

MERCURY RISING

~~"SIMPLE SIMON"~~

screenplay by

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based on a novel by

Ryne Douglas Pearson

Third Draft
Revised
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Before we see anything we hear a MELODY. Something haunting, moody. Played on an ELECTRONIC instrument. The same plaintive NOTES repeated over and over --

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON THE LETTERS 'JKL'

A pale white finger PRESSES down, moves to 'PRS' and 'TUV'. 'Playing' the melody with touch tones.

WIDEN and MOVE THROUGH a ROOM where someone is flicking the lights OFF and ON in time to the music. As the light flashes briefly we can make out FIGURES around the room, frozen like characters in a dreamscape. It's unsettling, startling. OFF. ON. Beep. Dweep.

A DOOR OPENS and a stocky woman in an oversized flannel shirt (LONNETTE) charges in --

LONNETTE

OK, where is it? Simon? I know you got it. I'll whip your butt ...

(as light flickers again)

Janine, get your goddamn hands off that switch

AS THE LIGHT STAYS ON - WE SEE A DAYCARE FACILITY

Plastic taped over a broken window, dingy carpets, Thrift Shop furniture. Lonnette moves a frail, YOUNG WOMAN with stringy hair away from the light switch. Surveys the messy room.

Now we can see the other KIDS and realize this is not a normal daycare. Its colors are heartbreak and confusion. An obese 14 year old black BOY rubs his head up and down against the wall; a GIRL (17) in several layers of clothes paces a tight circle round and round on the floor; two BOYS (15 and 13) sit on the floor speaking urgently, but not to each other.

ON NOTRE DAME CATHEDRAL

WIDEN as a jagged piece is place carefully on the 3 feet tall 3-D PUZZLE. SIMON LYNCH (16) lies on his back directly *under* the structure. His skin is pale white, almost translucent. Fine blond hair, green eyes. In his right hand a PORTABLE PHONE -- humming along with the touch tones as he pushes them. He hardly seems to pay attention as he completes the puzzle quickly. There's something in the way he stares up at the puzzle tower -- fervid, enraptured -- that seems to shut him off from the world around him. He never acknowledges LONNETTE as she kneels by him.

LONNETTE

I told you ... ask before you take. I got to call Louis' mom.

Simon's body goes rigid. Lonnette pulls the phone away from Simon. Simon *explodes* in a wild fury. His fury is stunning. He kicks out at the tower. The puzzle pieces come CRASHING down -- he kicks again knocking Lonnette backwards. His SCREAMS start a chain reaction of SCREAMING through the room.

LONNETTE

Simon, calm down. Stop it. I'll get you something else ...

Lonnette frantically rummages through an old cardboard box of *games* and *magazines*. Waves a MAGAZINE in front of Simon.

LONNETTE

Look ... look what I found for you. You like this ... right? See? ... OK?

Simon STOPS as suddenly as he began. He sets the magazine on his lap. Never having looked at Lonnette once. She takes the phone.

LONNETTE

You got to stop acting so crazy when you're upset. Make people afraid of you and you'll never have a chance.

No reaction from Simon. A wrenching WAIL OS makes Lonnette jump. The obese boy is slamming a WOODEN BLOCK against his head. Lonnette runs across the room.

LONNETTE

Louis! Stop that!

STAY ON SIMON -- the magazine propped on his knees. On the cover: *THE TINKERY*. Simon turns to pages filled with word and number GAMES. He begins to ROCK back and forth, humming, as he turns, synchronizing a *rhythm*. In some way we can read it as 'happy'.

CLOSER - AS SIMON TURNS ANOTHER PAGE

He stops rocking. His slender hand resting on the page. Simon leans his face to the PUZZLE. His body frozen but his eyes pale fires.

ON SCREEN: LETTERS AND NUMBERS RUSH RIGHT AT US

in monumental scale to give us some sense of how they speak to Simon. They rocket by, dazzling us in bright colors, cueing their own musical analogues, spinning out geometric patterns, so fast it makes us dizzy.

THIS IS WHAT SIMON SEES ON THE PAGE:

1839956021PFYRTELYTE366883484858KLRMAYBRKTR945959696080
70585868657474757686859493920586878695049271614134505836
25364858696947346576868493939485756757736263657684920201
36565687949587574767486070896847362515153645768665455837
56657478392942474900705984847374587685883837576773746565
64838384756646373848956960495879898079463524231335564737
58697979089584745638568568356856385685687568756565553656
54990909042902390390902901290390905906906906906785443673
26562161161615354543757384959687868585856868869869549698
68585587587437842849595959838378475757373476565596708090
90909796867567564645645535345343242424132563465657675784
84834895889986986987986985659853984985786785784873673147
85896050403873674785986984695824326567567467467764763567
53675367536753674268428743785378578478427837842785667750
84837112394958968675747384756563625254859606069069768785
75746346362325280456784567897665312211234554678988789090
99900876453421344567894567896789078776554321234567890987
ATHDKTENVODGLFORGODHSNFRHEHSDFJVMWUTUJJHQAMQKASQ

Simon closes his eyes. For a second. Hardly more than a blink. When he opens them he has already strung 103 letters and numbers together:

**IFYOUSOLVETHISPUZZLECALL18005551398ANDTELLTHEOPERATOR
THATYOUHAVE SOLVED PUZZLE 99 AND YOU WILL THEN BE ISSUED A PRIZE**

Another blink and ON SCREEN we see the letters and numbers TUMBLE into silent cohesion:

IF YOU SOLVE PUZZLE 99 CALL 1 800 555 1398

In the b.g. Lonnelle restrains Louis with a tight bear hug. He spits as she bulls him OUT of the room. The phone FALLS to the ground. Simon stands up. WALKS stiffly to the phone. SITS on the floor. Punches in the 800 number awkwardly.

QUICK CUT: CLOSE ON ANOTHER PHONE

It's hard to make out exactly where we are. Shades pulled below sill. An intensity LAMP reveals the Washington Post, a wax bag of pastries, a few numbered loose leaf binders. A Yamaha digital CD RECORDER clicks ON automatically as SOMEONE answers the phone. Simon hears:

A VOICE
Congratulations! You've reached the
Puzzle Center. For solving one of our
Master puzzles you've won a two year
subscription to the magazine of your
choice. Can I please have your name,
address and telephone number?

BACK TO SIMON: not a trace of anticipation or emotion in Simon's voice.

SIMON
You're a stranger.

VOICE
Excuse me? ... This is the Puzzle
Center. Where did you get this
number?

SIMON
Puzzle 99.

The silence on the other end *rages*.

PUNCH WIDER - REVEALING

A slim, trembling, buzz cut young man standing up from his swivel chair
is LEO PEDRANSKI (25). He's wearing Nike jogging shorts, a 'Poi Dog
Pondering' T-shirt, and hiking boots. Leo can barely breathe.

LEO
You want to repeat that?
(no reply)
Hello? Who the hell is this?

SIMON
You're a stranger.

LEO HEARS SOMEONE ELSE SHOUTING IN THE B.G.

LONNETTE (OS)
Simon! Put down that goddamn
phone.

LEO
Hey, man! Just tell me your name! ...
Please. Don't hang ...

THE LINE GOES DEAD.

LEO
... up! ... Asshole.

IN THE DAYCARE

Lounette tugs the phone away from Simon. Beeps it OFF.

LONNETTE
Don't say nothin' 'cause I'm in no
mood.

BACK TO LEO

The berserk energy of a true panic attack surges through him. He runs madly to lock the door. Then leaps to his *dufflebag* sitting on a chair. Digs frantically -- then just DUMPS it all on the floor. Gets on his knees.

LEO
(wired)
This really sucks. ... it's not my fault.

Rummaging until he finds a *cellular phone*. Curses as he punches in a number quickly with two fingers. His voice now breaking.

LEO
(into phone)
Are you scrambled? ...
(explodes)
I know it's just me. Scramble it
anyway! You have to get down here! ...
No, it can't wait! ... I don't give a flying
fuck. It's MERCURY. ... Somebody
walked on water.

EXT. TRUMP PLAZA - ATLANTIC CITY - NIGHT

A false neon daytime lights up the Boardwalk.

INT. MAIN FLOOR - ROULETTE TABLE

4 AM. Crowded, the room filled with smoke, booze and fear. The game moves fast. The only sound the anxious intake of money being sucked away. On the side a small GROUP: two very tall and very young WOMEN, all cleavage and ambition. And THREE MEN. MIKE FIORELLO, 52, dark glasses and ersatz elegance; his bullish bodyguard, LOU (26), and a man they know as DONNY (40ish), long hair, shaggy beard, dangerous. Fiorello drapes his arm around Donny as he plays.

100

Donny sees the BRIGHT FLASH first. Then hears the puff-puff of silenced SHOTS. By then he's falling backwards under the boards. His shirt gushing red. A HAND reaches INTO FRAME and grabs the TAPE. The world spins away from neon to black. The last thing Donny hears are FOOTSTEPS running up onto the Boardwalk.

MAN'S VOICE
I wasn't hurt ... not really.

DISSOLVE TO: - A MAN IN A SUIT (ART JEFFERSON, 40)

seated on a chair in a therapist's OFFICE. He's in good shape: an athlete's short hair cut, clean shaven, trim. It takes a moment for us to realize that 'Donny', the scruffy mobster we saw lying in his own blood is in fact Art. An older MAN (DR. HAMMOND) taps a Mont Blanc pen on Art's file.

HAMMOND
The medical report mentions a bullet entering the heart cavity. Ten hour surgery ...

Art fidgets in the chair like a boy at a barbershop.

ART
What do you want me to say?

HAMMOND
Agent Jefferson, why are you here?

ART
It's in the contract ... Use a gun, see a shrink.

Art grips the chair as if he's stopping himself from bolting out the door.

HAMMOND
This was your fourth undercover assignment in a row. You could've said 'no' to any one of them. Instead you chose to work in a violent world ... with violent men. Every day means hundreds of split second decisions ... just to stay alive. One of my patients described it as one step from madness. ... Six years is a long time to maintain a dual identity.

ART
Didn't bother Clark Kent.

HAMMOND
Ask Lois Lane, you'll get a different story. ... Your wife left you during this time ...

Art's eyes find the floor. Hammond isn't giving him any room to dodge.

ART

Water under the bridge. Happens to half the husbands in this country.

HAMMOND

Half the husbands aren't federal agents. ... Your last assignment was to get close to a man named Michael Fiorello. You were given expensive cars, lots of cash ... It must've been very... seductive ...

ART

(firm)

I had no problem ...

HAMMOND

(over)

... and disappointing. You're a proud man. A veteran agent. You had to face yourself knowing you came home with no arrests, no convictions ... only wounds.

The dam cracks and Art loses it. Jumps up, shouting.

ART

You're out of line. You don't know what it takes to do my job. ... This is not why I'm supposed to be here.

Art stops himself. Sits down and tries to shut down.

ART (CONT)

... Anyway, it won't happen next time.

HAMMOND

I don't think there should be a 'next time'. I've worked with FBI undercover agents for sixteen years. According to my professional evaluation ... you're not up to it anymore.

ART
(over)
OK. I get it. ... I know what's going on.

HAMMOND
And what would that be?

ART
I'm being punished. Because I
couldn't tag Fiorello. Because they
don't trust me anymore.

HAMMOND
If they wanted to punish you, why
would they send you to me for help?

ART
As long as you keep saying I might go
'postal', they can keep me on low
stress, bullshit assignments.

folds his arms tightly against his chest.

HAMMOND
Did you ever wonder why you were
good undercover? ... I know about
men like you. The assignment ends ...
you say you're glad to be home ... two
days later you're climbing the walls.
Itching for a new set of clothes, a new
address, a new name ... a new you.
The pattern is always the same. But
with time ... and therapy ... you'll
eventually start feeling comfortable
being Art Jefferson.

Art's face plays a thousand powerful emotions -- but settles finally on a
perfect mask.

ART
I don't feel anything.

Hammond takes a VIAL of pills from his desk.

HAMMOND
I'm starting you on Halcyon ... it will
help you sleep.

ART
I don't need it.

Hammond presses them on Art.

HAMMOND
... just in case you do feel something.

EXT. LANDING STRIP - CHONGJU, SOUTH KOREA - DAY

An F-16 comes screaming out of the steel gray sky. Smokes the strip as it skids to a gut churning stop. You'd never find this air base on any map. For all official purposes it does not exist.

SUPER OVER: LISTENING BASE ALPHA DELTA BRAVO

Two Humvees meet the jet. Four Army RANGERS armed with assault rifles are dressed in general work greens. No patches or identifying division insignias. The air is bitter cold. The same cold that killed ten thousand GI's 50 years ago at the DMZ.

DESCENDING FROM THE COCKPIT

The young PILOT jumps down first. He turns and watches a broad-shouldered man with close-cropped gray hair negotiate the fuselage grids. COL. NICHOLAS KUDROW (RET), 40's, carries a square leather briefcase *handcuffed* to his wrist. An OFFICER (LT. COL. BALL) in a heavy army snow coat shakes gloved hands with Kudrow.

BALL
Welcome, sir. I know it's been a goddamned long trip ... We've pushed back the briefing to 0800 so you can steal a few hours of sleep at the dorm.

KUDROW
That's a waste of my time. We'll start now.

Kudrow climbs into the Humvee. Ball and his men scramble to follow.

EXT. QUONSET HUT

A dozen white satellite DISHES are mounted outside like some lunar garden. Snow is beginning to fall.

INT. HUT (CONTINUOUS)

ELINT (electronics intelligence) and RADINT (radar intelligence) operations. As Kudrow enters six MEN wearing headphones are at work

on six computer screens. ON SCREEN text scrolls quickly in Korean ideograms.

BALL

My guys are amped like live wires ...
totally ready for your inspection.

One CORPORAL beams back at Kudrow.

CORPORAL

It's blowing Pyongyang's mind, sir.
We're throwing MERCURY right in
their faces but they can't figure out
how to sing along. It's a monster
system. Gonna kick prodigious ass.

KUDROW

Let's just get on with it.

The smiles disappear. They all sit up with 'this guy's a ballbreaker' looks on their faces.

BALL

Ready for protocol review, sir.

Two beeps from Kudrow's briefcase silence the room. Kudrow looks surprised.

KUDROW

Excuse me.

He steps aside with the briefcase and unlocks a flat, black BOX mounted at the back of the briefcase.

ECU

A mobile log and radio receiver are attached to a GPS tracking system. In the center is a small *encoding machine*. Kudrow watches the digital readout beep 10 more times quickly. Here's what he sees:

36N7MLA9990TYCCGEL01376HTF906970JKDNAK110P

Kudrow punches a receiving CODE -- a sequence of 12 numbers -- into the box. The digital letters and numbers in the case *SPIN* in a blur. Now he re-reads the message:

MERCURY IS FALLING

In the few moments we've seen Kudrow his face has seemed etched in granite. For the first time we read what could be called a strong emotion

in his visage. *Surprise*. Maybe even fear. It only lasts a second. Kudrow draws back into his shell. On the built-in keyboard he types a quick reply.

WILL ARRIVE IN 12 HOURS

He triggers the code and the message *spins and scrambles* into meaningless digits. Kudrow returns and announces.

KUDROW

I need to get back to Washington immediately.
Please inform my pilot.

The whole room looks stunned. Ball can't believe it.

BALL

But ... you just got here, sir. It's half way around the world. The pilot is on a required six hour turnaround rest.

Kudrow is already slipping into his coat.

KUDROW

Then get me another pilot.

CUT TO: CLOSE ON A CHRISTMAS TREE ORNAMENT

(a bright pink ball) as a PHOTOGRAPH of a scowling young black MAN with dreadlocks is pasted onto it.

BIZZI (OS)

The top? Uh-uh. Thompson was only a dyslectic counterfeiter ...

WIDEN TO REVEAL - FBI CHICAGO FIELD OFFICE - DAY

ASSISTANT SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE (ASAC) TOMMY BIZZI (35) stands atop a stepladder. A Christmas TREE is being trimmed in the middle of the room. SPECIAL AGENTS PILSEN (29), GRANT (38), SLEZAK (31) and SIMMS (40) argue around the tree. Photos of CRIMINALS dangle from every bauble.

GRANT

He didn't just do currency ... he forged tickets to rock concerts ... We busted him cause one night he misspelled 'ABBA' ...

SIMMS

(re:his globe)
... Eddie Farquar. He's hitting First
(MORE)

13

SIMMS (cont'd)

Federal on Michigan Ave. Passes a threatening note and a bag for cash. The teller asks him for I.D. and the moron shows her his driver's license. There's your top of the tree.

BIZZI

Wait a minute. Whoa. Not so fast.
(holds up his ornament)

Darryl Chee. Him and the secretary kill the wife, torch the factory. Fly to Palm Beach to wait for the insurance check. To make it look real he posts a 100 grand reward. Only he forgot to pay the last insurance premium. They're flat broke so the girlfriend turns him in to collect Darryl's own reward. ... that's your winner.

They all argue loudly at once until --

ART ENTERS THE ROOM

It gets real quiet, real fast. They're awkward with Art.

ART

I'm interrupting ... sorry ...

Bizzi, bulked up on daily weightlifting, jet black hair combed in a pompadour, jumps off the step ladder.

BIZZI

No ... hey, you make the call.
(holds up ornament)
Who goes on top of the knuckleheads' tree?

ART

(beat, then)
Got a group photo of the entire state of Montana?

The men signal Bizzi to stay with Art. AS THEY WALK --

BIZZI

So how you feeling?

ART

I'm great.

BIZZI

Sarah's making a little holiday get
together tonight. I rented a Santa suit.
You wanna come ...

(off Art's look)
or should I just go fuck myself?

ART

I think I'm busy.

BIZZI

I've been throwing this party for ten
years and every year I invite you and
every year you don't come. ...
Christstakes, you never even been to
my house. You're gonna give me a
complex. ...

ART

I'll try my best.

Art walks on.

BIZZI

(calling after)

... Just lie to me and say you wouldn't
miss it for the world.

ART

(over his shoulder)

I wouldn't miss it for the world.

COMM CENTER

Art checks his mail. A young black woman, DOLORES (24) with 2 inch
long, sparkling nails, types in a blur as she speaks.

ART

Anything for me, Dolores?

She hands him a file sheet. Art scans it quickly.

ART

Jesus Christ. ... Is Lomax here?

DOLORES

Not for you.

Art stares in disbelief at the worksheet again.

DOLORES

I mean it.
(finally stops typing)
Please, Art, don't ...

Art is already gone to --

INT. OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE (SAC)

Art walks in on SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE BURT LOMAX (46). At a beefy 6'7" Lomax can't fit his knees under his desk so he sits in a recliner off to the side.

LOMAX

(not looking up from
paperwork)
Not a chance.

ART

Either file a reprimand or put me
back undercover. But no more of this.

He waves the worksheet like a red flag in front of the bullish Lomax.

LOMAX

You're under a doctor's care.

ART

At least say it to my face.

Lomax engages. Finally looks right at Art.

LOMAX

You're the best undercover man we
have. Now suddenly you come up
empty handed with Fiorello? ...

(hard)

You were with him everyday.

ART

He's had the same girlfriend for six
years and she thinks he's an appliance
salesman. ...

Lomax springs up from the recliner. He seems to unfold in three
sections.

LOMAX

If Fiorello was on to you, you should've asked for help. Do you realize how it looked in Washington ... one of my men gets ambushed. They ask me where was backup ... I couldn't tell them Art Jefferson never asks for backup.

ART

I didn't need it.

LOMAX

What do you want me to say?

ART

Say one of us is acting like a prick.

Lomax stares at him. His face is flushed. Lomax falls back into his chair.

LOMAX

Excuse me.

Lomax zones him out. As Art leaves, Lomax closes the door with his foot.

CUT TO: A FOOTBALL

arcs through the cold air. SLAMS against the window of a blue VAN moving down a narrow city street.

IN THE VAN WINDOW

We see Simon Lynch. He doesn't react. Several neighborhood KIDS chase the ball.

WIDEN -- HARRISON PARK, CHICAGO - LATE AFTERNOON

The winter daylight is almost gone. The van stops at a tiny imitation craftsman house in this weary working class neighborhood. Despite a crooked porch 2564 VINCENT STREET has curtains in every window and a cheerful Christmas wreath on the door.

INT. VAN

A cloud of exhaust enshrouds the windshield. The bundled up DRIVER shouts over his shoulder.

DRIVER

Hey, Simon.

CLOSE ON SIMON

seated in the back wearing a red down jacket with the hood up over his head. Looks out the window as if he were seeing the house for the first time. He reaches under his sweatshirt and pulls out a STACK OF NOTECARDS ON A STRING. He wears them like a necklace. He flips to a CARD written in ragged script:

BLU HOUS NUMBR 2564. GIT OUT.

Simon makes his way slowly and carefully to the front of the bus.

INT. HOUSE - WAITING BEHIND THE FRONT DOOR

JEAN LYNCH (36), arms folded tightly to her chest, watches Simon through the window as he takes the bus steps one at a time. Clutching the rail tightly. The same way he does it everyday. Jean has to stop herself from going out to help him.

Simon climbs the porch steps with the same care. PUSHES THE DOORBELL. Jean lets it CHIME. Then she opens the door with a big smile -- the way she does it every day.

SIMON

Simon is home!

JEAN

Hi, honey. I missed you.

Jean Lynch hugs her son. Knowing she doesn't get a hug back. Simon's arms hang loosely at his side. Never makes eye contact.

JEAN

Come inside, Simon.

Simon bows his head to negotiate the doorstep. The smallest obstacle is a mountain to him. He concentrates, then JUMP/STEPS over the jamb into the house. Jean Lynch looks down the block at the boys playing in the street. She knows they'll never play with her son. She closes the door. The sky is almost dark.

INT. KITCHEN

Simon stands with his mother at the stove. She opens a packet of INSTANT HOT CHOCOLATE. He dumps it into a chipped MUG. She hands him a spoon. He stirs it with great intent -- exactly six times. The way they do it everyday.

JEAN
Careful. Simon.

SIMON
It's very hot! ... so sip it slowly!

Simon slurps it in regular beats of three, ending with a loud 'Ahhhh.'
Turning it into a rhythm.

JEAN
Daddy will be home soon.

SIMON
Simon will wait ... in his room.

He walks out carefully holding the mug with two hands.

CLOSE ON - A MAZE

in a PUZZLE MAGAZINE. A RED CRAYON traces a LINE from start to finish without hesitating even for a second.

WIDEN - SIMON'S ROOM - LATER

Simon Lynch sits at a tiny desk going methodically through a PUZZLE MAGAZINE of MAZES one page right after the other. Finishing each labyrinthine test in a matter of moments. A TOWER of DOMINOES stands on the other side of the desk. BOXES of JIGSAW puzzles and game MAGAZINES are stacked neatly by a twin bed. Walls are filled with Simon's art work -- clean, geometric patterns perfectly drawn over and over.

The sound of the front door OPENING fills the small house. Simon can hear his father's (MARTIN) FOOTSTEPS downstairs.

MARTIN (OS)
I'm home, Simon. Daddy will be right up.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

MARTIN LYNCH (38) is tired from a day that began before dawn. His green repairman's uniform is soiled. His hands grimy. He shoulders open the storm door to shake out his workboots. It's now dark outside.

A MAN STANDING ON THE PORCH STARTLES HIM

The MAN gives a friendly wave. Thinning red hair, average size, dull black overcoat. Nothing remarkable at all. He's already reaching in his pocket

19
for a velcro wallet showing a gold Chicago Police Department (CPD)
BADGE and I.D.

MAN

Martin Lynch? Detective Burrell.
Chicago Police. I'm sorry to bother
you. Can I talk to you a minute? It's
important.

Martin reacts. steps aside.

INT. FOYER (CONTINUOUS)

A small Christmas TREE strobes with tiny blue and green lights. A few
presents on a table. Burrell blows on his hands, smiles at Jean Lynch
coming in from the kitchen.

BURRELL

Mrs. Lynch?

JEAN

Is something wrong?

MARTIN

I don't know.

BURRELL

I got your address from the folks at
the Garden Path Day Care. Your boy
goes there? ...

JEAN

Yes ...

She looks anxiously to her husband.

BURRELL

If I draw this out, it'll only make it
worse so ... I'm afraid one of the other
parents has made accusations against
a teacher ... of a sexual nature.

JEAN

Oh god ...

BURRELL

I don't want to upset you.

MARTIN

You've already upset us.

BURRELL
They're only allegations at this point.
If I could speak to your son ... ask him
a few questions ...

The Lynch's exchange an anxious look.

JEAN
You don't know about Simon?

BURRELL
The school said he was retarded or
something.

JEAN
He's not retarded. He's autistic.

BURRELL
(frowns)
Can he talk?

MARTIN
Simon won't talk to you without one
of us there. He's afraid of strangers.

Burrell isn't happy about this but --

BURRELL
OK. Let's go.

OUTSIDE SIMON'S ROOM

Martin Lynch knocks 'shave-and-a-haircut' -- explains to Burrell:

MARTIN
Simon likes me to do it this way ...
(calls)
Is Simon home?

SIMON (OS)
Simon is home.

INT. SIMON'S ROOM (CONTINUOUS)

Simon is waiting for his father. His arm sticking straight out. Martin Lynch shakes his son's stiff hand. Simon doesn't look at his father but his eyes reflect his joy at this simple ceremony.

Simon suddenly pulls back his hand. Takes a step back. He's noticed Burrell. And Martin Lynch knows he has.

MARTIN
Come sit with daddy.

Simon follows his father to his bed. Burrell intercepts him. Tosses Simon's hair in a friendly way.

BURRELL
Hi, Simon!

Simon SLAPS at Burrell with a SHOUT and staggers back to his father.

MARTIN
(sharp)
Don't touch him. He doesn't like
strangers to make physical contact.

BURRELL
Sorry ...

MARTIN
It's alright, Simon. Detective Burrell
wants to ask you some questions.

Martin has large, calloused workman's hands. But he guides his son to sit on the bed with grace and comfort. A proud father despite what the world thinks.

BURRELL
This won't take long, Simon.

Burrell *lifts the desk chair* and sets it closer to Simon. Simon gives a pained yelp and starts to rock anxiously.

MARTIN
Put it back. Simon likes things the
way they are.

Burrell shrugs and puts the chair half way back.

MARTIN (CONT)
No. It's got to be exactly the same
way.

BURRELL
(setting the chair
precisely)
Kid's got a lot of rules.

MARTIN
He has the right to control the parts
of his life that he can.

Burrell looks over Simon's desk. Doesn't know what to make of the
DOMINOES. He picks a MAGAZINE off the top of the stack.

BURRELL
(flipping through it)
Look at all this. Pretty strange. Your
teacher said you like magazines. How
do you figure this stuff out. Simon?

Martin Lynch immediately notices Simon begin to dig his thumbs into his
palms.

MARTIN
He's not comfortable.

BURRELL
You have a system or something.
Simon? Like a gambler?

Simon begins to moan softly. Martin Lynch stands.

MARTIN
This was a mistake.

BURRELL
But we just started.

MARTIN
Simon's not going to talk to you. It's
his decision.

Burrell straightens up and smiles at Simon.

BURRELL
OK. I obviously need somebody more
familiar with his condition. Maybe I
can talk to you and your wife
downstairs?

MARTIN

Simon, I'll be back in a few minutes.

Simon waits on the bed as they leave. PUSH IN SLOWLY ON SIMON -- the sounds of his world are familiar, amplified explicitly in his mind. The sound of FOOTSTEPS descending the stairs. A neighbor's car door SLAMS. The dog down the block BARKS.

Then a new sound. Tsewp-tsewp. Tsewp-tsewp. THUMP. THUMP. Followed by the crystal jolt of breaking glass. A short CRY. His mother's voice. Then, silence.

Simon pulls roughly at a strand of hair behind his ear. His mouth open -- softly groaning. He *hears* heavy FOOTSTEPS on the stairs.

BURRELL opens the door again. He already looks a little different -- shoulders squared away, more alert, even younger. He's quick and rough. His voice flat, all business.

BURRELL

Look at this.

Burrell holds a XEROX of the square of numbers from the magazine. Puzzle 99. Simon doesn't look. Burrell grabs a tight fist of his hair. Forces his face to the page.

BURRELL

How do you know what this says? Talk to me. What do you see?

Simon twists his head and BITES Burrell's hand. Burrell curses and SLAPS Simon across the face. Simon falls to the floor. Curled in a ball.

DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY

Martin Lynch lays in a spreading pool of his own blood. Eyes wide open. He HEARS the clipped cry of pain from his son upstairs. With a great draw of air, he forces his head up. He can see his wife's legs twisted like a doll on the kitchen floor. He touches a hole in his chest with a trembling finger.

Another CRY comes from upstairs. Martin's anger denies his pain: he crawls along the floor to the sideboard in the hall. Blood-slicked HANDS reach for the PHONE. He grabs onto the Christmas tree for balance. It CRASHES to the floor.

SIMON'S ROOM

Burrell is kneeling over Simon when he hears the crash. He takes a silenced Walther PPK from its holster.

BURRELL

Don't move, Simon, or I'll hurt you again. When I come back we're taking a little trip.

STAIRWAY

Burrell hurries down, gun in hand. He sees Martin Lynch with the phone to his ear. Burrell grabs Martin Lynch's wrist -- the receiver falls. Martin Lynch is too weak to resist. Burrell wraps Martin's bloody FINGER around the TRIGGER and muscles his hand until the gun points at Martin's temple. He fires once. Martin drops to the floor, dead. Burrell listens to the receiver.

OVER THE PHONE

(filtered)

911 ... Sir, are you still there?

Burrell hangs up, runs upstairs two at a time. He bursts into --

SIMON'S ROOM

Simon is gone.

Burrell is frantic. He throws open Simon's closet. Lifts his single bed. Tears clothes from the closet. Checks out the window. Wild, furious at this glitch. With the back of his hand he sends the domino tower flying across the room. Then he HEARS the SIRENS carried over the frigid Chicago night air. He charges out of the room. Back down the stairs to --

THE BASEMENT

He leaps the stairs and lands nimbly. Burrell moves around the basement like a predator. The sirens are getting louder.

EXT. HOUSE (CONTINUOUS)

Two sector CARS arrive one behind the other. Lights bright against the early night sky. Four CPD OFFICERS rush up the porch stairs. Guns drawn. Aiming FLASHLIGHTS. The lead COP KICKS open the door.

INT. HOUSE (CONTINUOUS)

The bodies of Martin and Jean Lynch lay in twisted heaps. Two COPS run up the stairs. A third COP hurries into the basement.

BASEMENT

The Cop arcs a FLASHLIGHT beam through the darkness. There is no one there.

QUICK CUT: DOWN THE BLOCK

As more sector CARS rush to the scene. No one notices a middle-aged MAN cut through the night darkened alley. Burrell jumps into a Jeep Cherokee and drives away headlights off.

BACK TO VINCENT ST. -- BY THE FRONT DOOR

Two more COPS hurry in. They meet the cops coming down from upstairs. Six flashlight beams criss cross Gothically.

ONE COP

Nothin' but dead people in this house.

CUT TO: FOUR PIT BULLS

half crazy from abuse and amphetamines slam themselves against the wire mesh back of a rusty CAMPER.

WIDEN TO - SUBURBAN STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - MORNING

Art Jefferson jumps back from the dogs. Two Chicago Police Department (CPD) ANIMAL CONTROL OFFICERS stay safely behind Art.

FIRST OFFICER

There's your evidence. We busted a gang sneaking them up from Texas. Good fighting dogs bring two, three grand.

ART

Jesus, what's that smell?

SECOND OFFICER

The camper hasn't been cleaned in weeks. No way I'm going in there.

ART

That's why you called the FBI? ... Have you tried feeding them?

FIRST OFFICER

We've been feeding them all day. Only makes them meaner.

ART

They haven't tasted my recipe. Get me half a pound of hamburger.

INT/EXT TRUCK

We see Art sitting in the cab of his Ford F150, talking on his MOBILE PHONE.

ART

Does Lomax have any other matters of national security for me to attend to?

INTERCUT WITH: BIZZI - AT HIS DESK

BIZZI

He wants you to check out a possible missing child in the two/one precinct. FBI has to file a report because the kid was on a federal disability. CPD retains jurisdiction.

ART

Sounds like a whole lot of standing around and three hours of paperwork.

BIZZI

Artie ... you've got 106 vacation days accumulated. Am I allowed to make a suggestion?

Art bangs his phone on the dash.

ART

... losing you. I'm going into a tunnel.

BIZZI

There are no tunnels in Chicago.

ART

Can't hear you.

BIZZI
Putz. Did you hear that?

CLOSE ON THE FOUR PIT BULLS - LATER

Sound asleep like puppies in the camper. The officers are amazed.

FIRST OFFICER
How'd you do it?

Art digs into his pocket. Pulls out his HALCYON VIAL. Hands it to the Officer.

ART
First fix is free. Then they're hooked.

EXT. 2564 VINCENT ST. - DAY

A yellow POLICE TAPE flaps in a frigid wind. NEIGHBORS stand on their tiny porches or watch from windows. A dozen Chicago PD OFFICERS and crime lab TECHNICIANS work in the cold.

ART JEFFERSON

parks his pick up on a side street. He jumps out and ducks under the tape. Art meets CPD DET. LT. NICKLES (38) walking up the steps to the house.

ART
(reacts)
Why's homicide here? I thought it was
a missing kid?

NICKLES
It is. The parents are dead. Looks like
a murder/suicide.

ART
Where's the kid?

NICKLES
Missing, remember. ... What are you
doin' here?

ART
You called the FBI, remember?

NICKLES

No, no. I meant what are you doin' here?

ART

I'm working my way to the bottom.

INT. HOUSE (CONTINUOUS)

So cramped the police lab technicians work on top of each other. A TEKKIE in rolled-up shirtsleeves gets up from the floor with a gun in a plastic *baggie*. Art follows Nickles. Martin Lynch's BODY in the hall. Jean Lynch's BODY surrounded by forensics.

NICKLES

Meet the real American family values. The kid's name was 'Simon'. Neighbors say he's retarded. He's been missing over 24 hours.

ART

(frowns)

Guys who *kill* their families kill them all.

Nickles reacts, moves back down the hall.

NICKLES

Maybe he did the kid somewhere else. Didn't want the mom to see. ... A kid like that costs a bundle. They were on a waiting list for federal assistance but nobody gives a shit about those programs. People just want their taxes cut. Fuck you very much. Maybe dad just got tired of knocking himself out for a kid who didn't know any better. Put them all out their misery.

ART

Mind if I look around?

NICKLES

We already did. The kid's not here. ...
(off Art's look)
Be my guest ...

We STAY with Art as he checks out the house.

ART'S POV (MOVING)

The only sign of luxury is a LAZY BOY ROCKER in the small livingroom. A plastic Nativity creche has been set up in the false fireplace. On a table behind the TV is a PICTURE FRAME. Art picks it up.

INSERT - PHOTO

Martin and Jean Lynch smiling in front of a big Appaloosa. Holding Simon on a saddle. Simon looking off away from the lens.

Art moves on. Peers down the open basement door. A few cops move by the bottom of the stairs. He turns back and grips the upstairs bannister.

INT. SIMON'S ROOM

Two COPS brush by Art on the way out. Art steps into the room. Looks out the small window to the alley below. A long drop. Moves over to Simon's desk. Puzzles and magazines are scattered on the floor and desk. Art picks one up. Might as well be Latin.

He goes into Simon's CLOSET. Six identical pale blue shirts. On a hanger by itself is Simon's red hooded down jacket.

Art kneels to look under the bed. Sees something on the floor. A DOMINO. Picks it up. Art gets back up. Takes out his cellular phone. PUNCHES IN NUMBERS -- the tones echo in the room.

ART
(into phone)
... get Bizzi for me, thanks.

While he waits, Art notices several DRAWINGS taped on the wall. Bold, bright colors, in perfect geometric patterns. One glides slowly to the floor. Art bends to pick it up.

Then Art HEARS it

It sounds like ... HUMMING. He freezes, not sure if it came from downstairs. An eerie falsetto -- wistful, almost ghostly. It mimics the TOUCH TONES Art just dialed. It stops. Art switches off his cellular.

Then he PUNCHES IN THE TONES again. The humming begins again. Accompanying Art. Art circles the room PLAYING the touch pad. He stops again. The sound seems to be coming from deep inside. Art glides along the dry wall, PUNCHING TONES, listening. The humming leads him to --

THE CLOSET

Art throws open the door. Tosses aside clothes. He falls to his knees. Hidden by shadow is a 24" plywood DOOR. Art pulls it off. A deep, dusty CRAWLSPACE stretches far under the eaves. Art can't see a thing.

He runs from the room and stops a CPD COP at the top of the stairs.

ART

Give me your flashlight!

The Cop yanks one from his belt. Art runs back into the room. Kneels again at the crawlspace and SHINES THE LIGHT into the crawlspace.

POV

Dust hovers in the air. Art moves the light around. Two small circles of LIGHT kick back towards Art. Pellucid reflections of terror. Simon's eyes. Art slides his shoulder in as far as it will go.

CLOSE ON ART'S HAND

as it touches Simon's HAND. Simon whimpers and pulls back deeper into the crawlspace.

ART

(softly)

It's OK. I won't hurt you. I promise ...

Simon moans loudly. Two FEET appear behind Art.

NICKLES (OS)

What the hell ...

ART

Stay back!

Art latches onto Simon's wrist and pulls him to the light. Simon's face appears first -- dusted with grime and soot, his lips chapped from dehydration. Like an animal from a burrow. The dirt doesn't conceal a deep BRUISE on Simon's right eye and another on his chin.

ART

Shhh ... You're OK now ... sshhhh ...

Art helps him onto shakey feet. Tears the blanket from the bed and wraps Simon in it. Simon's eyes dart back and forth wildly.

ART
How long have you been hiding in
there? Simon? Who hit you?

Art reaches to brush dirt from Simon's hair -- and Simon LASHES OUT. He slaps at Art. Staggers back and forth in his room. from desk to bed to door and back. Then falls to the floor screaming and crying. Rolling his head side to side. Art backs away -- overwhelmed at first. He barks at Nickles.

ART
Call an ambulance. Get him over to
Concordia. And I want some badges
waiting.

INT./EXT. AMBULANCE (MOVING) - DAY

Art rides in the back with a MEDIC. The SIREN screams. Simon is in the corner, ready to explode, eyes shut tight, clenching his teeth as the Medic examines his arm.

ART
What are you doing?

MEDIC
(matter of factly)
Checking for tracks. He's strung out
on something.

ART
It's not drugs.

MEDIC
You do your job, I'll do mine.

Art rests a heavy hand on the guy's arm.

ART
Leave him alone.

The Medic reacts to the look on Art's face. Sits back. Simon groans loudly, rocks side to side.

ART (CONT)
I think the siren's too loud for him.

MEDIC
We make better time this way.

Art leans up front past the DRIVER and flicks the siren OFF.

DRIVER

What the ...

ART

You don't like it? Walk.

SIMON

Mommy, daddy ... mommy, daddy ...

ART

They're not here, Simon.

SIMON

Simon is alone!

(shouts rhythmically)

Alone! ... Alone! ... Alone!

The Medic looks like he's trapped in a lion's cage. Art tries to figure some way to calm Simon. He finds the string of CARDS that Simon carries around his neck set aside with Simon's red coat.

ART

Did you write these, Simon?

Simon backhands them wildly. Several tear off and fly all over the ambulance. Art collects the cards.

INSERT - CARDS

as Art reads them.

DONT TOUCH STOV IF MOMYS NOT HOM

Next one:

BRUSH TEETH BEFOR BED

ART

These are good rules, Simon.

Simon is groaning so loud Art isn't even sure if Simon can hear him.

ART (CONT)

I have ask you some questions when we get to the hospital. OK? My name is Art ...

Art holds out his hand. Simon screams -- falls back into the corner, bangs his head against the wall shouting --

SIMON

Art is a stranger! Art is a stranger!

Art leans away to give Simon space.

ART

This is out of my league.

The Medic throws an 'I told you so' look at Art.

THREE CPD SPECIAL UNIT OFFICERS

well-armed, fidget uneasily. Tough faces reduced to uneasy silence. In the b.g. they can hear Simon SHOUTING wildly.

REVEAL: CHICAGO CONCORDIA HOSPITAL - SECURITY UNIT - DAY

The Special Unit officers are stationed by a BARRED IRON GATE. Art trades business cards with Lt. Nickles.

NICKLES

You sure about this? I got to justify the overtime.

ART

... til the coroner says murder/suicide
... I don't know, maybe it's the way he
called for his mommy and his daddy.
... I'm going to need a follow-up for my
paperwork.

NICKLES

Yeah, yeah. I ain't going anywhere.
Call me at the nurses station. I'll be
here all night. It's my headache now.

Simon's screams shoot right through Art. He looks through iron bars down the hall.

POV

A quick glimpse of Simon being wrestled down by several ORDERLIES and NURSES. He sees a nurse with a syringe, a flash of Simon's white arm. Art turns to a NURSE at the station.

ART
Is that really necessary?

NURSE
He's autistic.

ART
So nothing gets through ...

NURSE
No, just the opposite. Everything gets through. To someone like him every touch feels like a wound. Every sound like a bee sting. So they shut themselves off ... there's nothing you can do.

Art nods to Lt. Nickles and walks away quickly. Simon's CRIES echo down the corridor.

SOUND CUE: ANOTHER SCREAM

jolting, deafening. But it's not a human sound. In fact, it's not even one voice. Rather, a hissing WHITE NOISE that begins to decay into a hundred VOICES. A drone of sibilance, consonants and vowels. *Languages.*

ON SCREEN

A rush of CYRILLIC LETTERS whizzes past. And a VOICE speaking quickly in Macedonian.

Then a burst of northern Korean dialect as picture-like LOGOGRAMS flash by.

And then the clicking pop of South African Xosa blends in.

WIDEN

We are in a cavernous, windowless room. Cool white lights bathe a hundred CUBICLES with COMPUTER SCREENS translating written texts into audio sounds. And at those screens over a hundred cryptographic ANALYSTS reworking those texts into code. A SECURITY GUARD patrols the rear of the hall: six U.S. Army RANGERS with M-16's on their backs.

SUPER OVER: NATIONAL SECURITY AGENCY

(which fades into)

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS SECURITY (COMSEC)

MOVE DOWN ROW OF ANALYSTS

all with headsets, fingers flying over keyboards -- to a TEAM MANAGEMENT ROOM at the rear.

CLOSE ON LEO PEDRANSKI

hyperventilating. Staring blindly at the tall pile of reports on his table. INTO FRAME -- another HAND, a softer hand, rests soothingly on top of Leo's. Leo practically jumps out of his seat.

Leo turns to see EMILY HUANG (27) smiling down at him. Tall, rail thin, short black skirt, T-shirt with a big red TAO on the front, black hair cut in hip angles, Emily's easy presence reassures Leo.

EMILY

Too much sugar on your Frosted
Flakes?

LEO

Kudrow wants to see me. I think I
really fucked up something. I'm such
a loser.

POV: they both instinctively peek up at a wall length ONE WAY WINDOW overlooking the work floor. Emily's been chasing Leo for a year but most times she feels more like his mother. She's the stronger one.

EMILY

Just throw him a 'Homer Simpson' ...
'Sir, it was that way when I got there.'

LEO

This is serious.

Emily smiles, Leo doesn't. They both look up at the WINDOW again.

POV - MIRRORED GLAZE POLARIZES INTO NORMAL GLASS

They see Kudrow's dark SILHOUETTE looking back down on the floor.

EMILY

Pay no attention to the man behind
the curtain.

INT. SECURITY CORRIDOR - COMSEC - SAME TIME

A boyishly handsome MAN (ANTHONY DEAN, 30), blond hair and a Walkman draped around his neck, holds up his NSA I.D. to a tall, granite-jawed Ranger (PITTS, 26). Another Ranger (BURCH, 24) stands on guard.

PITTS

Please state your name clearly.

Dean's playful like a tourist trying to get a Buckingham Palace Guard to crack a smile.

DEAN

Every single day you guys ask me to state my name ... even though you can see it right here on my ID. 'Anthony Dean' ... I mean, I know it's orders but don't you boys ever get the sense that's it like time to question authority? ... I mean, if somebody ordered you to put an ice pick through my ear would you do that, too? Don't answer that. ...

Dean laughs expecting Pitts to laugh with him. Pitts blinks cold blue eyes.

PITTS

(beat. then)

Please state your name clearly, sir.

CUT TO: CLOSE ON DIGITAL CD PLAYER

marking time while we HEAR VOICES.

LEO (RECORDED)

This is the puzzle center. Where did you get this number?

SIMON

Puzzle 99.

LEO

You want to repeat that? ... Who the hell is this?

SIMON

You're a stranger.

LONNETTE

Simon! Put down that goddamn
phone!

The recording stops. It immediately resets. Then plays again.

WIDEN TO REVEAL - OFFICE

Kudrow leans over to switch it off. His unpacked suitcase and overcoat sit on his chair. Dean and Leo sit by a long work table. Kudrow lifts a copy of the *THE TINKERY* from his desk. He seems relaxed in his suit and tie; but there's danger in his deep set eyes and the timbre of his voice.

KUDROW

I've flown 20 thousand miles in the last 24 hours. That's a lot of time to reflect. Correct me if I'm wrong but I believe neither of you has ever said the words 'Puzzle Line' to me ...

LEO

(flustered)

It's not what you think, sir ... I mean, at the time ... it didn't seem important ... sir...

DEAN

(over)

I take full responsibility. I should've told you a long time ago.

KUDROW

Then someone tell me now.

Leo's anxiety erupts into a mile-a-minute burst of words.

LEO

Before MERCURY went operational we ran a standard validation protocol. Total works. Double sets of paired Cray supercomputers, fucking velociraptor machines, chewing at MERCURY, 24/7. MERCURY came out unbroken. Unbent. Awesome. ... But there was one last thing to check out ... the geek factor.

Off Kudrow's look --

DEAN

Human beings. They'll fool you sometimes.

LEO

We slipped a hidden message in the back of a puzzle magazine. Right in the middle of the egghead word games. We dared the amateurs to take a crack.

DEAN

The puzzles were MERCURY ciphertext. Anyone who could break the code would read a message to call the puzzle line and ask for puzzle 99.

LEO

For Barbara Feldon, agent 99 ... you know ... 'Get Smart'?

Leo laughs nervously til Dean cuts him off with a look.

DEAN

This was nearly two years ago. It was impossible that someone would actually call.

KUDROW

Then why did you do it?

DEAN

What's the use of building Frankenstein if you can't show him off to your friends?

LEO

Maybe it was just some rug rat drooling over the phone, punching numbers ... like a random thing ...

Kudrow opens a CHICAGO POST, calmly smooths it on the table.

KUDROW

His name is Simon Lynch. He's sixteen years old. He lives in Chicago. And these are his parents.

The tabloid headline screams:

DAD GOES BERSERK!

Leo reacts and quickly scans the lead.

LEO

Poor kid ...

KUDROW

Simon Lynch is still alive ... and under police custody.

LEO

... his own father ...

Kudrow neatly folds the paper.

KUDROW

Hell of a coincidence, don't you think? Same day he makes the call us, his father becomes the Angel of Death.

DEAN

Someone else found out about Simon.

KUDROW

Obviously.

LEO

... who? ...

KUDROW

Take your pick. The Chinese? Taiwanese? ...

(builds faster)

Or Iran, Iraq, the Germans, the Czechs, the Serbs, Egypt, Israel, the Italian Mafia, the Russian Mafia, a Colombian cartel, a Peruvian cartel, King Hussein, Don King, King Kong, or just an entrepreneur who knows he can sell the most sophisticated security code in the history of the United States for a billion dollars.

LEO

No way this Simon just pops it open. ... We considered everything.

KUDROW

Want to hear something you didn't consider? ... Simon Lynch displays Asperger syndrome. It's called 'high autism'.

(softly)

A fucking retard broke your code.

DEAN

Not exactly a retard, sir.

KUDROW

Would you want your sister to marry one?

Dean gets up -- paces, thinking it through.

DEAN

I think it's OK. Maybe Simon Lynch didn't 'break' anything. Maybe he just recognized something he already knows.

KUDROW

MERCURY sits in a titanium vault spread out on 1 thousand and 4 floppy discs. That's 1 billion and 4 million kilobytes of memory. ... How the hell does he 'know' that?

DEAN

Actually, it's impossible ... but look at it this way. Children don't learn to speak by studying rules of grammar. They intuitively understand language. It's in the genes. Maybe Simon possesses the innate ability to express himself in MERCURY. To him it's just another language ... He didn't figure out the code as in 'one plus one equals two'. He just knew it instantly. The numbers give him pleasure. Like a Puccini aria ... The only question is ... can he do it again?

KUDROW

I couldn't allow that to happen..

Kudrow has stunned them with his tone.

LEO
You're making me really
uncomfortable, sir.

KUDROW
I'm the goddamned Prince of
Uncomfortable.

DEAN
Let me talk to the boy. Spend some
time with him. I have a feeling he's
harmless ...

KUDROW
And if he isn't ...

DEAN
(intense, passionate)
He doesn't know what he's doing. ...
We spend half our time trying to
recruit people who can recognize
linguistic patterns. Maybe he can help
us.

Kudrow turns to Dean. Looks him in the eyes. Then he turns away.

KUDROW
We'll have him picked up. You can
make your examination. ... But if there
is a foreign agent after Simon Lynch ...
if we can't get to him first ... This isn't
a game in a puzzle magazine. From
now on we don't meet in this
building.

Kudrow PUNCHES ON a memo recorder on his desk.

KUDROW (CONT)
(into RECORDER)
12. 9. 97. 1350 hours. Meeting
convened with unit advocates
regarding condition of lavatories. Will
send detailed memo to follow.
(switches it OFF)
Gentlemen, the Puzzle Line never
existed, the phone call was never
made, and this conversation never
took place.

EST. SKOKIE. IL - NIGHT

Affordable northern suburb. The homes would fit perfectly in a small town, reminding us how Midwestern a city Chicago really is -- despite Michael Jordan and the blues.

CLOSER - AS SANTA CLAUS

appears in the doorway of a modest LIVINGROOM to the *applause* of about 40 GUESTS -- and immediately proceeds to knock over a row of egg nog cups with his sack.

WIDEN - INT. BIZZI HOUSE - NIGHT

Tommy Bizzi is the most bulked up Kris Kringle in history. His costume strains across his chest and biceps. His wife, SARAH (35), grabs the Christmas tree just as Bizzi slams it, too, with his sack. Guides him safely into a corner. We see most of the other AGENTS with wives, girlfriends.

REVERSE ANGLE POV

Art's TRUCK is parked across the street. He watches through the picture WINDOW. Guest cars line both sides of the street. Art is dressed up: sharp suit, cheerful red tie. Turns off the ignition. Takes a bottle of champagne from the seat wrapped in a big red bow. Opens the door. Steps out. Bizzi slow dances with Sarah through the window.

Art stops, gets back in. Starts the ignition.

INT. O'HARE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - SAME TIME

Passengers from Washington, D.C. are deplaning. Two college KIDS embrace by the gate. Veering around them are two tall businessmen, pulling square briefcases on rollers. There's something about them. Shoulders too square. Hair too short.

PITTS and BURCH.

CUT TO: CLOSE ON A POWERBOOK

We see the *template* for FEDERAL DOCUMENT 302 -- the standard FBI report form.

WIDEN TO - ART'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Barely furnished. Nothing on the walls. Months of unopened mail spilling from a chair to the floor. You can tell nothing about the person who lives here.

Art's pants and jacket are neatly draped over a chair. He types on a LAPTOP in his shirt and tie. Exhausted but unable to sleep. The bottle of champagne is half finished. Music plays from a SONY portable blaster. Art looks at the stove CLOCK. 1:40 AM. Art grabs a phone book from under the sink and finds a number. Dials.

ART
 (into phone)
 Psychiatric ward ... Lt. Nickles, please
 ... Then let me talk to another officer.
 (reacts)
 When? ... They're all gone?
 (stands)
 Who told you you could move him out
 of lock up? ...

Art slams down the phone. Grabs his pants.

EXT. CONCORDIA HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Art speeds up to the ER DOORS. Parks illegally by an ambulance.

INT. CONCORDIA HOSPITAL (CONTINUOUS)

Art bursts through the doors. Sprints across the ER lobby. Slaps the elevator button. Then decides to take the stairs.

INT. SECURITY UNIT - NURSES STATION

A NURSE with frizzy red hair doles out medication into paper cups. Art runs up. Art looks around -- there is no one by the security gate.

ART
 What happened to the police?
 ... Where is Simon Lynch?

NURSE
 (he's scaring her)
 They got a phone call ... then they all
 left ... one of them said he was being
 taken out of protective custody ...

ART
 Where did you move him?

NURSE
 Are you a relative?

ART
Where is he?

INT. CORRIDOR

Art forces the Nurse to run with him. They pass by rooms filled with sick children -- a young girl with a shaved head stands listlessly in the hall.

ROOM 1106

The Nurse stands aside. The door is open but the room is dark. Art runs in. No sign of Simon. Then Art sees a white SHEET trailing from the closet door. Opens the door slowly.

SIMON

hides inside, pressing a pillow to his chest. Wearing a nightgown. Art clears his throat so Simon knows he's there.

ART
It's me. Art.
(closer)
I need to move you from here. Right
away. But I don't want you to be
scared.

Art grabs Simon's clothes. Simon jolts Art by throwing his water bottle across the room. He sweeps a food tray onto the floor. Crashes a lamp. Simon presses himself against the wall.

ART (CONT)
... please ... I don't have time to
negotiate with you.

INT. STAIRWAY

Two DOCTORS in green OR gowns, caps, shoe covers, sprint up the stairs. We recognize Burch and Pitts. They stop at the fire DOOR. Burch takes out a velcro pouch -- inside is an Army MEDVAC AIR GUN HYPODERMIC. Pitts produces a 9mm with silencer.

AT SIMON'S ROOM

Burch guides a WHEELCHAIR into the dark room. Pitts steps in front.

REVERSE TO ART'S POV

Art pins Simon against the wall as he watches them disappear inside the room. Art moves to an OPEN ELEVATOR. Simon hesitates at the crack

between the floor and the door. Art pulls him on. The doors CLOSE as -- BURCH and PITS run out of the empty room.

INT. ELEVATOR (MOVING)

Art holds Simon tightly. One hand cupped over his mouth.

ART

(urgent as Simon
struggles)

Simon, listen, listen ... listen. I'm
trying to help you here ... whether you
know it or not. If they find you,
they'll kill you. Understand? I'm
gonna take my hand off. ... but if you
scream I'll put it back.

Art lowers his hand. Simon sags like a doll. Art quickly pulls clothes over Simon's gown. Art can hear the boy's rapid breathing, his soft humming. Art slips Simon's red down jacket over his narrow shoulders.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM

The elevator DOOR OPENS. Art holds them. Not getting off yet.

ART'S POV - EMERGENCY ROOM LOBBY

A restive nighttime crowd fills the waiting area. From sick kids to gunshot wounds. Art quickly studies faces -- not sure what he's looking for: an attitude, a movement, a look.

ART

Simon, you have to walk with me
through that door.

Art sets one hand on the gun in his jacket pocket. Art grabs Simon by his coat and starts towards the automatic doors.

FOLLOWING ART AND SIMON

Every step is a victory. Art holds Simon tight. Not knowing how he'll react to anything. Two NURSES appear suddenly out of a supply room. An ORDERLY rumbles a stack of three wheelchairs right past them. A BABY starts screaming in an examining room. Four DOCTORS step off the adjacent elevator.

Art senses it right away. The commotion too much, too fast. Simon spins back, howls. Gets away from Art. Simon lurches forward -- to everyone in the ER lobby he looks drunk, stoned, wacko. He careens into a PREGNANT WOMAN in a wheelchair. She screams and her HUSBAND

explodes from the registration counter -- shoving Simon with the flat of his palm. Two SECURITY GUARDS rush over. Art sweeps Simon into his arms like a baby. Presses Simon to his chest and runs through the double auto DOORS.

EXT. ER EXIT (CONTINUOUS)

Art sets Simon inside his TRUCK and jumps in. An AMBULANCE pulls up - its SIREN screaming. Simon presses his hands to his ears. Closes his eyes tight. The ambulance is blocking them in -- Art jumps a high curb and speeds out of the parking lot.

BURCH and PITTS run out into the parking lot. Art is gone.

INT/EXT ART'S TRUCK (MOVING)

Art checks his rear view MIRROR as they head down an almost empty street. Simon is rocking on the seat, his head twisted towards the passenger window. Eyes wide open. Art takes out his cellular phone.

ART

(into phone)

It's Jefferson ... who's on? ... OK, patch Bizzi through to my cellular.

(cradles phone; waits; turns to Simon)

I'm going to take you to a safe place.
Until I find out what's going on ...

Simon begins PUSHING the NUMBERED BUTTONS on the RADIO -- Loud, jarring -- never letting a station play for more than a second.

ART

Simon, are you listening? It's important.

(Simon continues
popping radio buttons)

I don't think you're listening ...

Art pulls Simon's hand away from the buttons. Simon goes right back to them. Art doesn't know what to do. Simon punching the buttons faster. Short BURSTS of NOISE build an abstract audio pattern.

ART

I'm going to take you to my office.
We'll find people who can help you
better than me. Simon? ...

(to himself)

This is nuts. I can't hear myself think.

Art turns OFF the RADIO. Simon *howls*. Slams his head against the dash.

ART

Simon, don't ... OK, OK you want to
push buttons? ... here ... like this? OK?

Art hits three buttons in a row imitating Simon. And SIMON FREEZES -- as if he were listening. Art sees it. He punches a second button. Then Simon PUSHES a BUTTON. Then Art. They begin to take turns quickly. Back and forth. In a rhythm. Repeating the pattern. Art thinks he sees a smile on Simon's face. It feels like they're communicating somehow.

ART

... one small step for mankind.

ART'S POV - MOVING ACROSS SIMON'S HEAD - A RED DOT

Art is confused for a second -- wondering why Simon doesn't flick the dot from his cheek. The RED DOT dances past Simon and ACROSS THE DASH towards Art.

RACK FOCUS

A dark green Jeep Cherokee moves alongside. For a second we can SEE BURRELL from the glow of his dash. The red dot is the LASER SCOPE from an MP-5 semi-automatic. And it sits on Art's chest. Art SLAMS on his brakes throwing off the shot an inch. His window SHATTERS. Art throws down the phone, pushes Simon's head to the floor.

ART

Don't move!

WIDEN SHOT - ART'S TRUCK

Art spins the wheel and cuts across the road, jumps a median strip and shoots up an ON RAMP to --

INTERSTATE 90 (MOVING)

Art floors the accelerator as they ride the left lane. The bizarre thing about this huge interstate is that smack down the CENTER OF THE HIGHWAY are two low CONCRETE WALLS forming a rail corridor for CHICAGO RAPID TRANSIT (CRT): commuter lines that run east and west, splitting the interstate in two. Unsuspecting drivers are often freaked by the sudden appearance of a high speed TRAIN rushing right at them smack down what seems to be their inside lane. Driving is a disorienting madhouse of dopplered blurs and speeding metal.

Art desperately feels under the seat with his hand. Simon is a ball on the floor, groaning loudly.

ART

Keep your head down, Simon.

Art spots his phone on the floor. Bends down to grab it. Another EXPLOSION and his front left TIRE is blown away. Art tries to hold the wheel but loses control of the truck.

WIDER

as the truck *slams* once, twice into the rail WALL. It shudders violently and scrapes along to a lurching STOP on the highway as --

THE JEEP CHEROKEE

shoots past on the right. Art climbs out the passenger door and pulls Simon free. Reaches back in for his cellular phone on the floor. Stuffs it in his jacket. Dawn patrol traffic buffets them with carbon wakes. Art hears the screeching noise of the Cherokee backing up the highway towards them. Art knows with Simon it'd be suicide to attempt to dash across the six west bound lanes of U.S. 90 in the darkness. Art LIFTS Simon over his head and pushes him OVER THE CRT WALL. Art grabs for the top and rolls over.

ONTO THE TRACKS

Cold and hard. Simon lays face down in the gravel. Hands covering his ears. About 30 yards ahead is the AVONDALE PARK stop on the CRT Line. Art tugs Simon by the arm --- forcing the boy to stagger along the tracks. Then Simon pulls back hard. He goes limp and falls to his knees.

SIMON

Aaaahhhhhiiiiiee ...

ART

You have to walk.

Art kneels to pull Simon up and feels a sudden manic VIBRATION on the rails. He turns to look down the track.

POV

The Cyclops LIGHT of a four car CRT TRAIN races at them.

ART

Simon, get up!

But Simon's eyes are closed. He rocks back and forth on his knees like a suppliant. Art hefts Simon over his shoulder. Simon struggles, then arcs his body ridged like an infant, very unwieldy. Art stumbles forward trying to run the rails.

LONG LENS SHOT (LOOKING DOWN THE RAILS)

Art and Simon glow with a penumbra of light from the oncoming train. The train sounds its HORN. Art looks to the station platform -- then back at the train.

They won't make it. Art pulls Simon towards the narrow space between the rails and the concrete wall. Simon is dead weight.

ART

Get up, Simon, get up!

Simon kicks and screams not realizing the consequence of his actions. Art explodes at him: shouting wildly.

ART

Get up! Now! Now! Now!

Art throws Simon against the wall. Art presses the boy's blond head back with his hand. Pins his body flat with his own body. He knows he's hurting the boy. A great WIND rushes at them -- the nightmare noise of the train is unbearable.

PUSH IN CLOSE - A SINGLE NOTE CARD

has torn away from Simon's necklace. It flutters onto the track. Before Art can react Simon lurches forward to snag the card. The train drowns out Art's scream. Art grabs Simon by the hair and pulls him back just as --

THE TRAIN RUSHES BY THEM

as violent as a Lake Michigan squall. Kicking tiny stones that sting their hands and faces. No more than three inches of space between life and death. The train passes. Art lifts Simon and carries him to the IRON LADDER at the far end of the station PLATFORM.

ART

You have to climb this ladder, Simon.
OK? You hearing me?

Simon's small hands clench the rusty rung in a death grip.

SIMON

Mommy, daddy, mommy, daddy ...

ART
 (lifting his leg)
 Put your foot here ... One at a time.
 That's all you have to do.

ON THE PLATFORM - CRT STATION - AVONDALE PARK

A dozen night shift COMMUTERS boarding the train are startled when Simon's blond head appears over the edge of the platform. Art jumps over him. Pulls Simon along. The last commuters are on the train as Art drags Simon onto the train. The doors CLOSE.

INT. TRAIN (MOVING)

It leaves the station. Bulleeting along the interstate towards O'Hare Airport. Simon sits next to Art on a metal seat. Art lets the rocking of the train work on Simon. He seems coiled like a spring -- Art has no clue when he'll explode. Art takes out his *cellular* and hits *speed dial* -- the strobing BUZZ tells him he can't get a relay on the train.

ART
 (in a rush)
 Damn things never work when you
 need them ... OK ... We'll get out of
 this. Simon. Just hang in there with
 me ... You scared? I'm scared, too.

Simon is clutching the CARD he rescued from the track. Art watches him take out his necklace of cards and try to put it back on.

ART (CONT)
 Can I help you do that?

Art carefully unfastens the loop and slides the CARD on. INSERT:

FRNDS: MOMY, DADY, LONIT

ART (VO)
 (reading from card)
 'Friends: Mommy, Daddy, Lonit'

SIMON
 (shouts)
Lounette!

ART
 Lonn-ette ... OK ...
 (turning to another
 CARD)
 (MORE)

ART (cont'd)
'Do Not Talk to Strangers' ...
Is that why you won't talk to me? ...
OK, then ...

Art takes out his PEN and WRITES HIS NAME in big letters.

ART (CONT)
Now I'm a friend, too ...

Art thinks he's taken a giant stride forward. Simon looks at the card -- then screams and TEARS IT UP.

SIMON
Art is a stranger! Art is a stranger!

He goes running down the train aisle. Art takes off after him.

MOVING WITH SIMON

Grasping at the poles. People get out of his way. Simon finally comes to the end of the car. A WOMAN WITH A SHOPPING BAG standing by the door smiles at Simon. Maybe she has a boy of her own. Simon stops -- looks into her face as if searching for someone. He rests his head on a pole and calms down. Art comes up slowly behind him. Sits down.

ART
OK, I made a mistake. You're right ...
we're not friends ... not yet.

Then the Woman is hurled violently against the door -- her back EXPLODING in a spray of red viscera. The GLASS DOOR on the opposite side SHATTERS from automatic weapon fire. People scream, fall to the floor. Art yanks Simon down. Two more staggered bursts of automatic weapons fire rip through the car.

OVERHEAD SHOT

The Jeep Cherokee races to stay even with the train. We can see the flames of weapon's fire from its window.

ALONG THE TRAIN FLOOR

Art pushes Simon ahead of him. Slipping as the train rocks forward. The commuters pressed to the floor stare at them wide-eyed, terrified.

EXT. CRT STATION - GIDDINGS ST.

This platform is jammed with 30 BLACK WOMEN IN WHITE CLOTHES -- shift workers from the nearby BAKERY. The train pulls into the station.

TRAIN DOORS OPEN

Screams and cries as people push to get off. Bodies slamming into the startled women on the platform as on and off passengers collide. Confusion makes it worse. Why are these people acting this way?

ONE CAR AHEAD

Art is crouched by the open door. Art tugs Simon by the jacket and they fall out of the train. He presses Simon against the STAIRWAY to the pedestrian OVERPASS.

ART

Do not move. Understand?

Art crawls along the platform looking for something. He sees it. The RED DOT from the laser scope moves along the train. Searching for a target. Art takes out his gun and jumps OFF the platform.

ART RUNS BETWEEN THE TRAIN AND THE CONCRETE BARRIER

with about four inches to spare. He waits, then boosts himself over by a rail tie so he can look down at the highway.

POV - ON THE HIGHWAY

The Cherokee is stopped -- it's EMERGENCY FLASHERS sending traffic around. Art holds his 9mm steady and squeezes off six SHOTS. The rear window implodes, the car shakes. It veers off into the next lane slamming hard into a passing TAXI, then careening back into lane. Disappears into traffic.

ON SIMON

face down by the stairway beneath a giant poster of Dennis Rodman with blue hair floating over the city skyline of Chicago. Art carefully rolls him over. Simon just stares up at the caged walkway spanning U.S. 90.

ART

Who are you, Simon?

EXT. EAST BASIN DRIVE - WASHINGTON, D.C. - 4 AM

Around the long curve of the Tidal Basin road comes a BICYCLIST pumping hard. He speeds closer INTO FRAME in tight winter racing Gortex. He peels off the street and jumps the low curb.

PAN UP TO - THE THOMAS JEFFERSON MEMORIAL

The bicyclist dismounts at the steps -- popping his water jug. Takes off his helmet. It's DEAN. His deep breaths are tiny clouds in the frozen air.

CLOSER - STATUE OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

60 feet high -- looking out over the Mall towards the Capitol. We hear the *click-click* of Dean's bike as he moves across the rotunda. Leo steps out of the shadows. Freezing in a pea coat and ear muffs.

LEO

I totally cannot do this.

DEAN

Take it easy, Leo. We're gonna do this together. We didn't break any laws.

LEO

Man, I'm scared ... really scared.
Why'd he make us come here?

Dean kneads Leo's shoulder.

DEAN

Just relax ... He's playing secret agent.
No matter what he says or does ...
we're going to do the right thing.
We're not like him.

A GERMAN SHEPHERD rushes Leo. *Barking*. He jumps back.

KUDROW (OS)

She won't hurt you. ...

Kudrow appears in his overcoat and a wool hat with flaps down. The dog comes back to him.

KUDROW (CONT)

She turned 17 last week ... still thinks
she's a puppy. ...

(then)

They took the boy.

DEAN

Who?

KUDROW

An FBI agent named Art Jefferson. ...
I've got a direct tap on their Chicago
field office.

Leo keeps a nervous eye on the dog until it prances out of view.

LEO

You got a judge to approve that?

Dean shakes his head 'wrong'. Kudrow's tension rages under his icy
dermeanor.

KUDROW

We've lost control.

(almost to himself)

I cannot allow it ... A foreign agent
killed Simon Lynch's parents. Now
the FBI is involved. We are out of
options ...

DEAN

Jesus Christ. You're going to ... kill
him?

LEO

Oh, God ...

KUDROW

I'm going to protect MERCURY.

DEAN

No. You can't ... it's murder.

KUDROW

One boy's life weighed against national
security ... You're smart. Do the
numbers yourselves.

LEO

Goddamn ... goddamn ...

DEAN

But the boy is an innocent.
He doesn't know what he did ...

Kudrow explodes --

KUDROW

I am sick to my stomach of you
pampered eggheads ... your whole
careers handed to you on a silver
platter. ...

(to Leo)

Read that.

Kudrow flaps a gloved hand at the DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
chiseled in marble around the Rotunda.

LEO

What? ... You mean 'Life, Liberty and
the Pursuit of Happiness'? ...

KUDROW

No, read to the bottom.

(from the wall)

'And in support of this Declaration we
mutually pledge our lives, our fortunes
and our sacred honor.' ... Get it?

Liberty isn't a free ride. Men are
willing to give their lives for it. Men I
know. ...

(shouts this name)

Rasheed Halabi ... born in Paramus,
New Jersey. Valedictorian of his
senior class. Worked his way through
M.I.T. Married a farm girl from Iowa
City. Right now he's a colonel in
Sadaam's Republican Guard. We sent
him there. He hasn't seen his son or
daughter in five years. He's an Iraqi-
American and an outstanding patriot.
We walk in his shadow. Do you
understand what they'll do to him if
he's identified? They'll make sure it
takes weeks for him to die. There are
thousands like him. Men and women
whose identities are protected by this
code. Americans. And I will not see
them slaughtered.

Leo and Dean feel the world freezing in around them.

KUDROW

... I told you when I recruited you, this
isn't an ivy tower. Ideas here are a
matter of life and death.

LEO
What should we do?

KUDROW (CONT)
I've accessed Jefferson's security file
... like all heroes, people want to
believe the worst about him. So let's
give them the worst. You like
computer games, Leo. Play this ...

Kudrow takes a computer DISK from his pocket. Hands the DISK to Leo.

KUDROW (CONT)
You'll find a 1995 IRS filing for one
Michael Fiorello. Scumbag. Transfer
one million dollars from Fiorello to a
new account in the Banque Suisse in
Geneva. Label it Art Jefferson. Then
send an emergency notification from
INTERPOL to every agent in his office.

Leo looks at the disk in his hand. Kudrow gives a low sharp whistle. The
dog darts back. He clips on its leash.

KUDROW
You don't have the stomach? You want
to turn me in? Go right ahead.
Otherwise, be a patriot. And stop
whining, Leo. It makes me want to
crack your skull open.

CLOSE ON COMPUTER SCREEN

as someone TYPES --

*I'M 36 YEARS OLD. A SELF-MADE MILLIONAIRE. I SPEND MOST OF MY
TIME ON MY YACHT. WHAT DO YOU LOOK LIKE? LET'S GET
TOGETHER!*

REVERSE ANGLE

JERRY BIZZI (14), prowls ON LINE on his den COMPUTER. It's barely
dawn. The house in shambles from last night's party. BEER CANS are
gathered in three plastic GARBAGE BAGS. Snoring on the couch is
GRANT, also in shambles from last night. Jerry doesn't even hear the
front door click. When his brain registers the sound, he looks up --

JERRY
DAD!

Grant pops awake. SIMON stands in the doorway.

INT. KITCHEN

Bizzi hustles Jerry and Sarah, in sweats, out the back door.

SARAH

I can't just wake up my mother at this hour. What am I gonna tell her?

BIZZI

What you always tell her. Men are pigs and I'm King of the Porkers.

JERRY

Don't let him touch my computer.

BIZZI

Your computer?

Bizzi is still in red Santa pants and a T-shirt. He kisses Sarah, kisses his son. Closes the door behind them. Grant comes in with a Remington 12 gauge SHOTGUN. Hands it to Bizzi while he loads a 9 mm semiautomatic.

INT. DEN

Simon paces wildly from the door to Jerry's desk and back to the door again.

SIMON

Time to go home! Time to go home!

Simon's energy overwhelms Art.

ART

He should be exhausted by now. ...
I didn't want to take him to the office or a precinct. He's too scared.

GRANT

(rubs his temples)
Thanks for waiting till I had the worst hangover of my life to get shot at.

BIZZI

I woke up Lomax. He's on his way over. But he's pissed about dealing with some local domestic dispute.

ART
It's not murder/suicide. How many
repairmen on the east side you know
own two thousand dollar Glock 9
mm's?

GRANT
They got a page of photos in this
morning paper ... sure looks like dad
stuck a gun in his ear ...

Art cuts him off with a sharp look -- gestures to Simon.

GRANT
(reacts)
He can't understand me. Can he?

ART
He hears everything ... It's what he
pays attention to I haven't figured out
yet.

Art steps closer to Simon.

ART (CONT)
Simon ... I bet your mother told you
what to do when adults need to talk
privately.

Simon doesn't look at Art -- but then he reaches for his necklace of
CARDS. Flips through them methodically until he reaches the right one.

SIMON
(reading slowly)
'If mommy and daddy are busy, play by
yourself til they're done.'

ART
OK ... something to play with ...

Art looks around the room -- pulls an old BOX of wooden BRIO TRAINS
from Jerry's old toy chest. Hands it to Simon.

ART
Is this OK?

Simon shows no reaction. The others follow Art out.

INT. LIVINGROOM

Grant pours vodka in a Bloody Mary while Art and Bizzi draw all the shades down. Bizzi uses his shotgun to peek out to the street.

BIZZI

If it wasn't the old man, who was it? I mean why'd a pro try to whack this kid?

ART

That's just it ... he wasn't trying. I saw the scope line. The shooter didn't want to hit him.

BIZZI

He was just trying to kill you. That makes me feel better.

GRANT

The kid was a witness ... it makes sense. This guy is just cleaning up loose ends.

ART

I think the parents just got in the way and now I'm in the way. The kid is what they're after and for some reason they want him alive.

GRANT

Wiseguys?

ART

No, they're too clumsy.

BIZZI

Good guys?

ART

You ever get an order to shoot innocent people on a moving train?

GRANT

Maybe it's not local, maybe it's a foreign agency.

BIZZI

Well, somebody's gonna have to talk to the kid.

(looks at Art)

You're not exactly, Mr. Rodgers, Artie. You have to turn him over to social services.

ART

If the shooter can get past the cops, how's a social worker going to protect him?

BIZZI

Artie, you got to put him somewhere ... I mean ... you can't keep him. Right? You don't like kids. You don't like people, remember?

INT. A BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Burt Lomax struggles to get into his pants without waking his wife. Sleep heavy in his eyes. He grabs his things and hurries INTO the LIVINGROOM. Sits at his PC DESK to put on his shoes. Punches his COMPUTER out of SLEEP MODE to check his mailbox.

COMPUTER VOICE

WELCOME! YOU HAVE MAIL!

Lomax cues his E-mail. Finishes tying shoes -- then turns to look:

ON SCREEN:

TO: FIELD AGENTS VIA DEPUTY COMM DIRECTOR

PRIORITY MEMO: CC: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

RE: ARTHUR JEFFERSON

PUSH IN ON LOMAX as he reacts.

INT. BIZZI'S HOUSE

Pilsen, Simms and a few other AGENTS have shown. They are armed and stationed at every window and door. Jaws set -- the room is taut with anticipation. Art is on the PHONE.

ART
(into phone)
So let me get this straight, homicide
security disappears but nobody gave
the goddamn order ...

They all *JUMP* when the cutting throb of RAP MUSIC explodes from the
DEN. Pain threshold LOUD. It breaks the tension.

GRANT
I think Simon found the button on
Jerry's boom box.

Art hangs up.

BIZZI
Jerry's driving me nuts. He only
listens to gangsta rap now.

ART
Lots of kids like it.

BIZZI
But Rappers hate cops, right? I'm a
cop. So how come my kid likes it?

ART
'Cause you don't?

Art walks across the hall --

INTO THE DEN

Simon stands hands over his ears -- Jerry's BOOM BOX pulses. PAN
ACROSS TO the other side of the den --

A TOWER OF BEER CANS

a helix-like spire of Budweiser cans standing a good six feet high.
Sophisticated, perfect. The Brio TRACKS loop down from the top. Art
shuts OFF the speakers. Simon *hands Art the engine*. Art isn't sure at
first -- then he walks to the tower and sets the wooden toy on TOP. The
train *spirals down* through the tower and shoots onto the floor.

ART
(softly)
I'll never underestimate you again.
Simon. I'm going to find a safe place
(MORE)

ART (cont'd)
for you. I'm making that my personal
promise.

Jerry's computer is still ON LINE. A BEEP startles Art.

COMPUTER VOICE
YOU HAVE MAIL!

The message keeps BEEPING over and over.

COMPUTER VOICE
YOU HAVE MAIL! YOU HAVE MAIL!

ART
Give me a break.

Art punches UP the E-MAIL. Stands as he reads through the message.

LIVINGROOM

Bizzi and Grant are at the windows. Art appears. Acting casual.

GRANT
How's the kid?

ART
Sleeping. Finally.

Bizzi can't resist teasing Grant.

BIZZI
You're scared ... Hey, Art, look at
Grant. He's shaking.

GRANT
Bullshit ... Look who's talking. Captain
Crybaby.

They've been pushing these buttons a long time.

BIZZI
Me? Who piloted a NAVY Sea Stallion
through Hurricane Arthur ...

GRANT
Here we go. While he was in the air in
a heated chopper ask him who was in
the North Atlantic in winter with 20
foot waves?

ART
This is exactly why I like to work
alone.
(stretches, yawns)
I'm going to catch a hour ...

BIZZI
You bet. ...
(to Grant)
Boo!

Art exits. Grant and Bizzi shove each other like little kids. Then Grant looks out the window. Reacts to something.

POV - STREET

A CAR squeals to a stop at the curb.

GRANT
Oh shit ... I got action!
(then)
Fuck. he's coming this way.

The lights go OUT. Bizzi runs to the window. Peeks outside.

BIZZI
(reacts)
It's ... Lomax.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Lomax is gasping for breath as he sprints up. The door OPENS. Lomax pushes past Bizzi.

LOMAX
Where's Jefferson?

BIZZI
Upstairs ... sleeping.

Lomax takes out his gun. Runs up the stairs. Bizzi and Grant dog him.

BIZZI (CONT)
What the hell's going on?

LOMAX
He's under arrest.

BIZZI
You're fucking crazy.

LOMAX
Cuff him ... and don't talk to him.

INT. BEDROOM

Lomax throws open the door. Lights out. Covers drawn over someone sleeping. Lomax throws them back. Pillows.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - SAME TIME

Art hurries Simon down the narrow strip between the back yard fences. The wind shocks Simon. Billows his red jacket. He's literally pulled along by Art. They cross onto the next block.

BY A GARAGE

FOUR BOYS swirl on in-line skates in front of a street hockey NET set up by an open GARAGE DOOR. A two tone Chevy SUBURBAN parked inside. One BOY spins and slaps a plastic puck. It smacks the Chevy hard. An 18 year old BOY, big brother, pops out holding the puck. His YOUNGER BROTHER yanks off his helmet. His hair tow-head white in the cold bright sun.

LITTLE BROTHER
Give it back.

BIG BROTHER
When you get your training bra.

The Little Brother howls and charges waving his plastic hockey stick. The other boys egg him on. The Big Brother snags him in a head lock.

Then ART separates them.

ART
Play nice, boys.

BIG BROTHER
Who the fuck are you?

EXT. BIZZI HOUSE

Bizzi and Grant jump in the CAR with Lomax. Speed off down the block. The other agents fan out across the neighborhood.

INT/EXT CAR (MOVING)

BIZZI

I just don't believe it.

LOMAX

Believe it. Know why he couldn't tag
Fiorello?

(hands him copy of the
e-mail)

He was on his payroll. He's through.
Now do your fucking job.

They take the corner sharply and prowl the street. Lomax looks side to side. His face sharp, predatory. He slaps the dashboard. *Points.*

LOMAX

Got him!

POV - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

ART and SIMON jog down the middle of the street. Simon's red jacket and blond hair might as well be a flag. Lomax roars up behind them. Art and Simon cut across a lawn.

Lomax and Bizzi *leap out*. Lomax is fast despite his size. He pulls ahead of Bizzi. Breathing hard, Lomax really *digs* it out. Art is just in front of him. Lomax dives and *tackles* Art and the boy together.

LOMAX

Stay down! You're under arrest!

Lomax gets to his feet. A confused look on his face. Sprawled on the lawn are the two BROTHERS.

LITTLE BROTHER

Who the fuck are you?

LOMAX

Who the fuck are you?

BIG BROTHER

We didn't do nothing. Some guy gave
us \$10 to run around the block.

HOLD on Lomax' reaction.

EXT. BEST WESTERN, AURORA, ILLINOIS - DAY

The Chevy Suburban is parked in front of the lobby picture window. A FAMILY of four walks by on the way to their car. One KID stops.

KID

Hey dad, there's a crazy guy over here!

The parents turn back to see Simon rocking in the front seat, swinging his head from side to side. The kids start BANGING on the window. Simon never looks at them.

FATHER

Get away from there. You'll get hurt.

He pulls the kids away. All of which has been seen by --

ART

in the LOBBY at the registration desk. A YOUNG WOMAN comes back.

YOUNG WOMAN

This card's wasn't accepted either.

ART

(genuinely surprised)

Can I write you a check?

YOUNG WOMAN

(by rote)

Visa, Mastercard or cash, only.

CUT TO: CLOSE ON ART'S REFLECTION

as a computer MESSAGE is printed out in green letters:

YOUR ACCOUNT HAS BEEN CLOSED. WE CANNOT RETURN
YOUR BANKCARD. PLEASE CALL THIS TOLL FREE NUMBER.

WIDEN - 7-11 - DAY

Art presses his finger to the card SLOT. But his card is already gone. He turns to see --

SIMON is at the self-serve COFFEE BAR. He's banging a DISPENSER with a photo of HOT CHOCOLATE on it. Over and over. But he hasn't put a CUP under it. The steamy liquid is now flowing over the catch pan onto the floor. Customers shy away. A CLERK runs up.

CLERK
Are you fucking crazy?

He shoves Simon away. Art pulls the Clerk's arm back.

ART
Leave him alone.

CLERK
Get him away from there ... he doesn't
know what the hell he's doing.

ART
Yes ... he does.
(turns to Simon)
Simon, this is how you get hot
chocolate ...
(as he does it)
Take the cup. Slide it underneath.
Push the button once ... OK? ... out it
comes ...
(hands Simon the cup)
... now be careful, Simon.

SIMON
It's very hot ... so sip it slowly!

ART
That's right.

Simon slurps it three times, ending with a loud 'Ahhh'.

SIMON
Daddy will be home soon.

Art is thrown -- doesn't know what to say.

CLOSE ON GAS TANK SIGNAL LIGHT

flashing EMPTY. We HEAR Art OS mutter 'Oh, shit'.

WIDEN TO EXT. RESERVOIR - NIGHT

Art coasts down a gravel work road behind thick foliage until the car runs
out of gas. Fatigue washes over him like a rogue wave. Simon sits bolt
upright. Wide awake.

ART
Simon. I have to close my eyes. ... We
need to find some money tomorrow.
... I'm just gonna sleep for a few
minutes ...

SIMON
Daddy's gonna sing.

Art isn't ready to deal with this question with Simon.

ART
(simply)
He's not here. Simon.

SIMON
(insistent)
Daddy's gonna sing! Daddy's gonna
sing! ...

Simon seems so frail. Art tries to shake off sleep.

ART
OK. OK ...
(singing)
Sometimes you wanna go
Where everybody knows your na-a-me.
And the people are
the same ...
You wanna go ... where you can know
Our troubles ... are all ... the ...
same ...

It trails off as Art falls fast asleep.

CLOSE ON ART - LATER

his eyes blink open at the sound of someone playing a melody. Bright morning LIGHT surprises him. Simon is playing with Art's CELLULAR PHONE. Picking out a melody with the TOUCH TONES. Art pops up.

ART
How long was I asleep?

Art checks his watch. Looks at Simon.

ART
What the hell ...

Simon is holding a \$20 BILL in his hand. Art reacts.

ART

Where did you get this? Simon?

Then Art sees the necklace of CARDS on Simon's lap.

INSERT CARD (AS ART READS IT)

IF YOU NEED MONY LOOK UNDR YOUR CUFFS

ART (VO)

If you need money look under your
cuffs.

Art turns up the bottom of Simon's trousers. There's a SAFETY PIN above the hem where the money was pinned.

ART

I wish I could've met your folks. ...

CUT TO: MAN IN A SHOWER BEHIND A FROSTED GLASS DOOR

MAN

(shouts)

Honey? Where's my OJ?

IN THE KITCHEN

TINA, 26. Charo swirls of hair, panties and a tank top, grinds oranges in a juicer. Sitting at the table eating cereal is LOU, a bodyguard. Tina brings the juice through the LIVINGROOM.

SIMON is standing there. Tina drops the glass. Art catches it from behind. Motions for her to be quiet. Art carries it into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM (CONTINUOUS)

Shower shuts off. MICHAEL FIORELLO steps out, reaching for a towel. He is slim, handsome.

FIORELLO

Jesus Christ. Tina, you picking them
off a tree?

He jumps when he sees Art, sitting on the can sipping the OJ.

FIORELLO

Lou! ...

He tries to run out. Art trips him. Fiorello *slams* face first into his bedroom door. Lou comes charging in fumbling for a gun in a holster. Art snaps off a punch -- *hitting* Lou square in the chest, driving him back. Lou falls, groans, slaps at his throat. Art picks up his gun. Presses the gun to Fiorello's nose.

ART

You can get up. He stays on the floor.

Fiorello is naked and spitting blood as he stands.

FIORELLO

(to Lou)

Don't fucking move.

ART

Swallow your blood, Mikey. Isn't that what you used to tell guys? ... I'll give you a second to catch your breath.

LIVINGROOM

Simon stands stiffly, never acknowledging Tina.

TINA

I'm gonna make some coffee. You want some? ...

(no reply)

You shy? That's OK. I always liked your dad. He's kinda shy, too. He's the only one of Mike's guys who never tried to hit on me.

BACK TO BEDROOM

Fiorello holds a towel against his bleeding nose.

FIORELLO

(softly)

You didn't have to come here this way. We can talk like friends.

ART

I'm not your friend. ... I'm going to ask you a question. You do not want to lie to me. You put a million dollars in a bank account for me. Why? Did someone tell you to do it?

FIORELLO

I don't know what you're talking about.

Fiorello seems almost curious. Art suddenly kicks out at Fiorello's left knee. Fiorello drops like a rock, holding it in agony.

FIORELLO

(howls)

Jesus Fucking Christ, that's my bad knee.

ART

I know. I was the one who told you to stick to the bunny slopes. Remember?

FIORELLO

You're fucking crazy ...

(then, pleads)

I don't know anything ...

ART

You telling me the truth?

FIORELLO

You lied to me. I didn't lie to you. ...

(then)

Funny thing is ... I kinda miss the good times.

ART

There were no good times. You have no idea who I am.

Fiorello stares at Art --

FIORELLO

Maybe. ... You were the only cop who even came close. I can usually spot cops a mile away. Most of them slip up on something ... some tiny detail. It's only human ... but you never made a mistake, never showed yourself, not once. How come?

Art goes to Fiorello's pants hanging on a stand. Comes up with car KEYS and a roll of money. Pockets them both.

ART
I need a car they're not looking for.
I'm taking yours. And a donation.

Art backs out of the room. Takes the clip out. Throws the gun aside.

FIORELLO
(calls after)
Know who you are? You're the kind of
cop who ends up blowing his brains
out.

CLOSE ON A SLEDGEHAMMER

whipped in an arc, furiously exploding a dry wall. Chalk dust hovers in a small cloud.

WIDEN TO REVEAL - ART'S APARTMENT - DAY

A dozen FBI agents tear it apart. TOMMY BIZZI pounds the sledgehammer again. PILSEN and GRANT use crowbars to rip up the floor. Rage hangs in the air like the dust. LOMAX stands in the middle as the room *disappears*. Bizzi rips down a section of ceiling around a fixture. It just misses Lomax.

BIZZI
Stop staring at me. ... You got
something to say?

LOMAX
Yeah. I don't like the pained look on
your face.

All the guys are staring now. Bizzi raises his hammer -- Lomax stands his ground. Bizzi turns at the last second, drives it into the wall. Lomax's MOBILE PHONE rings.

LOMAX
(into phone)
Lomax.

INTERCUT: FBI CHICAGO FIELD OFFICE

DOLORES at the comm board.

DOLORES
I'm patching through a call, sir.
(punches it)
Go ahead ...

INTERCUT WITH: ART

driving Fiorello's white LINCOLN. Talking on his cellular phone. Simon is playing with AUTOMATIC WINDOWS, zipping them UP then DOWN.

ART

Hey, Burt.

Lomax looks at Bizzi. Signals him. Bizzi runs to his own MOBILE. It takes a second for every agent in the room to see what's happening. Bizzi listens in.

LOMAX

Justice says they'll take a plea bargain.
Myself ... an agent on the take is
better off dead.

BIZZI

(jumping on)

Artie, it's me. Come in. Tell your side.

LOMAX

(howls)

Bizzi, get off the fucking line.

ART

Meet me at the Loop Mall in ten
minutes and we'll all have a debate.

Art cuts off. STAY IN ART'S APARTMENT -- as Lomax announces --

LOMAX

We're going armed.

BIZZI

Jesus Christ, Burt. I've worked with
him for 12 years ...

LOMAX

Do you know him?

BIZZI

(over)

Nobody works harder ...

LOMAX

(and over)

But do you know him?

PUNCH CUT: CLOSE ON KUDROW

wearing HEADPHONES -- standing behind Leo in front of his
COMPUTER. ON SCREEN he scrolls through a MAP of CHICAGO.

KUDROW

You got it?

LEO

In a second ...

KUDROW

Now ...

LEO

... got it. Lake and Stetson.

Dean watches Kudrow pick up another phone. He and Leo exchange a
scared look.

INT. STARBUCKS - DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - DAY

Most of the tables are filled with shoppers and office workers grabbing
fast food. A YOUNG WOMAN (20's) is filling out a sales form. By her side
is a SAMPLE CASE fixed on wheels with a built-in handle. Her case slams
over. She looks up to see Art has bumped it.

ART

My big feet.

YOUNG WOMAN

Not your fault. I'm a walking law suit.

ART

(setting it back up)

What do you got in here, gold bricks?

Her laugh is wide and free. Art smiles back.

YOUNG WOMAN

Espadrilles ...

ART

Mexican food? You sell Mexican food.
Miss ...

Another wonderful laugh. She enjoys being teased.

YOUNG WOMAN

Stacia. And they're shoes. Light.
comfortable. summery.

ART

Last time I looked it was winter.

STACIA

My job is selling women shoes they
don't really need at prices they can't
really afford.

ART

This is going to sound crazy. Would
you watch him for a minute? ...

Stacia follows Art's look over to Simon, sitting at the adjacent table with a
cup of hot chocolate. Not returning the look.

ART (CONT)

He's autistic. I'm his Big Brother. I
just joined up a few months ago.
Decided I needed to give something
back. ... I have to fill a prescription for
him. But I hate disturbing him when
he's calm like this. All you have to do
is sit here and be as pretty as you are.

STACIA

(rolls her eyes)

I'll do it even without the flattery.

ART

You sure it's OK?

STACIA

If I can handle the buyer at
Bloomingdales. I can handle anything.
I'm going to have a nice visit with ...

ART

His name is Simon.

EXT. STREET - DOWNTOWN CHICAGO

Art sprints down the jammed sidewalk, checking his watch. He pushes
through the REVOLVING DOORS of --

INT. LOOP MALL

Five floors of upscale SHOPS. There are several old-fashioned CARTS ON WHEELS along the north wall selling caramel popcorn, fancy pens, sundries. Art picks up a Kodak cardboard DISPOSABLE 35 MM CAMERA. The cart GLY wears a bright red vest.

ART
How much?

GLY IN VEST
\$18.95.

AT THE MAIN DOORS - TWO CPD OFFICERS

Saunter into the lobby. Art recognizes BURCH and PITTS from the hospital. They move along the storefronts, scanning the crowd. ART is walking on the other side of the ESCALATORS. He hesitates long enough for Burch to spot him. They both react -- Art steps UP the moving stairs.

ESCALATOR (MOVING)

Art stands behind two black WOMEN, one holding an infant. Casually looks behind as Kudrow's men step onto the moving stairs.

SECOND LEVEL

Art moves quickly past shoppers, families, tourists. Burch and Pitts are younger, well-trained, they glide along behind Art. Art turns suddenly -- aiming the CAMERA. Clicks off two quick SHOTS. That's weird enough to freeze Burch and Pitts in their steps. Art breaks into a run. Burch and Pitts give chase. Disappears into the second floor of HECHT'S.

ON ART (MOVING)

weaving down the aisles of homewares then under an alcove into the FURNITURE DEPARTMENT. Disappearing into a maze of 'designer' ROOMS each set up in a different style.

BURCH AND PITTS

split up at the alcove.

FOLLOW BURCH (POV - MOVING)

He takes out a 9 mm and walks past a wall of sconces into a room of Spanish pine. A LIGHT is OUT up ahead. Then something MOVES on his right. An enormous MIRROR framed in wrought iron falls forward OFF THE WALL crashing at his feet. Burch turns.

FROM BEHIND

Art swings a brass CANDELABRA slamming Burch to the ground with an ugly *cracking* noise. Art kneels down close to him. Right at his ear.

ART

That was the sound of your nose breaking. You'll never smell your girlfriend's perfume again. Never enjoy food. ... Listen to me, asshole. You just got set up. I figured you had taps on the FBI office. I knew you'd show up here. I'm ahead of you. Now I want a name.

BURCH

(groaning)

Fuck ... you ...

Art grabs Burch by the shirt. Then hears the crunch of steps on glass.

CLOSE ON PITTS

with dead aim at Art's head with his 9mm. It's too late for Art to react. A *muffled* shot. Then Pitts FALLS forward -- towards Art. Drops to the ground. A red hole in the back of his head. Art looks up. BURRELL holds a semiautomatic.

BURRELL

Don't thank me. I just need you alive to take me to Simon.

ART

(still holding Burch)

Who the hell's he?

BURCH

I don't fucking know.

Burrell kicks Burch across the chin. Burch passes out. Burrell doesn't hear the *CLICK* of Art's CAMERA from his pocket.

BURRELL

Forget him. I'm the one you gotta deal with. You know about guys like me. You know the things I've done. You think I won't be able to get it out of you? ... They don't want me to kill you
(MORE)

BURRELL (cont'd)
but frankly I don't give a fuck
anymore. Now take me to the kid.

He drags Art to his feet.

MAIN LEVEL - SERVICE ELEVATOR

Art emerges on the main floor with Burrell.

POV

At the other end by the FOUNTAIN Art can SEE AGENTS LOMAX and BIZZI appear with several CPD OFFICERS.

Burrell prods Art with his gun towards a side street EXIT. Past a CART selling expensive PENS. A BUSINESSMAN considers a purchase. PUSH IN CLOSE as Art snatches and pockets a HANDFUL OF PENS. Making sure the Vendor sees him. Keeps walking.

VENDOR (OS)

Hey! asshole!

The Vendor grabs Art's arm. Burrell shoves him away hard.

BURRELL

Back off ...

VENDOR

(shouting)

Help! ... Somebody get a cop!

LOMAX turns towards the commotion. POV -- Burrell sees the CPD OFFICERS. The Vendor rushes Art again. Art uses him as a screen. He spins the Vendor at Burrell, then kicks hard at Burrell's gut, doubling him over. Lomax and the cops start running his way. Burrell jumps up.

ART is gone. Burrell ducks through the EXIT.

EXT. STREET (CONTINUOUS)

Burrell emerges -- he's lost Art.

INT. STARBUCKS

Art sprints back to where he left Simon with Stacia. They're GONE. Art is frantic, furious at himself.

EXT. STARBUCKS (CONTINUOUS)

Art runs out -- the street is busy. The nightmare sinking in. He's lost Simon. He looks at every face passing by. Turns the corner. Stops.

BY A SCULPTURE GARDEN

Simon stands with Stacia. Their heads tilted oddly back, looking far out onto the cityscape. Art appears, out of breath. Stacia beams at him.

STACIA

We're having such a good time.

SIMON

(softly)

Black is up ...

ART FOLLOWS SIMON'S POV - THE SEARS TOWER

From this angle it rises from the city around it like a moon rocket, blasting away from the earth itself. One of the world's tallest buildings. Onyx black and elegant. Dizzying just to look at it.

STACIA

The day I came here from Urbana. I rode up to the top with my suitcase. I told my mom I'd wave at her.

(sighs)

I wonder what happened to that sweet girl from the Midwest. ... I just wanted to show him. I hope it's OK.

CLOSE ON SIMON

as he *reaches out* towards the Tower -- trying to touch it. Simon closes his left eye, as if it were right there.

SIMON'S POV

as the world *disappears*, the TOWER seems to rush forward at him, attainable, necessary. Simon suddenly RUNS towards it -- OUT INTO THE BUSY STREET.

ART

No, Simon!

Simon is oblivious to the traffic. Art dashes out and grabs Simon from the path of a car.

SIMON
Black is up ... Black is up ...

ART
That's right, Simon.
(to Stacia)
Jesus, you should feel my heart ...

Stacia surprises Art by touching her hand gently on his chest.

STACIA
(teasing)
You're not one of those guys who uses
kids to pick up women?

ART
No. ... But it's a thought.

Art doesn't want to stare at her but he can't help himself. A PRECINCT
CAR passes down a cross street. Art is anxious to get Simon away.

ART
Simon and I have to go.

STACIA
(fumbles for a business
card)
It's a business card ...
(handing it to him)
... but you don't have to call about
business.

ART
(reading)
Stacia Sebring. ... how do I thank you?

STACIA
(no nonsense)
By telling me what's really going on
here.

She looks him right in the eye. Art wishes it was another time. another
world.

ART
I'm sorry ...

STACIA

Good bye, Simon. I liked our little stroll together.

Simon never acknowledges her. Art hurries him away. Simon turns back for one last look at the Tower.

CLOSE ON - STRIP OF PHOTOS

scrolling out of a Kodak commercial DEVELOPER.

WIDER - ONE HOUR PHOTO

Art leans anxiously over the counter.

ART

How we doin'?

CLERK

They're still wet.

ART

I'll take them now.

Art pulls them from the envelope. INSERT - BURRELL -- caught in motion -- his face contorted in rage.

CUT TO: KINKO'S OFFICE CENTER - LATER

Art at a row of by-the-hour rentable COMPUTERS. Using a SCANNER to FAX the PHOTO of Burrell. He writes in black MAGIC MARKER on top.

SHOOTER

INTERCUT: FBI FIELD OFFICE

as the FAX rolls out-- and sits on top a high stack of other FAXES.

PUNCH CUT: LEO - SAME TIME

reproducing the intercepted FAXed IMAGE OF BURRELL on his computer screen. Kudrow leans INTO FRAME as Leo prints it out.

KUDROW

Jefferson's doing our work for us. ...
Check every confidential photo bank.
If this guy's got a past ... you'll be able
to find him. Then we'll see who he's
working for.

Dean looks at Kudrow with resolve.

DEAN
That means we don't have to kill the
boy.

KUDROW
(calm)
We have to kill them all.

Kudrow exits. Leo's hands shake digging for a bottle of pills in his pocket.

LEO
I keep going over ... how this
happened. Oh god ...

DEAN
Hold on, Leo. He doesn't own us. I
swear. We'll figure a way to help
Simon.

BACK TO KINKO'S

Art takes the PHOTO OF BURRELL off the scanner. Art is surprised --
Simon stands right behind him -- looking at it.

ART
Simon ...

Simon backs up. Starts screaming.

SIMON
Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow! ...

ART
He can't hurt you now, Simon. I'm
here ...

SIMON
Man in house! Man in house!

Simon picks up a picture frame on display and THROWS IT AGAINST the
wall -- sweeps all the frames from the shelf screaming. Art tries to grab
Simon and Simon BITES his HAND hard. Simon falls to the floor. Art
realizes if he doesn't do something they'll backslide all the way.

ART
I thought I could avoid doing this ...
but I can't. Not now.

INT./EXT. LINCOLN (MOVING) - DAY

Simon is rocking furiously on the front seat. Out of control. Art drives as fast as he dares. He turns a corner sharply. Simon stops. PUSH IN CLOSE on Simon -- staring out the window. Then he SITS UP. Art watches him closely. Knows he's taking a chance.

ART
You know where we are, don't you?

Simon takes out his CARDS. Flips to one with his ADDRESS.

SIMON
(shouts)
Blue house! Two! Five! Six! Four! ...

ART
You're home, Simon.

EXT. BACK ALLEY

Art leads Simon quickly past garbage cans and through a broken fence. A torn yellow police tape whips in the wind. On the BACK DOOR: CRIME SCENE: DO NOT ENTER

INT. 2564 VINCENT - DAY

Simon takes an awkward step inside. Eerie silence. Afternoon shadows dance across the floor. The dull blood stains and body outlines of the forensics team remain. Art watches to see what Simon will do. His gut in a knot. Simon proceeds directly to --

THE KITCHEN (CONTINUOUS)

His heavy steps echo on linoleum. He goes to the dish rack -- as it was left. Finds his MUG and looks inside -- expecting to see something.

SIMON
(looks at the cupboard)
Mommy, daddy ...

ART
They're not here, Simon.

SIMON
(calling out)
Simon is home! Simon is home!

Art tries to read Simon. He opens the cupboard. Inside are a dozen
BOXES of INSTANT HOT CHOCOLATE.

ART
Jesus ... OK ... I think I'm catching on.
Show me what you need, Simon.

Art slams the kettle onto the stove. Tears open a packet of chocolate.

INT. SIMON'S ROOM

Simon enters, sits down on his bed. Cradling his MUG of chocolate. He
slurps it in a three beat rhythm, then says 'Aaahh'.

SIMON
(softly, confused)
Simon is home.

Art kneels by the bed.

ART
OK. Simon. Think back to the last
time you were here. Were you in your
room? Do you remember what
happened to you? Think.

Simon turns his head away. Starts to rock.

ART
Why did the man hurt you?

Simon falls back on the bed. Closes his eyes.

SIMON
... daddy sings to Simon.

ART
Simon, listen to me. Your mother and
father aren't here anymore ... They're
in heaven.

SIMON
(confused)
Heaven? ...

ART
(searches for words)
Up in the sky.

SIMON
Up in the sky.

ART
Right. Simon. Heaven is up in the sky.

SIMON
Heaven is up! Heaven is up!

Art looks at Simon's paintings scattered on the floor. His boxes of games and puzzles strewn. Art goes to Simon's desk. Flings open drawers. He collects a stack of MAGAZINES. Drops them on the bed.

ART
Look. all your stuff is right here. You can have it back. You can feel safe again. But you have to tell me what happened ...

No response. Art is lost. If this doesn't work, what will. Art bows his head, exhausted.

PUSH IN CLOSE ON SIMON

He reaches out slowly for something. Takes a MAGAZINE from the mess on the bed. THE TINKERY. Art sees him. Comes closer. Simon methodically turns the pages. Stops.

ART
What is it, Simon?

Simon is holding PUZZLE 99.

ART
What are you looking at?

Simon stands -- *walks out* of the room.

ART
Simon?

AT THE STAIRS

Simon takes them one at a time. Gripping the bannister tightly, walking feet-together, feet-together down the stairs. Art hangs back. Watching, trying to make sense of it.

DOWNSTAIRS (MOVING)

Simon goes to the PHONE on a small table beneath the steps. Art comes closer. He's amazed when Simon picks up the phone. Simon uses one stiff finger and slowly *punches in numbers*. Art quickly grabs a pen from his pocket and *copies the numbers* on the palm of his hand.

INTERCUT WITH: ROOM

Leo is working furiously at his computer. CLOSE ON PHONE as it RINGS. Leo stops, fingers in mid-air. Leo looks over at DEAN, on the other side of the room. The phone keeps *ringing*.

DEAN

Answer it.

LEO

Oh shit. oh shit. oh shit ...

Leo picks up the phone with a shaky hand. He tries to sound upbeat but his voice trembles wildly.

LEO

Hi. You've reached... the, um, Puzzle Center. For solving one of our Master puzzles you've, um, won, um, magazine of your choice.

(deep breath, then)

... Can I have your name?

SIMON

You're a stranger.

Leo *drops* the phone on the floor. Dean looks at him like he's crazy.

LEO

It's him.

The phone just lays there. Leo presses himself against the back wall. Frozen in fear. Dean kneels and lifts the receiver.

DEAN

Is this Simon?

ART GRABS THE PHONE FROM SIMON

ART

(sharp, for effect)

This is FBI Special Agent Jefferson.

(MORE)

ART (cont'd)
now listen closely to me scumbag. I'm
half way to you. and I'm coming hard.
so you tell me what's going on or
you'd better check the organ donor
box on your driver's license.

A long pause -- Art knows he's found one small crack in the wall. Dean
feels his fear give way to resignation -- then relief.

DEAN
Mr. Jefferson. I think I can help you.
And Simon.

ART
Is that right? Well, right now I
wouldn't believe Jesus if he came
walking across Lake Michigan so you'd
better 'wow' me.

DEAN
You have no reason to trust me. But
I'm the only one who can help you.

ART
The way you helped Simon's parents?

DEAN
(urgent)
I knew nothing about it. That's why
you have to listen to me. They're
going to kill the boy.

ART
What agency do you work for? CIA?
Defense?

DEAN
I'm afraid you're not that lucky.
I think the FBI likes to call it 'No
Such Agency'.

ART
(reacts)
NSA? They framed me to get to the
boy?

DEAN
Not the agency. They don't know yet.
It's my boss.

ART
Why does he want him so bad?

DEAN
Does it matter at this point? Simon knows something he shouldn't know. There's nowhere you can hide, no part of the government that can shield him. Witness protection is meaningless. As long as he's alive, he'll be hunted.

(he knows he's gotten
to Art)
... You don't know the kind of man I work for. He's barely human.

ART
What's that make you?

DEAN
A fool. A coward. But I won't help him anymore. I think I know a way to save Simon. It's dangerous but it's the only way.

Dean says nothing. It has the intended effect. Art's mind is spinning.

ART
Can you be in Chicago tonight?

DEAN
Tell me where.

ART
I'll be in touch. We have your number, remember?

Art hangs up. Looks for Simon. Simon is in the livingroom staring at the breakfront. Art comes closer. OPENS the drawer. He finds a TAPE. Written neatly on the spine is: *SIMON'S SLEEPY TIME TAPE.*

ART
Simon, is this what you need to go to sleep? ...

Simon is looking at something else. He reaches out to touch --

A FRAMED PHOTO

The one we saw before of Simon riding a HORSE.

ART

Simon, we have to go.

Simon stands arms dangling at his sides. Art picks up the frame.

INT./EXT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR

Art sets the frame on Simon's lap. Simon stares intently at the photo.

SIMON

Mommy is up. Daddy is up.

ART

We need to find a place to hide out for
a few hours.

(more to himself)

... the last place on earth anybody'd
think of looking for us.

Art starts the engine, pops Simon's tape in the cassette player. On
comes a recording of Martin Lynch singing 'It's Raining, It's Pouring'.

ON TAPE

Rain, rain, go away.

Come again some other day ...

Simon CLOSES HIS EYES, clutching the photo. A muffled sound stuns
Art. Art realizes Simon is CRYING.

ART

I guess I made the same mistake
everybody makes. I never stopped to
think about what you're feeling. ... I
don't know how to explain death to
you. My old man never said a kind
word to me in his life but I cried like
a baby at his funeral. So you go on and
cry as long as you want.

Art doesn't know how Simon will react but he needs to do something
human. Art reaches over and TAKES SIMON'S HAND.

And Simon lets him. He never looks at Art but he holds onto his hand as
they drive away.

CUT TO: THE BEATLES IN PLASTIC

A wind up MUSIC BOX from the 60s in cherry condition. Playing All You Need Is Love. A big smile breaks across EMILY YUANG'S face.

EMILY

My dad would kill for this. How much? ... It's so ... corny ...

WIDEN - FLEA MARKET - WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

Set up in an old mill. Rows and rows of tables with everything under the sun. A WOMAN bundled in two overcoats plays hard to get.

WOMAN

Three hundred.

EMILY

Get real.

POV

Leo is across the aisle. Emily hurries to him. Gives him a big hug.

EMILY

Did you ever think ... what are we gonna collect when we get old? Plaid shirts and 'Kramer' dolls?

Emily *laughs* -- and finally recognizes the sheer terror on Leo's face.

LEO

I'm in trouble. Oh god ... fucking loser.

A little too loud. Emily pulls him along past the tables of *stuff*.

EMILY

Tell me.

LEO

I can't. He'll find out.

EMILY

Who? ... Kudrow?

Leo is lost in his own panic.

LEO
I was going to e-mail the Director but
Kudrow monitors everything. I can't
use the phone ... it all gets recorded.
There's nothing I can do.

Emily stops in front of a shelf displaying six MANUAL TYPEWRITERS
like a small ossuary -- the dried bones of a forgotten world. Emily picks
up a small blue SMITH CORONA.

EMILY
Low tech rules ... If you can't plug it
in, nobody knows you're doing it.

EXT. LAKE DRIVE - LAKE FOREST, ILL. - DAY

Stately large homes on large lots along Lake Michigan. Quiet, woodsy.
Chicago's wealth speaks softly.

EXT. STONE GATES

lead to a winding drive on a 6 acre compound. Through the trees we can
make out the flat blue expanse of Lake Michigan. Art steps INTO FRAME -
- looks up at the HOUSE. A Tudor mansion made graceful by age. With a
Christmas TREE that wouldn't be out of place in Rockefeller Center. Art
seems as if he were steeling himself to leap across an impossible chasm.

EXT. FRONT DOOR

Opens quickly and two WORKMEN covered in dust carry out squares of
stone washed marble. Art steps back, out of the way. A WOMAN appears
holding a roll of blueprints. DANA GOLDWIN (36) glows with the studied
country breeziness of a model in a Tweeds catalogue.

DANA
I mean it, Eddie. I want my kitchen
back. I have 150 people coming for
Christmas Eve.

EDDIE
(walking away)
Next week.

DANA
You said 'next week' last week.

EDDIE
I mean 'this' next week.

Dana noudes Simon first, standing in the cold afternoon light, staring past her -- out to the lake and its endless horizon.

DANA
(confused)
Can I help you?

Then she sees Art. The first thing she does is cross her arms in front of her stomach. Now Art realizes she's pregnant. Dana turns as if to run into the house. Then stops herself.

ART
I wasn't gonna say it but ... 'Surprise.'

DANA
What are you doing?
Andy's home ...

ART
I know it's unfair ... but ... Dana, I
need help.

Art looks at Simon.

DANA
You never ask for help.

ART
I'm asking now.

INT. SUN ROOM

Wall-to-ceiling windows overlook the lake. THROUGH THE WINDOWS we can see a private DOCK and a sleek 42' SLOOP in the water.

ART
We need a place to stay for a few
hours.

DANA
If you can stand being around Trust
Fund Andy'.

ART
I was angry when I said that. I
wouldn't have come here if I didn't
have to ...

Dana can't make the decision.

DANA

Wait here ...

She disappears through a set of pocket doors. Closing them behind her.

ART

Arguing with your wife is like riding a bicycle. Simon. Even if you haven't done it a while, you can pick it right up again.

But Simon is looking past Art. He moves across the room towards a massive oak table with a 10 thousand piece JIGSAW PUZZLE, just begun. Art can HEAR furious WHISPERING behind the doors. A beat, then they OPEN. ANDY GODWIN (56), tall and patrician, frowns when he sees Art.

ANDY

Nice to see you again, Art.

ART

Andy ...

Art starts a handshake. Stops when Andy keeps his hands in his pockets.

ANDY

(walks past Art)

Don't touch that.

Simon holds a PUZZLE PIECE up to the window light -- staring at its shape. Never looking at Andy.

ANDY (CONT)

That's imported from India. I've been working on it for three months.

Art cuts off Andy before he yanks it from Simon. Gently takes it from Simon, hands it back to Andy.

ART

He didn't mean anything.

ANDY

I don't want him to mess it up. ...
What do you want from us?

ART

I need to leave Simon here for a little while. There's nowhere else I can turn. You should know the police and
(MORE)

ART (cont'd)
the FBI are looking for me. There's no
use convincing you I'm innocent ... you
just have to believe me.

Andy moves to Dana --

ANDY
I don't want you upsetting her. Not
now.

DANA
(off Art's look)
It's a girl.

ART
I'm happy for you.

DANA
Who is he? ... Not the official answer.
The real answer.

ART
Someone killed his parents.

ANDY
Jesus ...

Dana's icy facade begins to break.

ART
Don't help me. Help him.

Andy puts his arm around Dana while she calms down.

ANDY
It's your decision, darling.

DANA
(finally)
He must be hungry.

INT. SUNROOM - LATER

Simon pulls the draw string on an overhead FAN, on, off, on, off, ignoring
Art and Dana as they re-arrange the furniture in the room.

ART
This is about as close to his own room
as we'll get. Let him settle in.

DANA
... and hot chocolate in a mug.

ART
If he starts pacing, it doesn't mean
he's upset. He's just making it
familiar.

(hands her cassette)
This will help him go to sleep.
You have any dominoes, drawing
paper, crayons? ...

Dana suddenly presses her hands OVER ART'S EYES.

DANA
What color are my eyes?

ART
Um?

DANA
C'mon ... what color are they?

Art fumbles -- says nothing.

DANA (CONT)
Hazel. In three years of marriage you
never knew me as well as you know
him.

ART
I won't make excuses ...

DANA
(over)
... all those holidays by myself trying to
explain to my parents where my
husband was ...

ART
(looks at her)
I'm sorry, Dana ...

Dana reacts to the passion in Art's voice.

DANA
Go on. He'll be OK.

EXT. HOUSE

Art sits in the Range Rover. Andy holds the keychain.

ANDY

Beep once. locked. Twice. armed.

ART

I appreciate this.

ANDY

I'm helping you under one condition
... after tonight, never speak to Dana
again.

Art reacts, then nods.

EXT. ROOSEVELT ISLAND - WASHINGTON, D.C. - NIGHT

A wooded park in the middle of a bulge in the Potomac. A lone memorial to Theodore Roosevelt as forgotten as the president himself.

LEO walks briskly down a winding path. He shouts out loud when the GERMAN SHEPHERD jumps out at him, resting her paws on his chest.

KUDROW (OS)

Down girl ... you're scaring him.

Kudrow takes a biscuit from his overcoat -- throws it. The dog runs off. Leo hands Kudrow an envelope -- opening it. INSIDE are the PHOTO OF BURRELL and a computer PRINTOUT.

LEO

We found this guy in an Army top
priority classified data bank. His
name's Joseph Linesdorf ... he was
court-martialed out of the Special
Forces in '89. In absentia.

(voice quivers)

He raped and murdered a woman
stationed at Ft. Meade ... Disappeared
before they could arrest him.

Kudrow's sleepless eyes flash the strain of the last few days.

KUDROW

But you didn't find out who he's
working for ...

LEO

I can only risk two minutes in the Pentagon system. then it can ID an intruder ...

KUDROW

(cuts him off)

I called Mr. Dean at home. His machine said something about driving to Manassas to see his folks. ... I don't believe that. Leo.

Leo begins to tremble. opens his mouth but nothing comes out. The dog comes back. Kudrow kneels to hook its leash. When he straightens up he's gripping a Match Master .45. He raises it to Leo's face.

KUDROW

Now you're going to tell me where he really went.

Leo eyes are wide and white as comets.

LEO

(shouts out)

He went to Chicago to get the boy.

(cries)

That's all I know. I swear. Are you gonna hurt me? Sir?

KUDROW

Go home and hide til I say it's safe to come out.

HERTZ RENTAL CAR COUNTER - O'HARE AIRPORT - NIGHT

Dean moves up in line. He hands the CLERK his Driver's license.

EXT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

A Hertz SHUTTLE BUS pulls up to a marked STOP. Several TRAVELLERS step off. Dean steps on through the middle door. Sits down. The bus moves OUT. Dean checks the front of the bus. When he turns back ART is sitting next to him. Dean is startled.

EXT. HERTZ PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dean drives a white TAURUS through the checkpoint. Art is in the passenger seat.

DEAN
Where do I go?

ART
Nowhere. You just drive.

INT/EXT RTE. 94 SOUTH - NIGHT (MOVING)

Art peeks through the back WINDOW, then looks at Dean.

ART
It'd be a mistake if anyone was
following us.

Dean notices the silvery glint from a GUN on Art's lap.

DEAN
I don't blame you for being cautious.
I'm pretty freaked out myself.

ART
If you're looking for sympathy, you've
got the wrong guy. ... What exactly did
Simon discover?

DEAN
That the human mind is still a
mystery. That the soul is stronger
than the sword.

ART
Yeah, well I only went to City College
so spare me the poetry. Take this
exit.

LONG SHOT - CAR SWERVES ONTO A DOWN RAMP

and then shoots across to INTERSTATE 80 WEST (MOVING).

DEAN
One of the first acts of the Reagan
administration was to mandate the
National Security Agency to generate
a new cryptographic code to protect
American informants working for
foreign governments. Money was no
object. Anything to defeat
Communism ... You remember
Communists, don't you?

ART

I think they're called entrepreneurs now.

DEAN

It's a brave new world of dirty little governments, warlords, drug kings and holy fanatics. The complexity of our security has increased to the nth degree. We rely on a single, unpenetrable code ... MERCURY ... We named it for the Messenger of the Gods

ART

Simon figured out this code.

DEAN

I don't know. But he can read it. He might even be able to recreate it. And that is more astounding than you can ever realize.

ART

Help me take down your boss.

DEAN

Kudrow? Impossible. You can't even kill him ... that would alert the agency

ART

Then it doesn't sound like you can help me.

DEAN

A secret life makes strange friends. I know people who can arrange for a helicopter to get Simon out of the country. There'll be no flight report, no records at all. There's a place run by a French medical team dedicated to looking after autistic children. We have contacts there ... He'll have the best care. The best treatment

ART

What's in it for you?

DEAN

Believe it or not my friends used to
tease me about being an idealist.

ART

What if your boss finds out?

DEAN

He'll kill me.

BY A 7-11 PARKING LOT

Art points to a spot and Dean pulls over.

ART

It has to happen tomorrow.

DEAN

I'm ready. I can arrange a helicopter
to leave from DePage Field just
outside the city.

ART

No.

DEAN

But it's the closest landing strip ...

ART

I don't know how Simon will react to
flying. I need a place where he feels
comfortable ...

(beat. then)

Simon seems to have this thing about
the Sears Tower. There's a helipad at
the top that's not used anymore. No
one will even pay attention to it in a
city this big. We'll be there at 6 PM.

DEAN

6 PM ...

Art throws open his door.

DEAN

(looks around at the
seedy neighborhood)
Where am I?

ART
You're smart. Find your way back.

INT./EXT INTERSTATE U.S. 90 - RANGE ROVER (MOVING)

Art reaches deep in his coat pocket and pulls up a mic cord until he has a tape RECORDER in his hand. Hits the OFF button. PULLS off the WIRE taped to his chest. Then turns it ON. Speaking into the mic.

ART
Merry Christmas, boys. There's some things I need you to do. I hope all that bragging you did about helicopters and the Atlantic Ocean wasn't just B.S. Listen to the whole tape. By the end you'll know exactly where I'm going to be in 14 hours. The choice is yours. Help me or arrest me ...

CUT TO: TOMMY BIZZI

lifting weights in his basement -- working out his anger. He bench presses 300 pounds. Until the thumpa-thumpa bass of his son's ghetto blaster drives him to distraction. He storms to the basement stairs.

TOMMY
(screams)
Turn that goddamn music off ...

JERRY (OS)
OK, OK, don't go mental.

Silence. Bizzi goes back to his weights. Beat. Then he hears Art's VOICE.

ART (VO)
'Merry Christmas', boys. I got some things I need you to do ...

Tommy throws his bar crashing to the floor.

INT. KITCHEN (CONTINUOUS)

Tommy comes charging up the stairs. Jerry holds an ENVELOPE.

TOMMY
Where'd you get this?

JERRY
It was taped to the door.

Bizzi opens the package. Takes out a handwritten NOTE.

BIZZI

(reading)

Here's some rap even you can get
into.

Something flutters to the floor. Bizzi kneels and picks it up.

INSERT: THE PHOTO OF SIMON AND HIS PARENTS

taken out of its frame. Bizzi looks at it. *Reacts.*

CLOSE ON SIMON

asleep in the dark. Art steps into the room. Spreads a quilt on top of him. Then he feels *someone watching* him. he turns -- DANA is at the door. They exchange a look.

VOICE (OS)

What the hell? ...

INT. SUN ROOM

Art and Dana run in. Andy is standing over his puzzle. It's been COMPLETED -- *upside down.*

ANDY

It usually takes me six months to get
through one of these ... He didn't even
use the picture as a key.

ART

Sorry. Should I mess it up for you
again?

Andy throws him a look.

ANDY

I'll drive you into the city in the
morning.

ART

I can't take the chance. They're
watching the roads. And the trains ...
But I was thinking ...

Art goes to the window. Andy and Dana look at each other.

ART (CONT)

You can live in Chicago your whole life
and never realize it's a river city ...

INT. CONDO - MARYLAND - NIGHT

Bedroom walls filled with posters of WOMEN blown up from Japanese graphic novels. Leo Pedranksi is typing on the manual TYPEWRITER in between anxious tokes of sensimilla. He yanks TWO SHEETS OF PAPER sandwiching a sheet of CARBON from the carriage and runs into the kitchen. Throws open drawers until he finds TWO ENVELOPES. His hands shake as he addresses both envelopes and separates the two copies. Stuffs and seals the letters.

He runs back into the bedroom. A MAN stands with the typewriter in his hands. Looking at it like a fossil. BURRELL drops the typewriter. It crashes on the floor. Leo begins to shake.

LEO

Did he send you? ... Please, all I did
was tell him about the call. I don't
know anything else. It's not my fault!

Burrell calmly raises a silenced 9mm. Leo blinks twice before realizing there's a bullet in his skull. He falls forward. Dead. Burrell takes the two LETTERS from Leo's death grip.

DAWN OVER LAKE MICHIGAN

spilling pink and red dye across the dark tapestry of water.

EXT. DOCK - DAWN

Andy tosses life vests, blankets and jackets onto his prized sloop. Simon stands on the dock with a LIFE VEST secured on him.

BY THE HOUSE

Dana hands a Nordstrom's bag with a handle to Art.

DANA

Ziti with pesto, prosciutto
sandwiches, some sliced up mango ...
God I sound like Martha Stewart.

ART

(re: her eyes)
They're not always hazel ... in sunlight
they're almost emerald.

(MORE)

ART (cont'd)
(she reacts)
Dana ... I'm sorry I put you through
this ...

DANA
(cuts him off.
passionate)
... idiot. You don't understand
anything. All those years I waited for
you to love me the way I loved you. ... I
couldn't wait any longer. ... Now you've
changed. And I wish I never found
out. Now I know maybe if I stuck it
out I could've had children with you.
I could've had ... you. And that's all I
ever wanted.

Art and Dana stand in the cold morning air for a beat. There's nothing
left to say. Art touches Dana's belly.

ART
Relax, kid. You got a great mom.

Dana kisses Art -- hurries into the house.

INT. DODGE CARAVAN - NIGHT

Parked on a neighborhood street in Morton Grove. GRANT leans in -- a
coat over sweats -- listening to Art's tape on Bizzi's auto cassette player.

ART'S VOICE ON TAPE
... if you agree to do it, do it now ... but
you can't tell Lomax ...

GRANT
(over)
Jesus Christ. Lomax will kill us.

BIZZI
(looks at Grant)
Art's never asked for back up before.

GRANT
He is now.

CUT TO: A BLUE AND RED SPINNAKER BILLOWS OPEN
wind filling it with a loud whooosh!

EXT. LAKE MICHIGAN - MORNING

Andy's SLOOP cuts through white caps, hugging the shoreline. Andy stands at the wheel behind Art. The wind is almost unbearably cold. Simon leans against the main mast. He wears an orange life vest. Art knows what's ahead of Simon but doesn't know how to prepare him.

ART

I'll bet this is your first time on a boat.
Me, I like terra firma ... where I can
walk around ...

(building up his
courage)

Simon, I have to tell you something ...
... in a little while you'll be on your way
to a place that's safe and right for you.
But it's very far away. And I don't
know if I'll be able to see you ... You
understand?

Simon shows no reaction. Then --

SIMON

Black is up ...

ART

What? ...

Art follows Simon's POV: the sun has burned away the last of the lake mist and revealed the fullness of the tall city buildings. Jutting above them all, Simon has recognized the black SEARS TOWER. THROUGH SIMON'S EYES -- the city falls away and the TOWER shines, dazzling, so close. Simon reaches out to touch --

SIMON

Heaven is up ...
(figuring it out)
Mommy and daddy are up.

Simon suddenly bolts across the boat and steps out over the water. As if he could just leap to the top of the tower.

ART

No. Simon!

Art grabs him just in time. Simon struggles hard.

SIMON

Mommy, daddy, mommy, daddy ...

Art holds him tight. Simon finally stops, exhausted.

ART

I wish I could take you to them.
Simon. But I can't. I'm sorry ... I can't.

Simon twists his head away. The lake seems endless around them.

QUICK CUT TO: TOMMY BIZZI

Bizzi kneels in his garage. The door closed. A work light hangs overhead. He lays out an array of GUNS on a canvas sheet. Carefully begins to oil and load them.

QUICK CUT TO: GRANT

hurrying from a backyard SHED to his VAN. He lugs three pairs of SCUBA air TANKS, wet suits and flippers. Throws them in the back. Drives *away*.

QUICK CUT TO: INT. DARK ROOM

It's eerie red light bleeds over professional photographic equipment. Looking *THROUGH THE LENS* we see SIMON. A black box has been DRAWN around his face in the PHOTO of Simon on a HORSE -- blocking out his parents. CLICK! Several shots are snapped. WIDEN -- we see SIMMS hurry to a cropping board where a tray of solution waits with several other items, including a BLANK PASSPORT. Simms begins to wipe it down with solution.

CLOSE ON A CIGARETTE

stubbed out in an ash tray filled with a dozen others.

WIDEN TO REVEAL - MOTEL ROOM - CHICAGO

Just outside the city. Dean lights another cigarette. The TV plays COPS loudly.

DEAN

Turn that down.

BURRELL

grimaces on the edge of a twin bed near the TV. Dean paces obsessively.

BURRELL

It helps me relax. I hate flying.

DEAN

Kudrow was about to break Leo wide-open. I merely put him out of his misery.

BURRELL

You? ... You get other people to do everything for you. Like the kids' parents.

DEAN

Welcome to the food chain. You're the drone. I'm the thinker. ... Besides, he doesn't even know they're dead. He's a lump of flesh with a computer in his head.

Burrell watches Dean flop back on the bed and cover his eyes with his wrist.

BURRELL

What's gonna happen when you deliver him to the Saudis and they find out he can't explain anything?

DEAN

I have a right to the money.

BURRELL

Bill Casey used to say self-pity was the starting point for every act of treason.

DEAN

He died a poor man.

(looks at room clock)

When that helicopter takes off ... I'm going to be rich.

EXT. CHICAGO RIVER - MORNING

The river cuts through the heart of the city -- hidden in a concrete canyon -- forgotten, ignored.

UP RIVER - THE SLOOP

working against the current slowly on engine power. Sails down. Art stands on the bow, listening to the din of the traffic rushing across the MICHIGAN AVE. BRIDGE. They pass a series of small, private DOCKS. Art

turns to see -- SIMON standing portside, eyes searching for the
veriginous lines of the Sears Tower.

SIMON

(groaning)

Up is gone ... up is gone ...

Art looks back at the city as the Sears Tower disappears behind several
closer buildings.

ART

We'll go there. I promise you, Simon.

Andy calls out to Art from the wheel.

ANDY

When we get close, I'll toss you the
line. Just tie it to the cleet and walk
us in.

Art picks up the docking sheet, looks up river

POV - MARINA CITY CLUB

Twin cylindrical APARTMENT BUILDINGS keep a members-only river
DOCK forever in shade. It's surprisingly deserted. All those boats and not
a soul on the dock. Art turns, looks up to the top of the twin condos.

POV - CLOSER

A CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT SNIPER pulls his high powered rifle
back from the ledge of a BALCONY. Art looks around -- now he can pick
out MEN in the shadows, behind the boats. Art stays calm -- walks slowly
back to Andy. Art lays his hand on the WHEEL -- *gripping* Andy's hand.

ART

(softly)

Why'd you do it, Andy?

Andy tries to pull his hand back. The look on Art's face scares him. Andy
sags -- a moment of anger swept away by bitterness and doubt.

ANDY

Because you're a criminal ... and
because she still loves you.

Art grabs Andy by the jacket -- Andy struggles until Art HURLS HIM OFF
THE SLOOP into the river.

ANGLE - A POLICE BOAT

appears from the far side of the Marina Club churning towards Art. ON DECK we recognize LT. NICKLES. Along the dock police Special Forces OFFICERS appear. The police boat suddenly *blasts* its SIREN. It reverberates off the concrete river canyon walls -- frighteningly LOUD. Simon clasps his ears. Art spins the sloop's wheel hard to starboard. On a collision course with an L-shaped DOCK twenty yards before the marina.

ART

Simon! Stay close to me!

INTO THE DOCK (MOVING)

Several BOATS are already moored for the day. Art knows he'll hit it hard. Giant TRUCK TIRES line the dock. Art holds Simon tight as the current drives them hard for the dock. The bow of the sloop *shatters* a POWERBOAT, skids forward and SLAMS into the dock. Art and Simon are thrown to the deck. Art leads him to the rail.

ART

We have to jump.

Simon balks -- pulls back, terrified of the distance.

SIMON

Simon is afraid!

ART

You can do it!

Art has no choice -- he grabs Simon by the life vest. Then he JUMPS out -- over the river -- onto the floating dock. PUNCH IN CLOSE as Art catches his knee on the steel CLEAT. It cuts into his shin, tearing a bloody *gash*. Art falls to the ground. Forces himself up. He takes Simon by the hand. Hobbles in great pain, pulling Simon UP a steel STAIRWAY to the STREET.

ALONG THE STREET (CONTINUOUS)

People are already rushing over, blocking traffic to see what caused the crash. The web of *passers-by* and dense city traffic is an urban forest hiding them from view for a moment.

ANGLE

Nickles jumps from the boat to the dock. He leads a charge of CPD officers up the winding stairs from the Marina dock to the city street.

EXT. LASALLE ST. (CONTINUOUS)

Art pulls Simon along by his hand. The crowd has thickened as sirens continue to wail. Several CPD radio CARS are blocked by the traffic. Art tries to take Simon catty-corner across the INTERSECTION. Art stumbles on the curb -- *his leg gives out.*

ECU -- AS ART LOSES CONTACT WITH SIMON'S HAND

All he can see is a blur of legs and the faces of center city workers staring down at him.

ART

(screaming)

Simon! ... Stay near me! Simon!

ON SIMON -- bumped by the crowd. He's spun around. Then he reacts to something. POV - THROUGH THE FOREST OF TALL BUILDINGS -- Simon gets a tiny glimpse of the SEARS TOWER. He begins walking towards it. It disappears from view again. Simon is confused -- holds out his hand -- *keeps walking.*

ART forces himself to his feet. Pushes down the block. People are slow to get out of the way. The crowd can sense the chaos. The whirring sounds of real police action. Art stumbles forward. There is no sign of Simon. A rush of CPD OFFICERS breaks through the crowd. Nickles out front.

POV

He sees Art limping east on Lake St. Art falls to the sidewalk. Several cops beat Nickles to him. Art is cuffed and lifted into an arriving police VAN. He throws one last desperate glance down the street for Simon.

ART

(screams)

Simon!

CUT TO: SIMON IN DOWNTOWN CHICAGO

drifting down the block, terrified.

DOWNTOWN CHICAGO AS SIMON SEES IT

SOUNDS bleed one into another. Buses grind out their routes. Cars blast HORNS. Grating VOICES. Flashing traffic LIGHTS, blinking store signs. The entire landscape THROBS. Simon reaches an INTERSECTION. It might as well be the Mississippi. SANTA CLAUS rings a bell at a SALVATION ARMY money pot. A bean pole skinny HAWK (40's) leans against an arcade wall. He's on Simon soon as he sees him.

HAWK

(walking with Simon)

Merry Christmas ... Are you lonely?
Want to be friends? You like videos? I
got Sega, Genesis, everything right
back at my place.

He reaches out for Simon. Simon backs away. Stumbles by the curb into a parked MERCEDES. A car ALARM erupts, piercing, terrifying. Simon slaps his hands to his ears. Backs into the Salvation Army POT knocking it over. That chases the Hawk away. People hurrying by cast a look -- but no one stops. Simon staggers around the block. Then he *freezes*.

SIMON'S POV

Like a pasha's red carpet the dirty street leads to the SEARS TOWER ten blocks away. Simon holds his hand out to the black obelisk. LOOKING THROUGH SIMON'S EYES -- the city disappears and the TOWER fills Simon's world with perfect vertical lines that rise UP towards Heaven.

INT. PRECINCT HOLDING CELL

10x10 windowless room. Art is *pounding* on the door with his fists.

ART

Would one of you clowns get in here!
It's important. I know you can hear
me. ... I want to speak to a U.S.
Attorney! Hey! Let me see a circuit
judge! ... Open the goddamn door!

He *rams* it again and again with shoulder. Till his bandaged knee gives out. He *starts* with his fists again.

BACK TO ART'S CELL

The *sound* of the door being unlocked surprises Art. Two OFFICERS pounce on Art fitting manacles around his wrists, waist, legs. A DEPUTY U.S. MARSHAL in full uniform and dark glasses watches them.

DEPUTY

I'll be escorting you to the federal
facility in Evanston. Please cooperate
and make it easy on both of us.

ART

(resisting)

Just hear what I have to say ... Stop
being a hack and listen to me. I only

(MORE)

ART (cont'd)
have til six o'clock. It's a matter of
national security ...

DEPUTY
I have the right to gag you. Don't
make me use it.

ART
You idiot you've been set up ...
somebody's playing you ...

DEPUTY
Gag him ...

The cops fit a painfully tight plastic GAG on Art. Drag Art out of the cell
and follow the Marshal down the hall -- he kicks and twists all the way.
Art disappears into an ELEVATOR --

EXT. PRECINCT SECURITY DOOR

A dark blue JUSTICE DEPARTMENT VAN waits with its doors open. Art
is thrown inside the van. The Deputy signs for the prisoner. The doors
are closed. The van speeds off.

INT./EXT VAN (MOVING)

The Van takes the corner on two wheels. The Deputy driving. He takes
off his cap and his sunglasses. Turns and smiles at Art. Art recognizes
him by the black and blue swelling around his nose. BURCH. He fires a
straight FIST into Art's nose, rocking him backwards.

Sitting right next to Art is KUDROW. He cuts the gag off.

KUDROW
I told him he could do that. It was a
big compromise on his part.
(intense)
You fucked up. You lost the boy. Do
you have any idea where he is?

ART
Why should I trust you?

KUDROW
Who said anything about trust? Right
now I'm the boy's only hope. There
are other people after him ... I can
assure they're not big on quality of life
issues. So one more time ... do you
know where he is?

ART
I wasn't planning on the cops getting
in the way. ...

KUDROW
They don't have him.

ART
Then he could be anywhere ...

Art looks out the window. The afternoon shadows are deep and cold.

ART (CONT)
I know where he wants to go. He's
stronger than people think. ...
(firm)
But I have to be there.

KUDROW
Of course. come along. I hate
children.

EXT. DEPAGE AIRSTRIP - RURAL ILLINOIS - DAY

A reconfigured army STINGRAY VP07 transport HELICOPTER has its
blades spinning at the far end of the private airport.

INT. CHOPPER

Two MEN finish a pre-flight check. One hefts a M-16 and buckles it in by
his seat. The door flies open. The PILOT turns to see a MAN IN A BLACK
COMMANDO HOOD and the wrong end of a steel sap. Crack! The CO-
PILOT reaches for a 9 mm pistol. A SECOND COMMANDO whips the butt
of an M-16 across his chin. Yanks them both out of the chopper.

CUT TO: PANORAMIC SHOT - CHICAGO SKYLINE

A brilliant orange and purple sunset frames the black SEARS TOWER
against the oncoming night.

EXT. JACKSON ST. - SAME TIME

A wide marquee forms an awning over the wind buffeted street. In bold
letters we read:

SKYDECK OBSERVATORY

The crazy height of the Sears Tower generates turbulent winds at the
base. Just opening the lobby door takes patience and strength. Several

TOURISTS battle the door to get inside. As the door slowly closes SIMON STEPS INTO FRAME -- gets inside just before the door shuts.

INT. SKYDECK LOBBY ENTRANCE (CONTINUOUS)

TOURISTS are spread out over the entryway exhibition about the Tower and the city of Chicago. A gift SHOP sells overpriced replicas.

AT THE SKYDECK ELEVATORS

A young female GUIDE wearing a red Santa's hat greets a line of people winding behind a velvet sash.

GUIDE

Have your tickets out, please. It's a 46 second ride to the 103rd floor. Don't be alarmed if you feel some swaying at the top of the building. It can move as much as ten feet. The winds there have been clocked as high as 110 miles an hour. Enjoy the view.

The ELEVATOR DOORS open. People file on. The Guide collects tickets. She holds her hand out as Simon steps forward.

GUIDE

Ticket?

(no reply)

Do you have a ticket, sir?

Simon stares blankly past her.

SIMON

(softly)

Up ...

GUIDE

(confused)

You can't go up without a ticket.

INTO FRAME - A TICKET appears, handed over to the Guide. Simon doesn't move as -- DEAN steps forward.

DEAN

He's with me.

Dean smiles at Simon but Simon keeps his head turned away.

DEAN

Let's take a ride, Simon.

SIMON
(agitated)
You're a stranger.

Dean reaches out and touches Simon's shoulder. Simon twists away -- on the verge of a full out breakdown. until he hears --

GUIDE
(calls out)
Going up!

That word freezes Simon.

SIMON
(whispers)
Up ...

The Guide keeps the elevator doors open with her hand. Simon moves onto the elevator. Dean follows him. The doors CLOSE.

EXT. SEARS TOWER - ON THE STREET - SAME TIME

Kudrow's VAN stops curbside. Art jumps OUT. Kudrow hesitates. leans back to Burch.

KUDROW
Wait ten minutes. If I'm not back ...
find the boy and kill him.

ANGLE - THE SEARS TOWER

as we RACE UP from the street 103 stories. A move so sudden and precipitous it knocks us back in our seats. The world falls away. Like sprinting to the moon.

INT. SKYDECK OBSERVATORY - ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN

Simon bursts from the elevator. Excited. hopeful.

SIMON'S POV (MOVING)

360 degrees around the glassed-in and carpeted DECK. Floor to ceiling WINDOWS seal in the view. Simon walks awkwardly through the crowd of TOURISTS. He sees the back of a WOMAN IN A LONG COAT standing at the glass window. Her hair the same color as his mother's. He runs up and touches her.

SIMON
Mommy! ...

The WOMAN turns, scowling. Simon backs away. Confused. Pushes through the crowd, breathing heavily, now overwhelmed by the staring, annoyed FACES. Simon stops at the far end of the deck. By a DOOR.

HELIPAD: CLOSED : NO ADMITTANCE

Simon turns. Dean is right behind.

DEAN

We're going through this door, Simon.

Dean doesn't understand that Simon was expecting something else:

SIMON

Mommy ... daddy ... up ...

DEAN

(checks watch)

In a few minutes we're going for a ride.

Now Simon realizes he will not see his parents here. The vacant, endless sky, the finality of loss -- overwhelms his senses. He whips his head back and forth -- looking -- afraid he might have missed them.

Dean *pushes* the security bar unlocking the door bolt and OPENS the door to the helipad stairway. They're both surprised when an ALARM immediately begins to pulse. PUSH IN CLOSE ON SIMON -- he grabs his ears. Dean tries to drag him through.

DEAN

Walk, Simon ... now ... goddamn it ... move ...

Simon *howls* and lashes out at Dean. Tourists are looking over. Simon goes limp, slumps to the floor. A GUARD runs to turn OFF the alarm.

GUARD

Do you need help?

DEAN

He's retarded ... Just give us room. I'll calm him down.

Dean leans over Simon and levers a thumb and finger on Simon's carotid artery. The pain freezes Simon.

DEAN
I know you can feel that. Simon. Now
get up or I'll hurt you again.

EXT. STREET - IN THE VAN

Burch is timing Kudrow on his watch. The passenger door OPENS. Burrell leans in and *fires once* with a silenced 9 mm. Burch hardly moves in the seat. Burrell lets his head flop forward. To a passerby it looks like he's sleeping. Burrell closes the door.

INT. SKYDECK OBSERVATORY - SAME TIME

The elevator DOORS open and the TOURISTS file off. ART and KUDROW move clockwise around the carpeted circular deck. Kudrow stays a half step behind Art. The sunset fades as the city's lights come on. A 5 year old GIRL darts between Art and Kudrow, separating them for a second.

KUDROW
(catching up)
If you try anything, I'll shoot you right
here. You're an escaped fugitive.

Then Art can hear Simon moaning. Just around the corner. He breaks into a run -- DEAN is trying to force SIMON to his feet. He sees Art, then Kudrow. His face goes rigid. Dean takes a .38 from his jacket pocket and rests it against Simon's belly. Art moves closer.

ART
(to Dean)
I'm not armed ... just relax.
(calmly)
Hi, Simon. ...

Simon's head gives a slight shake. Wanting Art to explain this place.

ART (CONT)
I'm sorry we got separated. But I'm
here now. And I won't let anyone hurt
you.

KUDROW
You're acting irrationally.

DEAN
You'd be surprised at the
overwhelming logic in ten million
dollars.

ART
Let the boy go.

DEAN
I can't really do that. I have a contract
with people who don't take
disappointment well.

Art detects a *movement* on the periphery of his vision -- behind and to his left. CLOSE ON KUDROW -- as he reveals why he's really come there: he aims a 9mm Glock at Simon. Just before he FIRES Art grabs his arm.

ART
NO!

Kudrow squeezes off three wild SHOTS.

A WINDOW PANEL SHATTERS

at 1400 plus feet in the air. The wind load on the exterior tower is enormous. Spiderweb cracks *rocket* in all directions from each point of impact. The winds, gusting upward of 50 mph pour through the newly pulverized panels which explode INWARD with the roar of a hurricane *showering the room* with millions of tiny GLASS CRYSTALS.

LIGHTS go OFF. Panic spreads instantly. People rush for the fire escape and elevator. The Guards are overwhelmed. Four small emergency LIGHTS *come on* -- casting an eerie backlight across the skydeck.

DEAN *grabs* SIMON by the hair and drags him towards the Helipad DOOR -- KICKING it OPEN. Simon struggles in excruciating pain -- his senses on fire from the noise. Dean wrestles Simon through the DOOR.

Kudrow and Art fight for the gun. Art *cracks* Kudrow's wrist back, *breaking* it. The gun disappears in the darkness. Kudrow falls.

FOLLOW ART (MOVING)

Angry winds blow glass like snowflakes across the deck. As Art nears the HELIPAD DOOR something FLASHES in the darkness. Art feels a terrible pain in his left SHOULDER. By instinct Art leaps forward, slamming --

BURRELL

before he can fire a second SHOT. Art grips Burrell's gun hand tightly. Burrell pushes Art backwards. The floor now slippery with glass. Burrell pounds on Art's open wound with his free hand. Arms locked and coated primitively with blood.

WIDEN SHOT

What was once a safely enclosed deck is now OPEN, a sheer cliff buffeted by winds, cast in shadows. Art locks onto Burrell's gun hand desperately.

AT THE EDGE - CLOSE ON ART'S FOOT

trying to find traction. Giant SHARDS OF GLASS remain broken in the frame like stalactites. Art catches the frame with his right leg. Braking his momentum. The wind is a suction -- if Art's loses balance for a moment it will pull him out into the blackness. Burrell juts his free hand under Art's chin, twisting his head sideways. Burrell presses Art's right HAND into the glass. Bearing down hard.

Bracing his right leg against the frame -- Art kicks out with his left leg sweeping Burrell off his feet. Art yanks him down roughly. A three foot razor sharp triangle of glass pierces Burrell's thigh, severing the artery. Coating his torso in blood.

For a second they are both suspended over the lip of the building. Art locks both hands onto the frame and punches Burrell once, twice -- Burrell finally has to LET GO. A scream -- Burrell disappears into the darkness. Art rolls away from the edge. His right hand deeply cut and his left shoulder useless. He struggles to his feet.

EXT. TOWER HELIPAD

The HELICOPTER lowers itself out of the night like a dragonfly landing on a tomb. 10K FLOODLIGHTS drench the landing circle. Except for the glow of control panel lights we can't see into it. The chopper's blades continue to spin, helping it to ride out the roiling winds.

DEAN appears with SIMON. He waves to the chopper. Leaning hard into the wind, Dean drags Simon across the helipad. The door slides OPEN. Dean pushes Simon inside. Boosts himself up and rolls in.

INT. CHOPPER (CONTINUOUS)

Dean is exhausted but he smiles as greets the PILOT.

DEAN

What's our flying time to the relay?

Then Dean reacts -- the pilot wears a black hood.

CLOSER ON THE PILOT - TOMMY BIZZI

BIZZI

I'd say 10 years to life, asshole.

SIMMS
(reaches out his hand
to Simon)
C'mere, son, you're safe now.

Simon recoils from Simms' hand. Falls back, surprising Simms. Dean feels a steel line CLIP to his left. Hurls it at Bizzi knocking him back. He leaps at Simon, grabbing him by the hair, jamming the gun in Simon's neck. Simms holds back.

DEAN
(desperate)
I'll blow his face off.

Dean pulls the door, yanks Simon out, hitting the helipad hard. ART staggers across the pad. Bizzi and Simms jump from the chopper.

DEAN
Tell them to put their guns down!

ART
Do what he says!

Bizzi and Simms set down their guns. Dean wraps Simon in a headlock. The gun pressed into his chin.

DEAN
I have a rendezvous across the border
I'm not going to miss. You're going to
tell your friends to fly us there. Or I'll
kill Simon.

ART
He won't go with you unless I tell him.

DEAN
OK. Tell him.

ART
I have to ... write it down ... It's the
only way he accepts it ...

DEAN
Then do it.

Art takes the STRING OF CARDS from around Simon's neck. His hand shaking he writes on the card as best he can. Dean clutches Simon tighter.

DEAN (CONT)

(screams)

Stop stalling! I'm going to kill him!

Art hands the card to Simon.

ART

Go on. Simon. Do what the card says.

Simon *reads* the CARD. Dean keeps the gun digging into Simon's neck. Bulls him towards the chopper. Bizzi and Simms walk in front. The wind swirls around them -- now mixing with the downdraft from the chopper blades.

CLOSE ON ART -- using all his strength to get to his feet. Takes a step on shaky legs. Then Art *shouts* --

ART

Now. Simon!

TWO SHOT - CLOSE ON DEAN AND SIMON

as Simon BITES INTO DEAN'S HAND fiercely. Dean *screams* -- and drops the gun. He backhands Simon away and reaches down to pick up the gun.

FLASHING INTO FRAME

Art hurls his body at Dean knocking him back. Dean staggers backwards *firing* once into the air.

LOOKING DOWN

as Dean's momentum carries him into the TAIL BLADE of the chopper. It slices through him and he falls OUT of FRAME. A brief *scream*, then just the wind.

SIMON LAYS FACE DOWN on the helipad. Art kneels by him and lifts him gently. Bizzi and Simms run out to Art.

ART

It's time to go. Simon.

AT THE HELICOPTER

Art leads Simon to the belly DOOR.

SIMMS

(to Art)

We need to get you some help.

ART
No! Keep to the plan ...

Bizzi snaps Simon into a TANDEM PARACHUTE RIG.

ART (CONT)
Ever dream you could fly, Simon?
When I was your age all I did was
daydream about flying across the sky.

Bizzi finds a CARD in Simon's hand.

BIZZI
(reads)
'When I shout 'Now', hurt the bad
man.'

SIMMS
(checks his watch)
If this is gonna happen, we have to
move.

ART
Simon, this is Tommy.

SIMON
Tommy is a stranger.

BIZZI
No, kid. I'm your friend.

SIMON
(softly)
Art is my friend.

Art is frozen. His heart overwhelmed.

ART
(softly)
You bet I am. ... We have to say good-
bye, Simon.

Simon says nothing. Art HUGS him. And Simon lets him.

ART
Go!

Bizzi and Simms hurry Simon into the chopper. Art turns and walks away.

CLOSE ON ART (MOVING)

Angling his face into the stinging wind. Knowing it will numb him. He can HEAR the chopper blades spin faster. Hear the humming of the rotor as it pitches and rises from the pad.

Then Art turns around. LIGHT catches the chopper's big WINDOW. For a second Art thinks he sees Simon -- looking right at him. But in the dark he's not sure. It takes all his strength but Art *raises his hand in the air*. The chopper disappears into the horrid wind. Bizzi fighting it until he has a bird soaring out to Lake Michigan.

SKYDECK - SAME TIME

A rush of COPS, MED TECHS, and building security people have fanned out among the startled tourists. Helping people down. KUDROW wanders through cradling his broken wrist. One MED TECH startles him.

MED TECH

We'll have litter for you in a second,
sir.

KUDROW

Get out of my way.

Kudrow has his eye on something else.

POV - BANKING AWAY FROM THE ROOF

He sees the CHOPPER disappear out over the dark LAKE. Kudrow stumbles to MOUNTED BINOCULARS. With one hand he digs out two quarters and slip them into the machine. Presses his brow to the eyepiece.

POV - PUNCH IN CLOSER ON THE HELICOPTER

Far over the water. Simon is getting away.

KUDROW

Goddamn sonofabitch ...

Then a brilliant FLASH! lights the mist below. A muffled EXPLOSION as the chopper ERUPTS in a ball of fire. Flaming debris descends over the lake like a meteorite shower. Kudrow slumps down on the floor.

CLOSE ON KUDROW

reacting. A cold satisfaction spreads across his face. He turns and sees ART. He looks stunned.

KUDROW

I guess Mr. Dean's friends didn't trust him after all.

ART

You got what you wanted.

KUDROW

It wasn't about me. I did what had to be done. Simon is just the first casualty of the new cold war.

OVER THE LAKE

The last ember dies and the lake becomes a vast stretch of black velvet.

ON THE WATER

It's hard to make out at first -- but a Navy S47 INFLATABLE COMBAT RAFT glides into view. Agent Grant in a wet suit. Searching the sky with a NIGHTSCOPE.

POV - THROUGH NIGHTSCOPE

Floating down towards him like twin angels is a double PARACHUTE. Grant reaches into a supply kit and ignites a FLARE. Holds it high like a beacon -- leading us home.

DISSOLVE TO: INT. CONDO - MORNING

We hear the front door being unlocked. The building MANAGER (40's) pushes the door open. EMILY runs in behind. LEO'S BODY lies on the floor. His face still frozen in surprise.

MANAGER

Oh my god ...

EMILY

Don't touch anything. Call the police.

The Manager runs out. Emily kneels by Leo. Touches his eyes and says a silent prayer. She gets up and moves quickly through the apartment. Finds the typewriter smashed on the floor. Checks Leo's coffee table. Moves into the kitchen. A quick look over the mess. Then she looks in the trash can. Roots around. Reacts to something. Emily pulls out FOUR SHEETS OF CARBON PAPER. Holds them up to the light. In punched out IMPRESSIONS the WORDS of Leo's LETTER come to life.

EMILY
You're a winner. Leo ...

EXT. FT. MEADE - MORNING

Kudrow drives up to the SECURITY CHECKPOINT in his Infinity sedan. His face the most relaxed we've seen it in a long time. Classical MUSIC on the radio. He flashes his top level SECURITY BADGE as the DUTY SGT. appears at the gate.

KUDROW
(cheery)
Good morning, sergeant.

PUNCH WIDER

as ten base MP's suddenly surround his car.

DUTY SGT.
Please step out of the car, sir.

KUDROW
What the hell are you talking about?
Do you know who I am?

DUTY SGT.
You are under arrest. Now shut up and
get out.

HOLD on Kudrow's reaction.

CUT TO: SNOWFALL - CHICAGO - NIGHT

A late winter blizzard dropping like a stone club on the city. A mess.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Busy, lot's of couples. Art sits at the bar, nervously nursing a beer.

BARTENDER
Need a refill?

ART
No ... thanks.

Someone sits down next to him. BIZZI. Act perfectly casual.

ART
Nice trip?

BIZZI

Amazing place. They give you chocolate everywhere. Even in the banks. If I lived in Switzerland I'd weigh 300 pounds.

(waves off bartender)

Hey. I heard a funny thing ... Fiorello can't find his million dollars. Even Justice can't locate it. Poof. Just disappeared from the evidence log.

ART

No kidding.

BIZZI

How you been, Artie?

ART

Not bad. OK. ... Actually, I got a situation going on here ...

Big smile from Bizzi. Art's nervous.

BIZZI

First date? Relax. The worst that can happen is

ART

... don't tell me.

BIZZI

Artie, just be yourself.

ART

Yeah.

Art sets a PHOTO on the counter.

ART (CONT)

Thought you'd want to see this. Neat place. Near the Baja coast. 'Course they'll be fixing it up. Some anonymous donor gave them a million bucks. Out of the blue.

BIZZI

No kidding? Miracles do happen.

Bizzi OPENS the envelope. An 8x11 PHOTO slides out.

INSERT - PHOTO

In the b.g. we can see a green mountain and farm buildings. A few people working. And in the foreground -- SIMON SITTING ON A HORSE. He's looking right at the camera.

Someone lays a HAND on Art's shoulder. He turns -- jumps up, almost spilling his beer. It's STACIA SEBRING. Her blonde hair drapes a black overcoat. Art tucks the photo into his coat pocket.

STACIA

... what a night.

Bizzi quickly makes his exit.

BIZZI

See you around.

ART

I'm sorry ... I mean ... I made you come out a night like this.

STACIA

I've been thinking about a long vacation. Someplace really warm.

ART

I've got a 106 vacation days coming. I've been thinking about renting a house down in Mexico. I have a friend down there. And I love Mexican food ... especially those espadrilles ...

Stacia laughs free and easy.

STACIA

If that's an invitation ... I hardly know you.

ART

Then let's sit down. You can ask me anything. I'm an open book.

FADE OUT