

Ransom

by

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REVISED
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EXT. LOS ALTOS HILLS, CALIFORNIA - 7:00 A.M.

Bird songs. Serene. The lights of Silicon Valley flicker in the distance below. The only mechanical intrusion is that of an aircraft engine.

EXT. AIRCRAFT - IN THE AIR -

It's an antique, an open air Stearman. The pilot, TOM WHEATON sits in the rear cockpit. His nine year old son, SAM WHEATON peeks from the front cockpit. Each wears a headset over a leather helmet.

TOM
(over radio)
More rudder...that's it. You're getting it.

The plane skids crazily.

TOM
Whoa...Sam. Not so much...
Good...That's it. That's it. Roll out. Good...Try and coordinate the pedals with the stick...
(demonstrating)
This way and...this way. See?

The plane responds.

SAM
Dad, I can't even drive a car.

TOM
This is safer when you get the hang of it. Not much to hit up here in three demensional space.

SAM
Except the ground.

TOM
(conceeding)
That's why you have to concentrate.

The engine surges unnaturally.

SAM
What's that, Dad?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
(suddenly curt)
I've got the plane.

Engine surges again and quits.

Tom looks from side to side for a landing site as he tries to restart the motor in vain.

TOM
(calmly)
Damn.

SAM
(concerned)
How come you turned off the motor?

TOM
I didn't. I need to concentrate now,
Sam.

SAM
(panic welling)
Are we going to crash?

TOM
No. We'll find something.

PILOT'S P.O.V -

Highway 280 - Cal-Trans WORKERS in orange vests have closed a lane for resurfacing. Perfect landing strip. We'll take the ride down with them - skim in over cars caught in the bottle neck.

ANGLE STEARMAN - LANDING

Sort of a plant landing. Ground loops. Teeters. Falls back down on a wheel. Cars in the jam honk in approval. The Pilot waves with a flourish to them as he steers the plane towards the shoulder.

ANGLE - PLANE ON THE SHOULDER

A FLAGMAN waves traffic past it. The engine cowling is off the plane. Tools lie about on a blanket. TOM RANDOLPH WHEATON, easy, wide smile, is the richest man in Silicon Valley but you'd never know it by looking at him. He wears greasy coveralls. Av-gas drips out of a fuel line onto his running shoe as he undoes the other end of the line with a wrench. Sam holds plyers for him.

ANGLE -

Tom blows out the fuel line like a pea shooter. He looks at his watch. Pulls a cell phone from a hip pocket and punches in a number. Goes back to installing the cleared fuel.

TOM
David...Tom.

DAVID
(v.o.)
I know. Where the hell are you?

Tom looks around.

TOM
(smiles)
I'm stuck in traffic. I'll be on time
for Naguchi. Don't worry.

DAVID
(v.o. sarcastic)
Who me?

ANGLE - TEN MINUTES LATER

He's enlisted a couple of WORKERS to push the Stearman off the shoulder onto Hwy 280. It bounces out onto the asphalt, a gawky bird. The engine fires. Full throttle dust storm. Watch it take off.

EXT. SEMITEL CORPORATION - 8:00 A.M.

A five-story, full city block of glass and steel adjacent to SAN JOSE AIRPORT. The Stearman banks over the roof and lands.

ANGLE - STEARMAN

As it rolls to a stop near the Semitel building. Tom hops out with a briefcase, reaches back into the cockpit and pulls out a crumpled tie as Sam climbs out holding his school bag.

SAM
That was fun, dad...There's mom.

Tom looks across the low chain link fence. A white Acura waits in the Semitel parking lot nearby. He waves.

A female hand waves over the top of the roof. Tom swats Sam on the behind affectionately, sending him towards the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
(calling after him)
Give her a kiss for me.

Sam makes a face. Yuck.

Tom watches him get in the car then heads quickly to a sidewalk leading to the front entrance of Semitel.

INT. SEMITEL LOBBY -

Inside it's like an airport lobby. Tom blasts through the front door. A RECEPTIONIST at the main desk smiles up at him. The lobby is crowded. Sales. Suppliers. Job seekers. They look up as if God has just arrived. DAVID OSHIMA does not. He's obviously been waiting. He's Tom's second in command and dressed impeccably, unlike Tom still in his coveralls.

TOM
(impishly)
Am I late?

DAVID
Naguchi thinks you are.

They walk to the elevators.

TOM
The man takes six months making up his mind on this deal and suddenly he's impatient.

DAVID
He has to pick up his son in London. The boy was suspended from Eaton yesterday.

TOM
At last we'll have something in common.

DAVID
Sam was suspended again?

TOM
We've been close a couple of times.

INT. ELEVATOR -

Tom is climbing out of the coveralls. Underneath, a rack suit.

(CONTINUED)

DAVID
(referring to the newspaper
he's holding)
Read this yet?

TOM
No.

DAVID
They're not too happy about us going
in with the Japanese.

TOM
(doing his tie)
Since when does the San Jose Union
run my business...
Do I smell like gasoline?

DAVID
I wouldn't want to light a match in
here.

He stuffs his coveralls in his briefcase as the elevator opens.
Slips into a pair of loafers. They walk out.

DAVID
Good flight?

TOM
(wry)
Perfect.

INT. SEMITEL'S CONFERENCE ROOM

MR. NAGUCHI and three of his ASSOCIATES sit across from Tom and David. In the background, through a window, we see the fabrication room: Yellow light for U.V. protection and people dressed in white "bunny suits", white face-masks. A robotic arm lifts and inserts silicon discs into drying slots, like a high-tech juke box. David says something in Japanese to Naguchi. Naguchi looks confused and responds in Japanese.

DAVID
(to Tom)
He thought we were contracting the
whole room.

Naguchi flips through his budget list.

TOM
We are. I just want to know what he
wants for the implanters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

David and Naguchi have a short conversation in Japanese.

DAVID

Two million each with a three year service contract thrown in. There's a steep learning curve.

TOM

And he'll be learning the curve on our dime. Tell him it goes both ways, David. We're giving him the opportunity to build the most advanced C-MOS fabrication room in the world. I want a discount.

DAVID

I've already beaten him up pretty badly. Thirty million is as low as he'll go.

TOM

Tell him twenty eight but if he finishes the installation by April first, to the day, he gets his thirty.

David and Naguchi speak Japanese again. Naguchi smiles at Tom.

DAVID

(to Tom)

He can't do it.

Tom fishes in his pocket. Comes up with a quarter.

TOM

Heads I pay his thirty million. Tails we'll go my way.

What can David do? He explains the deal to Naguchi. Naguchi smiles broadly and bows -- a gambling man.

TOM

(to David)

I bet they didn't teach you this at Harvard.

Tom flips the coin.

ANGLE -

Naguchi, Tom and David stand in a circle watching the coin waffle on the floor.

ANGLE - COIN

Settling into heads up. Tom's loss. He doesn't bat an eye. He smiles graciously. Turns to David.

TOM
Well done, David. Mr. Naguchi-san.
Domo, domo arigato.

They bow. Naguchi says something to David.

DAVID
He wants the quarter as a souvenir.

Winner takes all. Fade from Tom's half smile to:

EXT. STANFORD DAY SCHOOL - LATE AFTERNOON

Old California architecture. The campus is empty. Sam sits on the front steps with his teacher, MS. BOOTHALAY. He's dressed in a dirty baseball uniform. She checks her watch.

SAM
My dad works really hard.

BOOTHALAY
(exasperated, wants to go
home too)
We all do.

Tom's Jaguar drives up. Boothalay gives Tom a crooked smile as Sam walks down the steps and gets in.

EXT. WHEATON HOME - LOS ALTOS HILLS - NIGHT

A rambling two story shake-sided house set back from the street on a knoll, circa 1929. An enormous sloping lawn and oak trees. A six car garage faces the street with two of the doors open. A half-built experimental airplane sits on saw horses inside the garage. Machine tools line the back wall. A hobbyist's paradise.

INT. GARAGE -

Sam works on an eight foot high Erector Set Tyrannosaurus Rex. By anyone's standards it's a marvel of engineering. Red light bulb eyes. Roofing nails for teeth. Tom hovers over Sam's shoulder as Sam tries to solder wires on an elbow motor. MUTT and CLYDE, their two dogs sleep on their beds nearby.

TOM
Too much flux on there. Here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He wipes the excess solder and flux from the wires with a rag.

TOM
Now...Just a dab.

Sam dabs the wire with a Q-tip.

TOM
Now heat the wire, not the solder.

SAM
(I know. I know.)
Dad...

The buzzer on the oven goes off in the kitchen which is directly off the garage. Follow Tom into the kitchen.

As he passes the counter, he sees the morning newspaper with the article David was reading to him. It's affected him more than he let on. He lets the buzzer go for a second or two and unconsciously reaches for the oven.

CLOSE - THE OVEN

Tom's hand opens the door and slides out a dish of Lasagne...bare handed. Ow.

See the newspaper fall on the floor.

INT. A CAR, AN '84 MERCURY ZEPHYR - SAME

Someone's P.O.V. of the Wheaton garage from a hundred yards down the road. Sam working a joy-stick. One of Rex's arms jerks mechanically. Hear a car door squeak open and lightly click shut. A FOOTSTEP on gravel.

INT. GARAGE -

Sam working the joy-stick on the remote. Noisy electric motors. Mutt and Clyde prick up their ears -- look into the night. Tom calls from the kitchen that dinner is ready.

INT. KITCHEN -

Tom rubs butter on his fingers. Decides it's too greasy and goes for the ice dispenser on the refrigerator. He misses seeing a security light go on just as he turns.

SOMEONE'S P.O.V. THROUGH BRANCHES -

Close to the garage now. Tom is in the kitchen talking through the open door to Sam in the garage. They both grin. Sam walks past his father into the kitchen stiff-legged as if he were the

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tyrannosaurus. Tom peers into the night through the open door right at us then shuts the lights and garage doors remotely.

INT. GARAGE -

Light leaks in under the doors enough to illuminate Mutt and Clyde standing at attention at the far end of the garage and growling softly. They plunge through the doggie door into the night. Bark.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Father and son eat their lasagne and do home work. Tom's got his fingers in a bowl of ice water. The dogs continue to bark.

TOM

Raccoon.

Headlights sweep the kitchen.

SAM

(without looking up from
his essay)

Mom.

EXT. DRIVEWAY -

Mutt and Clyde jump up on MARGARET. She's a radiant, short cropped blonde ten years younger than Tom, an even match mentally and slightly faster on the tennis court. She hugs the dogs and gives each one a peck on the nose. Tom helps her with her briefcase and the dry cleaning.

MARGARET

What a day.

In the background a pair of tail lights descend the hill. One of the lenses is busted and shows white. We make it as the '84 Mercury Zephyr.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Tom lays the dry cleaning over a chair.

SAM

Hi, mom. I got Rex's arm to work. It
was just some corrosion on the leads.

He presses his face to the bottom of a glass plate which distorts it horribly. He blows against it making a loud scatological faroomp. It is funny.

(CONTINUED)

MARGARET

Charming.

SAM

(distracting her)

Dad burned himself again.

MARGARET

Did you tell Dad about the call I got from school today?

SAM

I was going to.

TOM

Sam...Sam. Look at me. What happened to our agreement?

Sam looks at the table.

SAM

It wasn't my fault.

TOM

Who started it?

MARGARET

That's immaterial. Violence is unacceptable.

TOM

He has a right to defend himself. Was that the case Sam?

SAM

He called me a dick-head.

TOM

Billy O'Neal?...And so you hit him?

Sam nods.

MARGARET

That's twice in a week.

TOM

(he hates to be reminded)

I know it is.

(to Sam)

Sam, look. Remember what I said?...count to three or...ten or twenty --

SAM

I did that.

TOM

Well, go higher. A
thousand...whatever it takes.

SAM

Can I have dessert? I got an A in
math today.

Tom looks at Margaret. The kid is relentless.

MARGARET

An A in math does not cancel the F in
fight. To bed, young man.

INT. WHEATON BEDROOM - NIGHT

Margaret rests her head on Tom's arm. He reads Scientific
American as he strokes her.

MARGARET

I worry about his temper. Do you
think he's happy?

TOM

Does he seem unhappy to you?

MARGARET

No...

He lays the magazine aside.

TOM

It's just a stage. I was like that
too. It's the only child
syndrome...And boys are different
than girls.

MARGARET

(good humored)

Now there's an original concept...

(serious)

It's gotten worse, Tom.

TOM

Why do you think I'm always trying to
distract him with projects?

MARGARET

Maybe that feels like pressure to him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
He seems to love it.

MARGARET
He loves being with his dad.

She couldn't have said a more flattering thing. He grins.

TOM
(full of mock pride)
I know.

MARGARET
(oh brother)
Give him an inch.

TOM
(serious)
Maybe we should think about sending him to public school. The last thing I want is a spoiled rich kid for a son. You should see what some of those brats get away with.

MARGARET
He's not spoiled...

He picks up the magazine again. She has other ideas. She slides her hand into his pajamas.

MARGARET
...but maybe there's a way to remedy the only child situation.

She nibbles his ear. Throws his Scientific American on the floor. Clicks off the light.

INT. WHEATON BEDROOM - 6:07 A.M.

Door bell downstairs. Insistent. Tom wakes with a start.

MARGARET
(sleepily)
Who is it?

TOM
No idea.

She turns the clock to see the time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
(trying to get back into
bed)
Maybe it's the milk man?

She shoves him out again with a foot.

MARGARET
It's 1995. We don't have a milkman.
It's probably Lupe, forgot her keys.

INT. HALL -

It runs the entire front of the house with windows to the street. Tom peers out the first window. Nothing but blackbirds on the lawn. He opens the front door to DONALD RICE, Tom's neighbor. He's been running this morning. He looks like he runs too much. Gaunt.

TOM
(barely civil)
Oh...good morning, Donald. It's a
little early to...

DON
(looks shaken)
It's not about the property line this
time, Tom. You better come with me
right away.

TOM
Right now?

DON
(he means it)
Now.

TOM
Let me put on some shoes.

EXT. TOM'S STREET - DEER CREEK ROAD -

Tom follows DON off the roadway and down to a bridle path paralleling the road. Tom is still in his bathrobe but wears running shoes. They trot for a few yards, then Don stops and points up.

DON
There.

ANGLE - TREE - MUTT and CLYDE - hang by their hind legs on opposite ends of the same rope over a branch.

(CONTINUED)

TOM
(stunned)
What the fuck?...Jesus!...Who could
do this?

DON
Kids...maybe. Maybe kids. Probably.
Drugs.

Tom tries to shinny up the trunk.

TOM
Give me a boost.

Don makes a stirrup out of his hands.

ANGLE - TREE -

Tom straddles the limb out towards the rope.

DON
Maybe we should call the police first.

TOM
I don't want Sam to see this! Let's
just get them down!

Tom starts to haul on one of the ropes as we cut to:

EXT. WHEATON DRIVEWAY AT THE CURB - TWO HOURS LATER

Sam climbs aboard a Stanford Day School bus.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS -

As Sam settles into a seat at the back of the bus he gives his father a raspberry against the window like he did with the plate but Tom has already turned away. Sam takes it as a carry over from last night. He slumps into his seat. Tom scoops the paper off the driveway as the bus pulls away. He catches Margaret on the stoop still in her bathrobe. They look across to each other, trying to put it together. Worried.

ANGLE -

As soon as the bus is out of sight, an unmarked COP CAR materializes from up the street. Tom gets in. The car speeds the hundred yards to the tree.

EXT. HANGING TREE - MID MORNING -

DETECTIVE EARL DIXON squats next to the dogs. Tom stands by. A POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER takes pictures.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIXON
Did they bark a lot?

TOM
No...ocassionally...Who would do
this? It's unbelievable.

DIXON
One screwed up sonofabitch.

TOM
I want an autopsy.

Dixon hesitates.

DIXON
Looks like somebody hanged them would
be my guess.

TOM
I know what you think. I want an
autopsy. Dogs or not, they were
murdered.

DIXON
I don't know what the rules are on
that.

TOM
I'll pay for it.

DIXON
K-9 unit's got a real good vet. I'll
see what I can do, Mr. Wheaton.

He hands Tom his card.

DIXON
My beeper's on there too.

EXT. SAM'S BEDROOM DOOR - NIGHT

LUPE the housekeeper is just outside the door. She's thirty five,
and has four children back in Guatemala. She puts her bag down
and listens. Hear Sam sobbing from within. She taps on the door,
enters.

INT. BEDROOM -

Sam goes from his mother's arms to Lupé's. She looks over his
shoulder at Tom for an answer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

Mutt and Clyde were killed by a car
last night, Lupé.

Lupé holds Sam and strokes his head. Rocks him. Tom comes over,
picks him up and carries him back to bed. Margaret and Lupé take
off his shoes. Tom clicks off the light.

SAM

(stops him)

Dad?

TOM

What?

SAM

If they're up in heaven can they see
how sad I am?

TOM

I'd bet on it. But your mother knows
more about heaven than I do.

MARGARET

They can see.

Lupé nods as she pushes his hair back.

INT. SEMITEL CONFERENCE ROOM - NEXT MORNING

Dixon stares into the fabrication room at people in anti-
contamination suits while Tom starts reading the autopsy report.

DIXON

Sexual harassment wouldn't be an
issue those things.

TOM

(beat)

Forgive me. My chemistry is a bit
rusty. CH₃-CN?

DIXON

Methyl cyanide. He says it later down
at the bottom. He calls a bullet a
projectile, a knife a sharp
instrument. Know what I mean?...You
know...unless there's a motive it's
like looking for a snake in a
pipeyard...Silicon Valley is a pretty
competitive place wouldn't you say?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

Yeah, sure...Somebody might steal my shirt but...kill my dogs?

DIXON

According to yesterday's paper, some people are pretty upset. Any hate mail?

TOM

No.

Tom continues reading.

DIXON

(pause)

I seem to remember reading in the papers a while back...that when you took Semitel public you gave three of your employees checks for five hundred thousand dollars each.

TOM

A million.

DIXON

Splitting hairs. Maybe some others figured they were in line for a bonus too. You know...resentment. It grows sometimes.

Tom slides a manila envelope towards Dixon.

TOM

There's a list of ex-employees in there.

DIXON

I'll see what I can do...we're a little overwhelmed at the moment. For now, if I were you, I'd make sure your alarm is in good order and if anything comes up, give me a call.

INT. SEMITEL TRUCK - DEER CREEK ROAD - SATURDAY MORNING

Driving. Tom, Sam and NELSON, Sam's best friend. Nelson looks out the back window at Rex guyed down with ropes in the bed. Sam looks gloomily out the window.

SAM

Slow down, Dad. It might fall.

CONTINUED:

TOM

If we go any slower we'll be going backwards. How'd you get to be such a worry wart? Relax. Have fun.

NELSON

Can we ride in the back?

TOM

Too dangerous with the monster.

SAM

It's going to be pretty hard to have fun today.

CLOSE - SAM

Biting down on his tears.

TOM

(o.c.)

They don't feel any pain, Sam. They're probably scratching...fleas right now.

SAM

I know. I just miss them.

NELSON

(o.c)

Mrs. Boothalay said her dog is going to have puppies soon. Maybe you can get one.

Sam keeps staring out the window. Wipes a tear away surreptitiously.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - PALO ALTO FESTIVAL OF ART, MUSIC AND SCIENCE

The truck creeps along between people setting up booths. Hot dogs. Games of chance for charities. The Tyrannosaurus has already attracted an audience. Mostly boys. One runs along beside the cab.

EXT. PARKING LOT -

Tom searches for a space in the crowded lot. Finds one. Doesn't see it's a handicapped space. Up an alley in the background we catch a glimpse of the Mercury Zephyr. Ominous.

INT. MERCURY ZEPHYR - SOMEONE'S P.O.V -

Over a bean bag ashtray on the dash. Who ever this is, watches Tom, Sam and Nelson pile out of the truck.

EXT. DOWN TOWN PALO ALTO - UNIVERSITY AVE. - MID AFTERNOON

Cordoned off. No cars allowed. The Festival in full swing. Chili, string quartets and saxophones. Margaret threads her way through the crowd holding four ice cream cones. Follow her to the science displays. Whirly-ma-gigs, erupting volcanoes, etc. Most prominent is Rex. Sam operates him. Rex stands on four motorized skate boards. He's attracted a big crowd. Rex's eyes flash as Sam puts him through his paces in time to an R&B song. Nelson begs him for a turn.

TOM

Let Nelson have a turn. Sam, let him work it.

Reluctantly, Sam brings Rex to a teetering stop. The crowd whistles and claps. Sam hands Nelson the joy-stick.

SAM

(stern warning)

Don't push it past the mark.

NELSON

I know. I know.

Nelson is very good with it. Rex does a backward spin. Then Nelson takes him for a walk through the crowd and out onto the street.

SAM

Better turn around.

Sam tries to grab the remote.

NELSON

Don't sweat it.

Tom and Margaret watch warily.

TOM

Nelson. Be careful. He's not made to go off the platform.

NELSON

I am, Mr. Wheaton.

University Avenue has a slope. Rex is brakeless. He begins to roll faster and faster.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
Oh shit.

SAM
Dad!

ANGLE - REX

Parting the crowd. A group of children at a popcorn stand scream as the monster bears down on them. Tom sprints after him and throws a block, deflecting the dinosaur through the window of a capuccino shop.

INT. CAPUCCINO SHOP -

Rex's head, what's left of it, sticks into the shop. A shard of glass falls and shatters. The whole street has gone silent but for Sam who screams at Nelson. ANGLE - SAM and NELSON

SAM
You idiot! You idiot!

Nelson backs away, mortified.

SAM
I told you!

He hits Nelson. Nelson backs off and drops the joy-stick. Sam kicks it and goes after him. Nelson is a lot bigger but he cowers, too surprised and hurt to fight back. The crowd opens up to watch.

ANGLE - SAM

He windmill punches at Nelson. None connect. Nelson is crying now too.

NELSON
I'm sorry, Sam. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to. It was an accident.

He takes the blows. Until Tom yanks Sam back by the collar.

TOM
Apologize, Sam.

SAM
No.

TOM
Apologize.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
(in tears)
No! He ruined Rex.

TOM
I don't care.

Margaret goes to Nelson. He buries himself in her arms. She shepherds him away.

MARGARET
I'm going to walk him home.

SOMEONE'S P.O.V. FROM INSIDE A HOBBY SHOP ACROSS THE STREET -

Tom pulls Sam behind him and through a crowd gathering around two chain saw JUGGLERS. Not too scientific or musical but it's the crowd pleaser. Exhibits stand unattended. Everyone is being drawn off by the jugglers.

EXT. PARKING LOT -

Tom pilots Sam by the collar from the street into the parking lot. They weave through several rows of cars to get to their truck.

TOM
I never want to see you behave like that again! Do you understand? And if I ever, ever see or hear of you hitting anyone again I'll ground you for a year. Understand?

Sam nods.

TOM
Let me hear you say it.

SAM
(low and slow)
I understand, dad.

TOM
I didn't hear you.

SAM
(louder)
I understand.

EXT. TRUCK - SAME -

Sam gets in obediently.

CONTINUED:

TOM
I have to settle with the coffee
shop. I'll be back in a minute. Then
we'll go load Rex.

SAM
Forget it. He's ruined.

TOM
We'll fix it.

Tom starts to leave.

SAM
Can I listen to the radio at least?

TOM
No. Your mother and I were going out
tonight. I seriously doubt Nelson
wants you at his house now.

Takes a few steps, changes his mind and tosses them.

TOM
...Lock the doors.

P.O.V. FROM INT. MERCURY ZEPHYR -

Whoever watches just saw the key-toss.

EXT. TRUCK -

Sam cranes out the window for a better look at the jugglers,
forgetting to lock the doors. The radio blasts a baseball game.

P.O.V. FROM INT. MERCURY ZEPHYR -

Sam sits in behind the steering wheel and pretends to drive.

INT. CAPUCCINO SHOP -

The owner sweeps glass. Tom leans on the counter and writes out a
check.

EXT. SEMITEL TRUCK - POV SOMEONE COMING UP FROM BEHIND -

See the back of Sam's head through the back window.

INT. SEMITEL TRUCK -

Sam gets bored with driving and opens the glove compartment. An
avalanche of junk bursts out and litters the floor. He bends down
to pick it up and stuff it back in. He hears the driver's door
open.

(CONTINUED)

SAM
It just fell out, Dad.

A pale nicotine-stained hand with a ring tattoo, clamps him by the neck, face down into the seat. Hopelessly pinned. The other hand mashes a wadded rag in his face. Muffled cries. He goes limp. The engine starts.

EXT. UNIVERSITY AVENUE -

Tom heads back to the parking lot. A MAN he knows stops him for a second to introduce his WIFE. Tom continues on.

EXT. PARKING LOT -

Tom enters and heads for the space where he parked the truck. Not there. He starts up one row, then another, not trusting his own memory or geography.

TOM
(not alarmed)
Now where'd they go?

He does an about-face and walks back towards the capuccino shop.

EXT. CAPUCCINO SHOP -

Margaret is there.

TOM
That was quick. Where did you park the truck?

MARGARET
I didn't. What do you mean?

TOM
I thought you took it.

MARGARET
I walked, remember? Nelson lives two blocks away.

ANGLE -

Tom sprinting up University. Margaret is close behind. Again he rounds the corner to the parking lot. No truck. No Sam.

TOM
(faking a sense of relief
for her sake)
I know what happened.

CONTINUED:

MARGARET
(panting)
What?

He sees the handicapped space.

TOM
...They towed it.

MARGARET
With a boy in it?

TOM
No. Of course not. He's probably
looking for us at the cappucino
place. You go back there. I'm going
down this way.

He trots backwards and forces a smile.

TOM
Go on. He's probably there by now. Go
on.

He gives her one of his prize winning, reassuring smiles.

EXT. STREET -

Tom running up the white line between traffic. He didn't believe a word he just said. He stops in an intersection and looks in all directions. Honking horns. Sees the rear end of a stake-bed truck disappear into an alley. Runs after it.

ANGLE TOM -

Running up the alley. He surprises the driver. Wrong truck. Backs off and runs back out the alley.

EXT. CAPUCCINO SHOP - AT A PAY PHONE

Tom out of breath from the run. Margaret looks distraught as she hangs up the phone.

TOM
Nelson's?

MARGARET
He's not there. I'm calling the
police.
(yells up the street)
Sam! Sam!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

Let's not panic. He's walked home before.

MARGARET

I'm not panicked, Tom. I am just going to call the police.

She picks it up and punches 911.

911 OPERATOR

(v.o.)

911, emergency operator.

MARGARET

Hello my name is Margaret Wheaton and I think my son is missing.

Tom looks through his wallet for something. Finds a business card.

911 OPERATOR

(v.o.)

Is this an emergency?

MARGARET

He's missing. I'd call that an emergency.

Tom holds up Dixon's card to Margaret.

TOM

Let's go direct. Dial Dixon.

He hangs the phone up for her.

INT. MARGARET'S CAR -

Tom drives precisely and very fast. He reaches across Margaret and snaps her seat belt in for her. She pays no attention to the belt or the speed. She's on the phone with Patty, Nelson's mother.

MARGARET

Patty, It's me again. Any sign?...I will...I will...We'll be there in a minute...Call me if...I know... I promise...I know. You're probably right.

She presses the phone off. Stares out the windshield.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGARET
(snaps at Tom)
Slow down, dammit.

He does a little. She looks past her own reflection in the window at the blurr of trees.

MARGARET
(to herself)
Be home Sam. Be home.

INT. WHEATON GARAGE - DARK

The door flies open blinding us with light, silhouetting Tom.

TOM
Sam!

He throws the light switch. Empty.

INT. SAM'S BEDROOM -

Margaret. Lupe. Much like the garage. Models. Projects. Margaret yanks the closet open. Empty. Margaret flies out of the room.

EXT. ATTIC DOOR -

A mechanical whirring comes from within. Hope. A sign made by Sam hangs on it. "No parents allowed beyond this point without permission."

INT. ATTIC -

No Sam, but his train set is running, the source of the whirring. One of the dormer sashes has blown open and tripped the train's transformer to "on." Margaret goes to close it and notices Dixon's cruiser turn off the road and guns up the driveway. She watches him climb out.

INT. WHEATON LIVING ROOM -

Spacious. Good art collection. Outside through a bank of French doors we see the sweeping veranda. The phone rings. Dixon is close. He picks it up for Tom, hands it to him. Margaret is on another line. She covers the receiver and watches Tom.

TOM
Sam?
(it isn't)
Yes. This is he...oh I was
hoping...we're alright. Ah... yes,
just a minute he's here. It's for
you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dixon listens.

DIXON
...Yes sir, I will.

MARGARET
(overlapping)
What about Sam? Did he find him?

Dixon hangs up.

DIXON
They found the truck.

TOM
What about Sam?

DIXON
He...wasn't with it. They found something.

TOM
What? What did they find?

Dixon knows he's near ground zero.

DIXON
An envelope...just an envelope.
They're bringing it here.

A long silence. Except for the sound of Lupe worrying the cross around her neck. Margaret bumps a table. A porcelain dish falls off and wobbles to a stop on the oriental rug.

TOM
You okay?

MARGARET
(nods -- keep things normal)
Lupe, will you help me make
some...some tea while we wait?

She heads for the kitchen.

TOM
Hey...

She stops.

TOM
I love you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGARET
Me too. Me too.

EXT. WHEATON HOME - EARLY EVENING

Squad car. Detective YATES climbs out. Dixon and Tom are there to greet them.

YATES
(by way of apology to the
grim Tom)
We had to take it by the lab. Prints.

TOM
For God's sake we've been waiting an
hour.

INT. WHEATON LIVING ROOM -

Yates opens his briefcase and hands Tom the envelope. Tom looks at his name and address typed on it. Margaret stands stock-still holding her tea. Tom opens it and pulls a computer disk from it. See dusting powder.

TOM
Did you...?

YATES
No, Sir. Clean.

INT. TOM'S STUDY - CLOSE ON COMPUTER SCREEN -

as it comes to life.

ANGLE - TOM

He slides the disk into the machine. The disk Icon comes up. Tom moves the mouse arrow over the Icon. Clicks it. The screen goes blank. Then...

COMPUTER
(digital, robotic voice)
Please stand by, Mr. Wheaton.

Margaret draws a sharp breath. A dot appears in the middle of the screen. It grows rapidly until we see it's a computer graphic of two dogs swinging from a rope.

TOM
Jesus!

(CONTINUED)

MARGARET

Tom!

He reaches for her. The screen comes up words. The robotic voice reads them.

COMPUTER

(robotic v.o.)

Have I got your attention? Listen very carefully. I have your son. I will kill him if you do not cooperate with my instructions exactly. Do not involve the police any further. Tell them to leave immediately or I will kill him. Do not inform the media or I will kill him. I want two million dollars in fifties and hundreds. No consecutive serial numbers. No new bills. No marked bills. The money will fit into two model #6007, hard shell American Tourister suitcases. No tracking devices in the money or the suitcases or I will kill him. You have forty eight hours to get the money. I will contact you.

The disk ejects by itself. Silence. A delayed reaction. Dixon clicks off his tape recorder and keeps scribbling something in a little pad.

MARGARET

(exploding)

No. No. No. Nooooo!.

TOM

(getting up)

Maggie. Maggie.

MARGARET

Why did you leave him?! How could you leave him?! How could you?

Tom allows her to flail. He takes some direct hits in the hail of her fists and holds her by the shoulders and pulls her to him. She breaks free.

TOM

Margaret! Listen to me. Listen to me. Listen to me!

(shouts)

God dammit..Margaret!! Listen ...

Please! We are going to get Sam back. We are going to get Sam back.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM (cont'd)
Say it with me... come on! Say it!
Say it!

MARGARET
(haltingly)
We....are... going... to...

TOM
Come on. Say it!

MARGARET
...get... Sam... back.

TOM
Again.

MARGARET
We are going to get Sam back.

TOM
We will. I promise. I'll fix it.

Margaret jack-knives at the waist, catches herself on the corner of the desk. Her legs stammer and give way. Paralyzed. Tom tries to lift her. She shakes her head violently from side to side.

MARGARET
(moaning)
Make it like it was. Make it five
hours ago, Tom.

TOM
Maggie... Listen to me. Sam needs
you. Sam needs your wits. I need your
wits.

MARGARET
(wracking sobs)
I...I...Can't...

Tom gets down beside her. Strokes her back.

TOM
You want me to call the doctor? Would
you like that?

She shakes her head.

TOM
You want to just stay here for awhile?

She nods yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGARET

No doctor. No pills.

TOM

He's all right. I know it. He's very brave, Margaret.

MARGARET

He still sleeps with a night light.
How brave can he be?

INT. LIVING ROOM -

Tom braces up Margaret as he walks her out of the study.

DIXON

(to Yates)

We'll need to...

MARGARET

He said no police, Goddammit! That means no police!

DIXON

They all say that, Mrs. Wheaton...Mrs. Wheaton, he used us to deliver the message. We will need to get a tap warrant.

TOM

I have to believe him. I just can't take the chance.

DIXON

You can't handle this by yourselves. No way.

TOM

You're not listening. I said we can't take the chance. Please. We need to be alone. We need to think this through.

DIXON

I understand. Believe me. But...

(apologetically)

Mr. Wheaton, Mrs. Wheaton...there's one thing...We have to do this... Routine...procedure, for the record. We have to take a look for ourselves?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
(beat)
What?

MARGARET
(incredulous)
You think we did this? You think we
could be this evil?

DIXON
(hands are tied)
These days...everything happens.

Dixon signals to Yates to begin the search.

TOM
After you're done. Please leave.
He... they could be watching the
house.

DIXON
We will. But do yourself a favor, Mr.
Wheaton. Do your son a favor. Call
the F.B.I.. Get some advice. There's
no risk in that. They won't come in
unless you ask them. Forgive me
but...you're not the first people
this has happened to and you're not
going to be the last. The Bureau has
resources you can't even
imagine...especially right now...in
your... Dammit, you might say the
wrong thing when he calls. You might
blow it. This is not a business deal.

TOM
That's exactly what it is. Sam is
merchandise, and he's expendable.
That much he made clear.

DIXON
So...call in the experts like you
would for a tough business decision.
That won't jeopardize your son. You
remember that case in Florida...the
girl who was buried in a box. They
dug her up with their bare
hands...These guys in their grey
suits in a forest, on their hands and
knees digging with their bare hands.
They saved her. The F.B.I.. That
kidnaper said the same thing. No
police. It's standard operating

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIXON (cont'd)
procedure for these creeps... There's
this one agent up there, name's
Lonnie Hawkins. Ask for him. If
there's one guy who can get his arms
around this it's him...think about
it, but don't take too long.

Fade off Tom to:

EXT. OAK GROVE ON THE HILL ACROSS FROM THE WHEATON HOUSE - 8:00AM

A bicycle wheel skids into frame on the carpet of thick oak
leaves. Through the spokes we see a Sparkletts truck. An AFRICAN
AMERICAN built like a Miura bull loads empties onto the truck
then disappears into the house then re-appears inside the cab as
he slides in behind the wheel. Drives off.

INT. WHEATON KITCHEN -

Tom stares out the window watching the truck leave. Whoever is
driving the truck is a twin to the man getting out of his
Sparkletts suit on the kitchen floor behind Tom. Meet special
agent LONNIE HAWKINS.

TOM
Mr. Hawkins...I want to make
something very clear.

HAWKINS
(struggling with a cuff
over his shoe)
What's that, sir?

TOM
I have some questions to ask. That's
all. After that I'd like you to
leave. My wife is very upset that
you're even here.

HAWKINS
I understand, sir. Please call me
Lonnie.

Hawkins gets up in his street clothes folding his Sparkletts suit.

INT. WHEATON LIVING ROOM -

Margaret, Tom and Hawkins.

HAWKINS
Look...the Bureau's objective is to
get your son back and that's all. We
don't care squat whether we make an
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HAWKINS

(cont'd)

arrest or not. We've got three years to do that before the statutes run out, and we will, believe me. But we're not in the revenge business...right now...just so you know our priorities. Look, this guy was smart enough to program a computer, dumb enough to do it, and evil enough to kill your dogs.

MARGARET

Nobody could kill a child.

HAWKINS

All he wants is the money, Mrs. Wheaton. Greed is what ticks this guy's clock. Don't even consider that. Killing your dogs is one thing...

(changes course)

Any problem with getting the money?

TOM

No. None. Have you worked kidnappings before?

HAWKINS

Three. They're rare these days and that's because of us.

TOM

Did you get them back?

HAWKINS

(beat)

Two.

TOM

Great. What do you think the chances are?

HAWKINS

Better if you let us in. If you leave us out...I don't know what they are.

MARGARET

We have to believe him...what he said -- the rules.

TOM

Yeah...well. Maybe that's what he wants.

CONTINUED:

MARGARET

Tom. This isn't some test of wills.
We'll pay him what he wants and that
will be the end of it.

HAWKINS

I hope it's that simple, Ma'am.

TOM

I need to know more, Margaret.
(to Hawkins)
What's your take on this guy?

HAWKINS

He's already made his first mistake.
It's a matter of time until his next.

TOM

I have to assume he's a genius.

HAWKINS

I always do...and I'm always
surprised...

A peripheral movement catches Margaret's eye outside on the
veranda. Hawkins sees it too, draws his gun and glides into a
dark corner.

HAWKINS

(whispers)

Get down.

Neither of them do. Margaret is too shocked at the sight of the
gun but Tom is clearly impressed by Hawkins' response.

ANGLE - VERANDA

Sam's mountain bike rocks on its kick stand. Margaret bursts
through the French doors.

MARGARET

(joy)

Sam! Sam!

Tom follows. Nobody there. A stream of water shoots from behind a
wall. They race for it.

ANGLE -

Rounding the corner of the wall. Nelson looks up. Startled by the
grownups bearing down on him. He's flushed and sweating. He drops
the hose he's been drinking from.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NELSON
(stammers)
It's me.

Margaret turns away unable to hide her disappointment.

NELSON
I brought Sam's bike back. I guess
he's still mad, huh?

TOM
No, Nelson, he's just not feeling
well. Give it a couple of days.

NELSON
I'm very sorry about Rex.

TOM
Don't worry about it.

NELSON
Well, See ya.

TOM
See ya.

Tom turns to Margaret and Hawkins to go back inside.

TOM
(almost too loud)
Nelson.

Nelson stops on a dime.

TOM
Nelson...Sam is sorry about the fight.

NELSON
Oh I know. That's okay. Bye.

EXT. STREET - PALO ALTO - 10:00 am SUNDAY

Tom parks in front of the Wells Fargo Bank. A GUARD opens the door of the bank from within for him. Locks the door after Tom passes through.

INT. BANK -

Cavernous, empty. Tom's footsteps echo off the marble floor. A prominent looking man, HOLT SHERMAN, is waiting for him. He's dressed casually in golf clothes.

TOM

Thanks for coming down on such short notice, Holt.

SHERMAN

Tom, I could have come to you.

TOM

I needed something to do.

SHERMAN

How's Margaret holding up?

TOM

Okay...okay. She's fine.

Sherman slides a document across the marble island towards Tom.

SHERMAN

Will you give her my condolences?

Condolences was the wrong word. They both know it but let it pass.

TOM

I will.

Tom looks down at the papers.

TOM

Where do I sign?

SHERMAN

Just where it's highlighted. I'll fill out the rest.

TOM

Did you get the FBI fax?

SHERMAN

Yes. I don't think any of his demands will pose a problem. FBI wants to scan the serial numbers. That might slow it down a little but we're already on it...I'm so glad you decided not to go this alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

Yeah well...I hope they don't screw up. I need this as soon as possible.

SHERMAN

Twenty four hours at the outside.

Tom's pen chatters off the end of his signature and taps on the granite. Uncontrollable for a second.

EXT. PALO ALTO STREET -

Tom cruises by slowly as if looking for an address.

INT. JAGUAR -

Tom sees what he's been looking for up ahead. It's a parking structure. He turns into it.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE -

Tom sees a vacant space next to a van. Pulls in.

ANGLE - VAN -

The side door slides open. A pretty young woman steps out, special agent KIMBA ROSS. She opens the Jag's passenger door. Smiles and shows her FBI badge.

KIMBA

Good morning, Mr. Wheaton. Mind if we ride with you?

Tom looks over her shoulder at the backs of two other male AGENTS sliding canvas bags out of the van.

TOM

That was the plan.

EXT. WHEATON GARAGE -

One of the six doors opens. The Jag glides in. Looks like Tom is the only one in the car. The door closes.

INT. GARAGE -

Tom climbs out of the Jaguar and comes face to face with special agent PAUL RHODES climbing off the floor in the back. He's almost a perfect clone of Tom except he's two inches shorter. The resemblance is startling. Kimba opens the trunk to let out agent, JACK SICKLER. Sickler is huge. Looks more like an anthropology professor. Red beard. He pulls three over-night bags, a hanging bag and a rifle case out of the trunk after him. Rhodes extends his hand to Tom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RHODES

Paul Rhodes. The bear just got out of the trunk is Jack Sickler.

SICKLER

(referring to the
resemblance)

He's the closest thing we could find.

TOM

It's eerie.

SICKLER

So he can make the drop for you.

TOM

No. I'm doing it.

SICKLER

Just in case, he's here.

Kimba drags a metal suitcase out from the back seat floor.

KIMBA

Where's your phone panel, Mr. Wheaton?

TOM

I'll show you.

(to Sickler)

How did you guys manage this so fast?

SICKLER

Pump's always primed down on the farm.

TOM

Dixon called you last night.

SICKLER

You're right.

TOM

Well down on this farm, I'm the farmer. Is that clear?

SICKLER

Absolutely.

The sound of a truck coming up the drive takes his attention.

SICKLER

Who's that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tom is already walking out to meet it.

EXT. DRIVEWAY -

A Semitel truck similar to the one Sam was in, pulls up to the garage with Rex lying in the back.

ANGLE - TOM AND TWO SEMITEL DRIVERS -

lower the lift gate and drag Rex into the garage.

INT. LIVING ROOM -

Margaret watches Rhodes and Sickler unpack equipment, hard pressed to process the intrusion. Strangers taking over her house. She focuses on Sickler's shoe grinding against a table leg as he crawls under a table to plug in a battery pack. Hawkins notices and taps Sickler's shoe away with his foot.

MARGARET

(to Hawkins)

Who are all these people? Why do they have to be here?

HAWKINS

FBI policy is four agents in the house, minimum. Once we're set up we'll try to keep our presence low.

Kimba comes in from Margaret's study. She wears headsets.

KIMBA

(to Hawkins, loudly)

Pac-Tel is ready.

HAWKINS

Who's down there?

KIMBA

Sam and Dewey.

The mention of Sam's name travels through Margaret. She walks away to the French doors.

ANGLE - MARGARET AT THE FRENCH DOORS -

Looking out. Kimba comes over.

KIMBA

Would you mind closing the drapes, Mrs. Wheaton?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGARET
Oh, I like the light.

KIMBA
He might have spotters. We have to
assume he meant what he said about
outside involvement.

Margaret looks at her. Her own words played back.

ANGLE - MAPLE FLOOR - A COFFEE TABLE -

The shadows of the closing curtains covering Margaret's shadow.

ANGLE - MARGARET

Turns on a lamp, then goes into Tom's study. Not there.

INT. GARAGE - SAME

She finds Tom unbolting one of Rex's arms. She watches his
concentration. His channeled hope. She comes to him.

TOM
Damned thread's stripped.

She puts her hand on his shoulder.

TOM
I did the very thing they tell you
not to do.

MARGARET
It could've happened on my watch too.

He finally looks at her.

TOM
And I told him I'd ground him for a
year.

INT. WHEATON ATTIC -

Close quarters for Kimba who has just installed a pocket sized
video camera pointing out a vent. A cellular antenna is attached.
She tests its motorized swivel as she speaks into her headset.

KIMBA
Here comes one.

INT. DINING ROOM - THE COMMAND POST NOW -

Wires everywhere connecting miniature high-tech equipment. Cell-phone boosters, antennas, listening devices. Four laptops linked together. Rhodes talks back to Kimba as he adjusts the picture from the camera in the attic on a laptop. See a gardner's truck traveling down the road in front of the house. The camera tracks it. On the next computer a close-up of the license plate comes up. On the next: Registered Owner: Javier Guiterrez - Occupation: Gardner -- Everything you'd ever want to know about Javier Guiterrez starts rolling out of the printer.

RHODES
I've got signal.
(reads the screen. Sings)
Getting to know you...

INT. TOM'S STUDY -

Tom sits on the couch hunched over F.B.I. profiles and photographs of kidnapers laid out on the floor. Hawkins and Sickler stand at the fax machine as it rolls out the police photograph of the dead dogs. Hawkins rips it off. Hands them to Sickler.

SICKLER
(under his breath)
He is a fuck'n psycho.

Tom heard it.

TOM
Don't let my wife hear you say that.

Sickler wheels around to apologize.

TOM
Forget it.

Tom lays his glasses aside. Fatigue is beginning to show.

TOM
So you've based your statistics on a
compilation of these case histories.
Right?

HAWKINS
(doesn't know where Tom is
headed)
Right...yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

Case histories in which almost everyone paid and you conclude that you win more than you lose, but you still lose. Your statistics are bullshit.

HAWKINS

If you're looking for a guarantee this model doesn't come with one.

TOM

Pay and win. Pay and lose...Why do people pay?

HAWKINS

It would be a hell of a lot easier for us if no one paid. Kidnapping would disappear...

TOM

(grasping at straws)
Israel doesn't pay.

HAWKINS

This isn't about countries. It isn't about some national terrorist policy.

TOM

(begins to go off)
If this isn't terrorism what is?...Jesus...where are our priorities? I'm sick of all the excuses. Right is right and wrong is wrong. The whole Goddamned country is being held hostage by a bunch of low-lives wanting something for nothing. The juries don't know the difference...they lap up all the mitigating palaver like flabby brained lemmings. And now we give our illustrious felons three strikes. As if that's a big threat. Three strikes? Three strikes? This ain't baseball, it's the national pastime.

The phone RINGS. He grabs for it instinctively. Hawkins stops him.

ANGLE - THE EXTENSION IN THE LIVING ROOM RINGING A SECOND TIME

In the background Sickler yanks open the door to the dining room to check on Rhodes. He gives him a nod.

INT. PACIFIC BELL SWITCHING STATION - SAME

AGENTS SAM and DEWEY and two PAC-BELL TECHNICIANS hover over a computer screen with a grid of the U.S and Canada. They're plugged into Hawkins and no doubt a hundred other agents. A light blinks on the screen next to the Wheatons' name and address. Instant trace. The map macros to Silicon Valley. A green light blinks on the location of the caller.

AGENT DEWEY

Bingo.

INT. TOM'S STUDY - SAME

Tom puts the receiver to his ear.

TOM

Hello.

LEE ANN

Tom. Sorry to call on Sunday but I forgot to tell you, you have an 8:30 at the dentist tomorrow.

TOM

Cancel it.

He hangs up too abruptly.

TOM

That was natural.

Hawkins is on the phone.

AGENT SAM

(v.o.)

Lee Ann Roos. 422 Palo Alto Ave.

HAWKINS

(to phone)

That's his secretary.

We're talking to her tonight.

TOM

Why?

HAWKINS

Everyone is a suspect, Tom.

TOM

Jesus.

INT. SAM'S ROOM - LATE SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Tom sits at Sam's desk. Stubble faced. A yellow pad lies in front of him. Wheels turning. Poised to write. Scribbles something. Margaret brings in a sandwich on a tray and sets it on Sam's bed. Tom discreetly slides his arm over what he's been writing.

MARGARET
I wonder if he's had lunch.

TOM
I can't think about those things.

MARGARET
I have to. I keep him safe that way.

ANGLE -

Margaret lies on Sam's bed now. Looks at the ceiling.

MARGARET
What are you writing?

TOM
Nothing. Thoughts.

He tears off the sheet, crumples it and tosses it at the waste basket. It misses. He leans down to pick it up. Sees one of Sam's dirty baseball socks. He fishes it from under the bed. Regards it. Then holds this rank sock close.

MARGARET
Tom.

He takes the sock away from his face and looks at her. Lost. Temporarily adrift.

MARGARET
He's not dead, Tom. He's coming home.

INT. SAM'S ROOM - LATER

Close on a vacuum cleaner nozzle as it explores under Sam's bed. Margaret's face appears at floor level. She sees something. Lupe is changing the sheets as Margaret pulls out a Playboy. Smiles.

MARGARET
Oh Sam. Already?

LUPE
My children are so far away. But not like this. Not like this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The phone rings distantly. Margaret stiffens.

INT. DINING ROOM - SAME

It's the FBI line. Kimba picks it up.

KIMBA

Oh, hi Roberta. Just a second. No
he's right here.

HAWKINS

I'll take it in there.

INT. TOM'S STUDY - SAME

Hawkins on the phone with his wife Roberta. In the background we
see Sickler and Rhodes watching t.v.

HAWKINS

(softly)

...Let me speak to her...What are you
doing up this late, Twerp? How was
school?...You did?...See, I told you
so....Soon, honey. Very soon...I miss
you too... I promise...I love you
Alicia. Let me talk to momma again.
Sleep tight.

(whispers)

Hi, baby. Give her a hug...I don't
care. Give her another one. Roberta,
I'm so glad we're not rich...I better
go.

Roberta won't let him.

HAWKINS

Gotta go. Good night.

Hangs up. Senses a presence. Turns. Meets Tom's gaze. He's
overheard.

TOM

(cool)

Has anybody turned up anything yet?

HAWKINS

(realizes he might have
hurt Tom with the rich
remark)

Ah...no. Not yet. What I meant by
that was --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tom leaves without a word.

EXT. 9TH AVENUE, SAN FRANCISCO - SAME

A modest neighborhood with an occasional store front business. A theater, a corner liquor store and a grocery/Deli. Pick up the Mercury Zephyr as it rumbles down 9th. A MAN about fifty is crossing a side street mid-block, carrying groceries and walking his dog on a leash. He steps off the curb. as the Zephyr makes the turn off 9th a little too fast. The Zephyr sideways, inches from the man's black Lab. The man and the KIDNAPPER lock eyes through the windshield.

MAN

Slow the fuck down.

At first glance the KIDNAPPER looks benign -- an aging Berkeley type with John Lennon glasses, but under those wire-rims lie predatory, intelligent eyes. He diverts them.

MAN

Not in my neighborhood, asshole.

The man pulls his dog around the back of the Zephyr as it leaves slowly. The man keeps an angry eye on it. Watches it disappear into a garage under a clapboard house at the end of the block.

INT. GUEST ROOM -

Rhodes dozes in his clothes with the light on. Hawkins shakes him awake.

HAWKINS

Graveyard.

Rhodes looks at his watch bleary-eyed and swings off the bed. Scoops change off the bed that's fallen from his pants pockets. Heads for the bathroom tucking in his shirt. Hawkins flips the pillow over and flops down.

HAWKINS

Wake me in an hour.

EXT. WHEATON HOUSE - MONDAY - DAWN

David parks at the front door. The door swings open, silhouetting Tom. We can feel the despair flowing from the house.

TOM

Thanks for coming.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVID
How's Margaret?

INT. BREAKFAST ROOM - 8:00 A.M.

Everyone present. Jack Sickler serves. He leans in over Hawkins with a fresh batch of French toast, his gun inches from Margaret's face. Hawkins sees her discomfort. He tries to signal Sickler to be more discreet but Lupe is the one who derails the awkwardness by putting a piece of melon on Margaret's plate.

LUPE
(in Spanish)
Eat.

The thowp of a helicopter interrupts. Tom gets up to see.

TOM'S P.O.V. - DEER CREEK ROAD - SAME

The chopper wheels above the trees. See a CAMERAMEN in it. A news van pulls up and parks. An antenna dish extends like a periscope. SANDRA AGAGANIAN, an ambitious looking reporter, steps out of the van onto the lawn and tugs at her Ann Taylor jacket.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

The thwop of the chopper overhead is constant.

CLOSE - THE SAN JOSE UNION - SAM'S PICTURE -

as it skids off the coffee table onto the floor. It takes a vase with it. "Silicon Boy Kidnapped -- Sam Wheaton, 9 year old son of Tom Wheaton, multi-millionaire founder of Semitel Corporation was...

ANGLE TOM -

as he explodes. In the background Margaret watches her own house on television.

TOM
(rage)
Fucking vultures! How did this get out? How? God dammit! I want to know who leaked this.

DAVID
For starters you're the most famous man in Silicon Valley.

The door bell rings. Tom storms towards it. David stops him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVID

Let me handle this. I'll tell them no comment.

David exits.

TOM

(bores in on Hawkins)
Absolute secrecy. Is this the kind of well oiled machinery I'm going to have to rely on? My God, who's minding the store?

HAWKINS

Look at it another way, Tom... We've suddenly got ten million extra pairs of eyes. Somebody could have seen this guy with Sam. This could work for us, not against us.

TOM

I wish I shared your optimism.

The scene on the t.v. is from above. See Agagianian's camera man step awkwardly into a flower bed as he focuses on David.

MARGARET

(distantly)
He's trampling my marigolds.

She turns off the television as David rejoins them.

TOM

(hot, to Hawkins)
You said the odds were good. What do you mean by that? Just how good do you mean? Fifty fifty? Three to one? Ten to one? No bullshit, Lonnie.

HAWKINS

(hot too)
Dammit. I never said anything about odds.
(slows down)
Here are your choices. You pay...and get him back. You pay...and they'll kill him anyway because he's evidence. Or...

Tom looks at Margaret. She's standing fast.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

Or? Come on. What else?

HAWKINS

You can refuse to pay and still get him back. Or you can refuse to pay and they'll kill him. Those are your choices, Tom.

TOM

You said you got back two out of three. On the one you lost...did they pay?

HAWKINS

Yes.

MARGARET

Tom, what's going on?

TOM

I'm just trying to get a fix on the alternatives. Tell me what to do, Lonnie.

MARGARET

There aren't any alternatives. We're going to pay. You can analyze all you want to. But we're going to pay.

HAWKINS

I can only advise you. It has to be your decision.

MARGARET

Our decision.

TOM

The reality is paying may not even affect the outcome.
...In fact...our son could have been dead for the last thirty six hours. Isn't that true? And now with this... Hawkins doesn't deny it.

A helicopter comes in low and drowns them out. Margaret looks up at the ceiling. Trapped. She stalks out of the room.

TOM

What do you think, David?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVID
I'd rob every bank in San Jose...I'd
mortgage my life.

Tom sinks back in his chair realizing he's alone in his doubts to pay.

INT. KITCHEN -

Lupe is watching the little T.V. on the counter when Margaret storms in. She sees herself on t.v. Someone is using a telephoto outside and is able to punch through the window into the kitchen. It takes her a moment to realize it's her. She bats the set off. Slams the shutters.

EXT. OAK GROVE ACROSS THE STREET FROM WHEATON HOUSE -

Nelson watches the gathering of the press through the trees. More television MINI-VANS and TRUCKS are arriving and setting up. This is no place for him. He swings a leg over his bike and disappears into the trees.

EXT. WHEATON FRONT LAWN -

SANDRA AGAGANIAN gives her report back to the studio into the lens. She's taken the high ground nearest the front door.

AGAGANIAN
(shouting over the
helicopters)
We don't know yet whether the F.B.I
has become involved, John, but I've
been told the family is sequestered
and has no statement at this time. We
can only imagine what the Wheatons
are going through right now and all
coming directly on the heels of an
announcement today by a local
coalition of businessmen adamantly
criticizing Mr. Wheaton's
consideration of a Japanese firm to
upgrade Semitel's facility. For now,
we'll be standing by awaiting further
developments. This is Sandra
Agaganian reporting live...

The front door flies open behind her. Margaret stands framed in the threshold. Rage. Anguish. She comes at the media.

MARGARET
(mother lion)
Get out of here. Have you no decency?
Have you no conscience? Where's your
humanity?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She burns in a look at Agaganian as she twists the long handle to the sprinkler system. The lawn explodes with water. Total inundation. She turns on a hose and blasts Agaganian. Then goes after the crew, herding them away and anyone else who lags.

MARGARET
(to the whole crowd)
This is private.

She holds the hose defiantly. No one moves. She drops the hose, turns to leave and it snakes back on her soaking her too. Utter and complete humiliation.

ANGLE - A NEWS DIRECTOR

with his crew. Soaked to the bone. He turns away from the scene.

DIRECTOR
(to cameraman)
Turn it off...I said turn it off.

INT. WHEATON LIVING ROOM -

Margaret enters dripping. Tom has been waiting for her.

TOM
Nice work, Maggie.

Tom wraps her up in a huge towel and pulls her to him. Kisses her wet head then gently dries her hair.

MARGARET
(shaking)
Bastards.

Hawkins interrupts. No time for manners.

HAWKINS
We got a possible lead. Do you have a picture of Sam with short hair?

MARGARET
(the press outside becomes ancient history)
Oh my God. Where?

HAWKINS
Somebody saw a boy fitting Sam's description at a rest-stop on the Interstate with a man...they weren't sure because of his short hair. Sort of a buzz-cut.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

He's never had a buzz-cut.

HAWKINS

Well, they're waiting down there with the Highway Patrol.

(about the photograph of Sam he's holding)

I'll get the office to generate something off this.

TOM

Where is "down there?"

HAWKINS

(beat)

Reno.

TOM

Reno?

HAWKINS

We may get a lot of these.

TOM

(leaving)

I'll give him a buzz-cut myself.

Hawkins looks at Margaret quizzically. She smiles -- if you want to find out, you better follow.

INT. TOM'S STUDY -

Margaret and Hawkins watch over Tom's shoulder as he closes the lid to the computer scanner and taps in a key-stroke. Sam's face fills the monitor. Margaret reaches out instinctively. Tom stares too, then forces himself back to the task at hand. He highlights Sam's hair with the cursor and deletes it. Selects something off a menu of symbols. Hair builds rapidly into a half inch burr. Not too attractive on Sam.

MARGARET

Sam, don't you ever get one of those.

TOM

What's the fax number?

HAWKINS

(amazed at what's taken place on the computer)

Ah...702-457-3129

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tom taps it in and sends it.

TOM

Done.

He notices Margaret unpredictably fixated on Sam. He pulls her away gently.

INT. MARGARET'S STUDY - 5:30 P.M

Sickler reads Time Magazine. The phone rings. He whips on his head sets.

JUMP CUTS AS THE PHONE RING ECHOES -

INT. HALL -

Tom sprinting.

INT. BEDROOM -

Margaret frozen. Watching the phone.

INT. LIVING ROOM -

Hawkins alone by the phone, not wanting to touch it. Waiting for Tom.

ANGLE TOM -

Sprinting down the hall. Rhodes flies out of the guest bath. Collision. Tom rams his knee into a credenza. Excruciating pain.

HAWKINS'S P.O.V.

Rhodes drags Tom up.

CLOSE - PHONE - RINGS AGAIN!

ANGLE - SICKLER

With a cordless phone. Tosses it across the room to Hawkins who hands it to Tom.

HAWKINS

(yanking on his own
headsets)

Okay.

TOM

Hello?...Hello? Who is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Silence.

TOM
Hello? Sam...Sam?

SOUNDS OF CHILDREN singing and playing come over the line.

TOM
Sam. Sam...Who is this? Hello...

The phone is abruptly disconnected. Tom takes a step and grabs for his knee. Sits down painfully.

HAWKINS
You okay?...Did any of that sound like Sam?

TOM
I don't know. I don't know.

HAWKINS
We'll have it analyzed.

The phone rings again.

INT. PAC-TELL -

Agent Dewey and Agent Sam and technicians hover over the computers. Something is terribly wrong. A computer goes dark.

TOM
(v.o.)
Hello?

KIDNAPPER
(v.o. - distorted, sounds like the computer voice on the disk)
Mr. Wheaton?

INT. LIVING ROOM -

Tom looks to Hawkins. Hawkins nods, "it's him."

TOM
(slowly)
Yes. Yes. This is he.

KIDNAPPER
Get in your car and drive. Alone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

I want to talk to my son. I haven't
got the money yet.

Phone clicks off. Tom stares at it. Hawkins speaks softly to the
Dewey and Sam at the phone company. Looks at Tom. Shakes his head.

TOM

Why not?

HAWKINS

(apologetically)
Computer crashed.

TOM

(disgust)
Jesus. Wouldn't you know it.

MARGARET

What did he say? Tom. What did he
say? Is Sam okay?

Tom nods. He takes her aside.

TOM

I heard him...in the background. Sam.
He sounded fine, Margaret. He sounded
fine.

Margaret's whole body says she believes this.

MARGARET

I knew it. I knew it.

TOM

I have to drive. He wants me to get
in the car and drive.

MARGARET

Where? I'll drive.

TOM

No. No one comes. I go alone. I don't
know where. Just drive, he said.

INT. GARAGE -

Tom, Rhodes, Sickler, Hawkins, Kimba and Margaret. Tom climbs
into the Jag with David's help.

SICKLER

We wired it for sound. Just yell.
We'll be there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
That's what I'm afraid of.

Rhodes jacks a shell into a shotgun and starts to climb into the trunk.

TOM
Hey! What does it take?

Rhodes holds up his hands. You're the boss. Shuts the trunk.

Margaret leans in the window. They look at each other. This might be the last time.

MARGARET
I can't lose both of you.

TOM
(smiles reassuringly)
He's not going to do anything as long
as I have the keys to the vault.

He hits the garage remote. The agents step away out of sight from the press. He's gone.

EXT. DRIVE WAY -

The media has multiplied like a virus. Cops clear a path through them for Tom. A reporter's car peels out after Tom.

INT. KITCHEN -

Hawkins is on his phone watching the media fall over itself to follow Tom.

HAWKINS
(steely fury)
...ram them if you have to...get them
off him...Rights? Rights? Whose
rights we talkin' about? You tell 'em
the F-fuckin' B-I, and that means
Lonnie Reginald Hawkins, just revoked
them...obstruction of justice for
starters. They give you any shit set
their clocks on hard time.

Margaret comes in from the pantry where she's been watching Tom's departure, unbeknownst to Hawkins. He blushes. She smiles.

MARGARET
My husband thinks very highly of you,
Mr. Hawkins. I'm sure my son will too.

EXT. 101 FREEWAY - TWILIGHT

The Jag idles by, caught in rush hour.

INT. JAG -

The Jag jerks. Tom notices the fuel gauge. Bone dry. Frantically signals, weaves and pushes through two lanes of traffic. Barely makes an off ramp. People honk furiously. He nicks a guard rail. The car dies.

EXT. BOTTOM OF THE OFF RAMP -

The Jag coasts into a 76 station.

INT. JAG -

The ATTENDANT comes to the window for money. Tom reaches into his coat. No wallet. Feels for it in other pockets. Looks in the console. Looks up at the Attendant.

ATTENDANT
Thirty seven fifty.

TOM
I must've left my wallet at home.
Here take my watch.

ATTENDANT
We got a problem, pal. No can do.

His car phone rings. Starts the car. Floors it. Nearly hits another car. The Attendant stands there yelling, "Hey". A pickup truck pulls up next to the attendant and whatever the driver shows him quiets him down. F.B.I.

INT. JAG -

Bouncing over a curb. Phone rings again. Tom clicks it on.

TOM
Yes.

KIDNAPPER
San Francisco.

TOM
Where in San Francisco?

Line goes dead.

INT. PAC-BELL SWITCHING STATION -

Computer. The Cellular triangulation trace is successful. See a grid laid over the bay area. Three lines emanate from cellular towers intersecting a moving point over South San Francisco. An Agent taps a key. Macro up a 3-D graphic of the location. See buildings, San Francisco International, the 101 freeway. A green cursor blinks and moves along it. The phone number comes up within the cursor.

AGENT DEWEY

We got him. We got him...Sayonara,
asshole. 563-7896

AGENT SAM

That's Wheaton's. I want asshole's.

AGENT DEWEY

(nervous)

What do you mean? That's it. That's
what's showing.

AGENT SAM

How can that be?

TECHNICIAN

(incredulous)

He's able to throw off the
triangulation to the receiver not the
sender.

AGENT SAM

Can you do that?

TECHNICIAN

He just did.

INT. DINING ROOM -

Hawkins listens in to the agents at Pac-Bell and Tom. He looks up at Sickler who is also plugged in. This guy is good. See infrared view of Tom's car and the streets of San Francisco on the lap-tops.

HAWKINS

Rhodes. Get your butt moving on a
link analysis with Quantico. I want
to see every hacker and
communications psycho with a prior
dumped into the profile.

Switches to the helicopter pilot. Hear the choppper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWKINS
Charley, bravo?

PILOT
(v.o.)
Present.

HAWKINS
Stay that way.

PILOT'S P.O.V - SAN FRANCISCO

Blanketed in fog. Like rocks at sea, only the highest of high rises protrude. The SWAT COMMANDER next to him looks at the heat-seeking infrared monitor. See the same view Hawkins sees. Black and white screen showing people as ghostly-white figures going about their business.

EXT. MARKET STREET - NIGHT

Tom idles at a light. Fog. Shadowy pedestrians cross in front of him. He turns on the wipers. The phone rings.

KIDNAPPER
(v.o. as always, same
robotic voice)
Go to the United parking garage. Van
Ness and Geary. Drive to the roof.

EXT. ROOF OF PARKING STRUCTURE -

The roof is vacant. Tom's Jag comes up the ramp. He drives to the middle and stops.

INT. JAGUAR -

Tom Peers into the fog. Nothing. Checks the door locks. Reaches behind the seat and comes up with a tire iron. Lays it across his lap and waits. His fatigue rushes up on him. He closes his eyes tightly. Smiles painfully.

INT. TOM'S MIND -

Sam blowing on the bottom of the glass plate. His infectious laugh. Hawkins's disembodied voice jars him out of it over his car radio.

HAWKINS
(loud)
Tom. Someone's coming up from behind.

TOM -

Frosted with sweat. Turns down the radio volume. Sees a figure emerging from the fog. He slouches down. Grips the tire iron. Picks up the figure in his outside mirror. The man, a nobody, passes by on his way to the only other car on the roof.

EXT. JAGUAR -

All is dark. Thinning fog now. The phone rings. See Tom answer, listen and hang up. He gets out and opens all the doors and trunk -- leaves them open and slowly drives in a circle illuminated by the dome light.

INT. WHEATON DINING ROOM -

Hawkins watches the infrared view of Tom's car driving in a circle on a laptop. Another monitor scans the buildings around the parking garage.

HAWKINS
 (to Rhodes)
 Still want to ride in trunks?
 (to SWAT Commander in
 chopper)
 Pan that building again.

The camera retraces its move. It passes a heat blip on a rooftop.

HAWKINS
 What's that?

SWAT COMMANDER
 What?

HAWKINS
 That hot spot on the B of A building.
 Next to the airconditioning unit.

The image instantly enlarges. See the head and shoulders of a man looking through binoculars.

HAWKINS
 Units five through eleven. We've got
 a possible on the B of A roof. Get
 your tails over there and secure
 ground. Charley bravo...

SWAT COMMANDER
 Yes sir?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWKINS
You still out in the bleachers?

SWAT COMMANDER
Five miles, max.

HAWKINS
Tighten it up.

EXT. CHOPPER -

as it obeys and moves in towards the bank building.

EXT. B OF A STREET -

The pickup we saw at the 76 station idles into the loading dock area. A "homeless man" parks his shopping cart at the front doors.

INT. JAGUAR -

Tom still driving in circles.

INT. WHEATON LIVING ROOM -

Again we see the cellular triangulation locator but this time it works. A line intersects another directly over the B of A roof. Hawkins looks at Sickler.

SICKLER
Carpe diem.

Hawkins isn't so sure.

HAWKINS
(thinking)
Charley, bravo...

SWAT COMMANDER
Say the word.

SICKLER
(encouraging)
Ground's secured.

HAWKINS
I know. I know....Shit. Let me think.
Can you do it?

SWAT COMMANDER
Piece of cake...Sir?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWKINS

I don't want him getting into the building.

SWAT COMMANDER

He won't.

HAWKINS

What about that duct?

SWAT COMMANDER

Possible. But there's a big fan waiting for him in there.

HAWKINS

Unacceptable. I want this guy in singing condition.

(indecision)

Damn....

No one has noticed Margaret leaning on the door jamb.

MARGARET

Do it. If you're going to do it, do it.

Surprise. Hawkins whips around to meet with Margaret's steady gaze.

HAWKINS

(to SWAT Commander after a beat)

Take him.

EXT. B OF A -

The chopper thunders in from blackness with two S.W.A.Ts dangling from ropes. The MEN drop, roll and run to the back of the airconditioner. The chopper swings to the front. The observer covers the front. Big light. Bullhorn.

ANGLE - ONE OF THE SWATS

Plastering himself to a wall. Rotor washed. Dust, debris, then a blow-up Power Ranger DUMMY bounces past and stops abruptly at the end of its tether, an extension cord. The chopper pulls off. The dummy floats down to the roof.

ANGLE SWATS -

Walking up to the dummy. See a hair dryer duct-taped to the dummy's leg. Same tape for the binoculars to the hands. One of them bends down to click off the dryer. Retracts his hand. Hot.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The dummy deflates. He picks it up. See a felt-tipped message on its back: "DUMMIES" SWAT 1 talks into his hand-held radio.

SWAT 1

Nothing here but a hot air dummy and
a hair dryer. Shit floats, heat
rises. All this and a physicist too.

HAWKINS

(exasperated disappointment
over the radio)
I can see. I can see.

INT. DINING ROOM -

Margaret looks at the laptop view of the roof despondently.

KIMBA

Mrs. Wheaton...Heat-seeking devices
read heat not minds.

HAWKINS

I gave the order, Mrs. Wheaton, and I
was going to, with or without your
blessing. You are not guilty. I am
not guilty, Kimba is not
guilty...That sonofabitch is.

INT. JAGUAR -

Tom still driving in circles. Phone rings.

KIDNAPPER

(v.o. same computer voice)
You failed. I told you no cops.
Expect change in plans.

TOM

What are you talking about? What
cops?

KIDNAPPER

Expect a call noon tomorrow.

Hang up.

TOM

(yelling)
Hawkins. What the hell was he talking
about? What cops?...anybody home?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWKINS
(over radio)
Ah...We had a problem, Tom.

INT. TOM'S JAGUAR -

As he guns it up his driveway, face set in rage. Fog here too. Tom slams on the brakes in front of Hawkins and Margaret silhouetted in the door waiting for him. He gets out and limps past them, ignoring them. Margaret reaches for him as he brushes by.

MARGARET
You would have done the same
thing...Tom.

TOM
(furious)
Did anybody ask me?

HAWKINS
He wants you like this...He wants you
off balance. Don't let him do that to
you.

INT. LIVING ROOM - SAME

Margaret helps Tom to the couch. He cranes his sore leg up on the coffee table. David and Hawkins enter, not sure of his mood.

TOM
Lonnie, David...stay. What happened
to Reno?

HAWKINS
Didn't pan out.

MARGARET
Move your leg up.

She props his leg up with a pillow.

TOM
Where's the money?

HAWKINS
It's coming...two hours.

TOM
It was coming six hours ago.

Kimba enters with coffee and food. Tom isn't interested in the food.

(CONTINUED)

MARGARET

(looks at the sandwiches, a
new hope)

If he said he'd call you at
noon...Sam could be home for lunch.

(looks at Hawkins for
confirmation)

It's possible. Why not?

HAWKINS

Let's not start baking cakes yet. You
should both try and get some rest.

Margaret touches Tom's cheek. Starts to go upstairs.

TOM

I'll be up in a few minutes.

MARGARET

What time is it?

DAVID

Two.

She stops on her way out.

MARGARET

That's ten hours.

3:30 A.M. - LIVING ROOM -

Hawkins sees four Brinks GUARDS to the door. Tom just stares at
the suitcases. David picks one up to test its weight.

TOM

What good is it?

DAVID

What good is what?

TOM

The money. Negotiate with this guy?
What a joke. You think when it comes
time to make the drop he's going to
say, "meet me by the old oak tree,
hand me the money and I'll hand you
Sam." No way. I'll have to leave it
and wait for him. I'm going to have
to rely on him? Hope that he won't
kill Sam?...If he hasn't already. But
if there's no money. If I take away
his profit he ends up with nothing
but a murder rap.

DAVID

What are you saying?

TOM

If I pay I'm giving him his license to kill. He's not going to lead us to the evidence...to Sam. God what am I saying? If I keep the money, Sam stays alive.

DAVID

(exasperated)

For God's sake. Everything, statistics, common sense, says you'll lose, Tom.

TOM

And how many times has it not worked in spite of statistics...enough. Right? It's my son. How can I rely on statistics?

HAWKINS

So far it's worked more than not. How's that for statistics? You gonna deny that?

Tom doesn't reply.

HAWKINS

(cont'd.)

Oh, man....I'd bet on the guy who pays...every time, Tom. Look, some asshole comes up to you wielding a knife. He says, "I won't stab you if you give me a dollar." Are you going to give him the dollar or are you going to take the chance that if you don't pay, he'll get discouraged and leave?...Shit, stabbing you might be more satisfying than the dollar.

TOM

If he's that psychotic, sure. But does this guy seem that irrational? He's a planner. He's cautious. He obviously knows the consequences. He's thought this whole thing through but maybe not far enough.

DAVID

You're exhausted, Tom. What about Margaret? It goes against all... principles.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVID (cont'd)
(pause)
She'll hate you. Everyone will.

TOM
Because it looks cold and bloodless?
I don't give a damn what it looks
like...I have to go the way that
gives my son the best chance. Even if
it's only a millionth of a percent
better.

DAVID
This is not a Goddamned coin toss.
And what will you do if it fails? How
will you be able to live with
yourself?

TOM
David...Is there a better or worse in
Hell?

David strategizes for a minute.

DAVID
And you won't have a marriage.

TOM
But Margaret will have her son. We'll
have our son. A marriage is not a
son.

DAVID
Jesus. Tom. Get some rest. Please.
Things might look different with a
couple of hours rest. Will you do
that? Lonnie, do something.

Hawkins stands in the door, leaving.

HAWKINS
No. I'm here to enforce the law and
to advise and I've already done that.
If he wants to kill his son that's
his business.

Hawkins slams the door. David is about to follow but stops with
his hand on the knob.

DAVID
You're the one who is not being
rational. Margaret is my friend too.
I'm going to have to tell her. I
couldn't live with myself.

(CONTINUED)

TOM

(whirls on him)
Are you willing to take the
responsibility for my son's death?
Consider that. Are you? Are you so
goddamned sure, David Oshima?...I'm
the boy's father.

DAVID

(almost yelling)
And Margaret's his mother. She
carried him inside her. That
umbilical cord gives her more rights
than you.

TOM

(anguished)
Maybe that's what makes me more
objective. I've weighed every possible
consideration. Every scenario, every
second for the past fifty two hours.
And it's in here where you make the
final decisions, David. In here.

DAVID

(head or heart)
Where, which one, Tom?

TOM

It's both, it's the soul, and outside
opinions are just that. Outside.

DAVID

Then why ask mine?

TOM

Because you're the closest outsider I
know...and...you've never been a yes
man.

DAVID

And I'm not about to start now.

INT. BEDROOM - 4:00 A.M. TUESDAY

Gray light through the window. Tom is collapsed in a chair. He
may be exhausted but his wheels are still turning. Margaret pulls
down the covers. She's freshly bathed and wrapped in a towel.

CONTINUED:

MARGARET

Come on, lie down. How long has it been?

She pulls back the covers.

TOM

Forever.

He flops down on the bed. She slides his shoe off -- unbuckles his belt. Her bare shoulders are brown and smooth. He reaches out and undoes her towel. It falls away from her breasts. He cups one. They look into each other. A confluence of emotion. She takes his hand away gently.

TOM

I had to see if I'm still alive.

He pulls her down on top of him. Kisses her head. Strokes her bare back.

TOM

Margaret...?

MARGARET

What?

TOM

Nevermind. Go to sleep. Just a thought.

MARGARET

I want to know.

TOM

Nothing...now go on. Rest.

EXT. 9TH AVENUE DELI - 7:00 A.M. -

The man we saw confront the Zephyr is untieing his Lab from a news stand when the Zephyr pulls up to the curb badly. The Kidnapper gets out and nearly trips over the dog. The dog snaps. The Kidnapper leaps back. Sees the man.

MAN

She bites bad drivers. Nothing personal.

KIDNAPPER

(on another agenda)
Yeah, sure.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Kidnapper ducks into the Deli. The man follows him in with his eyes.

MAN
(to the dog)
Go for walk?

The dog leaps for joy. They walk off.

INT. WHEATON BEDROOM - 10:30 A.M.

Tom, sits in a chair with his yellow pad. Hasn't slept. Stares at Margaret sleeping. Her innocence. Her lovely nakedness. Takes a breath and bites down hard on his pain. He gets up quietly and clicks off the alarm and the phone. Leans over her and kisses her gently. Leaves.

CLOSE ON THE PHONE RINGING IN THE LIVING ROOM - NOON

Tom's hand snaps it up.

ANGLE TOM -

TOM
Wheaton.

KIDNAPPER
(same computer voice)
Got the money?

TOM
Got my son?

Scratchy phone. Tom looks at Hawkins hopefully.

SAM
(vaguely)
Daddy?...Daddy?...

KIDNAPPER
101 south. See a cop -- boy dies.

Hang up. Tom clenches his eyes and the receiver with both hands and rocks back and forth savoring the echo of Sam's voice. Hawkins finally takes it from him and lays it in the cradle.

TOM
If I see a cop, I'll kill him myself.

As Tom exits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWKINS

Tom...He exposed us up in Frisco for
this very reason. He knows you
wouldn't risk it again.

TOM

He's right. I won't.

INT. GARAGE -

Tom tosses the suitcases in the trunk. Slams the lid.

EXT. HOUSE -

The Jag bursts out of the garage. The Media comes to life like a pack of wolves. Avalanche of camera shutters and reporters. They block passage. Tom looks straight ahead. Trapped. He waves at them to move. Fuck it. He jams his foot down. The reporters scatter. One thuds against the fender. The Jag lunges out onto the street.

INT. JAGUAR - TOM'S POV IN THE REAR VIEW MIRROR -

of a news van tailing him. He slams on the brakes. The van skids violently up to his bumper with their logo filling frame. Tom lets them sit there. Agagianian nurses a banged forehead. He roars off.

EXT. JAGUAR -

pulling onto the South bound freeway. Heavy fast traffic.

INT. JAGUAR -

Phone rings. He activates it but says nothing. After a beat...

KIDNAPPER

(v.o. real voice but still
distorted, calm)
Mr. Wheaton...?

TOM

Yes.

KIDNAPPER

Alone?

TOM

Of course. What next?

KIDNAPPER

Drive to L.A.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Silence from Tom.

KIDNAPPER
Are you there?...I said drive to L.A.

Remains silent.

KIDNAPPER
Mr. Wheaton...?

TOM
(flatly)
No.

KIDNAPPER
What?

TOM
I said no. No L.A. I've had a change
of plans. Watch channel seven in one
hour. That's two o'clock.

KIDNAPPER
(confused)
What are you...?

TOM
Do you understand what I just said?

KIDNAPPER
Yeah but...

Tom punches off his cell phone. It rings immediately. He looks at it, then chucks it out the window. Whatever he's done there's no turning back now. He floors it and cuts across four lanes to an exit.

INT. PHONE BOOTH ON A STREET CORNER -

TOM
Put David on...David...yes I'm
fine...David please don't ask any
questions. Listen carefully. I need
you to arrange something for me...

INT. A WINDOWLESS GREEN ROOM -

Tom sits alone in this hospital-green room wearing his fatigue like a shroud staring up at a clock: 1:50. A television set is on in one corner. Sound off. Inane commercial. The door opens. David Oshima.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAVID
(resigned)
They're ready. I hope to hell he's
near one.

TOM
Nothing makes a man more
conscientious than pay day.

Tom picks up the two suitcases. They walk out of the room and
down a colorless hallway through a stage door with the same news
logo we saw on Agagianian's van.

INT. TELEVISION NEWS SET -

The local NEWS ANCHOR sits behind the upholstered desk. A STAGE
MANAGER escorts Tom and David in. He signals up to the DIRECTOR
in the booth. STAGE HANDS speak in hushed tones as they look at
Tom.

INT. DIRECTOR'S BOOTH - SAME

The NEWS ANCHOR'S face is on the monitor. MARVIN MARUS a wooly no
bullshit, bulldog type is the director. Oshima stands next to
him. The clock reads 2:00.

MARUS
Stand by camera three.

NEWS ANCHOR
(v.o.)
...We ask all of you to please stay
tuned for the following channel seven
exclusive breaking announcement
regarding the Wheaton kidnapping
which has been our feature story
since Monday morning. We will
continue with our regularly scheduled
programming immediately following the
announcement. Please stand by.

MARUS
Camera three.

The monitor above their heads cuts to Tom sitting at the end of
the anchor table. Tom, sweating under the blinding lights. Raw.
No make up. An alien place.

Tom on all monitors now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARUS
(impatient)
Mr. Wheaton you're on. Just look at
the red light.

Tom is caught off guard by Marus' voice in his ear.

DAVID
Give him a second.

Then Tom focuses down the barrel of the lens.

TOM
(gathers himself)
The whole world now knows that my
son, Sam, was kidnapped for ransom
three days ago.

He holds up a large photograph of Sam.

TOM
This is a recent photograph of him.
(pause)
And Sam. If you're watching this...I
love you. Don't forget that for one
minute. No matter what...
(hardens)
And this...this is what waits for the
man who kidnapped him.

DAVID
(v.o. - overlapping, urgent)
Now.

The camera widens to reveal Tom sitting behind a two million
dollar mountain of cash.

MARUS
(to Oshima)
This is gold.

Oshima cannot believe this guy.

CLOSE UP - TOM

TOM
(measured, cold, deadly)
This is your ransom...Two million
dollars in used bills. Exactly as you
demanded. But this is as close as you
will ever get to it. You will never
see one dollar of this money because
no ransom will ever be paid for my
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM (cont'd)

son. Not one dime. Not one penny. Instead I am offering this money as a reward on your head...dead or alive. And for good measure I'm adding an additional two million dollars to sweeten the pot. Congratulations...you have just become a four million dollar lottery ticket, somebody's jackpot, except the odds are much, much better. You're not just number on a wheel of fortune. The odds are better because you're a man with a face, with habits, with flaws, with needs, like food and clothing and gasoline and doctors and all the other things that link you to society. Every cop, every private detective, every bounty hunter, every man, woman, and child will be looking for you. The guy down at the Seven Eleven. The motel clerk. Who do you know who wouldn't turn you in for four million dollars?...

INTERCUT AT WILL WITH -

various faces in various places watching televisions in a beauty parlor, an airport lobby, people watching a wall of televisions on the same channel at Circuit City, then ending at FRANKIE's, a blue collar luncheonette on 9th Avenue in San Francisco. On a normal day you have to scream to be heard in here. Right now you could hear the cockroach in the conduit if it were not for Tom on the t.v. as we track down the counter and meet a mixed bag of customers lunching -- CON-EDISON MEN, a FED-EX GIRL, A SALESMAN.

TOM

...Whose loyalty can stand up to this offer? Wherever you go, sleeping, waking, walking, eating...this money will be tracking you down...for all time. And to ensure that it does...to keep the interest alive, I'm going to run a full page ad of this reward in every major newspaper every Sunday for as long as it takes. But...and here's your last chance...If you return my son, alive and uninjured and you're later arrested, I will drop all charges to the extent that the law permits. And I will pay for the attorneys for your defense...Understand -- you will never see this money.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM (cont'd)
But, you still have time to make the
right choice. If you don't...God be
with you, because no one else on
earth will be.

BACK IN THE STUDIO -

Silence.

OFF CAMERA TECH
(blurting out)
Jesus.

ANGLE -

The gallery of cameramen and stage hands. Stunned. Unsympathetic.
Tom ignores them, gets up and walks off camera.

INT. A DARK ROOM -

The Kidnapper watches an ancient television in the midst of a
mass of electronic equipment. Computers, wires, phones. An arm
rests on the doiled arm rest of a chair. He clicks off the T.V.
Total darkness except for the screen savers on the computers.

INT. CONTROL BOOTH -

No one seems to know what to do. The monitors hold on the pile of
money. David exits onto the stage. A VIDEO TECH holds his hand
over the mouth piece of a phone. A call has come through already.

MARUS
(excited, ratings through
the roof)
Go to something. Anything. Holy shit.
(to the guy holding the phone)
If that's the F.C.C. tell 'em I just
died and went to heaven.

VIDEO MAN
It isn't...F.B.I. for him.

INT. FRANKIE'S -

Like the rest of the neighborhood, gentrification came through
Frankie's ten years ago. FRANKIE has just muted the greasy t.v.
above the grill. A commercial.

FRANKIE
(to two COPS at the
register)
There's a new angle. Cojonés, eh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The two cops stare at the t.v. like the rest of the clientele.

COP
If you got it flaunt it.

OTHER COP
Our luck we'd be exempt.

Cop lays a bill down.

COP
Tomorrow, Frankie.
(to a man at the counter. The one we
saw almost get hit by the Zephyr.)
You bringing the beer tonight, Jimmy?

JIMMY
(smiles apologetically)
End of the month.

COP
Is this what we have to look forward
to?

JIMMY
By the time you guys retire you won't
be able to.

COP
Coors?

JIMMY
Whatever. Fine...Catch that guy we'll
be drinking Dom Perignon.

COP
You're the tracker.

JIMMY
Once upon a time.

They leave. Jimmy goes back to his book and egg salad.

INT. WHEATON LIVING ROOM -

The mindless commercial we saw at Frankie's yammers on the t.v..
Margaret is frozen in disbelief in front of it. Kimba goes to her
but she throws up her hands. Don't touch me. Hawkins slams down
the phone shocking her out of it. He watches her get up and weave
out of the room. Equilibrium akimbo.

(CONTINUED)

HAWKINS
 (growls at Sickler)
 Get somebody over there.

INT. CBS STAGE -

Same commercial on. Tom packs the money in the suitcases like an automaton. David tosses another stack into a suitcase with a trace of deliberate exasperation.

DAVID
 (tense)
 I can take care of this, Tom...Go on.
 Go to Margaret.

TOM
 (quietly)
 David...thanks.

Silence from David. Just packs money.

EXT. DEER CREEK ROAD - AFTERNOON

Tom drives the gauntlet of media and now TOURISTS. A feeding frenzy. Faces come at him. Surreal.

BYSTANDER
 (shouts)
 Way to go, buddy.

NEWSMAN
 (running alongside the car)
 Mr. Wheaton, Mr. Wheaton people are
 calling this another one of your
 power plays. Can you comment on
 that...?

Tom's window is up. The newsman gives up and turns back to his cameraman.

NEWSMAN
 ...Mr. Wheaton is known for his
 unorthodox business style...I've been
 taking the pulse out here and I can
 tell you the mood is not one of
 support...

INT. WHEATON LIVING ROOM

Dark. Hear noise from the media street circus -- a police bull horn. Tom shuts the front door on the noise. Tosses his keys on a sideboard. Flips on the lights. Margaret sits in a chair looking...

CONTINUED:

at the T.V.. It's been off since Tom's broadcast. He enters. Sees Hawkins close the dining room door.

MARGARET

(ice)

I can't look at you.

TOM

They're still here?

MARGARET

They didn't throw their principles out the window.

TOM

I had to do this.

MARGARET

(bitter)

I had to do this.

TOM

(pause)

I had to.

MARGARET

(quietly)

And you couldn't tell me?...God, you didn't separate business from life.

(beat)

Win or lose I'll never trust you again.

TOM

I know.

MARGARET

Tom Wheaton...the risk taker...always has to be in control. Always has to win. Always the one with the last word. Who the fuck do you think you are?

TOM

I'd do it again. If we give him the money he'll kill Sam. I know it.

MARGARET

I don't know it.

TOM

Margaret...Sam is a witness. He's evidence, incriminating evidence.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TOM
(cont'd.)

Margaret...He thinks if he can get away with the ransom he can get away with murder. What does he care?

MARGARET
How does Tom Wheaton know what he thinks?

TOM
Look at it from his point of view...you think you're smart. You've got it pegged. You've thought of everything...but you're greedy. Blinded with greed. The world owes you a living. You're fucking lazy. And you're an ignorant dreamer. And then out of left field, the one thing you never dreamed of happens. No ransom. No money. No profit. Nothing what-so-ever to gain. Your grandiose dreams evaporate. ...and once that sinks in, you realize that if you hurt the boy you'll be the most hunted man since Saddam Hussein. And you've got this guy, this boy's father who's willing to risk his son's life to get you. The father is hard like you never imagined. He's got the power and he's willing to use it. God knows what he can do. And you're still sitting there with two bucks in your pocket while dad calls in the F.B.I., the C.I.A. and the Penatgon for all you know. It ain't a private business deal anymore. If I were him I'd be so scared of Sam stubbing his toe I'd hire a limousine to bring him back.

MARGARET
(venemous)
And what if this grandstand play doesn't go the way you think it will? What then?
(pause)
Take it back. Tell him you were wrong.

TOM
No. It's done.

CONTINUED:

Silence. As she walks out.

MARGARET
You can sleep in Sam's room.

INT. DINING ROOM -

Hawkins, Sickler, Kimba & Rhodes. Tom opens the door. Hawkins finds it difficult to look at him.

SICKLER
Was it the drive to L.A.?

TOM
I'd have driven to Argentina, Mr. Sickler.

HAWKINS
Take a powder, Jack.

TOM
That's okay.

HAWKINS
Sometimes we get a little too attached.

TOM
I appreciate that. But for now anything less than professional detachment and positive attitudes is unacceptable.

INT. TOM'S STUDY - EVENING -

Tom looks distantly across the lawn from his red leather chair. He's beyond fatigue. Hawkins sits down nearby with a sandwich Lupe has provided.

TOM
Any leads?

HAWKINS
(edge of exasperation)
You mean the "tip" line?

Tom picks up on the edge.

TOM
Yes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAWKINS

Tips. Millions...plus or minus. Guess how many leads?

Hawkins holds up his fingers in a zero. Chews his sandwich.

TOM

It would seem that comes with the territory... Separating the wheat from the chaff.

HAWKINS

Not a whole granary.

TOM

Whatever it takes, eh Lonnie. Didn't you have a theory about suddenly having millions of eye witnesses.

HAWKINS

I didn't have any control over that.

TOM

And you didn't have any control over me. Is that's what's under your saddle?

HAWKINS

(chewing stare)

Lotta resources. Lotta frustration up at the office.

TOM

Lotta inefficiency too, I'd bet.

Hawkins picks up his plate and leaves.

EXT. DEAD END STREET COMING OUT OF GOLDEN GATE PARK - EVENING

Jimmy Collins jogs with his Lab out of the park and past a furious OLD WOMAN pacing up and down in front of the shabby row house we saw the Zephyr park under. She's yelling "shaddap, shaddap." Heavy metal music blasts from inside. She's too timid to actually go up to the front door. She grabs Jimmy's arm and begs him to do something. Why not? He pounds on the door. A familiar pale hand with the tatoo ring parts the curtains. Jimmy makes a sign to cut the volume. The curtains close. Jimmy expects the door to open. Instead, the volume is turned down. He looks at the old lady. That was easy.

OLD LADY

Oh bless you, Mr. Collins.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY

If they do it again, Gladys, give me
a call. I'll get an injunction.

As he walks Gladys to her door we see the garage door closed down
on the trunk of the Mercury Zephyr. Too much junk inside to get
the car all the way in.

INT. TOM'S STUDY - NIGHT

Hawkins answers his line.

HAWKINS

Hawkins...ah yeah...
(lowers his tone)
No. I'll come.

Hangs up.

TOM

(hopefully)
What? Somebody call in a lead? They
got something?

HAWKINS

(grim, putting on his coat)
They got something...
(lies)
They weren't sure what.

TOM

(starts to get up)
Don't patronize me, Lonnie. I want
the truth.

HAWKINS

If I knew it, you'd have it.

EXT. PALO ALTO WETLANDS - NIGHT -

Hawkins pulls up to a chain link fence that continues across a
briny mud flat to a reed patch. Dixon, KIRKLAND and three other
AGENTS wait for him. They're wet up to their chests. In the
background shafts of light tell us there are other AGENTS in the
reed patch. Hawkins looks at Dixon inquisitively.

DIXON

The call came in an hour ago.

ANGLE HAWKINS -

Using the fence as support. Sucking mud. He gets to the agents on
the reed patch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AGENT

Through here.

(as he guides Hawkins
through the reeds)

What's he like, Wheaton?

HAWKINS

Complicated.

Hawkins whistles softly. Clothes-pinned to the fence, where the bay laps at a piling, is Sam's STANFORD DAY SCHOOL T-SHIRT splotted with blood. A baggie containing a computer disc is stapled to it.

HAWKINS

Jesus.

DIXON

Maybe it's cow's blood.

HAWKINS

Yeah, sure...Silicon Valley makes
more optimists than chips.

INT. FBI - DOWNTOWN SAN FRANCISCO - AN HOUR LATER

Hawkins bursts out from the FORENSICS LAB. He carries a large manila envelope. One look at Hawkins and we know it wasn't cow's blood. Kirkland in lock step.

KIRKLAND

I can deliver it. Maybe it's time you
took a break.

HAWKINS

I have to do this.

He pushes through the doors into the parking lot.

INT. TOM'S STUDY -

Hawkins watches Tom as he carefully folds his son's t-shirt on his desk. He makes a slight mistake and refolds it from scratch. His hands tremble. The news choppers thwop oppressively above. On Tom's monitor we see the kidnapper's note. The note: "HERE'S YOUR REWARD. THAT WAS HIS FINGER. NEXT IT'S HIS THROAT. SAY YOU MADE A MISTAKE AND YOU'RE PAYING THE MONEY!" Tom puts the shirt carefully back in the manilla envelope. Hawkins leans in and turns off the computer.

TOM

Give me a minute.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hawkins walks out of the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM -

Tom enters from his study and walks to the front door past Hawkins. Takes a deep breath opens it.

EXT. FRONT DOOR

Tom steps out alone.

ANGLE - THE PRESS

The police have kept them off the property. It takes them a moment to register the front door opening and Tom. Agaganian's cameraman is the first. He taps her shoulder. Lights ignite.

ANGLE - TOM

As his legs take him down the lawn towards the press, the din of camera shutters rolls up to greet him.

ANGLE - AGAGANIAN

See Tom coming towards her.

AGAGANIAN
(to her camera man)
Turn it on.

ANGLE TOM

He stops twenty feet from the wall of reporters. The pack swarms. Microphones. Questions. Mini-cams. They quiet down. Tom looks into the camera.

TOM
(cont'd.)
I'm raising the reward by two million dollars.

Tom turns and walks. The press is on him all the way to the door pressing questions.

AGAGANIAN
Mr. Wheaton, people are saying some fairly nasty things about you. Have you any comment on that?

He ignores her and goes into the house.

INT. HOUSE

Tom closes the door on the press. Hawkins sits in front of the TV. He looks at Tom with a mix of disbelief and confusion as Tom heads up the stairs. Margaret appears at the top of the stairs. Lady MacBeth with good reason.

MARGARET

Don't even think of coming up here. I don't want to hear your reasons. I don't want to look at you.

TOM

Margaret...Listen to me..

MARGARET

You've got to be kidding?

(sarcasm)

Was it generosity or did you miss the bright lights? What has he done to deserve a raise?...I'm beginning to think you might be enjoying this. A chance for Tom Wheaton, the closet Napoleon, to come out and fight his Waterloo on CNN...over and over again in replay. The pundits are placing bets on top of yours. They're having a field day. You're a spectacle of arrogance. Everybody thinks you're crazy. "Has the pressure driven him mad?" Goddamned right it has! You've lost it, Tom, and you've lost me. I am not going to be part of this. I am not going to be the victim of your deceit. Now get out of here...I'm going to Patty's.

TOM

I need you here.

MARGARET

I just hope to God there's someone out there who needs the money as much as you need to show off.

She slams the door.

INT. JIMMY COLLIN'S HOUSE -

Neat. Not much color. Books. A black banded memorial card photograph of a woman on the mantel. Jimmy walks through to turn off a whistling tea pot in the kitchen. Glimpse the newspaper with Sam's photograph on the table.

INT. JIMMY'S KITCHEN -

He stands at the window stirring his Nescafé. From here we can see the layout of the neighborhood. Frankie's, the Deli - the house of heavy metal where the Zephyr lives. The back yard is rangy with a tool shed at the back fence. Jimmy dips down and takes a quick peek through a pair of huge binoculars on a tripod trained at the house.

INT. WHEATON KITCHEN -

Tom stands at the window wearing a welder's smock and gloves. He watches Margaret's Acura wend its way through the reporters and turn out onto the road. Too much to bear but he does. Walks back into the garage. Pops on his torch. Flips down the welding helmet. See now that Rex is standing.

MONTAGE - FROM WEDNESDAY NOON TO MIDNIGHT

Time passage by way of the sun's shifting angles. Tom sits rigidly in the same position in his study the entire day. The sun winks out over the trees. Hawkins pretends to read in a chair nearby keeping a close eye on Tom. Sickler plays cards in the study. He too looks at Tom. Both men wait for the crack in the cement before the cave in. Both awed by the magnitude of the man's strength.

EXT. THE BACK LAWN - DAWN - THURSDAY -

Tom stands motionless and alone on the great lawn. Marooned in hell. The phone on the veranda rings.

ANGLE - TOM

Two rings. Three rings. He looks up to see Hawkins appear at the French doors wearing his head phones. He tosses Tom the phone.

HAWKINS

Answer it.

TOM

(into phone)

Hello?

KIDNAPPER

(distorted throughout)

Want to talk to your son?

TOM

Yes. Of course.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Murmurs and scratches on the line.

KIDNAPPER
(v.o. to somebody near by)
Quick.

SAM
(v.o. distant, toneless,
from the dead)
Hi Dad.

Tom wells with joy.

TOM
Sam. Sam. Thank God. Sam...

The Kidnapper comes on.

KIDNAPPER
(v.o.)
That's enough.

TOM
No. No. Let me talk to him.

KIDNAPPER
You did, asshole. You've got one more
chance to change your mind. Quick.

Tom looks at Hawkins. Hawkins looks hopeful.

KIDNAPPER
(counting down slowly)
Five, four, three, two...

TOM
(quietly after a long beat)
No.

KIDNAPPER
(small beat)
You did it. Not me.

Hear muffled cry. Could be Sam.

TOM
Wait!

SAM
(screaming)
Dad!

INT. ANONYMOUS ROOM - DIM - SAME

The muzzle of a revolver swings close to a cellular phone. The gun points at something. Boom! Flash and smoke. A hand clicks off the phone and lays it down.

EXT. VERANDA -

Tom reels off the phone, holding his ear. Teeters. Hawkins clasps his ears too.

HAWKINS
Motherfucker!

Tom drops the phone on the ground.

TOM
Oh my God. What have I done? What
have I done?

Tom steadies himself against a chair. Hawkins whips him around. Shakes him before the man has a chance to spin all the way down into hell.

HAWKINS
It's a bluff. Listen to me. Listen to
me. Hang on Tom. Hang on. We don't
have proof.
(not convinced himself)
It could be. Wait til there's proof.
Just..hang on. Okay? Okay?

Tom stares at Hawkins, inside exploding into fragments down a bottomless shaft. He nods mechanically.

INT. WHEATON FOYER - DAWN

Hawkins and Sickler show Kirkland and another AGENT out the door. Kirkland holds the manilla envelope with Sam's shirt in it. We see Tom sitting in the living room. Stone-like. Hawkins and Sickler speak in hushed tones.

SICKLER
What about you?

HAWKINS
I don't know. I guess I'll stay here
for today. I just...I can't leave him
here.

Sickler nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SICKLER

If only he'd listened. I shoulda gagged and tied him. What's he made of?

HAWKINS

Flesh and bones and cold rolled steel.

INT. TOM'S STUDY -

Tom picks up the phone without acknowledging Hawkins. Dials the phone. Patty answers.

TOM

Patty, I need to speak to Margaret.

PATTY

(v.o., cold)

She's asleep. The doctor gave her something very strong.

She hangs up.

INT. TOM'S STUDY - DAY

Tom goes through a stack of mail. Dead eyed. Running on empty. He sets a National Geographic addressed to Sam on a stack of other magazines. Popular Mechanics. Mountain Bike. etc.

ANGLE - TOM - ENTERING FLASHBACK -

Washing his hands in the kitchen sink. Stares into the water and we travel with him to a small water fall in the Sierras. Sam shivers at the top of a rock above the falls. Tom comes up beside him dripping wet too. Sam grins. Tom takes his hand and they leap together into the pool below the falls. Yell of terror - delight.

INT. TOM'S STUDY - THURSDAY - NOON

Sherman, Oshima, Hawkins, Tom and a Lawyer. Tom is signing papers like a slow signature machine.

HOLT

Do you want me to put it in a money market account?

TOM

I don't care. Just do it. (to one of the attorneys) Lawrence...

LAWRENCE

Yes sir?

(CONTINUED)

TOM

As far as the reward money goes...I want you to create a trust. We'll work out the details later, but if after ten years we don't get Sam's killer I want it rolled into the next kidnapping case. David will you be the trustee on this?

DAVID

Well...sure. But...where are you going?

TOM

(perfunctory to Lawrence.)
All other assets I want divided evenly between my wife and these charities.

Uneasy silence.

TOM

Can we go on to Semitel matters now?

David looks at him deeply concerned. Tom does not look back.

TOM

(numb monotone)

At the share holder's meeting next month David will announce my resignation. I'm recommending to the board that he be appointed CEO immediately. I think it would be prudent for you to distance my name from Semitel. The annual report can be reprinted in time to accomodate this.

He sits back in his chair. The men wait for something else but nothing comes. They gather their things. David goes towards Tom.

TOM

You can do it. I'll see you out.

BOTTOM WHEATON STAIRCASE LANDING -

Hawkins is the last to leave. He stands in the door. Hear cars fading out on the gravel drive. The door is ajar. Tom stares at a painting on the wall. He straightens it then leadenly starts up the stairs. Hawkins pulls the front door closed. He's staying for now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He watches Tom pull himself up by the banister, hand over hand. Step at a time. Crushing grief, exhaustion. He trips on a riser. Falls to his knees and finally breaks. Hawkins takes the stairs four at a time. The dam has broken. Tom's grief pours out in jagged sobs. Hawkins holds him like a brother. Rocks him in his arms.

INT JIMMY COLLINS' KITCHEN - SAME

Something catches his eye in the back yard of the house of Zephyr. Looks through the binoculars.

ANGLE THROUGH BINOCULARS -

The Kidnapper crosses the grass to the tool shed.

EXT. TOOL SHED - CLOSE ON KIDNAPPER -

He looks furtively in all directions as he works the combination lock.

INT. JIMMY COLLINS' KITCHEN -

Jimmy retreats from the window. Kidnapper might've seen him. Jimmy goes to his bedroom where a curtain gives him cover. Looks out again. This time we see the Kidnapper making tracks back to the main house. Glimpse a white trash WOMAN as she opens the screen door for him and hands him a furniture blanket. Reed goes back to the shed. Collins sits on the edge of the bed, thinking. Picks up the phone. Puts it down. Gets up. Goes to the window. Looks through the curtains. Goes to his bureau. Opens the top drawer.

ANGLE INTERIOR DRAWER -

A wallet with a badge. A brace of engraved .45 automatics lie on the green felt liner. Hear the phone-tones of Jimmy dialing.

JIMMY

(o.c)

Detective Whitaker please.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO PRECINCT -

A DETECTIVE answers his phone.

DETECTIVE

Dick Whitaker...Hey, Jimmy Collins.
Lieutenant Jimmy Collins? Que
paso?...

(sits up to listen)

...No shit?...Positive? Just a
second. Hang on. Hang on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He scrambles for a pencil and starts jotting down instructions.

EXT. GEARY STREET - SAN FRANCISCO

A squad car blips its siren for a second as it jerks through an intersection against the red light. A car goes sideways to avoid it. Another squad car careens out of an alley and follows. Pedal to the metal.

EXT. - ELEVATED FREEWAY -

An F.B.I. unit whistles down the outside rail at 110.

EXT. JIMMY COLLINS' STREET -

Jimmy running flat out. Rounds the corner by the Deli in time to see the garage door of the house of the Zephyr swing open. Jimmy draws a gun and works himself up towards the house, taking cover behind parked cars. The Zephyr lurches out into the driveway. Cold motor stall. See two people behind the tinted glass. White-Trash and Kidnapper.

INT. ZEPHYR -

Kidnapper stomping, pumping the gas pedal. Cranking the motor over.

THEIR POV -

Through the rear window. Jimmy pointing a gun in at him. Holds up a badge. Smiles.

WHITE TRASH

(panicky)

Oh, baby. Oh baby.

She pulls at the door handle to get out but it's busted. She starts to climb out the window. Reed pulls her back in as the car starts. He turns in his seat to back up. Floors it. Slams on the brakes. White-Trash screams.

INT. ZEPHYR -

Kidnapper confused. Sits back around and stares out the windshield, thinking. In a lightning move he grabs the gun from White-Trash and fires over the back seat through the rear window, crystallizing it. Visibility gone. He shoots again. White-Trash screams and slaps her hands over her ears. Just lost her hearing.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - THE ZEPHYR

Bullets blowing out the back window. Then the side windows disintegrate as a hail of bullets rain in from Jimmy's gun.

ANGLE JIMMY -

Bullets go wild all around him from the Kidnapper's gun, shattering glass, chipping wood. He slams another clip in his gun and resumes firing. The Zephyr rolls feebly and stops against the curb as a cop skids in behind. Jimmy holds his badge up high as the cops pile out of their car.

JIMMY

Police officer. Police officer.

Jimmy takes a quick inventory of the car: D.O.A. He runs up the steps into the house as the street fills with more cops.

EXT. WHEATON LAWN -

Tom and Hawkins wait for a chopper as it descends onto the lawn. Patty's Volkswagen whips up the driveway. Margaret hits the ground running.

INT. HOUSE -

Camera races behind Jimmy. Follow him through the house outside to the shed. Rips open the door.

INT. SHED -

Hubcaps. Licence plates. A plywood partition at the back. A small boy's leg overhangs off the end of a filthy mattress. Jimmy kneels and puts his hand on the boy's leg.

INT. F.B.I. CHOPPER ON THE WHEATON LAWN

Hawkins lifts Margaret up beside him.

EXT. STREET -

Confusion. Cops everywhere. Crowd developing. A cop with a video camera. More sirens. A Coroner's van pulls up in front of the house. A news chopper materializes above the roofs.

MATCH CUT - INT. CHOPPER -

Skimming over roof tops. Quiet. Safe. Margaret and Tom sit stiffly on either side of Hawkins. Tom dares a look at her. She knows he's looking. She looks down out the window.

EXT. STREET -

The Kidnapper is being zipped into a body bag. A second body covered by a sheet lies nearby. White-Trash.

MARGARET'S P.O.V. - FROM CHOPPER -

A little league game. Then the street with a carpet of flashing red lights.

EXT. LITTLE LEAGUE GAME - THE CHOPPER ABOVE

A booming voice, Hawkins' over the chopper's p.a. system.

HAWKINS

Please clear the field. This is the
F.B.I. Please clear the field.

EXT. STREET -

Tom, Margaret and Hawkins running through the crowd, past cop cars. Past a body bag. The Zephyr. Hawkins talks to a cop on the run. The cop points to the house. He runs interference through the crowd for Tom and Margaret up to the house. See Jimmy surrounded by reporters and F.B.I. Then Margaret freezes. The Coroner's van. Tom is already up the stairs pushing through the cops.

MARGARET

(screams)

Tom!

Sees her beside the Coroner's van. Connects with a horrible sinking feeling. Starts to go to her but then keeps going up into the house.

EXT. BACK OF HOUSE -

Access to the shed is only through the house. Tom and Hawkins pile out through the screen door past some cops towards the shed.

INT. SHED -

Tom pushing. Shoving up towards a circle of Paramedics kneeling over Sam. Glimpse a leg.

TOM

(shouts)

I'm the boy's father. I'm the boy's
father.

A MEDIC steps aside to reveal Sam lying on the floor, ashen faced, eyes closed. Another medic is just snapping off a blood pressure tourniquet. Tom kneels to the floor beside him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

21.

TOM

Sam. Sam. It's me. It's dad. Are you
alright? Mom's here. She's right
outside.

Sam opens his eyes. Doesn't register right away. Tom looks up at
a medic.

TOM

Is he alright? Can I pick him up? Can
I hold him.

MEDIC

He's fine, Mr. Wheaton. Except for a
cut on his hand...a little groggy
from whatever they gave him but he's
just fine.

Tom immediately inspects the fresh bandage the medics have
applied to Sam's finger. Tom scoops him up. Right now he could
hold his son like this for the rest of time.

SAM

Dad.

TOM

Come on. Your mother needs you.

But she's already there.

SAM

Mom...Mom.

MARGARET

(flood gate opens)

Sam! My darling. Oh my darling.

Tom hands him into her arms. If ever there was a hug meant to be.
Kissing. Sobbing. Laughing. Indistinguishable words of love.

EXT. STREET -

Tom carries Sam down the center of the street. Margaret keeps a
hand on her son. Hawkins and Jimmy help part the crowd for access
to the helicopter. Hawkins swings open the door as Jimmy holds
back a reporter. Hawkins beams back at Tom.

HAWKINS

Oh happy day.

TOM

Oh happy day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tom acknowledges Jimmy with a nod.

JIMMY

Yeah.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM - A CURTAINED CUBICLE - NIGHT

Sam sits up on an examining table. Eye contact between Margaret and Tom is only for an instant. A NURSE enters with a chocolate milkshake.

TOM

I think I'll get one of those too.

NURSE

Cafeteria's on the third floor.

TOM

(to Margaret)

You want something?

Tom parts the curtain to leave.

SAM

(sudden fear)

No dad.

TOM

No?

Sam shakes his head no.

TOM

I'll be back in a minute.

Sam shakes his head no again.

TOM

You're right. I don't need one.

Off his smile we cut to:

INT. HALLWAY -

Hawkins and some cops usher Sam and his parents out the service entrance to a waiting car. The awkwardness between Tom and Margaret is obvious. Tom reaches behind Sam for Margaret but misses. Decides not to try again.

INT. WHEATON HOUSE - NIGHT

Tom carries Sam down the hall. Margaret opens the door to Sam's room and turns on the lights.

INT. SAM'S ROOM -

Margaret lies next to Sam. She strokes his head and reads to him. Tom sits on the floor listening with his back to the bed holding Sam's hand. Sam seems to be asleep. Tom reaches over to the lamp and turns it off. Darkness for two beats.

SAM
(panicky)
Turn the light on! Turn on the light!
Mom! Mom!

Tom finds the switch again. Sam clings to his mother. Shaking. Tom grabs Sam's arm reassuringly. Sam pulls him in closer, into a family hug.

INT. HAWKINS' OFFICE - SAN FRANCISCO F.B.I OFFICE - NIGHT

Jimmy sits in a chair. Hawkins sits with his feet up on the desk. A tape recorder is on the desk. Sickler hands Jimmy a sandwich off a tray he carries in from the hall.

JIMMY
Suspicion is something you pick up,
like a bad habit.

HAWKINS
Or a good one.

JIMMY
(crowing a little)
Or a good one...so I figured they
were moving him back there to kill
him. They'd taken camping equipment
out earlier...but now they were
moving really fast. Really paranoid.
Exit fever. I had to go for it...If
it got heavy, help was on the way.
Surprise. They came blasting out of
the garage. I hold up my badge. Talk
about naive. Jesus, the guy starts
blasting away like a blind man in a
barrel. The rest is history.

SICKLER
So what are you going to do with all
that money?

JIMMY
Oh, God, I didn't do it for the money.

(CONTINUED)

SICKLER

I know that. But what? Come on. Give a guy a bone.

JIMMY

(uncontrollable smile)

I don't know...maybe a car. I like the new Town Car.

SICKLER

Must be nice.

JIMMY

The best.

SICKLER

Not the car. The freedom.

JIMMY

I don't think I can take the man's money but you keep this up...you might convince me.

HAWKINS

I know him. He won't let you get away.

INT. SAM'S ROOM -

Sam is now fast asleep. Tom is nearly there himself. He catches himself from the brink of sleep, unwinds himself out of Sam's arms. Leans over and kisses him on the forehead. Margaret signals that she'll stay.

TOM

(beat)

Dr. Margolis is coming over first thing in the morning...he can see us too...any time.

MARGARET

Oh.

She just looks at him. He begins to leave.

MARGARET

Tom...

He stops.

TOM

Yes?

CONTINUED:

MARGARET

...they were leaving Sam behind,
weren't they?

TOM

Yes...they were. They did.

MARGARET

You were right. It worked...You did
it.

TOM

...Thanks.(for giving me that)
Look...Maggie...I'm sorry...It was as
if I knew something no one else could
know...It was so strong I couldn't
ignore it. No matter what you
said...what anybody said.

MARGARET

(a trace of lingering
bitterness)
We'll have to talk about that.

TOM

I love you, Maggie. I want to put
this behind us.

MARGARET

I know you do.

TOM

Have you ever been happier in your
entire life?

MARGARET

No.

TOM

That's a start.

He shuts the door softly.

INT. EXT. WHEATON LAWN - SATURDAY EVENING -

A banner strung from two trees says: "Thank You Mr. Collins." The bar-b-que coals are dim. The celebration party has wound down. Hawkins, Rhodes, Kimba, Sickler and their families all meander towards the house with Tom, Margaret and Jimmy. Sam runs up to his mother and holds her hand. His new PUPPY follows at his heels.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JIMMY
(to Sam, a little drunk)
What's his name again?

SAM
Frank Wheaton.

JIMMY
Right. Right. How could I forget a
dog with a last name.

INT. WHEATON FOYER - SAME -

Hawkins and ROBERTA, his wife are the last to leave. He shakes
Jimmy's hand as Margaret talks with Roberta.

HAWKINS
Some guy called you a modern day
Wyatt Earp on CNN. Did you see that?

JIMMY
Yeah. Unbelievable. They called me at
five a.m.

TOM
You'too? What did you tell them?

JIMMY
I don't remember. Something very rude.

HAWKINS
Well everybody...I guess we'll be
seeing you. Thanks for everything.

Tom closes the door behind them.

TOM
(to Jimmy, smiles)
Well, Jimmy. Time to make you a rich
man.

JIMMY
Like I said...

TOM
Say it again and I'll give it all to
charity.

Jimmy visibly blanches.

TOM
I'm kidding, Jimmy. Care to join us,
Margaret?

(CONTINUED)

MARGARET

No. This is yours to do. Lupé needs a hand.

INT. STUDY -

Tom pulls his check book out of the desk.

TOM

Sit down. Relax. There's a cigar in the humidor.

JIMMY

Don't smoke. Thanks anyway.

TOM

Jimmy. I haven't even fully absorbed it....it's incredible.

JIMMY

Well thanks again. But once a cop always a cop. It's entirely my pleasure.

TOM

And thank you for your patience.

JIMMY

(self-deprecating smile)
I really can't take your money.

TOM

It'll be the most satisfying check I've ever written.

JIMMY

I just came by to meet you in person...officially.

TOM

I don't take no for an answer.

JIMMY

I've been warned about you...Can I ask you a personal question?

TOM

Ah...Sure.

JIMMY

What made you decide not to pay the ransom?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

Oh...I'd rather not go into that. I'd like to put this all behind us if you know what I mean.

JIMMY

I understand.

The french doors are open. Frank, the puppy, bounds in with Sam right behind. Frank has a paper plate in his mouth with the remains of cake on it and hops up on the couch.

SAM

Oh hi, Dad. Excuse me.

TOM

That's okay.

(to Jimmy)

You should see what Sam made out in the garage.

SAM

He's still kinda busted, dad.

(to Jimmy)

Can I see your gun?

TOM

Sam...

JIMMY

Oh I don't mind. I...I don't carry one anymore, son. I'm retired.

SAM

Oh.

Jimmy and Sam keep talking as Tom shuffles under papers looking for a pen. Can't find one and slides a drawer out. Frank licks noisily at the cake plate.

JIMMY

(continuing with Sam under Tom's shuffling)

Shouldn't let him eat that stuff.

Give him something with some protein.

Makes 'em fill out. Heya, pooch.

TOM

(finding a pen)

Got it. Sam, Mr. Collins and I have some business to do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM
Okay, Dad. I'll be out in the garage.

TOM
Make sure the door is closed.

Sam leaves.

JIMMY
What a boy...How's he doing?

TOM
(hesitates, thinking)
So far so good...all things
considered.

JIMMY
That's good.

CLOSE - THE CHECK -

Tom's pen point hesitates.

TOM
(o.c)
What's the date?

JIMMY
(o.c)
Uh, the third.

The pen tip writes in the date.

TOM
The third...God. James or Jimmy?

JIMMY
James. James'll do. I have to tell
you. I really appreciate this but...

The pen point stops.

ANGLE TOM -

Leans back in his chair. Jimmy glances at the check.

TOM
Jimmy, with all your experience in
law enforcement...what makes a human
being do this kind of thing?

(CONTINUED)

JIMMY

Born stupid.

TOM

But he was computer literate.

JIMMY

Idiot savant maybe. He took computer science in Folsom. Some rehabilitation program, eh? Seems like anybody can program a disk these days.

TOM

Yeah. I guess you're right.

Tom signs his name. Smiles. Hands the check to Jimmy. Jimmy takes it. Looks at it. Can't help but grin.

JIMMY

No more car payments.

TOM

That's the idea. It's been a pleasure, Jimmy. Any plans?

Jimmy pulls out his wallet and carefully slides the check in as Tom holds out his hand.

JIMMY

Ah...no. Not yet. It'll be hard to decide. Thank you. Thank you very much. Well...

TOM

I'll see you out.

FOYER -

Jimmy has his hand on the front door knob which sticks a little.

TOM

Here. Goes to the right.

SAM

Mr. Collins. I got Rex's head to swivel.

JIMMY

(halfway out the door)
Oh...right. I said I'd see something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM
You don't have to. I'm sure we'll be
seeing you again.

JIMMY
Nope. I said I would. Through here?

TOM
How about another drink? I'll bring
it out to you.

JIMMY
Yeah why not.

INT. GARAGE -

Sam shows Jimmy in. Jimmy immediately takes an interest in the
home-built plane on saw horses.

JIMMY
Nice.

SAM
It's my dad's. This is Rex. Watch
this.

Sam turns on Rex. A piece of him clatters to the floor. Jimmy
instinctively leans down to pick it up. Sam sees a .38 in a snug
little belt holster. The coat catches on it. Sam stares at it.
Jimmy rises, knows the kid knows. Pulls his coat down. Sam
stares at him as another piece of Rex jams up. Jimmy reaches
over and turns it off for him.

JIMMY
I don't like to advertize I'm wearing
it. Makes people nervous.

SAM
Oh.

JIMMY
Let's keep it between you and me.
Deal?

SAM
Okay.

INT. LIVING ROOM -

Tom fixes drinks at the bar. Finishes the last drop of scotch in
a bottle. Looks for another on a higher shelf when a thought
stops him cold. Shakes it off. Margaret comes through on her way
outside.

(CONTINUED)

MARGARET

(whispers to Tom)

Whatever I thought about Mr. Collins before, I take it back. They're in there like peas in a pod.

TOM

What did you think about him?

MARGARET

I don't know. He seems so cold...maybe he's just shy. I wish I liked him--it'd be easier to feel grateful...What's the matter?

TOM

(thinking)

Nothing. Nothing.

She leaves. He pours some scotch still thinking. Leaves the glass on the bar and goes into his study.

INT. STUDY -

Tom finds a number in his address book.

INT. HAWKINS' CAR ON THE FREEWAY -

Hawkins and Roberta. His car phone rings.

HAWKINS

Hawkins...Tom. Did I forget something?

INT. TOM'S STUDY -

TOM

No...Nothing. Lonnie, did you tell Collins about the ransom disk?

HAWKINS

(v.o. beat)

...No. Why?

TOM

He knows about it...Lonnie you there?

HAWKINS

(v.o.)

Yeah, I'm here...Tom he can't know about it. It's exclusionary evidence. And anyone who does know about it was sworn to secrecy. Is he still there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

Yes.

HAWKINS

(v.o.)

I'm on my way.

Margaret comes back through with a tray.

MARGARET

Who was that?

TOM

Lonnie.

MARGARET

What did he want?

TOM

(measured so he doesn't
have to repeat it)

Margaret. I don't have time to
explain...Jimmy is the kidnappper.

MARGARET

Tom, that's a horrible joke...You're
kidding?

TOM

(same tone)

I am not kidding, Margaret.

MARGARET

...Sam.

She starts for the garage.

TOM

Wait. Wait. I don't think he knows we
know. Keep calm. Nothing is wrong.
Okay?...Margaret.

She nods, still not able to process it.

INT. KITCHEN -

Lupe at the sink. Margaret comes in with the tray, Tom with
drinks. The door to the garage is closed. Frank barks in the
garage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARGARET
(calling out, slight crack
in the voice)
Sam...time for bed, honey.

No response.

TOM
(as he opens the door)
Jimmy, got your drink here.
Mosaltov...

Empty garage. The big doors are closed.

MARGARET
(this isn't happening)
Tom...

He puts his fingers to his lips.

TOM
Lupé, did you see Sam and Mr. Collins?

LUPE
They go up to Sam's room I think.

He reaches into the garage and grabs a shovel starts to run. Sees Margaret hover over the alarm.

TOM
(to Margaret)
What are you doing? Come on. Come on.
Never mind that.

MARGARET
(trying to read the alarm
panel)
Which one is it? Which one is it?

TOM
The red one is the silent...

Wrong button. Sirens shriek throughout the house.

INT. SAM'S ROOM -

Jimmy snapping alert. Might be a false alarm. He looks at a closed door. Sam's bathroom. Starts to walk towards the door leading to the hall.

INT. SAM'S BATHROOM -

He's been peeing. Clasps his hands to his ears. Glued to the spot as if the siren has triggered all the terror of his abduction at once.

TOM -

Flying through the house. A chamber of siren horror. Checks out the front door to see Jimmy's car still there.

ANGLE - JIMMY AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS -

Sees Tom with the shovel in the foyer. Eyes meet. Jimmy tries a bluff smile. "What set it off?" Slides back into Sam's room.

INT. SAM'S ROOM -

Jimmy locking the door. Panic indecision. Goes to the French doors. Locked.

TOM -

Slamming into Sam's door.

JIMMY -

Doing the same against the French doors but they don't give an inch. Trapped. Go for the kid but the kid's door is locked too. He smashes into it repeatedly. His gun falls from its holster but he doesn't notice. To hell with the kid. He goes for the gun that isn't there as Tom splinters the door open. Looks around wildly for the gun but has to face Tom with the shovel raised ready to strike. He backs towards the french doors. The siren stops.

TOM

Sam! Sam!

SAM

I'm in the bathroom, Dad.

TOM

Stay in there, Sam.

Jimmy's eyes find the gun on the floor in front of the bathroom door. Tom follows his glance and sees it too. He's a lot closer. Margaret arrives.

TOM

He's alright. He's alright, Margaret.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

Mom.

Sam opens the door, sweeping the gun in front of it even closer to Tom.

TOM

(to Jimmy)

Don't even think about it.

Tom slides the gun to himself with his foot. Jimmy starts for him. Tom jabs him on the bridge of the nose with the shovel point. Jimmy staggers back.

Tom snaps up the gun. Jimmy takes a step toward him.

TOM

Take another step I'll kill you. Take two I'll kill you twice.

Jimmy stops.

TOM

In my house. In my house...Margaret!
Get Sam out of here.

She hesitates, looking at the gun.

TOM

Now!

Margaret yanks Sam out into the hallway.

MARGARET

Tom...

TOM

Go! Go!

MARGARET

Tom!

Tom pushes them out the door.

JIMMY

This is crazy.

TOM

No, this is self defense. You can't
imagine the satisfaction.

Jimmy starts backing towards the French doors.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TOM

(the killer in him)

You did it, and now you're in my house. For six days I sat in my house tortured by the possibilities of what you were doing to my son. I prayed for my own son's death so that he might be spared from these things. And then you brought them here.

JIMMY

But I almost won, didn't I? Didn't I? You shoulda paid and saved yourself all that grief. But no, Mr. Wheatons' got his principles. Why didn't you just pay? And now you want to kill me in the kid's room on principle.

Tom cocks the hammer back.

TOM

On purpose.

Jimmy turns and charges through the French doors falling onto the balcony. Cut badly. Tom is on him in a second. Flips him around and clocks him with the gun. Hard. Jimmy falls to his knees. The desire to kill this man is overwhelming; instead, he hurls the gun into darkness.

JIMMY

You couldn't do that either.

TOM

You wanted to know why I didn't pay.

Tom pops him between the eyes with a punch that would kill a calf. Jimmy folds ignominiously backwards over his knees in a deep sleep.

TOM

I could never put a price on my son's head...yours was easy.

Hawkins steps out onto the balcony. Impressed.

Hawkins flips Jimmy onto his face. Cuffs him.

EXT. WHEATON HOUSE -

The camera cranes up off a motorcade of police cars turning out of the driveway and drifts through a window into the upstairs hall where we pick up Sam, Tom and Margaret walking arm in arm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAM

Can I sleep in your bed tonight?

TOM

Of course.

SAM

Can Frank come too?

MARGARET

Oh, why not.

SAM

Then can we go flying tomorrow?

TOM

I think maybe tomorrow's going to be a family day, wouldn't you say?

MARGARET

We'll all do something fun together like...

TOM

(teasing)

Clean your room?

SAM

Dad!

-end-