

DEJA VU

by

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From a story by

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"If I'm mad, that
would explain it."

-- Kim Novak in Vertigo

EXT. COURTLAND HOME - DUSK (1956)

Well-dressed guests are filtering through the ornate iron-wrought gate leading to the Courtland home. Through the moss-draped oaks one can see the Doric columns of a stately turn-of-the-century New Orleans home. Not quite the Garden District, but an estimable place to live nonetheless. The iron fence surrounding the house is decorated with a byzantine combination of grape vine and corn stalk patterns.

The cars and dress of the guests indicates it is the middle Fifties.

ACROSS THE STREET in a blue panel truck reading "Kinder Catering Service" two men watch the guests pass through the Courtland gate.

Their names are FARBER and FERGUSEN and they do not appear to be your average caterers. Farber is a little older and sits behind the wheel. Ferguson, sitting next to him, is reading a copy of the May 7, 1956 New Orleans Times-Picayune.

INSERT from the financial page of the New Orleans Times-Picayune. A short one column story reads in part:

COURTLAND-SHORE TO
PURCHASE NEW PONCHARTRAIN

Two New Orleans businessmen, Michael Courtland and Robert Shore, co-owners of the Crescent City Insurance Company, 211 S. Picatell, will purchase the New Ponchartrain Estates for a reported \$200,000. Michael Courtland will hold the controlling interest.

Farber checks his watch and looks back at the Courtland home. The last of the guests are being welcomed at the front door.

Farber opens the cleanly-pressed white shirt of his neat catering uniform and pulls a .32 automatic out of his waistband. He checks to see if the loaded cylinder is in place--it is.

Farber looks toward Ferguson who sets down the paper and checks his own gun. Looking once more toward the Courtland home, Farber opens the van door and steps down.

CUT TO:

2

INT. COURTLAND LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Sequence opens with series of old COLOR SLIDES. The slides appear to have been taken sometime in the Forties (we learn later it was 1946). The photograph is strictly amateur and the stills have that pinked-out Kodachrome look.

CONVERSATION indicates these slides are being shown to a group of congenial, slightly intoxicated adults.

Slides show MICHAEL COURTLAND and his wife BETH in Italy ten years before.

SLIDE #1: EXT. SHOT of small Early Renaissance chapel in Florence. An U.S. Army jeep and 40's Italian car are parked on the street; bombed rubble can be seen in the distance. Two U.S. soldiers are walking near the jeep.

COURTLAND (O.S.)

Here's another view of the Church of Santa Trinita, where Beth and I first met...

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

(interrupting)

More churches! Is that all you ever did during the Occupation, Michael? How about some signorinas?

(laughter)

JANE (O.S.)

Please. Not our Cap!

COURTLAND

(trying to be serious)

I used to go to Florence on weekends...

SLIDE #2: Captain Michael Courtland, his uniform neatly pressed, stands on the steps of the Church of Santa Trinita. He looks about 22 years-old.

COURTLAND (O.S.)

(continuing)

And here I am again...

SHORE (O.S.)

(interrupting)

Didn't you ever take your uniform off, Court?

(laughter)

2 Cont.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
We're coming to that now.
(more laughter)

JANE (O.S.)
Oh, you were a handsome one
then, Cap.

STILL #3: Beth stands on a ladder in the Church sketching the Early Renaissance altarpiece of the Madonna and Child. She is very young, about seventeen or eighteen, and very beautiful. Although she is dressed casually in a pants and sweater, her look and posture identify her as a well-bred American Eastern girls' school student.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Beth.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
The Madonna! The Madonna herself!
I have seen the Madonna!
(laughter)

SHORE (O.S.)
How could you take advantage
of that sweet thing, Court?

COURTLAND (O.S.)
That's exactly where Beth was
standing when I first saw her.
Her class was in Florence on
an overseas Spring vacation.

There is a slightly embarrassed pause before Courtland triggers the next slide. We stare at Beth: she is beautiful.

SLIDE #4: A dark slide of Michael and Beth standing arm in arm in front of a small Italian restaurant. A red sign reading "RISSO'S" is highlighted above their heads. Below the sign, only Michael and Beth's dark outlines are distinguishable.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
What's that?

JANE (O.S.)
I can't see a thing.

2 Cont. (2)

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

It's all dark.

COURTLAND (O.S.)

Come on.

SHORE (O.S.)

(mock recognition)

Of course, it's our lovers.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Ta-da.

SLIDE #5: A hand-lettered slide reading: "And They Lived Happily Ever After."

LAUGHTER. LIGHTS GO UP. More LAUGHTER and APPLAUSE.

We see our cast of characters:

MICHAEL COURTLAND, now 32, runs a New Orleans insurance agency with his partner Robert Shore. Courtland is quiet, forceful, genial--a seeming pillar of strength. Yet there is something else to Courtland; his exterior is too solid and peaceful. There is also a sense of a deeply hidden instability, a weakness, though now well glossed over by a businesslike patina, still seeps through the corners of his mouth when he smiles. One senses that if he were pushed too hard--if he were forced to stare into a mirror too long--Michael Courtland would break down into tears and self-pity.

BETH COURTLAND, 28, is like the Madonna she once sketched: pure, distant, almost too good for this world. She really isn't these things, of course, but men find in her the symbol--the icon-- of the Beauty they aspire to, and she is content to let this be her role in life. She is the middle-class princess of whom Harold Brodkey wrote in another connection, "To see her in sunlight was to see Marxism die."

ROBERT SHORE, 35, Michael's business partner and closest friend. He seems more at ease than Michael, more gregarious and ambitious, and he and Michael have worked out a good business relationship.

JANE, Michael's secretary, 20, likes her boss only a little this side of idolatry. Her attractive openness is a perfect foil for Beth's distant beauty; and, although Michael can speak more easily with Jane, one knows his love is reserved for Beth.

2 Cont. (3)

The Courtland living room is spacious and well-planned. It is free of the kitsch and overdecoration which usually afflicts 19th Century homes. Instead, the room's decor and furnishings--mahogany floors, high ceilings, double doors, rosewood furniture--reflect the sensitivity of the people who live there.

Four or five other couples are in the room when the LIGHTS GO UP. They are all white, young, ambitious and upper middle-class: the chosen people of the Eisenhower era.

All the guests, of course, are dressed in the style of 1956.

The living room has been decorated for a party. A banner on one wall proclaims:

HAPPY 10TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY
MICHAEL AND BETH COURTLAND
1946-1956

A CHEER goes up from the room. Jane throws her arms around Michael and gives a congratulatory kiss to her boss. Michael is a little embarrassed, but exchanges the kiss. The other guests line up to either shake hands with or kiss Michael and Beth, depending on their sex and preference.

JANE
(to Michael)
Congratulations, Cap! Here's
to my favorite boss.
(kisses him)
May you have many more.

Michael smiles and thanks her. Jane warmly shakes Beth's hand and congratulates her. Robert Shore puts his arm around Michael's shoulder:

SHORE
Congratulations, Court. A
finer partner I'll never have.

Michael laughs and returns a similar compliment.

Shore steps toward Beth with the air of a supplicant approaching his shrine, and demurely places a kiss on her cheek. In fact, all the men at the party seize this occasion to kiss or embrace the beautiful Beth

2 Cont. (4)

Courtland. It is clear that the party guests regard Michael and Beth as the grown-up equivalent of the "class couple."

CAMERA PANS across Michael, Beth and their admirers to the steaming buffet of jambalaya and file gumbo which is being readied at the end of the room. Farber and Fergusen, neatly dressed in their white caterer's uniforms, are making the final preparations.

A dish accidentally slips from Farber's hand. There is a loud CLANG and Michael turns his head toward Farber. Michael and Farber's eyes meet and hold for a second in an almost prescient recognition.

A loud POP! comes from nearby. Farber and Fergusen instinctively turn their heads in the direction of the noise.

Bob Shore stands nearby holding an uncorked fizzling bottle of champagne. He holds up the bottle and two glasses as he steps toward Michael and Beth.

Farber and Fergusen's P.O.V.:

SHORE

I propose a toast. To Michael and Beth--this world's last Romantics. Happy anniversary and may they have many more!

(cheer)

And....and....

(room quiets down)

And to Michael and myself, soon to be owners of what will be New Orleans' finest development site, New Ponchartrain Estates!

(more cheers)

TWO MALE GUESTS walk in front of CAMERA and help themselves to some hors d'oeuvres on the buffet table. This is still from Farber and Fergusen's P.O.V.

MALE GUEST #1

(looking at Shore)

It's really killing the old boy. Bob would've given an arm and a leg to get control of that land. He wants to exploit it raw; Michael wants to make some "Community Park Development."

2 Cont. (5)

MALE GUEST #2

(looking at Beth)

Who cares about land? I'd like
to get an arm and a leg of that.

MALE GUEST #1

Private Property.

CAMERA returns to Robert Shore, who stands between Michael and Beth. JUDY, the Courtlands' thirtyish maid, stands in the background. A 78rpm RECORD PLAYER is playing softly in the b.g. Patti Page is singing dreamily about "Changing Partners."

Michael's eyes light up as he sees something in the doorway.

AMY COURTLAND, a sleepy-eyed girl about 9, stands in the doorway in her pajamas.

COURTLAND

Look who we woke up.

AMY

Mommy, daddy.

BETH

Come here, Amy.

Amy trots into her mother's arms. Together they do resemble Santa Trinita's Madonna and Child, or, rather, standard and miniature versions of the same Madonna.

Amy, now fully awake, wiggles to be set down. Beth carefully sets her on the floor and Amy reaches out and takes her father's hand. Some of the other couples are dancing to the Patti Page song.

AMY

(to Michael)

Dance with me, Daddy.

COURTLAND

Of course, sweetness.

Michael puts his arms softly on Amy's waist and does a step-by-step slow waltz with her. VOLUME of "Changing Partners" INCREASES.

CAMERA circles Michael and Amy COUNTERCLOCKWISE as they slowly turn CLOCKWISE.

2 Cont. (6)

TIME DISSOLVE in gradually SLOWING MOTION. Michael and Beth are now slowly dancing. The party is drawing to a close; dirtied dishes and glasses are scattered about the room.

Patti Page's soaring voice fills the SOUNDTRACK:

"So I'll keep changing partners until
you're in my arms and then,
Oh, my darling, I'll never change
partners again."

One couple stands in the doorway preparing to leave but Michael and Beth do not notice them. All their thoughts are directed toward themselves. In the b.g. Farber and Fergusen are cleaning up the buffet table.

TIME CUT: EXT. SHOT of Courtland home. Michael and Beth are standing in the doorway bidding their last guests goodnight.

INT. LIVING ROOM. Michael and Beth half-drunkenly drift back through the living room arm in arm. Out of sync, they SING softly to themselves:

"Oh, my darling, I'll never change
partners again."

They pass Farber and Fergusen as they go. Farber and Fergusen are stacking up the last of the plates.

CUT TO:

3

INT. BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Michael is sitting on the edge of the bed in his pajamas. The night of partying has taken its toll; he looks exhausted.

SOUNDS of Beth in adjoining bedroom. Michael speaks to her:

COURTLAND

Thank goodness Amy finally got
to sleep. I'm afraid she's go-
ing to be dead to the world
tomorrow.

3 Cont.

Me too. BETH (O.S.)

What, dear? COURTLAND

Nothing, Mike. BETH (O.S.)

What? COURTLAND

BETH (O.S.)
(a little louder)
Happy, Mike. I just said I
was very happy.

So am I. COURTLAND

Michael looks from side to side, nervously slapping his thighs as he waits for Beth to come out of the bathroom.

There is the SOUND of the bathroom door opening and Michael looks up:

Beth emerges from the bath. There she stands: Beauty, Purity, Sensuality--all that men like Michael aspire to. The soft light from the bathroom filters through her sheer blue nightgown. The faint outlines of her nipples stand out in the blue glow.

SOUND of bedsprings as Michael stands.

COURTLAND (O.S.)
God, Beth, I love you so.

SOUND of Amy crying in another room. Disappointment flashes across Beth's face.

BETH
Just a moment, Mike. I'll
check on Amy and be right back.

She exits.

CUT TO:

4 INT. AMY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Beth enters Amy's bedroom and reaches through the semi-darkness for the light switch.

BETH

(softly)

What's wrong, dear?

A black gloved hand clamps around Beth's mouth. Another black hand claps her wrist and wrenches it behind her back.

She attempts a MUFFLED CRY as she is dragged off.

CUT TO:

5 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Michael grows anxious:

COURTLAND

Beth? Darling?

He gets up and goes looking for Beth. She is not in the BATHROOM, not in the HALLWAY.

COURTLAND

Beth? Amy?

SOUND of catering van driving off.

Michael enters Amy's bedroom, flips on the LIGHTS, and finds the room in disarray.

A hand-lettered note lying on the sheets reads:

DO NOT CALL POLICE. BE IN YOUR
OFFICE WITH \$100,000 CASH TOMORROW
IF YOU WANT WIFE AND DAUGHTER
RETURNED IN SAFETY.

CUT TO:

6 INT. BAYOU HIDEOUT - MORNING

EXT. SHOT: The early morning sun falls on a small ranch-style house somewhere on the bayou.

INT. Beth and Amy, their hands tied behind their backs,

6 Cont.

sit on an old ratty sofa. They have been wrapped in blankets to cover their semi-nakedness.

The low-ceilinged room is cheaply furnished with furniture which looks like it was stolen from a succession of Quality Court motels. Chips of peeling paint fleck Beth and Amy's hair. "Romper Room" is silently playing on a 14" television set across the room, but no one is watching.

Ferguson sets an old fashioned tape recorder at Beth and Amy's feet and fiddles with the dials.

Farber, rubbing his freshly shaved cheeks, walks into the room. He wears an empty holster over his T-shirt.

FERGUSEN

You're a cool one, aren't you?

FARBER

No, but I don't worry unless I have to--and I don't have to. Shit, this is so easy it makes me feel dishonest just to think about it. Foolproof. 100%.

(a beat)

You about ready to go with that thing?

FERGUSEN

Godamn machines. You'd think we coulda bought a new one with all this money we're gonna make.

FARBER

Ready?

FERGUSEN

Yeah.

FARBER

All right, you hold the mike.

(to Beth and Amy)

Now peoples, Miss and Mrs. Courtland, we are going to send a message to your daddy and husband, a message so heartrending and pathetic, so chilling

(MORE)

6 Cont. (2)

FARBER (Cont.)

that Courtland will zip us that
money in a flash and we can all
go our separate ways.

(to Fergusen)

Turn it on.

Fergusen turns the tape recorder on and holds the microphone up to Amy and Beth. Neither say anything, but instead stare speechless, shaking with fear.

Through either calculation or impulse, Farber explodes with anger.

FARBER

Come on, kid! Talk, damn it!
Tell daddy how much you want
him to bring the money.

Farber stomps his boot down on Amy's bare foot--she SCREAMS and begins CRYING--and turns on Beth, slapping her 4-5 times in rapid succession.

With Amy crying in the b.g., Beth attempts to compose herself and speaks slowly into the microphone:

BETH

Darling, Mike. I'm trying to
be composed, but I think they
will kill us...

AMY

(crying)

Daddy, daddy, pay them. Please!
Daddy! They're hurting us!

FARBER

(under his breath)

That's good. That's real good.

Beth breaks down and begins to cry:

BETH

I love you, Mike. I love you.
Always remember that. I love
you.

FARBER

(to Fergusen)

That's enough. Shut it off.

6 Cont. (3)

Ferguson shuts off the recorder, puts it on the table and rewinds the tape.

Farber sits across the table writing out a note.

FARBER

(to Amy and Beth)

Jesus, that was good. I'd pay up myself, but I haven't got the money.

(a beat)

What are you two so sour about? You'll all be home safe and sound tonight.

FERGUSEN

What makes this thing so sure?

FARBER

Does the moon tell the sun when to get up? Of course, it's sure. The guy's got the loot. He'd cut off his nose before letting someone touch his princess.

(a beat)

I read it in the papers.

Farber stands up, puts the note and tape reel into a paper bag, checks his gun and holsters it, puts on his shirt and coat and prepares to leave.

FERGUSEN

You leaving now?

FARBER

(checking his watch)

Yeah, it's about that time.

CUT TO:

7

EXT. CONGO SQUARE - MORNING

Farber's 1955 black Ford Fairlane with continental kit stands in front of a phone booth near the historic old Congo Square in downtown New Orleans.

Farber is in the booth dialing.

CUT TO:

8

INT. COURTLAND OFFICE - MORNING

Michael Courtland sits at his desk staring straight ahead. On his desk is an open black briefcase with stacks and stacks of money in it.

The phone RINGS. He answers.

Michael listens without saying a word. As he listens, CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal room:

On the wall to Michael's right is a large frame re-touched color photo of Beth. Jane stands against a bookcase. Shore paces back and forth in the doorway.

After a short time Michael hangs up.

COURTLAND

We wait some more.

SHORE

What did they say?

COURTLAND

To have the \$100,000 ready and wait further instructions.

(looking at desk)

I've done that already.

JANE

Call the police, Cap.

COURTLAND

Not yet.

EXT. OFFICE CORRIDOR. A small hand reaches up and knocks on a door reading:

CRESCENT CITY INSURANCE

MICHAEL COURTLAND

ROBERT SHORE

Jane opens the door. Michael and Shore are standing behind her.

Jane's P.O.V.: a small boy stands with a crumbled paper bag in his hand.

BOY

I'm supposed to bring this to Mr. Courtland.

8 Cont.

Jane takes the bag from the boy and hands it to Michael. When Michael walks toward his office with the bag, the boy calls after him:

BOY

Sir? Mr. Courtland?

COURTLAND

(turning)

Yes?

BOY

The man said you'd give me a tip.

COURTLAND

Oh, sure.

Michael reaches into his pocket, pulls out a \$5 bill and hands it to the boy.

BOY

Five dollars! Gee thanks!
Schzaam!

Michael walks into his office as he opens the bag. Shore crouches in front of the boy.

SHORE

What did he look like?

BOY

Who?

SHORE

The man who told you to bring the bag here.

BOY

Just a man.

SHORE

Okay, let's start at the beginning. First, what is your name?

SOUND of Amy's crying VOICE comes from within Michael's office. Jane quickly steps into his office; Shore, holding tightly onto the boy, follows.

8 Cont. (2)

MICHAEL'S OFFICE. Michael flips off the tape recorder as Jane and Shore step into the room. He is holding Farber's hand-lettered note in one hand. He looks up at Jane:

COURTLAND

Call the cops. Tell them to
send plainclothesmen.

CUT TO:

9 INT. SHORE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Michael stands in front of a huge wooden display board in Shore's office. The board reads: "Proposed Plan for New Ponchartrain Community Park Development," and shows a street plan interspersed with parks and an artificial lake.

Shore sits behind his desk, swiveling back and forth.

COURTLAND

Well, I guess this is the end
of my dream.

(a beat)

There's no way we can postpone
the deal for a couple of days,
is there, Bob? I may be able
to recover the ransom money.

SHORE

You know I would do anything
for you, Court, but the option
expires in three days. After
that a hundred developers will
snap it up at any price.

COURTLAND

But you won't lose it will you,
Bob?

SHORE

Under our agreement I can find
smaller investors and gain con-
trolling interest through them.

COURTLAND

Yeah, but then you'll fill the
damn place up with tacky track
houses and 20 foot clearances.

9 Cont.

SHORE

It's my plan, Court. I never
complained about yours.

COURTLAND

(looking at board)

I know. I know. It's just so
hard to give up something
you've spent your life trying
to attain.

SHORE

It's a terrible situation.

COURTLAND

Jesus, stop me Bob! I can't
even think about this. I've
got to give the money to the
kidnappers.

SHORE

Put it out of your mind, Court.
You have no choice. It's
something you have to do. Some-
thing I would do. Something
any decent person would do.

Jane sticks her head into Shore's office:

JANE

Inspector Brie wants to see
you now, Cap.

CUT TO:

10

INT. OUTER OFFICE - MORNING

FBI Inspector AUGUST BRIE talks like he just walked out
of French detective fiction: suave, confident, Cartesian.
Maurice Chevalier playing Sherlock Holmes. The hand-
lettered ransom note hangs from his hand. An ASSISTANT
stands nearby.

The boy sits in a b.g. corner fingering his newly
acquired \$5 bill.

BRIE

It's an excruciating situation,
I guess I don't have to tell
(MORE)

10 Cont.

BRIE (Cont.)

you that. Preparing for the worst, hoping for the best. I been through this many times before and you can take comfort in the fact that, relatively speaking, we're in pretty good shape. I've seen many cases very similar to this and they've all ended with the successful return of the hostages and apprehension of the kidnappers. It's just a matter of intelligence and calm nerves. Just try to leave this as much as possible to the FBI. There's nothing you can really do.

COURTLAND

Money isn't the most important thing, Inspector.

BRIE

Of course it isn't. I don't like to see a hundred thousand dollars thrown in the nearest gutter, but if it would make your wife and daughter an iota safer, I would recommend it.

COURTLAND

I want to pay the money.

BRIE

That's the hell of it, Mr. Courtland. I think this is one of them damn cases where the presence of this much money would actually make your wife and daughter less safe. These men act very professionally; they're in it for the money. If they're pinned and there's no loot, they'll come clean. If they've got the money at hand we may have a very ugly fight on our hands..

COURTLAND

What do you suggest?

10 Cont. (2)

BRIE

Very simple. We've used this method before. Go through the entire drop as instructed. False money and a transmitter in the briefcase. We follow the pickup man by car and helicopter until he returns to the hostages or tries to reach a phone. Then we got him. Just leave it to us.

(a beat)

Well, what do you think, Mr. Courtland?

Michael looks at the New Ponchartrain display board in Shore's office, then at the \$100,000 stacked on his desk.

CUT TO:

11 EXT. MONEY DROP SEQUENCE - LATE AFTERNOON

Michael Courtland, neatly dressed, enters the NEW UNION STATION (it is only a year old at this time) carrying a black briefcase. It is late afternoon: commuter hour.

A POLICEMAN sitting before a radio receiver in a PANEL TRUCK picks up the signal from Michael's transmitter. He picks up a short-wave phone.

The 5:30 TRAIN, crowded with commuters, chugs out of the NEW UNION STATION.

INSPECTOR BRIE, driving in an unmarked car with an ASSISTANT, gets a short-wave call.

His briefcase on his lap, MICHAEL sits passively in a window seat. The TRAIN STEWARD, checking the seats, finds Michael and gives him a message.

HELICOPTER P.O.V.: TRAIN passes through the old plantation land and bayou country west of New Orleans on the line to Baton Rouge. SOUND of helicopter.

Michael expressionlessly watches the street and city signs roll lazily past his window. They have names like "La-Place," "LaSalle," and "Vacherie." Finally the one he has been waiting for appears: LEE'S CROSSING. Michael immediately stands up and moves toward the rear of the car.

11 Ccnt.

Michael stands at the REAR OF THE TRAIN studying his watch. The second hand ticks steadily toward the designated spot. Michael matter-of-factly throws the briefcase from the rear of the train and returns to the car.

FARBER'S P.O.V.: the TRAIN to Baton Rouge rolls past LEE'S CROSSING.

BRIE puts down his short-wave mike and speeds off.

FARBER'S BLACK FORD thumpity-thumps over the railroad ties toward the black briefcase. Reaching the drop spot, Farber gets out of the car, picks up the briefcase, throws it in the front seat and drives off.

HELICOPTER P.O.V.: FARBER'S FAIRLANE zooms down a lonely country road. FURTHER BACK, BRIE'S CAR, the POLICE VAN and two additional POLICE CARS can be seen following. They pass the Lee's Crossing drawbridge.

FARBER'S FAIRLANE pulls into the driveway of the BAYOU HIDEOUT. It is now DUSK and the last rays of sun catch the tree tops.

CUT TO:

12 INT. BAYOU HIDEOUT - DUSK

Farber walks into the hideout living room with the black briefcase.

Amy and Beth, unmoved since we saw them last, are seated on the sofa. Ferguson, a pistol on his lap, sits in an old padded chair watching the small silent TV tube. Some "Queen for a Day" has just had her every dream come true.

Farber sets the briefcase on the table and puts a cigarette in his mouth.

FARBER

(to Amy)

You should be happy, little girl. Your daddy came through with the money. Everything will be all right.

12 Cont.

AMY

(to Beth)

Oh, Mommy, Mommy, Daddy's
brought the money.

A THIRD MAN, tall and gaunt, walks into the living room. He nods to Farber and Ferguson and they, saying nothing, return his nod.

Farber breaks the briefcase open with a screwdriver as Ferguson and the third man watch on.

After a struggle, the briefcase pops open: there stacked neatly side by side are stacks of blank paper surrounding a radio transmitter.

Amy instantly realizes the significance of the blank paper. Her eyes bulge open and she SCREAMS. And SCREAMS.

AMY

Mommy! Mommy!

Farber grabs his pistol in anger and in one maniacal stroke slashes its butt across Amy and Beth's faces. Amy's head slumps on her mother's shoulder and blood gushes from Beth's cheek.

The third man reaches out to restrain Farber. All three kidnappers are stopped dead in their tracks by the SOUND of a BOOMING MEGAPHONE VOICE.

BRIE'S VOICE

The house is surrounded. The house is surrounded. Come out with your hands raised and you will not be harmed. Come out with your hands raised and you will not be harmed.

Farber whirls his pistol toward the unseen voice.

THIRD MAN

Act coolly now. Don't panic.

CUT TO:

13

EXT. BAYOU HIDEOUT - NIGHTFALL

Brie, a gun in one hand and a megaphone in the other,

13 Cont.

stands beside his car. Additional police cars and policemen are nearby. A helicopter hovers overhead.

Every eye is trained on the hideout. Brie is about to repeat his loudspeaker warning when he is interrupted by a policeman's VOICE:

POLICEMAN (O.S.)

There's movement! I see movement!

Dark undefinable shadows are moving in front of the bayou hideout.

BRIE

Light! Throw some more light out front!

A police searchlight passes across the hideout, overshoots the black Fairlane--there was movement!--and swoops back to the kidnappers' car. Several outlines can be seen crouched in the car. SOUND of car starting up.

FARBER'S VOICE calls out:

FARBER

Don't shoot, coppers, unless you want to see the lady and kid get it! I'll blow their fuggin heads off!

BRIE

Hold your fire! They've got the hostages with them.

Spitting gravel, the Fairlane whirls about and charges for the police line. In a flash of red lights and shooting sparks the Fairlane crashes through the police line and careens down the highway.

The police jump into their cars and, lurching and screeching their autos forward, pursue.

HELICOPTER P.O.V.: A jagged line of speeding lights moves down the dark country road. SIRENS fill the air.

HELICOPTER P.O.V PANS: Ahead of the trail of lights we can see the lights of a drawbridge, and, before it, the flashing red lights of a police roadblock.

13 Cont. (2)

AT LEE'S CROSSING DRAWBRIDGE. A POLICEMAN, standing near the blockade, gives instructions to the DRAWBRIDGE OPERATOR to raise the bridge.

The policeman looks up:

Speeding directly toward the blockade comes the kid-nappers' black Fairlane. The policemen scramble for safety.

The Fairlane crashes through the blockaded police cars, shooting sparks into the night air.

The Fairlane charges up the drawbridge ramp, intent on crossing the ever-widening gap.

HELICOPTER P.O.V.: The gap proves too wide, however: the Fairlane zooms over one side and is for a moment suspended in mid-air before it crashes into the far side and, exploding in a ball of flames, falls to the rapids below.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. TELEVISION BROADCAST - DAY

A local May 1956 New Orleans BLACK-AND-WHITE VIDEOTAPE television broadcast.

Broadcast emanates from the scene of the kidnapping disaster. Newsmen, policemen and other officials mill about the Lee's Crossing drawbridge. In the distance police officers are dragging the river.

In the crowd we recognize Inspector Brie, his Assistant and the drawbridge operator. Looking over the side of the bridge Jane, Michael and Shore stand arm in arm.

A NEWSCASTER stands before the camera, and in his familiarly neutral tone of voice lends objectivity to the whole scene:

NEWSCASTER

The wife and daughter of New Orleans businessman Michael Courtland were killed yesterday when a kidnap rescue attempt tragically backfired. According to the sketchy information

(MORE)

14 Cont.

NEWSCASTER (Cont.)

provided by police so far, Courtland paid the demanded ransom--reportedly \$100,000--but when the kidnappers refused to release the hostages, police located and closed in on their hideout near Lee's Crossing and the kidnappers, still holding Mrs. Courtland and her daughter hostage, escaped in a late model Ford. In the ensuing chase, the kidnappers' car attempted to cross the partially drawn bridge here at Lee's Crossing and fell to the rapids below.

Inspector Brie walks into the immediate background and the newscaster, seeing him, walks over and catches his attention:

NEWSCASTER

(continuing)

Here is FBI Inspector August Brie who is in charge of the case. What exactly happened here, Inspector?

Brie is too busy to talk but says a few obliging non-committal words:

BRIE

I can't divulge any information at this time. The police did all they could. It's just tragic, that's all, just tragic.
(excuses himself)

Newscaster motions to the cameraman and CAMERA PANS around to catch Michael standing in the distance. Jane and Robert Shore stand at his side, supporting him as he gazes down at the rapids below. He seems in shock.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

Standing by the bridge now is Michael Courtland, husband and father no more.

As the newscaster continues to speak, TV CAMERA slowly ZOOMS in on Michael, Jane and Shore. As the camera zooms, the B&W VIDEOTAPE slowly DISSOLVES into 35MM COLOR FILM footage.

14 Cont. (2)

Concurrent with the ZOOM-DISSOLVE, the NEWSCASTER'S VOICE slowly FADES, yielding to the LIVE SOUNDS from the drawbridge scene.

NEWSCASTER (O.S.)

The search for the bodies has been hindered by both the explosion of the auto on impact and the rapid current of the Vacherie River. Parts of several bodies have been found but final identification will await a laboratory investigation. Meanwhile, the search has gone on all night and will continue for several days, both here and down river as far as ten miles.

(voice FADES away)

CAMERA, now in standard 35mm color format, closes in on Michael, Jane and Shore.

Michael looks from side to side, then back at the foaming rapids. Were it not for the supporting arms of Jane and Shore, it appears as if he would slump to the floor of the bridge in a puddle of self-pity.

SHORE

You can't blame yourself, Court.
You did all you could. It's just one of those things.

JANE

Oh, Cap, Cap.
(puts her arm
around him)
Hold yourself together, Cap.
Stay together.

COURTLAND

I killed her. Their blood is on me. I wouldn't pay the money, now they're dead.
(a beat)
Now I will pay.

CUT TO:

15

EXT. NEW PONCHARTRAIN CRYPT SITE - DAY

A black funeral cortege is parked outside a large stone crypt on a grassy knoll. Uniformed chauffeurs stand expressionlessly beside their black limousines. A light drizzle is falling.

CAMERA PANS past crypt and cortege to the unkempt fields and forests surrounding it. There stands a large sign reading:

NEW PONCHARTRAIN
COMMUNITY PARK DEVELOPMENT

and over it another sign reading:

CLOSED!
PRIVATE PROPERTY
NO TRESPASSING

CUT TO:

16 EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY (1974)

The tall skyline of present-day New Orleans gleams in the mid-day sun. 1970's cars drive down the congested boulevards.

CUT TO:

17 INT. COURTLAND OFFICE - DAY

Sign on a modern office door reads:

CRESCENT CITY INSURANCE
MICHAEL COURTLAND
ROBERT SHORE

SOUND of VOICES and office activity comes from inside.

INSIDE Courtland's office, Michael Courtland, now 50 years old, is sitting in his comfortably furnished office. The lines etched into Michael's face have only made him look more attractive. He wears a fashionable--but still conservative--striped suit.

Jane, 38, stands against the far wall. Michael and Jane's relationship has grown with the years and they are now at ease with each other as much as any long-time husband and spouse. Jane, still attractive, has kept up with the fashion.

The furnishings in Michael's office show that he has prospered over the years, but is not a man of great wealth. On the wall behind him hangs the same retouched color photograph of Beth that hung in his former office eighteen years before.

Michael is playing distractedly with one of those expensive office game toys--the one where the player has to work a silver ball through an intricate wooden maze.

COURTLAND

(kidding)

So you really don't think I should go?

JANE

No, Cap, I don't. It's not healthy. You know how morose you can get when you're alone.

17 Cont.

COURTLAND

Now really, Janey.

JANE

It's true. You're just a sentimental old fool. You get half a chance...

COURTLAND

(not looking up
from his puzzle)

Whatever happened to those short skirts you used to wear?

JANE

They went out of fashion years ago. You get half a chance and you'll just sit wallowing around in self-pity like a lovesick teenager.

Looking up from his puzzle-toy, Michael cups his right hand under his left breast and says half-facetiously, half-seriously:

COURTLAND

No, Janey-o, not any more. Me old heart ain't nothing but a mass of scar tissue today.
(smiles)

There is a slight embarrassed pause.

COURTLAND

(continuing)

Besides, it's just a business trip. Bob needs me to go. He set up the meeting for the office and now he can't make it. Somebody will have to represent the office to save face.

JANE

It can be put off.

COURTLAND

Why bother?

(a beat)

Besides, I need the vacation.

17 Cont. (2)

JANE

But you've never been back to Florence in all this time and now you're going back alone. You'll just get to brooding and wandering around. You know Doctor Ellman always warns you about going too far into the past.

COURTLAND

That old Freudian?

JANE

Come on, Cap, he's your best friend.

COURTLAND

I have to go back some time.

(a beat)

I want to go back. I think it's about time.

(a beat)

Honestly, Janey, sometimes I think you and Doctor Ellman live more in the past than I do.

JANE

(resigned)

It's so tragic.

COURTLAND

Is it really, Jane? A man makes a mistake and spends his life paying for it, I don't find that particularly tragic. It's normal. If I had made a mistake which did harm to my own person, say if I had lost my legs...

(gestures)

or my eyes, I would naturally spend my life paying for it. Instead I made a mistake which cost me something much more dear than my body, and I have paid for it. That doesn't seem tragic, it seems just.

17 Cont. (3)

He returns to his puzzle-toy.

JANE

Well, just how much should a man pay for a woman?

COURTLAND

(half serious)

When I was a child and heard that VanGogh cut off his ear, it never occurred to me that that was an unseemly sacrifice for a man to make for a woman.

(smiles)

It was only later they told me no woman was worth it.

JANE

But you never believed it.

COURTLAND

Oh yes I did. That's the wonder of modern psychiatry. What you see before you now is a man not half, but whole.

JANE

(joking)

You're getting a little deep dish, now professor. The least you can do is get someone to go with you. An aide. Take the new boy in the office. He'd be flattered to death.

COURTLAND

Nah, Jane, he'd just be a tag-along.

(pause)

You take too good care of me, Janey-o.

JANE

Well, it isn't easy, Cap. It's like taking care of a wounded bear. You can never get close enough to help him.

COURTLAND

(kidding)

Now, now.

17 Cont. (4)

JANE

All right, Cap, I can take a hint.

Jane starts to return to her office.

COURTLAND

Can we continue this tomorrow,
Jane? Same time?
(both laugh)

CUT TO:

18 INT. SHORE'S OFFICE - DAY

Michael and Shore, now in his middle Fifties, have been conversing in Shore's office.

Shore sets out several files and sheaths of paper for Michael.

SHORE

Sorry to put you to all this trouble, Court, but I think it will pay off in the long run.
(pause)

Now here's all the papers and files you will need. I'm afraid this D'Annunzio fellow you'll be meeting with is a bit of a pig, but he's awfully important in Florence and can release a lot of Italian money for use in New Orleans. He's also susceptible to flattery.

COURTLAND

(ironic)

My forte.

SHORE

I can give you my stock book of flattering Italian phrases. That way it won't hurt so much when you tell him he's as wise as Caesar and as honest as the Pope.

COURTLAND

Ouch! It hurts already. Why didn't you tell me what you'd set me up for?

18 Cont.

SHORE

I thought you'd like a surprise.

(hesitant)

One other thing, Court. I'm
hesitant to mention it. I think
you know what it is.

COURTLAND

Yes. Gulf Oil will have their
annual acquisitions meeting
next week while I'm gone...

(Jane walks in)

Jane, come on in. I want to
talk with you in a moment.

Jane feels a little awkward but stays. For his part,
Michael wants to use her to extricate himself from the
unpleasant discussion he is about to get into.

SHORE

That's right, Court. You know,
I just think...

Michael interrupts Shore and speaks to Jane. He speaks
in a joking manner, but his intent is serious.

COURTLAND

(to Jane)

You know what this fellow's
problem is, Janey-o?

(puts his hand

on Shore's shoulder)

He wants to be rich. He's not
content to eke along on thirty
or forty thou a year, but he
wants to be a millionaire. An
oil millionaire at that!

JANE

(reprovingly)

Cap.

Shore shakes his shoulder free of Michael's hand. His
mood is more one of time-worn disappointment than real
anger.

SHORE

Okay, Court, if that's the way
you're going to be.

13 Cont. (2)

Shore walks out of the office. Michael and Jane wait for him to fully exit.

JANE

Honestly, Cap.

COURTLAND

Damn it, Jane. Now I've been best friends with that man, twenty, twenty-five--can it be twenty-five years?-- and he won't let that thing lie.

JANE

Well it is a million dollars for him.

COURTLAND

Probably more by now. Million and a half maybe.

(a beat)

Look, I know there's oil under the New Ponchartrain land and Gulf or any other company will make us all filthy rotten rich, but I just can't do it--now or ever. First it was tract houses now it's oil. But that's blood land. I paid for it with Beth and Amy's blood. When I built their crypt there I swore I would never see a condominium or a tract house on that land, and the same goes for oil wells.

Jane has heard this little speech many times before. She puts her hand on Michael's arm as if to calm him down.

JANE

I know, Cap. But don't be so hard on Bob.

COURTLAND

Am I being unreasonable?

This question's a stumper: Jane knows he's being unreasonable, but doesn't have the heart to tell him. How can she hope to reason with Michael's private, tormented logic?

18 Cont. (3)

JANE
(a beat)
How could I know?

CUT TO:

19 EXT. NEW ORLEANS - LATER AFTERNOON

Michael, driving his new brown Buick, passes the familiar landmarks of New Orleans as well as the new glass and steel high rises.

He pulls into the driveway of his home. The Courtland house is unchanged since the time when Beth was alive-- the same Doric columns, the same moss-draped oaks, the same wrought-iron gate.

Michael, briefcase in hand, opens the front gate and walks toward the front door.

CUT TO:

20 INT. COURTLAND HOME - LATE AFTERNOON/EVE/NIGHT

Judy, now in her late forties, greets Michael at the door as he walks in.

JUDY
Welcome home, Mr. Michael.

COURTLAND
Hello, Judy.

LATER THAT NIGHT: Judy removes Michael's dishes from the dining room table and brings him coffee. Michael says nothing, but instead is absorbed by the emptiness of the room.

LATE THAT NIGHT: Michael, dressed in his pajamas, sits on the edge of his bed thinking. He looks up toward the bathroom door as he did the last time he saw Beth. He turns around and crawls into bed.

CUT TO:

21

EXT./INT. NEW PONCHARTRAIN CRYPT - DAY

Michael's Buick pulls past the old faded sign reading "New Ponchartrain Community Park Development." In the distance is nothing but hills, marshes, trees and unrestricted natural life.

Michael pulls up the gravel drive leading to the carefully landscaped knoll on which the crypt stands. The crypt shows some weather stains but the word "Courtland" is still clearly legible across its facade.

Michael parks near the crypt and gets out of his car. In his hand he has a bouquet of fresh flowers.

He unlocks the crypt door and enters.

INSIDE THE CRYPT: Michael's footsteps ECHO as he steps lightly into the damp crypt. On the far wall two names are engraved into the stone:

BETH
1928-1956

AMY
1947-1956

Michael removes the three-day old flowers which are in the containers beneath the names. He splits his bouquet into two equal parts and places each into one of the floral containers.

Holding the old flowers in his hand, Michael gets on his haunches and rests a moment.

After a moment of silence, he exits.

OUTSIDE THE CRYPT: Michael closes the crypt door, locking it behind him. The wilted flowers still hang in his hand. He looks up and sees something:

Jane, dressed in a bright green suit, stands by her car at the bottom of the knoll. Her car, a light green Chevrolet, is parked alongside his.

Michael says nothing but slowly walks toward Jane. She walks up to meet him.

They say nothing to each other but instead walk side by side. Michael indicates by his walk that he is not ready yet to return to his car. They walk a small piece up the gravel road together.

Strolling side by side, Jane and Michael stare straight ahead, not seeming to acknowledge each other's presence.

21 Cont.

They have known each other so long they can almost read each other's thoughts.

After a long silence, Michael rubs his chin and speaks informally--as if he were casually remarking about the weather:

COURTLAND

You know, Janey, I've been thinking about what you were saying yesterday.

(a beat)

About this Italian trip and all.

(a beat)

I kind of think you were right.

(a beat)

I should take somebody with me.

(pause)

I was wondering if you could make it.

Jane, in sync with Michael's timing, looks up at him a moment before answering:

JANE

I think so, Cap.

COURTLAND

Good.

(a beat)

Good.

Jane takes his arm as they turn and walk back toward their cars. The wilted flowers still hang from Michael's right hand.

CUT TO:

22 EXT. MOISANT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY
A Pan Am flight departs.

CUT TO:

23 INT. CONGRESS CENTRE - DAY
EXT. SHOT: L.S. on the red tiled roofs of Florence.

23 Cont.

INT. MICHAEL and Jane walk the lobby of the Congress Centre, one of the few modernistic buildings in Florence.

JANE

(joking)

Ah, Signor D'Annunzio. Signor D'Annunzio.

Michael looks from side to side in mock shock and puts his fingers to his lips:

COURTLAND

Ssh. Ssh.
(both laugh)

CUT TO:

24 EXT. SIDEWALK RESTAURANT - NOON

Michael and Jane are sharing a litre of white wine at a small sidewalk cafe. On the street next to them tourists occasionally look up from the guide books to examine the art treasures which litter the city.

Jane is still poking fun at Michael's business meeting:

JANE

Signor D'Annunzio, sei saggio
come Cesare ed onesto come il
Papa!

(laughs)

I didn't know you knew Italian,
Cap.

COURTLAND

I don't. Bob lent me his little
black book of flattering phrases
in all languages.

There is a momentary pause in the conversation and Jane places her hand atop Michael's. Michael makes no immediate response and after an awkward moment Jane continues the conversation:

JANE

So what shall we do the rest
of the day?

24 Cont.

COURTLAND

Oh, I don't know. I thought
we'd just knock around Florence
the rest of the day.

JANE

Fantastic.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. CHURCH OF SANTA TRINITA - DAY

Michael and Jane, dressed in casual clothes, are walking down a street in central Florence. They have a map in hand and are checking out the historic spots as they go.

Michael looks up and they both stop dead in their tracks. Before them stands the Church of Santa Trinita, appearing just as it did in Michael's slides, unchanged since the day Michael met Beth, unchanged since the day it was built. (This, of course, can be any of the smaller out-of-the-main-tourist-thoroughfare churches in Florence.)

They both recognize the significance of this building.

JANE

I'll wait here if you like.

COURTLAND

Well, all right. I'm just going to go in for a moment and look around. For old time's sake.

Michael walks up the steps alone.

CUT TO:

26 INT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

Michael walks softly into the foyer and looks around. Some of the frescoes have been damaged and several young people are silently working on a restoration project.

Michael walks up to the information desk, deposits a contribution and picks up some literature.

26 Cont.

In the distance he can see a corner portion of the Madonna and Child altarpiece. Although the MUSIC is pushing him inexorably toward the altarpiece, Michael, attempting to be casual, examines all the iconographic paintings on the church walls as he makes his way toward the altarpiece.

Even before Michael reaches the altarpiece, we can see the lower portion of a ladder and a young girl's legs standing on it.

Filled with premonition and anticipation, Michael turns his face toward the Madonna and Child altarpiece. If he were any more saturated in memories he would vanish from the present tense.

Like us, Michael first sees the lower part of the ladder. Slowly he raises his eyes fully expecting to find another girl in the place where Beth first stood.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.: the CAMERA PANS up the ladder to reveal not a different girl but the resurrected image of his dead wife. Sure it's a different girl: her hair is darker, her eyes flashier, her posture altered, her looks clearly Italian--but it is the image of Beth. (The same actress plays both roles.) It is as if Beth were brought back to life as she looked eighteen years before. She is wearing a white frock.

Michael says nothing; he just stares. When the young Italian girl embarrassedly looks back at him, he apologetically smiles and walks out of the church.

CUT TO:

27

EXT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

Jane is waiting for Michael on the church steps as he exits.

Michael seems too shocked to say anything and they proceed down the street. Finally she asks:

JANE

How was it, Cap?

COURTLAND

Oh, you know, just another church. Nothing there any more.

27 Cont.

JANE

I knew if you went back it
wouldn't be the same at all.

They continue to walk down the street. Michael's
thoughts are elsewhere, however.

CUT TO:

28 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - EARLY EVENING

Michael and Jane are seated in the plushly-decorated
lobby of their hotel having a drink.

JANE

Think you're ready to head back
to the old U.S. of A. tomorrow,
Cap?

COURTLAND

Well, actually, Janey, I thought
we'd stick around Florence for
another day. There are a few
more things I'd like to see.

JANE

Sounds wonderful to me.

COURTLAND

To tell the truth, I've been
thinking about going back to
the Church of Santa Trinita--
but this time I'd like you to
come in with me.

Thinking this is an invitation to a closer relationship
rather than a set-up, Jane is flattered.

JANE

Anything you want, Cap.

COURTLAND

Yes. I'd appreciate it.

CUT TO:

29 INT. MICHAEL'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Michael sits alone in the semi-darkness of his hotel room. He is full of thoughts and memories.

He takes out his wallet and removes an old frayed photograph of Beth. He holds the photo like it were an ancient icon.

Examining the photograph closely, Michael sees that the resemblance he noticed in the church was no trick of memory but reality.

He returns the photo to his wallet and his wallet to his pocket. He clearly does not know what to make of it all.

CUT TO:

30 EXT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

Michael and Jane walk down the street and up the steps to Santa Trinita. Jane appears quite at ease, Michael much less so.

CUT TO:

31 INT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

The inside of the church appears as it did the day before: tourists, a guard, the information desk, the young restoration workers.

Looking at several frescoes before reaching the altarpiece, Jane attempts to be easy-going and light-hearted. Michael's heart, however, is in his throat as he cautiously awaits Jane's reaction to what she will find at the altarpiece.

JANE

(looking at
paintings)

Living in this city must be
like living in a mausoleum.
Pompeii without Vesuvius. The
permanent city of the past.

Michael says nothing, but gradually works his way toward the Madonna and Child. Behind him we can see that the same Italian girl is working on the altarpiece restoration.

31 Cont.

Michael and Jane stroll before the altarpiece. Jane is about to make a comment about the painting when she recognizes the Italian girl as the alter-image of Beth. She gasps:

JANE

Oh!

and hides her face behind Michael's back to conceal her shock. Michael is secretly pleased that Jane has recognized her too. Now he knows it was not an apparition or the trick of an old man's foolish mind.

P.O.V. SOMEONE AS YET NOT DETERMINED. Michael takes Jane by the arm and slowly escorts her from the church. This angle is shot in such a way that we know they are being watched by a third party.

As they exit, we see the third party: it is a young well-dressed Italian man.

CUT TO:

32

EXT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

Michael and Jane descend the church steps. Jane has regained her composure but does not immediately speak.

Finally she says:

JANE

It really doesn't look like her. Oh, there's a resemblance all right, but it really doesn't look like Beth at all.

Michael is silent--and silently happy. Neither of them believe what Jane is saying.

COURTLAND

No, I guess not.

(a beat)

Not at all.

CUT TO:

33

INT. FLORENCE AIRPORT - DAY

Michael and Jane are standing in front of the Air Italia boarding counter at the Florence Airport. Jane has her air travel bag in her hand and her suitcase by her side; Michael carries nothing.

JANE

You sure you want it this way, Cap?

COURTLAND

Yes. I just need a couple days to be alone. I'll be back in New Orleans by the weekend.

JANE

(tears come to her eyes)

Oh, Cap.

Michael puts his fatherly arms around her.

COURTLAND

Now, now, Janey. Don't be silly. Everything's all right.

JANE

You shouldn't...

COURTLAND

(interrupting)

I'm a grown man now, Jane. I can take care of myself.

She embraces and kisses him as if it would be the last time. They break the embrace and Jane wipes the moisture back from her eyes.

JANE

Well, enough teary farewells. I've got to catch my flight, so you take care of yourself now.

(a beat)

Promise?

COURTLAND

Promise.

Jane turns and walks into the boarding area. Michael watches her for a while, then turns and strides away not looking back again. He has other places to go.

CUT TO:

34 EXT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

CUT ON MOTION: Michael, wearing the same suit as in the previous scene, walks down the street leading to the Church of Santa Trinita.

The street is full of emptiness and foreboding, and Michael must walk it alone. This is for real now--he no longer has Jane's strength and perspective to lean on. He is alone with his past.

Measuring his footsteps, Michael slowly ascends the steps to the sanctuary. The MUSIC pushes him forward.

CUT TO:

35 INT. SANTA TRINITA _ DAY

This time Michael does not bother to look at the other frescoes but walks directly to the altarpiece.

CAMERA PANS over to and across altarpiece, as if fearful it will no longer find the same girl stationed there. But there, as before, is the ladder, and upon the ladder the young Italian girl dressed in a white frock working on the Madonna and Child.

Michael removes himself a short distance and stands and watches. The girl can feel him staring at her, but doesn't know what to do. So she keeps on working--and he keeps on staring.

Watching the girl, we can see the nature of the restoration work being done. A small portion of the painting has peeled away and underneath it is another painting--a cruder, less refined version of the original. The workers are painstakingly reconstructing the original from bits of fallen paint chips.

Michael continues to watch the young worker with that look every girl understands. Finally the girl--whose name is SANDRA--turns and acknowledges Michael's presence.

SANDRA

Buongiorno.

Michael moves closer to her.

COURTLAND

Buongiorno. Io non parlo
Italiano.

35 Cont.

Sandra speaks with a pronounced Italian accent:

SANDRA

That's all right. I speak English.

(a beat)

Are you American?

Sandra removes her bandanna and moves down the ladder several steps.

COURTLAND

Yes.

SANDRA

(gesturing)

You like the Madonna?

COURTLAND

Very much. I was struck by it the first time I came in here and have been back every day since.

(a beat)

I'm very interested in that painting.

(gestures toward
information desk)

It said in the brochure...

SANDRA

It was painted in 1423 by Gentile de Fabriano. Early Renaissance. Some people don't think much of it, but I like it. Like the coloring and shading especially. I used to come and watch it as a child. That was before the floods. It was much more beautiful then.

COURTLAND

You were born in Florence?

SANDRA

Yes. You would think I would get tired of all this history, but I don't.

35 Cont. (2)

COURTLAND

Are you a student?

SANDRA

You flatter me. I haven't been a student for many years. I was just a--how you say--shopgirl? But then two years ago I read about the restoration project and said, Sandra, the Madonna needs you. So I quit my dull job and now I am a...art historian!

(laughs)

COURTLAND

I can't think of any better work.

SANDRA

(looking around)

At least they don't holler and scream at you when you talk to strange men.

(smiles)

What do you do?

COURTLAND

I would be embarrassed to say now. It's very trivial. In fact, I was just thinking how actually unimportant it was.

There is a slight uneasy pause. Sandra is much more open and uninhibited than Beth ever was, but Michael has a tendency to be his same old brooding self. Sandra, seizing this awkward moment, makes as if she has to return to work.

Michael remembers he has not introduced himself:

COURTLAND

I'm sorry. My name is Michael.
Michael Courtland.

SANDRA

Happy to meet you. I'm Sandra.
(mocking him)
Sandra Portinari.

35 Cont. (3)

Michael must work to keep the conversation going--and for a middle-aged, out-of-practice man like Michael, it is work.

COURTLAND

(gesturing toward
altarpiece)

What are you doing?

SANDRA

Well, it's not really me. I'm
just a workman.

(draws closer to
painting)

You see, several years ago,
long after the floods, moisture
seeped into a portion of the
altarpiece and it began to peel...

C.U. of altarpiece small portion of painting which has
peeled away revealing an earlier, less beautiful draft
of the same Madonna.

SANDRA (O.S.)

(continuing)

...revealing an older painting
underneath it. Then all the
art scholars had to decide what
to do. Should they remove and
destroy a great painting by
Fabriano to uncover what appeared
to be a crude first draft under-
neath, or should they restore
the original, and never know for
sure what lies beneath it? When
Giotto's "St. Louis of Toulouse"
peeled in the chapel at Santa
Croce, workers found a truer,
more beautiful painting under-
neath, and discovered that the
first painting had only been an
imitation overlay by Bianchi, a
19th Century restorer.

(a beat)

What would you do?

Michael, looking at the altarpiece, thinks a while before
answering:

35 Cont. (4)

COURTLAND

I would restore the altarpiece as it stands. The earlier draft appears to be much less beautiful, and you should protect the beauty you have.

SANDRA

Good. That is what the scholars decided to do.

(pause)

Well, now you have a free lecture and you don't have to read the brochure.

Sandra begins to rescale the ladder to return to her work.

COURTLAND

Mind if I come to watch your work, Sandra?

SANDRA

It's "open to the public," so I guess that means you.

(a beat)

Besides, I like being watched.

COURTLAND

(pause)

Could we get together some time? For dinner?

SANDRA

(mock shock)

Signor, I thought it was the Italian men who picked up the American women.

COURTLAND

I have to repay you for my free lecture.

SANDRA

Well, dinner can be a pretty serious affair here.

COURTLAND

Lunch then. I know a very nice place near here.

35 Cont. (5)

SANDRA

All right, lunch.

(smiles; looks
at watch)I have to work another hour
and a half before I can go to
lunch, though.(gestures toward
altarpiece)

The Magi needs me.

COURTLAND

I'll wait.

Sandra puts her bandanna back on, rescales the ladder,
and returns to her task.Michael fixes his feet firmly into the floor and watches
her silently, steadfastly.CAMERA slowly TRACKS back from Michael through the church
and stops at the position where the Italian man stood
watching him the day before.

CUT TO:

36 INT. RISSO'S - NOON

EXT. SHOT of Risso's, the small restaurant that Michael
and Beth were standing in front of in the last slide of
the anniversary sequence.INSIDE, the restaurant is of contemporary Italian design:
clean, concise, tubular.Sitting in the lunch-hour crowd, Michael and Sandra are
having a light green salad, cheese and white wine lunch.

SANDRA

So you were in Florence before?

COURTLAND

Yes, a long time ago. I was
stationed near here during the
Occupation.

SANDRA

I wasn't even born then. But
those must have been horrible

(MORE)

36 Cont.

SANDRA (Cont.)

days. My mother told me often how hard times were then.

COURTLAND

You live with your mother?

SANDRA

Not any more. I have an apartment on the Ponte Vecchio. But I was raised by my mother. My father deserted us a long time ago.

COURTLAND

That's terrible. Almost unforgiveable.

SANDRA

I thought it was when I was a little girl, but I got over it.
(a beat)

What was Florence like during the Occupation?

COURTLAND

I'm afraid I'm not much of an authority on the Occupation. My mind was elsewhere.

(a beat)

I met my wife then.

SANDRA

So the plot thickens. Let us sit and tell sad tales of broken marriages. I thought you had a familiar melancholy look when you came into the church.

COURTLAND

No, Sandra, I didn't mean it that way. My wife died a long time ago. Twenty years.

SANDRA

I'm sorry, Michael. I didn't mean that. It's just that a single girl meets a lot of men--

(MORE)

36 Cont. (2)

SANDRA (Cont.)

mostly Americans--who want to tell her about their wives. It's not very flattering, you know.

(a beat)

What was she like?

COURTLAND

Beth?

(a beat)

She was like you in many ways--only not so beautiful. It's been so long ago I hardly remember what she looked like anymore.

SANDRA

Do you have a picture of her?

Michael thinks a moment and decides not to show Sandra the photo of her dead lookalike.

COURTLAND

No.

Sandra looks at her oversized watch and turns slightly as if to get her coat, but she stops mid-turn when she sees the Italian Man--whose name is FRANCO--watching her from another table.

SANDRA

Oh!

Michael's eyes follow hers until they reach Franco's. Michael and Franco's eyes meet and interlock for the briefest instant, as if each were trying to summon up the moment they had met before. Michael senses that he has seen Franco before, but doesn't know where or when. Michael has seen Franco before, of course, but he will never know where or when.

Franco is an oddly reflected image of Farber, the caterer and kidnapper. Perhaps the same actor plays both roles, perhaps two different actors share a mannerism or mode of dress. Their connection should not be direct or intentional, but instead coincidental or illusory. Farber/Franco is a Quiltesque character, a man who is as much an extension of Michael's guilt and paranoia as he is real. In another time and place, he will make yet another appearance.

36 Cont. (3)

FRANCO is a young, well-dressed handsome Italian man. Unlike the Italian stereotype, however, Franco seems shy and retiring.

COURTLAND

Who is that?

SANDRA

Oh, it is nothing. He is just someone I used to know. His name is Franco. My fiance. Now he follows me all the time.

COURTLAND

Your fiance?

SANDRA

Yes, we were going to be married, but I broke it off.

(a beat)

I changed my mind, you know? A girl can do that.

(a beat)

He used to write me sonnets.

COURTLAND

Why does he follow you?

SANDRA

He loves me very much. He used to come and watch me at the church. I could hardly work. It got so bad one day I asked the guard to make him leave.

(a beat)

Men are like that.

COURTLAND

Do you think he would harm you?

SANDRA

Oh no, nothing like that. It's just an irritation, you know. And now that I'm with you, I don't know what he'll do.

COURTLAND

Don't worry about it.

36 Cont. (4)

SANDRA
(starts to get up)
I really have to get back now.
(reaches for coat)

COURTLAND
Can we get together again?

SANDRA
I guess so. Sure.

COURTLAND
How about dinner?

SANDRA
When?

COURTLAND
Tonight.

Michael speaks with the clipped voice of a man possessed.
Sandra is taken aback by his intensity.

SANDRA
Tonight?

COURTLAND
Is that all right?

SANDRA
(looking at watch)
That's only five hours from
now.

COURTLAND
You'll have time to change.

SANDRA
Sure...okay...but...

COURTLAND
Good. It's a date.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. FLORENCE STREET AND PIAZZA - LATE NIGHT

Michael and Sandra, dressed in impeccable evening
clothes, are strolling down the street near Santa

37 Cont.

Trinita toward a distant piazza. RISSO'S sign can be seen in the distance.

The street is clean and quiet: romance is in the air.

SANDRA

You're very fond of that restaurant, aren't you?

COURTLAND

Oh, it's just another restaurant.

SANDRA

(pause)

That's where you met her, isn't it?

COURTLAND

Met who?

SANDRA

Beth.

COURTLAND

No.

(a beat)

We ate there, though.

(pause)

You know, don't you?

SANDRA

Know what?

COURTLAND

That I met her in the church.
In Santa Trinita. By the
Madonna and Child.

SANDRA

I sort of thought so.

Michael and Sandra walk slowly toward the fountain in the piazza. In the fountain stands one of those erotically contorted public statues that populate Florence.

After a long pause, Sandra speaks:

37 Cont. (2)

SANDRA

You were going to tell me what
Beth was like.

Michael has been giving a lot of thought to the resemblance of Sandra and Beth, and now he is ready to talk about it:

COURTLAND

Well, to begin with, the accent was different: that's obvious. Beth was very East Coast, but toward the end her accent was being cut into by a standard Southern accent. Her eyes were not quite as flashy as yours--I don't know exactly why. That could be just faulty memory. But her hair was darker, and she didn't wear it long on her shoulders like you do. Of course, the fashion was different then, and she wore it sort of up in the back.

(gestures)

She wore a little lipstick--light pink--and now that's out of style, too. She never did wear rouge, though. And when she laughed, she laughed just like you.

(a beat)

But I think the main thing--the main difference--was the walk. Your walk is 100% different from hers. Beth had the classic East Coast girls' school walk. She was very Bryn Mawr.

Michael steps back and looks at Sandra. Sandra is wearing a slinky white evening dress that fits tightly around the hips.

COURTLAND

I'll show you. Walk.

SANDRA

Huh?

37 Cont. (3)

COURTLAND

(gestures)

Just walk. Back and forth.

Sandra walks slowly away from Michael and slowly back.

COURTLAND

See! See there! That's very
Italian. You have a very
Italian walk.

SANDRA

Whatja expect?

COURTLAND

Now watch.

Michael walks up close behind Sandra and cups his hands
tightly around her buttocks so that he can steer the
slightest movement of her hips.

COURTLAND

Walk.

Michael urges her forward with his hands. Sandra slowly
walks around the fountain while Michael follows holding
her ass tightly, thereby steering her direction and
determining her gait.

COURTLAND

That's it. That's it.

(a beat)

You're getting it.

(a beat)

Right there. You got it.

That's a real Bryn Mawr walk.

Michael steps back and lets Sandra walk toward him demon-
strating her newly learned gait.

Sandra continues to walk toward Michael until she stands
directly before him. She takes one of his hands.

SANDRA

(sympathetically)

Michael.

COURTLAND

That's another thing. She
always called me "Mike."

CUT TO:

38

EXT. PONTE VECCHIO - LATE NIGHT

LATER THAT NIGHT: Michael and Sandra stand underneath the open arches of the Ponte Vecchio, Florence's oldest bridge. Built in 972, the Ponte Vecchio contains a long row of small shops on the first floor and apartments on the second and third.

The stucco facade of Vecchio shines white in the moonlight. Further down the Arno River, lights twinkle from successive bridges.

Sandra hesitates before the stairway leading to her second floor apartment.

SANDRA

Well, this is where I get off.

Michael hesitates, unwilling to leave her.

SANDRA

I'm a good Catholic girl, you know. I obey everything the Pope says. You know, about birth control and all.

COURTLAND

Can we get together tomorrow?

SANDRA

You forget, I've got a job to go to.

COURTLAND

In the evening?

SANDRA

Let's wait a couple days. Saturday. I'm free Saturday. We'll see some museums. We'll go to the Medici Tombs.

(pause)

Is that all right with you?

COURTLAND

Yes. I can make it. I'll be here.

SANDRA

About 11:00 o'clock?

38 Cont.

COURTLAND
I'll meet you here.

SANDRA
Fine.

There is an awkward moment as they say goodnight. Sandra's prepared to accept a goodnight kiss but Michael is afraid to offer one. Instead, he extends his hand in a shy, awkward way and she takes it.

COURTLAND
Goodnight, Sandra.

SANDRA
Buona notte, Mike.

They turn and go their separate ways.

CUT TO:

39 INT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

Sandra and another white-coated worker labor over the Madonna and Child altarpiece in Santa Trinita.

CAMERA TRACKS and PANS to reveal Michael standing at a distance watching them. CAMERA continues to TRACK, revealing Franco at a greater distance, watching Michael and Sandra.

Michael becomes aware that he is being watched. At first he pretends to ignore Franco, but, after a few uncomfortable moments, he looks back at Franco again and decides to go back and talk to him.

Michael walks up to Franco and motions for him to follow. They walk out of the sanctuary proper, but station themselves at such a position that they can keep an eye on Sandra in the distance.

Michael comes right to the point:

COURTLAND
Why don't you leave her alone,
Franco.

Franco speaks in broken English:

39 Cont.

FRANCO

Who?

COURTLAND

You know who, Franco: Sandra.
Why do you follow her?

FRANCO

Because she needs help. She
is very sick.

COURTLAND

Look, just because she gave
you the air...

FRANCO

Huh?

COURTLAND

Just because she jilted you,
doesn't want to marry you any-
more.

FRANCO

She doesn't know what she is
doing.

COURTLAND

She thinks she does. And so
do I.

FRANCO

She doesn't. And neither do
you, signor. She doesn't need
a father, a "sugar-papa," she
needs a husband.

COURTLAND

(growing angry)

Listen, Buddy. So you lost at
love. Why don't you just face
it instead of moon-calfing
around? There's plenty of other
fish in the sea. You've got
to take these things in stride.
Keep on living. Find another
girl.

FRANCO

You are a very hard man, signor.

39 Cont. (2)

COURTLAND

Life has a way of doing that.

Michael's voice has raised to an undesirable pitch and the guard walks over to quiet him. In the b.g. a few visitors turn their heads in Michael and Franco's direction, as do Sandra and her co-worker.

GUARD

Ssh, signor. Silenzio per piacere.

COURTLAND

Okay. Buono, buono.

Michael and Franco stare at each other a moment, each daring the other to renew the argument. Finally Michael turns and walks slowly away.

CUT TO:

40 INT. MEDICI CHAPEL - DAY

Michael and Sandra walk across the echoing marble interior of the New Sacristy in the Medici Chapels.

The Sacristy houses some of the most famous tombs in the West--those designed by Michelangelo for the Medicis in the 1520's. Against opposing walls, the nude figures of "Day," "Dusk," "Night," and "Dawn" lie languorously over the tombs. The quadrangular room is constructed of blue stone and marble and rises to an elaborate dome.

Michael and Sandra walk from sculpture to sculpture studying them silently. There are a few other tourists in the Sacristy but the room is not crowded (artistic license!).

Sandra walks up to one of the tombs and stares at the statue of Lorenzo which sits above the prone figures of Dusk and Dawn.

SANDRA

Toward the end of his life, the only patrons who could afford to employ Michelangelo were tyrants and popes.

CAMERA PANS to nude figures of Dawn and Dusk reclining at Lorenzo's feet.

40 Cont.

SANDRA (O.S.)

Some scholars say these figures on the Medici tombs were Michelangelo's revenge--the expression of his despair over the rise of the Medicis.

Sandra looks around the tombs:

SANDRA

(continuing)

The Medici rule finally ended because of its extreme effeminacy. The last Medicis had an almost pathological aversion to women--distaste to the degree they could not, or would not, propagate themselves.

Sandra's mood darkens. She draws close to the reclining nude female figure of Dawn and looks into her contorted, pain-filled face. Sandra lightly touches the statue's knee, as if to make some human contact with the stone. Sandra's head is at the level of Dawn's naked thighs.

SANDRA

Sometimes when I come here I think I've lived before.

COURTLAND

You have.

SANDRA

Is that true?

COURTLAND

Yes, you've lived here...

(gestures)

in my heart.

(smiles)

SANDRA

(joking)

Is that all?

Michael and Sandra walk away from Lorenzo's tomb toward the exit, passing a group of photo-snapping tourists as they go.

40 Cont. (2)

SANDRA

You still love her, don't you?
(a beat)

Beth, I mean. That's why you
love me.

COURTLAND

Is that so bad?

SANDRA

It would be nicer if you loved
a girl for her own sake, Mike.

COURTLAND

I do.

SANDRA

(pause)

How did she die?

Michael thinks a moment, then turns toward Sandra:

COURTLAND

I killed her.

CUT TO:

41

EXT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

ANOTHER DAY: Michael and Sandra, still dressed casually,
are wearing different clothes.

Michael poses on the church steps; Sandra, Nikomat in
hand, prepares to take his picture.

SANDRA'S P.O.V. through VIEWFINDER: Michael is appropri-
ately framed. CLICK--and Michael is momentarily caught
in a FREEZE FRAME.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V. through VIEWFINDER: Sandra now poses on
the church steps. The viewfinder image is slightly out
of focus and Michael's hand turns the lens, drawing the
image into FOCUS.

CLICK: now Sandra is caught in the viewfinder FREEZE FRAME,
but as the image holds momentarily we see what Michael
sees--Franco stands in the shadow watching both the photo-
grapher and his subject.

CUT TO:

42 INT. BADIA CHURCH - DAY

ANOTHER DAY: the dank sanctuary of the Badia Fiorentina Church (10th C) is deserted and in disrepair.

Sandra leads Michael down the central aisle. They both seem very much at ease.

The interior of the church is built on a Greek cross design and down the nave run two rows of plain wooden benches. The high stone walls contain the remnants of paintings and frescoes drawn and altered over the centuries.

Sandra is in a cheerful, pranksterish, seductive mood. She wears a pristine white school-girl dress with yellow trim. To the extent possible, we can already notice that Sandra is taking on the qualities of Beth, such as the famed "Bryn Mawr" walk.

Sandra jumps a few steps ahead of Michael, turns and, reciting poetry, says playfully:

SANDRA

Voi non doveste mai, se non per
morte,
La vostra donna, ch'e morta,
obliare
Cosi dice 'l meo core, e poi
sospira.

Michael thinks she is playing a joke on him:

COURTLAND

What is that? One of your
fiance's sonnets?

SANDRA

No, it isn't, philistine. That's
Dante:

This time she recites with a deeper, almost eerie feeling:

SANDRA

(continuing)

While life endures you should
not ever be,
Inconstant to your lady who in
death doth lie,
So speaks my heart, and afterwards
doth sigh.

42 Cont.

Sandra smiles coyly; she has not selected these particular lines from La Vita Nuova without a purpose.

SANDRA

(continuing)

This is the church where Dante came to watch Beatrice. The lady Beatrice--"la bella donna"-- would sit here with her father.

(gestures)

And there, over there the young Dante, twenty-three years old, would sit and watch Beatrice.

(gestures)

And here, in between, sat the Lady of the Screen, a lady Dante pretended to love so that Beatrice would not be embarrassed by his continual gaze.

Sandra opens her arms playfully to Michael as if offering herself as the Lady of the Screen.

Michael stands stunned, devastated--and thoroughly seduced. He wishes to run up to Sandra, sweep her into his arms and carry her away to some fairy-tale castle.

CUT TO:

43

EXT. PIAZZA DELLA SIGNORIA - DAY

SAME DAY: Michael and Sandra stroll out of the Palazzo Vecchio and across the Piazza Della Signoria.

This is Florence's most famous piazza and the heart of the Old Centre. It is bordered on one side by the Palazzo Vecchio (13th C) and on another by the Loggia of the Signoria.

The Loggia is an open-air museum, three broad arches under which stand many of the most famous sculptures in Florence: "Perseus," "The Rape of the Sabine Women," "Menelaus Supporting the Body of Patroclus," and so forth.

The piazza is crowded with the tourists of all nations. Michael, holding Sandra's arm gently, works his way toward the Loggia.

43 Cont.

COURTLAND

Two weeks ago I wouldn't have believed I would soon be an expert on the art history of Florence.

FRANCO'S P.O.V.: Michael and Sandra walk slowly across the piazza, often pausing to look at the statues and buildings. CAMERA pulls back to give us an ANGLE ON FRANCO.

CUT BACK to Michael and Sandra:

COURTLAND

They say Florence is the city of love.

SANDRA

No, that's Venice.

COURTLAND

Venice? I always thought it was Florence.

SANDRA

No, it's Venice. Cause of the canals. Which stink even worse than the Arno.

COURTLAND

Spoken like a Florentine.

Sandra looks at the Loggia de la Signoria and emits an abbreviated gasp! Michael's eyes follow hers and see Franco standing under the arches watching them.

COURTLAND

Excuse me a moment.

SANDRA

(holding his arm)

No, please, don't.

COURTLAND

I'll just be a second.

Michael walks across the piazza toward Franco. Michael takes Franco by the arm and walks slowly with him across

43 Cont. (2)

the front of the arches. In the b.g. the gigantic classic figures of Cellini, Fedi and the early Greeks are engaged in various heroic actions.

COURTLAND

I thought I told you to leave Sandra alone, Franco.

FRANCO

What you say makes no difference to me.

COURTLAND

It should.

FRANCO

I am only interested in Sandra's welfare.

COURTLAND

I think I've heard this conversation before.

FRANCO

You can't stop me. All you Americans think you are tough guys. Walking on the moon. Pushing people around.

Franco pauses, changes tack, and puts his arm on Michael's shoulder in a false gesture of intimacy:

FRANCO

(continuing)

Listen, signor, listen for your own sake. Sandra is no good. She only wants your money. She'll pretend to love you, do anything so she can get your money.

Michael pushes Franco's hands away and grabs him by the collar:

COURTLAND

(growing angry)

Listen yourself, you godamn Italian...

43 Cont. (3)

FRANCO

You can't hurt me.

Michael pushes Franco against the base of Cellini's "Perseus," a thirty foot bronze statue of the naked Perseus holding up the severed head of Medusa while her grotesque body lies at his feet.

COURTLAND

You don't think so, huh? You don't think so?

Michael's temper flares and he throttles the hapless Franco, batting his head against the base of the statue. Michael normally keeps his instability under strict control, but in moments like this one can see how close to the surface it actually is.

FRANCO

(calling out)

Aiuta mi! Aiuta mi!

COURTLAND

Are you going to leave her alone, Franco? Leave her alone!

Franco, having no choice, quickly agrees:

FRANCO

Si, si.

Several tourists, hearing Franco's pleas, walk over to see if they can be of assistance.

Michael releases Franco before the others can stop him. Not bothering to explain his actions, he walks quickly back toward Sandra. Although his face is flushed with excitement, he wears a secret smile, for he has done battle for his lady fair.

CUT TO:

44

INT. SANDRA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sandra, wearing her silky white evening dress, is lying back on her sofa in her half-darkened Ponte Vecchio apartment. Michael, wearing a tuxedo, sits at her feet. The sofa is of contemporary Italian design, as is the rest of the apartment.

44 Cont.

Out the window behind Michael the lights of Florence
twinkle across the Arno. Michael's wallet rests on the
coffee table.

COURTLAND

If your mother is everything
you say she is, I'm really
looking forward to meeting her.

We notice that Sandra's accent has become less pronounced:

SANDRA

She's quite some woman, Mike.
She thinks you must be somebody
very important. A senator may-
be, or a gangster. She thinks
all Americans are gangsters.

COURTLAND

Americans think it's just the
other way around. I'll really
have to impress her.

(does imitation of
Brando's Godfather)

Missus Portinari. Ida likea
very much fora your daughter
to bea my wife. I'ma gooda
solid businessaman...

(a beat)

ina jukeabox industry.

SANDRA

(laughs)

Then she would know you were
an American! Maybe you shouldn't
meet her.

COURTLAND

But I'm going to have to meet
her.

SANDRA

Why?

COURTLAND

How else am I going to ask for
her daughter's hand?

SANDRA

You're still kidding.

44 Cont. (2)

COURTLAND
I was never kidding.

SANDRA
But, Mike...

COURTLAND
(joking; puts his
hand on her)
I wouldn't want to make you do
anything that would make the
Pope blush.

Sandra sits up. Michael remains at her feet.

COURTLAND
(more serious)
I have to go back to New Orleans.
I've been away from my business
two weeks. And I don't want to
go back alone.

SANDRA
What's the rush?

COURTLAND
There's no rush. It's just that
if it is the right thing to do,
then we should do it. And I
think it is the right thing.

SANDRA
Can't we stay here?

COURTLAND
We can. But I think you should
get away. It's not good for
you to be living in the past,
having Franco following you
around all the time.

SANDRA
I don't know, Mike...

COURTLAND
You'll never find a heart as
true as mine.

SANDRA
(smiles)
I know that.

44 Cont. (3)

COURTLAND

Everything is ready in New Orleans. I've got a grand old home just lonely for someone to take care of it.

SANDRA

I'll have to have time to think about it, darling.

COURTLAND

I don't want to pressure you.

Michael nervously stands up and walks toward the kitchen where several bottles of liquor and mixer stand on a lighted counter.

IN THE KITCHEN, Michael pours himself a drink.

COURTLAND

Want another, dear?

Sandra is looking down at Michael's wallet which sits on the coffee table.

SANDRA

(distracted)

What?

(a beat)

Oh sure, of course.

Sandra picks up the wallet and opens it slowly.

SANDRA

I'd like about five days to think about it. Can you wait that long? Do you have that much time?

Almost afraid of what she will see, Sandra opens the wallet and turns to the photo section.

C.U.: wallet. Sandra passes a photo of Amy, and then-- as the MUSIC CRESCENDOS--stares at the 18 year old frayed photograph of herself in the image of the dead Beth.

COURTLAND (O.S.)

I have all the time in the world.

CUT TO:

45

INT. SHORE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jane is swiveling nervously back and forth in Robert Shore's leather desk chair. Shore stands against a nearby book shelf with a telegram dangling from his right hand.

SHORE

No matter how many times I read it, Jane, it still says the same thing: "HOLD ST. LOUIS CATHEDRAL FOR MAY 2ND. BREAK OUT THE CHAMPAGNE. AM RETURNING TUES THE 19TH FOR CHURCH WEDDING. LOVE, MICHAEL."

JANE

Poor Cap. Poor, poor Cap.
He's a goner now.

(pause)

I'll tell you, Bob, if I hadn't seen her with my own eyes I would have never believed it. It was like Beth crawled out of her grave after eighteen years, unchanged, unaged. The resemblance is uncanny.

(gestures toward
telegram)

You'll see for yourself soon enough.

SHORE

Do you think she's a golddigger?

JANE

I don't know what she is.

SHORE

Maybe if we called Dr. Ellman he could do something.

JANE

What good could he do? He lives in 1974.

(a beat)

Michael lives in 1956.

CUT TO:

46 INT. COURTLAND'S OFFICE - DAY

Jane walks into Michael's office and stands silently staring at the framed old color photograph of Beth hanging on the wall.

CAMERA CLOSES on C.U. of photo.

CUT TO:

47 EXT. MOISANT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

A Pan Am flight lands in New Orleans.

CUT TO:

48 EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

Michael's brown Buick drives past some familiar New Orleans landmarks. Sandra is riding in the front seat.

The Buick pulls into the driveway of the COURTLAND HOME. Michael opens the car door for Sandra, and, carrying her bags, walks her to the front door.

Standing on the door steps, he unlocks the door.

CUT TO:

49 INT. COURTLAND HOME - DAY

Michael sets down Sandra's bag and closes the door behind him. Sandra surveys the living room.

Judy's voice calls out from another room:

JUDY'S VOICE

Hello! Hello! Is someone there?

COURTLAND

(calling back)

It's me, Judy. I'm back.

Judy rushes into the room and enthusiastically welcomes Michael home.

JUDY

Ah, Mr. Michael, Mr. Michael.

49 Cont.

Judy stops dead in her tracks when she sees Sandra, staring at her as if she were seeing a ghost.

COURTLAND

Judy, this is Sandra. I wrote you she would be coming. We'll be married soon.

(a beat)

Sandra, this is Judy, a life-long part of this house.

Judy overcomes her initial shock, smiles and extends her hand:

JUDY

Welcome, Miss Sandra. Michael wrote much about you.

Sandra accepts Judy's hand.

SANDRA

Thank you, Judy.

Judy offers to take Sandra's coat:

JUDY

Let me help you, Miss Sandra. I always thought Mr. Michael had very good taste.

CUT TO:

50 INT. COURTLAND OFFICE - DAY

Michael and Robert Shore are having a catch-up conference in Michael's office. Stacks of neatly labeled files set on Michael's desk.

SHORE

This D'Annunzio Florence deal has really come a cropper, Court. Looks like the old goat will invest some money with us.

(a beat)

You really did well for yourself in Florence.

(smiles)

50 Cont.

COURTLAND

(not smiling)

Yeah...well, Bob, I don't know how much of this I'm really going to be able to handle.

(surveys work on his desk)

I sure would like it if you would hang on a little longer, if you could. I'm busy with these wedding plans and all right now. So if you could keep track of some of this work, I'd appreciate it. I'm going to lay low for a while...until this is all straightened out.

Shore tries to be genial, but his displeasure with this turn of events shows. ✓

SHORE

Well...can do, Court. Can do. That's what a partner's for, I guess.

(a beat)

So when do we get to see the new Mrs. Courtland?

COURTLAND

Not yet. I'm holding that for a surprise. You'll all be at the wedding though. It's going to be a nice big church wedding. This is the start of a new life for me, Bob--"la vita nuova."

SHORE

(hesitant)

I know this is none of my business, Court, but don't you think this is all a little hasty, a little premature?

COURTLAND

(smiling but cold)

You're right, Bob. This is none of your business.

50 Cont. (2)

SHORE

(backtracking)

Well, business is business and
personal life is personal life.
I never have tried to inter-
fere with your personal life,
Court.

Jane walks into the office with a manila folder.

COURTLAND

I know that, Bob, and I appre-
ciate it.

Michael is obviously of no mood to continue this con-
versation. There is an awkward silence.

SHORE

(awkward)

Well, I'll get back to this
Florence material. Talk to
you later.

Shore exits. Jane, looking back at Shore, walks toward
Michael.

JANE

(joking)

Looks like I might end up run-
ning this office myself.

(a beat)

Here's the rest of that Florence
file, Cap. You'll have to go
through it and see if everything's
in order.

She hands him the file; he opens it. Michael's defensive
tone indicates he has lost his true defensive mechanism,
his sense of humor. Jane doesn't realize this yet--but
she will soon enough.

COURTLAND

Have you checked with St. Louis'
yet?

JANE

I talked with Father Ainse.
It's going to take some doing,
but I think it can be arranged.

50 Cont. (3)

COURTLAND

Good.

(apologetic)

Look, Janey-o, about Florence.
I'm sorry. I really am. I
just don't know what to say.

JANE

Don't say anything. It's better that way.

COURTLAND

But I...

JANE

You don't have to, Cap. You
know I'll always stand by you
no matter what happens.

Her voice, however, lacks the conviction it would have had three weeks before.

Michael returns to the Florence file, where, after a moment, he notices something unusual. Jane watches him closely.

COURTLAND

What's this.

Michael pulls one of those "humorous" greeting cards from the folder.

COURTLAND

(touched)

A card. Janey, how nice of you.

Michael holds the card. C.U. card: the front shows an imitation renaissance painting of a Madonnaesque beauty. It reads:

CONGRATULATIONS!

On your WEDDING

You have chosen the most
beautiful girl in the world...

Michael opens the card. Inside is a picture of the same Madonna, wearing a dirty apron, her hair in curlers, her makeup askew, a steaming iron in one hand and a caterwauling child in the other--all in a rather poorly drawn parody of the Madonna and Child.

50 Cont. (4)

The legend inside the card reads:

Now you have to
LIVE with HER!

And underneath that is hand-written:

I think I'll take up art restoration,
Love, Janey

Michael's mood suddenly sours.

COURTLAND
This isn't funny, Jane.

Jane is absolutely flabbergasted by his reaction.

JANE
(astonished)
Cap?

COURTLAND
(staring at card)
This isn't funny at all.

Jane is too crushed to react. She rushes from the room to hide her grief.

Michael folds the greeting card in half and drops it in the waste basket.

CUT TO:

51 INT. COURTLAND HOME - DAY

Sandra, wearing jeans and a sweater, is exploring the interior of her new home. She goes from room to room, inspecting them with an almost morbid curiosity.

She examines AMY'S BEDROOM (just as it was the day Amy died), Michael's home OFFICE, JUDY'S ROOM and so forth.

When she finds a locked door UPSTAIRS, Sandra goes in search of Judy.

Sandra finds Judy working in the KITCHEN.

SANDRA
Judy?

51 Cont.

JUDY

Yes, Miss Sandra.

SANDRA

There's a locked room upstairs.
What's in it?

This is a good as time as any to notice that Sandra is gradually losing her Italian accent.

JUDY

That's Mr. Michael's room.

SANDRA

But what is it?

JUDY

(evasive)

I don't know, Miss Sandra. I
don't clean it anymore.

SANDRA

Would you open it for me?

JUDY

I don't have the key. Mr.
Michael keeps it.

SANDRA

(insistent)

Where?

JUDY

(relenting)

Well, I guess it's all right.
Mr. Michael keeps the key in
his desk.

(a beat)

I think--but don't tell him I
told you so.

SANDRA

Thanks, Judy. Don't worry,
I'll put it back.

CUT: Sandra, key in hand, walks down the carpeted CORRIDOR toward the locked room.

Sandra unlocks the door and walks cautiously in.

51 Cont. (2)

The opening door reveals a long, musty WALK-IN CLOSET. The small room is cluttered with chests, shoe boxes bulging with papers, racks of clothes and other memorabilia.

Sandra picks up a banner which reads:

HAPPY 10TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY
MICHAEL AND BETH COURTLAND
1946-1956

Sandra looks through the clothes rack. She finds Michael's old Army Captain's uniform, an old tuxedo, the dress Beth wore on her 10th anniversary and other assorted suits and dresses.

Opening an old wooden chest, Sandra finds various family odds and ends. She holds up a pair of Beth's earrings like they were the treasured relics of a lost era. She also finds a series of clippings, a box of stills marked "Florence, 1946," a marriage certificate and Amy's old school notebooks.

From the bottom of the chest Sandra pulls out a worn, battered diary. She gingerly opens the cardboard cover. On the first yellowed page the following words are printed with a legible hand:

MY DIARY
BETH COURTLAND

Sandra pages through the diary and begins to read.

As Sandra reads we hear Beth's voice in VOICE OVER, reading various diary entries. Beth's voice, of course, is very similar to Sandra's, except it is totally free of the lingering Italian accent Sandra still has.

BETH (V.O.)
February 14, 1949. I think the days in Florence will be the happiest I will ever have. New Orleans is a nice town and Mike is very nice to me, but it is all so different now. He is busy at work all day and night and Amy demands so much of my time. Sometimes I wonder if Mike loves me as much as his business. I wonder if he would do as much
(MORE)

51 Cont. (3)

BETH (V.O.)
for me as he would do for the
insurance company.

September 22, 1953. Amy's
sixth birthday. Amy's getting
to be quite a little woman.
In many ways she's as smart as
her father. I ran into Miss
La Place and she said Amy's
always first in the class with
the answers. Mike was at Amy's
party, but he was so stiff and
over-cautious it wasn't much
fun. I finally had to send him
to the store. The party's worn
me out so write more tomorrow.

Sandra turns to the last entry in the diary:

BETH (V.O.)
(continuing)
May 6, 1956. I don't know why
Michael has to make such a
fuss about this 10th wedding
anniversary. I'd rather just
have a quiet dinner, but he
feels he has to do something
"really special" for me...

Sandra stands up and stares into an old mirror hanging
in the closet. She examines her face in the mirror and
pulls her hair back the way Beth's was done.

BETH (V.O.)
(continuing)
I don't know why I always com-
plain. My life is good and
Mike loves me. And I do love
him so.

CUT: Sandra walks back in the KITCHEN with the key in
her hand. Judy turns at the sound of her footsteps.

SANDRA
Thank you, Judy. I'll put the
key back now.

Judy nods.

51 Cont. (4)

SANDRA

Judy?

JUDY

Yes, Miss Sandra.

SANDRA

Tell me about Beth.

CLOSE on Sandra's face.

CUT TO:

52 EXT. AUDUBON PARK - DAY

A SUNDAY AFTERNOON. Michael and Sandra, wearing casual clothes, sit on a bench in Audubon Park in downtown New Orleans.

Audubon Park, part of City Park, contains a zoo and a rotunda surrounded by a reflecting pool. Michael and Sandra sit by the pool and look across the water.

Michael throws a pebble into the pool. Sandra looks more and more like Beth every day.

COURTLAND

Everything is set for the 19th.
Father Ainse says it will be
okay.

SANDRA

Don't you think it will be
awfully hectic, Mike? Two hun-
dred guests is an awfully lot
of people. I mean, we don't
need all that. Just a small
ceremony would be fine.

COURTLAND

No, darling. This is a very
big day for you. I want every-
thing to be just right. Very
special.

SANDRA

If you say so.

52 Cont.

CAMERA holds on the scene for a moment. Young couples play frisbee in the distance.

CUT TO:

53 EXT. OFFICE BLDG. - MORNING

Michael's Buick pulls into the parking garage of his office building.

INT. Michael walks down CORRIDOR and enters his outer office.

OUTER OFFICE: he is greeted by the secretary.

CUT TO:

54 INT. COURTLAND'S OFFICE - MORNING

Michael walks into his office and finds DR. ELLMAN waiting for him.

DR. ELLMAN is a fiftyish psychiatrist, looking more like a bank president than a shrink.

DR. ELLMAN
(extending his hand)
Hello, Court.

COURTLAND
(surprised)
What are you doing here?

ELLMAN
This was the only way I could get in touch with you. You're a very hard man to get a hold of.

COURTLAND
What do you want?

ELLMAN
I thought we might just sit down for a while and have a personal talk. Purely a social visit.

54 Cont.

COURTLAND

How come psychiatrists are
never good liars, Charlie?

Michael steps in the doorway and calls across the
office:

COURTLAND

Bob! Janey! Come here!

The startled office employees look up as Shore and Jane
hurry over to Michael's office.

COURTLAND

(to Shore and Jane)

Did you ask Dr. Ellman to come
here?

JANE

Well, he called and wanted to
know how you were, and I didn't
see any harm...

COURTLAND

That's just peachy. You "didn't
see any harm"...

ELLMAN

(interrupting)

Court! Stop that!

COURTLAND

(cowed)

All right, Charlie. Sorry.
I'm just a little edgy, that's
all. Sorry, Jane. Sorry, Bob.

Jane puts her hand on Michael's arm; he ignores it.

COURTLAND

(to Shore and Jane)

Now shall we all have this
"social visit" together?

Jane and Shore excuse themselves and exit, closing the
door behind them.

Ellman sits down, motioning for Michael to do likewise.
After a moment's hesitation, Michael sits.

54 Cont. (2)

ELLMAN

Court, I went over and saw Sandy yesterday. We had a talk and...

Barely in his seat, Michael pops up again:

COURTLAND

You saw Sandra!--how can you call her Sandy?--What gave you the right to invade the privacy of my home? Who do you think...

ELLMAN

(interrupting;
his voice rising)

Court! Court! Listen to yourself! Just stop a moment and listen to what you are saying. Can't you see what you're doing?

That calms Michael down a bit and he slips back into his old self:

COURTLAND

Okay, Charlie. I'm sorry. Don't pull rank on me. You see, Charlie, things are a little strained for me right now. I'd rather not talk about it just yet. Things will be all right as soon as I'm married and get settled down. I don't want to interfere with anybody else's world, and I don't want anybody to interfere with mine.

ELLMAN

But you're talking with someone who already knows your world, Court. Knows it better probably than any other human being. We've been together twenty years. We've been in a lot of scraps together. We've been to the brink several times. And whatever happened we always talked it out, worked it out together.

54 Cont. (3)

Michael offers no response. Instead he sits silently in his chair, taking his scolding like a dutiful school-boy.

ELLMAN

(continuing)

Sandra and I talked over a lot of things yesterday. I don't like to throw fancy terms around, but this has all the earmarks of a folie a deux. It's incredible, Court. Whatever problems you have, she's caught in with them. You must know what is happening. You're no fool. Think of Sandra too; give her a chance. Don't bring Sandra down with you.

(imploring)

I don't want to lose you, Court. Whatever it is that's bothering you, you can't run away from it. We've done it before, we can do it again. Let's sit down and talk this thing out together.

Michael knows from experience that resistance only makes Dr. Ellman more persistent, so he takes the other approach--he pretends to go along with the doctor although another course of action has already formed in his mind:

COURTLAND

You're right, of course, Charlie. As always. It's not like you think at all, but I understand your concern. Let's get together after lunch and I'll tell you the whole story. Okay?

ELLMAN

(relieved)

I'm sure I'm way off base, too. Just come by and straighten it out for me. I'm sure we'll both feel much better.

COURTLAND

I'll do that. I promise. Just after lunch.

54 Cont. (4)

They shake hands tightly and Ellman leaves the office.

As soon as the door closes behind Ellman Michael stands up and walks over to his desk. He picks up his briefcase, opens it, and dumps all its contents on a chair.

Then, setting the open briefcase on his desk, Michael systematically goes through the drawers, clearing out whatever personal possessions he desires to keep and dropping them into the open briefcase.

Having cleaned out his desk, Michael looks around the room to see if there is anything he has missed. His eyes light upon the old framed photograph of Beth hanging on the wall.

Removing it from the wall, Michael holds the picture in his hands and punches the photo out of the frame. The frame and glass fall to the carpet. Michael puts the old color photograph into his briefcase and closes the briefcase.

Michael checks himself in the office mirror to see if he is in order, then picks up the briefcase and calmly walks out of the door, closing it behind him.

He walks through the OUTER OFFICE and into the corridor without saying a word.

CUT TO:

55 EXT. COURTLAND HOME - DAY

Sandra, dressed in a conservative suit, walks out of the house, gets in Michael's second car, and drives away.

She seems in a trance.

Sandra drives past New Orleans LANDMARKS.

CUT TO:

56 EXT. NEW PONCHARTRAIN CRYPT - DAY

Sandra's car passes the New Ponchartrain sign and pulls into the gravel drive leading to the Courtland crypt.

56 Cont.

She gets out of the car and walks toward the crypt. She carries a fresh bouquet of flowers in one hand.

Unlocking the door, she enters the crypt.

INSIDE THE CRYPT. Sandra's footsteps echo across the marble floor. Still trance-like, Sandra replaces the old flowers with the fresh ones and crouches before the urns a moment as Michael did.

After a moment she stands and exits.

OUTSIDE THE CRYPT, Sandra walks back to her car with the wilted flowers, gets in, and drives off.

CUT TO:

57 EXT. COURTLAND HOME - DAY

Michael, dressed in the same clothes as his previous scene, waits anxiously in the doorway.

Michael's P.O.V.: Sandra's car is gone, no cars come down the two-lane street.

Finally, Sandra's car appears round the corner. Michael watches its every movement from the doorstep.

Sandra parks the car, gets out and walks through the iron gate toward Michael. She is wearing the same suit as she did in the previous scene.

She walks up the steps and Michael welcomes her into his arms.

SANDRA

Darling, why are you home?

COURTLAND

I couldn't stand to be away from you any longer. We'll always be together now.

They embrace.

CUT TO:

58 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Michael and Sandra are sitting at the dining table sipping apertifs. Sandra is wearing the earrings she found in the locked closet.

After a silence, Michael speaks:

COURTLAND

Let's get married tomorrow,
Sandra?

SANDRA

Tomorrow?

COURTLAND

Sure. We can have a Justice
of the Peace perform the
ceremony.

SANDRA

Why?

COURTLAND

I just don't want to wait any
longer.

SANDRA

But what about the arrangements
at St. Louis Cathedral? And all
your friends?

COURTLAND

They can be cancelled. And I
don't have any friends. I
found that out today.

(pause)

Would you be terribly disappointed,
love?

SANDRA

No. Not at all, Mike.

CUT TO:

59 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

LATER THAT NIGHT: Michael is speaking with Judy in the
living room:

59 Cont.

COURTLAND

Now if anybody calls, we're not home. And you don't know when we'll be back. Don't answer the door. Just let it ring. Don't make any calls. And when you go out on errands, don't talk to any strangers.

JUDY

Yes, Mr. Michael.

(a beat)

But it seems pretty silly to have a phone if nobody can use it.

COURTLAND

I'm having it disconnected.

Sandra walks into the room. Judy tactfully exits.

COURTLAND

Ready for bed, darling?

SANDRA

Yes, I'm very tired.

Michael embraces her, sensuously crushing her body against his.

Sandra pushes him back a fraction.

SANDRA

Remember, we're not married yet. Tomorrow. Don't spoil it for tomorrow.

COURTLAND

I won't.

They kiss.

SANDRA

I'll just sleep in Amy's room again tonight.

CUT TO:

60 INT. LIVING ROOM - LATE MORNING

Morning light filters through the windows as Michael and Sandra stand before the Justice of the Peace.

Michael is wearing the old tuxedo he has retrieved from the locked closet, and Sandra wears Beth's 10th anniversary dress which formerly hung on the rack next to the tuxedo. Sandra also wears Beth's earrings. Her hair has been tied up in the back as Beth wore it, and she wears light pink lipstick.

Judy is the only witness.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

And now, in accordance with the powers invested in me by the State of Louisiana, I now pronounce you man and wife.

Michael and Sandra kiss. The Justice of the Peace kisses the bride, and Judy kisses Michael.

CUT TO:

61 EXT. COURTLAND HOUSE - LATE MORNING

Michael, chatting with the Justice of the Peace, escorts him down the sidewalk and out the wrought-iron gate. They wave farewell.

When the J.O.P. is safely in his car, Michael slams the heavy grape-vine decorated gate behind him.

Michael picks up a heavy chain and padlock from the ground and, wrapping the chain through the gate, locks it.

He places a sign on the gate reading:

NO TRESPASSING
PRIVATE PROPERTY

CUT TO:

62 INT. JANE'S OFFICE - DAY

The telephone rings in Jane's office. She picks up the receiver.

62 Cont.

JANE

Cap! Where are you? How are you? We're worried sick.

(a beat)

We're both sorry about that. We didn't mean it. We only thought you...

(a beat)

But who will take care of the business?

(a beat)

Don't say that.

(a beat)

Of course. Anything you say.

(a beat)

We love you, Cap.

(a beat)

Cap? Cap?

Phone goes to BUZZ. Jane sets the receiver on the desk.

SHORE (O.S.)

Was that Michael?

Jane looks up. Robert Shore stands in the doorway.

JANE

Yes. He wants us to put his share of the business into a trust fund.

SHORE

Where is he?

JANE

Who knows?

CUT TO:

63 INT. COURTLAND BEDROOM - NIGHT

Wedding night. Michael stands in front of his full length bedroom mirror undressing.

He removes each article of clothing like a priest removing his vestments. His face in the mirror is hollow, gaunt, obsessed.

63 Cont.

From the bathroom we can hear SOUNDS of Sandra preparing for bed.

Michael puts on his pajamas and sits on the edge of the bed waiting for Sandra.

COURTLAND

You about ready, Sandra?

SANDRA

Just a second, Mike.

COURTLAND

What?

SANDRA

(a little louder)

Just a second. Don't rush me.

Michael resigns himself to waiting a little longer.

INSIDE THE BATHROOM. C.U. Sandra's face in the mirror: she appears hesitant.

SANDRA'S P.O.V.: She tiptoes toward the second bathroom door, the one leading away from Michael's bedroom.

She turns the door knob--it is locked.

COURTLAND (O.S.)

Sandra?

Her moment of apprehension gone, Sandra resigns herself to her wedding night and replies:

SANDRA

Coming, Mike.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V.: Finally, she appears. The soft light from the bathroom filtering through her sheer blue nightgown, she is Sandra no more but the reincarnated image of Beth. Sandra has transformed herself into the image of Michael's former wife: the accent, posture, hair color, make-up are all the same now. It is exactly the same image that stood in the bathroom door eighteen years before.

The light blue light plays around the outline of Sandra's nipples.

COURTLAND (O.S.)

Sandra.

63 Cont. (2)

SANDRA

Tonight is the night.

COURTLAND (O.S.)

Oh, Sandra, you don't know
how long I've waited for to-
night.

SANDRA

Me too, Mike.

Sandra walks up to Mike, embraces him passionately and pushes him back onto the bed.

Sandra's initial reluctance is now transformed into enthusiasm, and she takes the lead. Michael and Sandra roll about the bed, embracing, kissing, laughing. Zombies no more, all their tensions and frustrations are relieved in exuberant love-making.

Michael's interrupted anniversary night is finally consummated.

POST-COITAL. Michael and Sandra lie silently in bed. Sandra sits up beside him, stretching her legs across his.

SANDRA

Now I am your wife.

COURTLAND

I know.

SANDRA

No, you don't. I am your wife.
(a beat)

I am Beth.

Michael looks into her eyes. Beth's eyes stare back at him. As the supernatural MUSIC throbs into his head, Michael almost believes his dead wife has come back to him.

But he stops himself: Sandra's obsession with the dead Beth has now even superseded his own. He must try to hold this delicate situation in balance.

COURTLAND

No, Sandra, you shouldn't talk like that. It isn't right.

63 Cont. (3)

SANDRA

It isn't right, but it's true.

Michael grasps her by the shoulders:

SANDRA

Do you want to see for your-
self?

COURTLAND

What?

SANDRA

It is no secret. You can see
for yourself.

Michael looks at Sandra, waiting for an explanation.

CUT TO:

64 EXT. COURTLAND HOUSE - NIGHT

Michael, quickly dressed, walks out of the house and
toward the car. He carries something in his hand.

Michael drives off.

The Buick, basked in an eerie moonlight glow, again
glides past the familiar New Orleans LANDMARKS.

CUT TO:

65 EXT. NEW PONCHARTRAIN CRYPT - NIGHT

The Buick pulls past the faded New Ponchartrain sign
and pulls into the gravel drive leading to the crypt.

Michael walks through the moonlight toward the crypt.
We now see he is carrying a hammer and a crowbar in
his hand.

Michael opens the crypt door and enters.

INSIDE THE CRYPT, Michael walks toward Beth's tomb. Once
there, Michael sets the edge of the crowbar against the
edge of the vault and drives it repeatedly with the
hammer. The crowbar breaks open the vault drawer.

65 Cont.

Pulling out the vaulted drawer, Michael lets the hammer and crowbar CLANG to the marble floor.

Michael reaches in the drawer and pulls out Beth's urn. He breaks the seal, opens it, and, after a momentary pause, turns it upside down--nothing falls out. It is empty.

Holding the empty urn in his hand, Michael hears Sandra's VOICE:

SANDRA (V.O.)

I am no longer there, Michael.
I am no longer in that cold
marble.

(a beat)

I am here. I am Beth.

CUT TO:

66

EXT. DUELING OAKS - NIGHT

Michael and Sandra are taking a nocturnal stroll near the historic Dueling Oaks in City Park.

They stroll in the carefree manner of young lovers. For them it is Spring and the birds are singing.

Michael no longer knows what is true or not, what is sane or not--but he no longer cares. He again has what he has always loved, and that is all that matters.

Sandra may have been so crazy she emptied Beth's urn, or she may actually be Beth--but what does it matter?

SANDRA

I have come back for a reason,
Mike.

COURTLAND

What do you mean?

SANDRA

I came to give you a second
chance to prove your love.

COURTLAND

My love has never wavered, Beth,
never wavered for a day, an
hour, a minute, a second.

66 Cont.

SANDRA

I want you to be with me always.
Never leave me alone.

COURTLAND

I will be with you always. I'm
never going back to work. I
want to spend all my time with
you.

SANDRA

I'm happy now, Mike.

They walk on.

CUT TO:

67 EXT. COURTLAND HOUSE - DAWN

Day breaks over the padlocked wrought-iron gate lead-
ing to the Courtland house.

CUT TO:

68 INT. BEDROOM - DAWN

Early morning light filters through the curtains as
Michael turns restlessly about in his bed.

CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal he is sleeping alone.

Michael, half awake, calls Beth's name and reaches a
blind arm for Sandra's body.

After a few moments of sleepy fitfulness, Michael begins
to realize he is in the bed alone. He bolts upright
in the bed.

Looking about, not seeing Sandra, he calls her name:

COURTLAND

Beth! Beth!

Michael jumps out of bed, slips on his clothes and looks
in the BATHROOM: she is not there.

Michael dashes from room to room, finding each more empty
than the last.

68 Cont.

Judy gives a short SCREAM as Michael bursts into JUDY'S ROOM, looks quickly around, and dashes off.

Walking back through the DINING ROOM, Michael sees a sight that makes his face turn white. Lying on the table is the very same ransom note that was delivered to his office eighteen years before.

We were not able to read the note when it was delivered before, but now a C.U. affords us a long look at the message:

COURTLAND: BRING \$100,000 CASH
SMALL BILLS IN BRIEFCASE ON
LAST CAR NEXT TRAIN FROM UNION
STATION FOR BATON ROUGE AND
WAIT FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS DO AS
WE SAY AND DO NOT CALL POLICE
AND WIFE AND DAUGHTER WILL
RETURN UNHARMED

"F"

Now Michael knows what Sandra meant when she said, "I came to give you a second chance to prove your love."

Judy, awakened by the noise, walks sleepily into the dining room.

JUDY
What's wrong, Mr. Michael?

COURTLAND
(composing himself)
Oh nothing, Judy. I got my
second chance, that's all.
Go back to sleep.

Judy finds this good advice and trots back to her room.

CUT TO:

69 EXT. COURTLAND HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

It is early dawn: Michael jumps into his late model Buick and SCREECHES off.

CUT TO:

70 EXT. ROBERT SHORE'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Michael rings the doorbell of a comfortable upper middle-class home in one of New Orleans' newer suburban districts.

In the b.g. Michael's Buick is rammed at an angle against the curb, with one wheel up on the curb itself. The driver's door is wide open.

When no one immediately answers Michael pounds on the door, then rings, then pounds.

Finally the door creaks open and a sleepy Robert Shore, dressed in pajamas and a bathrobe, peers out.

Michael pushes his way inside.

CUT TO:

71 INT. ROBERT SHORE'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Michael grabs Shore by the shoulders, then by the lapels.

COURTLAND

Bob! I need \$100,000 in cash.
Now!

SHORE

(sleepy)
Huh? What are you talking
about?

COURTLAND

I'm talking about one hundred
thousand dollars cash. Can
you give it to me now?

Shore's wife calls from the bedroom:

SHORE'S WIFE

Bob, what is it? Is there any-
thing wrong?

SHORE

No, dear. Go back to sleep.
(to Michael)
Now what's the idea, Court?
What's this about \$100,000?

COURTLAND

It's none of your business. I just need it now.

SHORE

\$100,000 none of my business!

COURTLAND

Look, I'm sorry, Bob. I can't explain. I know you've got that much in the office safe. I need the money now and the bank doesn't open until ten. All my cash is locked in a trust.

Shore walks over to the phone.

SHORE

Michael, you are under incredible strain. I don't know what's going on but I think I better call Dr. Ellman. You need help, Court. You should be hospitalized.

Michael stops Shore from dialing and grabs him by the pajama top again. Michael is manic; there is no stopping him.

COURTLAND

What do I have to do to get the money? Cut off my hands?

(holds up hands)

I'll do it!

SHORE

I'm only thinking of your good, Court. It's not the money I'm worried about, it's you.

COURTLAND

The land! That's it--I'll sign over my share of the New Ponchartrain land for the hundred thou. You've always wanted it, now you got it. It ain't important to me anymore because Beth isn't buried there anymore--so there! She's gone! I'll sign over the land if you give me the hundred thou now, cash, no questions.

71 Cont. (2)

Shore still hesitates and Michael starts to rough him up.

COURTLAND

Come on, godamn it!

Greed and the temptation of a lifelong dream overcome Shore's better judgement:

SHORE

All right! All right, all right, Court!

(Michael eases up)

I'll do it. I'm crazy to do it, but since you're crazy too, I guess it's all right.

(a beat)

Let me get dressed and I'll go to the office.

COURTLAND

You don't need to get dressed to open a safe. I'm not going to let you get near a phone.

Shore's wife, sleepy-eyed, walks in the living room wearing a bathrobe.

SHORE'S WIFE

Bob?

Michael forcibly escorts Shore out the front door.

SHORE

(as he goes)

It's all right, dear. I'll be right back.

She stares in amazement.

CUT TO:

72 INT. SHORE'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Michael stands by Shore's desk. Shore, still dressed in his pajamas hands him a triplicate form.

SHORE

Just sign each form twice, Michael. I'll get the cash.

72 Cont.

Michael signs the form. Shore disappears then re-emerges with stacks of bills wrapped in brown paper.

Shore places the wrapped bills into a black briefcase and closes it.

Michael finishes the forms, picks up the briefcase and strides out without bothering to say goodbye.

CUT TO:

73 EXT. MONEY DROP SEQUENCE - MORNING

TRAIN pulls out of the NEW UNION STATION.

Michael sits silently INSIDE the last car looking out the window. The briefcase is on his lap.

EXT.: the station signs drift by. The LEE'S CROSSING sign appears.

Michael stands up and walks toward the rear of the car.

EXT. REAR OF TRAIN. Michael stands at the rear of the train checking his watch. At the appointed moment he tosses the briefcase from the rear of the train.

CUT TO:

74 INT. COURTLAND LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Michael paces back and forth in the darkened living room.

He turns, waits, listens, resumes pacing.

There is the SOUND of a car door closing outside. Michael bolts toward the front door and rushes out.

CUT TO:

75 EXT. COURTLAND HOME - NIGHT

Michael rushes toward the front gate.

A car stands at the far curb. Two teenagers are necking in the front seat. Across the street a young girl is bidding her boyfriend goodnight under the porch light.

75 Cont.

Michael clutches the baroque wrought-iron gates in despair.

CUT TO:

76 INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING. Michael, still wearing the same clothes, paces across the floor. He has not slept all night.

Judy, standing in the shadows, watches him cautiously as one would watch a beast in the jungle.

Michael looks at his watch, opens the curtains, and checks the height of the sun. He walks out the front door.

CUT TO:

77 EXT. LEE'S CROSSING - MORNING

Michael drives his Buick slowly down a side road which crosses the railroad tracks. He turns onto the tracks.

The Buick clunkety-clunks down the railroad ties.

Michael leans out the driver's window, his eyes scrutinizing every pebble on the shoulder.

Ahead he sees the black briefcase: it has been broken open.

Michael jumps out of his car, leaving the door ajar, and runs toward the open briefcase.

Several of the brown packets in the briefcase have been torn open and blank pieces of white paper are blowing in the wind.

Michael frantically rips open more of the packets only to find that they all contain blank paper.

Suspended between shock and rage, unable to move or speak, Michael sinks to his knees beside the briefcase.

CUT TO:

78 INT. MOISANT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

Sandra sits in a booth in the airport bar. Through the window behind her airplanes taxi to and fro.

She nervously gulps down her second whiskey sour.

CAMERA PANS across to reveal her companion in the booth: it is Robert Shore. A thick envelope rests on the table between them.

Sandra pushes the envelope back toward Shore.

SANDRA

I don't want it, Bob. I don't want any part of it.

SHORE

Fifty thousand dollars is a lot of money to turn down. Take it. You're going to need it. You earned it.

Sandra's hands are trembling. She is distraught, at wit's end.

SANDRA

When you told me about it, I didn't think it would be anything like this.

SHORE

That's not true, Sandy. It was a dirty business right from the start and you knew it. When I found you I told you it would be dirty, that Court would either give up the land or be declared mentally incompetent to manage it. And you agreed. So don't get an attack of conscience now.

Sandra opens her mouth to speak, but nothing comes out. Shore makes an unfortunate attempt to lighten the conversation:

SHORE

At least you got out in time. At least you kept him out of bed. Look at it that way.

78 Cont.

SANDRA

(distraught)

It isn't conscience that's bothering me, Bob. Can't you see that. It's love. I've fallen in love with that poor man. I want to go back to him and confess everything, ask him to forgive, plead with him to take me back. That's all that matters now.

SHORE

Hold on now, Sandy. Keep your head a moment. We just swindled a man--a nice, sensitive man, admittedly--out of a million and a half dollars or more. Now the law isn't exactly going to look lightly on that when you go back to Michael and confess.

(a beat)

You made a dirty deal, you executed it flawlessly, and now I think you're entitled to the due wages of sin--money.

(pushes envelope
back to her)

SANDRA

(full of emotion)

But how can I live? How can I live with myself--how can I go on?

SHORE

It's a little late for existential questions, darlin. Take the money. Go back to Florence. Go back to your fiance. You'll forget. Life always goes on.

An undercurrent of fear runs through Sandra's voice--
a fear of herself:

SANDRA

Never. I could never forget.
I could never go back.

78 Cont. (2)

SHORE

(looking at watch)

But you will. And quite soon.
Because your plane leaves in
ten minutes.

Sandra picks up the envelope and rises from her seat.

CUT TO:

79 INT. AIRPORT BOARDING AREA - DAY

Shore escorts Sandra to her Pan Am flight and watches
to make sure she boards her flight.

C.U. Sandra's face: it seems about to shatter in a
thousand pieces.

CUT TO:

80 EXT./INT. OFFICE BLDG. - DAY

Shore drives his car into the parking garage.

INT. OUTER OFFICE. Shore pleasantly greets his secre-
tary and walks into his office.

CUT TO:

81 INT. SHORE'S OFFICE - DAY

As Shore enters his office an animal lurches from the
shadows and grabs him by the throat: it is Michael.

COURTLAND

(his voice croaking
with pain)

What have you done to me?
What have you done to me?

SHORE

What do you mean?

COURTLAND

The money! Where's the money?
Where was the money?

81 Cont.

Shore pushes Michael's hands from his throat and holds them tightly.

SHORE

Court! Court! You woke me up in the middle of the night! You forced me to give you \$100,000 in cash! I thought you were crazy. I only wanted to protect you from yourself. I didn't want to see you lose \$100,000 in a crazy fit so I gave you dummy money. I have your money here. I've had it here all along. It's in the safe. I was only looking out for your own good.

(walks toward safe)

Here, let me get it for you.

CAMERA follows Shore to the safe. He opens the safe and assembles the \$100,000.

Michael keeps talking, as if he doesn't know Shore is no longer standing in front of him. He first speaks O.S., then CAMERA cuts back to him.

COURTLAND

I killed her, Bob. Beth came back to me and I killed her again. She said she came back to test me and I failed the test again. She came back to test my love and I didn't come up with the money again. I had my chance. I failed her again. Now I've lost her forever.

Shore returns with a canvas sack full of money. He dramatically empties the sack on his desk, spreading out the bills over its surface.

Michael hardly seems to notice.

Michael is in the final stages of a complete breakdown. It is impossible to predict what he will do next.

81 Cont. (2)

COURTLAND

Do you know what this means,
Bob? Do you know? My life is
over now. It's all over. And
you did it, Bob. You did it.

Michael grips Shore's throat with one hand, bats him
across the head with the other.

SHORE

(pleading)

No, Court. No. Court!

Michael searches the money strewn across Shore's desk.
Beneath the loose bills he locates a paper scissors
and holds like a knife. Several loose bills waft to
the carpet.

Scissors in hand, Michael descends upon Shore. Shore
tries to dash toward the door but is halted mid-step as
a scissors pierces through his breastbone.

Shore sinks to the floor. Blood spurts down his white
shirt.

Michael searches the desk for another weapon.

The door to Shore's office is ajar. Several office
employees crowd around the open slit. They stare aghast
at what they see.

Michael finds a letter opener on the desk and clutches
it.

SHORE

No, Michael. Let me confess.
I'll confess. I'll tell every-
thing.

Michael hears nothing but the pounding logic of his own
passion.

SHORE

I'll confess. It was me...

COURTLAND

(interrupting)

I don't want to hear!

81 Cont. (3)

Michael thrusts the letter opener into Shore's chest.
Shore belches out a hideous SCREAM.

Leaving the letter opener in Shore's chest, Michael
searches the desk top for another weapon.

Jane comes to the open door and gasps.

SHORE

(dying)

I kidnapped Beth. I set it
up. It went wrong. She died.
It went wrong. She died.

Michael finds a paper spindle on Shore's desk. It's not
the most effective weapon, but it will do.

Michael jams the paper spindle into Shore's bloody chest
next to the scissors and letter opener.

Shore is too far gone to scream. Coughing blood, he dies.

Michael stumbles toward the door.

Shore lies on the floor, his head propped up against the
wall. A letter opener, scissors and paper spindle pro-
trude grotesquely from his blood-soaked shirt.

Michael pushes his bloody way through the group of shocked
office employees outside the door.

Jane watches in horror as he passes.

CUT TO:

82

EXT./INT. NEW PONCHARTRAIN CRYPT - DAY

Michael brakes his Buick sharply on the drive leading
to the grave. Bits of gravel spray in every direction.

Michael opens the car door and, carrying a hammer and
crowbar, walks toward the crypt. He unlocks the door
and enters.

INSIDE THE CRYPT, Michael breaks open Beth's grave with
the crowbar. Reaching inside the vault drawer he pulls
out the urn.

82 Cont.

SOUND of cars pulling up outside the crypt.

Michael breaks open the urn, turns it upside down and watches the ashes drift slowly to the marble floor.

Three policemen appear in the doorway.

Michael looks up pathetically as the SOUND of the policemen's footsteps walk closer.

An anonymous policeman pulls out Michael's hands and clamps a pair of handcuffs on them. CLICK.

CUT TO:

83 INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Sandra sits in a first class window seat on a Pan Am flight to Rome.

She stares blankly out the window, seemingly unaware of anything but that which is happening inside her own mind.

A full drink rests limply in her hand. The plane hits turbulence, the drink spills, but Sandra does not seem to notice.

CAMERA PANS across the seat: next to Sandra sits an attractive middle-aged woman who looks like Sandra enough to be her mother. She is wearing Beth's 10th anniversary earrings.

Sandra has some airline stationery on her lap. She is now writing a letter.

Sandra narrates the letter as she writes:

SANDRA (V.O.)

Dear Father,
I do not ask forgiveness
because I know there can be
none. I write this knowing
I will never live to see the
day you will read it.

CUT to TINTED SHOT of Third Man in kidnappers' hideout picking up the unconscious 10 year-old Amy and carrying her out the back door of the hideout.

83 Cont.

SANDRA (V.O.)

(continuing)

I was never killed in the car
crash eighteen years ago.

CUT to TINTED SHOT of kidnappers' Fairlane crashing into
the rapids.

SANDRA (V.O.)

(continuing)

I was rescued by Mr. Shore and
brought to Florence where I
was raised by Mrs. Portinari.

CUT to TINTED SHOT of Third Man bringing Amy to Robert
Shore. In exchange Shore gives the man an envelope.

SANDRA (V.O.)

(continuing)

Uncle Bob came to Florence
every year to visit me.

CUT to TINTED SHOT of Robert Shore, the young Amy and
an older ITALIAN WOMAN in Florence.

SANDRA (V.O.)

(continuing)

I was raised believing you
killed my mother.

CUT to TINTED SHOT of Amy's horrified face as she sees
the ransom briefcase is full of paper money.

SANDRA (V.O.)

(continuing)

I lived for the day when I
could revenge her death. That
day came when Shore asked me
to be part of a scheme...

CUT to TINTED SHOT of Shore visiting the adult Sandra in
her Ponte Vecchio apartment.

SANDRA (V.O.)

(continuing)

- which by now you must know
very well.

Two burly men with guns--FARBER and FERGUSEN--appear in
the aisle of the airplane. Sandra, still writing, does
not seem to notice.

83 Cont. (2)

Farber grabs the woman sitting next to Sandra, cups a black glove around her mouth and puts a gun to her head. Sandra continues to write.

The skyjacker calls out:

FARBER
We're taking this plane to
Algeria!

The passengers SCREAM and panic. SHOTS ring out.

Ferguson, shot in the chest, falls to the floor. Farber keeps on shooting. The woman next to Sandra catches a bullet in the throat.

Flames burst out from the cockpit section. Someone yells:

VOICE
We're going to crash!

More panic. Farber catches a bullet and falls.

The plane starts to heave furiously to and fro. The engine outside Sandra's window explodes in a burst of flames. She looks up from her letter.

Flames engulf the interior of the plane.

The plane goes into a nosedive, spinning headfirst toward the ocean. Panic is everywhere.

SANDRA (V.O.)
I only ask that you remember
me with fondness. Remember
the hours and moments we had
together.

The plane splats into the ocean, exploding into pieces.

Sandra floats in the ocean among the flaming wreckage. Her drink is still in her hand.

She looks up: Michael is swimming toward her with a black briefcase.

She looks in the other direction: Shore paddles his way furiously toward her.

In the distance: Franco stands on a raft calling her.

83 Cont. (3)

Michael offers her the briefcase. It pops open; it is full of blank paper money.

SANDRA (V.O.)

So speaks my heart, and afterwards doth sigh.

Love, Amy.

Sandra slices her wrists with a scissors.

There is a THUD against the bathroom door on the airplane. A stewardess rushes to the door and opens it.

Sandra's body falls out of the bathroom onto the floor of the airplane.

She lies in a pool of blood. Her wrists are slit.

The stewardess quickly carries her into a private section of the plane.

A stewardess steps into the bloodied bathroom. Lying on the floor is the partially crumpled letter Sandra was writing to Michael.

The stewardess picks up the letter and deposits it in the waste receptacle.

END FLASHBACK/DREAM SEQUENCE.

CUT TO:

84 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Michael sits expressionlessly between Jane and his LAWYER. His eyes stare into empty space. Dr. Ellman is seated behind him.

It is a closed court inquest. Only witnesses and principals are in the courtroom.

Among the witnesses are several of the office employees that saw Michael stab Shore.

One of the employees is on the stand:

EMPLOYEE

Then Mr. Shore said, "I'll confess. I kidnapped Beth. It

(MORE)

84 Cont.

EMPLOYEE (Cont.)
went all wrong. She died."
And then Mr. Courtland stabbed
him again.

TIME CUT: C.U. Michael's blank face. His lawyer is
speaking privately with the judge:

LAWYER (O.S.)
My client is unable to testify.

TIME CUT: the Judge pronounces verdict:

JUDGE
Hereby drops the charge of 1st
Degree Murder because of miti-
gating circumstance. How does
the Defense wish to plead to
the charge of 2nd Degree Man-
slaughter?

LAWYER
(standing up)
Innocent by Reason of Insanity,
your Honor.

JUDGE
Is the plea acceptable to the
Prosecution?

PROSECUTOR
(standing)
It is, your Honor.

JUDGE
(slamming gavel)
I hereby sentence you, Mr.
Michael Courtland, to spend
the rest of your natural life
in the custody of the Tele-
chain Hospital for the Crimi-
nally Insane, or until such
a time that you shall be deemed
fit to return to society.
(slams gavel)
Case dismissed.

CUT TO:

85 EXT. NEW PONCHARTRAIN CRYPT - DAY

CAMERA PANS across the Courtland crypt and the grassy knoll.

Construction trucks stand near the crypt.

In the distance oil wells are sprouting up like grotesque flora. A light drizzle falls on the dismal scene, just as it did eighteen years before.

CUT TO:

86 EXT. TELECHAIN MENTAL HOSPITAL - DAY (1985)

L.S. The imposing modernistic building of the "Tele-chain Hospital."

CUT TO:

87 INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Sign on steel door reads:

R. J. COLLINS
PSYCHIATRIC WARDEN

R. J. Collins' VOICE comes from inside.

INSIDE. R. J. Collins sits behind his desk speaking toward the CAMERA. The calendar on the wall behind his head reads:

June, 1985

COLLINS is a young, officious professional type.

Jane and Dr. Ellman sit patiently in the office waiting for Collins to finish. They both have aged appropriately; Jane is about 50, Ellman 65.

COLLINS

I'm sure Michael will be all right in your care. Although he had some hard years at first, he has always been a model patient. I'm sure you'll have no trouble.

JANE

Will we be able to take him home today?

COLLINS

I don't see why not. We can always work out the paperwork later. Dr. Ellman has been most helpful.

(a beat)

I think I hear them coming now.

Their eyes turn toward the door.

87 Cont.

Michael Courtland, now a wizened handsome man of 62, walks into the room with a staff doctor. He stands up straight in his well-fitting new dark suit.

Everything about Michael suggests he is a reserved and cautious man, but when he sees Jane and Ellman he smiles broadly and appears in perfect health.

JANE

Oh Cap!

(they embrace)

Michael shakes hands with Dr. Ellman.

COURTLAND

Hello Jane. Hello Charlie.

ELLMAN

Welcome back, Court.

JANE

(to Collins)

Can we go now?

COLLINS

I don't see why not.

(to Courtland)

Goodbye, Michael. I'm going to miss those chess games. Drop by and see me sometime if you want to.

(they shake hands)

COURTLAND

Yes. Thank you, Ron.

Jane and Ellman exit with Michael.

CUT TO:

88

EXT. HOSPITAL GROUNDS - DAY

Jane, Ellman and Michael stroll across the landscaped lawns of the hospital.

Michael walks cautiously, as if testing out thin ice.

88 Cont.

ELLMAN

Well, Court, the world is yours again. You're now an oil millionaire, you have time, freedom...

JANE

(interrupting)

And friends. Lots of friends.
(holds his arm)

Michael's voice is slower and sure--more full of pain and memories.

COURTLAND

I know that, Jane. Thank you.
And thank you, Charlie.

(a beat)

For everything.

ELLMAN

The house is all ready. Judy, of course, died two years back, but we've got a new housemaid for you and I'm sure you'll like her. And Jane will stay for a couple days until you get all settled in.

Michael nods.

ELLMAN

(continuing)

Is there anything special you would like to do? Any place you would like to go? Do you have any plans?

COURTLAND

No. I thought I would just take it easy for a while.

C.U. of Michael's face:

COURTLAND

(pause)

Maybe do some traveling.

CUT TO:

89 EXT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

It is late FALL. The street leading to the Church of Santa Trinita is filled with strange little electric cars and wildly dressed youngsters.

Amid the cars and youngsters an old man in an old-fashioned suit trods slowly up the street: it is Michael.

Arriving at the church, Michael looks slowly up at the 12th Century doors and ascends the steps.

CUT TO:

90 INT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

C.U. the altarpiece of the Madonna and Child. It has long been restored to its original condition.

CAMERA PANS and TRACKS to reveal Michael seated on a long wooden bench studying the altarpiece.

Behind Michael, two museum attendants talk softly. CAMERA TRACKS over to them:

1ST ATTENDANT

He sits in the same spot every day.

2ND ATTENDANT

What does he want?

1ST ATTENDANT

Maybe he finds peace here.

CAMERA CLOSES on Michael's tired, intent visage.

CUT TO:

91 INT. RISSO'S - EVENING

Michael has dinner at Risso's. The restaurant has been redecorated and is filled with strange, young Italian types.

CUT TO:

92 INT. PIAZZA - NIGHT

Michael strolls around the fountain where he first taught

92 Cont.

Sandra to walk like Beth.

Halfway around the fountain he picks up the Beth/Sandra gait himself, imitating Sandra on that first night.

CUT TO:

93 EXT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

Ready for another day of altarpiece-gazing, Michael walks up steps to Santa Trinita.

CUT TO:

94 INT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

C.U. Altarpiece.

CAMERA TRACKS in a looping circle through the church, revealing these things:

--The two attendants stand watching someone who is...

--Michael who stands a short distance in front of the attendants and who is watching someone who is...

--Sandra, who sits on the bench watching the altarpiece.

Sandra, now nearly 40, is as beautiful as ever. As CAMERA closes in on her eyes, however, we see they are empty and devoid of any expression or awareness.

CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal two nuns standing behind Sandra. At an appointed moment the nuns help Sandra up and slowly escort her from the sanctuary.

Michael's eyes turn to watch Sandra and the departing nuns. After a moment, he follows.

CUT TO:

95 EXT. SANTA TRINITA - DAY

The two nuns escort Sandra down the street.

Michael follows at a safe distance.

CUT TO:

96 EXT. SANTA FELICITA - DAY

Michael follows Sandra and her escorts until they enter Santa Felicita, a Roman Catholic Hospital.

Michael's eyes follow Sandra until she is lost in the recesses of the building. Medical and religious personnel walk inside the building.

Michael waits, pauses, starts up, then goes in.

CUT TO:

97 INT. SANTA FELICITA OFFICE - DAY

Michael is speaking with FATHER ROBERTO FABRINI, head of staff at Santa Felicita. Fabrini is heavy-set, middle-aged, and sports a thick Italian accent. As he speaks he occasionally brushes the thick red hair of his beard and moustache away from his mouth.

Fabrini speaks for quite some time before we recognize him. We are not exactly sure what gives him away--a smile, a pronunciation, an idiosyncratic gesture--but at one moment we realize we have seen him before--in the image of Farber, the 1956 kidnapper, and Franco, the 1974 fiance. (He is so well disguised, in fact, that some viewers may not see the resemblance at all.)

Michael himself doesn't recognize Fabrini. Oh, he has some dim recollection, but nothing concrete enough to separate it from his haze of memories.

FABRINI

Yes, Sandra Portinari, one of our saddest and most tragic cases. She is a Florence girl, as you probably know. She was raised here as a child, worked here, then went to the United States to get married. She was not gone but a few weeks and she returned, and on her return she attempted suicide--in an airplane of all places. She has been with us since. It has been over ten years since she returned to us like...like she is.

(gesturing toward
nothing)

You would like to see her?

97 Cont.

COURTLAND

Yes. Very much.

FABRINI

You are her...?

COURTLAND

Her uncle. On the American side. Charles Courtland.

FABRINI

Yes, of course.

(standing up)

Come, Mr. Courtland, follow me.

CUT TO:

98 INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR/SANDRA'S ROOM - DAY

Michael and Fabrini walk down the sterile corridor toward Sandra's room. Oddly colored signs and levers indicate that this is the future, although for the most part 1985 is treated simply as an extension of 1974.

FABRINI

We tried to contact her American relatives, but because of Sandra's condition we had little success. There was no place to start from. You will see...

Fabrini opens the unlocked door to SANDRA'S ROOM and bids Michael to enter.

The hospital has tried to make Sandra's room homey and comfortable, but she has given them no help. The room contains a bed, an easy chair and a writing desk, but the walls are blank except for a few placid paintings obviously put there by the psychiatric help. The room bears no marks of Sandra's personality.

Sandra sits on the edge of the bed staring into empty space. She is catatonic: unmoving, unblinking, unfeeling.

Fabrini tries to be cheery:

98 Cont.

FABRINI

Buongiorno, Sandra! We have a visitor for you today. It is your old friend, your Uncle Charlie. Mr. Charles Courtland. He came all the way from America to see you.

Michael looks into Sandra's eyes. They do not move: there is not even a flicker of recognition.

FABRINI

(to Michael)

How sad. This is all we've had to work with for ten years. And she was so beautiful, too. Very tragic.

(to Sandra)

Buongiorno, Sandra.

Michael nods politely to Sandra and exits with Fabrini.

Michael and Fabrini continue walking down the CORRIDOR.

FABRINI

We have had so little to work with. A few shreds of evidence, a few rudimentary tools, but they never add up to anything. We can't seem to find the entrance to her secret world.

They come to a door labeled, "Art Room." A nurse stands nearby.

FABRINI

(to nurse)

I quadari della signorina Sandra sono esposti?

NURSE

Si.

FABRINI

Grazie.

Fabrini opens the door for Michael and he enters.

CUT TO:

INT. ART ROOM - DAY

Michael and Fabrini enter the Art Room.

A hastily set up display of water-color paintings covers one wall.

All of the water-colors are variations on the same theme: the Madonna and Child altarpiece at Santa Trinita Church. Some are realistic, some impressionistic, some black on white, some in color, some madly and bizarrely contorted. Apart from the fact that they all deal with the same subject, there seems to be no definable pattern running through the paintings.

In some of the water-colors the small peeled section which Sandra was restoring eleven years before appears exactly as it was. In others, the whole altarpiece seems to have peeled away, revealing a grotesque original.

Michael and Fabrini walk slowly down the row of paintings as Fabrini speaks:

FABRINI

Sandra has painted these over the last ten years. These here at the left were painted when she first came, those at the far end are the most recent.

(gestures)

They are all variations of Fabriano's altarpiece of the Madonna and Child at Santa Trinita, the restoration of which Sandra worked on when she lived here. For some reason this particular subject matter has become fixed in her mind. She paints nothing else. Every month or two she'll get up from her room--we have no locked doors here, you know--and she'll come here, pick up the brushes and paint another Madonna and Child. Then she'll set the brushes down, leave, and we'll know nothing more about her than before.

(a beat)

Except, of course, the pattern of
(MORE)

99 Cont.

FABRINI (Cont.)

the paintings themselves. As you can see the focus of the paintings is on the faces, not the surroundings. In some paintings the Madonna will have the large head, the child the small. In others, vice versa. In some the Madonna and Child have the same faces, in others they are both faceless.

Red and yellow water-color shows both the Madonna and Child with Beth's facial features. Michael, here, as throughout the scene, keeps all his thoughts to himself and shows no outward emotion.

FABRINI

(continuing)

Then, of course, there is this whole matter of peeling versus the restored painting, but I won't bore you with these details. We have tried to ascribe some underlying importance to the structure of these paintings but have met with no success. I now have a tendency to believe it's just one of those things the deranged mind fixes on and won't let go of.

Fabrini walks toward the door and Michael follows.

CUT TO:

100 INT. FABRINI'S OFFICE -- DAY

Seated behind his desk, Fabrini continues:

FABRINI

Of the actual incident which precipitated this trauma we know little. We haven't even been able to discover who she married or where she went.

(a beat)

That is why I was so glad when
(MORE)

100 Cont.

FABRINI (Cont.)

you walked into my office today, Mr. Courtland. Perhaps you can add another piece to this incredibly complex puzzle.

COURTLAND

What about her mother?

FABRINI

Mrs. Portinari? Ah, she should be here too. But at her age, it is not called mentally disturbed, it is called senile.

Fabrini pages through a file on his desk.

FABRINI

.(continuing)

So you, Mr. Courtland, are Sandra's only connection to the world of the sane. Can you help us? Do you know anything of her past?

Michael thinks a moment before speaking. When he speaks, he speaks cautiously, as if fearful of making a slip.

COURTLAND

Not too much, really, but probably more than you do. I was out of the country at the time of my brother's marriage, and when I returned it was all over. From what I've been able to gather Sandra was kidnapped on their wedding night and her husband failed to bring the ransom money, or, rather, brought blank money instead. Sandra was never heard of again and her body was never found. My brother, tortured by guilt, subsequently went insane and has been committed in a mental hospital since that time. He himself probably knows as little about it as you, Dr. Fabrini.

100 Cont. (2)

FABRINI

This is a tragic situation.

COURTLAND

Yes, Michael's friends tried but were unable to discover what became of Sandra--until, that is, today.

FABRINI

Michael?

COURTLAND

Yes, Michael Courtland. That was her husband.

FABRINI

Where is Mr. Courtland now?

COURTLAND

I'd rather not tell you the name of the hospital. I'm afraid the shock might kill him--he's still quite borderline, you know.

Fabrini reaches into his file and pulls out a small photograph of Robert Shore (circa 1974) and places it in front of Michael.

FABRINI

Is this her husband?

COURTLAND

(a beat)

Yes. That's him. Michael Courtland.

Fabrini makes some notes.

FABRINI

Thank you. We may get somewhere yet.

COURTLAND

Where did you get that photograph?

100 Cont. (3)

FABRINI

Oh, Sandra's mother gave it
to us when Sandra was committed.

COURTLAND

Is she still alive?

FABRINI

She was a couple years ago, but,
now, I don't know. When she
brought the picture in she said
it was Sandra's father, but she
was so senile already then that
she could hardly say two words
without contradicting herself.

COURTLAND

Do you have her address?

FABRINI

Sure, for what good it is.

Fabrini writes the address on a slip of paper and hands
it to Michael.

FABRINI

Yes, Mr. Courtland, you could
really help us out in this case,
that is, if you are willing to
oblige.

COURTLAND

I'd be glad to do what I could.

FABRINI

Good. Sandra's case of catatonic
schizophrenia is really a throw-
back, you know. It's nearly
obsolete. Modern electrical ther-
apy has made it a thing of the
past. Yet none of our techniques
seem to prevail against it--so
I'd like to try an old-fashioned
technique for an old-fashioned
case.

(a beat)

If we could recreate the condi-
tions which induced the trauma,
recreate the kidnapping itself,

(MORE)

100 Cont. (4)

FABRINI (Cont.)

perhaps we could elicit some reaction from her, perhaps even find the key to her inner world.

(a beat)

If we recreate the kidnapping from what you know of it would you be willing to play the role of your brother--Sandra's husband? We'll provide the necessary ransom money and you, playing Michael, could successfully ransom her.

(a beat)

What do you think?

COURTLAND

(hesitant)

Well, Doctor, I don't know. I really don't like it. It seems a little risky.

FABRINI

What have we to lose? Sandra's been dead to the world the last ten years. What greater harm can befall this tragic girl?

COURTLAND

Let me think about it.

(a beat)

I'll call you tomorrow and give you my answer then.

FABRINI

Good.

CUT TO:

101 EXT. FLORENTINE STREET - AFTERNOON

A narrow street in Florence. Michael looks at the slip of paper in his hand and knocks on a shabby curbside doorway. In his other hand he has a book of English-Italian phrases.

A YOUNG WOMAN comes to the door. The SOUND of crying children can be heard in the b.g.

101 Cont.

Michael opens his book of phrases and turns to the page where he has inserted a piece of paper. Reading from the paper he says:

COURTLAND

Questa la casa di Madame Maria Portinari?

YOUNG WOMAN

E morte.

COURTLAND

Dead? How long?

She does not understand. He checks his book again.

COURTLAND

Quanto tempo?

YOUNG WOMAN

Due ano.

COURTLAND

Two years. Grazie. Thank you.

The woman closes the door and Michael walks off.

CUT TO:

102 INT. BADIA CHURCH - AFTERNOON

Michael walks down the aisle of the historic Badia Fiorentina Church.

Michael's P.O.V.: he looks where Beatrice once sat, where the young Dante sat watching her, and where Sandra once stood reciting poetry.

He HEARS a young voice like that of Sandra's. He turns, looks, but it is another girl.

CUT TO:

103 INT. RISSO'S - NIGHT

Michael pushes his plate away; he has no appetite.

103 Cont.

His eyes examine the young girls in the restaurant, hoping to find some resemblance to Sandra.

CUT TO:

104 EXT. PIAZZA - NIGHT

The piazza fountain by moonlight.

CUT TO:

105 INT. FABRINI'S OFFICE - DAY

CAMERA SHOT through window of Fabrini's office. He picks up the phone. We are unable to hear his voice.

He disconnects the line and immediately dials another number.

CUT TO:

106 EXT./INT. PHONY KIDNAPPING SEQUENCE - DAY

Fabrini stands OUTSIDE SANTA FELICITA'S with two big trench-coated THUGS wearing black gloves. They are standing beside a long black Italian car.

Fabrini gives the thugs instructions. C.U. reveals they are two hospital attendants in disguise.

CUT: Fabrini inspects a hospital ROOM especially decorated to look like a cheap HIDEOUT shack. There is an old sofa and several rickety chairs.

Along one wall are several mirrors. Fabrini examines them closely.

Fabrini walks into ADJOINING ROOM and examines the small modern video cameras which are trained through the two-way mirrors leading to the phony hideout room. Several attendants stand by the camera. Fabrini checks to see if the planted microphones are working properly.

EXT. SANTA FELICITA'S. Michael walks into the hospital.

Fabrini checks his watch.

106 Cont.

The two trench-coated thugs burst into SANDRA'S ROOM, pull guns, wave them dramatically about and drag her off. She shows no emotion.

EXT. REAR DOOR of Santa Felicita. The thugs hustle Sandra out of the rear door of the hospital.

The taller kidnapper forces her face down into the back seat of the waiting black car. The thugs get in the front seat and drive away.

HELICOPTER SHOT shows the black kidnapping car driving around and around the hospital.

Fabrini and Michael stand in FABRINI'S OFFICE. Fabrini places a black briefcase on his desk and opens it for Michael.

The briefcase is stacked high with American money. Michael checks out the briefcase, closes it and hefts it.

EXT. REAR DOOR of Santa Felicita. The kidnappers' black car screeches to a halt at the same door it had just left.

The pseudo-kidnappers drag the limp, blindfolded Sandra out of the back seat.

The black outlines of the kidnappers haul the unprotesting Sandra through a stark white CORRIDOR. What the kidnappers lack in acting ability, they make up in enthusiasm.

The pseuco-kidnappers force Sandra into the specially decorated HIDEOUT ROOM and close the door behind them.

Fabrini and Michael stand next to the cameras in the ADJOINING OBSERVATION ROOM. They stare intently through the two-way mirrors.

Michael holds the black briefcase.

MICHAEL'S P.O.V. through mirror: the thugs throw Sandra on the sofa and remove her blindfold. Knowing the cameras are trained on them, the kidnappers strike phony poses, wave their guns and strut about the room.

Sandra shows no emotion.

106 Cont. (2)

Fabrini turns to Michael:

FABRINI

Are you ready, Mr. Courtland?

Michael nods.

FABRINI

Okay.

Fabrini motions for Michael to go and he exits the observation room.

FABRINI'S P.O.V. through mirror: Fabrini waits for Michael to enter the hideout room with the money. Sandra sits on the sofa next to one of the kidnappers.

There is a KNOCK on the hideout door. One of the kidnappers motions for the other to answer the door. He stands up.

The kidnapper, his gun drawn, opens the door and lets Michael in. Sandra watches him intently.

Michael walks over until he is standing directly in front of Sandra.

KIDNAPPER

(gesturing with gun)

Open it.

Michael sets the briefcase on the sofa next to Sandra and slowly opens it. Sandra turns her head and stares at the briefcase.

The briefcase is stacked with money.

Sandra looks at Michael. The pseudo-kidnappers quickly walk out of camera range.

Michael waits not knowing what to expect.

CAMERA goes to TWO-SHOT of Michael and Sandra.

Sandra looks at Michael and says:

SANDRA

Daddy! Daddy! Mommy, look!
Daddy's finally come with the
money!

106 Cont. (3)

Michael, thinking he was re-enacting the second kidnapping, realizes he has in fact re-enacted the first. The horrible truth descends upon him in a flash.

With the sound of a dying animal Michael cries out:

COURTLAND

Amy! Amy!

Their eyes melt into each other.

Sandra, unsure of what his reaction will be, stands up and approaches Michael.

Michael sweeps Sandra up in his arms and twirls her about.

Amy is overjoyed to have found her father again. Michael is not sure who he is holding in his arms--Beth, Sandra or Amy--but whoever it is, he loves her. This is all he has ever lived for.

Michael and Sandra spin CLOCKWISE in each other's arms as the CAMERA turns COUNTERCLOCKWISE around them.

They drift into SLOW MOTION as the sound of Patti Page's soaring voice fills the soundtrack:

"So I'll keep changing partners until
you're in my arms and then,
Oh, my darling, I'll never change
partners again."

THE END