

FUNNY FARM

Screenplay by

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Book by

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FADE IN:

1

INT. SHEA STADIUM - PRESS BOX DAY

1

ANDY FARMER arrives at his station in the press box. He settles in behind his typewriter and takes a few fast gulps of coffee from a styrofoam cup.

Below him, THIRTY THOUSAND FANS watch the New York Mets take on the Philadelphia Phillies.

ANDY (V.O.)

My name is Andy Farmer, and for the last eight years I've been writing a sports column for the world's greatest newspaper, The New York Times.

Andy observes the game for a moment, then his fingers fly into motion on the typewriter keys.

2

INT. A FIFTH GRADE CLASSROOM - DAY

2

ELIZABETH FARMER stands before a well-behaved class of uniformed fifth graders.

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

Elizabeth, my wife, was teaching fifth grade at an exclusive private school on the Upper East Side.

(beat)

I guess you would say we had it made...

3

EXT. MADISON AVENUE - DAY

3

A bus goes by with a SIGN BOARD on the side. It says: "Read Andy Farmer on Sports everyday in the New York Times."

Andy views it with pride from the crowded street corner where he wolfs down a vendor's hot dog while holding a second one in his other hand. He glances impatiently at his watch and looks in all directions.

Elizabeth waves from across the street and hurries towards him. Andy hands her the second hot dog.

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

We were New Yorkers, all right. One hundred percent died-in-the-wool city dwellers.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

ANDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

(beat)

Everything we did, we did on the run. There weren't enough hours in the day.

Andy must hurry off before Elizabeth even has time to finish her hot dog. He kisses her and hails a passing cab.

4 INT. RINGSIDE - MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

4

Andy is seated ringside, covering the fight. Elizabeth occupies the seat next to him, but she is sound asleep on his shoulder.

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

We loved the city life, but we were ready for something else. Not just a change of scenery -- we were looking for a change of heart.

(beat)

And we knew exactly where to find it...

5 INT. FARMER'S APARTMENT

5

A farewell party is in progress.

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

We were moving to the country!

A banner strung across the room reads: "Good Luck Andy and Elizabeth!" Beneath the banner is a FRAMED PHOTO of a charming FARM HOUSE.

FRIENDS and RELATIVES say their good-byes.

6 EXT. A NEW YORK STREET - DAWN

6

A dark green MG ROADSTER, beautifully restored to its original 1955 condition, is parked at the curb.

Andy and Elizabeth emerge excitedly from their apartment building and jump into the car.

7 INT. MG ROADSTER

7

Andy starts the motor.

ANDY

Ready?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Elizabeth gives him an affirmative nod.

ANDY

We're off!

The MG ROARS away from the curb.

8 EXT. PARK AVENUE - DAWN

8

The MG speeds up the avenue. At this hour of the morning, the streets are nearly deserted.

9 CLOSE ON ANDY AND ELIZABETH

9

as they give the empty city streets wistful farewell glances.

10 EXT. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - DAWN

10

The sun is just about to break on the horizon. The city is still asleep. The MG zips across the bridge, leaving Manhattan behind.

11 INT. THE MG - DAWN

11

A MOVING VAN travels across the bridge up ahead.

ANDY

Hey! There's our movers!

Andy speeds up alongside the moving van, HONKS his HORN and waves to the driver.

ANDY

See you there!

12 INT. CAB OF MOVING VAN

12

CROCKER, the driver, looks out the window as the MG flies by.

CROCKER

What was that?

His assistant, MICKEY, just shrugs his shoulders.

13 EXT. A WINDING COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

13

The MG tools down the winding two-lane road. It is a glorious Spring day. Blue skies overhead; gently rolling green hills in all directions.

14 CLOSE ON ANDY BEHIND THE WHEEL

14

drinking in the fresh country air.

ANDY (V.O.)

We plunked down our life savings on a house we found in the countryside of a little town called Redbud. It was love at first sight. The perfect place to write a novel.

(pause)

Yeah, I was stepping up to bat and taking a swing at my first novel. But don't get me wrong, I didn't jump into this with my eyes closed. I had a publisher lined up -- and a cash advance in the bank!

15 EXT. A ROLLING PASTURE - DAY

15

CAMERA PANS across the pasture

ANDY (V.O.)

Ahh... the country!

(beat)

We must have stopped at least a dozen times along the way just so Elizabeth could admire a covered bridge or a weather vane... or simply some cows, grazing in an open field.

CAMERA COMES TO REST ON ANDY

leaning against the top rail of a fence, admiring some cows grazing in an open field as --

16 ELIZABETH

16

waits patiently in the parked MG. SLAP! She swats to death a small insect that has crawled onto her arm.

17 EXT. A SCENIC SPOT - DAY

17

The MG is parked by the side of the road. Andy and Elizabeth sit beneath a shade tree with a large wicker picnic basket open before them.

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

I felt lucky just to be alive.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

17

CONTINUED:

17

ANDY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Not the bad kind of lucky-to-be-alive -- like when you've cheated death in a subway mugging. This was the good kind -- because life was beautiful and filled with promise.

BEGIN TITLES:

18

EXT. A HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - DAY

18

As the MG pulls up the drive toward the house, the MUSIC SWELLS dramatically, reflecting Andy and Elizabeth's heightened state of mind.

The house is picture perfect in every way. A rambling, two-story wood and stone structure, with an expansive covered porch. It's situated on 25 rolling acres that includes a tree-shaded pond.

19

INT. THE MG

19

Andy reaches over and takes Elizabeth's hand in his own.

20

EXT. FRONT YARD OF HOUSE

20

Andy and Elizabeth hop from the MG.

ELIZABETH

Am I crazy, Andy, or is it even prettier than the day we bought it?

ANDY

No. It is!

(sees pond)

Look! The ducks are still here!

ELIZABETH

(laughingly)

Of course they are, Andy. This is where they live.

ANDY

That means they're ours! We own ducks, Elizabeth. We're duck owners!

Elizabeth takes great pleasure in Andy's enthusiasm. Andy strides off toward the pond for a closer look.

21

THE DUCKS

21

(a pair of Mallards) see Andy approaching. They cautiously swim toward the opposite bank of the pond.

22

ANDY

22

looks down at his reflection in the water.

ANDY

Look at that water, honey. I'll bet I could reach in there and pull out a fish with my bare hands!

ELIZABETH

No doubt about it.

He charges off in a new direction.

ANDY

Look!

Andy picks up a PINE CONE from the ground and holds it up for inspection as if it were a rare gem. Elizabeth comes up beside him.

ANDY

(meaning the pine
cone)

This one's a beauty, isn't it?

ELIZABETH

A work of art.

Andy hands the pine cone to Elizabeth for safekeeping, then heads for the porch.

ANDY

Let's go inside!

Elizabeth pockets the pine cone and follows Andy up the porch steps.

23

EXT. FRONT PORCH

23

Andy locates the key on his key ring and the Dutch door swings open. Elizabeth is about to enter when Andy stops her.

ANDY

Wait.

(beat)

This is our first house. Our first real house. I want to carry you in.

Elizabeth thinks it's a sweet thought, so she allows Andy to sweep her up in his arms.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY

Umph.

ELIZABETH

(with an affection-
ate smile)

I heard that.

ANDY

Nonsense. You're as light as
a feather.

To prove his point, he whirls her around in his arms
and -- THONK! -- her head makes solid contact with the
doorjamb.

TITLES END.

Andy steps inside with Elizabeth who is holding her hand
over her cheekbone, suffering in silence.

Andy puts her down and Elizabeth wobbles around as if
she'd just been clipped on the chin with a Mike Tyson
uppercut.

ANDY

Elizabeth! Are you okay? I'm
sorry. Are you okay, honey?

Elizabeth grabs hold of the wall to keep from falling
to the floor. Andy puts his arm around her for support.

ANDY

(softly)

Okay now?

Elizabeth turns her face to him. We see a big ugly red
bump forming under her eye.

ELIZABETH

Just fine.

Andy smiles and turns Elizabeth gently around to face
the living room.

ANDY

Well, Mrs. Farmer... Welcome to
your new home.

25

INT. CAB OF MOVING VAN - TRAVELING - SOMEWHERE IN
THE COUNTRY - DAY

25

Crocker leans over the steering wheel, peering out the windshield.

CROCKER

Let's see the map.

Mickey hands Crocker a homemade map, drawn with a felt pen, marked with X's and arrows. Crocker struggles with it as he drives.

CROCKER

Which way does it go? Which is
North? Where's South? Who drew
this map, anyway!? All the ink's
runnin' together!

The Moving Van hits a deep rut in the road. Crocker and Mickey are jarred right down to their socks by the impact.

Mickey points out the window to an OLD CHARACTER mending a fence by the side of the road.

MICKEY

Let's ask directions.

Crocker applies the brakes and leans out the window.

CROCKER

Hey, Jack! Which way to Redbud?

The Old Character looks up from his work with a suspicious expression.

OLD CHARACTER

How'd you know my name?

CROCKER

(taken aback)

Oh... just guessed.

OLD CHARACTER

Then you can guess the way to
Redbud.

The Old Character turns his back, leaving Crocker to fume in silence.

26

INT. KITCHEN OF COUNTRY HOUSE

26

This is a true "Country Kitchen." Lots of room. Lots of cupboards. Big gas stove.

(CONTINUED)

Andy tests the lights. Is pleased to see them come on. Then he tests the faucet. Water GUSHES out.

Elizabeth has the refrigerator freezer door open. She breaks out a tray of ice and holds a big piece against her swollen cheek.

ANDY

The juice is on. The water's on.
Everything's on track around here.

ELIZABETH

No phone.

ANDY

Huh?

ELIZABETH

There's no phone. They didn't install the phone. They were supposed to install a 'sandstone beige' wall phone right here next to the fridge.

Andy inspects all the walls. Sure enough... no phone.

ANDY

I don't get it. I ordered that phone in writing, a month in advance -- and paid a fifty dollar deposit!

ELIZABETH

Be that as it may, Andy. There is no telephone in this kitchen.

Andy looks momentarily concerned -- but quickly dismisses the feeling.

ANDY

The men and women who settled this land two hundred years ago went their entire lives without a telephone. I guess we can manage for a day or two until we get it straightened out.

ELIZABETH

You're right.

(beat)

I know. Let's get something to eat.

(CONTINUED)

26

CONTINUED: (2)

26

ANDY

You can't be hungry already.

ELIZABETH

We ate hours ago.

ANDY

Okay. How's this sound: As soon as the movers arrive and unload, we'll zip into Redbud for an old-fashioned home-cooked dinner!

ELIZABETH

(grudgingly)

Whatever you say.

As she says this, she begins to eat some of the ice.

27

EXT. A FORK IN THE ROAD - DAY

27

CLOSE ON A ROAD SIGN that reads:

REDBUD 12 MILES

An arrow on the sign points the way. We HEAR a SAW CUTTING WOOD... and the sign CRASHES to the ground.

TWO TEENAGE BOYS are now revealed. One carries a saw. They examine their trophy with appraising expressions.

SECOND TEENAGER

I bet we can trade this for a
'Railroad Crossing.'

The two teenagers disappear into the bushes with the sign. Moments later, the MOVING VAN containing all the Farmer's possessions ROARS by... missing the turn-off... heading into oblivion.

28

INT. THE FARM HOUSE - AN UPSTAIRS ROOM

28

Andy stands in the middle of the room with a big grin on his face. He gestures toward the four bare walls and empty floor.

ANDY

My Writing Room.

Elizabeth regards him with an indulgent smile.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY

Tell me what you think...
(begins to move
around the room as
he talks)

Originally, I thought my desk
should face the window, so I
could look out toward the pond,
and my bookshelves would be over
here. But then I thought, no,
too many distractions, so my desk
should face this way, and then
the bookshelves would go against
that wall there.

(beat)

What do you think?

ELIZABETH

I like it the first way better.
Facing the window.

ANDY

You're right! I like it that way
better, too!

A CHIRPING BIRD is heard out the window.

ANDY

Listen, honey!

Andy goes to the window and looks out.

ANDY

C'mere. Look at this. What is
that? A robin? A finch?

Elizabeth looks out the window.

ELIZABETH

I think it's a sparrow, Andy.

Andy turns away from the window.

ANDY

That's perfect! Isn't that
perfect, Elizabeth?! A bird's
nest right outside my Writing
Room window!

ELIZABETH

I don't think I've ever seen you
this happy before, Andy.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY

Why shouldn't I be happy! Look around us, Elizabeth. Look at what we have. And you know what? The best is yet to come.

He begins to nuzzle her neck. Elizabeth sighs.

ANDY

When's the last time we had hanky-panky in the middle of the day?

ELIZABETH

(after a moment)

Six years ago. When we were both laid up with the flu.

ANDY

That's too long.
(glances around)
Where's the bedroom again?

ELIZABETH

Does it matter?
(pinches his cheek)
Look me up when our brass bed arrives.

She turns to go, but Andy stops her.

ANDY

The settlers two hundred years ago never needed brass beds.

Then: Elizabeth hears something. She shushes Andy.

ELIZABETH

Listen.

Andy cocks his ear. A TRUCK MOTOR can be heard far off in the distance.

ANDY

The movers! They're here!

Andy bolts from the house and runs excitedly down toward the road. Shielding the sun from his eyes with his hand, he looks down the road and sees a cloud of dust approaching.

(CONTINUED)

29

CONTINUED:

29

ANDY

Here they come!

As yet, Andy cannot see the approaching vehicle -- but he sure can HEAR it. It BACKFIRES, KNOCKS, CLANGS, REVS its MOTOR and GRINDS its GEARS, sounding altogether like Rommel's Panzer Division as it moved inexorably across France.

Andy's excited expression fades and is replaced by one of confusion and alarm. He glances back at Elizabeth who is now approaching... then steps into the middle of the road for a better look.

What happens next, happens fast --

30

A BATTERED GREEN PICKUP TRUCK

30

Hurtles over the rise in the road. For Andy, it seems to explode from the blinding sun that now hangs low in the sky.

ELIZABETH (O.S.)

Andy! Look out!

The Pickup Truck bears down on Andy with malicious intent. Its rusted old grill looking like a gap-toothed monster; its driver obscured behind a grease-soiled windshield.

31

ANDY

31

leaps from the truck's path and rolls in the dirt. The Pickup THUNDERS by. And as it passes, a handful of white papers fly from its cab, flutter in the air and land in the thorny bushes by the roadside.

Elizabeth runs to Andy's assistance. She helps him to his feet.

ELIZABETH

Are you all right!?

Andy wears a stunned expression as he brushes the dirt from his clothes.

ANDY

Who was that maniac!?

Elizabeth cautiously enters the thorn bushes to see what was thrown from the cab. She picks up a piece of paper and reads it.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

ANDY

What's it say? 'Get out of town
and stay out'?

ELIZABETH

No... it says: 'Occupant. Route
Two. Dog Creek Road.'

She looks at some of the other white missives, then
glances up at Andy with a deadpan expression.

ELIZABETH

This is mail, Andy.

(beat)

That 'maniac' is our mailman.

She slaps the mail into the palm of Andy's hand.

32

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

32

Crocker and Mickey have stopped to ask directions from
another OLD CODGER they've encountered along the road.

OLD CODGER

... swing around and go back the
way ya came, but this time make
a right turn where the old
Hollenshed barn used to be. Then,
about five miles before the road
dead-ends, ya veer left and follow
the railroad tracks straight into
a town called Beaver Mills.

(beat)

Or... you could take the bridge
up ahead and save yourself a heap
of time...

Hearing this, Crocker throws the Van into gear. As the
Old Codger watches the Van ROAR off, he slowly completes
his thought:

OLD CODGER

(continuing)

... but I wouldn't go that way
if I were you.

33

EXT. A WOODEN BRIDGE - DAY

33

The Moving Van cautiously crosses the old wooden bridge
that spans a shallow stream.

34 INT. THE MOVING VAN

34

Crocker grasps the steering wheel like a shipwrecked man clinging to a life preserver.

CROCKER

This ain't a bridge. It's an army of termites holding hands.

MICKEY

Come on, Crocker. Have a little faith in the craftsmanship of our forefathers. They built these babies to last.

Crocker holds his breath as he inches the mighty truck forward.

35 EXT. THE MOVING VAN

35

Our view is HEAD ON, looking at Crocker and Mickey through the windshield. Now, the truck begins to DROP BELOW FRAME in three separate downward movements -- each one accompanied by the SOUND of CRACKING WOOD.

Crocker and Mickey react.

36 THE MOVING VAN

36

hauls ass in reverse as --

37 THE BRIDGE

37

collapses! Board by board. Like falling dominoes. Starting from the opposite end and working its way toward the fleeing Moving Van. Water SPLASHES. Dust rises. Rats scamper for safety. Birds and bats take to the wing. Boards SNAP. Nails POP. The SOUND is deafening.

After a moment... all evidence of the picturesque old bridge has vanished, leaving the Moving Van perched at the edge of the road.

38 INT. THE MOVING VAN

38

Mickey wipes his brow and emits a low whistle. Crocker pulls a BOTTLE OF TUMS from his pocket and begins to chug-a-lug the tablets.

39 EXT. FRONT PORCH OF HOUSE - NIGHT

39

Andy stands on the porch, peering off into the distance with a dejected expression.

(CONTINUED)

39

CONTINUED:

39

Elizabeth comes out onto the porch and stands beside him. She is eating a banana.

ELIZABETH
(very innocently)
I guess they're not coming today.

Andy gives her a withering look. He wants to say something sarcastic in reply, but restrains himself. Then he notices the banana.

ANDY
Where did you get that?

ELIZABETH
From the picnic basket.

ANDY
Is there anything else?

ELIZABETH
No. This was the last of it.
One banana. That's all.

ANDY
I thought I saw an apple.

ELIZABETH
Nope. Just this.

She refers to the now empty peel, which she discards over her shoulder.

40

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

40

It is pitch dark. We can barely make out the contours of the Moving Van that is parked at the side of the road. A CHORUS of CRICKETS CHIRP in all directions.

41

INT. STORAGE AREA OF VAN

41

Crocker and Mickey try to make themselves comfortable on the boxes and crates that contain the Farmer's possessions. They are not having much success.

In the distance, a WILD ANIMAL HOWLS sending a chill down Crocker's spine. Mickey, meanwhile, takes a final stab at unlocking the secrets of the hand-drawn map.

Using a flashlight for illumination, he turns the map around and around in his hands. Crocker glances over at him.

(CONTINUED)

41

CONTINUED:

41

CROCKER

Be sure to save that map. It
might be the piece of evidence
that gets us off a murder charge.

Mickey lowers the map and turns off the flashlight.

The following is PLAYED OUT IN TOTAL DARKNESS:

MICKEY

Hey, Crocker... you messing with
my foot?

CROCKER

What??

MICKEY

You chewing on my foot?

CROCKER

Of course not!!

MICKEY

(a sick, sinking
tone to his voice)

Oh, lord...

42

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

42

Andy and Elizabeth prepare to spend the night on the
floor in front of the fireplace, where they have made a
small fire from twigs and branches collected from the
yard.

All they have to comfort them is the picnic blanket.
Elizabeth RAPS her knuckles against the oak floor.

ELIZABETH

When they say hardwood floors,
what they really mean is: Hard,
wood floors.

ANDY

Ah, this isn't so bad. We got a
roof over our head and a nice warm
fire. Think about the settlers
two hundred years ago --

ELIZABETH

-- oh, Andy -- shut up!

(CONTINUED)

42

CONTINUED:

42

ANDY
(continuing;
determined to
make his point)
-- they slept under the stars,
they bathed in icy streams --

ELIZABETH
-- and they lived to an average
age of twenty-nine.

Now Andy looks hurt and Elizabeth wants to make it up to him.

ELIZABETH
Come here...

She offers her lap as a pillow for Andy's head. And Andy takes full advantage of the offer. He sighs deeply, and Elizabeth strokes his forehead.

ANDY
These are the times we'll laugh
about later on.

ELIZABETH
Close your eyes. Try to get some
sleep.

Andy closes his eyes. Elizabeth rocks him gently and HUMS a soft lullaby.

43 MOVE IN CLOSE ON ANDY

43

as he drifts off to sleep. Then, we HEAR the RUSTLING OF MATERIAL followed by the SHARP CRUNCH of Elizabeth's teeth biting into a fresh APPLE.

Startled by the sound -- Andy's eyes blink open. Elizabeth immediately begins to stroke his cheek and slumber returns once again to Andy Farmer.

Now, the SOUND of the APPLE being RAVENOUSLY DEVoured.

DISSOLVE TO:

44 EXT. THE FARM HOUSE - DAWN

44

Somewhere in the distance, a ROOSTER CROWS. And the Moving Van pulls into the Farmer's driveway, HONKING its HORN.

45 INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAWN

45

Andy and Elizabeth are awakened by the horn.

(CONTINUED)

45

CONTINUED:

45

Their bodies are contorted in the most uncomfortable looking positions imaginable. They struggle to their feet.

ELIZABETH

(glancing out
the window)

The movers are here.

Elizabeth heads for the door. Andy puts on his shoes and follows. But he only takes a step or two before SLIPPING on Elizabeth's discarded APPLE CORE.

46

EXT. THE FARM HOUSE - DAWN

46

Elizabeth stands on the porch as Andy comes out the door. He gives her a murderous look (his reaction to the apple core) but decides to save his anger for the movers who wait in the truck which is parked in the yard.

ELIZABETH

Be civil.

Andy storms up to the truck and BANGS his fist against the driver's door.

ANDY

Where the hell have you been!?

47

INT. TRUCK'S CAB

47

Crocker and Mickey look bleary-eyed and unshaven; their tempers stretched to the breaking point.

MICKEY

Oh, man.

CROCKER

Did you hear that?

MICKEY

No. I didn't hear a thing.

Andy, outside the truck, continues to RANT.

ANDY

I'll have somebody's ass for this!

CROCKER

Perhaps you heard that?

Mickey makes no reply.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY

You're a day late, damn it!! We had to sleep on the floor last night! Where the hell have you idiots been?!

The vein in Crocker's neck begins to pop out.

CROCKER

Or that?

MICKEY

I heard a little of it.

Crocker REVS the engine. Mickey looks alarmed.

MICKEY

Don't do it, Crocker. Don't ram the house. It'll come out of your paycheck!

ANDY

I've got a contract here!

(unfolds it)

Can either of you two morons read?! It says if you're late, you get a rebate!

Crocker turns to Mickey in disbelief.

MICKEY

I don't know what to say, Crocker. Life goes on. Forgive and forget. Christ, I'm at a loss.

ANDY

(continuing his tirade)

Well, you guys are late! And I want more than a rebate. I want a goddamn refund!

Crocker grips the steering wheel so hard, his knuckles turn white. His jaw is working overtime on a handful of Tums.

ANDY

Somebody answer me!!

Mickey leans across Crocker in order to reply to Andy.

MICKEY

We got lost.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED: (2)

47

ANDY

Lost! Lost?! How could you get
lost!? I drew you a damn map!!

Crocker's eyes widen. He stops chewing. His nostrils
flare. He kills the motor.

48 EXT. THE MOVING VAN

48

The door swings open and Crocker climbs down slowly from
the cab. Mickey comes around from the other side. They
walk wordlessly toward Andy, who momentarily fears a
physical attack. But they go directly past him and slide
open the Van's rear door.

Mickey hops into the storage area as Crocker peers inside
with the attitude of a man selecting a shirt from his
closet.

CROCKER

(pointing)

There.

MICKEY

Good choice.

Mickey picks up a BRAND NEW SOFT-LEATHER OFFICE CHAIR and
hands it down to Crocker. Andy is very pleased by this.

ANDY

Okay! Now we're getting
somewhere. That goes in the
writing room. Second floor.
Last room on the left.

Crocker hoists the chair onto his shoulder. Andy leads
the way toward the house... unaware that Crocker has
veered off in a different direction.

Elizabeth stands on the porch steps wearing a troubled
expression.

ANDY

(to Elizabeth)

Don't worry. Everything's under
control.

Elizabeth points to Crocker who is heading toward the
pond. Andy turns.

ANDY

Hey, fella! Where ya headed? I
said it goes in the writing room!

(CONTINUED)

48

CONTINUED:

48

Crocker pays no attention. Upon reaching the pond, he hurls the chair with a mighty heave. It SPLASHES down about twenty feet from the bank, floats for a moment, then begins to sink.

Both Ducks dive beneath the surface to avoid being struck by any additional furniture that might come their way.

Andy is livid. Outraged. And speechless. Crocker pokes his finger into Andy's chest.

CROCKER

Stay outta our way and keep your mouth shut! None of this, 'Put it in the writing room' shit. We're movers, not decorators. We put the stuff in the house and that's it.

Crocker turns on his heel and marches toward the Van leaving Andy standing alone in the middle of the yard.

He exchanges a helpless look with Elizabeth.

ANDY

Sounds fair.

Crocker and Mickey begin to unload the Van.

ANDY (V.O.)

Once the ground rules had been worked out to everyone's satisfaction, the move proceeded smoothly.

49

EXT. THE FARM HOUSE - DAY

49

The now-empty Moving Van ROARS away from the farm house. So anxious is Crocker to leave, that he drives off without Mickey.

Mickey chases after the Van and manages to leap into the cab as it picks up speed.

50

ANDY AND ELIZABETH

50

stand on the porch, watching the movers depart with expressions of relief. They turn and go into the house.

51

INT. THE FARM HOUSE - DAY

51

Andy and Elizabeth come through the front door. All their possessions have been placed in an ENORMOUS PILE in the center of the living room.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

51

Andy and Elizabeth exchange a look, then begin the process of putting everything away.

52 INT. THE WRITING ROOM - DAY

52

The room is arranged and ready for occupancy. Andy stands and admires it.

ANDY (V.O.)

By mid-week we were all moved in
... and I was ready for work!

Andy lowers himself into his chair. We HEAR a wet-sounding SQUISH. Andy makes a face, then slides up to his IBM Selectric.

Andy is about to roll in a piece of paper when he pauses to listen to the CHIRPING BIRD outside. He gives the bird a wink and turns on his typewriter. It HUMS impatiently.

53 CLOSE ON THE TYPEWRITER

53

Andy types out the following:

The Big Heist
by
Andy Farmer

54 CLOSE ON ANDY

54

He smiles. Very satisfied with his initial effort.

ANDY (V.O.)

I had the whole book worked out in my head. And why not -- I'd been thinking about it for years.

(very confidently)

Four poker buddies from New Jersey plan to knock over a boardwalk casino. 'Perfect Crime' stories are always sure-fire.

ANDY

(as he types)

Page one, chapter one.

55 CLOSE ON THE TYPEWRITER

55

Andy types the very first word of his novel:

The

But then he stops. We wait in suspense for the next word. It doesn't come. We wonder why.

56 CLOSE ON ANDY

56

Chin resting comfortably on chest. He has fallen asleep!

But a GRUNTING SNORE startles him awake. He leaps to his feet and goes to the window for some fresh air.

57 EXT. FRONT YARD - DAY

57

Elizabeth -- who is about to do some gardening -- looks up and sees Andy in the upstairs window.

ELIZABETH

How's it going?

ANDY

Fine, fine. I'm, uh, about to do some character sketches now. You know, really getting to know my characters.

ELIZABETH

That's good.

ANDY

(after a long pause)

Well... back to work.

Andy disappears from the window and Elizabeth returns to her planting. Using a hand trowel, she begins to dig in the earth -- but immediately hits something hard and HOLLOW SOUNDING.

She continues to clear away the dirt with great curiosity, and eventually uncovers something that causes her to stop and GASP.

ELIZABETH

Andy! I need you!

58 INT. THE WRITING ROOM

58

Andy leaps up from his typewriter and goes to the window.

ANDY

What is it?

ELIZABETH

Come down here right away!
Hurry!!

Andy dashes out of the room.

59 INT. ENTRYWAY OF HOUSE

59

Andy stampedes down the stairs and throws open the Dutch door.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED:

59

Only the BOTTOM HALF OPENS, however -- and Andy CREAMS himself on the TOP HALF.

ANDY

Owww! Jeeze!

He reels backwards, holding his hand over his nose. Then, something catches his attention:

60 A TELEPHONE CORD

60

extending from a phone jack on the wall near the floor, running about twelve inches along the baseboard, and disappearing once again into a cupboard behind the opened bottom half of the door.

Andy CLOSES the BOTTOM HALF of the door and gets down on his hands and knees to make a closer inspection of the situation.

61 EXT. THE YARD

61

Elizabeth, meanwhile, runs toward the house from the garden with a terrified expression. She scrambles up the porch steps and throws OPEN the door -- again, only the BOTTOM HALF OPENS -- hitting something on the other side with a LOUD THUD.

62 INT. THE ENTRYWAY

62

Andy kneels on the floor, holding his head where the door's BOTTOM HALF clobbered him.

Elizabeth BANGS open the TOP HALF and enters. Andy looks up at her with a slightly dazed expression.

ANDY

I found the phone, honey...

Andy indicates an old black TELEPHONE ON A ONE FOOT CORD that he has discovered secreted away in the low cupboard.

But Elizabeth isn't interested. She's gulping air, trying to catch her breath.

ANDY

What's the matter?...

ELIZABETH

... in the garden...

ANDY

What?...

(CONTINUED)

62 . CONTINUED:

62

ELIZABETH

In the garden...

ANDY

What about the garden?

ELIZABETH

There's a coffin in the garden!

ANDY

A what?

ELIZABETH

A coffin. A pine box.

(beat)

There's a stiff in our front yard!

ANDY

Are you sure?

ELIZABETH

Yes, I'm sure! Now do something!

(finally acknowledging

Andy's discovery)

Call somebody!

ANDY

Right! I'll call the sheriff!

Andy gets down on his hands and knees and hastily dials the operator.

63

INT. REDBUD TELEPHONE COMPANY OFFICE

63

TWO OPERATORS, one YOUNG the other OLD, sit at their computerized switchboards in the rather cramped office of the Redbud Telephone Company.

YOUNG OP.

(into headset)

Yes, sir. I can connect you with the sheriff's office if you will kindly deposit twenty cents.

(pauses; listens)

You're not?!

The Young Operator turns to the Old Operator.

YOUNG OP.

He says he's not calling from a pay phone.

The Old Operator takes a peek at the other operator's screen.

(CONTINUED)

33

CONTINUED:

63

OLD OP.

He's lying. Tell him to pay up or hang up.

YOUNG OP.

(into headset)

Please, sir. Deposit twenty cents into the slot so that I may complete your call as requested.

64

INT. FARM HOUSE

64

Andy is on the phone.

ANDY

You don't understand. This is Mr. Farmer. We just moved into the old Musselman place. You were supposed to install a wall phone in the kitchen, but that's another problem. Right now we need to --

YOUNG OP. (OVER)

-- please, sir. Just drop a couple of dimes into the slot and I will happily --

ANDY

Slot?! What slot?! Haven't you been listening to me?! This is not a pay phone. This is a goddamn 1948 black table model with a twelve inch cord that some stupid idiot --

65

INT. PHONE OFFICE

65

OLD OP.

(to Young Op.)

Disconnect! Vulgar and abusive language! That's an automatic disconnect!

So saying, the Old Operator hits the appropriate button on the computer terminal and disconnects Andy.

66

INT. THE FARM HOUSE

66

Andy glares at the dead phone in his hand.

ELIZABETH

(firmly)

Call them back.

67 NEW SHOT - ANDY ON THE PHONE (CALL NUMBER TWO)

67

ANDY
(into phone; disguising his voice)
Hello, operator... this is Agent
(mumble-mumble) from the Utilities
Commission. (mumble-mumble)
official business. Please connect
me with the sheriff's office right
away. (mumble-mumble) highest
priority. (mumble-mumble) very
urgent.

68 INT. PHONE COMPANY OFFICE

68

The two operators listen to Andy's routine with very
suspicious expressions.

OLD OP.
(into headset)
Nice try, Mr. Farmer.

She disconnects him.

69 INT. THE FARM HOUSE

69

Andy once again holds a dead phone in his hand.

70 NEW SHOT - ANDY ON THE PHONE (CALL NUMBER THREE)

70

ANDY
Please believe me. I beg of you.
This is not a pay phone. I'm
calling from my living room.

YOUNG OP. (OVER)
(sympathetic)
There's nothing I can do, sir.
We've just switched over to
computers and we haven't worked
out all the bugs yet.

ANDY
(exploding)
Bugs!? Lady, you got the friggin'
Creature from the Black Lagoon in
your lines!

CLICK. The line goes dead.

71 NEW SHOT - ANDY ON THE PHONE (CALL NUMBER FOUR)

71

Andy drops TWO PENNIES into a JELLY JAR, and positions
the receiver to pick up the SOUND. He is certain of
success.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

71

ANDY
 (pleasantly)
 Sheriff's office, please.

72 INT. PHONE COMPANY OFFICE

72

OLD OP.
 (into headset)
 You gotta get up earlier in the morning than that, Farmer. I know the sound of two pennies being dropped into a jelly jar when I hear it.

She disconnects.

73 INT. THE FARM HOUSE

73

Andy is so frustrated, he's ready to pull the phone out of the wall. Elizabeth calms him down.

ELIZABETH
 Let me try to straighten this out.
 Sometimes it takes a woman's touch.

Elizabeth dials the operator.

ELIZABETH
 (into phone)
 Now listen to me! This is Elizabeth Farmer. We have a corpse in our garden! Do you hear me? Now call the Sheriff this very minute!
 (listens; then,
 very sweetly)
 Thank you very much.

74 EXT. THE GARDEN - LATER

74

The COFFIN is being dragged from its shallow grave by a primitive block and tackle arrangement attached to LON and DIRK CRITERION'S flat-bed truck.

Andy and Elizabeth observe the operation in the company of Redbud's SHERIFF LEDBETTER.

LEDBETTER
 Yup. That's a casket, all right.
 (takes a closer look)
 Appears to be a real home-shop project, too. Staples and plywood.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY

Any idea who... you know... who
it is?

LEDBETTER

Maybe.

The Criterion Brothers have the casket almost onto the
truck's bed. The block and tackle CREAK. The casket
sways.

ANDY

(to Lon)

How much is this service gonna
cost me, fellas?

LON

(to Dirk)

Uh, Dirk... what's our charge
for excavatin' mortal remains?

Dirk scratches his head and thinks it over.

DIRK

Guess we better bill 'im
by the pound.

Dirk and Lon now have the casket perched on the edge
of the truck where it rocks precariously.

ANDY

Careful... careful.

And then... the casket falls to the ground.

DIRK

Woops.

It hits the ground OFF SCREEN. But we clearly HEAR
the plywood box SHATTER and the distinct THUD of the
corpse landing in the dirt.

Andy reacts with revulsion at the sight. Even the
Criterion Brothers look a bit put off.

Andy springs towards Elizabeth and covers her eyes with
his hands.

ANDY

Don't look!!

Sheriff Ledbetter, however, being an officer of the
law, is duty-bound to inspect the remains.

(CONTINUED)

He looks down at the OFF-SCREEN BODY then smiles from ear to ear.

LEDBETTER

Lon! Dirk! Come over here and check this out!

Andy and Elizabeth are startled by Ledbetter's delight. The Criterion brothers come up beside the Sheriff.

THE CAMERA ASSUMES THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE BODY if it were able to look up at the three men standing over it. Lon and Dirk react.

LON

It's Claude Musselman!

DIRK

No doubt about it. I recognize the glass eye.

Ledbetter turns away with a gleeful expression, SLAPPING his hands together.

LEDBETTER

I knew it.

(beat)

I always said someday Eula was gonna get fed up with Claude's insults and practical jokes.

Andy and Elizabeth can't believe their ears.

ELIZABETH

Sheriff... what are you saying? We met Eula Musselman. We know her. We bought this house from her. She couldn't have...

Ledbetter gives Elizabeth a devilish look that says, Oh, couldn't she?

ANDY

She said her husband was waiting for her in Florida...

LEDBETTER

(tickled pink)

She did? Ha, ha, ha!

(then; very serious)

Look.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

74

CONTINUED: (3)

74

LEDBETTER (CONT'D)

Claude Musselman was the meanest sonofabitch God ever put on earth, and if Eula packed the old bastard's pipe full of rat poison one quiet Sunday afternoon, all I can say is she did the world a favor.

At this moment, Lon Criterion appears silently at Andy's side. Andy turns to him.

LON

Excuse me, Mr. Farmer... but could I trouble you for a shovel and some plastic garbage bags?

75

EXT. THE FARM HOUSE - LATER

75

Andy, Elizabeth and Sheriff Ledbetter walk away from the garden.

ANDY

Well... thanks for coming out, Sheriff.

LEDBETTER

All in a day's work. Any other problems, just let me know.

ELIZABETH

There is one. The mail delivery.

LEDBETTER

You're on Crum Petree's route, aren't ya? Problem is, by the time he gets all the way out to here, he's pretty well liquored up and pissed off. My advice is, learn to live with it.

ANDY

I'll have a talk with him.

LEDBETTER

(with an amused chuckle)

Yeah. You do that, Mr. Farmer.

(laughing)

You do that! You two have a nice little chat!

(CONTINUED)

75

CONTINUED:

75

Ledbetter is about to climb into his car... which we now realize is actually a REDBUD TAXI CAB. Ledbetter opens the back door, but pauses before entering.

LEDBETTER

Ike! Let's go!

IKE, the cab driver, walks past Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

(to Ike)

Does the Sheriff always drive around in a taxi?

IKE

Ever since he flunked his driving test.

Ike climbs in behind the wheel and SLAMS the door. Ledbetter is already in the back seat. His hand emerges from the window to SLAP a RED BUBBLE LIGHT onto the cab's roof.

Then, the cab SQUEALS away in reverse, raising a cloud of dust, bubble light flashing.

Andy and Elizabeth watch the cab depart with slightly dazed expressions.

76

INT. THE BEDROOM - NIGHT

76

Andy and Elizabeth prepare for sleep. Andy buttons up his pajama top and takes off his watch. Elizabeth pulls back the bedspread.

Neither one says a word -- but their silence speaks volumes. Eventually...

ANDY

Okay. We're both thinking the same thing, so let's get it out in the open.

ELIZABETH

Good idea.

ANDY

You go first.

ELIZABETH

All right... we've had some surprises here...

(CONTINUED)

ANDY

Right. I agree. That's a good word.

(beat)

We found a corpse in our garden but we dealt with it. Didn't we?

ELIZABETH

Yeah. I guess so...

ANDY

It's behind us. It's not like the city where the same problems keep coming at you day after day. Noise. Traffic. Crime.

ELIZABETH

I see what you're saying. Out here, you solve your problems and they're solved forever.

ANDY

Exactly. That's the beauty of country living. You've got some control over your life.

(beat)

Let's see. What other problems do we want to face head on? The telephone. The mail...

ELIZABETH

Everything doesn't have to be perfect, Andy...

(beat)

... All I know is, I love this house... and I love you.

Andy grins. He puts his arms around Elizabeth and they roll back onto the bed.

77

INT. KITCHEN - (NEXT) MORNING

77

Elizabeth wears a Sony Walkman. As she arranges her kitchen, she sings and dances to the MUSIC.

The kitchen floor is Elizabeth's stage, and she really knows how to put on the moves.

78

INT. THE WRITING ROOM - MORNING

78

Andy is behind the typewriter. The SPARROW CHIRPS outside his window. Andy's fingers are poised over the keyboard, but they never actually fly into motion.

(CONTINUED)

78

CONTINUED:

73

Instead, Andy sits back and sips a cup of coffee. Then he leans forward to inspect the paltry few sentences written on the page in the IBM. The SPARROW CHIRPS MERRILY outside the window.

Andy hates what he has written -- we can tell by his expression. And the CHIRPING SPARROW is really getting on his nerves.

Finally, Andy throws his coffee cup out the window... and the CHIRPING STOPS.

79

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

79

Andy enters carrying a fishing rod and reel. He has also changed out of his "writing clothes" and into his "fishing clothes."

Elizabeth still has the Walkman on. Andy taps her on the shoulder. She turns in his direction, but continues to dance. She tries to enlist him. Andy makes a few perfunctory moves then backs off.

ANDY

I'm going fishing.

Elizabeth removes the Walkman headset.

ELIZABETH

Done writing?

ANDY

Taking a break. Thought I'd try my luck down at the pond.

(with a wink)

Maybe catch us some lunch.

ELIZABETH

Great idea. Have fun.

80

EXT. THE POND

80

CLOSE ON THE TWO DUCKS as Andy's bobber SPLASHES between them, nearly scaring them into flight.

81

ANDY

81

stands beneath a shade tree, holding his fishing rod. A net dangles from his belt. The two ducks watch with cautious interest.

The bobber sinks as a fish strikes.

ANDY

Got one!

(CONTINUED)

81

CONTINUED:

81

The pole nearly bends in half under the weight and the line is pulling tight.

ANDY

Heading for the weeds, huh?!
Oh no you don't!

Andy gives the rod an enormous tug -- and SOMETHING HUGE EXPLODES out of the water like a missile shot from a submarine.

The "thing" is just a blur as it speeds through the air heading directly toward Andy's head.

Andy's eyes widen.

ANDY

Oh, Jesus!!

It's a SNAKE! Four feet long and black as night. It hits Andy in the face with a wet THWACK! Wiggling from both ends, it wraps itself around his neck.

Andy lets out a SHRIEK. The Ducks panic -- SPLASHING madly toward the safety of the pond's opposite bank.

ANDY

Get off! Get off!

Andy tries to beat it off with the fishing net but only succeeds in looping the net over his head and the head of the snake.

ANDY

Help! Help!

82

INT. THE KITCHEN

82

Andy's cries go unheard by Elizabeth who continues to dance to the music of her Walkman headset.

83

EXT. THE POND/YARD

83

Andy wrestles with the snake, which has now gotten completely tangled in the net.

Finally -- Andy gets free. The snake falls to the ground and begins to slither around like a big, wet, ugly worm.

Andy tries to flee, but the fishing line has gotten twisted around his leg, and the snake is being dragged along behind him.

ANDY

It's chasing me!!

84 EXT. LONG SHOT - THE YARD 84

Andy running wildly across the yard, dragging the snake.

85 INT. THE KITCHEN 85

Andy dashes past the window, SCREAMING. Elizabeth has her back to the window and doesn't see him. And her Walkman headset still prevents her from hearing anything as well.

Elizabeth turns toward the window just as Andy disappears from sight. But when Elizabeth bends down to search for something under the sink, Andy REAPPEARS IN THE WINDOW -- frantically jumping up and down on the snake.

Elizabeth raises her head at the same moment that Andy DISAPPEARS from view again.

And when Elizabeth turns away from the window, Andy REAPPEARS holding a large rock over his head, which he now drops on the snake.

86 EXT. THE FARM HOUSE 86

Andy leans through the opened upper half of the kitchen Dutch door -- mentally and physically exhausted from his battle with the snake. Hands shaking. Heart pounding. Sweat pouring off his face.

Elizabeth finally catches sight of him. She takes off her headset.

ELIZABETH

Catch anything?

ANDY

Uh, no... not a nibble.

DISSOLVE TO:

87 EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - DAY 87

The Farmers' MG on the road.

88 INT. THE MG 88

Andy and Elizabeth, motoring happily. Elizabeth ties a scarf around her head to keep the wind from whipping her hair around.

ANDY

When we get to town, we should circulate and try to make some friends.

ELIZABETH

Okay. Great idea.

89 EXT. THE TOWN OF REDBUD - DAY

89

The MG drives down Redbud's main street toward the Town Square. Redbud is as quaint and charming as a small town can be.

The MG pulls into one of the many available diagonal parking places adjacent to the Square.

90 ANDY AND ELIZABETH

90

climb from the car and look around them in all directions.

ANDY

Well, this is it. Downtown Redbud.

ELIZABETH

I love it.

ANDY

(pointing off)

Look at that, honey. Old men playing checkers in the town square.

ELIZABETH

Maybe there's an antique shop.

ANDY

Go look. I have to go in here for a few supplies.

Andy indicates the nearby FEED & GRAIN STORE.

91 INT. FEED & GRAIN STORE

91

Andy consults with the STORE CLERK over a BAG OF POWDERED POISON. Andy pours some into the palm of his hand.

ANDY

You say this will kill snakes, huh?

CLERK

Guaranteed.

Andy raises his hand to his nose in order to give the powder a little SNIFF.

CLERK

Better take this --

He slides a SURGICAL MASK across the counter toward Andy.

(CONTINUED)

CLERK

Wear this during the application procedure. Keeps the stuff outta your lungs.

Andy immediately lowers the poison from his face and brushes it quickly from his hands.

CLERK

Goggles are optional since we don't carry 'em. And wait for a day when the air is calm.

ANDY

Is this stuff harmful to ducks, too.

The Clerk seems almost appalled by the question.

CLERK

I can think of a lot more humane way of gettin' rid of ducks than feedin' 'em poison, young man!

ANDY

I don't want to get rid of them. I want to keep them safe.

The Clerk seems relieved to hear this.

CLERK

Wait a minute. I'll check.

The Clerk picks up the phone and dials.

CLERK

(into phone)

Hey, Lester... you know that stuff you put together to kill snakes? Well, what about ducks?

(listens)

Doesn't hurt 'em, huh.

(listens)

But it's death on cows.

(beat)

Well, what about humans?

(listens)

Uh-huh. Well, did he live?

(beat)

Okay. I'll be sure to tell 'im. Thanks, Lester.

The Clerk hangs up the phone. He turns just in time to GLIMPSE ANDY EXITING THE STORE without the poison.

92 EXT. REDBUD PICNIC GROUNDS - DAY

92

A BANNER stretched between two trees proclaims this to be the REDBUD FOUNDER'S DAY PICNIC.

A softball game is in progress.

93 EXT. THE SOFTBALL FIELD - DAY

93

The SCOREBOARD shows a tie score in the sixth inning. An elaborate billboard for "Tuna Boat" Tuna Fish ("Redbud's Favorite!") dominates the center field fence.

Many spectators. Much CHEERING. The PLAYERS on the field (Redbudians all) seem unlikely candidates for anything this athletic -- especially MARION COREY, JR., a mild-mannered lawyer, who is catching behind the plate.

After a moment, Andy steps INTO FRAME. He stands behind the backstop to watch the game. There is a contentment in his expression we haven't seen before as Andy observes the play.

ANGLE ON THE PLAYING FIELD

Marion Corey, Jr. hunkers down behind the plate, flips his face protector down and awaits the pitch.

The UMPIRE calls "strike two!" The Batter (EWELL) scowls and digs in for the next pitch.

Marion Corey, Jr. squats down once again and shoots his signals to the PITCHER. The Pitcher nods and releases the ball.

Perhaps Marion Corey, Jr. called for a "change-up." Who knows, because the ball has been pitched almost straight up in the air -- like a pop fly -- toward the plate.

Marion Corey, Jr. watches it come down. He throws off his catcher's mask and steps forward, standing on home plate.

As the ball comes down, Marion Corey, Jr. prepares to catch it. It is a pitched ball, however, and Ewell decides to swing on it -- totally unaware of Marion Corey, Jr.'s current location.

The aluminum bat WHISTLES through the air and -- BONG!! -- connects with the back of poor Marion Corey, Jr.'s head.

94 CLOSE ON ANDY

94

wincing.

CLOSE ON MARION COREY, JR.

sinking to his knees as the ball trickles away from him.

UMPIRE
Steeee-rike threeee!

Marion Corey, Jr. looks out toward the centerfield fence. The last thing he sees before blacking out is the TUNA BOAT SIGN GOING OUT OF FOCUS.

Then he drops face first into the dirt in front of home plate.

EWELL
Gosh. Sorry, Marion.

FIRST BASE COACH
(to Ewell)
Run! Run, you idiot! He dropped
the third strike!

Ewell lopes off uncertainly toward first base as Marion Corey, Jr.'s teammates -- immobilized to the man by confusion and horror -- stand by and do nothing.

WOMAN IN THE STANDS
Somebody pick up the damn ball!
The ball! Somebody go for the
ball!

Finally catching on, the FIRST BASEMAN (MARCUS) rushes in to pick up the ball.

At the same time, Ewell is rounding third and heading for home.

Marion Corey, Jr.'s body unfortunately covers home plate.

The Crowd FALLS SILENT as Ewell and Marcus race for home.

EWELL SLIDES! -- feet first -- cleats up -- catching
Marion Corey, Jr. in the ribs. MARCUS DIVES! -- the
ball in his outstretched hand SLAMMING into Marion
Corey, Jr.'s groin.

The Crowd MOANS on Marion Corey, Jr.'s behalf.

As the dust clears around the plate, the Umpire inspects the tangled knot of limbs and bodies and makes his call:

UMPIRE
God almighty, Ewell... you're
safe!

MARCUS
The hell he is!

(CONTINUED)

95 CONTINUED:

95

UPROAR! Both benches clear as the field erupts in controversy and disagreement. Somebody waves a RULE BOOK.

96 CLOSE ON ANDY

96

watching the proceedings with an appalled expression.

97 INT. MRS. DINGES' ANTIQUE SHOP - DAY

97

Elizabeth browses through the store, which is actually the first floor of MRS. DINGES' house. The antiques are mostly of the small and fussy variety favored by elderly women.

Mrs. Dinges tags along behind Elizabeth.

MRS. DINGES

If you have any questions, just ask.

Elizabeth picks up and admires a tea cup.

ELIZABETH

This is nice.

MRS. DINGES

Isn't it, though. That belonged to my sister.

(beat)

She's dead.

ELIZABETH

(taken aback)

Oh. Sorry.

Elizabeth quickly puts the cup down, then spots an ancient rocking chair. She rushes to it.

ELIZABETH

I love it!

(beat)

How much are you asking?

MRS. DINGES

That belonged to my husband. It was his favorite chair. He would come home from a hard day on the railroad and just rock and rock.

(she gently rocks the chair with her hand)

I can almost see him in it now.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MRS. DINGES (CONT'D)
(looking up at
Elizabeth)

I don't believe a soul has sat in
this chair since the day he died.

Elizabeth backs away from the chair, then spots an old
Philco radio.

ELIZABETH
Now there's a real collector's
item.

MRS. DINGES
That belonged to my son, Don.

ELIZABETH
(almost afraid to ask)
Dead?

MRS. DINGES
Oh, no. Moved to Arizona.

Elizabeth looks enormously relieved.

ELIZABETH
Thank God. I'll take it. How
much is it?

MRS. DINGES
The radio? Why, I could never
sell that! What if Don came home
and wanted it back?
(beat)
He might show up one of these
Christmases. You always hope.

Elizabeth gives Mrs. Dinges a curious smile, then moves
off to inspect other items in the shop.

MRS. DINGES
You must be new to Redbud.

ELIZABETH
That's right. We just moved up
from New York.

MRS. DINGES
How do you like it so far?

Elizabeth catches sight of something, and she moves
toward it as she answers Mrs. Dinges, her mind not really
on her words.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED: (2)

97

ELIZABETH
(distracted; not
knowing what
she's saying)

We haven't had time to make any
friends or neighbors yet... Other
than that, everything seems to be
going wrong...

Now WE SEE the true object of Elizabeth's attention:

98 A STUFFED SQUIRREL 98

A feisty little beast with a comical expression standing
on its hind legs.

99 ELIZABETH 99

grins at it enigmatically.

100 EXT. PICNIC GROUNDS - DAY 100

Marion Corey, Jr. is being placed inside an AMBULANCE.
A crowd has gathered. Andy is there, too. He stands be-
hind three Redbudians named HANK, PETERBROOK and BROCK.

PETERBROOK
Well, that's that. Forget the
fishing derby, boys.

HANK
How come?!

PETERBROOK
Without Marion, we're a man short.
Rules say four men in a boat.

BROCK
Ya mean, we're disqualified?

Andy can't help but overhear this conversation.

ANDY
Did somebody say "fishing derby"?

They turn slowly to look at Andy. Their expressions are
not friendly... but Andy gives them his warmest smile
nonetheless.

101 EXT. LAKE REDBUD - DOCK AREA - DAY 101

Andy, Hank, Peterbrook and Brock climb into a large in-
board LAPSTRAKE FISHING BOAT that is tied to the dock.
A very jazzy model.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED:

101

All but Andy have number cards pinned to their shirts designating them as TEAM NUMBER THREE. Brock hands a card to Andy who begins to pin it on.

BROCK

Fish much?

ANDY

Every chance I get. What about you?

Andy's good-natured question goes unanswered by Brock, who just fixes Andy with a stoney look of silence.

HANK

Okay -- we're off!

Hank GUNS the engine -- THROWING THE STANDING ANDY OFF THE STERN OF THE BOAT INTO THE WATER!

Peterbrook taps Hank on the shoulder and points aft. Hank looks back and sees Andy SPLUTTERING and treading water.

It is obvious to us that Hank considers all his options before circling back reluctantly for Andy.

102 EXT. OUT ON THE LAKE - DAY

102

Hank, Brock and a sopping Andy -- all facing different directions -- cast out their lines. They unreel from their spools with smooth WHIRRING sounds and the lures PLOP into the water some distance away.

However, as Peterbrook draws back his rod to cast, the dangling lure snags Brock in the neck -- several of the hooks embedding themselves deep into the skin near the jugular vein.

Brock SQUEALS in pain. Drops his rod and grabs his neck. Everyone looks.

PETERBROOK

Jesus, Brock -- I'm sorry!

Brock falls with all his weight to the bottom of the boat, causing the boat to rock violently. Everyone is pitched off balance. Brock HOWLS.

Hank reaches for the line, as if to yank the lure free.

PETERBROOK

No! Don't pull on it! You'll rip his damn veins out!

(CONTINUED)

HANK

He's dying, Peterbrook! He's
dying a slow death.

Hearing this, Brock SCREAMS some more, kicks his feet and
flails his arms.

PETERBROOK

Take it easy, Brock! You're just
making it worse! Let me see it!

BROCK

No! Stay away from me!

PETERBROOK

We've got to get those hooks out!

BROCK

No! Get away! Get away!

HANK

Hold still, Brock! You're bleeding
to death.

Having studied the situation, Andy concludes that the
only chance they have of saving Brock's life is to knock
him unconscious to get the hooks out.

ANDY

I know what to do! Sorry to do
this, Brock, but it's for your own
good.

Andy makes a fist and takes a swing at Brock, missing
him completely.

BROCK

Hey Jesus! Cut it out!

Andy responds with two quick rights and an upper cut.
One punch catches Brock on the ear. The next hits
the top of his head. The third punch glances off his
nose.

BROCK

Bastard!

PETERBROOK

(in awe of Brock)

He's tough.

HANK

This isn't working. You're not
knocking him out, you're only
beating the piss out of him.

(CONTINUED)

BROCK

Sons of bitches!

Blood is pouring from Brock's nose.

ANDY

(imploringly)

Hold still!

PETERBROOK

Sure is tough...

ANDY

Somebody else take a swing.

PETERBROOK

I only hooked him in the neck.
I'm not trying to kill him.

ANDY

At least pull his hands away from
his face!

PETERBROOK

No way!

BROCK

(to Andy)

I'll kill you for this!

In desperation, Andy grabs an OAR. Brock opens his mouth
but doesn't have any screams left.

ANDY

Sorry, Brock. It's the only way.

Andy gives the oar a mighty swing. Brock ducks. The oar
WHISTLES over his head striking Peterbrook and Hank --
WACK! WACK! -- knocking them both into the water.

ANDY

Oh, Christ... sorry, fellas!
Lemme give you a hand.

Hank and Peterbrook climb back into the boat without
Andy's assistance.

BROCK

Hey, look!

All turn to see that the fishing lure has shaken loose
from Brock's neck.

BROCK

It fell out.

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED: (3)

102

Brock, Hank and Peterbrook now turn to Andy with ominous expressions.

ANDY

No need to thank me.

They move toward him menacingly.

ANDY

I was only trying to help.

They continue to advance.

ANDY

If you come to get me I'll be ready. I don't work. I don't sleep.

They are about to grab Andy, but he slips away at the last second, dives into the lake and heads for shore.

103 EXT. THE PICNIC GROUNDS - DOCK AREA - DAY

103

Elizabeth drives up in the MG. She gets out and glances across the lake. Behind her, a car marked COONFIELD'S DRIVING SCHOOL SQUEALS into the parking lot, jumps a curb, scatters several bystanders and comes to rest with its front wheels in the shallow water.

Sheriff Ledbetter climbs out from behind the wheel. The DRIVING INSTRUCTOR takes his place.

INSTRUCTOR

Try again tomorrow, Sheriff?

Ledbetter ignores him. He strides over to Elizabeth.

LEDBETTER

(touching his
hat brim)

Mrs. Farmer.

Elizabeth turns away from the lake to face Ledbetter.

ELIZABETH

Oh, hello, Sheriff.

LEDBETTER

Got something here for you, ma'am.

ELIZABETH

What is it?

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

LEDBETTER

The bill for Claude Musselman's funeral.

Elizabeth looks at the bill and her jaw drops.

ELIZABETH

Are you serious? This bill is for four-thousand dollars!!

LEDBETTER

(defensively)

I'd call it a bargain. He got the most scenic plot at Memorial Cemetery.

ELIZABETH

For four thousand dollars, we could've had him mounted over the fireplace!

LEDBETTER

I thought you'd want to give him the best burial money could buy.

ELIZABETH

Frankly, Sheriff, I don't see how this is even our responsibility in the first place...

Elizabeth glances over Ledbetter's shoulder and catches sight of:

104 ANDY

104

rising from the lake's shallow waters. Dripping wet. Lily pads hanging from his arms and neck. His mood foul; his expression sour.

He marches grimly past Elizabeth and Ledbetter without giving them so much as a look. His shoes SQUISHING loudly.

He plops himself down in the passenger seat of the MG, crosses his arms, and waits to be whisked off.

ELIZABETH

(to Ledbetter)

Can we discuss this some other time?

LEDBETTER

If you like.

(CONTINUED)

104

CONTINUED:

104

ELIZABETH

I'll take it up with my husband
the moment he dries out.

Elizabeth heads for the MG.

LEDBETTER

(calling after her)

Just remember, Mrs. Farmer, when
you buy a house, what's in the
ground belongs to you. Whether
it's gold... or oil... or Claude
Musselman.

105

EXT. ROAD LEADING AWAY FROM REDBUD - DAY

105

The MG zips out of town.

106

INT. THE MG

106

Elizabeth behind the wheel. Andy in the passenger seat;
dripping wet; reading the bill from Memorial Cemetery.

ANDY

Four thousand dollars!

ELIZABETH

It's itemized.

ANDY

(reading)

Argentine wood casket, fourteen
hundred dollars. Italian marble
headstone, twelve hundred dollars.
Reverend Cobb's sermon, one
hundred and twenty-five dollars.
Traffic control! -- One hundred
and fifty dollars!

(rips up the bill)

So much for getting out and making
friends.

ELIZABETH

(after a long silence)

Want to tell me about it?

ANDY

No.

He looks straight ahead, silent and glum. Then sees a
SIGN that reads:

DOGS FOR SALE
ALL BREEDS

(CONTINUED)

106

CONTINUED:

106

ANDY
(excitedly)
Hey! Stop the car! Go back!

Elizabeth looks perplexed, but she hits the brakes, puts the car in reverse and backs up. Andy points to the sign.

ANDY
If I can't make a friend, I'll
goddamn buy one!

CUT TO:

107

INT. THE MG - TRAVELING

107

Andy and Elizabeth in the car as before... only now a big, slobbering, frisky IRISH SETTER sits between them. Andy smiles proudly. Elizabeth looks unconvinced. The Irish Setter pants nervously, tongue hanging out about two feet.

108

EXT. THE FARM HOUSE - DAY

108

The MG pulls up to the house. Andy leaps from the car, holding the door open for the Irish Setter.

ANDY
Your new home, boy! How do you
like it?

The Setter bounds across the hood of the car and begins to prance around the yard with tremendous exuberance.

ANDY
That's one high-spirited animal!

109

THE SETTER

109

paces to the pond, splashes into the water after the ducks. The ducks paddle madly to the opposite bank.

The Setter takes off in a new direction, sprinting through tall grass with lengthening strides -- its coat glistening in the sun.

110

ANDY AND ELIZABETH

110

watch it with near-parental pride.

ANDY
Hell of a dog!

ELIZABETH
It sure likes to run.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

110

And then it dawns on them that the Setter is running away -- and they are helpless to do anything but watch.

ANDY

Hey! No! Wait! Come back!
Hey... dog. Come back...

After a moment, he is gone forever. Elizabeth and Andy exchange a look.

ELIZABETH

Maybe our homeowner's policy will cover it.

ANDY

Stay here!

Andy leaps into the MG and BURNS RUBBER as he chases after the dog. Elizabeth watches him vanish down the road, then she walks toward the house.

DISSOLVE TO:

111 EXT. THE FARM HOUSE - DUSK

111

Andy returns. It is now dusk. Andy climbs from the car, the slope of his shoulders indicating a lost cause. Elizabeth sits on the porch, rocking grimly.

Andy approaches.

ELIZABETH

Well?

ANDY

(shaking his head)

Vanished without a trace. I must have covered ten square miles. I don't see how a dog can just disappear like that.

ELIZABETH

Maybe something ate it.

ANDY

This has been one hell of a day.

ELIZABETH

And it isn't over yet.

Andy gives her an inquiring look.

ELIZABETH

They installed the kitchen phone while we were gone.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

Andy heads toward the front door.

ANDY

Well, thank God something's gone
right today. Does it work?

112 INT. THE ENTRYWAY

112

Andy and Elizabeth enter the house and walk toward the
kitchen.

ELIZABETH

I didn't try it.

ANDY

Why not?

113 INT. THE KITCHEN

113

Andy enters and stops in his tracks: A PAYPHONE has been
installed on the wall. Elizabeth comes up behind him.

ELIZABETH

No change.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

In which summer passes into fall:

114 INT. THE WRITING ROOM

114

Andy flips the wall calendar to the month of November.
The 15th is circled in red. In big, bold letters, Andy
has written:

DEADLINE! FIRST TEN CHAPTERS!

Clearly, the approaching deadline fills him with dread.

115 INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

115

Elizabeth chats away contentedly on the payphone, the
receiver balanced between shoulder and chin as she pumps
coin after coin into the slot.

116 INT. THE WRITING ROOM

116

Andy works feverishly on his novel. CAMERA MOVES IN
CLOSE on him as Petree's truck can be HEARD APPROACHING
in the distance. Andy begins to twitch... much like
Captain Hook reacting to the ticking clock.

117 INT. THE STAIRCASE

117

Andy dashes down the stairs, heading for the front door. Without missing a step, he snatches up a sign that has been strategically placed in the entryway.

118 EXT. THE HOUSE

118

Andy tears down the driveway toward the road holding the sign.

As Petree's Green Pickup Truck approaches, Andy raises a sign, which reads: PLEASE STOP!

But the sign has the reverse effect. The Pickup ROARS by with such speed that Andy's jacket flies up in his face. Letters flutter into the bushes.

ANDY

(shaking his fist)

I'm not giving up! I'll never
give up!

We HEAR the distant sound of PETREE CACKLING. Andy begins to collect the mail, of which one piece is a bill from Memorial Cemetery that has DELINQUENCY NOTICE stamped on it.

Andy tears it up into very small pieces.

119 INT. THE KITCHEN

119

Elizabeth turns away from the window where she has just witnessed Andy's failed attempt at stopping Petree.

Wearing a thoughtful expression, she begins to write long-hand in a YELLOW LEGAL PAD. Then, she looks up with a smile.

120 EXT. MRS. DINGES' ANTIQUE SHOP

120

CAMERA WAITS OUTSIDE AND LOOKS IN as Elizabeth enters the shop and talks to Mrs. Dinges. Elizabeth points to something on a high shelf. Mrs. Dinges gladly takes down the STUFFED SQUIRREL and hands it to her.

121 INT. REDBUD BARBER SHOP

121

Andy enters. The BARBER has his back turned to us. Andy slips into the vacant chair and closes his eyes with a relaxed sigh.

ANDY

Just an old-fashioned shave,
please.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

BARBER (O.S.)

Sure thing. Make yourself
comfortable.

We HEAR the STROPPING of the RAZOR. Something about the barber's voice stirs Andy's memory. He opens his eyes to see that the barber looming over him with a gleaming razor in his hand is Brock! His old fishing buddy.

ANDY

On second thought, I'm thinking
of growing a beard!

Andy leaps from the chair and dashes out the door.

122 EXT. THE POND

122

The Ducks take to the wing. Andy watches them; his expression communicating his great respect for the workings of Nature. Elizabeth is by his side.

ANDY

Time to head south, hey? Good
luck to you, old friends. See
you in the spring.

As the Ducks fly away, Andy's reverential expression quickly vanishes. He cups his hands to his mouth and yells after them:

ANDY

(pointing the
opposite direction)
South is that way!

123 EXT. THE WRITING ROOM - NIGHT

123

Andy burns the midnight oil.

124 EXT. THE YARD - DAY

124

As Andy brings an armload of firewood into the house, he is startled to see:

125 THE IRISH SETTER

125

racing across the horizon far in the distance, BAYING
LOUDLY.

126 EXT. GRASSY HILL ABOVE FARM HOUSE - DAY

126

Elizabeth sits under a tree writing on a yellow legal pad. A breeze rustles the tall grass around her and leaves begin to fall from the tree.

(CONTINUED)

126 CONTINUED: 126

Elizabeth turns up the collar of her sweater and continues to write in the pad.

127 INT. THE WRITING ROOM - DUSK 127

Andy leans back in his chair with a look of exhaustion. The completed pages of his manuscript are piled on the desk before him.

128 EXT. THE FARM HOUSE - DUSK 128

Autumn has arrived. Lights glow from within. Smoke curls from the chimney. A pumpkin on the porch and Indian corn hanging from the door.

END OF MONTAGE

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

129 INT. LIVING ROOM OF FARM HOUSE - EVENING 129

Andy, dressed in a suit, checks his tie in the entryway mirror. He hears Elizabeth coming down the stairs and turns.

She looks beautiful. Andy smiles.

ANDY

Happy anniversary.

He gives her a kiss.

ELIZABETH

I have something for you.

ANDY

So do I. It's right here.

He excitedly picks up a small wrapped box from the table.

ANDY

But I'm saving it for later.

ELIZABETH

Mine's on the porch -- and you can have it now.

(beat)

Wait here.

Elizabeth opens the door -- disappears for a moment -- then reappears dragging a BIG FAT YELLOW DOG by the scruff of its neck.

(CONTINUED)

129 CONTINUED:

129

She literally has to drag the dog into the house.

ELIZABETH

Happy anniversary, sweetheart.

Andy isn't sure what to say.

ANDY

Uh... is it alive?

ELIZABETH

Would I buy a dog if I thought it was dead?

Elizabeth looks at it closely -- sees its chest expand and contract.

ELIZABETH

See? -- It's breathing.
(beat)

This one is guaranteed not to run away.

ANDY

(deadpan)

Did you get it in writing?

Elizabeth looks disappointed.

ELIZABETH

You don't like him.

Andy grins and bends down to stroke the dog's coat.

ANDY

Are you kidding? I love him!
What's his name?

ELIZABETH

That's up to you.

ANDY

(thinks about it)
I'll just call him Yellow Dog for now.

130 EXT. THE PORCH - EVENING

130

Andy and Elizabeth emerge from the house. Andy has a departing word for Yellow Dog who is fast asleep on the floor inside:

ANDY

Stay.

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED:

130

Andy and Elizabeth go down porch steps toward the car.

ANDY

I've made reservations for us at
one of Redbud's most popular
eateries.

131 EXT. IVY'S CAFE - NIGHT

131

The Farmer's MG is parked outside.

132 INT. IVY'S CAFE

132

Andy and Elizabeth sit at the counter enjoying what
looks to be a terrific home-cooked meal. IVY, the
owner, sweats over the hot griddle.

ANDY

This is the real thing, Elizabeth.
The atmosphere. The food. It's
perfect. We should have come
here sooner.

Andy returns to his meal of Lamb Fries.

ELIZABETH

You sure love those lamb fries.

ANDY

In fact --

(turns toward
Ivy)

Another order, please, Ivy.

IVY

Comin' up.

ELIZABETH

Andy, that's your third order.

ANDY

I'm hooked, Elizabeth. Call me
Mr. Lamb Fries.

A local named OATES laughs at Andy's remark, then
slides over a couple stools to be next to him.

OATES

Now there's a man who knows
when he's got something good
in his mouth.

(CONTINUED)

132

CONTINUED:

132

As he says this, Oates helps himself to one of Elizabeth's biscuits and drags it through Andy's gravy.

Ivy sets a heaping plate of lamb fries in front of Andy.

IVY

Polish this off, and ya break the record.

She indicates a chalk board hanging behind her with the number "28" written on it. Andy glances at it confidently.

ANDY

Stand back! The record falls tonight!

OATES

Hot damn!

Andy digs into the lamb fries. Oates watches him with great interest.

OATES

(to Ivy)
Lookit 'im go!

IVY

(to Oates)
I believe he's right. I believe the record will fall tonight.

(to Elizabeth)

It's stood at 28 for nearly two years now.

ELIZABETH

(impressed)
That long.
(to Andy)
Go for it, Andrew!

Andy wolfs down the order, eager to break the record.

IVY

Well... that's it! The new record!

The OTHER CUSTOMERS in the cafe give Andy a standing ovation. Ivy erases the "28" and replaces it with a "32." Andy spins around on his stool, wipes his mouth and beams with pride. Elizabeth gives him a kiss on the cheek.

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED: (2)

132

IVY

I thought that record was
gonna stand forever...

(beat)

Most folks just don't seem
to have a taste for testicles
no more.

Elizabeth and Andy react.

ELIZABETH

(in a whisper)

Testicles??...

OATES

(to Ivy)

Tell 'em why yours are so
tasty.

IVY

The trick is, clippin' 'em
off way up high.

She makes a clipping gesture with her fingers. Andy
puts his hand over his mouth, makes a MUFFLED GAGGING
sound and turns white.

Oates scoots away.

OATES

Uh-oh. Looks like we got some
trouble here.

Andy climbs from his stool and staggers toward the door,
BANGING into tables as he goes. Elizabeth charges after
him.

OATES

(to Ivy)

I knew you shoulda explained
those things better on the
menu.

133 EXT. SID'S ALPINE VILLAGE - NIGHT

133

A complex of small cottages all lined up in a row.
Andy and Elizabeth drive up and park next to the Office.

134 INT. THE MG

134

Elizabeth looks confused.

ELIZABETH

What's this?

(CONTINUED)

134

CONTINUED:

134

ANDY

Oh, just part of your anniversary present. I thought we could use a night away from home.

Elizabeth looks at him with a concerned expression.

ELIZABETH

Are you sure you're feeling better now?

ANDY

Yeah. I feel fine. Come on. Let's go.

Andy hops out of the car.

ELIZABETH

I didn't pack anything.

Andy proudly produces an over-night case from the area behind the front seats. Elizabeth looks pleased with him.

135

INT. OFFICE OF SID'S ALPINE VILLAGE - NIGHT

135

SID is behind the counter. Andy registers.

SID

Got plenty of cottages available tonight. Would you like the "Yankee Zyphyr"? Or how about the "Twentieth Century Limited"?

ELIZABETH

They're all named after trains?

SID

Yeah. It's our new theme. How do you like it? The Alpine Village thing was gettin' kinda stale. So I thought: Hey, why not go with the obvious?

ANDY

Trains?

SID

Right. What could be more logical?

Andy and Elizabeth exchange a confused glance. Sid spins the register around and looks at the name.

(CONTINUED)

SID

Holy Jeeze! Farmer?!

(beat)

Not Andy Farmer? The man who
broke the lamb fry record
down at Ivy's Cafe tonight?

ELIZABETH

Word travels fast.

SID

Thirty-one, was it?

ANDY

(proud)

Thirty-two.

SID

I'm givin' you the best cottage
of the bunch.

(beat)

How's "The Orient Express"
sound?

ELIZABETH

(looking at Andy)

It sounds romantic.

SID

O.E. It is.

He BANGS a big, heavy DOORKNOB down on the counter. Andy
looks taken aback.

SID

People used to steal the keys.
but I haven't lost a doorknob yet.

136

INT. THE "ORIENT EXPRESS" COTTAGE - NIGHT

136

Nothing inside the cottage suggests the Orient Express or
anything close to it.

ANDY

This is the Orient Express
cottage? I don't get it.

ELIZABETH

It doesn't matter. It's clean
and cozy...

(sees the fireplace)

We can make a fire...

ANDY

First open this.

(CONTINUED)

He hands her a gift-wrapped box. Elizabeth eagerly pulls off the ribbon and paper and opens the lid. She seems surprised to find a thin MANUSCRIPT inside.

ANDY

It's my novel, Elizabeth. The first few chapters, anyway.

Elizabeth seems touched -- but also a bit apprehensive.

ELIZABETH

Oh, Andy...

They now become aware of a NOISE building in the DISTANCE. A low, ominous RUMBLE that is rapidly becoming an EAR-SHATTERING ROAR accompanied by a SHRILL WHISTLE.

The cottage begins to SHAKE. Windows RATTLE. Furniture VIBRATES.

"I LOVE
LUCKY"
steal

Andy throws back the window curtain to see a FREIGHT TRAIN THUNDERING by within several feet of the cottage's rear wall.

Mercifully, it is a short train and the SOUND quickly subsides.

Andy and Elizabeth are left with stupefied expressions and ringing ears. But then... Andy smiles.

ANDY

Nothing is going to spoil this evening for me, Elizabeth! Not lamb fries or trains right outside my window!

(beat)

That manuscript, Elizabeth, is why we moved to the country. It validates our decision.

ELIZABETH

(delighted)

It's good?! You really think it's good?!

ANDY

Read it and tell me.

Elizabeth wears a blank, frozen smile. Overwhelmed by the responsibility.

ELIZABETH

Now? Tonight?...

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED: (2)

136

ANDY

Yes. Of course.

Elizabeth looks down at the manuscript, then back up at Andy.

ELIZABETH

With you watching me?

ANDY

I'll be very quiet. I promise.
Go ahead...

Andy can barely contain his excitement as he anticipates Elizabeth's reaction. His own expression mirrors all the delight and amusement he assumes she is feeling.

She reads the first page impassively, then turns to the second.

ANDY

You didn't laugh. Didn't you
think it was funny?

ELIZABETH

You mean, the first page?

ANDY

Yes! There were at least three
big laughs on that one page
alone.

ELIZABETH

Andy...

ANDY

Okay, okay. I'm sorry. Read the
next page. It gets funnier.

ELIZABETH

Is this a comedy? I thought it
was... you know... "action-
adventure."

ANDY

It is! It's all three! Go ahead
-- read!

Elizabeth starts to read again, but it's impossible with Andy looking over her shoulder, GIGGLING softly.

ELIZABETH

Andy... let me read this at
home... I can't --

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED: (3)

136

ANDY

-- you can't read with me here. I understand. I'll leave.

Andy jumps up from the bed and grabs his coat.

ELIZABETH

Andy, wait --

Then: ANOTHER TRAIN is heard APPROACHING in the distance.

ELIZABETH

Here comes another one.

ANDY

Ignore it!

ELIZABETH

But --

ANDY

-- read, Elizabeth. Read! I'll bring back some champagne.

(beat)

We'll celebrate!

Andy goes out the door before Elizabeth can object. She settles back with the manuscript just as the TRAIN PASSES -- with the same effect as before.

Elizabeth tries to ignore it as Andy suggested, but it's just not possible. She closes her eyes tightly to shut it all out.

Andy, meanwhile, can be seen OUT THE WINDOW. He peeks in and continues to read over Elizabeth's shoulder. He laughs at something he has written, then disappears into the darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

137 INT. THE COTTAGE - LATER

137

Andy sits on the bed, patiently waiting for Elizabeth's verdict. A BOTTLE OF CHAMPAGNE chills at the ready.

Elizabeth lowers the final page and looks at Andy.

ELIZABETH

It's good. It's... really good.
I like it.

ANDY

Do you?

(CONTINUED)

137 CONTINUED:

137

ELIZABETH

Yes. Very much.
(long pause)
Of course...

ANDY

Of course, what?...

ELIZABETH

It needs work.

ANDY

Of course.
(long pause)
But not a lot of work.

ELIZABETH

Some work. Some revisions. You know, some rewriting.

ANDY

But you like it?

ELIZABETH

I said I liked it.

ANDY

Because I'm starting to pick up that maybe you really don't like it that much.

ELIZABETH

No. I like it. You've made a good start.

ANDY

A good start? Why don't you just say what you mean?

ELIZABETH

Well... it's all those flashbacks. What you need to do is start at the beginning and write a simple story.

ANDY

Writing is hard work, Elizabeth.
Terrifyingly hard work.

ELIZABETH

(starting to lose
her composure)

I don't know when anything is taking place.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

In the first twenty pages alone I counted three flashbacks, a flash forward, and on page eight, I think you have a flash sideways.

ANDY

I see. I suppose you don't like the idea of a perfect crime, either?

Elizabeth sadly shakes her head, no.

ANDY

So what are you saying I should do?

ELIZABETH

(with a WAIL as she bursts into tears)

Burn it!

Andy is shocked. Elizabeth looks at him through tear-filled eyes.

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry.

Andy seethes with feelings of betrayal. He angrily grabs the pages out of Elizabeth's hand.

ANDY

You don't know what the hell you're talking about!

ELIZABETH

Thanks.

ANDY

You don't know a damn thing about writing.

ELIZABETH

I certainly do.

ANDY

You're a goddamn schoolteacher, not an editor!

ELIZABETH

That's obvious! An editor would have stopped reading on page one!

Andy makes a fist. Elizabeth sticks out her chin.

(CONTINUED)

137 CONTINUED: (3)

137

ELIZABETH

Go ahead! Put me out of my misery.

Andy looks as if he might as a THIRD TRAIN APPROACHES.

CLACKITY-CLACK! CLACKITY-CLACK! WHISTLE SCREAMING.
Windows RATTLING. A chair dances across the floor.
Walls SHAKE. The doorknob falls from its hole and BANGS
to the floor.

Trying to talk (or even yell) over the DIN of the PASSING
TRAIN appears useless.

Andy POPS open the champagne and takes a hit directly
from the bottle. Elizabeth glares at him hatefully.

138 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

138

The MG with Andy and Elizabeth inside speeds down the
road.

139 INT. THE MG

139

Andy and Elizabeth drive in silence. Finally, Andy
breaks the ice.

ANDY

I'm sorry about the way I acted
last night. You were just being
honest. And it's encouraged me to
try harder and to do better.

(beat)

And for that, I thank you.

He snakes his arm around Elizabeth's shoulder. She gives
him a loving smile, and rests her head on his arm.

All is forgiven. And then:

ELIZABETH

Andy! Look out!!

140 EXT. A FIELD - DAY

140

Two Teenage Boys (the same two seen earlier) carry a
DANGEROUS CURVE sign away from the road.

In the b.g., the AIRBORNE MG FLIES ACROSS THE FRAME
several feet off the ground and CRASHES OFF SCREEN.

FIRST TEENAGER

Look what you did.

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED:

140

SECOND TEENAGER

Me? You unscrewed the bolts.

FIRST TEENAGER

Think we should put it back?

SECOND TEENAGER

Are you nuts? This sign is mint!
There's not a bullet hole in it.

141 EXT. A WEED-FILLED GULLY

141

As the dust settles, we see that Elizabeth is all right, Andy's head is resting against the steering wheel and the MG is a wreck.

ELIZABETH

Andy! Are you all right!

Elizabeth pulls Andy's head back. He has a huge bump on his forehead and a glazed look in his eyes. His head falls back against the headrest. He WINCES in pain, and grabs his SHOULDER.

142 EXT. THE ROAD

142

An AMBULANCE speeds to the rescue.

143 EXT. THE GULLY

143

Andy is propped up against a tree trunk in a seated position. He cradles his injured arm with his good one.

144 EXT. THE ROAD

144

As the AMBULANCE arrives, Elizabeth rushes to meet it. It SKIDS to a stop.

ELIZABETH

This way! Hurry!

STAN and MORT leap from the ambulance. Elizabeth runs toward Andy. Stan and Mort begin to follow -- then STOP DEAD IN THEIR TRACKS.

Elizabeth looks at them in disbelief.

ELIZABETH

What are you doing!? He's down there! Let's go!

MORT

Sorry, ma'am...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MORT (CONT'D)
(indicates an
imaginary line
on the ground)
... County line ends right here,
and our franchise ends at the
county line.

Elizabeth now notices a COUNTY LINE SIGN by the roadside.

STAN
(pointing)
That, over there, is Walnut
County. This, over here, is
Matson County.

MORT
(helpfully)
You drag your husband's butt over
here into Matson County, and we'll
be glad to render all the competent
emergency medical care you need.

ELIZABETH
You can't be serious!

STAN
We could lose our franchise!
How's that for serious?

Elizabeth's eyes narrow.

ELIZABETH
All right... what's your price?
How much do you want? We've got
a hundred dollars in cash on us,
but I can write you a check if
that's not enough.

Stan and Mort regard her with expressions of moral
outrage.

MORT
You can't buy us!

STAN
We're not for sale!

MORT
We're doctors!

STAN
(to Mort; under
his breath)
No we're not.

(CONTINUED)

144 CONTINUED: (2)

144

Elizabeth fixes Stan and Mort with a withering look.

ELIZABETH
(through clenched
teeth)

Wait right here.

She spins on her heels and storms off toward Andy. Stan and Mort turn to each other and justify their actions.

STAN
Rules are rules.

MORT
Our hands are tied.

145 EXT. THE GULLY

145

Elizabeth arrives. Andy looks up at her weakly.

ANDY
Are they getting a stretcher?
Or a gurney? Make sure they're
gentle with me. I think I've
dislocated my shoulder.

Elizabeth bends down and gives Andy a hand.

ELIZABETH
Come on, Andy. You've got to
get up.

ANDY
What?...

Andy looks up at her with an uncomprehending expression.

ELIZABETH
We've got to walk.

Andy struggles to his feet with Elizabeth's assistance.

ANDY
What?...

Andy has his good arm draped around Elizabeth's shoulder. They stagger and weave. Andy looks bewildered.

ELIZABETH
They won't cross the county line.

ANDY
What??...

146 EXT. THE ROAD AND AMBULANCE

146

Stan and Mort LOUNGE against their ambulance. Mort even holds a sun reflector under his chin.

Stan nudges him with his elbow.

STAN

Hey. Here she comes. An' she's got the accident victim in tow.

147 ANDY AND ELIZABETH

147

approach the county line. Elizabeth strains under Andy's full weight -- heroically keeping him erect and on course.

ELIZABETH

Almost there. Almost there...

ANDY

What?...

They trip! Almost fall. Andy goes cross-eyed in pain, and Elizabeth must use every ounce of her strength to keep him upright.

148 MORT AND STAN

148

casually amble over to the county line to await their arrival.

149 ANDY AND ELIZABETH

149

are gasping for breath. Exhausted; weakened; depleted of energy. Andy is dizzy. Racked with pain. Ready to black out.

The County Line is only several feet away now. Elizabeth struggles valiantly to carry Andy the final two or three steps. Mort and Stan reach out their hands to him, but...

Andy loses his balance. He pivots on his heel and stumbles backwards several steps. Elizabeth hangs onto him, keeping him on his feet.

ELIZABETH

Oooooooh!...

MORT & STAN

Oooooops!...

ANDY

What?...

Andy stumbles around in dazed circles. Elizabeth manages to support him, keeping him from collapsing completely.

(CONTINUED)

149

CONTINUED:

149

She tries to maneuver him toward the County Line.

MORT & STAN

Come on, lady! Come on!

Elizabeth gets Andy close again. Mort and Stan reach out... but Andy loses his equilibrium and reels backwards, out of control.

Elizabeth rushes around behind him and props Andy up just as he's about to fall.

MORT

Nice save!

Now Elizabeth is behind Andy, literally PUSHING him toward the County Line. But she's running out of steam. Finally, she puts her foot against Andy's butt -- and shoves him into Mort and Stan's arms.

MORT & STAN

Oomph!

150

ELIZABETH

150

glares at the Ambulance Drivers with blazing eyes. Breathing hard. Sweating profusely. Hair and clothes a mess.

ELIZABETH

(biting off each
word)

Now put him in the ambulance!

MORT & STAN

Yes, ma'am!

They carry Andy to the Ambulance and open the rear doors. Elizabeth is startled by what she sees inside... a GOAT!

MORT

(to Elizabeth;
defensively)

Goats are entitled to the same medical care as people, aren't they?

Elizabeth can't even bring herself to reply.

151

EXT. THE ROAD

151

The Ambulance speeds away, SIREN SCREAMING.

152 INT. THE AMBULANCE

152

Elizabeth is in the back with Andy who is stretched out on the folded gurney. She holds his hand, comfortingly.

Andy MOANS SOFTLY, then feels HOT BREATH against his neck. He turns to see the goat. The goat looks at him, then casually begins to eat the buttons off his shirt.

DISSOLVE TO:

153 EXT. FRONT PORCH OF FARM HOUSE - DAY

153

Andy sit on the porch in an old lawn chair wearing a SHOULDER CAST and a forlorn expression, staring vacantly out into space. Yellow Dog lies at his feet wearing an identical expression.

Andy's cast suspends his arm (bent at the elbow) in mid-air in front of him.

A FAMILIAR SOUND echoes across the landscape: The sound of Petree's Pickup Truck approaching. Andy stirs.

154 THE DUCKS

154

turn in the direction of the sound, then dive below the surface of the water.

155 ANDY

155

begins to tremble involuntarily. His eyes twitch and the toe of one foot taps spasmodically against the porch floor.

And now...

156 PETREE'S TRUCK

156

comes into sight over the hill: Gears GRINDING. Motor KNOCKING. Tailpipe EXPLODING. Trailing a cloud of smoke and dust and leaves.

157 ANDY

157

rises to his feet, using a cane to push himself up. Unconscious of his own pain and discomfort, and heedless of the utter futility of the act, he hobbles down the porch steps in pursuit of Petree.

Petree speeds by, and the mail flies in the air, before Andy can take more than two or three torturous steps.

Elizabeth comes out of the house and walks past Andy on her way toward the road.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED:

157

ELIZABETH

Save your strength, sweetheart.
I'll get the mail.

What Elizabeth doesn't notice is Andy's FOAMING AT THE MOUTH.

158 ELIZABETH

158

begins to collect the mail from the bushes and weeds along the road. She has a big reaction to a LARGE BROWN ENVELOPE -- practically ripping it open. And when she sees what's inside, she wants to scream with excitement.

But she glances back at Andy, who has returned to his chair on the porch, and keeps her mouth shut.

159 INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

159

A fire flickers in the fireplace. The lights have been turned down low. The atmosphere is cozy and romantic.

Andy hobbles in and takes a seat by the hearth, where Yellow Dog is already curled up asleep. He settles back with a contented, satisfied expression on his face.

Then, he smells something strange. He sniffs the air and glances about him.

160 YELLOW DOG'S TAIL

160

has flopped into the fire, and now it's smoldering. Andy hooks the tail with the crook of his cane and pulls it out of harm's way. Yellow Dog never even wakes up.

161 ELIZABETH

161

enters.

ANDY

That was quite a dinner, honey.
Quite a dinner. I'm ready to burst.

ELIZABETH

Can I get you something else?
Some apple pie? Or make some coffee?

ANDY

No, thanks. I'm just going to sit here by the fire and relax.

Elizabeth hands him an extra pillow.

(CONTINUED)

161 CONTINUED:

161

ELIZABETH

I have some good news, Andy.

ANDY

You do?

(beat)

Let's hear it. I'm always in the mood for some good news.

ELIZABETH

Look...

She hands him a piece of paper. He takes it cautiously, examines it, then looks up.

ANDY

A check for five thousand dollars... made out to you.

ELIZABETH

Isn't it wonderful?! I sold a book!

Andy looks completely thrown.

ANDY

What book?...

ELIZABETH

A book I wrote.

Now Andy looks positively dumbstruck.

ELIZABETH

Is five thousand much for a first book?

ANDY

Well, I suppose... you know... it's...

(beat)

... You wrote a book?! When did you write a book?!

ELIZABETH

At odd times. A little here; a little there. I just wrote it out longhand on legal pads and Federal Expressed it to an address I found in one of your magazines, and today, when I collected the mail, there was an envelope with a contract and a check and a typed version of the manuscript -- and well, I can hardly believe it.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY

Me too.

ELIZABETH

The publisher wants to know if I have any others. Do you think I need an agent?

ANDY

(still dazed)

You wrote a book... and then you sold it...

(pause)

... What's it about?

ELIZABETH

Animals. Squirrels, mostly.

ANDY

Squirrels?? You wrote a book with characters who are squirrels?? What kind of a book is that?!

ELIZABETH

A children's book.

ANDY

Children's book?

ELIZABETH

What did you think I wrote? A novel?

Andy looks tremendously relieved.

ANDY

Well... I wasn't sure.

(beat)

A "children's book"...

(beat)

... I'm proud of you, Elizabeth. I'm really proud of you!

ELIZABETH

Are you, Andy? Are you, really?

He gives her a big hug and kiss.

ANDY

Of course, I am.

ELIZABETH

I thought you might be jealous. Or feel threatened.

(CONTINUED)

ANDY

Me? Are you kidding?

(beat)

So tell me... these squirrels,
they have adventures and stuff?

ELIZABETH

Oh, yeah. It's so great. It's
about this squirrel from Central
Park; he goes to sleep in the back
of a delivery truck and wakes up
in the country.

(beat)

He has some funny misadventures
and makes all kinds of mistakes
-- because he's from the city,
right? And now he's completely
out of his element.

(beat)

It's a "fish out of water" story.

ANDY

(after a sobering
pause)

This squirrel is me, isn't it?

ELIZABETH

He's funny.

ANDY

But he's based on me.

ELIZABETH

I wouldn't say that.

ANDY

What's his name?

ELIZABETH

His name?...

ANDY

Yeah. His name. What's your
squirrel's name?

ELIZABETH

Andy.

ANDY

(looking away)
I'm a son of a bitch.

(CONTINUED)

161 CONTINUED: (4)

161

ELIZABETH

Don't be upset, honey. It's really flattering. You were my inspiration. It's a tribute to you.

ANDY

Oh, yes. Absolutely. That's how I see it, too.

(pause)

I'd like to read it.

ELIZABETH

And you shall! You shall...

(then; with much hesitation)

Would you mind, Andy, if I used the typewriter tonight, just for a little bit. I have some ideas for a second story I want to get down before they fly right out of my head. I'm sure it'd go much faster on the typewriter... if that's okay with you, of course.

ANDY

Uh, sure. Sure...

(beat)

... Let me just go straighten up in there a little.

162 INT. THE WRITING ROOM

162

Andy moves around the room collecting his debris in a cardboard box: Empty beer cans, old food, dirty coffee cups, dog food cans, sports magazines, etc.

ANDY

(loudly, because Elizabeth is in the next room)

You know, I'm starting to enjoy the idea of both of us being writers. It's in the great tradition of, uh... what's-his-name... and his wife.

Elizabeth enters with the typed manuscript and the STUFFED SQUIRREL under her arm. Andy does a double take.

Elizabeth places the squirrel on the desk next to the typewriter.

ANDY

Where did that come from?

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH

Mrs. Dinges gave it to me.

(beat)

This is what gave me the idea to write the book in the first place.

ANDY

I thought I was your inspiration.

ELIZABETH

It was the combination of the two.

ANDY

(pointing to the
manuscript in
Elizabeth's hand)

Is that it?

Elizabeth seems reluctant to hand it over.

ELIZABETH

What I did, Andy, was use the entire town.

(smiles at the
thought)

There's a great big old hedgehog that's based on Sheriff Ledbetter. And two crazy racoons that remind me of those Criterion Brothers. And remember that strange man at Ivy's Cafe who --

ANDY

-- But the squirrel... Andy... he's the main character.

ELIZABETH

Oh, yes. Of course.

Andy snatches the manuscript from her hand and begins to flip through it.

ANDY

So! What kind of cute stuff will ole Andy the Squirrel be up to in the next adventure?

ELIZABETH

Well... maybe you should read the manuscript first.

ANDY

I will, I will. I just wanted to know what's in store for Andy next.

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED: (2)

162

ELIZABETH

Actually, Andy doesn't make it
into the second book.

ANDY

(after an ominous
pause)

Why not?

ELIZABETH

He gets run over by a truck at the
end of the first book.

Andy flinches -- as if from a blow. Elizabeth sits down
behind the typewriter. Her fingers hit the keys and
they're just a blur. The words are pouring out of her.

Andy just stands there, morbidly dwelling on the fate of
his namesake.

163 INT. THE HALLWAY

163

Andy exits the writing room, closing the door after him.
Then he pauses there for a moment, listening in wonderment
to Elizabeth's feverish pace at the typewriter.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE SEQUENCE:

164 INT. THE WRITING ROOM - DAY

164

Elizabeth is busy at the typewriter. So eager is she to
get to work, that she doesn't even bother to get dressed.
She wears a bathrobe over her nightgown.

ANDY (V.O.)

In the weeks that passed,
Elizabeth's creative flow never
let up. If anything, it
increased. Like an avalanche.
Building on itself. Swallowing
everything in its path.

165 INT. THE BEDROOM - NIGHT

165

Andy lies in bed, wide awake. Yellow Dog lies next to
him, belly up, paws bent, tongue out, SNORING LOUDLY.

Andy checks the bedside clock. It is THREE A.M. From
down the hall, we hear the insistent CLACK-CLACK-CLACK of
Elizabeth typing.

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED:

165

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

I couldn't get back into the writing room or even near the typewriter. Elizabeth owned it... the way certain celebrated ball players are said to own third base or centerfield.

Andy wraps his pillow around his head to shut out the sound.

166 EXT. THE FRONT PORCH OF FARM HOUSE - DAY

166

Andy stands on the porch looking very disheveled. He takes a long hit from a pocket flask.

ANDY (V.O.)

But the break from writing turned out to be a blessing in disguise. For the first time since moving to Redbud, I began to appreciate the simple joys of country living.

Andy falls drunkenly off the porch, landing directly on top of the sleeping Yellow Dog who GRUNTS SOFTLY but otherwise doesn't stir.

167 ELIZABETH

167

watches from a window.

168 EXT. DOWNTOWN REDBUD - DAY

168

Andy is behind the wheel of a battered old PICKUP TRUCK.

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

I bought a more practical vehicle to replace the demolished MG...

169 EXT. REDBUD FILLING STATION - DAY

169

Andy's Pickup pulls into the station. Andy hops out wearing a pair of bib overalls and a John Deere baseball cap.

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

... and drove into Redbud every day. Friendships developed as I became more involved in community activities.

(CONTINUED)

169 CONTINUED:

169

The Criterion Brothers are having a poker game alongside the station's grease bay. As Andy approaches, Dirk and Lon welcome him by tossing him a bottled beer.

Andy screws off the cap and sits down to play.

170 EXT. ROAD LEADING TO FARM HOUSE - DAY

170

Andy attends to the finishing details of a TANK TRAP he has dug in the middle of the road: A HUGE HOLE covered with a piece of canvas that has been sprinkled with dirt and leaves to blend in with the road.

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

Various small problems around the house also received the attention they deserved.

As PETREE'S TRUCK APPROACHES, Andy ducks into the bushes along the road.

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

An attempt was made, for example, to improve the service of the delivery of the mails.

PETREE'S TRUCK runs up an embankment to avoid the convincingly concealed tank trap, and speeds on.

Enraged by his failure, Andy bolts from the bushes and charges after Petree's Truck.

He runs directly across the Tank Trap -- and DROPS ABRUPTLY FROM SIGHT!

171 EXT. MEMORIAL CEMETERY - NIGHT

171

A STORM builds in distance. THUNDER ROLLS across the horizon and LIGHTNING FLASHES in the night sky.

The Criterion Brothers, wearing hooded rain slickers, dig in the area of CLAUDE MUSSELMAN'S HEADSTONE.

Andy watches with a smug expression.

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

A solution was also found to the vexing Claude Musselman situation...

172 EXT. THE YARD OF FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

172

The STORM continues to BREW as the Criterion Brothers now lower a pine box into a very shallow grave they have just dug in the Farmer's garden.

Lon stands in the truck bed operating the block and tackle. Dirk guides the casket into the hole. Andy supervises.

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

We moved Old Claude back to where Eula had planted him in the first place... and Memorial Cemetery tore up their bill.

Andy, Lon and Dirk pass around a pint bottle as --

173 YELLOW DOG MOVES

173

For the very first time ever. He actually RISES from the spot where he had been sleeping, LUMBERS over to the fresh grave, and inspects it with uncharacteristic curiosity.

174 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (STORM)

174

A PELTING RAIN HAMMERS against the windows as Andy and the Criterion Brothers doze on the sofa and in chairs, SNORING LOUDLY.

Empty beer cans and bottles litter the floor around them.

Elizabeth casts baleful glances at the snoozing offenders as she cleans up their mess.

END MONTAGE SEQUENCE

DISSOLVE TO:

175 INT. THE BEDROOM - DAY

175

Andy is in bed. His back turned to the door.

Elizabeth enters dressed for the cold weather, slipping on a pair of gloves. She seems very distressed as she looks at Andy's shape under the covers.

ELIZABETH

It's one o'clock in the afternoon,
Andy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(no response
from Andy)

I'm taking the truck into town.
I need some supplies and I'm going
to drop in on Mrs. Dinges.

(still no response)

What's going on, Andy? Is this
all you want to do with your life
-- sleep and hang out with the
Criterion Brothers?

Andy GRUNTS and pulls the covers completely over his head.

ELIZABETH

(getting emotional)

You're sinking into a pit of self-
pity, defeatism and alcohol... and
you're enjoying it!

Exasperated, Elizabeth storms out of the bedroom, SLAMMING
the door behind her with these parting words:

ELIZABETH

You'll see me when you see me!

We HEAR her FOOTSTEPS on the STAIRS. We HEAR the front
door OPEN and CLOSE. We HEAR the truck START UP and DRIVE
OFF.

And then...

The covers are thrown back as Andy leaps out of bed
wearing ARMY FATIGUES and COMBAT BOOTS.

He goes to the dressing table mirror with a can of shoe
polish in his hand. He dips his fingers into the polish
and begins to camouflage his face.

Andy is rolling a HEAVY BOULDER into position at the top
of the hill. In addition to the army fatigues, combat
boots and camouflage makeup, Andy also sports a BATTLE
HELMET festooned with twigs and leaves.

Something is needed to hold the boulder in place. Andy
looks around and sees a block of wood that will do the
job. But he must hold the boulder steady with one hand
as he reaches out for the block of wood with the other.
Andy has to stretch his arm as far as it will go -- and
even then, he can only get his fingertips on it.

177 INT. A FORD SEDAN 177

A WELL-DRESSED MAN driving the car looks out the windshield and sees Andy way up at the top of the hill. He TOOTS his HORN.

178 EXT. THE HILLTOP 178

Andy is distracted by the car horn. He accidentally loses his hold on the boulder... and it begins to CRASH down the hill.

ANDY

Oh, shit!

179 THE BOULDER 179

THUNDERS down a prescribed path toward the road.

180 ANDY 180

chases down the hill after the boulder.

181 INT. THE FORD SEDAN 181

The driver sees the boulder coming at him.

182 EXT. THE ROAD 182

The driver hits the brakes. The car fishtails to a stop on the shoulder of the road, as the boulder misses it by only inches!

Andy arrives just as the dazed driver (a man named MICHAEL SINCLAIR) emerges from the car.

Andy is fuming.

ANDY

What the hell do you think you're doing!? Are you nuts?! What were you honking at?!

(pointing at the boulder)

Look what you've done!

Sinclair blinks at Andy in confusion. Andy paces around, letting off steam.

SINCLAIR

Are you Mr. Farmer? Mr. Andy Farmer?...

(CONTINUED)

182 CONTINUED:

182

ANDY

(calming down
a little)

Okay, maybe there's an "up" side
to this. At least I know that
my calculations were correct...

(looks back up the
hill and squints)

The trajectory. The angle of
incidence. A slight adjustment
to the left perhaps...

(turns back to
Sinclair)

But that doesn't mean you're off
the hook, pal. That boulder's
gotta go back up the hill, and
you're gonna help!

Andy goes over to the boulder.

ANDY

Get over here and help push!

183 EXT. THE HILL

183

Andy and Sinclair roll the heavy boulder back up the hill,
grunting and groaning with the effort

ANDY

Who are you, anyway?

SINCLAIR

Michael Sinclair...

Sinclair removes his right hand from the boulder to shake
with Andy -- and the boulder immediately begins to slip
backwards.

ANDY

-- don't!!

Sinclair puts his hand back in place.

ANDY

Never remove your hand from a
boulder on an incline like this!
Jesus -- you're a one-man
disaster area!

In the distance, the DISTINCTIVE SOUND OF PETREE'S TRUCK
is HEARD.

ANDY

Hurry!

(CONTINUED)

183 CONTINUED:

183

Andy and Sinclair rapidly roll the boulder into place.
Andy uses the wood block to secure it.

The NOISE of Petree's Truck grows LOUDER as the Truck gets closer. Andy's face begins to twitch.

SINCLAIR

Uh... What are we up to, may I ask?

ANDY

Shut up! Get down!
(beat)
And take that scarf off!

Andy unravels the bright red scarf from around Sinclair's neck and tosses it away.

ANDY

Here he comes!...
(to Sinclair)
When I give you the signal, kick the block out from under the boulder.

SINCLAIR

Huh?...

ANDY

The block! When I give you the signal, kick it out!

Andy now crawls on his stomach to a better vantage point.

184 PETREE'S TRUCK

184

comes up the road. KNOCKING. CLANGING. BACKFIRING LOUDLY. Then it comes to a sudden stop.

ANDY

narrows his eyes and smiles to himself.

ANDY

(very low)

Ha, ha. You know I'm out here, don't you? You can feel it in your bones. But you don't know where... and you don't know when.

185 CLOSE ON PETREE'S TRUCK

185

Engine RUMBLING. Petree hidden behind the opaque windshield.

Suddenly -- the Truck ROCKETS forward, motor ROARING like a 747 taking off.

186 ANDY

186

waits for just the right moment, then signals to Sinclair.

ANDY
Now! Kick it now!

Sinclair stands there, frozen in place.

ANDY
Kick it, goddamnit!

Andy leaps over and kicks away the block of wood himself.

187 FULL SHOT - THE HILL AND THE ROAD

187

The boulder CRASHES down the hill on a collision course with the speeding Truck.

188 ANDY

188

watches with blood lust in his eyes. Sinclair views Andy with the horror that comes from witnessing madness at first hand.

189 INT. THE TRUCK - PETREE'S POV:

189

Looking through the grease-stained windshield over the old Truck's dented hood, driving fearlessly into the boulder's path... and swerving at the last minute, avoiding a direct hit.

The BOULDER THUNDERS by, missing the truck by only inches!

190 EXT. THE ROAD

190

IMPACT! The boulder SMASHES POWERFULLY INTO SINCLAIR'S FORD -- shoving it several feet across the road, SHATTERING windows, CRUSHING in a side door and fender. Wheel covers pop off. A metal headlamp rim bounces away and rolls down the road.

Petree's Truck escapes unharmed. It proceeds down the road at full throttle.

191 EXT. THE HILL TOP

191

Once again denied the sweet taste of victory, Andy's expression glazes over. Petree's DERISIVE CACKLE drifts up the hill.

Sinclair looks at his crushed car in disbelief. Then, Andy spins in his direction: A volcano ready to erupt. Sinclair takes several fearful steps backwards.

(CONTINUED)

191 CONTINUED:

191

ANDY

Why didn't you kick it when I told you!? We coulda nailed him! We coulda had him dead center!

SINCLAIR

Now take it easy, Mr. Farmer...

ANDY

Who are you, anyway? How do you know my name?

SINCLAIR

I -- I told you who I was:
Michael Sinclair.

Andy cocks his head, like an uncertain spaniel.

SINCLAIR

From Hufnagel & Brown.

Andy still draws a blank.

SINCLAIR

Your publisher, Mr. Farmer.

Andy's eyes widen as it registers.

ANDY

W-what are you doing here?

SINCLAIR

Your deadline. The first
installment --

ANDY

-- deadline??... Already?

SINCLAIR

Three weeks ago, actually.

(beat)

We didn't hear from you. Our
letters went unanswered.

Andy takes off his helmet, his expression very sheepish,
trying desperately to regroup.

ANDY

Look, I know how crazy this all
must seem, and you'll just have to
trust me on this, but there's
absolutely nothing out of the
ordinary going on here.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

191 CONTINUED: (2)

191

ANDY (CONT'D)
(glances down
toward the road)
I'm sorry about your car. A
rental?

SINCLAIR
I just bought it.

Andy looks ill.

SINCLAIR
Let's just forget about the
deadline, Mr. Farmer. Return the
advance money and we'll call it
even!

ANDY
Give the money back!?!...
(beat)
I've been working! I've got
something down on paper! I'll
show you!

Andy leads a doubtful Sinclair down the hill by the arm.

192 INT. THE WRITING ROOM - DAY

192

Andy rummages frantically for his "Big Heist" chapters.
He looks everywhere, but without success. Desperate and
about to give up, his eyes fall on ELIZABETH'S MANUSCRIPT.

After a moment of tortured conflict, Andy snatches it up.
Only "Andy," the Stuffed Squirrel, is there to witness
this act of duplicity. Its glass eyes seem to burn with
accusatory fire.

Andy literally SNARLS at the damn thing.

ANDY
(under his breath)
Fuck yourself.

Then he exits the room with the manuscript in hand.

193 INT. THE LIVING ROOM

193

Sinclair waits restively by the front door for Andy's
return. Finally, Andy scrambles down the staircase and
presents the manuscript.

ANDY
Take this.

(CONTINUED)

193 CONTINUED:

193

Sinclair looks at it skeptically.

ANDY

It's not the novel... but it shows
I've been working. I think you'll
like it.

(beat)

Please take it.

Sinclair gives Andy a sidelong glance as he takes the
manuscript and stashes it into this briefcase.

SINCLAIR

You'll be hearing from us, Mr.
Farmer. Good day!

Sinclair storms off. Andy watches him depart. There is
relief in Andy's expression... but there is foreboding
as well.

194 EXT. ROAD LEADING AWAY FROM FARM HOUSE - DAY

194

Sinclair's battered car hobbles away on a bent axle, one
of the tires SCRAPING against the dented fender.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

195 EXT. THE FARM HOUSE - DAY

195

Yellow Dog can be seen digging energetically in the area
of Claude Musselman's fresh grave. (It does not escape
our notice that Musselman's arrival at the farm has given
Yellow Dog a new lease on life.)

From inside the house, we HEAR the TELEPHONE RINGING.

196 INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

196

Elizabeth answers the phone.

ELIZABETH

Hello...

197 INT. MICHAEL SINCLAIR'S NEW YORK OFFICE - DAY

197

Sinclair is on the other end of the telephone connection.

SINCLAIR

(into phone)

Hello. Farmer residence?

INTERCUT BETWEEN ELIZABETH AND SINCLAIR:

(CONTINUED)

ELIZABETH

Yes.

SINCLAIR

Whew! Finally made it. Getting through to Redbud is no easy matter.

(beat)

Is Mr. Farmer there?

ELIZABETH

No, he's... uh... still sleeping, actually. This is his wife. Can I help you?

SINCLAIR

(very cheery)

This is Michael Sinclair, Mrs. Farmer. From Hufnagel & Brown, your husband's publishing house.

ELIZABETH

(warily)

Yes?...

SINCLAIR

Would you mind passing along to your husband my apologies? I've been dealing with writers for fifteen years, you'd think I'd be used to their eccentricities by now. Anyway, I acted like a fool and I apologize.

(beat)

Your husband is a very talented man.

ELIZABETH

He is?! I mean... he is. But, how did you know?...

SINCLAIR

Believe me, Mrs. Farmer, I know. I have a manuscript in front of me that is simply wonderful. It's fresh. It's original --

ELIZABETH

-- you like it!?

SINCLAIR

We love it!

(CONTINUED)

197 CONTINUED: (2)

197

ELIZABETH
(under her breath)
Sonofabitch.

SINCLAIR
And we want to put it out.

Elizabeth's head is spinning. She can hardly believe what she's hearing.

ELIZABETH
Andy will be thrilled...

SINCLAIR
Of course, we don't actually publish children's books here at Hufnagel, but we have a subsidiary house we use --

ELIZABETH
-- wait a minute. Children's book? Didn't he submit a book about four poker buddies knocking over a casino!?

SINCLAIR
No. This book is about squirrels.
(beat)
Mrs. Farmer? Are you there?

Elizabeth has lowered the phone from her ear as she contemplates Andy's demise.

198 INT. THE BEDROOM - DAY

198

Elizabeth rips the sheets and blankets from Andy's sleeping body. Andy awakens with a bewildered, uncomprehending expression.

ELIZABETH
How could you!? Have you no shame!? Have you actually sunk this low?!

ANDY
What? What's going on?...

ELIZABETH
Your publisher just called! He loves the book you gave him.
(beat)
My book!

(CONTINUED)

198 CONTINUED:

198

Andy staggers out of bed, deciding this battle is better fought on his feet than on his back.

ELIZABETH

Were you drunk again, or just desperate?! How could you do something this pathetic and underhanded!?

These are fighting words -- and Andy snaps at her.

ANDY

It was easy! I'd do it again!

Elizabeth GASPS at his gall.

ELIZABETH

You'll never get the chance!

Elizabeth throws open the closet door in a rage and pulls out a suitcase. Then she removes a drawer from the dresser and dumps its contents into the suitcase.

199

INT. THE HALLWAY

199

Elizabeth charges out of the bedroom heading for the writing room. Andy dashes ahead of her -- TRIPS over the sleeping Yellow Dog -- CRASHES to the floor -- but leaps up quicky to block the writing room doorway.

ANDY

You're not taking the typewriter!

ELIZABETH

I don't want your typewriter, Andy. You keep it. Maybe you'll think of a use for it one day.

Andy's eyes blaze.

ELIZABETH

(pushing past him)

I want my notes and manuscripts.

200

INT. THE STAIRCASE

200

Elizabeth comes down the stairs with the suitcase in one hand and her papers in the other. Andy is right behind her.

ANDY

You've never supported this move, and you've never supported me! Right from the start -- treachery and deceit!

(CONTINUED)

200

CONTINUED:

200

ELIZABETH
Treachery and deceit!? Me?!
You're the book stealer!

ANDY
What about the apple? Don't
forget the apple.

ELIZABETH
What apple?

They arrive at the bottom of the stairs. Elizabeth puts
down her suitcase to take her coat from the closet and
put it on.

ANDY
You know very well what apple!
The last apple! The one you ate
while I was asleep, after you ate
the last banana! Don't deny it --
I stepped on the core!
(beat)
And that was just the first day!

ELIZABETH
Oh, Jesus!

ANDY
Want to hear more?!

ELIZABETH
No! I'm willing to concede that
our marriage has been just a
series of mutual betrayals! I
know it! You know it! Even
Yellow Dog knows it!

ANDY
I know it. You know it. Goddamn
Yellow Dog doesn't even know what
town he lives in!

ELIZABETH
(snatching up truck
keys from table
near door)
I'm taking the truck.

201

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

201

Andy and Elizabeth stampede out of the house. The
weather is very cold and Andy is only wearing pajamas
and slippers.

(CONTINUED)

201 CONTINUED:

201

They march toward the pickup truck.

ELIZABETH
I'm moving in with Mrs. Dinges!

ANDY
Good for you! I'm moving back
to New York!

This causes Elizabeth to stop in her tracks.

ELIZABETH
If anybody's moving back to New
York it's going to be me!

ANDY
Just stay above Fifty-ninth
Street!

ELIZABETH
That suits me fine!

Elizabeth continues on toward the truck. Andy thinks of something that makes him run back into the house.

He turns -- charges up the porch steps -- TRIPS over Yellow Dog for the second time -- leaps to his feet and disappears into the house.

202 EXT. THE TRUCK

202

The cold air causes the motor to turn over very slowly.

However, no sooner does Elizabeth get the truck moving, then she BRAKES hard and throws open the passenger door.

ELIZABETH
Out! Scram! Beat it!

The TWO DUCKS come tumbling out the Truck's Cab, QUACKING in protest.

203 EXT. THE YARD

203

Andy reappears from the house holding the STUFFED SQUIRREL in his hand. Elizabeth is now driving away. Andy runs after her.

ANDY
(contemptuously)
Don't forget "Andy"!

He heaves the squirrel into the back of the truck, then watches it speed off.

(CONTINUED)

203 CONTINUED:

203

The Ducks observe this domestic upheaval with concerned expressions.

Andy turns and marches across the yard toward the house. Blinded by anger, he doesn't notice that he's walking across Musselman's grave which has been partially uncovered by Yellow Dog.

The WOOD SPLITS and Andy's slippered foot sinks into the casket with a SOFT CRUNCH.

ANDY

Oh, Jesus God!!

Andy struggles to extract his foot. When he finally gets it free, he kicks a bit of dirt back into the grave and hurries inside.

A moment later, Yellow Dog appears from under the porch. He ambles over to the gravesite with renewed interest.

204 INT. ROADSIDE TAVERN - NIGHT

204

Andy finishes his fourth or fifth beer, then hangs his head sorrowfully. A GRIZZLED DRUNK (from the Auld Sod) sits across the table from him. There is something undeniably sympathetic in the Grizzled Drunk's red-rimmed blue eyes that draws us in.

ANDY

Hard times. Hard times...

GRIZZLED DRUNK

(nodding his head
in understanding)

Aye...

ANDY

I quit my job and moved out here
to write a book, but my book
stinks.

GRIZZLED DRUNK

Aye...

ANDY

My wife hates me. She turned me
into a squirrel, then --
(snaps his fingers)
-- squashed me with a truck.

GRIZZLED DRUNK

Aye...

(CONTINUED)

204 CONTINUED:

204

ANDY

We're meeting with lawyers in the morning.

GRIZZLED DRUNK

Aye. Aye...

ANDY

What's a man to do?...

GRIZZLED DRUNK

Do what I do...

ANDY

Yeah? What's that?

The Grizzled Drunk clears his throat and BREAKS INTO SONG: A lilting Irish ballad that almost brings tears to the eyes.

Caught up in the mood of the song, Andy soon joins in.

205 EXT. A ROAD - NIGHT

205

Something is approaching in the distance. We can't tell what it is, but it makes a LOUD THRASHING NOISE.

Then we see that it is Andy -- riding away from the Roadside Tavern on a TORO LAWNMOWER, still drunkenly SINGING.

206 INT. LAW OFFICE OF MARION COREY, JR. - DAY

206

Andy and Elizabeth sit in opposite corners of the office, glaring spitefully at each other.

Seated next to Elizabeth is her attorney, the redoubtable GUS LOTTERHAND. Lotterhand wears a METAL BRACE that runs from his waist to his chin -- forcing him to look straight up at the ceiling at all times.

Redbud's other attorney, Marion Corey, Jr. enters the office. We recognize him as the man who was struck by the bat during the Founder's Day Softball Game.

Marion Corey, Jr. takes a seat behind his desk, next to Andy. He is the picture of efficiency.

MARION

All right, then... we have come together in the matter of Farmer Vs. Farmer...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARION (CONT'D)
(scans his notes,
then looks up at
Elizabeth)

Mrs. Farmer, you are bringing
divorce proceedings against your
Tuna Boat. Is that correct?

Andy and Elizabeth blink in confusion. So does Marion
Corey, Jr. at his own gaffe.

MARION
Did somebody say, "Tuna Boat"?

LOTTERHAND
Yes, Marion. You did.

Marion Corey, Jr. collects himself and continues:

MARION
The point I wish to make is this:
The dissolution of a marriage is a
very serious undertaking --

LOTTERHAND
(abruptly)
Who wants the house?

ANDY & ELIZABETH
Nobody!

LOTTERHAND
Well, at least you're both in
agreement.
(to Marion)
Marion, when's the next available
court date?

Andy and Elizabeth look concerned.

ELIZABETH
We have to go to court?...

LOTTERHAND
We are merely attorneys, Mrs.
Farmer. Handmaidens of the law.
Only a judge can dissolve a
marriage.

Marion Corey, Jr. consults his desk calendar.

(CONTINUED)

MARION

(to Lotterhand)

Circuit Judge'll be here next month, but that's when we go to trial on your personal injury suit.

ELIZABETH

(to Lotterhand)

Wait a minute! Does Marion Corey, Jr. represent you in another matter?!

LOTTERHAND

Yes, ma'am.

ANDY

Isn't that a conflict of interest?!

LOTTERHAND

Not necessarily.

Andy rolls his eyes in disbelief.

MARION

(looking up from his calendar)

Okay... how about the first week in Tuna Boat?

LOTTERHAND

July's better for me.

ELIZABETH

July is seven months away.

MARION

Were you in a rush?

Andy can brook no more.

ANDY

Excuse us a moment!

He grabs Elizabeth by the arm and drags her out of the office.

Marion Corey, Jr. pours himself a cup of coffee.

MARION

(to Lotterhand)

You think twice about getting a short haircut once you've been hit by a softball bat.

(CONTINUED)

206 CONTINUED: (3)

206

LOTTERHAND
(as always, looking straight up)
You've got to get these ceilings
painted sometime, Marion.

207 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE OF OFFICE

207

Andy and Elizabeth fume at each other.

ANDY
You lawyer's a jerk!

ELIZABETH
My lawyer? What about your
lawyer: Captain Tuna Boat!

ANDY
At least my lawyer can look you
in the eye!
(beat)
Boy, you can't do anything right.
Only two lawyers in town, you had
first choice, and you still picked
the wrong guy!

ELIZABETH
It's a habit I have.

Andy snarls at her, then composes himself.

ANDY
Okay. This isn't getting us
anywhere.
(beat)
The thing to do now is sell the
house.

ELIZABETH
Yeah? Who would buy it?!

ANDY
We did!

ELIZABETH
We didn't know what we were
getting into!

ANDY
And neither will the new buyers!

208 INT. REDBUD TOWN MEETING HALL - DAY

208

A town meeting is in progress. MAYOR BARCLAY presides.

(CONTINUED)

MAYOR BARCLAY
(slamming his gavel)
... Moved and carried! The town
of Redbud will seek official
accreditation as the Acorn Capitol
of the World.
(turns)
Did you get that, Mr. Recording
Secretary?

The Recording Secretary is lawyer Marion Corey, Jr.
He makes a notation in the minutes.

MARION
Tuna Boat Capitol of the world.

MAYOR BARCLAY
That's close enough.
(beat)
Last on the agenda, Elizabeth
and Andy Farmer have requested
permission to address the council.
As the current Lamb Fry Record
Holder, I'm sure Mr. Farmer is
familiar to you all.
(to Andy and
Elizabeth)
The floor belongs to you.

Andy and Elizabeth rise from the front row where they
have been sitting (with a vacant chair between them)
and approach the podium. Elizabeth carries a grocery
bag which she places on the floor by her feet.

ELIZABETH
Thank you, Mayor Barclay.

She looks at Andy, who clears his throat, then begins:

ANDY
Council Members, Citizens of
Redbud...
(beat)
We're selling the Musselman
place.

COUNCIL MEMBER (A MINISTER)
God rest his soul.

ANOTHER COUNCIL MEMBER
Wherever he is.

Andy and Elizabeth look out across the meeting hall at a
sea of blank faces.

(CONTINUED)

208

CONTINUED: (2)

208

Among them, the grizzled "Irish Tenor" from the bar and most of the Redbuddians we've met so far.

ANDY

We came to Redbud filled with hopes and dreams for a better life in a better place, and we saw those hopes and dreams shattered and crushed into dust before our very eyes.

(beat)

Now, I'm not saying it's entirely your fault... but any potential buyer who comes out here is going to expect to find a townful of gentle, warmhearted country folk...

(beat)

... Not this bunch of... freaks!

This remark is met with a CHORUS OF BOOS. A crowd of people get to their feet and head for the exits.

ANDY

(not even raising his voice)

There's money in this for you.

Hearing this, the TOWNSPEOPLE TURN EN MASSE and return quietly to their seats.

ANDY

(to Elizabeth)

Go ahead.

Elizabeth removes a pile of magazines from the grocery bag and deposits them on the podium in front of her.

ELIZABETH

These are Saturday Evening Post magazines from the Thirties and Forties. The covers of these magazines were painted by a man named Norman Rockwell.

(beat)

Norman Rockwell knew a thing or two about small town life. Normal small town life, that is. He knew how people looked, what they did and how they dressed.

(beat)

And that is what we want from you. We want you to look, and dress, and act like the people on the covers of these magazines.

(CONTINUED)

208

CONTINUED: (3)

208

She hands the pile of magazines to a person in the front row.

ELIZABETH

Pass the magazines out among yourselves. Look at them. Study them. Take them home if you wish.

(beat)

But be careful with them; they're on loan from Mrs. Dinges' Antique Shop.

The magazines are taken reluctantly by the wary townspeople.

MAYOR BARCLAY

Hold on now, Mrs. Farmer. Did we hear some mention of money?

ANDY

Within 24 hours of close of escrow on our property, we will hand over to the City of Redbud a check in the amount of fifteen thousand dollars.

This gets a BIG REACTION from all.

ANDY

Also... a bonus of fifty dollars each to any individual who performs a specific act of "traditional small-town behavior" in the presence of the prospective buyers!

UPROAR! Citizens of Redbud cannot contain their enthusiasm for the scheme. Andy looks very pleased with himself.

Mayor Barclay jumps to his feet.

MAYOR BARCLAY

Leave everything to me, Andy and Elizabeth. I'm going to ram this project home!

CUT TO:

209

EXT. ROAD NEAR FARMHOUSE - DAY

209

A brand new JEEP WAGONEER travels down the road.

210 INT. THE JEEP - DAY

210

BUD and BETSY CULBERTSON are inside. They wear clothes straight from the pages of Town & Country magazine. Betsy is consulting a neatly drawn map.

BETSY

I'm sure we're almost there, Bud.

She peers out the window and spots the farmhouse.

BETSY

There it is!

Bud turns the wheel and the Jeep drives up onto the property. MUSIC SWELLS as they approach the house (just as it did for Andy and Elizabeth when they first arrived.)

211 BUD AND BETSY'S POV: THE HOUSE

211

Set in a winter wonderland. It looks beautiful. Christmas lights and ornaments adorn the porch. A large, carefully sculpted snowman with coal eyes and a crooked smile stands ready to greet them.

212 RETURN TO SCENE

212

Betsy looks overcome with emotion. She grabs Bud's arm emphatically.

BETSY

Oh, Bud! It's perfect!

Bud smiles and pats his wife's hand.

BUD

Play it cool, honey. Play it cool.

213 EXT. THE YARD

213

The Jeep parks. Bud and Betsy hop out. Bud spots the two Ducks slipping on the frozen pond.

BUD

Look, honey -- ducks!

Bud chuckles to himself as he puts his arm around Betsy's shoulder.

214 INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

214

Andy and Elizabeth peek out the window to see the Culbertsons approaching. We notice they are decked out in L.L. Bean's finest. Andy even holds a PIPE in his hand.

(CONTINUED)

214 CONTINUED:

214

ELIZABETH

Here they come.

ANDY

Who sent them over -- Central
Casting?(then; into a
walkie-talkie)

Cue the deer!

215 EXT. WOODS NEAR FARMHOUSE - DAY

215

The Criterion Brothers stand by their parked truck. Lon
also holds a WALKIE-TALKIE. He lowers it from his ear.

LON

(turning to Dirk)

Cue the deer!

Dirk drops the truck's tailgate and a DEER SCAMPERS OUT.

216 EXT. THE FARMHOUSE YARD - DAY

216

The Deer darts from the bushes and runs by the pond. Bud
and Betsy see it -- and GASP with pleasure.

217 THE CRITERION BROTHERS

217

exchange low-fives deep in the woods.

218 INT. THE LIVING ROOM

218

As the Culbertsons mount the porch steps outside, Andy
primps nervously.

ANDY

How do I look?

ELIZABETH

The pipe's a bit much.

Andy gives her a dirty look, but pockets the pipe anyway.

They go to the door, open it and greet the Culbertsons.

BUD

(extending his hand)

Hi! Bud and Betsy Culbertson.

DISSOLVE TO:

219 INT. THE KITCHEN - LATER

219

Elizabeth serves coffee and muffins to Andy and the
Culbertsons.

(CONTINUED)

219 CONTINUED:

219

Bud lights up a pipe that looks exactly like Andy's. He puffs it to life.

BUD

Don't you have a dog?

ANDY

Oh, sure. He's probably out somewhere... scaring up game.

BUD

Place like this oughta have a dog.

BETSY

(to Elizabeth)

It's been a dream of ours for a long time, moving out to the country.

(gives Bud an adoring smile)

Bud's going to write a novel.

Andy does a SPIT TAKE, SPEWING COFFEE all over the table.

ELIZABETH

(smiling)

How nice.

ANDY

(wiping his mouth)

Great... great place to write out here.

BETSY

(to Elizabeth)

Do you mind if I ask why you're moving?

In the distance, the UNMISTAKABLE SOUND OF PETREE'S TRUCK APPROACHING. Andy begins to twitch.

ELIZABETH

(answering Betsy, but noticing Andy)

Uh, we're being transferred. Andy's with the government.

Betsy nods. The Culbertsons don't notice that Andy is transforming into Mr. Hyde before their very eyes.

Andy has his ears cocked to the outdoors; waiting for the USUAL ROAR of Petree's TRUCK as it THUNDERS past the house.

Instead... Andy hears the truck come to a COMPLETE STOP -- and his eyes widen as a result.

220 EXT. CLOSE ON PETREE'S BOOTS

220

As they climb down from the truck's cab -- CRUNCH DRAMATICALLY across the snowy yard -- and mount the backdoor steps with heavy THUDS.

221 INT. THE KITCHEN

221

The suspense is too much for Andy. He leaps from his chair and FLINGS OPEN THE DOOR, ready to attack.

But he gets the surprise of his life:

222 CRUMB PETREE

222

stands in the doorway wearing a neatly-pressed Mailman's uniform holding a bundle of letters in one hand and a cake tin in the other. But that's not the only shocker: Petree, whose face we have never seen has turned out to be the GRIZZLED DRUNK with the sumpathetic blue eyes who Andy drank and sang with at the Roadside Tavern.

PETREE

(bowing slightly)

Mail, Mr. Farmer.

Andy is speechless. He just stands there, frozen in place. Petree steps inside.

PETREE

I'll just leave it here on the table for you, sir.

(sets down the mail)

As usual, I weeded out all the junk mail myself.

(hands the cake tin to Elizabeth)

Mrs. Petree sent this over, ma'am. It's her traditional rum nut plum pudding cake of the season.

ELIZABETH

Thank you very much...

(shocked into formality)

May I present Mr. and Mrs. Culbertson.

BUD

(to Petree)

Bud and Betsy.

ELIZABETH

They're thinking of buying the house.

(CONTINUED)

222 : CONTINUED:

222

PETREE

Is that so?
(to the Culbertsons)
You won't regret it. We'll be
real sorry to see the Farmers
go.

He lets out a brief, startling CACKLE, then controls
himself again.

PETREE

(to Andy)
Well, gotta go. Doin' some ice
fishin' tonight. Been pullin'
some nice size pike outta the
lake, I hear.
(tips his hat)
Good day to you all.

Andy walks him to the door.

ANDY

(sotto voce)
Ice fishing?

PETREE

Thought it was a nice touch.
(puts his hand
out)
But it'll cost ya.

Andy ushers Petree out the door.

223 EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY

223

Andy digs into his pocket and slaps a few bills into
Petree's palm. Petree smiles with what seems to be gen-
uine affection.

PETREE

You and the wife are okay, Farmer.
You're the kinda colorful,
eccentric characters that make
Redbud worth livin' in.

Petree turns and moves off toward his truck. Andy stands
there for a moment before going back inside.

224 EXT. ROAD INTO REDBUD - DAY

224

Bud's Jeep Wagoneer, with Andy, Elizabeth, Bud and Betsy
inside, heads into town as snow begins to fall.

225 INT. THE JEEP - ENTERING REDBUD - DAY 225

Everyone looks out the windows at Downtown Redbud. Andy and Elizabeth are startled by what they see.

226 EXT. DOWNTOWN REDBUD - HIGH ANGLE 226

It looks like a scene from a Christmas card. Lights have been strung across the street. Shop windows are decorated. Shoppers bustle from store to store with wrapped presents.

A SIDEWALK SANTA RINGS his bell. A tall Christmas tree has been set up in the town square. It is being decorated by a TROOP OF BOY SCOUTS.

And snow begins to blanket everything.

227 INT. THE JEEP 227

Andy and Elizabeth are visibly moved by the town's efforts on their behalf.

ANDY

It's a little piece of heaven,
isn't it, Bud?

Bud is impressed, but tries to conceal it.

BUD

Very nice. Very nice.

228 EXT. MAIN STREET 228

The Farmers and the Culbertsons stroll down the street. Bud and Betsy are clearly drinking up the atmosphere.

Redbuddians have out-Rockwelled Rockwell: A shivering "HUCK FINN", with straw hat, fishing pole and string of dead fish flung over his shoulder, walks by in bare feet. "TOM SAWYER" is across the street painting a fence. He periodically breaks the ice that forms over the white-wash.

REDBUD CITIZENS are on their best behavior. They tip their hats and wish "Merry Christmas" by the dozens.

ANDY

(in an aside
to Elizabeth)

Should we be taking down names?
This is going to cost us a
fortune.

ELIZABETH

The fifty dollar bonus was your idea!

(CONTINUED)

228 CONTINUED:

228

SIDEWALK SANTA
Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!

The Culbertsons deposit a few coins into Santa's pot, then everyone moves on. But Santa reaches out and grabs Andy. He yanks down his beard, revealing himself to be Mayor Barclay. He gives Andy a big wink.

229 A REDBUD POLICE CAR

229

rolls up slowly alongside the curb where the Farmers and the Culbertsons are walking. Sheriff Ledbetter is behind the wheel. He leans out the window.

LETBETTER
Merry Christmas, folks! All is well in the town of Rosebud.

ANDY
Keep up the good work, Sheriff.

Ledbetter smiles, then puts the car accidentally into REVERSE. He SQUEALS backwards, then BRAKES hard. He puts it into NEUTRAL and REVS the motor until it's an absolute ROAR!

ANDY
Drive carefully, Sheriff...

LEDBETTER
You bet.

With the motor ROARING in NEUTRAL -- Ledbetter puts the car into DRIVE. It ROCKETS away from the curb, skidding, swerving and fishtailing in the slushy street.

Andy turns to Bud.

ANDY
You can sleep well at night when you have a man of Sheriff Ledbetter's caliber on the job.

Bud nods appreciatively, then sees that they are standing in front of IVY'S CAFE.

BUD
Who's hungry besides me?

Bud hurries inside. Andy, Elizabeth and Betsy follow dutifully along.

Fortunately, everyone (except Andy) is spared the sight of:

230 SHERIFF LEDBETTER'S PATROL CAR

230

going out of control, crossing the Town Square and CRASHING into the giant Christmas Tree that the Scouts have just completed decorating.

231 INT. IVY'S CAFE - DAY

231

Lamb Fries, SIZZLING on the griddle! Scooped onto a plate and carried across the cafe by Ivy.

BUD (O.S.)

I was a tenured English Lit. professor, and Betsy was working for one of the top brokerage houses, but one day we just woke up and looked at each other and said, okay -- the time has come to make a change.

Ivy deposits the plate of Lamb Fries in front of Bud, then looks at Andy with a significant expression.

IVY

This order makes thirty-three.

Andy glances uneasily at the chalkboard where his own record of 32 is recorded. Bud digs into the order of Lamb Fries.

BUD

These lamb fries are just delicious! I could eat 'em all day.

Andy begins to silently gnash his teeth.

ELIZABETH

(to Andy; enjoying it)

Records are meant to be broken.

Andy glares at her hatefully.

BUD

Betsy, try one of these. You'll love 'em.

Andy brightens.

ANDY

Yeah. Try one, Betsy. You can't leave Redbud without sampling the lamb fries.

(CONTINUED)

231 CONTINUED:

231

BETSY

Oh, all right.

Bud uses his fork to put one into her mouth. Andy favors Elizabeth with a smug expression.

ELIZABETH

(to Andy)

Records are still meant to be tied.

We HEAR the Lamb Fry POP and SQUISH inside Betsy's mouth.

BETSY

Mmmmm. They're just... well, they're just indescribable.

BUD

I told you so.

ANDY

Oh, yeah. They're great. Elizabeth adores them. Lamb Fries are her absolute favorite.

Elizabeth gives Andy a nasty look.

BUD

Is that so, Elizabeth. But you didn't order any.

ELIZABETH

(playing along)

Oh... they were my favorite. But I gave them up. Too fattening.

BUD

(with a big smile)

Well, I've saved the last one for you just the same.

We notice that OTHER CUSTOMERS have turned their attention on Andy's table.

Bud SPEARS the Lamb Fry with his fork. Elizabeth turns white in horror.

ELIZABETH

Oh, no, I --

BUD

Just one can't do you any harm.

(CONTINUED)

231 CONTINUED: (2)

231

ANDY
(agreeing with Bud)
Absolutely not.

Bud moves the Lamb Fry toward Elizabeth's mouth.

BUD
Take it, Elizabeth. I insist.

Elizabeth closes her eyes and takes the Lamb Fry in her mouth. She chokes it down, trying to conceal her revulsion. Andy watches her with a big, shit-eating grin.

CAFE CUSTOMER
The record stands!

This is followed by SCATTERED APPLAUSE. Andy acknowledges the applause with a humble smile.

232 EXT. THE FARM HOUSE - DAY

232

The Farmers and the Culbertsons return to find a group of CHRISTMAS CAROLERS in the yard, SINGING JOYOUSLY:

CAROLERS
Jingle bells, jingle bells!

Bud and Betsy smile appreciatively at the Carolers as they head toward the house.

ELIZABETH
(to the Carolers)
Come inside for some cocoa and eggnog!

Everyone hurries eagerly into the warm house.

233 INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY

233

A fire is roaring. The tree is decorated. The Carolers are just concluding a rendition of I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS, and there isn't a dry eye in the house.

Bud and Betsy share a kiss. Elizabeth and Andy exchange an uncomfortable glance. A CAROLER raises his glass of eggnog in the air.

CAROLER
A toast to the Farmers! We'll miss you...
(an obvious plug for himself:)
... or my name isn't Otis Berryhill of 23 Redbud Road.

(CONTINUED)

233 CONTINUED:

233

ANDY

Everybody, your attention please.
I may not be a sentimental man,
but there's something I'd like to
say at this time.

Andy puts his arm around Elizabeth and holds her close in
a display of faked affection.

ANDY

(continuing)

It's hard for Elizabeth and me to
say farewell, but there will
always be a special place for
Redbud in our hearts.

234 CLOSE ON ELIZABETH

234

Her eyes widen in a look of horror. This is what she
sees:

235 YELLOW DOG

235

pokes his head out from between the legs of the people
listening to Andy. In his mouth he holds a bone... a
HUMAN BONE! The forearm, wrist and hand of Claude
Musselman -- all five fingers hanging down and CLATTER-
ING SOFTLY.

236 FULL SHOT - THE LIVING ROOM

236

Elizabeth nudges Andy in the ribs with her elbow. But
Andy just gives her a quick, angry look and continues his
speech:

ANDY

And I know you will show the new
owners -- whoever they may be --
the same affection you have shown
us. And they, too --

Now Elizabeth presses her heel into the toe of Andy's
shoe. Andy grimaces and looks down.

ANDY

(continuing)

-- and they, too --

And now he catches sight of Yellow Dog and the bone.

ANDY

-- Good God! --

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANDY (CONT'D)
 (trying to recover)
 ... Uh, that is... Good God
 willing, they too will grow to
 love this house and this town and
 you wonderful people, just as much
 as we have.

During this, Elizabeth slips away from Andy's side and attempts to ensnare Yellow Dog without alerting the Culbertsons. But Yellow Dog eludes her grasp, sneaking away the moment she approaches.

The crowd, assuming Andy's speech has come to its logical conclusion, lifts their glasses of eggnog in the air to salute him -- but Andy suddenly starts up again:

ANDY
 Because, uh, Redbud is a town with heart. Redbud is a town that cares. We came to Redbud as strangers, but we were welcomed with open arms --

Elizabeth is having one hell of a time catching Yellow Dog, forcing Andy to continue with his speech, even though he has clearly run out of fresh thoughts.

ANDY
 (continuing)
 -- and soon we were made to feel as though we had lived here all our lives. And this is the feeling we will take with us when we leave --

Now everyone -- except Bud and Betsy -- have become aware of Elizabeth's dilemma. They try to help her corral the slippery dog.

237 YELLOW DOG

237

darts between their legs, then comes face to face with Elizabeth -- who holds a FRYING PAN in her hand.

Yellow Dog makes a sharp detour into another room. Elizabeth follows, SLAMMING the door behind her.

238 FULL SHOT - THE LIVING ROOM

238

ANDY
 (continuing)
 And as the saying goes, once a Redbudian, always a Redbudian --

(CONTINUED)

From inside the closed room we HEAR a VICIOUS SNARL followed by a LOUD BONG! The door opens. Yellow Dog staggers out minus the bone. Elizabeth follows with a victorious smile on her face.

Andy sees this -- breathes a deep SIGH of relief -- and raises his glass:

ANDY

To Redbud!

ALL

To Redbud!

CHEERS and APPLAUSE. Then, the Carolers begin to zip up their jackets.

OTIS

(to Andy)

Well... back to work.

The Carolers deposit their empty glasses on handy surfaces and file out the door to continue their musical vigil in the front yard.

Bud and Betsy come up to Andy. Apparently, Andy's speech has moved them profoundly.

BUD

Andy... Betsy and I want to sleep on it, but I think we'll be back in the morning to make you an offer on the house.

ANDY

(to Bud)

Tomorrow? Where are you staying tonight?...

BUD

Sid's Alpine Village.

ANDY

Oh, Christ -- no!

BETSY

Huh?

ANDY

I mean, you'll spend the night here! In our guest room. I insist.

Elizabeth reacts unfavorably.

(CONTINUED)

238 CONTINUED: (2)

238

BUD

Thanks, Andy. That's very nice of you.

ANDY

Nonsense. We're happy to do it.

239 EXT. THE FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

239

A HORSE-DRAWN SLEIGH passes in front of the house with bells JINGLING. BUNDLED PASSENGERS inside wave and yell seasonal greetings.

The Carolers are still on duty, singing below Andy and Elizabeth's bedroom window.

240 INT. THE BEDROOM - NIGHT

240

Elizabeth looks out the window with a wistful expression and sees the sleigh glide by below as the Carolers sing SILENT NIGHT.

Andy enters with an armload of blankets and pillows.

ELIZABETH

I love the sound of Christmas Carolers.

ANDY

(annoyed)

And they've been at it for hours.

He dumps the blankets and pillows unceremoniously on the floor.

ANDY

You can have the bed. I'll sleep on the floor.

Elizabeth turns to him in silence.

ANDY

Look. I'm sorry. This is just for one night.

Long pause.

ELIZABETH

(ruefully)

You did it, Andy. You really pulled it off.

Andy looks up at her with a startlingly ingenuous expression.

(CONTINUED)

240 : CONTINUED:

240

ANDY

Of course I did, Elizabeth.

(beat)

Being a fake is what I do best.

241 ELIZABETH

241

hears this and turns away to look out the window once again. As the Carolers continue singing, the CAMERA PUSHES IN on her... and we see that her eyes are welling up with tears.

DISSOLVE TO:

242 INT. THE KITCHEN - MORNING

242

The Farmers and the Culbertsons sit on opposite sides of the kitchen table. There is tension in the air, a feeling of drama, as Bud jots something down on a piece of paper, folds it once and slides it across the table toward Andy and Elizabeth.

BUD

That's our offer.

Andy unfolds the piece of paper and reacts.

ANDY

This is more than we're asking.

BUD

I know. We want it all. The furniture, the dishes, the pots and pans...

BETSY

It's all so perfect. We want everything.

BUD

(smiling)

I even want the damn dog.

ANDY

Yellow Dog?... You want Yellow Dog?...

Andy and Elizabeth look dazed and overwhelmed. Bud pulls out a pen and hands it to Andy.

BUD

Just initial that offer on the bottom, Andy, and we'll call it a deal.

(CONTINUED)

242 CONTINUED:

242

Andy takes the pen from Bud and brings it mechanically toward the piece of paper in front of him. Elizabeth watches with an expression of great sadness.

Andy hesitates, then turns to Elizabeth.

ANDY

I've done a lot of things I'm
ashamed of lately, Elizabeth.
I've made a lot of mistakes.

(beat)

I don't want to make another.

Elizabeth looks at him expectantly. Bud and Betsy become instantly uneasy. Andy sets the pen down on the table in front of him.

ANDY

I don't want to move. I like it
here!

ELIZABETH

I don't want to move, either!

BUD

Hey -- what is this?

ANDY

And I don't want a divorce!

ELIZABETH

Neither do I!

Bud and Betsy look totally bewildered.

ANDY

You don't!?

ELIZABETH

Of course not! I don't know what
I was doing. You were acting so
strange...

ANDY

I know I was. And I'm sorry.

ELIZABETH

So am I.

They throw their arms around each other and kiss.

BUD

Hold it! Wait a damn minute here!

(CONTINUED)

Andy and Elizabeth's embrace becomes more ardent.

BUD

What the hell is going on?

Andy, starved for affection, nuzzles Elizabeth's neck and kisses her cheeks. He tries to talk without taking his lips off of her.

ANDY

Mummmph hummph gliffglumph!

BUD

What?

As Andy works his way down her chin, Elizabeth turns to face Bud.

ELIZABETH

He says, the house is no longer
for sale.

Bud and Betsy look pissed off.

BUD

He can't do that!

ANDY

(still kissing
Elizabeth)

Garnumph hemmerphrumph!

ELIZABETH

He says, we've decided to stay.

Bud's eyes narrow in rage. He tears up the offer.
Elizabeth begins to swoon as Andy kisses her neck.

BUD

This is what we get for dealing
with yokels, Betsy. Let's get
out of here!

(as they exit)

You'll be hearing from my
attorney, Farmer!

ANDY

Munnerphreff humma giffermumph!

ELIZABETH

(shouting after them)

He says you can contact him
through the law offices of Marion
Corey, Jr.!

243 EXT. THE FRONT YARD - MORNING

243

This is the scene that greets the Culbertsons as they march from the house:

The ENTIRE TOWN'S POPULATION, it seems, has gathered on the Farmers' property. Kids build snowmen. Skaters skate across the pond. People warm themselves around make-shift fires. The horse-drawn sleigh is parked in the road. It is a merry, festive scene straight from the pages of Currier & Ives.

Oh, yes... the Carolers -- knee deep in a snow drift -- now sing IN YOUR EASTER BONNET.

Everyone converges on the Culbertsons, smothering them in Christmas Cheer. The Culbertsons angrily shoulder their way through the crowd in an effort to reach their Jeep.

BUD

Outta the way! Clear a path!
Clear a path! Comin' through!

The Townspeople now realize something has gone terribly wrong and become alarmed -- fearing that they are somehow responsible.

Andy and Elizabeth step out onto the porch.

Bud and Betsy jump into the Jeep, SLAMMING the doors hard. Bud impatiently LEANS ON HIS CAR HORN, attempting to clear the road of Redbudians.

As the Culbertsons' Jeep pulls away, the Carolers run alongside, POUNDING on the windows, taking one last desperate shot.

CAROLERS

Swanee, how I love ya, how I love
ya. My dear old Swanee!

The Jeep accelerates and drives off, leaving the defeated Carolers in the road behind.

A great, gloomy silence ensues as Townspeople react to their failure. They gather around the porch, their heads hanging low. Mayor Barclay steps forward.

BARCLAY

Sorry, Andy and Elizabeth. We let
these two get away. We'll do
better next time.

ANDY

(to Barclay)
It doesn't matter anymore.

(CONTINUED)

243

CONTINUED:

243

BARCLAY

Huh?

ANDY

(to all)

Good news!

(puts his arm around
Elizabeth)

We've decided to stay!

Dead silence. Townspeople exchange mutinous expressions.

VOICE FROM THE CROWD

What about our money!?

The Farmers are taken aback by this.

ANDY

Well... uh...

The crowd SURGES FOWARD.

A REBUDIAN

We still get our money, don't we?

Some people begin to mount the porch steps with threatening expressions.

ANDY

Hold on now, everybody...

Somebody throws a SNOWBALL. It SPLATTERS against the wall next to Andy's head.

Andy and Elizabeth retreat into the house.

244

EXT. THE LIVING ROOM

244

They try to shut the door behind them, but Townspeople pushing in prevent them. Andy puts his back against the door.

ANDY

(to Elizabeth)

Push! Push!

The TWO DUCKS just squeak into the house the moment before the door SLAMS SHUT.

Elizabeth throws the bolt. She and Andy catch their breath as Redbudians POUND on the door.

245 YELLOW DOG

245

bounds down the stairs -- sees the Ducks -- and all hell breaks loose! FEROCIOUS BARKING. TERRIFIED QUACKING. FURNITURE CRASHING. Nails CLICKING across hardwood floors. WINGS FLAPPING. Feathers flying.

Meanwhile, Redbudians continue to BANG their fists against the house. A SNOWBALL CRASHES through a window.

246 ANDY AND ELIZABETH

246

look at each other with expressions that speak of both doubt and hope. Then Andy points to the MISTLETOE hanging above the door. They smile... and kiss like newlyweds. For a moment, oblivious to all the chaos that surrounds them.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Kill 'em! Kill the dirty
S.O.B.'s!!

CUT TO:

247 EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - SPRING DAY

247

A game is in progress. A WOMAN in the bleachers has jumped to her feet.

WOMAN

(continuing from
previous scene)

Kill 'em! Hit 'em where it hurts!

Andy is on the sidelines, making notes in something that can only be called a REPORTER'S PAD.

ANDY (V.O.)

Mayor Barclay ruled that we weren't liable for the fifteen grand since we never actually sold the house, but for our own safety and future happiness, we had better make good on the fifty dollar bonuses.

Andy hears a HORN HONK and glances away from the game to see Elizabeth drive up in the Pickup truck. She hops out and waves to him. He gives her a smile.

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

Elizabeth, meanwhile, has had three new books published... and I've been working for the Redbud Gazette.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

247 CONTINUED:

247

ANDY (V.O.)(CONT'D)

(beat)

As a novelist, I turned out to be
a pretty good sportswriter.

CAMERA PANS to a BILLBOARD on the centerfield wall. It
shows a picture of Andy, and says: "Read Andy Farmer on
Sports every day in the Redbud Gazette."

ANDY (V.O.)

(continuing)

We had finally found the change
of heart we were looking for.

Elizabeth comes up behind Andy and puts her arms around
his waist.

CUT TO:

248 EXT. THE PLAYING FIELD - END TITLE SEQUENCE248

The two opposing softball teams, and all the spectators
in the bleachers, are comprised of CAST and CREW MEMBERS.

The CAMERA LOCATES each participant as his or her CREDIT
comes ON SCREEN.

All positions are up for grabs. But the Umpire will
definitely be GUS LOTTERHAND.

Lotterhand still wears his chinbrace -- which works fine
when he bends over to call strikes and balls. But when
he stands up, he's looking straight into the clouds.

The sequence will consist of typical "Redbudian Blunders,"
and conclude with a play at --

249 HOME PLATE

249

as a RUNNER and the BALL arrive at the same moment. The
CATCHER tries to make the tag. The Runner slides. A
DUST CLOUD consumes them both.

And Gus Lotterhand -- looking straight up into the sky --
makes his call:

LOTTERHAND

SAFE!!

THE END