUNG MAN

(softly)

You've obviously had a bad day, one of those days which makes you feel that everybody's out for their pound of flesh.



The Blonde turns to look at him, her expression softer, but not much.

THE BLONDE  
 (slow, considered  
 delivery)  
 That is the kind of day I've been  
 having lately.

She glances out of the corner of her towards Baldy. He is watching them.

THE BLONDE (CONT'D)  
 (looking back to Young  
 Man)  
 Say something to me.

YOUNG MAN  
 Such as?

The Blonde slaps the Young Man hard across the face. He looks shocked.

THE BLONDE  
 (turning to her drink)  
 I'll be outside in ten minutes.

EXT. ENTRANCE TO BASEMENT BAR/CLUB - NIGHT

The Young Man is loitering outside.

The Blonde comes up out of the club and walks towards the Young Man without appearing even to notice him. He falls into step beside her. They don't speak for several paces.

THE BLONDE  
 Live close?

YOUNG MAN  
 Yeah. You live, I mean, you do you  
 live around here?

THE BLONDE  
 I do. But I don't want to go back  
 there.

YOUNG MAN  
 Because of the bald guy.

THE BLONDE  
 No.

YOUNG MAN  
You want to go to my place?

THE BLONDE  
(laughing)  
Don't get your hopes up. I can't be  
seen with you in any of the bars  
around here. Got anything to drink  
at home?

YOUNG MAN  
We can stop on the way.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. CAFÉ - DAY

The Young Man sits alone at a table by the window, watching the building opposite. He has short hair and wears sunglasses to hide the worst of his facial bruises, but his swollen lip is still noticeable.

In front of him on the table are a cup of coffee, a notebook and a pen. He sips at the coffee.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Young Man's POV from the café. Baldy exits the building and hails a taxi.

INT. CAFE - DAY

The Young Man opens the notebook and writes in it, and we:

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. OUTSIDE THE DOOR TO A FLAT, THE LANDING OF A NARROW STAIRWAY - DAY

Cobb comes up the stairs and stops outside the door.

The Young Man (he has long hair and is unshaven) follows, standing behind Cobb, looking over Cobb's shoulder as he examines the door.

Cobb knocks gingerly on the door. After a pause, he reaches into his jacket pocket and pulls out a pair of rubber surgical gloves. He inflates the gloves one after the other before putting them on, interlacing his fingers and bumping the gloves snugly into place. He turns to the Young Man.

COBB  
(whispering)  
Gloves?

The YOUNG MAN nods and holds up his hands for inspection- he is wearing thick, leather and wool gloves.

Cobb rolls his eyes. Shaking his head, he turns back to the door, then pushes the Young Man back and lifts up the doormat. There's nothing under there, and he lets it back down. The Young Man leans forward to whisper into Cobb's ear.

YOUNG MAN  
(whispering)  
People don't really do that, do they?

COBB  
(whispering, reaching into his pocket)  
You'd be surprised.

He takes a piece of plastic out and starts working it into the crack between the door and the frame.

The Young Man notices a potted plant on the windmill. He reaches over and shifts it slightly, finding a key underneath it. He taps Cobb on the shoulder and when he turns around the Young Man holds it up in front of his face. COBB smiles as he grabs it, and turns back to the door to unlock it.

COBB (CONT'D)  
(whispering)  
Beginner's luck.

Cobb opens the door and heads inside, the Young Man following.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

No lights - cold grey daylight filtered through net curtains.

Cobb is first, creeping forward through the flat with the Young Man at his shoulder. Cobb looks left and right into doorways as they advance, pushing them open gently to see inside to let more light into the hallway. At the end of the hall Cobb turns to face the Young Man.

COBB  
(speaking normally now)  
See, nobody home. Right, first things first. We need a bag.

YOUNG MAN  
(whispering)  
A bag?

COBB  
To carry the stuff out of here. Why  
are you whispering?

Cobb passes through a door off to the left.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A futon, two wardrobes, piles of books and neatly folded clothes by the wall. Cobb crosses the room to the first wardrobe and opens it, rummaging around the bottom.

COBB  
(head in wardrobe)  
Bingo.

COBB backs out of the wardrobe clutching a soft overnight bag.

YOUNG MAN  
(not whispering, but still  
quiet)  
Don't you have your own?

COBB  
Yeah, sure, it's a big bag with  
'swag' written across the side.  
OK... what do you fancy?

The Young Man looks around and shrugs.

COBB (CONT'D)  
Not much is here of any value.

YOUNG MAN  
You don't seem too concerned.

COBB  
I don't do it for the money.

YOUNG MAN  
So why-

COBB  
For the adrenalin, and because,  
like you, I'm interested in people.

The Young Man raises his eyebrows.

COBB (CONT'D)

You can tell a lot about people from their stuff. How old would you say these people were?

The Young Man shrugs.

COBB (CONT'D)

Well, just from the futon you can make a pretty good guess. Young people have futons. I'd be surprised if they were anywhere near forty with a futon. But they've got one laundry bag so they're used to each other which makes me think that they're over twenty-five.

YOUNG MAN

But if they're only twenty they could have been living together for years.

COBB

Look at the books. They're educated—went to college, graduated when they were twenty-one or twenty-two, wouldn't have moved in with each other until at least the last year of college. Get a better idea from their music.

He starts to examine the shelves, running surgeon's fingers across the shelves, touching things without picking them up. He comes across a wooden box.

COBB (CONT'D)

Here's the box.

YOUNG MAN

What box?

COBB

Everybody's got a box. With men it's usually a shoebox.

YOUNG MAN

With valuable inside?

COBB

No. More interesting, more personal. Letters, odd snapshots, a plastic toy out of a Christmas cracker, a pebble from some beach.

He opens the box. The Young Man looks over his shoulder.

COBB (CONT'D)  
(picking through the  
contents)

See? Photos, odd bits of paper,  
worthless plastic jewelry. An  
unconscious collection. A display.

YOUNG MAN  
Display?

COBB  
Yes, a display. Each object showing  
something about the person,  
together adding up to an  
illustration of their personality.  
We've all got something of the  
artist inside of us, even if it is  
unconscious. It's extremely  
personal. We're privileged to see  
it. People rarely show anyone their  
box.

Cobb stares lovingly at the contents of the box for a few  
seconds before suddenly throwing it across the room, spilling  
the contents everywhere with surprising violence.

YOUNG MAN  
(taken aback)  
It's like a diary. They hide it,  
but secretly they want someone to  
look at it and that's what I do.  
Concealment, display; flip sides of  
the same coin. This way they know  
that someone's seen it. That's what  
it's all about, interrupting  
someone's life, making them think  
about all the things they usually  
take for granted. That's what  
you're doing when you steal their  
things. When they collect the  
insurance money they go out and buy  
all these things that have just  
been sitting on their shelves,  
stuff they'd forgotten they'd  
bought, and they have to think all  
over again about why they wanted  
this stuff, what it's for. You take  
it away and show them what they  
had.

He moves to the laundry bag, and reaches into his pocket. He pulls out a pair of lace panties, holding them up for the Young Man to see.

COBB  
Saucy, eh? I took them from the  
last place, two young women sharing  
a flat.

The Young Man looks totally baffled as Cobb reaches into the laundry bag and pulls out a pair of trousers. He stuffs the panties into the front left pocket and sticks the trousers back into the bag. COBB heads towards the door, passing the baffled Young Man.

COBB (CONT'D)  
(winking)  
Give 'em something to chat about.

Cobb leaves the bedroom. The Young Man follows.

INT. HALLWAY - DAT

Cobb walks down the corridor carrying the bag, the Young Man behind him.

YOUNG MAN  
Why did you do that?

COBB  
(over his shoulder)  
She'll find them in his trousers  
and want to know what he's been up  
to.

YOUNG MAN  
Why would you want to fuck up their  
relationship?

Cobb spins about to face the YOUNG MAN so abruptly that they almost collide. There is a manic look in his eyes.

COBB  
(deadly serious)  
Don't you listen? You take it away  
and show them what they had.

The Young Man is speechless. Cobb turns and from in front of him we can see a mischievous grin break across his face which is hidden from the Young Man. Cobb dives through a doorway. The Young Man shakes his head and heads after him.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Cobb is taking two glasses down from the cupboard. There is a bottle of red wine on the counter.

The Young Man enters.

COBB  
Fancy a drink?

The Young Man looks at the bottle then at Cobb.

YOUNG MAN  
You've got to be joking.

COBB  
(rummaging in a drawer)  
Don't be fooled by the supermarket label - its quite good, I've had it before.

He takes a corkscrew out of the drawer and starts to open the bottle, his hands smooth and graceful - surgical, almost - in their white latex sheaths.

COBB (CONT'D)  
(levering the cork out)  
You'd have trouble doing this with your gloves on.

He places the corkscrew on the counter and pours two glasses of wine, handing one to the Young Man who sips at it. Cobb picks up the corkscrew and starts to remove the cork from it.

YOUNG MAN  
So are we going to take anything?

COBB  
(placing the corkscrew back into the drawer)  
Anything your heart desires. But look, that's not the point, that's just work. This is what it's all about- being here. Entering someone's life, finding out who they are... just feel it- standing in someone's kitchen, drinking their wine, someone you'll never even meet.

He jams the cork into the neck of the bottle and sticks it up on the shelf.



Just as he does so there is the unmistakable sound of the front door being opened.

Cobb spins around to face the kitchen door. The Young Man throws his glass down onto the counter.

We hear a muffled voice through the door.

WOMAN (O.S.)  
Drink? I've got some wine.

MAN (O.S.)  
Why not?

Cobb stands frozen, tense, staring at the door. The Young Man looks terrified, glancing from the back of Cobb's head to the door and back.

YOUNG MAN  
(tense whisper)  
What the fuck do-

COBB  
(hissing)  
SHHHHH!

The door swings open and Cobb's face transforms into an expression of innocent surprise. A young Woman stands frozen in the doorway. Cobb steps forward, palms open.

COBB (CONT'D)  
(friendly, relaxed)  
You startled us! From the agency or viewing, like us?

As he speaks he has moved right up to the Woman, coming close enough that she feels compelled to step back into the hall. The Young Man follows, still looking nervous, but the Woman's attention is on Cobb.

WOMAN  
(tense, confused)  
What are you doing in my flat?

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The Woman comes into the hall followed by the Young Man. Cobb turns his attention to the older man who stands frozen in the hall, looking as nervous as the Young Man.

COBB  
 (to the woman)  
 Viewing it. The agent said you'd be  
 out this afternoon.

WOMAN  
 (bewildered)  
 But we're not moving.

COBB  
 (to older man, ignoring  
 Woman)  
 You must be the man of the house.  
 You have a lovely home.

The older man looks nervously to the Woman. The Young Man and  
 Cobb are both now at the door.

COBB (CONT'D)  
 We'll leave you in peace, then.

WOMAN  
 But we're not moving!

COBB  
 (opening door, looks  
 bewildered)  
 Not even at the end of the month?

WOMAN  
 NO!

The woman notices their gloves.

Cobb notices her noticing.

COBB  
 (motioning the young man  
 out the door)  
 I should check with the agent,  
 then, Luv. Sorry to have bothered  
 you.

Cobb leaves, closing the door in the couple's bewildered  
 faces.

EXT. ROOFTOP - DAY

The Young Man comes out of a doorway onto the flat roof,  
 hurrying, followed by Cobb. Cobb closes the door behind him.

COBB

Shouldn't have come back up here.  
We'll have to wait ages before we  
go down. Maybe there's another way  
off here.

Cobb starts to look around the edges of the roof.

YOUNG MAN

Jesus shit. You think they believed  
you?

COBB

(laughing)  
Of course they didn't fucking  
believe me!

YOUNG MAN

So what did-

COBB

I just confused them. We caught  
them on the hop.

YOUNG MAN

How do you mean?

COBB

That bloke wasn't the boyfriend.  
Why do you think he didn't say  
anything? They were up to no good  
and was probably glad that we  
weren't her boyfriend.

YOUNG MAN

You reckon?

COBB

Definitely. Why else would she be  
home from work in the middle of the  
afternoon? You just can't plan for  
that kind of shit, we were unlucky.  
Don't be put off. It's not going to  
happen next time.

YOUNG MAN

I'm not so sure.

COBB

(offended)  
Oh yeah? Well next time you can do  
the prep work.

YOUNG MAN  
I didn't mean that-

COBB  
I'm serious. You pick a mark, check it out to your own satisfaction days, months, years, whatever- and that's what we'll hit next.

YOUNG MAN  
(thoughtfully)  
Yeah. Yeah, all right.

COBB  
Tell you what.

YOUNG MAN  
What?

COBB  
I feel bad about pulling the panty routine on that bloke- she'll give him a load of shit, and it's her that's screwing around.

The Young Man laughs, releasing tension.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Small, eclectic mix of stuff. Rubber plant, portable TV, desk, portable stereo. The Blonde circles the room slowly, looking at various items, her overcoat still on.

The Young Man enters (he has short hair and is clean-shaven), carrying two glasses.

The Blonde hasn't heard him come in. He watches her from the doorway as she reaches out to touch a ceramic candlestick sitting on a shoulder-high shelf. As she touches the candlestick it falls into two pieces. As she grabs at them she notices the Young Man watching her.

THE BLONDE  
(flustered)  
I'm sorry, I just touched it, it -

YOUNG MAN  
Just came apart in you hands.

THE BLONDE  
No, really, it did.

The Young Man smiles as he moves into the room.

YOUNG MAN

I know, it was already broken.  
Somebody dropped it, I was going to  
glue it...

He grabs two pieces, putting the glasses down on the shelf in their place.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

... But sod it, I'll never get  
around to it.

He drops the pieces into a waste-paper basket.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

(gesturing at chair)

Take a seat.

The Blonde perches on the edge of a chair, her coat still on. The Young Man takes a bottle out of a plastic bag, opens it and pours two measures. He hands The Blonde a drink. She sips at it. She looks cold.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

So what about the bald guy?

THE BLONDE

What about him?

YOUNG MAN

You're going out with him.

THE BLONDE

Not exactly.

YOUNG MAN

But you and him are -

THE BLONDE

(matter-of-factly)

I used to have a thing going with  
him, but it's been over for a long  
time.

YOUNG MAN

So why did you tell me you were  
with him?

THE BLONDE

To get rid of you.

YOUNG MAN

(grins)

So when you decided to have a drink with me, why did we have to come here?

THE BLONDE

He still gets jealous, he's a dangerous person. And I don't want to go to my place right now.

YOUNG MAN

(probing)

Why not?

THE BLONDE

I was burgled yesterday.

YOUNG MAN

Really? What did it feel like, to find your place broken into?

THE BLONDE

That's an odd question. Most people ask 'What did they take?'

YOUNG MAN

I'm curious about the way people feel about things.

He moves to the desk, reaching at a black case which sits amidst the papers and assorted crap.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

I'm a writer.

(opening the case to reveal an ancient manual typewriter)

See?

THE BLONDE

(deadpan)

Gosh.

YOUNG MAN

So?

THE BLONDE

So?

YOUNG MAN

How did it feel?

THE BLONDE

(annoyed)

Great. How do you think it felt? I don't really want to talk about it, thank you.

The Young Man shrugs.

YOUNG MAN

Sorry.

He straddles the chair which is in front of the desk. He leans in towards The Blonde.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

So the bald guy's dangerous?

THE BLONDE

(laughing)

Christ, you're a nosy bastard.

YOUNG MAN

Dangerous like how?

THE BLONDE

Dangerous like criminal type, involved with bad things type dangerous.

YOUNG MAN

What sort of bad things?

THE BLONDE

The usual: girls, drugs, magazines.

YOUNG MAN

Magazines?

THE BLONDE

And films... pornography. And he owns a couple of clubs.

YOUNG MAN

Wealthy?

THE BLONDE

Yes. And refined. It took me a long time to realize the sort of things which he was capable of.

YOUNG MAN

What sort of things?

THE BLONDE  
Perhaps another time. I think I'd  
better be going.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Young Man stands at the window, watching people pass by on the street below. He has short hair and his face is badly bruised.

He picks up the telephone and dials a number. After a few rings, the phone is answered by a man we might recognize as Cobb.

COBB (O.S.)  
Yeah?

YOUNG MAN  
It's me... Bill.

COBB (O.S.)  
What the fuck do you want?

YOUNG MAN  
Advice.

A pause.

COBB (O.S.)  
On what?

YOUNG MAN  
The job.

COBB (O.S.)  
What fucking job?

YOUNG MAN  
The one I asked you about.

COBB (O.S.)  
Not interested.

YOUNG MAN  
(snorting)  
I gathered that. I'm doing it on my  
own. I wondered about protection.

COBB (O.S.)  
Protection?



YOUNG MAN

Self-defence, weapon of some sort.  
Surprisingly enough, I thought you  
might be able to advise.

Cobb laughs at the other end of the phone.

COBB (O.S.)

Steel whip, nun-chucks - they're  
all right. Tools are good:  
sharpened screwdriver, hammer,  
chisel -

YOUNG MAN

Hammer?

COBB (O.S.)

Yeah, medium size, good rubber grip  
- very nasty. Get a claw hammer you  
can pry doors with it. Slip it into  
the back of your waistband, you're  
set.

The Young Man's eyes have glazed over - he doesn't seem to be  
listening.

COBB (O.S.) (CONT'D)

You still there?

The Young Man hangs up without a word and we:

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE DOOR TO A FLAT - DAY

Cobb and the Young Man (he has long hair and is unshaven) are  
putting on their gloves.

Cobb looks at the Young Man's leather gloves.

COBB

Why don't you get some of these,  
for Christ's sake?

YOUNG MAN

Where do you get them?

COBB

Stole a box from the Middlesex  
Hospital, but you can buy them.

He bends down and checks under the doormat. He straightens,  
up holding a key.

COBB (CONT'D)  
Bing-fucking-go.

He unlocks the door and they step cautiously inside.

INT. DIMLY LIT HALLWAY OF THE FLAT - DAY

Cobb proceeds slowly down the hall, pushing open each interior door and checking the various rooms. He stops at the last door.

COBB  
You find a bag, I'll check out the stuff.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

A small room with an eclectic mix of stuff, rubber plant, portable TV, desk, portable stereo.

Cobb enters and circles around the room, running his gloved hands across the mantelpiece, rubber-plant leaves, etc.

The Young Man enters, carrying a sports bag.

YOUNG MAN  
Here we go.

COBB  
(almost to himself)  
That was quick. We may not need it...  
(he looks at the Young Man)  
... there's fuck-all here.

Tight on the Young Man's face; he's really interested.

YOUNG MAN  
Oh?

COBB  
(sarcastic)  
Oh.

The Young Man looks around. Cobb prowls around the room dangerously.

YOUNG MAN  
What about the stereo?

Cobb has stopped at some shelves. Near his shoulder is a ceramic candlestick, no candle in it.

COBB

How much would you pay for a second-hand, ten-year-old portable stereo? You want to carry it, you can have it. This is fucking useless.

He tips the candlestick off the shelf and on to the floor. It breaks in two when it hits the floor.

YOUNG MAN

(surprised)  
Hey, what are we - vandals or burglars?

COBB

You're a burglar? So burgle.

YOUNG MAN

Well... what about the CDs?

Cobb crosses to the small CD rack.

COBB

(interested now)  
Not much of a collection.

YOUNG MAN

(drawing him out)  
Oh?

COBB

(flipping through CDs)  
Very little here. And what there is seems quite personal.

YOUNG MAN

How's that?

COBB

There's none of the music that people play when their friends come round, you know, not to be listened to or even noticed but to fill in gaps in conversation.

YOUNG MAN

Like what?

COBB

(glances around room)  
For someone this age...

(MORE)

COBB (CONT'D)  
I dunno, maybe Simply Red or  
Fleetwood Mac, that sort of shit.

YOUNG MAN  
He's got good taste.

Cobb moves over to the desk.

COBB  
Each to his own. But he's a sad  
fucker with no social life.

The Young Man raises his eyebrows. At the desk Cobb flips  
open a black case to reveal an ancient typewriter.

COBB (CONT'D)  
Nice machine.

YOUNG MAN  
You think he's a writer?

COBB  
(scoffing)  
If he wanted to write he'd have a  
word processor. He doesn't want to  
write, he wants to be a writer -  
and that's two...  
(notices something)  
... two completely different  
things.  
(turns to Young Man)  
You check this out, right?

YOUNG MAN  
Right.

COBB  
(suspicious)  
You watched him come and go, saw  
his routine?

YOUNG MAN  
(defensive)  
I told you, I checked it out. Why?

Cobb turns to the desk and stares at it, hard.

COBB  
This guy's unemployed.

YOUNG MAN  
No he isn't.

COBB

(emphatic)

He's unemployed. Look at this desk,  
people with jobs don't want this  
shit in their living rooms!

(rummaging through papers,  
files)

This guy is unemployed or a  
student... either way he could be  
back any fucking second!

YOUNG MAN

(concerned)

Hw won't. I watched him come and  
go, he's got a job.

COBB

(rummaging)

Yeah? What's he do, then?

YOUNG MAN

(insistent)

I checked it out.

Cobb stops rummaging, turns around and glares at the Young  
Man.

COBB

(malevolent)

What the fuck is this, then?

He holds up a booklet.

COBB (CONT'D)

(controlled anger)

You should recognize this, Dole-  
boy...

(steps forward)

... his fucking UB40.

He grabs the Young Man and throws him against the wall.

He holds the Young Man's face with his left hand and slaps  
the booklet across with the other, hard.

COBB (CONT'D)

Checked it out! You fucking  
arsehole, are you trying to get us  
thrown in jail? We're leaving now.

He releases the Young Man, staring at him fro a few seconds  
before walking out of the living room. The Young Man rubs his  
face before following.

INT. HALL - DAY

The Young man hurtles after Cobb, who is almost at the front door.

YOUNG MAN  
Aren't we going to take anything?

COBB  
We're going now. I don't steal from  
no-hope dole scroungers. No  
offence.

YOUNG MAN  
(to himself)  
None taken.

Cobb opens the front door and turns to face the approaching Young Man.

COBB  
There's another place. One that  
I've checked out...

They leave, closing the door behind them.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. ROW OF TERRACED TOWNHOUSES - DAY

The Young Man (with short hair and clean-shaven) loiters at the bus stop, watching The Blonde's second floor windows. The curtains are pulled back to reveal The Blonde. She stands at the window. The front door opens and Baldy steps out.

The Young Man watches Baldy as he walks down the steps on to the street and turns right, away from the Young Man.

The Young Man waits for a few seconds before walking up to the front door and ringing The Blonde's buzzer. The front door clicks unlocked and the Young Man heads inside.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE BLONDE'S FLAT - DAY

The Young Man comes up to the door and knocks; the door pushes open slightly with the force of the knock.

THE BLONDE (O.S.)  
(from within)  
It's open!

The Young Man enters.

INT. HALL OF A LARGE APARTMENT - DAY

Noise of a shower running, steam coming out of an open doorway.

The Young Man comes down the hall, cautiously. The Blonde comes out of a doorway in a bathrobe, glances at him.

THE BLONDE

You're early.

She disappears into the bathroom before the Young Man has a chance to reply.

THE BLONDE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Make yourself at home, I'll be a minute.

The Young Man comes down the corridor. As he comes past the bathroom he sees that she has only half-closed the door - he peers in, but sees only a towel rail and steam. He goes through the next doorway along.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Expensively and tastefully decorated, almost cluttered - some pictures on the walls, lots of plants.

The Young Man comes into the room, glances around. He moves over to a small table by the wall and looks down at it. There is nothing on it. He runs his fingers over the polished wood surface, then turns around, looking about the room for something that he can't find. He crosses the room and sits down in a large armchair near the windows.

The Blonde enters, still in her robe, rubbing her wet hair with a towel.

YOUNG MAN

Nice place.

THE BLONDE

(sitting down on the couch)

Thanks. I can't stand the idea that some stranger was in here, rummaging around. Creepy.

YOUNG MAN

What'd they take?

THE BLONDE  
CD player, CDs, stuff like that.  
They took one of my bags to carry  
it in - the police told me that  
that's pretty standard.

YOUNG MAN  
Must be bad - losing that stuff.

THE BLONDE  
(shrugging)  
Insurance'll cover it. The personal  
stuff was worse.

YOUNG MAN  
Personal stuff?

THE BLONDE  
They took some of my things. They  
rifled through my underwear.

YOUNG MAN  
Probably thought you kept your  
valuables hidden there.

THE BLONDE  
(shaking her head with  
evident distaste)  
They took some of it.

YOUNG MAN  
Shit. Why would they do that?

THE BLONDE  
(mocking)  
Come on, don't play the innocent,  
you're a man - you know the sort of  
kinky voyeuristic shit men get up  
to.

YOUNG MAN  
(shaking his head)  
No. No, no, no... I'm not into that  
kind of...

THE BLONDE  
So you have no interest in women's  
underwear whatsoever?

YOUNG MAN  
No. I'm interested in what's inside  
it, that's all.



THE BLONDE

So if I offered you a pair of my panties, you wouldn't be remotely interested?

YOUNG MAN

'Fraid not, though I'm sure they're lovely. Now you've embarrassed me enough, thanks.

THE BLONDE

(shrugging)

Well, they took some. I'll tell you what else, they took one of my earrings - not the pair, just one of the earrings. Bloody annoying.

YOUNG MAN

Maybe you've just misplaced it.

THE BLONDE

No. I know where it was - they took it... just to fuck me around. Bloody annoying, they probably thing they're really clever. I wear the one they left on its own.

YOUNG MAN

Why?

THE BLONDE

(shrugs)

Makes me feel good and miserable. I don't know, gives me something to talk about, anyway.

She sighs and looks over to the window.

THE BLONDE (CONT'D)

(rising)

Give me a minute, I'll get dressed.

She leaves. As soon as she is out of the room the Young Man jumps out of his chair and lifts up the seat cushion, looking underneath. He thrusts his hands down the back and sides of the chair, feeling for something. He comes up empty-handed, puzzlement on his face, and replaces the cushion.

He goes into the hall and crosses to another doorway.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The Young Man pauses at the door. It is open a crack and through the crack he can see into the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

The Young Man's POV through the crack shows us The Blonde almost dressed, buttoning her blouse in front of the mirror.

The Young Man watches for a second or two, then pushes the door open quietly.

The Blonde turns her head to look at him, apparently unsurprised. The Young Man moves towards her. She allows him to reach out and pull her towards him. He kisses her on the lips and we:

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING IN SOHO - DAY

The Young Man loiters outside. He has short hair and wears dark glasses. Baldy exits with another man. They hail a cab and leave.

The Young Man wanders down an alley running down the side of the building. He takes a piece of paper out of his pocket on which a rough floor plan has been drawn.

He counts windows down the side of the building, stopping at a particular window to study it. He looks around, puts the paper back into his pocket and walks back out on to the main street.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Small, dark, cluttered.

The Young Man enters, carrying a paper bag. He removes his sunglasses, revealing his bruised face.

He tosses the paper bag on to the bed, then reaches into the breast pocket of his suit jacket and pulls out a pair of rubber surgical gloves.

He inflates one before stretching it on to his fingers, then does the same with the second, interlacing his fingers to jam the gloves on snugly. He flexes his hands, then turns to the bed and reaches into the paper bag, removing a brand new hammer with a rubber grip and a claw head.

He tests the weight of the hammer, first in one hand then in the other. He awkwardly sticks the hammer into the back of his waistband and moves to the dusty mirror, examining himself. He removes the hammer from his waistband and looks at himself holding it in the mirror, and we:

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. INSIDE THE HALL OF A LARGE APARTMENT - DAY

Little is visible in the gloom. All is quiet.

Suddenly a splintering crash breaks the silence and the front door breaks inward, revealing Cobb and the Young Man (long hair, unshaven), gloves on, glancing about nervously.

Cautiously, they creep into the flat. Cobb shuts the door behind them. The Young Man moves to the nearest doorway and opens the door, spilling a cold, diffuse light into the hall. He opens the next door along and looks in and we

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Young Man's POV: expensively and tastefully decorated, almost cluttered - lots of pictures on the walls, lots of plants.

The Young Man steps back into the hall.

INT. HALL - DAY

The Young Man looks over at Cobb.

YOUNG MAN  
(whispering loudly)  
Not bad at all.

Cobb turns to look at him.

COBB  
(speaking normally)  
I'll check the bedrooms for a bag,  
you check out the stuff.

The Young Man nods and passes into the living room.

## INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Young Man enters and crosses to the centre of the large room. He turns around, scanning the room, taking in furniture, stereo, plants, TV and VCR, pictures.

Noticing something, he moves closer to a group of pictures on the wall.

He leans in to study them and his POV reveals a collection of framed photographs of the same young woman. In some of them she is obviously posed; the black-and-white ones in particular look like professionally shot modelling photos. The Young woman is an attractive blonde.

He stares at the pictures for a few seconds, then turns back to the room. He crosses to the small table with some framed photographs on it and leans over to examine the pictures. They are all of The Blonde. The Young Man picks up one of the framed photos and looks at it more closely.

COBB (O.S.)

Hey! Take a look in here!

The Young Man places the picture back on the table, keeping his eyes on it until he has moved several steps towards the door.

## INT. HALL - DAY

The Young Man exits the living room and walks down the corridor looking into the room for Cobb. He enters a room near the front door.

## INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Double bed, light, feminine, patterned fabrics and many cushions, a chest of drawers beneath a framed photograph.

Cobb is standing in front of the chest of drawers, the top drawer open.

He is holding up a garter belt for the Young Man.

COBB

(mischievous,  
conspiratorial)

Saucy lady, n'est-ce que pas?

The Young Man approaches, looking at the photograph above the chest of drawers - it is The Blonde looking serious.

Cobb turns to the chest of drawers and rummages around.

COBB (CONT'D)  
I haven't found a bag, yet.

The Young Man comes up beside Cobb and looks into the drawer - it is full of silk panties. Cobb rummages through them. He looks more interested in the panties than anything he might find in them.

YOUNG MAN  
This is her flat?

COBB  
Yeah, and she's a fox.

YOUNG MAN  
But she's got pictures of herself everywhere.

COBB  
Yeah, and she looks good. Check this lot out.

He nods his head at the underwear. The Young Man hesitates and Cobb jerks his head again. The Young Man reaches into the drawer and feels through some of the silk undergarments. Cobb grabs a handful, puts them to his nose and inhales deeply, looking at the Young Man, who shakes his head and smiles pityingly. They stand there, two piggies at the trough. The Young Man grabs some of the panties and lifts them up. He glances up and freezes, seeing the picture of The Blonde looking down at the them.

COBB (CONT'D)  
You should take some.

YOUNG MAN  
What?! No way.

COBB  
(shrugs)  
Suit yourself. I'm going to, she's a babe.

He stuffs a handful of silk into his pocket and moves from the chest of drawers. The Young Man glances at Cobb, then swiftly pockets some panties when Cobb has turned his back. The Young Man stares up at the picture of The Blonde as he backs away.

COBB (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
Bingo.

The Young Man turns to see Cobb displaying a large leather holdall. Cobb turns and points at a pair of pearl earrings on the dresser. He picks just one of them up and heads into the hall.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Young Man is stuffing CDs into the leather holdall.

Cobb is slumped in a large armchair, watching.

The Young Man straightens up.

COBB

You should take that CD player.  
It's small enough.

The Young Man grabs the player, pulls wires out of the back and sticks it into the holdall. He moves over to a small desk. On the desk lies a set of passport photographs. He stares at four near-identical images of The Blonde.

YOUNG MAN

(without turning around)  
Why does she have so many pictures  
of herself?

Cobb looks around the room.

COBB

I think she's a model. Certainly  
vain.

The Young Man slips the passport photos off the desk and into his pocket. Cobb notices but doesn't say anything - just smiles to himself. The Young Man turns around. He avoids making eye contact with Cobb.

YOUNG MAN

That about it?

Cobb looks lazily over the room.

COBB

I think that covers the useful  
stuff.

He hauls himself out of his comfortable chair with a groan.

COBB (CONT'D)

Let's go.

He holds up the single pearl earring.

COBB (CONT'D)  
(mischievous)  
I'll just misplace this for her.

He pulls the seat cushion off the armchair, places the earring on the chair, dead centre, and replaces the cushion.

EXT. ROW OF TERRACED TOWNHOUSES - DAY

Cobb and the Young Man exit one of the front doors, the Young Man carrying a full leather holdall.

They turn down the road and walks briskly away.

INT. CHARING CROSS STATION LEFT-LUGGAGE OFFICE - DAY

The Young Man hands over the leather holdall, takes a ticket and offers it to Cobb.

COBB  
(refusing the ticket)  
It was your job. You hang on to the stuff.

They walk out of the station.

EXT. CHARING CROSS STATION - DAY

Cobb and the Young Man talk as they stroll away from the building.

COBB  
Pick it up tomorrow and hang on to it till I let you know we're ready to fence it.

YOUNG MAN  
Right.

Cobb looks thoughtfully at the Young Man.

COBB  
(seductive, drawing him in further)  
Unless, of course, you want to sell it yourself and just give me my half of what you get for it.

YOUNG MAN  
Wouldn't know how to go about it.

COBB

Look, about being hard on you back  
at that first place: I won't let  
anyone put me at risk, it's  
dangerous enough already.

They stop, unsure how to proceed.

COBB (CONT'D)

An early supper, I think.

YOUNG MAN

Look, I really can't afford -

COBB

(smiling)

It's covered.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Formal, expensive, white linen, mirrors.

The Young Man and The Blonde are seated at a table in one  
corner; cosy, intimate. They are having coffee.

THE BLONDE

How was your food?

YOUNG MAN

(looking down)

Fine.

THE BLONDE

So what is it?

YOUNG MAN

You chose this restaurant because  
you knew we wouldn't run into him  
here.

THE BLONDE

So?

YOUNG MAN

You said it was over between the  
two of you.

THE BLONDE

It is.



YOUNG MAN

Then why -

THE BLONDE

I also said that he's dangerous.

The Young Man looks at her imploringly.

THE BLONDE (CONT'D)

(pitying but impatient)

Fine. An example. One night he came back to the flat - my flat - with a couple of the thugs who work for him. That meant trouble; right away I could tell something was going to happen. Then, a little later this other man arrives...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE BLONDE'S FLAT, FRONT HALL - DAY

A heavy-set man opens the door to a smaller man and motions him towards the living room.

THE BLONDE (V.O.)

... you don't need to know who he was or anything about him except that he had cheated them out of some of their money...

INT. THE BLONDE'S FLAT, LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Blonde sits in the armchair, smoking, nervous. Baldy and a heavy-set man welcome the smaller man into the room.

THE BLONDE (V.O.)

... just money, that's all.

The two heavy-set men grab the smaller man and force him to the ground spreading his arms out before him, pinning his wrists to the floor, one of them kneeling on his back.

Baldy brings the hammer down on to a finger with tremendous force.

The Blonde gets up to leave. Baldy looks up at her, pointing at her with the hammer.

BALDY

Stay. Watch.

The Blonde stops at the door and turns around. Baldy starts smashing all of the smaller man's fingers in turn.

The Blonde closes her eyes and presses her face against the door frame as if she's trying to burrow her way out.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Young Man listens intently.

THE BLONDE  
He smashed all of his fingers...  
then he split his head open...

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLONDE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Baldy grunts as he brings the hammer down sharply.

Baldy stands up and drops the hammer. There is blood.

The Blonde is crying.

BALDY  
Give me a fucking tea-towel or  
something.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The Young Man is speechless. The Blonde sips at her coffee before continuing.

THE BLONDE  
Dangerous enough for you?

YOUNG MAN  
Is it true?

THE BLONDE  
Yes.

YOUNG MAN  
Christ. You don't see him any more?

THE BLONDE

(deadpan)

After he messed up my rug like that?

YOUNG MAN

That's not funny.

THE BLONDE

I know.

They both sip their coffees. The Young Man looks thoughtfully at her.

YOUNG MAN

So how did you meet him?

THE BLONDE

Let's not talk about him -

YOUNG MAN

(bitter)

Did you work for him?

THE BLONDE

(furious)

That's none of your fucking business! You're sick. And a hypocrite. You loved hearing that story, you want to hear some more for your jollies... you're as bad as the freak who stole my pants...

(rising from the table)

...well, you can fuck off, you filthy little shit.

She throws her napkin down, upsetting her water glass, and strides away from the table. The Young Man grabs the glass, mopping at the spilt water with the napkin. He looks around to see if the other diners have noticed (they have). He catches the waiter's eye and scribbles in the air for the bill.

He takes out a credit card. He looks down at it, turning it over in his hands before laying it down on the table.

The name on the card is Timothy Kerr.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

The Young Man (short hair, sunglasses) glances around before diving into the side alleyway.

He moves along the building, counting the windows as he goes.

Finding the right one, he pulls his hammer out and levers it open using the claw. Looking about, he lifts the window and hauls himself through.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Big desk, filing cabinets, couple of chairs.

The Young Man slithers through the window and on to the floor behind the desk.

He gets on to his haunches and removes his sunglasses, putting them into his breast pocket. He looks around the office. It is well lit from the streetlights outside the windows.

The Young Man moves to the bookshelves and starts to remove books, stacking them on the floor quickly but quietly.

Halfway through the second shelf he uncovers a safe set into the wall.

Excited, hands trembling, he removes a piece of paper from his pocket. It has a series of numbers written on it. He spins the dial according to the numbers. He tries the door - it won't open. He tries the combination again, pulls the door and this time it swings open to reveal a large stack of money. The Young Man is shocked by the amount. Next to the money is an A4 envelope.

YOUNG MAN

Bingo.

He pulls the money and the envelope out of the safe, leaving it in a pile on the floor. He stands up and looks around.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

(under his breath)

Bag.

He opens the desk drawers, looking in each one. He opens the closet, searching around, finding nothing.

Increasingly frantic now, the Young Man paces around the room, peering into every corner, looking behind every piece of furniture. At length, he stops, exasperated.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)  
 (loud whisper)  
 FUCK!

He looks at the bundles of banknotes. He looks at the cluttered desk. There is a roll of masking tape on the desk. The Young Man steps over, grabs the tape and pulls off a long strip, breaking it with his teeth and we:

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. FRENCH RESTAURANT - DUSK

Understated. Expensive; polished wooden floors, starched linen, well-dressed clientele. The Young Man and Cobb are seated at a table near the back of the place.

Cobb eat his good with small, graceful movements. In his dark suit and tie he fits right in, unlike the Young Man, who is shabbily dressed, unshaven, has long greasy hair and looks ill at ease.

Cobb finishes chewing a large bit of his steak, sips from his glass of water, then dabs his lips gently with his napkin.

COBB  
 You're developing a taste for it.

The Young Man looks up from his food.

COBB (CONT'D)  
 The violating, the voyeurism - it's definitely you.

YOUNG MAN  
 I think not.

COBB  
 I think so. And I think before long you'll develop a taste for the things you can do with the proceeds.

YOUNG MAN  
 Such as?

COBB  
 (gesturing around them)  
 This.

YOUNG MAN  
 You make all of your money that way.

COBB  
 (smiling)  
 Not all of it. You're going to pay  
 for this.

YOUNG MAN  
 But I told you, I can't afford -

He is silenced by Cobb throwing a credit card on the table.

COBB  
 It won't really be you, it'll be...  
 (he tilts his head to at  
 the card)  
 Timothy Kerr. But I thought I'd  
 give you the pleasure of pretending  
 to pay.

YOUNG MAN  
 But how -

Cobb tosses a pen on to the table next to the card.

COBB  
 Sign it.

YOUNG MAN  
 (picking up the card)  
 Sign it?

He looks at the card. He turns it over; there is no signature  
 on the white strip. He looks up at Cobb.

COBB  
 Sign it in your own handwriting and  
 you can use it for anything. I  
 wouldn't use it for more than a day  
 or two, just to be safe.

YOUNG MAN  
 (a whisper)  
 Christ.

The two men smile at each other. The Young Man reaches for  
 the pen. He signs the back and pockets the card, shaking his  
 head and laughing.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)  
 Don't you worry about being caught?

COBB  
 Why else would I do it? Besides,  
 I'm not going to get caught.

YOUNG MAN

You've thought it all through.

COBB

(raises wine glass)

I've thought it all through.

(pause)

This is just the tip of the iceberg, I do things you wouldn't believe.

YOUNG MAN

Such as?

COBB

An example. Sometimes when I'm watching a place I'll see that the owners are about to go on holiday. I'll wait till they've gone, then move in for a week or so.

YOUNG MAN

You've got to be joking.

COBB

Happens a lot more often than you'd think.

YOUNG MAN

But how do you know how long they'll be gone for?

COBB

Almost always marked on the kitchen calendar.

YOUNG MAN

(a whisper)

Christ.

He takes a sip from his wine, then shovels a forkful of food into his mouth. He chews for a second then freezes, his eyes locked on something at the far end of the restaurant, behind Cobb.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

(through steak)

Jesus fucking Christ!

Cobb narrows his eyes.

COBB

What's wrong?

YOUNG MAN  
(swallows hard)  
The woman, the woman from that  
first place, the one who came  
home, the, the, the one who saw me -  
us... she just walked in.

The Young Man's POV shows us the young woman from the first robbery and a man, whom we have not seen before, waiting to be seated.

COBB  
(calm, not turning round)  
Are you sure?

YOUNG MAN  
Yes, I'm fucking sure!

COBB  
(impatient)  
Is she with the same bloke?

YOUNG MAN  
No.

COBB  
We're all right then.

YOUNG MAN  
All right?! What if she sees us?!

COBB  
If she sees us, she won't do  
anything. She's with her partner  
now and she won't want to have to  
explain how she found us at their  
flat when she was supposed to be at  
work.

YOUNG MAN  
That's one hell of a chance to  
take!

COBB  
(fed up)  
Look, just calm down. What would  
she do anyway? All we stole was  
half a bottle of an indifferent red  
wine. Just relax, keep your head.

The Young Man looks at his plate, trying to stay calm.

YOUNG MAN  
You mind if we skip dessert?



COBB  
(with disgust)  
Yes, I fucking mind.

INT. FRENCH RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Later.

Cobb is scraping up the last of his chocolate mousse. An almost untouched dessert sits in front of the Young Man, who repeatedly glances up past Cobb's head. The Young Man's POV shows us the young woman seated with her companion at the other end of the restaurant.

The young woman pushes her chair back from the table, stands up, places her napkin on her chair and heads towards Cobb and the Young Man's table. The Young Man looks terrified.

YOUNG MAN  
She's coming this way.

Cobb looks up from his chocolate mousse. He nods at a door off to his left.

COBB  
She's going to the loo, relax.

The Young Man can't take his eye off the young woman as she approaches.

She comes near their table. As she turns to the left she notices the Young Man and looks at him for an instant with something which might be recognition. She carries on, passing through the doors to the lavatories.

YOUNG MAN  
(losing it)  
She fucking looked at me!

COBB  
Yeah?

YOUNG MAN  
Yeah! She fucking knows - we have to leave!

Cobb places his spoon back into his dish and looks up at the Young Man with an almost bored expression.

COBB  
(gesturing to the waiter)  
We'll leave - not that we have  
anything to worry about other than  
you making a twat of yourself.

EXT. FRENCH RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Cobb and the Young Man exit. Cobb suddenly turns on the Young Man as if he might hit him.

COBB  
(pointing at the Young  
Man's face)  
You know, I really hate it when I  
don't get to finish a good meal  
with a coffee.

The Young Man looks flabbergasted.

YOUNG MAN  
But -

COBB  
(bitter)  
Just don't fucking say it!

He waves at a taxi.

INT. BACK OF TAXI - NIGHT

Cobb looks out of the window like a sullen child. The Young Man looks at him, thinking.

YOUNG MAN  
Look, she recognized me, OK? She's  
had a second look at me. It makes  
me nervous.

Cobb turns to the Young Man.

COBB  
(calm)  
If you're worried about being  
recognized, why don't you do  
something about your appearance?  
Haircut, smart clothes, your own  
mother won't recognize you.

The Young Man looks down at himself, chastened.

COBB (CONT'D)  
(grinning to himself)  
Just because you break into  
people's homes, doesn't mean you  
have to look like a criminal.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. ROW OF TERRACED TOWNHOUSES - NIGHT

The Young Man (short hair, clean-shaven) buzzes The Blonde.

THE BLONDE  
(voice on tannoy)  
Fuck off.

YOUNG MAN  
How do you know it's me? Could be  
your mother you just told to fuck  
off.

THE BLONDE  
(voice on tannoy)  
I mean it.

YOUNG MAN  
Please, just let me in... I've come  
to apologize.

The lock clicks open and he steps inside.

INT. THE BLONDE'S FLAT, HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Young Man walks slowly down the corridor. Passing the  
bedroom he sees The Blonde sitting on the bed. He stands in  
the doorway.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Double bed, light, feminine, patterned fabrics and many  
cushions, a chest of drawers.

The Blonde sits on the bed, legs crossed, smoking a  
cigarette. The Young Man considers his opening line.

THE BLONDE  
So apologize.

YOUNG MAN  
I haven't been entirely honest with  
you.

The Blonde raises her eyebrows.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)  
I'm writing about burglaries.

THE BLONDE  
(confused)  
What?

YOUNG MAN  
I'm researching burglaries. I'm,  
I'm doing a piece about a guy I  
know who burgles people. That's why  
I've been asking you questions  
about your burglary.

THE BLONDE  
Why didn't you just tell me.

YOUNG MAN  
I didn't want to upset you. See,  
I've been breaking into houses with  
him - that is, he's been breaking  
in and I've been watching him. I  
mean, I haven't taken anything  
or... whatever, I just go along and  
watch, for my research.

THE BLONDE  
Is that it?

YOUNG MAN  
Yes.

THE BLONDE  
What does that have to do with  
anything?

YOUNG MAN  
Now I've been honest with you, I'd  
like you to return the favor.

THE BLONDE  
I have been honest with you.

YOUNG MAN  
You're still seeing the bald guy.

THE BLONDE  
(flustered)  
How do -

YOUNG MAN

I was early the other day. I saw him leave. You said it was over.

THE BLONDE

(resigned)

It is.

YOUNG MAN

(quizzical)

Then why?

THE BLONDE

He's blackmailing me.

YOUNG MAN

You said he's rich - why would...

THE BLONDE

(bitter)

Who said anything about money?

The Young Man sighs. He slides down the wall to sit in the doorway, his back against the frame. After a moment's thought he looks up at The Blonde.

YOUNG MAN

What's he blackmailing you with?

THE BLONDE

Photos.

YOUNG MAN

Of what?

THE BLONDE

Of me. And don't ask me anything else about them. You'd only want the details to fuel your seedy little fantasies. Let's just say that my mother wouldn't frame them for her sideboard.

YOUNG MAN

You've got me all wrong, you know.

THE BLONDE

Have I?

The Young Man nods. He thinks for a moment.

YOUNG MAN

So where does he keep them?

THE BLONDE  
In his office. Why?

YOUNG MAN  
Maybe I can get them back.

THE BLONDE  
How?

YOUNG MAN  
Break in and take them. I can get  
my friend to do it with me - there  
must be valuable stuff in his  
office, right?

THE BLONDE  
He sometimes has money in his safe.

YOUNG MAN  
(shaking his head)  
No, we can't get into a safe -

THE BLONDE  
That's where the pictures are.

YOUNG MAN  
What?

THE BLONDE  
In a manilla envelope in his safe,  
negatives and eight-by-ten prints.

YOUNG MAN  
Then we can't -

THE BLONDE  
I know the combination.

YOUNG MAN  
How?

THE BLONDE  
I've seen him open it a million  
times. I've always figured that I  
might get a chance to lift the  
photos.

YOUNG MAN  
Right, that's what we'll do then.

He gets up and moves on to the bed.

THE BLONDE

Nobody in their right mind would steal from him.

YOUNG MAN

(putting his arms around her)

If we don't get caught it won't make any difference who it was we stole from - and we won't get caught.

He kisses The Blonde. She pulls away to speak.

THE BLONDE

Just promise me one thing. If you get the pictures you'll bring them to me without looking at them, without even opening the envelope.

YOUNG MAN

Of course.

THE BLONDE

I've got your word?

YOUNG MAN

You have my word.

They kiss again.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

The Young Man (short hair, bruised face) has taken his jacket off and is frantically taping bundles of money to his arms and around his waist. He works in a frenzy, ripping masking tape with his teeth, grabbing bundles and slapping them against his stomach. He covers his arms and abdomen, but there's still a lot more money, so he undoes his trousers, pulls them off and frantically starts to tape bundles to his bare legs. His jacket, the manilla envelope and his hammer are sitting on the desk. He grabs a bundle and tapes it to his ankle. He straightens up, looks at the remaining money.

YOUNG MAN

(whisper)

Fuck it.

He takes the tape and passes it around his midriff, securing the bundles which he has already taped to his waist.

As he is doing so the overhead light snaps on and the Young Man freezes.

One of Baldy's business companions is standing in the office doorway, a look of amazement on his face. Neither man moves. The Young Man eyes the hammer on the desk, within easy reach. He grabs it as he launches himself at Baldy's man, trailing bank notes in the air behind him as he flies across the room, hammer raised.

The Young Man brings the hammer down across the other man's head in a nasty sideswipe. The man goes down and doesn't get up. The Young Man moves back to the desk, shocked. He clumsily puts his trousers on over the money, then looks over at the man on the floor as he grabs for his suit jacket. The man is not moving; there is blood on his head and on the floor.

The Young Man gets his jacket on, tears his eyes away from the prone man to realize that he has blood on his hands and now on his previously white shirt. He shudders as he jams the bloody hammer into his waistband, grabs the manilla envelope and heads for the window. A last glance at the prone man before climbing out of the window.

EXT. SIDE STREET - NIGHT

The Young Man practically falls out of the window and on to the ground. He struggles to his feet, weaving like a drunk, and heads away from the office window towards the main street.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Small, cold, dingy.

The Young Man stands in front of the mirror, examining his longish hair and attempt at a beard.

He picks up some nail scissors and starts to cut his hair.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Small, dark, cluttered.

The Young Man is knotting a tie in front of a dusty, cracked mirror. He is wearing a dark suit, old-fashioned and well-worn. His hair is dramatically shorter; a ragged near-crew cut.



He plays with his hair, looking at his reflection. He rubs his newly shaven chin.

Close on the mirror we see that the strip of passport photos of The Blonde are wedged into the bottom right-hand corner of the frame.

The Young Man's eye is caught by the photos and he picks them up, looking closely at them, a thoughtful expression on his face.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lighter. Neater, apart from the paper-covered desk.

The Young Man is on the phone, waiting for it to be picked up at the other end. We hear the click as it is answered.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Yeah?

YOUNG MAN

Cobb? Bill.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Hello, 'Bill'.

CUT TO:

INT. INDISTINCT SURROUNDINGS; A WINDOW COVERED BY A NET CURTAIN - DAY

Cobb is standing by the windows on the phone. He wears a white shirt, unbuttoned.

COBB

What can I do for you?

YOUNG MAN (O.S.)

Nothing too important.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

YOUNG MAN

It's about the stuff.

COBB (O.S.)  
What about it?

The Young Man's other hand comes into frame; he is holding the passport photos as well as some bunched-up silk.

YOUNG MAN  
(staring at the photos)  
I've met a guy - I won't go into details. I'll take care of it myself as you suggested, and you'll get half. I can't promise to get as much as you would but I'd like to give it a go. How does that sound?

COBB (O.S.)  
Sounds fine. Anything else?

YOUNG MAN  
I took your advice.

COBB (O.S.)  
What advice?

YOUNG MAN  
My appearance. I cut my hair, and I'm all dressed up.

COBB (O.S.)  
'With no place to go.'

CUT TO:

INT. BY THE WINDOW - DAY

COBB  
You know I wasn't being entirely serious about that.

YOUNG MAN (O.S.)  
It makes me feel better.

COBB  
Safer, huh?

YOUNG MAN (O.S.)  
Safer. I'll give you a call when I've got the money.

COBB  
Right.

He hangs up. We go wider and see that he is leaning on the windowsill in what appears to be a bedroom. His shirt is completely untucked and unbuttoned.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)  
What was all that about?

COBB  
You.

Cobb's POV shows us The Blonde, lying in bed, under the sheets, but apparently naked.

COBB (CONT'D)  
Your stuff, anyway.

He clambers up on to the bed to lean against the wall beside The Blonde.

COBB (CONT'D)  
He's going to deal with it himself.

The Blonde lays her arm across Cobb's stomach and looks up at him.

THE BLONDE  
Meaning?

COBB  
Meaning he took the bait and he's hooked. He's going to hang on to your stuff, pretend to sell it, give me some money. If you're lucky he might even give you most of it back. It's perfect, the photos worked. I've even got him to cut his hair and change his clothes.

THE BLONDE  
So are you going to tell me where you hid my earring, now?

COBB  
(grinning)  
No. And I wouldn't hold your breath for the return of your underwear, either. He'll be far too embarrassed to admit to stealing your panties.

THE BLONDE  
Shit. And did you have to pretend to break down my door?  
(MORE)

THE BLONDE (CONT'D)  
 Couldn't you have pretended to find  
 the spare key?

COBB  
 (laughing)  
 Couldn't. That would have been  
 three spare keys in a row - even  
 'Bill' isn't going to buy that.  
 When went to his place it was  
 embarrassing - right under the mat,  
 just like I told him... pathetic.  
 It was a new mat as well, and I  
 swear, I seriously think he went  
 out and bought the mat just so he  
 could put his key under it.

The Blonde laughs. Cobb laughs.

FADE TO:

INT. YOUNG MAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

The Young Man is knotting his tie in front of the mirror.

The Blonde is lying on the bed behind him.

THE BLONDE  
 What if he won't help?

YOUNG MAN  
 Then I'll do it on my own.

THE BLONDE  
 How long will you be?

YOUNG MAN  
 Couple of hours.

EXT. CHARING CROSS STATION LEFT-LUGGAGE OFFICE - DAY

The Young Man hands over his ticket and collects the leather holdall.

EXT. HUNGERFORD BRIDGE - DAY

The Young Man crosses south, carrying the leather holdall.

INT. HALLWAY IN A BLOCK OF FLATS - DAY

The Young Man knocks on a door.

The door is opened by Cobb.

COBB  
You're late.  
(noticing the holdall)  
You said you'd fenced it.

He steps back to let the Young Man in.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Comfortable, tastefully furnished.

Cobb is sitting on the couch. The Young Man stands at the window.

COBB  
It'll take me a few days to sell  
all of it.

YOUNG MAN  
Whatever.

COBB  
Something else on your mind?

The Young Man turns to face Cobb.

YOUNG MAN  
I want to break into a place.

COBB  
I've been scouting a couple -

YOUNG MAN  
A particular place. For some  
photos.

COBB  
Photos?

YOUNG MAN  
Photos. For a friend.

COBB  
What's the place?

YOUNG MAN  
Office. In a safe, but we'll have  
the combination.

COBB  
If it's for a friend, where's the  
money in it?

YOUNG MAN  
There's money in the safe...  
probably.

COBB  
Probably? Whose office?

YOUNG MAN  
Club-owner, pornographer type.

COBB  
Heavy?

YOUNG MAN  
From the sound of it.

Cobb exhales. He stares hard at the Young Man.

COBB  
What the fuck's going on?

YOUNG MAN  
I'm seeing someone. They need my  
help.

Cobb stands up and walks over to the Young Man.

COBB  
Who are you seeing?

The Young Man looks away.

COBB (CONT'D)  
(loud)  
Who?! Who are you seeing?!

The Young Man looks into Cobb's eyes.

YOUNG MAN  
The owner of the bag.

COBB  
(confused)  
What?

YOUNG MAN  
The woman who owns the flat we hit -  
the one with the pictures of  
herself.

COBB  
 (barely concealing rage)  
 Tell me you're fucking joking.

YOUNG MAN  
 (excited)  
 Her pictures - I was curious, I followed her, got to know her. She'... she's... she's... we're in love.

COBB  
 You've slept with her?

YOUNG MAN  
 (unaware of Cobb's growing rage)  
 Yeah. She's fantastic, amazing. That's why I haven't sold her stuff, I mean, I thought that I might give it back to her but that would mean -

COBB  
 That would mean telling her that it was you who fucking robbed her! How shrew - How, how, how, prudent of you not to tell her that!

The Young Man is quiet, realizing he has misjudged the situation.

COBB (CONT'D)  
 Nice hair, by the way. And a nice suit, shame about the bloodstains, though.

YOUNG MAN  
 (looks down at himself)  
 Bloodstains?

Cobb punches him in the face then belts him in the stomach. The Young Man doubles over, groaning.

COBB  
 I fucking warned you.

He smiles as he brings his elbows down hard into the Young Man's back. The Young Man grunts and staggers to the side, just keeping on his feet. Cobb pushes him back across the room and charges at him.

COBB (CONT'D)  
 I won't let anyone put me at risk.

As he speaks, Cobb grabs the Young Man's face with one hand and punches him hard in the face several times.

The Young Man slips to the floor, dragging Cobb down with him. The two men scrabble around on the floor, the Young Man putting up a right until Cobb finally swivels round and boots him in the ribs, then the face.

The Young Man groans and bleeds as Cobb staggers to his feet, out of breath. Cobb dusts himself down and does his hair in the mirror.

COBB (CONT'D)  
 (at his reflection)  
 Idiot. How could you be so stupid?  
 (turns to look at the  
 Young Man)  
 You're on your own, Billy-boy.  
 Here...  
 (reaches into his pocket  
 and pulls out a pair of  
 rubber gloves; he tosses  
 them at the Young Man)  
 ... take these. Present from you.  
 To get you started on your new solo  
 career.

He reaches down and pulls the Young Man to his feet. The Young Man's face is a bloody mess. Cobb picks up the rubber gloves and stuffs them into the Young Man's breast pocket.

He drags the Young Man to the door.

COBB (CONT'D)  
 Now, fuck off.

He throws the Young Man out of the door and slams it behind him. He laughs hysterically as he walks back into the living room and we:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. COBB'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cobb is lying on the floor, tossing a golfball into the air and catching it just before it hits his face.

The Blonde is sitting on the couch.

THE BLONDE  
 Did you have to beat him?



COBB  
Did you have to sleep with him?

THE BLONDE  
You told me to.

COBB  
I said you should if you had to,  
that's not the same as telling you  
to.  
(catches the ball and  
looks over)  
Did you enjoy it?

THE BLONDE  
Did you enjoy beating him up?

COBB  
Of course.

The Blonde shakes her head pityingly.

COBB (CONT'D)  
He brought it on himself. He didn't  
have to tell me he was seeing you,  
but once he did I had to react the  
way I would really.

He sits up.

COBB (CONT'D)  
I'm in deep shit, this has to work.

THE BLONDE  
But why are you so sure they think  
you were involved?

COBB  
They've already had me in for  
questioning, for Christ's sake.  
They know my m.o. And it's just a  
matter of time before they find the  
bloke who saw me leave and pull me  
in.

THE BLONDE  
You think he got a good look at  
you?

COBB

No, which is why this will work; all we need is someone else with the same way of working and roughly the same appearance caught in the act.

THE BLONDE

Why can't you just tell them what really happened - that you just found her like that?

COBB

If you'd seen her, you wouldn't even ask. It was horrible, blood everywhere. Her face had been... beaten... almost not human. I'd been in the flat a while, I may have left traces, forensic stuff, I don't know. But she was fresh, she hadn't been dead long, the witness might put me there close enough to the time of death -

THE BLONDE

But if he didn't get the a good look -

COBB

That's not the point! A crime that brutal, an old lady beaten like that... if they think it's me, they'll find a way to make it stick. There has to be someone else - I've told them there's someone else!

THE BLONDE

What if he has an alibi?

COBB

He's a loner, that's why he's so perfect. And he looks so different now that strangers aren't going to remember having seen him. He's our man.

The Blonde and Cobb look at each other.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. NARROW PASSAGEWAY CONNECTING TWO STREETS LIT BY A STREETLIGHT - NIGHT

It is raining.

The Young Man (short shair, shades) stumbles along. His dark suit bulges oddly. He brings his hand up to adjust his shades and we see a fifty-pound note sticking out of his cuff.

He disappears around the corner and we:

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The Young Man has taken his suit off and is removing the money from his body. He is wet, his tie is loose, there is blood on his shirt, he is on the phone.

YOUNG MAN  
(strained, on edge)  
I got it.

THE BLONDE (O.S.)  
You're bringing them to me?

YOUNG MAN  
(bending to remove money  
from his leg)  
I had to stop off to dump the  
money.

THE BLONDE (O.S.)  
Money?

YOUNG MAN  
(giggling)  
Lot of fucking money!

He yelps as he yanks tape from his hairy legs.

THE BLONDE (O.S.)  
What?

YOUNG MAN  
Nothing. I'll be over soon.

THE BLONDE (O.S.)  
So it was OK?

YOUNG MAN  
(a pause, close to tears)  
OK, yeah. I'll be over soon.

He hangs up the phone. He's removed most of the money, but odd bundles hang from his legs and shirt.

He looks at the hammer lying on the floor, blood on it. Next to the hammer lies the manilla envelope.

The Young Man picks up the envelope, pauses for a moment, then rips it open and yanks out the contents: eight-by-ten glossies.

The photos are straight modelling portrait shots of The Blonde - absolutely nothing interesting or remarkable about them whatsoever.

He flips through them again and again looking for some meaning, some super-subtle obscenity he might be missing, a manic desperate look developing on his face.

He flings them across the room, and we:

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE BLONDE'S FLAT

The Young Man looks up at the window. He's not happy.

INT. THE BLONDE'S FRONT HALL - NIGHT

The Blonde moves to answer the door.

The door opens to reveal a wet, bedraggled Young Man, bruises on his face. The Young Man slaps The Blonde hard and walks in past her. She expresses neither pain nor surprise.

THE BLONDE

You promised me you wouldn't look  
in the envelope.

YOUNG MAN

Wasn't sealed, they fell out.

The Blonde stairs at him with a half-smile.

THE BLONDE

Right... They fell out.

The Young Man looks back at her coldly.

YOUNG MAN

Are you going to explain?

The Blonde says nothing.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

(rising anger)

What?! Was it all bullshit just to get the money?

THE BLONDE

(shrugs)

He's never had any in there before.

The Young Man grabs her by the shoulders and shakes her.

YOUNG MAN

What, then?!!

The Blonde puts her hands up defensively to tell him to remove his hands. He does so.

THE BLONDE

(matter-of-factly)

For a friend. The police think he did something which he didn't and he needs a decoy - another likely suspect, someone caught robbing a place the same way he does, using his methods.

YOUNG MAN

His methods?

(truth dawning)

Who's the friend?

THE BLONDE

(mischievous, waiting for a reaction)

Cobb.

The Young Man closes his eyes.

The Blonde turns away.

THE BLONDE (CONT'D)

(straight)

He broke into a flat a couple of weeks ago. Found an old lady who'd been beaten to death. He ran off, somebody saw him and a few days later the police picked him up for questioning. They think he killed her -

YOUNG MAN

(opens eyes)

He probably did.

THE BLONDE

He's a thief, Not a murderer. He told them they had the wrong man, had him confused with another burglar he knew about, one who has the same m.o....you.

YOUNG MAN

Why me?

THE BLONDE

(like it's his own fault)  
You set yourself up for it. Cobb noticed you following him days before he approached you - at first the thought you were the police but then he followed you -

YOUNG MAN

He followed me?

THE BLONDE

(sarcastic)  
He followed you and realized that you were just some... weirdo... waiting to be drawn into it, used.

YOUNG MAN

(asking for it)  
So you and Cobb...

The Blonde shrugs and smiles.

The Young Man slaps the wall hard by the side of The Blonde's head. She doesn't flinch. He turns around, raising his hands in total frustration.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

How could you do this to me? To anyone?

THE BLONDE

It's not that bad. You've got the money. You didn't kill the old woman. You're just there to plant doubt in the minds of the police - they'll never charge you. The idea was that someone would catch you breaking in tonight, the police would pull you in, then ask you about the old lady - which you wouldn't know anything about.

YOUNG MAN

(incredulous)

Yeah, but they'd still charge me with breaking and entering!

THE BLONDE

(amused)

But you did do that. And anyway, for whatever reason, nobody did catch you red-handed.

YOUNG MAN

(wielding the bloody hammer)

He came in, he went down. I didn't hang around to see if he got up.

It's his blood on my hammer.

(smashes hammer into wall)

How could you do this to me?

THE BLONDE

(unimpressed)

It's not personal. When I agreed to it, I didn't even know you.

The Young Man drops the hammer. The Blonde opens her eyes. The Young Man takes a deep breath, regains his composure.

YOUNG MAN

I'm going to the police in the morning.

THE BLONDE

You can't.

YOUNG MAN

I'm going and I'll tell them everything.

THE BLONDE

You can't - they'll never believe you.

YOUNG MAN

I'll tell them everything and they'll believe me because it's the truth.

THE BLONDE

They'll never believe you unless someone backs you up.

YOUNG MAN

You could.

THE BLONDE

I won't.

YOUNG MAN

(confident)

They'll make you. Your lies won't  
hold up against the truth.

The Blonde turns away, shaking her head.

THE BLONDE

You know, I really wouldn't do -

She is cut off by the sound of the door slamming. She turns  
to see that the Young Man is gone.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. ROOM WITH TABLE - DAY

Close on the Young Man (short hair, bruises)

YOUNG MAN

That's it.

Wider shows us a room lit by early morning sun, the Young Man  
seated at a table, an Older Man opposite. Between them on the  
table is a tape recorder. They both look tired. The Older Man  
doesn't speak.

YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

I mean.. If you've got questions..

The Older Man leans forward.

OLDER MAN

One or two.

A pause. The Young Man raises his eyebrows in expectation.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET IN THE WEST END - DAY

Cobb strolls down the street. He is carrying the leather  
holdall.

CUT TO:



INT. ROOM WITH TABLE AND TAPE RECORDER - DAY

OLDER MAN

You see... We don't actually have  
any unsolved murders of old ladies  
right now.

YOUNG MAN

(baffled)  
But there has -

OLDER MAN

(more assertive)  
There is no such ongoing  
investigation.

The Young Man looks confused and scared.

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)

And we don't know this...  
(looks at his notes)  
... 'Cobb' of yours.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLONDE'S FRONT HALL - DAY

The Blonde opens the front door to Cobb and we:

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE BLONDE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Blonde and Cobb are having a drink.

COBB

I warned you he'd look in the  
envelope.

THE BLONDE

He gave me his word. I believed  
him.

COBB

Nothing personal, he couldn't help  
himself - he's a born peeper.  
Anyway, down to business.

THE BLONDE

Business?

Cobb takes a handkerchief out of his pocket and starts to wipe the outside of his glass and we:

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM WITH TABLE - DAY

We move in on the Young Man, puzzled, thinking hard.

OLDER MAN (O.S.)  
Perhaps there's something else  
you'd like to tell me about.

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLONDE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Blonde watches, puzzled as Cobb stretches his rubber gloves and puts them on, interlacing his fingers for a snug fit.

COBB  
Where's the hammer?

THE BLONDE  
Oh, down there in the bag.

She points to a shopping bag on the table across from Cobb. Cobb rises, crosses the room and picks up the bag with his back to The Blonde. She can't see him take it out of the bag and look at the dried blood on its head.

THE BLONDE (CONT'D)  
What are you going to do with it?

COBB  
(his back to her)  
The old man was pretty specific  
about the way I should do things.

THE BLONDE  
(puzzled)  
What's he have to say about it?

COBB  
(turning around, hammer in  
hand)  
Well, he is giving me all the money  
out of his safe.

THE BLONDE  
 (not liking this)  
 Money? What for?

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM WITH TABLE - DAY

Close on the Young Man as he thinks.

The Older Man puts on a pair of rubber surgical gloves.

OLDER MAN (O.S.)  
 Anything at all. Your side of  
 things?

CUT TO:

INT. THE BLONDE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Cobb moves towards The Blonde with the hammer.

COBB  
 (smiling)  
 He says your demands have become  
 unreasonable... too greedy in your  
 blackmail.

THE BLONDE  
 (scared now)  
 But, no - I, I, I don't -

COBB  
 (smiling, soothing)  
 Something about an incident you  
 witnessed in this very room? He was  
 specific about where and how I  
 should take care of things. Some  
 sense of poetic justice, I suppose.

THE BLONDE  
 But I -

COBB  
 Something about a bloodstained  
 carpet you've got stashed away to  
 back up your story, should it ever  
 be told.

The Blonde is crying.

THE BLONDE  
How could you do this to me?

COBB  
(softly)  
Money.

He lunges for The Blonde, grabbing her wrist and pulling her to the floor. He forces her hand flat against the floor and raises the hammer high above his head and we:

CUT TO:

INT. ROOM WITH TABLE - DAY

Close on the Young Man as he realizes something.

YOUNG MAN  
Did you talk to her?

OLDER MAN  
(nods gravely)  
We found her early this morning.

YOUNG MAN  
Found her?

OLDER MAN  
Her body.

The Young Man covers his face with his hands.

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)  
We also found a hammer with two types of blood on it, one type which I assume will match the block you put in the hospital. All of her fingers were smashed - you must have tortured her for the combination.

YOUNG MAN  
NO! I haven't done anything to her!  
Go and pick up Cobb, he did it, he must have done it -

The Older man silences the Young Man by putting a shoebox on the table between them.

OLDER MAN  
(rifling through the contents of the box)  
(MORE)

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)

We found some interesting items at your flat. In addition to the various items which the deceased reported stolen last week, we found several pairs of ladies' underwear - are they hers?

The Young Man says nothing.

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)

I assume so, since they were found stashed with some passport-style photographs of the deceased.

The Young Man closes his eyes.

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)

(pulls a small, clear plastic bag from the box)

We also found this pearl earring.

The Young Man opens his eyes. He looks at the evidence bag which the Older Man is holding out for him to see. Inside it is The Blonde's pearl earring.

OLDER MAN (CONT'D)

It matches the one worn by the deceased at the time of her death. Little trophy?

YOUNG MAN

(desperation)

NO! Cobb planted it! He took it when we broke in - pick him up, I gave you his address, he's the one who killed her - he has to be.

OLDER MAN

We went to the address you gave us. There's no 'Cobb' there. The flat belongs to a...

(checks notes)

... Timothy Kerr. He just got back from holiday and he says that he was robbed while he was away. Not too much was taken... but his new credit card hasn't arrived -

YOUNG MAN

That was Cobb, see?! We used it to buy a meal one time!

The Older Man reaches into the box and pulls out another clear evidence bag. Inside it is a credit card.

OLDER MAN  
We found this at your flat.

YOUNG MAN  
(running out of steam)  
It was... Cobb who stole it...

The Older Man flips the card over to display the signature on the back.

OLDER MAN  
Is this your handwriting?

The Young Man looks at the card in despair.

YOUNG MAN  
(quiet)  
Yes.

CUT TO:

EXT. BUSY WEST END STREET CROWDED WITH PEDESTRIANS - DAY

Cobb comes out of a café and walks away from us down the street.

He stops and looks back towards us over his shoulder as if to check that no one is following him.

Satisfied, he turns back, moves off and is swallowed by the mass of pedestrians, crossing the frame in slo-mo and we:

FADE TO BLACK.