

READ MY LIPS

screenplay by

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based on the film

Sur Mes Levres

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two

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OPEN ON:

A SUBWAY TRAIN -- New York -- SCREAMING downtown through a dark, echoing tunnel -- LOUD AND HARSH -- MOTOR WHINING -- RAILS GRINDING -- and then, just as suddenly --

CUT TO

INSIDE THE TRAIN. Instant SILENCE. But not. Not quite. It only seems like silence at first because of the contrast. No, there's *something* there, something deep in the mix. Thick, distant sound. Muffled. Swampy.

THE CAMERA FINDS

CARLA alone at the back. Would we see her if we weren't looking? She's maybe thirty, and not unattractive, but everything about her seems to deflect attention. In time we'll learn much about her, but for the moment all we see is a dull, hassled Midtown work-frau. She's dressed today, as she was yesterday, in a slightly burned-out trenchcoat, a dress from Century 21 that she settled for, and her second best pair of Nine West shoes. Two huge, bruised FILE CASES at her feet.

CARLA'S POV

A CLUSTER OF TEENAGERS down the car. Just off school. Hanging. Goofing. There's a couple in the group -- TWO YOUNG LOVERS oblivious to all but themselves. Hanging on each other as the car rocks along. His hand teasing at her belt loops. Her fingers stroking his. HIS LIPS at her ear. HER SMILE. The two of them whispering back and forth. Billing and cooing and...

CARLA watching them. But getting something from this that we don't. As if she *understands* them. Locked on their conversation. Then turning away, almost embarrassed, as we --

CUT TO

FOLEY SQUARE. Afternoon city traffic, but SILENT. Only the loudest, harshest noises bubbling through. As if we were hearing it from inside a bag of laundry. Odd. Disorienting.

CARLA crossing the street. Struggling with those file cases. Rushing to make the light. AN AMBULANCE racing past, lights blazing, but the siren little more than a distant whine. And then, suddenly, she stops, rushing to pull A VIBRATING BLACKBERRY E-PHONE from her pocket --

CARLA

(answering)

...hold on, sorry...just...hang on...

(juggling the phone and
the cases, and now--)

A HEARING AID -- a BTE unit (Behind The Ear) -- a small, serious piece of equipment -- discreet, but hardly invisible. CARLA pulling back her hair, hurrying it into place and -- SOUND -- *too hot at first* -- A PIERCING BLAST OF CITY NOISE comes rushing in until she can adjust it down and --

CARLA

(back on the phone now)

...no, sorry, I was on the train...

(some frustrating question)

Yeah, that's why it's taped up, it's been jammed all week...

(office crap)

I guess when I get back, okay?

Hanging up. Checking her watch. Shit...

CUT TO

BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT LOBBY. CARLA at the security desk, struggling to hoist the file cases onto the conveyor belt. TWO YOUNG MALE COPS hanging and chatting, until it's clear she's holding up the line. Finally, COP #1 reaches over and lends a hand.

CARLA

(smiling)

Thanks...

But he barely nods. Still gabbing away with his partner. Like she's invisible.

CUT TO

BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT FILING CENTER. A dingy municipal basement space. Vast and airless. CARLA at the counter, watching a BUILDINGS CLERK move very slowly through a huge pile of documents, as HER PHONE starts vibrating again --

CARLA

Hello...

(it's the office again)

No...just tell him to mark it up and I'll do it when I get back.

(longer pause)

(MORE)

CARLA (CONT'D)

No, I had a messenger lined up, but Paul was freaking out so I came down myself.

(watching the clerk)

I don't know. As as soon as I'm done.

Click. Done with the phone, stowing her impatience, trying to find a smile for THE CLERK, as we --

CUT TO

CARLA hauling the cases through A LARGE GLASS DOOR...

sheridan/ryce
design/construction/management

INTO

THE OFFICE. The decor is modern. An airy, open design. Scale models of high-rise residential projects line the entrance. There's a quasi reception area and beyond that, a large bullpen/atrium sprinkled with cubicle workstations. At the center, a large, glass-walled conference room. The executive offices rim the windowed perimeter. Thirty people work here, but it's getting late. Not much left but stragglers. A few people wrapping up.

CARLA heading toward her desk. She's the executive assistant for the Construction Management team. She's got a cubicle-suite at the hub of four offices. She's checking her watch, she's got to move quickly here if she's gonna get everything done. And then --

HER DESK. Shit... Someone's spilled coffee all over it. CARLA furious. Who'd do this? Who'd leave it? But then her outrage failing almost immediately under it's own weight. Who's here to blame? Who'd care?

CUT TO

A XEROX MACHINE strobing away --

WE'RE IN

THE DUPLICATION AREA. CARLA building presentation folders. She's got a stack of BRIGHT BLUE BINDERS laid out across the counter. She's here alone. Shoes off. Hearing aids in her pocket. Suddenly -- A SHADOW behind her -- she's startled --

SHERIDAN

Carla...

WALTER SHERIDAN in the doorway. He's in his late fifties. He's the boss. He's been working late, heading home now. Waiting, as she quickly pulls on her "ears."

CARLA

(turning up the volume)

Sorry, I was...

SHERIDAN

It's okay.

(cranky but gentle)

What happened this afternoon? It was chaos around here.

CARLA

The filings. We had the deadlines.

SHERIDAN

Can't a messenger do that?

(before she can answer)

Look, part of moving up is knowing how to delegate. I'm happy to give you this shot at the desk, but you're gonna have to start separating what's really important from the stuff we can source out, okay?

CARLA

Yes. I understand. I do.

SHERIDAN

If there's a problem? Tell Paul. Tell me.

CARLA

Okay. I will. I promise.

He nods. Smiling as he backs away. And then gone.

CARLA

(to herself)

Fuck.

The XEROX MACHINE still strobing away, as we --

CUT TO

ANOTHER FLASHING LIGHT. A wall-fixture blinking away --

WE'RE IN

CARLA'S APARTMENT. The flashing light must be her visual doorbell, because here comes CARLA to check the intercom. She'll press the buzzer and wait for her visitor to climb the stairs as we take a look at the place --

It's a small, downtown one-bedroom. A walk-up in the shadow of the Brooklyn Bridge. Nice enough. Those BLUE-BINDERS have come home from the office, she's still working on them. THE TELEVISION is playing a movie with the sound off and the closed captioning on. And there's A SLEEPING BABY sprawled out on the couch, surrounded with folded towels and clothes to stop her from rolling off onto the floor.

CARLA turning on her "ears," as she opens the door --

TO GREET

HER SISTER. ERIN is younger by a year. Prettier by half. More confident to a degree that's simply not fair.

CARLA

(as Erin breezes past)

I was just about to call you. I was getting worried.

ERIN

Sorry.

(the baby)

She was good?

CARLA

She was fine. She stopped crying right after you left.

ERIN

Darren call?

CARLA

No.

ERIN fixing the baby's t-shirt. Tender. But jumpy.

ERIN

Can I take a shower?

CARLA

Here?

ERIN

Really quick.

CARLA

Why?

ERIN

Does it matter?
(Carla not sure.)
Take me four minutes...

CARLA standing aside. No stopping her sister. Never was.
ERIN pulling off her sweater as she heads for the bathroom.

ERIN

You have a t-shirt I can borrow?

CARLA standing there as the water starts running. She's
about to ask a question, but then stops herself. Picking up
the sweater instead. Starting to fold it, as we --

CUT TO

THE OFFICE. Day. CARLA carrying a stack of BLUE BINDERS
toward the glass, "fishbowl" conference room. It's done.
Mission accomplished.

VERLAWN (OS)

Just in time...

PAUL VERLAWN waiting for her. Her direct boss. He's forty.
Slightly long hair. Slightly roguish. Slightly too cool for
the room. Or is it that he's full of shit?

VERLAWN

(the binders)

Let's have a look...

CARLA hands him one, starts for the conference room --

VERLAWN

Wait.

(she stops)

The fixture specs.

CARLA

You said we didn't need them.

VERLAWN

I said I wasn't sure. Now I'm sure.

CARLA

It hasn't been formatted.

VERLAWN

How long will it take?

CARLA
(minor panic)
We have the meeting...

VERLAWN
Okay, so bring it in as soon as you
can.
(there's a phone ringing
behind her--)
Is that yours?

It is her phone. Plus A MESSENGER hovering at her desk.

CARLA
I'm supposed to be in this meeting.

VERLAWN
Then you better hurry...
(taking the binders like
he's helping her--)
Go on, I'll pass this all out.

CARLA -- before she can protest -- VERLAWN's already heading
toward the conference room, holding those binders like he
owns them.

CARLA'S POV

There's MR. SHERIDAN heading for the meeting and VERLAWN's
handing him one of the binders, smiling proudly. TWO MORE
GUYS -- SETH and DON -- joining the conversation. SETH a
little younger and squirrely. DON more of a hardhat trapped
in a suit. The four of them admiring the binders and --

BACK TO

CARLA watching this. Knowing she's getting screwed and
there's not a damn thing she can do about it. Pushing down
her anger. Turning away. Heading back to her desk and the
messenger and the ringing phone and the rest of it, as we --

CUT TO

THE CONFERENCE ROOM. Later. SHERIDAN, VERLAWN, DON, SETH,
and several ARCHITECTS and ENGINEERS all huddled over those
blue binders...

SHERIDAN
... on these water mains, somebody
refresh my memory, what's the regulation
for pressure on the upper floors?

REVERSE TO

CARLA AT HER DESK. Watching the meeting through the glass. Turning now, moving to a bookshelf beside her desk. Pulling down A THICK CODE MANUAL, as --

VERLAWN (OS)

(behind her)

Carla, you have a plumbing code book handy?

Does she ever. In her hand. Meeting him half-way.

VERLAWN

(a bit surprised, but..)

Cool. Great. Thanks.

CARLA

The fixture specs. They're printing.

VERLAWN

Doesn't matter now. Walter's got a ten-thirty, we'll never get to it.

(off her reaction)

Better safe than sorry, right?

Checkmate. There he goes. Back to the conference room. Door closing behind him, as we --

CUT TO

OFFICE KITCHENETTE. End of the day. CARLA with her coat on, stopping here to clean up before she heads out, when --

SHERIDAN

(at the door)

There you are. I was hoping you were gonna be in the meeting this morning.

CARLA

So was I.

SHERIDAN

I'm thinking that if you're that swamped, we've got to explore making some changes around here.

CARLA

(stricken)

Changes, you mean like...

SHERIDAN

I want you to hire someone.
(is she hearing him?)
Get someone to help you. Just keep it
cheap, okay? A trainee. No promises.
See how it goes. Okay?

CARLA

Yes. Okay.
(rallying)
Yes.

CARLA wants to say thank you, or bless you, or something,
but she doesn't get it out fast enough. And he's gone.
Missing her smile.

CUT TO

AN EMPLOYMENT OFFICE CUBICLE. One little corner of some
massive operation. CARLA watching a woman named DOLORES
clattering away at the keyboard.

DOLORES

So clerical, right?

CARLA

An assistant. For me. Copying and
filing. Computer skills. Messenger.

DOLORES

Flex temp, right? No benefits.

CARLA nods. DOLORES entering the data.

CARLA

Preferably male.

DOLORES

Sorry?

CARLA

A man would be best.

DOLORES

We can't do that. It's against the law.

CARLA

(after a moment)

What about the age? Can you ask for
someone young?

DOLORES turns back. Been there. Tough but sympathetic.

DOLORES

It's a trainee position, right?

(Carla nods)

You guys have state contracts?

CARLA

All the time.

DOLORES

Anything else?

CARLA

Someone friendly.

DOLORES smiles. CARLA watching her do her thing, as we --

CUT TO

A DOWNTOWN BUS. A rainy night. Late enough that it's almost empty. CARLA heading home. Sitting there with a wet copy of Cosmo. Flipping the pages...

Sex. Skin. Lingerie. Diet. Orgasm improvement. Sex.

Finally she quits. Casting around for something to change the subject...

DOWN THE AISLE. AN OLD WOMAN talking to herself. She's got one pocketbook too many. Not homeless, but troubled. Deep in conversation with herself.

CARLA watching. Getting it. "Listening." Turning away finally because it's freaking her out. Pulling out the magazine again, as we --

CUT TO

THE OFFICE. CARLA at her desk on the phone. Under siege -- three lines holding, two lines RINGING --

CARLA

...can you hold, please?

(punching up another line)

No, I'm sorry they've gone for lunch...

(scribbling a number)

I will. Of course.

(next line)

Construction desk, can I help you?

(listening, as--)

THE CAMERA FINDS

DANNY standing there with a manila envelope. He's better looking than he knows. He's wearing new jeans, a confusing shirt and tie, and a 14th St. leather jacket. The outfit perhaps a decent reflection of his mood; he's off-balance here, not sure if he should sit or stand or what...

CARLA

...I think they were trying to find out if we were handling the zoning regs, or...sure, go ahead.

(so now she's on hold,
looking up and seeing

Danny--)

You're here for a bid proposal?

(pointing)

Right behind you, the blue binders...

DANNY hesitating. Should he take a blue binder? Doesn't seem right, but she's already back on the phone...

CARLA

...what they want, I think, is to find out whether it's just the local zoning board, or the...

(whispering to Danny as she suffers through some windy explanation--)

Are you dropping off?

DANNY

I don't know...

Waving for him to wait -- she's almost done --

CARLA

(wrapping up the call)

...of course....as soon as they can...
I will....I will....you too.

(done now)

Sorry. Where's your slip?

DANNY

I don't know.

CARLA

Am I signing?

DANNY

They just said to come here.

CARLA

Who?

DANNY

About the job?

She hesitates. Thrown. He's digging in his pocket, he's got a card from the employment office.

CARLA

I thought they were gonna call me.

DANNY

Why? You already picked someone?

CUT TO

OFFICE BUILDING FOOD COURT. Ground floor luncheonette.
DANNY watching CARLA read through his paperwork.

CARLA

(impressed)

You have CAD? Which program?

DANNY

Where's that?

CARLA

You checked off CAD...

DANNY

Oh, on the computer? Which one? PC.

CARLA

I meant the software.

DANNY

The one that's on there...

CARLA

It doesn't say.

He hesitates. Anger the first thing that comes up for him when he's anxious, but he's trying to push that away.

DANNY

I lied. Okay?

(fuck it)

On there, on the skills. I mean, I can type. And Word? Microsoft Word? I'm pretty good. But the VDP there, the certificate? It's bullshit. It's basically just typing.

CARLA

What is V-D-P?

DANNY

Vocational Development Program.

(mistaking her confusion
for interest--)

They tried for computers. Then some
guys scammed a phone in there and got
online. So that was kinda the kiss of
death there for that whole situation.

(beat)

Look, I don't even know what CAD is,
okay? But I can type. For real.

(he's tries a smile)

I learn quick.

Silence. And it's awkward. They're both confused.

CARLA

(the paperwork)

What is Client Class 1C-SMW?

DANNY

That's my parole designation.

(off her silence)

"Class 1" means, I'm a low-level risk
for flight. "C" means I'm in a housing
unit. "SMW" is a Substance Mandate
Waiver -- basically I don't have to go
piss in a cup every week. For drugs,
right?

(not getting a warm feeling
about this suddenly)

Look, I mean, my profile -- other than
the housing -- it's as good as you're
gonna get.

(just finally realizing
there's something very
wrong here--)

You don't know any of this, right?

CARLA

No.

DANNY

Who filled the application?

CARLA

Me. I did. I just...

DANNY

Who'd you think you were gonna get?

CARLA

What do you mean?

DANNY

It's a program. You went for some kind of tax break. Who'd you think was gonna apply?

CARLA

She never told me that.

He nods. He's done. Standing now...

DANNY

Fuck it. I knew this was bullshit. Sorry to waste your time.

CARLA

I didn't know...

DANNY

Why take a chance, right?

And then he's gone. CARLA sitting there alone with his paperwork. Kind of stunned. Wishing it hadn't gone like that. Not sure what she wanted really...

CUT TO

A CHINATOWN NOODLE SHOP. A big room. Even late in the afternoon it's half-full. DANNY in the corner with a book and bowl of soup. THE BOOK, a graphic novel, serious manga -- apocalyptic Samurai madness: Swords...Motorcycles... Dwarf ninjas...Fire....

Except DANNY's not looking at the book anymore, because --

OVER BY THE COUNTER

THREE GUYS just came in. Tough crew. Local dudes goofing their way through a take-out order.

BACK TO

DANNY turning away. He knows them. And it's instantly clear, he's not looking to rekindle the friendship.

AT THE COUNTER

One guy -- MARCO -- he's the dude Danny's worried about -- he's leaning there, glancing around the place. Kind of stoned. Eyes wandering --

HIS PASSING POV

DANNY in the corner. Turned away now, deep into his bowl.

BACK TO

MARCO who hasn't quite made the connection yet --

HIS BUDDY

Yo, Marco...

(as he turns back)

He's out of duck. You want pork?

MARCO hesitates -- then turning back, because he's just realized who he thinks he saw, except --

Danny's gone.

CUT TO

DANNY -- in motion -- ON THE STREET -- escaping -- hustling away into Chinatown, as we --

CUT TO

A DOWNTOWN BAR. Night. CARLA and ERIN at a table.

CARLA

(shocked)

Who is he?

ERIN

Just a guy from class. He lives in Brooklyn. He's married.

CARLA

You had sex with him?

ERIN

Had sex?

CARLA

Where?

ERIN

In a car. On the street. Like we were sixteen.

(Carla silent)

What am I supposed to do? Pretend I'm dead?

(guilty defiance)

You really, I'm serious, you have this
(MORE)

ERIN (CONT'D)

fantasy picture about Darren -- about the marriage -- how people live. It's just so not like that. We're basically roommates. I mean, that's the reality. That's how we live. Once a month we turn the TV down for ten minutes and that's it.

CARLA

You never talk about it?

ERIN

I don't want to talk about sex, I want to have it.

(and then--)

Oh, God, you totally disapprove...

CARLA

Like you care.

ERIN

I'm not you, okay?

CARLA

(stung)

What does that mean?

ERIN

I'm not patient.

(only half-kidding)

I'm selfish. I'm a bad person.

(beat)

And please, I mean, I'm telling you this -- you look like mom all of a sudden...

(raw)

I'm 28 years old, Carla. Is that supposed to be it? I'm done?

CARLA

You don't even know this guy!

ERIN

That's what I like! I'm standing there in the rain and suddenly he's asking if he can kiss me, and I'm like, "Omigod, I remember this." Kissing someone for the first time? When you want it and you don't know what's gonna happen next? Someone's skin? Their hands? When you don't know what's going to happen?

CARLA
(quietly undone)
I can't believe you.

ERIN
Oh, God, will you relax...
(softer)
It's not a threat to the marriage.
If it's gonna do anything, it's gonna
keep me sane enough to work it out.

CARLA
You're gonna get caught.

ERIN
Not if you help me.
(before Carla can protest)
Your company has all those apartments,
the buildings on West Street...

CARLA
I can't do that...

ERIN
Who would know?

CARLA
That's not the point.

ERIN
Hotels need credit cards.

CARLA
I can't believe you're doing this.

ERIN
I'm not asking permission, Carla.
I'm asking for a place to go.

CARLA
They don't even have carpeting in yet.

ERIN
I don't need carpeting.

Silence. CARLA withering. Their familiar dynamic.

CUT TO

DANNY'S FACE. He's sleeping. But only a moment. Because suddenly -- HE'S AWAKE! -- HIS HAND -- like a shot --

GRABBING

SOME JUNKIE -- this wiry, haggard black dude -- DANNY's got him by the throat -- like a vise -- just brutal -- pulling the guy down before he knows what hit him and --

WE'RE IN

A HOMELESS SHELTER DORM ROOM. Six cots, one window. FIVE GUYS -- Danny's roommates -- just looking on as he wrestles THE JUNKIE to the floor and --

JUNKIE

(gasping, barely)

-- shit, man -- don't -- my quarter --
I dropped my change -- my coin --

DANNY

-- next to my bag, right? --

JUNKIE

(flat out guilty)

-- no -- no, man -- that's wrong --

DANNY

Shut the fuck up!

(making sure his stuff's
still there--)

Who let this piece of shit in here?

HIS ROOMMATES -- silence -- no takers -- FIVE BLANK FACES --

JUNKIE

Hey, man look, I'm just tryi--
(no chance to finish,
because--)

DANNY just jerked him off his feet -- so close to beating him down -- fighting the urge -- throwing him instead -- hard -- out the door -- JUNKIE scrambling off into the corridor, as --

DANNY

(to his roommates)

Thanks. I mean it. You guys are
the best.

CUT TO

A FADED SHIELD-LIKE LOGO --

NEW YORK STATE DIVISION OF PAROLE

WE'RE IN

A SMALL PAROLE OFFICE. Cramped and cluttered. P.O. DUTTON sits behind a desk overwhelmed with paper. Files stacked in sagging piles. Everything here screams too much work, too little time. DUTTON is big and black and raw with the job.

DUTTON

I had a message here for me about you.
Sheridan/Ryce, you know what that is?

DANNY

(across the desk)
I went for a job there.

DUTTON

(a piece of paper)
This make sense to you?

DANNY fearing the worst, starts to read it. Then he smiles.

DUTTON

These people know what's going on
over here?

DANNY

I guess. I told her...

DUTTON

This is office work.

DANNY

That's what I want.

DUTTON with the hairy eyeball. DANNY watching him dig through the chaos on his desk as HIS PHONE STARTS RINGING --

DUTTON

(can't find shit)
What's your sentencing balance?

DANNY

What I owe? Fourteen months.

DUTTON

(finally grabbing the phone)
Dutton.
(listening)
Which one? Cause I've got two.
(searching for something)
Broaster with a B. Kelvin and Julius.
(impatient pause)
Hang on a minute...
(covering the phone,
back to Danny now--)
Fourteen months?
(MORE)

DUTTON (CONT'D)

(Danny nods)

I want you thinking about that time
like it's a block of stone hanging
over your head. You fuck up?
You play me? All's I do is pull the
string and that shit comes down.

(his baddest self)

Don't make me think about you.

DANNY

Yes, sir.

DUTTON nods. Diving back to his phone call. They're done.

CUT TO

A SECURITY KEYPAD. Fingers coding in, as we hear --

CARLA

We open at eight-thirty. I usually
get here at eight...

WE'RE IN THE

OFFICE RECEPTION AREA. CARLA and DANNY the only ones here.
It's his first day. He's wearing the same, slightly odd
outfit he wore to the interview --

CARLA

...there's one code for this door
and another one for the bathrooms...
(leading him--)

INTO

THE OFFICE. CARLA explaining it on the fly --

CARLA

...there's a few design people
downstairs, but the construction team,
and the engineers are on this floor...

TIME CUT

SHERIDAN'S OFFICE. A minute later. As they pass --

CARLA

...Mr. Sheridan -- he'll tell you to
call him Walter -- he's the big boss...
(and the smaller offices
down the line--)
...Seth, Don, and Paul, they're the
project managers...

TIME CUT

THE FILE LIBRARY. Walls of colored binders --

CARLA

...it looks complicated, but it's not. Each project has it's own color. Orange is Queen's Village...Green is Fulton Tower...all this blue stuff, is Hamilton Plaza, which we're just prepping for bids, which is why it's all over the place...

TIME CUT

THE DUPLICATION CENTER. Three huge Xerox machines.

CARLA

...I'll teach you. Don't worry. Anybody asks you for something, you don't know what it is? Just say yes, and then come to me, okay?

DANNY

Yes.

A moment. He's kidding. She smiles.

TIME CUT

CARLA'S DESK. The office filling up behind them, as --

CARLA

...this is my desk, I've got another phone console that'll be for you, but I've got to show you how it works, and it's a crappy system, so...
(stopping because--)

Here come VERLAWN and DON. CARLA straightening, nervous. DANNY picking up on the vibe instantly.

VERLAWN

(as they arrive)
This the new victim?

CARLA

(awkward at this)
Daniel -- Danny -- Danny this is Paul, Mr. Verlawn and...

DON
(easy, hand out)
Don Speath. How you doing?

Quick handshakes all around. DANNY off-balance, but trying --

VERLAWN
So where you coming from, Danny?

DANNY
Just now?

VERLAWN
No, I mean workwise.

CARLA
(jumping in)
He's been at Kinkos.

VERLAWN
What was the dress code over there?

DANNY
Excuse me?

VERLAWN
What'd they have you wearing at Kinkos?

DANNY
Pants....shirt...just...

VERLAWN
Cause we get clients up here, so...

CARLA
(to the rescue)
We talked about it already.

VERLAWN
Cool. Okay, then...
(that smile)
Let's get on it. Welcome aboard.

And there they go...

CARLA
(once they're alone)
Asshole.

DANNY
Kinkos?

CARLA

You want me to tell him the truth?

DANNY

What the fuck is Kinkos?

He's serious. More tense than we realized.

CARLA

The copy stores. They're everywhere.

What'd you think it was?

(he shrugs, not sure)

There's one around the corner.

DANNY

The clothes...

(tight)

I'm kind of limited.

CARLA

I have some petty cash. We'll take care of it.

He hesitates. Confused by kindness. But no time to work it out, because her PHONE IS RINGING, as we --

CUT TO

A BUSY MIDTOWN STREET. Night. CARLA waiting by the corner. Like maybe she's been waiting for a while. Wondering if maybe she's waited too long, when --

ERIN

(from across the street)

Carla!

There she is. Dressed to party. Rushing over.

ERIN

I am *so* sorry. Were you on time?

My sitter was late...

CARLA

I was afraid to call.

ERIN

Why? I told you, Darren's in Houston.

(hyper)

You want a drink? I have time.

CARLA

I can't.

CARLA hands her an envelope. Funky moment. Neither of them quite comfortable here.

ERIN

So it's okay, right?

CARLA

There's people living on the top three floors, so I doubt anybody's gonna ask what you're doing there. If they do, just ask for Mr. Javier, he's the super, tell him you're my sister.

ERIN

It's just the one key?

CARLA

I wrote it down.

ERIN

Look, if it's bugging you, we can forget it.

CARLA

I feel responsible.

ERIN

You're not responsible.

CARLA not so sure. ERIN reaches over -- what's she doing? -- she's undoing a button on Carla's shirt. Searching for cleavage.

ERIN

(as she does it)

You want to feel something? You should feel the way I do right now.

CARLA

Will you please be careful?

ERIN

Let's make a deal. I'll try to be careful, you try to be happy.

CARLA nods. ERIN backing away, stops -- raises her hand -- and in a flurry of quick, fluent sign-language, she says:

"I hope you know how much I love you."

CARLA's answer? The finger...

"Fuck You."

And she's only half-kidding, but that's the half that ERIN's taking with her as she rushes away happily down the sidewalk. CARLA left standing there. Starting to re-button her shirt. Then deciding not. Leave it.

CUT TO

OFFICE BUILDING FOOD COURT. DANNY alone at a large table. He's wearing a new shirt. Looking up, as CARLA pulls up a chair across from him --

DANNY

I don't mind eating alone.

CARLA

I'm sorry...

(thrown)

I just sat down, I didn't even ask you.

DANNY

No, I mean, it's not that...

CARLA

(starting to leave)

No, you're right.

DANNY

That's not what I meant. I don't know how it works here. Who eats with who. I mean, if you normally eat with them, seriously, don't sweat it...

CARLA

With who?

He gestures behind him. VERLAWN, DON, SETH and a couple other suits eating across the room.

CARLA

No. I don't. Most of the time I just take something upstairs.

DANNY

So sit. If you want...

But now it's easier to stay than leave. DANNY watching her get settled. Waiting. A long, tentative silence, until...

CARLA

(finally)

What?

DANNY

My conviction. You never asked
what I did.

CARLA

Felony larceny. They told me when
I called.

DANNY

It's not armed robbery, right?
You understand the difference?

CARLA

No gun...

DANNY

Not even. I mean, it's less, it's
like no threat.

They go quiet again. He's waiting for her to pick up the
thread, but she seems a little distracted.

DANNY

So what's the deal? Nobody else
wanted the job?

CARLA

(focusing)

Sorry?

DANNY

I'm trying to figure out why you
hired me.

CARLA

I don't know. I guess I thought
you really wanted it.

There is, there's something going on behind him --

DANNY

What're you doing?

CARLA

What do you mean?

DANNY

You keep looking over there...
(glancing back, and--)

ACROSS THE ROOM -- VERLAWN, SETH, DON and the others.

CARLA

Don't...

DANNY

(turning back)

Why?

CARLA

They're just...they're a bunch of jerks, that's all.

DANNY

Why? What're they doing?

CARLA

Talking about us.

DANNY

Us, you mean you and me?

CARLA

Forget it.

DANNY

Hey, if it's about me...

CARLA

It's not. It's just the usual crap.

(trying to laugh it off)

About me. What a mess I am. That I'm sitting here with you. What a bore. What a drag for you. All that high school shit.

(off his look)

What?

DANNY

Nothing.

CARLA

I'm not crazy, okay?

DANNY

Okay.

But she can sense that he's shining her on.

CARLA

Look, I can see how you'd think that, okay? But you're wrong.

DANNY

Did I say anything?

CARLA

You think I'm paranoid.

DANNY

Look, they could be talking about anything...

CARLA

No. I read lips.

DANNY

What do you mean?

CARLA

I read lips. When they talk. I can see what they're saying.

DANNY

Across the room?

CARLA

I'm deaf. I was. I'm less deaf now.

DANNY

Bullshit.

She pulls back her hair. Showing him her hearing aids.

CARLA

What do you think that is?

DANNY seeing it. Wow. Factor that.

DANNY

So what're they saying right now?

ANGLE ON

THE OTHER TABLE. VERLAWN, SETH, DON, and TWO ENGINEERS sniggling away over lunch. Macho office horseshit.

VERLAWN

-- talk about hiring the handicapped, I walked by, the guy was staring at the scanner like it was a spaceship that just landed --

SETH

-- what the hell you think you're gonna get for eight bucks an hour? --

VERLAWN

-- hey, Walter gave her the rope --
so she's hanging herself --

DON

-- well, maybe he can buy himself a
toothbrush and a shower --

BACK TO

CARLA "reading" this -- turning back --

CARLA

They moved on...
(sparing him)
They're talking about sports now.
(wanting this over)
Anyway...

DANNY

Don't they know?

CARLA

That I'm deaf?

DANNY

That you know what they're saying.

CARLA

No.

DANNY

(incredulous)
Nobody here knows?

A moment. Both of them suddenly realizing how much has just
been shared. Neither of them quite prepared for it.

CARLA

(then quickly)
Look, obviously, it's not something
that I really want out there...

DANNY

Hey.
(way ahead of her)
I'm a thief, not a snitch.

CARLA hesitates. Smiles. Because he's smiling.

CUT TO

BUILDING ELEVATOR. Minutes later. Doors just closing.
DANNY and CARLA riding up alone.

CARLA
What were you stealing?

DANNY
When I got caught? Camera gear.
Lenses.

CARLA
From a store?

DANNY
No. This was stuff coming in from
the airport.

CARLA about to ask another question, but they're stopping.
Both of them falling silent as the doors open and ANOTHER
PASSENGER steps on.

CUT TO

OFFICE STORE ROOM. Minutes later. DANNY and CARLA alone
here. She's below with a handcart. He's on a step-ladder
handing down boxes of paper from a high shelf, as --

DANNY
...these guys, two guys from my
neighborhood, they paid someone,
they got the code -- security code
-- to this warehouse out by JFK.
(the shelf)
There's like six other boxes up here...

CARLA
You're kidding.

DANNY
Way in the back. You want them?

CARLA
Yeah, God knows how long they've been
up there.
(as he tries to reach
them--)
So your friends, there were three of
you?

DANNY
My friends?

CARLA
When you got caught.

DANNY
My *friends*?
(not quite)
No. No, my friends didn't go along.
They're like the bank. Like a boss.
(he's got the boxes)
You better look out, this stuff is
really dusty...
(bring them down two at
a time--)
I was *supposed* to take another guy
with me, he was gonna watch the radio
when I went in. Then his daughter got
sick, so like two days out he bailed.
That kind of put me in this weird
position where did I want to bring
somebody else in late or try to go
for it myself.

CARLA
And...

DANNY
Yeah, I went alone.

CARLA sensing this is as far as it goes. Watching him stack
the boxes. How he moves. Getting everything just right...

DANNY
(looking up)
What?

CARLA
Nothing. Just trying to imagine
you doing all that.

DANNY
Yeah, me too.

DANNY rolling away with the cart. CARLA lingering behind.
Watching him go. And then following, as we --

CUT TO

EAST VILLAGE STREET. Night. DANNY walking along with a beer
in a bag --

UP AHEAD

THE SHELTER. It's getting close to curfew, there's a knot of guys waiting around the front door, hanging out as long as they can before it's time to sign-in. Smoking. Sipping.

DANNY pulls up to finish the beer. Chugs it. Looking for a can to toss the empty, when suddenly, he stops --

RIGHT THERE!

MARCO -- the guy from the Noodle Shop -- waiting just inside THE SHELTER FOYER --

REVERSE TO

DANNY backing up fast -- too fast -- almost falling as he pushes his way through the crowd --

BACK TO

MARCO in the foyer -- catching the vibe from the street -- turning back to see what's going on, but --

Nothing.

CUT TO

A SCALE MODEL OF A BUILDING PROJECT. A toy-sized apartment complex. Toy sidewalks. Toy trees. Toy people. Even a little toy fountain. As we hear:

CARLA (OS)

...right now, it's just a hole in the ground, but this is Hamilton Plaza -- what it's gonna look like when it's done. Not *exactly* what it's gonna look like obviously, because it's sort of in it's own perfect little space here...

WE'RE IN

THE CONFERENCE ROOM. CARLA and DANNY alone in the fishbowl. It's early, through the glass, we can see the office just starting to fill up behind them. On the table, in addition to THE SCALE MODEL, there's a large BLUEPRINT BOOK and a dozen piles of those BLUE BINDERS.

CARLA

...the real site -- you'll see it -- there's a garage on one side and this incredibly ugly office building across the street...

CARLA's gonna be explaining the bidding procedure to DANNY.
As she talks, we'll be seeing INSERTS of the stuff she's
explaining --

CARLA

Okay, this is the master plan.

(the blueprint book)

It stays here in case anybody wants
to see the whole project. But the
job's broken down into pieces.

Sub-contractors, okay?

(the binder piles)

...Excavation...Structural steel...
Sheet metal...Plumbing...Electrical
...Drywall...Heating and AC. They're
all labelled. These are the specs
and drawings for each of those jobs.
At ten a.m. these are officially open
for bid, okay?

(Danny nodding along)

There's a list of sub-contractors
who've been pre-approved, right?
They've got the insurance, licenses,
good credit -- all that stuff, they're
gonna come up here today and get
their packets.

DANNY

So they can figure out what to charge.

CARLA

Exactly. And because it's a State
contract, there's all these rules
about how we have to do things.
The bids are blind, okay?

(he looks unsure)

They're sealed. It's a secret.
You make your number and then you have
to stick with it.

DANNY

So nobody knows.

CARLA

Until the end. There's a deadline
and then we present the package to
the city for final approval.

DANNY

Lowest bid wins?

CARLA

That's the game.

Then suddenly -- behind them -- RAP!-RAP!-RAP! --

IT'S

VERLAWN at the glass. Tapping his watch. Mouthing the words, "Are we ready?"

DANNY

What's he saying?

CARLA

He's apologizing for having me do the entire presentation by myself and him taking credit for it.

DANNY

Seriously?

CARLA just looks over. Are you kidding?

CUT TO

AN APARTMENT BUILDING in the West Village. Nearly-complete. Still some scaffolding, fencing and dumpsters. A sign:

west street green
another quality project from sheridan/ryce

CUT TO

WEST ST. GREEN LOBBY. A work in progress. Masonite still taped down to protect the floors. WORKERS hanging sheetrock. The sounds of CONSTRUCTION echoing through the place.

CARLA standing at the elevator with MR. JAVIER. He's the Super here, a serious middle-aged guy with lots of keys. They're having a quick chat before she goes up to inspect --

CARLA

And they know sanitation's going to be here tomorrow?

MR. JAVIER

He says he called them...

CARLA

We'll see, right?

(stepping into the elevator)

The painters?

MR. JAVIER

They were on five this morning.

She nods. They're done. The door closes, and...

CUT TO

FIFTH FLOOR HALLWAY. The painters seem to have moved on. Lots of blue-tape and wet paint, but nobody here. CARLA walking through, checking THE DOORS as she passes...#512...#513...then she stops. Pulls a master key and --

INTO

APARTMENT #515. A bright, empty, one bedroom. The plumbing and most of the fixtures are in, but the floors are raw and the place is still dusty and unfinished.

Erin's love nest.

There, on the kitchen counter, AN EMPTY WINE BOTTLE and TWO PLASTIC CUPS... There, by the fireplace, half-a-dozen, burned-down CANDLES... There, in the corner, on a cardboard box, a cheap QUILTED BLANKET that's been folded up.

CARLA standing there, taking it all in. Is she jealous? Disapproving? Angry? Excited? Perhaps it's all those things at once. And then something else catches her eye...

THE WINDOWS

Big panes. And there -- captured in the daylight -- A SERIES OF HANDPRINTS ON THE GLASS. Two distinctly different sized hands. As though a woman had braced herself with a man behind her.

CARLA moves closer. She puts her hand against one of the smaller prints...now her other hand to it's corresponding match...her imagination in full flight...as she closes her eyes, and we --

CUT TO

OFFICE BUILDING HALLWAY. Early morning. CARLA coming off the elevator. Heading down the corridor toward the front doors. Just about to open up, when she hears something behind her -- turning --

SHE SEES

DANNY -- there's A UTILITY CLOSET beside a fire door -- he's standing there, with his back to her, pulling on his coat --

CARLA
You're already here?

He's surprised. Closing the door. All too quick.

DANNY
Yeah.

CARLA
(the closet)
What're you doing?

DANNY
Nothing. Waiting for you.

Something's off, but she doesn't know what. And now he's standing there waiting for her to open up. Unsure what to do, she just codes the door and in they go...

CUT TO

CARLA at her desk. Two minutes later. It's still bugging her. She glances back --

HER POV

THE DUPLICATION ROOM. DANNY in there, busying about.

BACK TO

CARLA and she's made up her mind. She's gonna check it out.

CUT TO

THE UTILITY CLOSET. As CARLA opens the door. There, on the floor -- beside a mop and a fire extinguisher -- a nest of blankets and clothes. A flashlight. A book. A soda can.

CUT TO

THE OFFICE MEN'S ROOM. One minute later. He's washing his face, as she comes blasting in --

CARLA
Since when?

DANNY
What?

CARLA
Sleeping in the closet. Since when?

DANNY

I don't know.

CARLA

How can you not know?

DANNY

A week. Not even.

CARLA

I thought you were in a shelter.

DANNY

I was -- I just -- it's --

CARLA

(just furious)

-- I can't believe this --

DANNY

-- it's just really bad there --
it's like prison -- it's worse --

CARLA

-- so this? -- this is what you do?

DANNY

I didn't steal anything!

CARLA

Yes! Yes you did! I trusted you!
You stole my trust! You know what
happens if you get caught?

DANNY

Okay! Sorry...

CARLA

Where do you bathe?

DANNY

(the sink)

Here...

CARLA

Oh, Jesus...

And she storms off. DANNY left there, as we --

CUT TO

THE FIFTH FLOOR HALLWAY AT WEST ST. GREEN. Late afternoon. CARLA marching through with DANNY in tow. The two of them squeezing past A PAIR OF ELECTRICIANS working there -- past the apartment that she lent to Erin...#515... #517...#519...

CUT TO

UNIT #521. As the door opens and CARLA enters. DANNY at the threshold. Hanging there. Wary...

CARLA

Well, come on...

He does. Looking around. It's a similar unit to the one she gave Erin. One bedroom. Dusty and raw, but nice.

DANNY

You're sure I can stay here?

CARLA

Till the work's done.

DANNY

How long's that?

CARLA

Two, three months.

DANNY watching her as she busies around --

DANNY

Nobody cares?

CARLA

There's a few tenants in upstairs. It's our building. Just don't cause any trouble and it'll be fine...

(the key)

Here. You'll need some towels and cups and stuff like that...

(an envelope from her bag)

Take this.

DANNY

What is it?

CARLA

An advance on your pay. Get what you need.

DANNY can't quite seem to get with this. Looking lost as she moves into the bathroom...

CARLA

The weekends might be noisy. They're working around the clock. I'm pretty sure there's hot water on this floor...

DANNY listening to the water run. But what? He seems way off-balance here.

CARLA

(coming out of the bathroom)

So...

DANNY

(flat)

Yeah. It's great.

And there's this silence. They're alone and aware of it.

CARLA

Okay, then...

(weird silence)

What's the matter?

He hesitates. And then, as if he were jumping off a cliff, he reaches for her -- this awkward lunge for her body -- her breast, taking that first -- pawing her -- too hard -- too fast -- and if she was wanting him, it definitely wasn't like this -- no chance to even think about what she did want, because his mouth is coming at her as he's reaching down to grab her ass and hoist her up toward the counter and --

CARLA

-- no -- no -- no --

(but he's not stopping,
until--)

She slaps him! -- he's shocked -- almost striking back -- stopping himself -- then -- now -- suddenly -- before he can think -- she's pushing past him, running INTO THE BATHROOM and LOCKING THE DOOR --

DANNY standing there. Lost. Buzzing. All that confusion suddenly transformed into anger --

DANNY

That's what you wanted, isn't it?

(yelling at the door)

Isn't it? --

CUT TO

CARLA IN THE BATHROOM. Breathless. Freaked. Undone. And listening to him is just making it worse --

DANNY (OS)
 (through the door)
 -- the job...the clothes...apartment...
 money. For what? What the fuck do
 you want? You like strays? Is that it?
 Is that what gets you off? --

BACK TO

DANNY pacing by the door, burning with rejection --

DANNY
 -- lemme give you a little advice,
 you wanna date convicts? Stick with
 the ones that're still inside!
 I don't need a fucking penpal, okay?

BACK TO

CARLA in the bathroom, just imploding --

CARLA
 I didn't want anything!

DANNY (OS)
 Everybody wants something!

BACK TO

DANNY stepping away suddenly as THE DOOR FLIES OPEN and
 CARLA comes rushing out. She's heading for the front door
 and he wants to stop her, but he's afraid to touch her now --

DANNY
 -- wait -- Carla -- fuck! --

But she's not stopping -- out the door -- already jogging
 away down the hall... She's gone. DANNY left standing
 there, as we --

CUT TO

CHELSEA. Twenty minutes later. Sundown. The streets busy
 with rush hour and people in transit and --

CARLA -- in motion -- tearing up the sidewalk -- aimless --
 wild -- fleeing -- God knows how many blocks she's gone
 already -- everything around her LOUD and chaotic -- TRAFFIC
 -- HORNS HONKING -- MUSIC BLARING from some gang-bang SUV
 and then, suddenly --

She stops.

Stops dead. Right there in her tracks. Stops because it's useless to keep going; she can't outrun how she feels -- the panic -- wrongness -- disappointment -- it's everywhere. Standing there. Realizing that. What a fucking fool she is.

And then... Silence. Because she's pulling off her "ears." And all that noise is gone. Nothing but the muffled sound of her pounding heart. There she is, parked in the middle of the sidewalk; some unhappy, breathless woman with her hair a mess and her bag falling open. People flooding past her -- around her -- nobody even reacting, really.

As if she weren't there...

CUT TO

THE OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY. Early morning. CARLA coming into work. Slowing now, because ---

DANNY

I tried calling like twenty times...
(he's been waiting)
Carla, what I said...what happened
...I'm sorry, *really* sorry...

CARLA

I think we should just forget it.

DANNY

You're not gonna let me explain?

CARLA

(still raw)
I wasn't looking for a *favor*.

DANNY

I know that. When I *think* about it,
I know it, but I'm just not...
(stumbling to it)

Look, I'm coming off two years, and
I mean every day of it, just trying
to keep my face up. You don't get a
choice, you've gotta butch up every
day, because every single person
you're gonna deal with is trying to
take something away from you. And
then like, *bang*, you're out, and
everything that's been keeping you
alive is wrong...

(beat)

I'm not used to anybody looking out
for me, that's all.

He has no idea how deeply that's landed on her.

CARLA

Like I said, let's just forget it.

He nods. Sucking it up.

DANNY

Can we make it so I quit? Like I
couldn't hack it. If you tell them
why, it's gonna be bad for me.

CARLA

(staring at him)

Danny, forgetting it means going to
work...

He hesitates. What? Just getting it, as we --

CUT TO

THE OFFICE. Midday. Full swing. CARLA working at her desk,
looking up to see --

MARCO

How you doing?

CARLA

Fine. Can I help you?

CUT TO

OFFICE STORAGE ROOM. DANNY stacking boxes, as --

CARLA

(from the door)

There's someone here for you.

He blinks. What the fuck? Moving to the doorway --

CARLA

Who is he?

CUT TO

THE RECEPTION AREA. MARCO with a friendly smile as DANNY
heads out to meet him.

MARCO

Double-D...

DANNY
 (pushing past him)
 Not here.

CUT TO

CARLA catching a glimpse of this -- but now they're gone -- they've exited into the hallway. She's not sure what to do.

CUT TO

UNNGHH! -- MARCO'S FIST -- DANNY'S GUT --

WE'RE IN

THE FIRE STAIRWELL. MARCO wailing on him -- DANNY trying to cover up, but he's outgunned --

MARCO
 -- what the fuck, Danny? -- making
 me chase you! --
 (punch)
 -- Terry and Victor up my ass --
 (punch)
 -- shit...
 (stopping now, because Danny's
 nose is bleeding bad--)
 Goddammit...look at this...
 (blood on his pants--)
 ...goddamit, Danny!...
 (pulling a card from his
 pocket, throwing it to
 the floor--)
 Tonight. Nine o'clock. Be there.

CUT TO

THE HALLWAY MENS ROOM. DANNY splashing water on his face. The sink filled with blood. Turning quickly, as --

CARLA
 (seeing him)
 Omigod...

DANNY
 You gonna just stand there?

CARLA -- no -- she's rushing into the stall, grabbing a huge wad of toilet paper -- DANNY trying to wipe his nose -- CARLA scrambling to clean up the sink, but then --

CARLA

-- go! --
 (the stall)
 -- get inside -- lock the door --

CUT TO

SHERIDAN'S OFFICE. Empty. CARLA opening his credenza to find a stack of freshly laundered shirts inside and --

CUT TO

THE MENS ROOM STALL. DANNY stripping off the bloody shirt as fast as he can. CARLA standing at the door to the stall, with THE CLEAN SHIRT, when suddenly, he grabs her! --

CARLA

-- wha--
 (no chance because--)

His hand -- like a shot -- clamping down over her mouth -- pulling her into the stall -- closing the door -- someone's coming in! -- he heard it, she didn't, and --

ANGLE ON

THE BATHROOM. It's VERLAWN coming into take a piss...

BACK TO

THE STALL. DANNY holding CARLA. The two of them frozen there. Silent. His bare chest. His skin. His hand on her face. Hearts racing. Electric and intimate, and then... finally, THE SOUND OF VERLAWN LEAVING, and --

DANNY

Go. Go. Get out of here.

CARLA

What happened? Who was he?

DANNY

It's not your problem.
 (before she can protest)
I'll deal with it.

He slams the stall door shut. CARLA lingering a moment, but what's the point? Backing away, as we --

CUT TO

CARLA'S APARTMENT. Night. CARLA standing there in the dark. She's wearing DANNY'S SHIRT, the blood-stained one from this afternoon. And that's all she's wearing. Standing at the mirror. Pressing it against her skin... The smell of it... As MUSIC STARTS TO THROB QUIETLY in the background, and we --

CUT TO

"THE NIGHT-LIGHT." There's no sign out front, just a set of double doors and the discreet neon silhouette of a flashing incandescent bulb. We're just off 10th Avenue in the heart of Westside Clubland. A chaotic mix of warehouses, sweat-shops, garages, and the art galleries and nightclubs they've been converted into.

It's early, so THE TWO BOUNCERS manning the velvet rope look a little desperate for someone to fuck with. Until...

DANNY

(unimpressed)

I'm here to see Terry and Victor.

CUT TO

NIGHT-LIGHT DANCE FLOOR. And that MUSICAL THROB that began subliminally back at Carla's apartment has been building gradually until it is now a DEAFENING DANCE DRONE echoing around this huge, empty barn of a room.

DANNY being led through the place by a twenty-something floor manager named BIX. In the BG, BARTENDERS and WAITRESSES prepping for the evening onslaught. One main bar along one raised perimeter. There's a VIP area and another bar on a corner terrace. DJ booth. Tables. Etc. The decor is balanced somewhere between angular glamour and industrial utility. The clientele, when they finally do appear, will be young, thirsty, and flash.

CUT TO

BACKSTAGE. A maze of grotty concrete corridors lined with beer cases and glass racks. DANNY following BIX past ICE MACHINES, LIQUOR CAGES, LOCKER ROOMS, STAFF BATHROOM and --

FINALLY TO

A BACK STAIRWELL. Cast-iron fire-stairs rising above the BEER CAGES into this former warehouse. The MUSIC STARTING TO FADE now, as DANNY follows BIX up and --

CUT TO

A STAIRWAY LANDING. Narrow and funky. And there, standing at AN OPEN DOOR --

MARCO

Double-D...

BIX has stopped. DANNY walking that last bit alone --

INTO

THE CLUBHOUSE. You could call it an office, because there's a front room with a computer and phones, but it's really an apartment; a shotgun layout of rooms with windows over the back alley. A living room, kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom -- an inner circle, all-purpose suite set-up for getting high, banging chicks and hanging out.

Meet THE ZERELLA BROTHERS. TERRY's in his late thirties. He's the bigger, louder, slightly more predictable of the pair. VICTOR is a couple years younger. He's the wildcard. They're half-Dominican, half-Italian and a hundred percent Loisada-Makes-It-Big. Scary even when friendly.

TERRY

Look at this...

DANNY

Hey, Terry...Victor...

A bearhug from TERRY. A nod from VICTOR.

TERRY

What'd you call him? Double-D?
That's going way back, right?

DANNY

All the way.

TERRY

Who was the other guy? There was
another Dee-Dee...

MARCO

Diego Diaz.

VICTOR

I remember them calling you Zone.

TERRY

They did. Like Zone-D, right?

DANNY

From playing ball.

TERRY

Yeah, cause you never liked to hustle.
(smiley smile)
Unless someone's chasing you, right?

DANNY shrugs. Trying to grab a piece of the loose vibe.

DANNY

You got a great memory, Terry.

TERRY

I know, man. It's a curse.
(then to Marco)
Take a walk.

MARCO's leaving. DANNY missing him already.

TERRY

So siddown, homes. Welcome to the
Nightlight...

DANNY

(sinking into a couch)
Yeah, wow. When did this all happen?

VICTOR

We're branching out.

DANNY pondering that. As the mood downshifts.

TERRY

So not good, Danny. Us having to
come after you. Starts to look like
you're trying to hide or something.

DANNY

I didn't want to bother you.

TERRY

(menacingly rational)
So it's consideration really.

DANNY

Did I ever ask for anything?

TERRY

What would you ask for? I'm curious.
Seeing as you cost us 40K outta pocket
and two hundred in potential.

DANNY

Look, I fucked up, I did the bit.
I kept my mouth shut.

VICTOR

You didn't flip, because if you did,
you know what would've happened.
And you got caught because you're a
greedy little fucking asshole.

DANNY

Hey, the guy's daughter got sick.
I didn't have a replacement.

VICTOR

Who says you make that decision?

DANNY

What was I gonna do? Involve you?

TERRY

Yeah, why involve us? We only had
forty thousand dollars in the job.

Dead pause. So many bad ways this could go.

DANNY

What do you want? Cause I got nothing.

TERRY

Not how we see it.
(like it's good news)
You got us. Our history together.

VICTOR

Plus the forty grand you owe us.

TERRY

Maybe we need some help. You ever
think of that?
(Danny looking lost)
It's a big place, this place. Lotta
cash moving through. Lotta faces.
We caught some bartenders last week
trying to bring in their own cash
register.

DANNY

Bold move.

TERRY

Yeah, well I doubt they're thinking
it's too bold right now.
(stone cold)
So you're gonna start here Friday.

DANNY

What? You mean work here?

TERRY

We can't trust you?

(silence)

Good, cause I want a neighborhood presence on the floor. I need some faces around here I know where they came from.

DANNY

I'm on parole, man...

VICTOR

I thought you just said you owed us.

DANNY

I'm not supposed to work a bar.

TERRY

Like anybody gives a fuck.

DANNY out of gas. Drowning in that couch.

CUT TO

A LARGE OPEN CONSTRUCTION SITE. Nothing but a hole in the ground, a couple trailers, a fence, and a sign:

hamilton plaza

another quality project from sheridan/ryce

THE CAMERA FINDS

CARLA with a THREE GUYS IN HARDHATS. Some little on-site meeting that's just breaking up. She's juggling an armful of plans and papers as she makes her way --

BACK TO

A COMPANY CAR parked by the fence. DANNY there waiting.

CARLA

What're they doing here?

He turns. Twenty yards back, TWO VAGUELY THUGGISH DUDES standing beside an SUV.

DANNY

I thought they worked here.

CARLA handing him the plans, walking now --

OUT TO

THE SUV. THE TWO DUDES looking over as she approaches --

CARLA

Hi. How you doing?

SHELBY

Richie Shelby...

(like she should know)

We met before. The Hunts Point job.

CARLA

Sure. You need something?

SHELBY

No, we're cool. We're just checking out the parking situation, trying to figure out where to put the trucks. You think there's any chance we can permit the street?

CARLA

I don't know...

(surprised by the question)

I mean, nothing's been decided yet.

SHELBY

You mean the bids.

CARLA

We won't be making a decision for another two weeks.

SHELBY

(cocky cool)

Okay. Sure. Whatever.

OTHER GUY

(piping in)

It's still Paul, right? Verlawn?
He's the project manager?

CARLA

Yeah.

SHELBY

We're just getting a headstart, that's all. In case we get it...

(brushing her off)

Tell Paul we said hello...

CARLA nods. Done here. Looking tight as she walks --

BACK TO

THE CAR. And...

CARLA

Let's get out of here.

DANNY

Something wrong?

CARLA

I've seen their bid.

(she's really steamed)

They're way high. Not even close.

DANNY

What're you talking about?

CARLA

This guy Shelby? He's on every job Paul runs. And you know what?

Now I know why.

(opening the car door)

Not *how*, but why.

DANNY

What? Like it's fixed?

CARLA

Shocking, right?

(she's being sarcastic)

And I'm running around trying to figure out why Paul's working so hard to get me off the project...

Slamming the car door as she gets in, and we --

CUT TO

SHERIDAN'S OFFICE. Day. SHERIDAN at his desk, signing papers for CARLA. Almost finished when...

VERLAWN

(popping in)

You gonna make the Trenton thing?

SHERIDAN

I haven't decided.

SHERIDAN done signing now. CARLA gathering the papers.

SHERIDAN

(amused)

Carla's just telling me Shelby's already lining up parking on the Fulton Site.

A moment.

VERLAWN

Well, his bids have been great...

SHERIDAN

Can't win 'em all, right?

VERLAWN

What do you mean?

SHERIDAN

(to Carla)

You said he's high, right?

CARLA nods. Trying not to enjoy this.

VERLAWN

No way. I'm just going through them.

(to Carla)

You're wrong. You're confusing him with Sherman, they were high.

CARLA not ready for this. Then before she can rally --

VERLAWN

Since when are you going through the bids anyway?

CARLA

(off-balance)

I need the insurance numbers...

VERLAWN

Yeah, well, they're sealed for a reason. It's bad enough we've got these things floating around here for two weeks without everybody flipping through them.

(softer to Sheridan)

I'm sorry, Walter, I don't mean to snap, but I'm the one who's got to bring them in. It's my rep on the line.

SHERIDAN

I'm sure we're fine.

CARLA

I was only...

VERLAWN

Forget it.
 (exasperated, like he's
 forgiving her)
 Are we ready for the zoning proposal?

CARLA

You said you wanted it tomorrow.

VERLAWN

No, Carla, I said this afternoon.
 You must not have heard me...

CARLA hesitates -- stunned -- but now SHERIDAN'S PHONE STARTS
 RINGING -- she's lost his attention --

VERLAWN

 (dismissing her)
 You better put together what you've
 got. I'll take a look after lunch.

Closing that glass door tight behind her, and we --

CUT TO

CARLA AT HER DESK. Two minutes later. And if she was
 angry before, she's positively fuming now, because --

HER POV

SHERIDAN'S OFFICE. Through the glass. VERLAWN still in
 there bending SHERIDAN's ear. HIS LIPS working away and --

CUT TO

VERLAWN

....clerically she's fine, it's the
 human stuff, dealing with the vendors
 and clients -- she's killing us...

CUT TO

CARLA watching this. "Hearing" it. Roiling inside, as we --

CUT TO

VERLAWN

...I mean, even if she were trending
 in the right direction...

SHERIDAN

You're speaking for Don and Seth?

VERLAWN

They're too nice to say it. And they
haven't seen it up close the way I have.

(beat)

She's got to go, Walt.

SHERIDAN

You have any idea how hard it is to
fire someone with a disability?

CUT TO

THE DUPLICATION CENTER. DANNY busy making copies --

CARLA

(rushing in)

Where are the Hamilton Plaza bids?

DANNY

What?

CARLA

(almost frantic)

The bids, they're not in the carousel!

DANNY

Paul took them this morning.

CARLA gone -- flying away before he's even had a chance to
ask her what's going on --

CUT TO

VERLAWN IN HIS OFFICE. He's busy packing the blue-covered
Hamilton Plaza Bids into A GYM BAG. Doing this as quickly
and discreetly as he can, and --

CUT TO

CARLA AT HER DESK. Clocking VERLAWN as he passes through
the office on his way out. Taking special note of THE GYM
BAG and --

CUT TO

THE OFFICE BUILDING BASEMENT GARAGE. Empty and quiet.
VERLAWN stepping off the elevator. Hauling the gym bag
down the ramp, into the bowels of the place, and --

CUT TO

A MERCEDES -- the trunk -- popping open. VERLAWN tossing in THE GYM BAG -- pulling out A SQUASH RACQUET -- closing the trunk, and --

CUT TO

THE STREET. VERLAWN coming out of the garage exit with the squash bag in hand. Heading off to his regular luncheon game as --

THE CAMERA FINDS

CARLA ACROSS THE STREET. Tucked out of sight. She been waiting. Knows exactly what he's doing. Watching him go...

CUT TO

THE DUPLICATION CENTER. CARLA alone here with --

DANNY

(whispering)

-- forget it! -- no fucking way...

CARLA

He's gonna take those bids home, and change them and there's gonna be nothing we can do about it.

DANNY

Who cares?

CARLA

I do! I care! This is easy for you.

DANNY

No! It's easy for you. For me it's a quick trip back upstate.

CARLA hesitates, but she's desperate --

CARLA

You asked what I wanted? For the job? The apartment? This. This is what I want. I want those bids. I've been here two years, doing his work, covering his ass, and watching him take credit for all of it! Now he's trying to get me fired! You think they're gonna keep you here if I go?

DANNY

Carla, please...

CARLA

It's perfect! Right now. He's gone at least an hour. I can go down, I can watch out for you. It can't be that hard...it's just his car, right? ...tell me it's not that hard...

(until finally she falls
silent--)

You're right. It's crazy, isn't it?

Long pause, as we --

CUT TO

THE OFFICE KITCHEN. DANNY working fast -- pulling open COUNTER DRAWERS -- searching for something, and...there -- A BREAD KNIFE. That's a start, when --

SETH

(behind him)

You doing a lunch run?

DANNY

Just waiting for the order.

SETH

Great. Gimme two minutes...

DANNY nods. Waiting for him to go. Then quick back to work looking for more "tools", as we --

CUT TO

THE GARAGE -- VERLAWN'S MERCEDES -- DANNY poised at the driver's window -- listening -- prepping -- hesitating, and then --

Fifteen seconds.

That's all it takes. One for the glass. Five for THE ALARM TO START SCREAMING before it's cut off at the dash. The last six, nothing but DANNY standing there making sure no one's coming before HE POPS THE TRUNK, and we --

CUT TO

CARLA'S DESK. An hour later. SETH working with CARLA and DANNY on those zoning proposals that Verlawn asked for. PAPERWORK just piled around them; which combined with the

half-eaten sandwiches and cold french fries makes it look like they've been holed up here for days.

SETH (OS)
...they're gonna want the ratio of
common space to unit size, so...

CARLA
(pointing for Danny)
...there's a floor plan in that box
right beside you...

DANNY busy looking for it, as --

SETH
(something by the door)
What the hell's going on?

THEIR POV

THE RECEPTION AREA. VERLAWN in animated conversation with MR. SHERIDAN and TWO UNIFORMED COPS. And here comes DON with a "holy shit" look on his face --

SETH
What?

DON
His car just got broken into.

SETH
In the building?

DON
He's freaking out.

CARLA and DANNY trading a glance. Here we go...

SETH
What'd they take?

DON
His wife's laptop, MP3 player...
(punchline)
And the Hamilton Plaza bids.

SETH
What?

DON
He had the bids in his trunk.

SETH
Oh, shit...

CUT TO

THE CONFERENCE ROOM. An hour later. SHERIDAN holding an emergency meeting. VERLAWN looking glum. DON, SETH, and CARLA trying to pick up the slack.

SHERIDAN

We're gonna contact every vendor on the list and tell them they've got to resubmit their bids. Tell them we'll pick up the expenses. Let's hope everybody understands and that nobody tries to play any games.

(resigned)

Shit happens, right?

CUT TO

CARLA IN CLOSE-UP -- slightly drunk, giddy --

CARLA

...so what Paul's doing, he takes the bids, right? Shelby, and whoever he's got this going with -- they make their normal bid, just like they would, okay? Then Paul, he goes through them, he finds the lowest bid -- say it's six-hundred thousand -- he calls Shelby and says, "Six hundred's the winner, you better come in at 575 thousand." Shelby redoes his bid, Paul slips the new paperwork into the presentation and Shelby wins...

WE'RE IN

A MIDTOWN RESTAURANT. Busy after work. CARLA and DANNY have carved out their own little corner at the bar.

CARLA

...and Paul, God knows how much he gets for that. You saw his car, right? The suits...the house in the Hamptons ...his wife who doesn't work -- it's like, "How do you pull that off?"

(she drains her drink)

I bet if we went back through the project files, you'd see that Shelby wins every contract by like ten-twenty thousand dollars.

DANNY

You better be careful.

CARLA

Me? ~~He~~ better be careful...

(getting up)

I'll be right back.

DANNY

Hey, wait...

(before she goes--)

No. Listen to me, I'm serious here. You're into something you don't know anything about. You figured this all out, that's great. But now? How to play it? You don't know shit.

(she's listening)

What're you gonna do with the bids? You can't turn them in. Where you gonna say they came from?

CARLA

I don't know, but Walter needs to know what's happening...

DANNY

And say what? We stole them from Verlawn's car?

CARLA

No, I know, I can't show him the actual bids, but...

DANNY

So then what?

CARLA

I have to do *something*.

DANNY

Yeah, you know what that is? Cover Your Ass. Cause here's what I know -- and believe me I know it -- Never Wound An Enemy. You either take them out, or walk away. You toy with this asshole and you're gonna lose. He'll squirm his way out and you'll be the deaf chick that overplayed her hand.

(just realizing how hard

that sounded--)

Look, I didn't mean it like that...

CARLA

...no, you're right...

DANNY

...really, I was just making a point,
I wasn't trying to...

(quieting as she puts her
finger to his lips--)

CARLA

Stop.

(gentle beat)

It's okay. You're right. I mean it.
You're totally right. I have to be
very careful.

(then softer)

Smile. You never smile...

So he does. Sort of. And then she's smiling, and maybe
she's a little bit drunker than we knew...

CARLA

Hold that thought.

And there she goes. DANNY watching her go skittering off
through the crowd. And then he checks his watch. Shit,
it's late. It's Friday night. He's due at the club...

CUT TO

THE RESTAURANT LADIES ROOM. CARLA at the mirror. Primping.
Fussing with her hair. Her lips. Her breath. Opening a
button on her blouse. Ripe with anticipation...

CUT TO

THE BAR. DANNY waiting, as --

CARLA

You getting hungry? I'm starving.

(sitting back down)

We don't have to eat here. We can
go anywhere we want.

DANNY

I can't.

(dead air)

Not tonight. I gotta go. I'm kind
of late already.

CARLA caught off-guard. Trying to cover up fast.

CARLA

You should've told me.

DANNY

I know...I just...
 (he feels like shit, but he
 can't tell her why--)
 Maybe another time.

CARLA

Yeah, this was...out of the blue,
 like this...
 (seeing that he's reaching
 for his wallet--)
 No, don't, don't worry about it.

DANNY

You're sure?

CARLA

Absolutely.

DANNY

I should've said something...
 (he'd linger, but--)

CARLA

Stop. I'm fine. And you're right
 about the bids. I'll be careful.
 I promise.
 (wanting this over)
 You should go...
 (a sturdy smile)
 I'll see you Monday.

DANNY

Yeah...

And he walks. And CARLA stays behind. Alone. Crushed.
 Catching a glimpse of herself in a mirror. Buttoning back
 her button. What a fool she is. Hating herself. Hating
 everything. Sitting there all alone as CLUB MUSIC STARTS
 PUMPING IN THE BACKGROUND, only getting LOUDER, as we --

CUT TO

THE NIGHTLIGHT. In full-tilt, Friday night clubthrob.
 QUICK SHOTS: THE ROPE LINE OUTSIDE...BOUNCERS WORKING THE
 CROWD...DANCE FLOOR PACKED...DJ'S IN THE BOOTH...and then --

FINALLY TO

THE MAIN BAR. Three deep and thirsty. DANNY one of SIX BARTENDERS working the line, and since it's his first night he's trailing another guy we'll call RIO -- grabbing ice -- setting up glass-racks -- scrambling to stay on the train, as THE MUSIC KEEPS PUMPING, and we --

CUT TO

CARLA'S APARTMENT. Same time. CARLA just coming through the door. After Danny left, she went to the movies alone, had some pizza and a couple solitary Martinis. Now she's home to a dark, empty apartment. Pondering that, as we --

CUT TO

THE CLUB/VIP LOUNGE. A mezzanine above the dance floor. DANNY and BIX helping A WAITRESS serve cocktails to a huge table. TWENTY BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE making the mad, fabulous scene up here -- flirting -- posing -- YELLING OVER THE MUSIC. And ONE GUY at the center of it all --

MARCHAND

-- is that tequila? -- she wants
tequila -- is it the Patron? --

VIN MARCHAND with the tan, Prada stink of a thirty-year-old hipster draped on the bloated frame of a guy fifteen years past that. A maitre'd, night freak who made good. Charming, slick and venal. Amped and dissipated.

MARCHAND

-- we need ice -- all around --

DANNY working and watching. Clocking MARCHAND immediately as a force to be reckoned with.

MARCHAND

-- honey? -- Sandy? -- honey? --

SANDY MARCHAND in exile down the table. A bejeweled, bored, botox-frozen woman; she doesn't fit the demographic and doesn't care. Enduring the spectacle as much as anything --

ANGLE ON

DANNY AND BIX retreating to the bar now --

DANNY

Who's the dude?

BIX

That's Marchand. He's the owner.
The jewelry store at the end of the
table? That's his wife.

DANNY

I thought Terry owned this place.

BIX

Not yet.

DANNY glancing back. Factoring that, as we --

CUT TO

THE STREET. Day. CARLA walking alone in the West Village.
Following her for a moment. And then pulling back --

TO REVEAL

WEST ST. GREEN. Danny's building. Just across the block.
CARLA standing there, wondering. Should she go in? Could
she? It's her building, she's got every right to be there.
And then, coming to her senses. God, what a fool she is...
Realizing that. Walking off, as we --

CUT TO

DANNY'S APARTMENT. Same time. Sun shining in because
there's no curtains. Not that it matters, because DANNY's
crashed out in the corner in a sleeping bag. Bone tired.
Nothing's going to wake him. Not even the MUSIC THAT'S JUST
STARTING TO BUILD AGAIN, as we --

CUT TO

THE CLUB/MAIN BAR. Early Saturday night. DANNY and THE
OTHER BARTENDERS still setting up as the crowd filters in.

CUT TO

ERIN'S DINING ROOM. CARLA over for a take-out dinner.
Sitting there with ERIN and her husband, DARREN. He's a
young lawyer. It's a young lawyer's East Side apartment.
CARLA with THE BABY ASLEEP in her arms as ERIN serves --

DARREN

(checking the order)

They forgot the spring rolls...

ERIN

You ordered.

DARREN

I asked twice.

ERIN

(pissy about it)

You obviously didn't make it clear.

DARREN

(firing back)

From now on, you know what? You call it in. Knock yourself out.

CARLA holding THE BABY, tuning them out as they keep sniping, and we --

CUT TO

THE NIGHTLIGHT -- DANNY working -- he's getting the hang of it, pouring drinks, making change. Looking up as, FLASHBULBS start popping down the bar --

MARCHAND AND TERRY with HALF-A DOZEN NBA PLAYERS in tow --

MARCHAND

(yelling over the music)

SEE THESE GUYS? WHATEVER THEY WANT,
IT'S ON THE HOUSE.

TERRY catching DANNY'S EYE for a moment -- "Long way from the neighborhood, eh?"

CUT TO

A DOWNTOWN BUS. Late and empty. CARLA coming home from dinner at Erin's. Another lonely tableau, as we --

CUT TO

THE CLUB/MAIN BAR. Witching hour. Everything cranking. DANNY jamming beer bottles row-on-row into the ice --

BIX

Danny!

(a magnum of chilled
champagne--)

They want this upstairs.

CUT TO

THE CLUBHOUSE DOOR. DANNY waiting with the Champagne, as --

MARCO

(opening up)

Here we go...

(ushering him--)

INTO

THE CLUBHOUSE. Party time. TERRY and VICTOR camped out with THREE CLUB GIRLS they've trolled off the dance floor. MUSIC piped-in from downstairs and lots of GIGGLING and RAPID CHATTER, but we're concentrating on --

MARCO

Double-D with the D-P.

VICTOR

(he's loaded)

Set that shit up, man.

DANNY finds a spot. Working open the bottle as --

THE CAMERA FINDS

MARCHAND IN THE KITCHEN. Hunched over a mirror.

MARCHAND

(coming off the snort)

What the fuck're you looking at?

DANNY standing there proffering a glass of champagne.

TERRY

Jesus, Vin...

(jumping in fast)

This is Danny. Danny from the block.

Danny, this is Vin...Vin Marchand...

DANNY barely nods. MARCHAND outright dismissive.

MARCHAND

You want to come up behind me like that, you better put a dress on...

(calling into the other room--)

Mindy! Where's my Little Mindy?

TERRY's no fool, he senses instantly how chafed DANNY is by this encounter. Pulling him out of the way as LITTLE MINDY high-heels her way into the blow chamber and --

NEW ANGLE

THE BEDROOM. TERRY ushering DANNY away from the Kitchen.

TERRY

(talking him down)

C'mon, man, he's baked...lighten up.
That's the big tit in there. That's
our whale. So cool the fuck out.

DANNY nods. Man, the shit just gets higher and higher.

VICTOR (OS)

You see this?

VICTOR coming toward them. He's got A PISTOL in his hand,
holding it flat with both hands in a chamois cloth.

TERRY

Who's is that?

VICTOR

Is that sweet or what?

(off Terry's look)

It's Marchand's, man. It's cool.

It's a Beretta snub.

(offering it to Danny)

Feel the weight on that...

DANNY hesitates, but there it is, in his hands.

TERRY

Is that thing loaded?

DANNY -- old habits -- hands checking the chamber --

DANNY

Yeah.

(handing it back now--)

TERRY

Jesus, Victor...

(quietly, re: Marchand)

That's all I need, this clown blowing
himself up before we drain him.

Put the fucking thing away, will you?

VICTOR folding THE PISTOL gently into the chamois.

DANNY

You need anything else?

TERRY
I'll let you know.

DANNY nods. Escaping, as we --

CUT TO

THE OFFICE. Day. CARLA at her desk. Looking swamped as --

DON
Where's Danny?

CARLA
He's sick.
(she's lying)
He came in early, I sent him home.

CUT TO

MIDTOWN STREET. Lunch rush. CARLA on her mobile phone...

DANNY'S VOICE
"Yeah, this is Danny. Leave a message."
(beep, and--)

CARLA
(furious)
It's me. Again. Where are you?
You've got to call me. You can't just
not come in and not call!

CUT TO

HAMILTON PLAZA 5TH FLOOR HALLWAY. Night. Quiet. Empty.
Worklights here and there make it weird and dim. CARLA at
the door of Unit #521 -- Danny's apartment. Poised there.
Listening. Finally, she KNOCKS. Then again. But there's no
answer. Pulling her key. Opening the door and --

MOVING INTO

THE APARTMENT. Finding a light. Standing there a moment.
Not much has changed. The raw space only modestly impacted
by his residence. The few things that are here are arranged
with an inmate's care and economy.

There, on the kitchen counter, a box of Fruit Loops and some
plastic spoons and bowls cadged from a Chinese takeout order.
There, by the window, a sleeping bag and a cheap pillow.
There, in the corner, a stack of Japanese graphic novels.

CARLA kneeling beside his nest of bedding. A terribly private moment, as she straightens the sleeping bag. And now, relenting to some vulnerable urgency inside her, she's picking up his pillow. Holding it to her face. Breathing him in...his smell...his presence...and then...

A SOUND! -- caught, she turns -- rushing to play the volume on her hearing aids. Listening... Its nothing.

And then, something else catches her eye...

THE CLOSET

There, hanging neatly, THREE BLACK POLO SHIRTS and THREE PAIRS OF BLACK JEANS. A uniform. To what? CARLA moves closer. Pulling out ONE OF THE SHIRTS...

A LOGO on the chest. A red, incandescent light bulb and the words -- NIGHT-LIGHT -- embroidered below. As THE POUNDING DRONE OF DANCE MUSIC BEGINS TO SWELL, and we --

CUT TO

THE NIGHTLIGHT ENTRANCE. A SWARM OF CLUBGOERS clustered around the door. THE BOUNCERS picking and choosing, and --

THE CAMERA FINDS

CARLA at the edge of the scrum. She's dressed as she was at his apartment, still wearing her clothes from work, but she's lost the sweater and loosened her blouse. The lameness of the effort made all the more glaring by the outfits of the girls around her. This a world of skin, leg and make-up.

And sonically it's a nightmare. THE MUSIC INSIDE ebbing and flowing each time the door is opened. OTHER MUSIC blaring from cars and SUVs lined up down the block. PEOPLE PLEADING WITH THE BOUNCERS and THE TRAFFIC and...

Just as she's about to give up -- A GROUP beside her starts to move -- THE BOUNCERS lifting the rope -- CARLA going for it -- head down, bulling forward -- THE MUSIC GETTING LOUDER AND LOUDER AND LOUDER, as we --

CUT TO

INSIDE THE CLUB. It's LOUD -- TOO LOUD -- CARLA rushing to lower her hearing aids and everything just falling away. The clubbeat reduced to a swampy, distant pulse. And as weird as it might've been with the sound up, moving through THE CROWD with the volume off is somehow more disorienting...

WE'RE FOLLOWING HER

THROUGH THE PLACE. Skin city. Donkey Island. Dancing. Laughing. Drinking. HANDS -- BODIES -- FACES -- everything moving -- but to what? Without the sound, the glue is gone.

AND THEN...

RIGHT BEHIND HER! -- MARCO -- he must've seen her coming in, and if he wasn't sure how to place her, he is now, because she's heading across the floor and --

STRAIGHT FOR

THE MAIN BAR. DANNY hauling an ice bin. Coming this way. Dumping his cargo as he goes. Looking up --

There's CARLA. Waiting for him.

CUT TO

THE BACKSTAGE LABYRINTH -- minute later -- DANNY rushing CARLA past the liquor cages and ice machines. She's just hustling to keep up, trying to get her hearing aids back on as he pulls her along, and we --

CUT TO

THE CLUB ALLEY. Classic warehouse style. Dark and funky. Wide enough for truck deliveries. Another building, SOME KIND OF GARAGE, directly across. Dumpsters and trash bins.

DANNY

(the moment they're alone)
What're you doing here?

CARLA

What are you doing here?

DANNY

How'd you find me?

CARLA

How long have you been here?

DANNY

I was gonna call you tomorrow.

CARLA

Call me? What about showing up?

DANNY

I got a problem, okay?

CARLA

You're working here? You can't!
You're not allowed!

DANNY

I don't have a choice! These guys,
I owe them, they came after me.

CARLA

What guys?

DANNY

From before. My old job.

CARLA

(astonished)

I can't believe you didn't call.

DANNY

I didn't get to bed until five.

CARLA

That's your excuse?

DANNY

I don't have an excuse! I'm out of
excuses! You're smart, do the smart
thing. Get someone else.

CARLA

And when your parole officer calls?

DANNY

(trapped, exploding)

I don't know! Do what you want!

CARLA

What I want? I want you back in the
office tomorrow.

DANNY

You're not hearing me. I got no
choice. I can't not take this job.

CARLA

Then do them both.

There she goes, heading off down the alley, as we --

CUT TO

THE BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR. A minute later. DANNY coming back from the alley, stopping because there's --

TERRY

Keep your social life out of here.

DANNY

What?

TERRY

What? The office girl.

(stone cold)

You're down forty thousand. Until we figure out how to make that work, I want your full attention.

(then the smile)

After that you can play with whoever you want.

DANNY trying not to look too rattled, as we --

CUT TO

THE OFFICE KITCHEN. Next morning. DANNY looking a little ragged, making that first pot of coffee. Turning back as --

CARLA

(coat on, in the doorway)

If you don't want to work here then you should go.

DANNY

Yeah? Then what?

CARLA

I'll be sad. I'll know you made a terrible mistake. But I won't stop you. I'll do what I can to make it look okay. The apartment, you can keep until you find something else.

DANNY

What is it with you?

CARLA

What do you mean?

DANNY

Doing stuff for me.

CARLA

What can I tell you, I'm the deaf chick.

DANNY

What if I want to stay here?

CARLA

You better think about it.

DANNY

I did.

Okay then. Both of them a little surprised.

CUT TO

THE CLUB/MAIN BAR. Weeknight crowd. SANDY MARCHAND at the bar with TWO FRIENDS. Society types slumming at her husband's nightclub. They've just come from some charity event, all of them dripping with MAJOR JEWELRY.

DANNY's been serving them, moving off now to confer with RIO by the cash register --

DANNY

(her bar tab)

Marchand's wife, does she sign, or what?

RIO

Forget it. Don't even ring it up.

(off Danny's reaction)

She's the bank, dude. It's her money. You think Marchand paid for all this?

DANNY

I didn't know.

RIO

Hell, man, he's just a bartender who stepped in shit.

DANNY

What kind of money?

RIO

Daddy money. Jewelry stores, her family's got like twenty of them.

DANNY

So what the fuck's Marchand doing
with Terry and Victor?

RIO

Guess he kind of blew his allowance.

DANNY

On what?

RIO

Sports book. Blow. Teen pussy.
Guy bets hockey for crissake.

DANNY

So they're into him like a lot?

RIO

Like a big lot.

RIO with an, "ain't life grand" smile as he dives back to
his customers. DANNY thinking it over, as we --

CUT TO

SHERIDAN'S OFFICE. But we're outside. Through the glass we
see VERLAWN gabbing to MR. SHERIDAN.

REVERSE TO

CARLA watching. "Reading" it. DANNY nearby, prepping stuff
for the big bid presentation.

CARLA

Oh, Christ...

(disgusted)

Now he's talking up Shelby, what a
great job he's doing in Jersey.
I swear, I'm gonna puke.

DANNY

So quit watching.

CARLA

It doesn't bother you?

(seriously)

Tomorrow morning we're gonna present
these bids to the city and Paul's
gonna look like a hero, get a bonus
from the company, and God knows how
much money under the table. Doesn't
that make you crazy?

DANNY

What do you want to know? He's a Dick. You want to bet percentages, bet on a Dick. They're your big winners. The upside?

(she's waiting)

When they screw up? Nobody screws up like a Dick.

CARLA

Great. I'll cling to that.

CUT TO

VERLAWN'S GYM BAG. The one Danny stole from his car. Stuffed with bids. The originals.

WE'RE IN

CARLA'S APARTMENT. Night. CARLA sitting there staring at the bag from across the room. Like she's been sitting there a while. Thinking about it.

CUT TO

THE CLUB ALLEY. DANNY out here alone. Pacing. Drinking a big take-out coffee. Hoping the fresh air will wake him up, because he's fucking exhausted. Moving. Jumping. Anything to get the blood moving and then --

HIS POV

TWO FLIGHTS UP. LIGHTS coming on in the The Clubhouse.

REVERSE TO

DANNY curious, stepping back for a better look...and a little more...and now, all the way into the shadows because --

DOWN THE ALLEY

HEADLIGHTS just turning in. A BIG BLUE LEXUS comes peeling to a stop behind the club. MARCHAND piling out. Locking the car. Hustling to the back door.

CUT TO

DANNY climbing A DARK, RUSTED STAIRCASE...

WE'RE IN

THE GARAGE ACROSS THE ALLEY. Except it's not a garage, it's overnight storage for PUSHCARTS. Hot-dog carts...ice cream carts...hundreds of them lined up in the dark.

RISING TO

A STAIRWELL LANDING. Ambient light from the alley filtered through a filthy cataract of A WINDOW. DANNY working the window open and...

HIS POV

THE CLUBHOUSE -- there it is -- *almost* directly across the alley -- the total, "Rear Window" panoramic view -- there's MARCO IN THE BATHROOM, partially covered by a dingy curtain as he takes a piss. And there -- TERRY AND MARCHAND IN THE LIVING ROOM, they're talking and TERRY's pouring him a big tumbler full of vodka, as we go --

BACK TO

DANNY kneeling there at the window. When suddenly -- HIS PHONE STARTS GOING --

DANNY

Hello...

INTERCUT WITH

CARLA IN HER APARTMENT. Alone at her kitchen table --

CARLA

It's me.

DANNY

Hey.

CARLA

I got an idea.

DANNY

About what?

CARLA

But I want you to talk me out of it.

DANNY

Is this about tomorrow?

CARLA

What time do you get off?

CUT TO

THE BAR. Later. Loud and busy. DANNY pouring. Making change. Checking the time, when --

MARCO
(calling from down the bar)
DANNY! YO! TAKE FIVE...

CUT TO

THE BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR. Minute later. DANNY arriving to find TERRY waiting for him. And there's MARCHAND propped in a chair by the lockers.

DANNY
What's up?

TERRY
You're gonna take a break.
(re: Marchand)
They just called, the alarm's going off at his house. I guess his wife's outta town.

DANNY
What's that got to do with me?

TERRY
He's trashed. You're gonna go with Marco and tuck him in. Make sure everything's where it's supposed to be.

A quiet minor chord.

DANNY
Terry...

TERRY
What?

DANNY
I don't want any trouble.

TERRY
Good. Cause you're right, you got all the trouble you need.
(an afterthought)
Don't forget his bag...

DANNY hesitates. Pushing down his reluctance and picking up MARCHAND'S BRIEFCASE sitting there on the floor, as we --

CUT TO

THE CLUB ALLEY. DANNY helping MARCHAND into the backseat of the LEXUS. MARCO taking the wheel and --

CUT TO

WEST 12TH ST. A block of gorgeous BROWNSTONES. All quiet save for an NYPD CRUISER and THE LEXUS double-parked outside MARCHAND'S HOUSE. MARCHAND ON HIS STOOP WITH TWO COPS -- one of those NYC, seen-it-all conversations; the body language alone enough to tell this is a non-event.

CUT TO

INSIDE THE LEXUS. DANNY and MARCO sitting this part out.

MARCO

You ever break into a house like that?

(Danny doesn't answer,

doesn't even turn--)

What? You did some big jobs.

CUT TO

INSIDE THE BROWNSTONE. Minutes later. MARCHAND drunkenly leading DANNY and MARCO through the house. It's awesome. Triple-mint. The furnishings, the art...

MARCHAND

...the curtains get blowing, that sets

off the motion detectors so we keep

getting these goddam false alarms...

(as he leads them--)

UP THE FRONT STAIRCASE

DANNY bringing up the rear with MARCHAND'S BRIEFCASE. His eyes working the angles, taking it all in. Is it recon, or just professional curiosity?

MARCHAND

...watch, ten minutes from now, the

phone's gonna ring, it's gonna be my

wife and father-in-law in Florida,

cause they're gonna call him...

(leading them--)

INTO

A MASTER BEDROOM SUITE. DANNY and MARCO standing there as MARCHAND wanders into a huge, walk-in closet.

CUT TO

MARCHAND IN THE CLOSET. There's A LARGE WALL SAFE hidden behind a mirror. He's making sure it's okay, but doing a terrible job of being discreet about it...

BEHIND HIM

IN THE BEDROOM. DANNY putting down THE BRIEFCASE. Shooting a "What the fuck're we doing here?" look to MARCO, just as --

MARCHAND

(stumbling out)

Anybody know if the Celtics covered tonight?

CUT TO

THE OFFICE. 4:00 a.m. CARLA hustling through the dark --

TOWARD

THE RECEPTION AREA. DANNY through the glass. CARLA rushing to open THE DOOR, she's nervous and hyper and --

CARLA

(before he's even in)

You don't have to do this...

CUT TO

THE DOOR TO VERLAWN'S OFFICE. Minutes later. DANNY with a paperclip he's converted into a burglar's pick. He's working the lock...feeling his way in...a very gentle bit of trial and error foreplay. CARLA right over his shoulder, holding A FLASHLIGHT. It's all very dark and intimate.

CARLA

How do you learn this?

DANNY

(as he works)

...dinner table, I guess...my father, step-brother...my dad's best friend... this was what they did...

CARLA

Like a team?

DANNY

(almost amused)

A team? No, definitely not a team.

CARLA

But like...everyday?

DANNY

...they had stuff they'd do, drive a cab, paint apartments, bullshit jobs...
(getting close now)

...but it was all just to pass the time when they weren't stealing shit or selling it...

(click)

Or getting caught.

He's got it. THE DOOR is open. But nobody moves. Are they nervous? Or is it the physical proximity?

DANNY

Carla...

She nods. She knows. It's time...

CUT TO

A PRESENTATION SCREEN. Power Point style. The stuff we're seeing matching up with what we're hearing --

VERLAWN (OS)

...The winning bid for ironwork was Tremont Steel from Stamford, Connecticut. Their bid at two-point-three-two million was best by a margin of eighty-thousand dollars.

(click, as we--)

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

A CITY HEARING ROOM. PLANNING COMMISSIONERS -- five of them -- spread across the dais. It's a public hearing.

AT THE PODIUM

VERLAWN running the projector as he speaks. He's taking bid cover sheets from a file case, laying them on the light bed.

VERLAWN

...the winning bid for framing and drywall was Jacardi & Sons. They're based in Staten Island. Their bid at one-million-nine was our lowest by a margin of forty-thousand dollars...

(click, and--)

CARLA, SHERIDAN, DON and SETH right behind him --

VERLAWN

...winning bid for plumbing, heating,
and fire suppression is Richard Shelby
& Associates of Newburg, New York.
Their bid of two-point-two-five-three
million was the lowest by a margin of
fifteen thousand dollars...

(click, and--)

VERLAWN already moving on, when --

COMMISSIONER #1

(into her microphone)

Can we go back, please?

VERLAWN

Excuse me?

COMMISSIONER #1

The previous bid, I'm confused.

VERLAWN has no idea anything might be wrong, retrieving the
Shelby bid and laying it back down on the projector and --

ON THE SCREEN

THIS NUMBER -- \$2,855,000 -- clear as day.

COMMISSIONER #1

Is that the wrong bid or the wrong
number?

VERLAWN

(lost for a moment)

I'm not sure...

COMMISSIONER #2

(jumping in now)

Yeah, you've got two-point-eight on
the screen. This says two-two...

The room suddenly focusing --

VERLAWN

(vamping fast)

...this is -- it's out of sequence
somehow, I think this is a bid from
another job here --

COMMISSIONER #1

It says Hamilton Plaza.

VERLAWN just grasping the possible extent of his problem.

VERLAWN

Could I have a moment to get this
together with my colleague?

(turning to--)

Carla...

(tight to Sheridan)

We just need a minute.

CUT TO

HEARING ROOM HALLWAY. Moments later. DANNY's been waiting
out here -- turning now, to see --

VERLAWN

(practically pulling Carla
out the door--)

What the fuck're you trying to pull?

CARLA

What're you talking about?

VERLAWN

(hushed panic)
Where's Shelby's bid?

CARLA

You just put it up...

VERLAWN

Don't play that shit with me!

DANNY

Hey...

VERLAWN

Back off, Kinko!

(towering over Carla)

You've got thirty seconds to make
this right, or I swear to God, I--
(no chance to finish,
because--)

DANNY just grabbed his arm -- VERLAWN wheeling on him,
ready to swing and --

Wrong -- DANNY -- one shot, right in the sternum -- so fast
it's like it never happened -- CARLA confused for a moment --
but VERLAWN's backing away -- gasping -- sputtering --

VERLAWN

...you...you're going down...both
of you...this is a 15 million dollar
project you're messing with...
(still sucking wind, as--)

SHERIDAN appears with DON and SETH. Like they're leaving.

VERLAWN

(like nothing's wrong)
I'll be right back in.

SHERIDAN

Not today.

VERLAWN

What?

SHERIDAN

Is this Shelby's bid or not?
(he's holding it--)

VERLAWN

No. There's obviously been a mistake,
that's what I'm trying figure out --

SHERIDAN

(just livid)
It's stamped, Paul. It's signed.

VERLAWN in full desperate, guilty, implosion --

VERLAWN

-- that's the thing, it's not the
number I was given, that's why I'm
asking Carla what's going on here --

SHERIDAN

Carla?

(total incredulity)
You've been shutting her out since
this thing began.

VERLAWN

...because I knew...we talked about
it, that there were problems...

SHERIDAN

The problem here, Paul, is that Shelby
changed his numbers.

VERLAWN

We...we don't know that...

SHERIDAN

This is his original bid!

VERLAWN

That's impossible.

SHERIDAN

Apparently not.

(they're done)

I had my doubts when your car got broken into, but I set them aside --

VERLAWN

-- Walter, please --

SHERIDAN

-- piece of advice? If you're gonna skim, it's works better if you keep your paperwork in order.

VERLAWN impaled there. Drowning. Staring at CARLA, as SHERIDAN leads them away, and we --

CUT TO

FOLEY SQUARE. Ten minutes later. DANNY loading the filing cases into the trunk of a TOWN CAR. Turning back and --

HALFWAY DOWN THE BLOCK

CARLA huddled on the sidewalk with SHERIDAN, DON AND SETH. A very somber, post-mortem conversation. CARLA listening and nodding; the very model of competency and seriousness, and then, she turns, leaving the conversation behind...

And the whole mask just falls away.

CARLA walking back toward DANNY -- toward us -- with this utterly goofy, "Holy-shit-you-can't-even-begin-to-believe-how-insanely-amazing-this-is" look on her face.

CARLA

(quietly, as she arrives)

You have to know that if we were anywhere else right now I'd be jumping up and down and screaming at the top of my lungs about how incredible that was. How incredible you were.

(she's just awed)

You actually *hit* him...

DANNY

Sort of.

CARLA

Sort of? He was about to fucking cry.
You are my hero.

DANNY

What's the verdict?

CARLA

He's gone. They're clearing out his
office this afternoon. We did it.
You did it.
(that smile again)
The Dick Is Dead.

DANNY

Told you, when they go down...

SHERIDAN and the guys looking ready to move now --

CARLA

They want me to go to lunch.

DANNY

That's great.

CARLA

Walter wants you to take the paperwork
up and then send back the car.
(brightly)
So I'll see you after.

DANNY

I got my PO this afternoon...

CARLA

Are you working tonight?
(he nods)
So when are we gonna celebrate?

DANNY

Doesn't seem to be up to us, does it?

CARLA

But that's a yes, right?

DANNY

That's a definite yes.

She's beaming. Just a moment. Just for him. Stowing it
away as she turns back to the world, and we --

CUT TO

THE PAROLE OFFICE. DANNY sitting there with --

DUTTON

You look tired.

(Danny shrugs)

Office work's a little tougher than
you thought, huh?

CUT TO

THE OFFICE. Afternoon. CARLA watching TWO GUYS carrying
boxes out of VERLAWN'S OFFICE.

CUT TO

THE CLUB/MAIN BAR. Early. Empty. DANNY humping bottles
out from the back, when he stops --

HIS POV

BIX AND SOME GUY just off the dance floor. BIX setting him
up a table, making sure he's comfortable. THE GUY is a
compact, bespectacled man of sixty with long, white hair.
Distinguished and distinctive. His name is MR. JONES.

DANNY hanging back, but here comes --

BIX

Take care of this guy. He's here to
see Terry and they're running late.

DANNY

(before he gets away)

Bix?

BIX

What?

DANNY

I know this guy.

(ominously quiet)

It's a little complicated...

BIX

I don't want to know.

(keep me out of it)

Look, go find Jose. Terry wants the
clubhouse cleaned up before they meet
this dude anyway. So just go.

CUT TO

THE CLUBHOUSE DOOR. A minute later. DANNY watching JOSE -- the porter -- reach up behind a piece of molding for A KEY that's hidden there -- unlocking THE DOOR and --

JOSE

Shit...

It's a shambles from the night before.

DANNY

How much time do we have?

JOSE

He say maybe one hour.

CUT TO

VERLAWN'S OFFICE. Night. Except it's not Verlawn's anymore, it's Carla's. His stuff's been cleared out. CARLA sitting there surrounded by boxes, when HER PHONE STARTS VIBRATING. Her mood brightening further when she sees who's calling...

CARLA

(answering)

Hey. Guess where I am?

INTERCUT WITH

DANNY IN THE CLUBHOUSE BATHROOM. He's got the door shut.

DANNY

No idea.

CARLA

My new office.

DANNY

That was fast.

CARLA

(sensing his tension)

You okay?

DANNY

I need a hand with something.

CARLA

I think I owe you.

CUT TO

DARKNESS. And then A FIRE-DOOR opens...

WE'RE IN

THE PUSHCART GARAGE. The alley entrance. DANNY with A FLASHLIGHT and A SMALL TOOL BAG. CARLA behind him --

DANNY

Gimme your hand...
(turning on the FLASHLIGHT,
leading her--)

UP THE STAIRCASE TO

THE PUSHCART LANDING. As before. The window. The clubhouse visible across the alley.

CARLA

(increasingly nervous)
What're we doing, Danny?

DANNY

Couple guys, they're gonna have a meeting. Right over there...
(through the window)
I need to know what they're saying.
I think maybe they're planning something. Like maybe they're trying to get me involved.

CARLA

You mean a crime.

DANNY silent. Pulling a pair OF BINOCULARS from the bag.

CARLA

Are you crazy? If you're in trouble you need to get out.

DANNY

Out of what? That's what I need to know.

(the binoculars)

You gonna help me, or not?

A moment. As THE CLUB-THROB MUSIC SURGES, and we --

CUT TO

MR. JONES rising to greet TERRY and VICTOR as they make their way THROUGH THE CLUB to his table. It's too loud for business here, so they're moving and --

REVERSE TO

DANNY AT THE BAR. Watching them as he works and --

CUT TO

THE PUSHCART LANDING. CARLA waiting in the dark. Cold. Bored. And then, suddenly she's up, scrambling for THE BINOCULARS because -- ACROSS THE ALLEY -- the clubhouse lights just came on --

HER BINOCULAR POV

Nothing for a moment...then TERRY appearing in the living room...VICTOR and MR. JONES entering behind him --

CUT TO

INSIDE THE CLUBHOUSE. Same time.

TERRY

You want a drink?

MR. JONES

(all business)

I'm good.

TERRY nods, taking something carefully from his pocket, handing it to MR. JONES who's pulling A JEWELER'S LOUPE and moving into the better light, as we --

CUT TO

CARLA -- she's got a A NOTEPAD AND PEN -- struggling to scribble things down as she juggles the BINOCULARS and --

CUT TO

THE CLUBHOUSE. JONES pocketing his loupe --

MR. JONES

(they're in play)

His minimum unit is five hundred.

TERRY

We're there no problem.

MR. JONES

He doesn't meet. I'm the escrow.
I take ten-percent from your side.
He pays on delivery and guarantees
the stones get placed off-shore.

CUT TO

THE CLUB/MAIN BAR. DANNY working and the MUSIC PLAYING and
the place is filling up and --

OVER THERE

MR. JONES on his way out. The meeting's over.

BIX

Danny!
(waving to him from
the floor)
I need help upstairs!

CUT TO

CARLA'S BINOCULAR POV -- TERRY and VICTOR are alone now in
the clubhouse -- they're still talking, but they're pacing
around which means they're not always visible --

REVERSE TO

CARLA having trouble keeping up, as we --

CUT TO

THE VIP MEZZANINE BAR -- DANNY, BIX and ANOTHER BARTENDER
just swamped -- WAITRESSES stacked up waiting and --

BIX

(over the noise)
WHAT THE FUCK'RE YOU DOING?

DANNY juggling HIS PHONE, trying to call Carla as he works --

BIX

PUT THE PHONE AWAY AND GET TO WORK!

CUT TO

THE BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR. TERRY and VICTOR have left the
clubhouse, heading back into the club and --

CUT TO

THE PUSHCART LANDING. CARLA where we left her, except now the lights are off in the clubhouse and she's cold and she's got HER PHONE out and it's RINGING...and RINGING...and...

DANNY'S VOICE

"Hey, it's Danny. Leave a message."

CARLA

Where are you?

CUT TO

THE MEZZANINE BAR. MARCO, MARCHAND and SOME WOMEN partying in a booth. Making room for TERRY and VICTOR and --

CUT TO

THE GARAGE STAIRS. CARLA coming down in the dark -- too fast -- too dark -- almost falling and then --

DANNY (OS)

Carla...

CARLA

Jesus!

There he is -- just below her -- out of breath --

DANNY

There was a flashlight...

CARLA

I left it up there.

DANNY taking her hand as she comes the last few steps --

DANNY

You're freezing...

CARLA

I kept calling. Where were you?

DANNY

I know. I got stuck...

(rushing)

Did it work? Could you see them?

CARLA

It's gems. *Stones.*

(like an accusation)

The guy -- the guy with the hair --
he had one of those eyepieces...

DANNY

Yeah, he's a jewelry fence.

CARLA

You know him?

Confirmation in his silence. CARLA trying to suppress her
concern, pulling out HER NOTEPAD --

CARLA

He gets ten-percent. There's another
guy, but they can't meet him...

(trying to read in
the dark--)

He said it has to be five hundred,
"the minimum unit is five hundred."

(looking up)

Five hundred what? It's thousands,
isn't it? He's talking about dollars.

(it is)

Omigod...

DANNY

When? When is this happening?

CARLA

I don't know...

(the notepad)

Who's "The Prince?" It's all got
something to do with a Prince.

DANNY

What do you mean?

CARLA

That guy left, then the other two,
that's when they started talking
about some Prince. That they've got
him in place, that he's ready...

DANNY

Marchand?

CARLA

Is that what they call him?

DANNY

The *Prince*? I don't know.

Moment. She's upset. More upset than we knew.

CARLA

They're gonna ask you to steal for them, aren't they?

DANNY

I don't know.

(off her look)

I don't.

(silence)

I can't afford to be wrong, Carla.

She turns away. There's this moment with them both just standing there in the dark. And then, he reaches over and finds her face with his hand, turning her back to him so quietly that it's almost imperceptible, and now --

He's kissing her. As sweet and real as anything he's ever done, so gentle and deeply-felt that even if it only lasted a moment that would be more than enough to erase the ugliness of what happened with them the last time. Finally they break. Both of them completely undone.

CARLA

Was that to kiss me or shut me up?

DANNY

Both.

CARLA, she can't stop herself, she's kissing him again -- this one deeper, faster, and more desperate than before. Both of them knowing it's a good night kiss; rushing to fit everything in, before they have to break it off and THAT CLUB THROB MUSIC RISING, as we --

CUT TO

THE CLUB/MAIN BAR. 3:00 A.M. A slightly thinned-out crowd. DANNY stacking glasses, when --

BIX

(leaning over the bar)

I'm gonna cut you loose early tonight, but I need you for set-up tomorrow.

DANNY

Thursday's my prep shift.

BIX

Yeah, well I changed it.

BIX in no mood. DANNY watching him head back down the line, nodding to VICTOR as he passes. Was that weird, or is he just being paranoid? No, that was weird.

CUT TO

WEST ST. GREEN. The apartment building at night.

CUT TO

AN ELEVATOR. DANNY riding up alone. Exhausted.

CUT TO

THE FIFTH FLOOR HALLWAY. As the ELEVATOR DOORS OPEN and DANNY steps out. It's dark. A pile of TOOLS there amidst the tarps, etc. DANNY pulling his key and --

OUT OF NOWHERE

A GUY! -- some guy -- on his back! --

DANNY blindsided -- falling -- falling hard -- THE GUY -- he's big -- bigger than DANNY -- punching -- clawing --

THE GUY

-- you like it now? -- like it now,
you prick bastard! -- happy now, you
motherfucker? --

(just on and on and--)

DANNY on the bottom -- taking a beating -- swamped -- not ready -- trying to cover up, and then -- an opening -- DANNY -- HIS HAND -- hard -- up into THE GUY'S THROAT and --

THE GUY -- shocked -- GAGGING! -- falling back -- DANNY -- just on him -- fast -- raw -- PUNCH after PUNCH, until --

It's over.

DANNY looking down -- winded -- scared -- focusing...

DANNY

Who the fuck are you? -- WHO? --
WHO SENT YOU?

IT'S DARREN! -- Erin's husband -- face bloodied -- gasping -- panicked -- drunk -- burbling and grovelling, as we --

CUT TO

CARLA'S BEDROOM. Dark. And then, a LIGHT STARTS FLASHING.
CARLA roused from sleep -- it's her phone...

CUT TO

ST. VINCENT'S HOSPITAL. 6:00 a.m. Saturday morning.

CUT TO

EMERGENCY ROOM WAITING AREA. DANNY one of A DOZEN PEOPLE
scattered around this fluorescent hospital purgatory.
He's got a bruise on his chin and his pants are ripped.

CUT TO

A HOSPITAL HALLWAY. CARLA and ERIN trying to keep it quiet,
but it's going to be tough --

ERIN

-- an *ex-con*? What're you thinking?
He could've killed him!

CARLA

Darren attacked him.

ERIN

He was drunk! He was angry! It was
wrong, okay, but, I mean, my God, where
do you even *find* this guy?

CARLA

No!

(Erin vulnerable enough
to be startled--)

You don't get to be the victim here!
(pure steel now)

I don't care what you think. All I
need to know is that you're not gonna
press charges or make a thing out of
this...

(stopping because--)

ERIN is weeping. CARLA standing there stunned, as we --

CUT TO

A DINER. An hour later. CARLA and DANNY in a booth over
breakfast. She's on THE PHONE.

CARLA

...no, no, I understand...I do...
...of course...I'll see you then.
(hanging up, and--)

DANNY

I gotta move out?

CARLA

We'll go by, I'll get your stuff.
He doesn't want you back in the
building.

DANNY nods. Tight. Frustrated. Exhausted.

CARLA

(sensing how roiled he is)
You've got to get away from that club.

DANNY

Yeah, like they're just gonna let me
leave.

CARLA

What about your parole officer?

DANNY

And say what? I've been working in a
bar with a bunch of known criminals,
but now they're planning a major felony
so I need to make some adjustments?

CARLA

You'd be reporting a crime.

DANNY

Are you kidding?

(beyond incredulity)

I owe the State Of New York fourteen
months. I go to him, that's where
I *start* That's just for knowing
about it. And that's the *good* news,
because I rat these guys out I'd
be dead before I had a chance to
worry about it. You have no idea
how these people are. None.

CARLA

There's got to be something.

DANNY

What? You want me to run?

CARLA

Who said that?

DANNY

Cause if I run, I'll be running
forever. That's it.

CARLA

That's the worst thing you could do.

DANNY

Yeah, well, that's the alternative.

CARLA

You want to lose everything?

DANNY

That's what I'm saying.

CARLA

So tell me you won't do that.

DANNY

I'm not!

(off her look)

I'm not running.

All quiet now. Where are they?

CARLA

Stay with me.

(she's serious)

Just don't show up. Call in sick.

Just till Monday, just...

(wide open)

Stay with me till we figure it out.

He's rocked. Sanctuary. Again.

CUT TO

WEST ST. GREEN. 5TH FLOOR HALLWAY. MR. JAVIER, the Super,
waiting out here. Pissed-off and impatient, as we --

CUT TO

DANNY'S APARTMENT. CARLA gathering his stuff as fast as
she can. QUICK TIME CUTS -- toothbrush and razor from the
bathroom -- books and comics on the windowsill -- folding
his clothes -- pillow, blanket, the sleeping bag...

AND THEN

IN THE CLOSET -- there on the top shelf -- HIS KIT BAG --
CARLA pulling it down -- she's gonna start packing it up
with the stuff she's collected, when... What's this?
There's something taped inside...hidden there...

A PLANE TICKET. American Airlines.

CARLA standing there. Still staring at it, as we --

CUT TO

THE SIDEWALK OUTSIDE. DANNY seeing CARLA come out of the
building. He's smiling, and moving to meet her -- but it's
starting to look like a one-way street as she gets closer --

DANNY
Everything okay?

CARLA
(his bag)
Here...

DANNY
What?

CARLA
Just go.

DANNY
(lost)
Go where?

CARLA
San Diego...
(she's got the ticket)
Apparently you're leaving Newark
at seven-ten Monday morning.

She hands it to him. Steely now. Disappointment forging
into something more ominous.

DANNY
I wasn't gonna use it.

CARLA
Which is why you bought it.

DANNY
Carla, it's a ticket. So what?

CARLA
So you lied to me.

DANNY

I wasn't lying.

CARLA

You told me you weren't gonna run.

DANNY

Where am I? Am I standing here?
Am I running?

CARLA

You bought it *yesterday*.

DANNY

It was just-in-case! I didn't want
to need one and find out I couldn't
get it.

CARLA

Like me, right?

DANNY

What?

CARLA

Just-in-case?

DANNY

Don't do this...

CARLA

What? Ask you to tell me the truth?

DANNY

Make a huge thing out of it.

CARLA

You think it's just this?

(on fire)

I met you lying, okay? You lied
on the application. Then it was
sleeping at the office. Then you
want the job, but you disappear.
You're trying to get straight, but
you end up with the guys who put
you in prison. They're planning
some crime, and you're not involved,
but you are. Now you're not running,
but there's the ticket...

(wound out)

I mean, come on...

DANNY

You ever think maybe I changed my mind?

CARLA

Then why not tell me?

DANNY

(too hard)

I guess I didn't think you were gonna toss my cell.

CARLA

Oh, fuck you...

DANNY

So it doesn't matter what I say.

CARLA

What do you think? I'm so needy and stupid I'll go for anything?

DANNY

Wait a minute, I'm playing you? I've been running your shit since this started. I'm the one who's hanging out here!

CARLA

I've done nothing but help you.

DANNY

You got what you wanted.

That cuts it. She's out of here.

CARLA

I can't believe you'd say that.

DANNY

Think about it.

Forget it, she's running -- there's A CAB STOPPED at the light. DANNY standing there, watching her go and --

CUT TO

INSIDE THE CAB. THE DRIVER turning back, as --

CARLA

(rushing in)

-- midtown -- anywhere -- I don't care -- Bryant Park...

The light changes. THE DRIVER pulling away. And suddenly, there is SILENCE. CARLA taking off her "ears" and everything going quiet; the noise of the city...the driver's radio... even the sound of her weeping in the backseat, all of it just falling away, as we --

CUT TO

A FLOPHOUSE HOTEL. DANNY at the desk, getting a room.

CUT TO

MIDTOWN. CARLA walking aimlessly -- SILENTLY -- through a crowd of Saturday afternoon shoppers.

CUT TO

FLOPHOUSE HOTEL ROOM. DANNY on the bed. Shades drawn against the afternoon light. He's utterly beat, but sleep won't come.

CUT TO

ROCKEFELLER PLAZA. CARLA on a bench watching the skaters. She's cried out. Drained. Just letting the world silently, busily push it's way around her, and then --

Her eyes fix on something in the distance. A moment later she's standing for a better look...

Suddenly, she's grabbing HER HANDBAG, searching for --

THE NOTEPAD -- flipping pages -- scanning -- looking for the right page -- going too fast -- going back, as ---

THE CAMERA TURNS

ACROSS THE STREET. A STORE WINDOW. And here's what seems to have gotten her so excited:

WE PRINT DIGITAL!
Digital Camera Prints Our Speciality!

THE CAMERA ZOOMING IN ON ONE WORD...

Prints

CUT TO

THE CLUB. Early. The SET-UP CREW going through the motions. DANNY at the bar marrying up bottles. He and BIX turning as MARCHAND comes shuffling in with MARCO --

BIX

How's it going?

MARCHAND

Hanging low, man...

(major hangover)

Too much last night last night.

(or is he selling it?)

I'm going up and take a nap. I don't want to be disturbed, okay?

BIX

You got it.

DANNY watching this all very carefully. Smelling trouble. And if that wasn't enough...

MARCO

Yo, Dee...

(he's got a box)

Do me a favor. These guest passes gotta be dropped off in the Village.

DANNY

I'm setting up, man.

MARCO

C'mon, there's like ten guys here...

(to Bix)

He'll be back in an hour.

BIX

Whatever.

MARCO

Gimme a little Goose before you go...

DANNY nods. Tight but trying to hide it. Pouring the vodka.

DANNY

Where the Brothers at?

MARCO

They went to Atlantic City. They'll be back tonight. Why? What's up?

But DANNY'S PHONE IS RINGING --

DANNY

Hello...

INTERCUT WITH

CARLA IN HER APARTMENT. She's got THE NOTEPAD and --

CARLA

Please don't hang up. Please.

DANNY

(covering instantly)

Yeah, this is him.

CARLA

Where are you? You're at the club?

DANNY

(low key, smooth)

Oh, yeah, definitely...

CARLA

You can't talk.

DANNY

Is this about the rent?

MARCO right there, impatient, checking his watch, pushing THE BOX OF GUEST PASSES across the bar.

CARLA

Listen to me. Prince.

(pacing, urgent)

It's not prince like we thought.

I think I was wrong. It's not prince, like royalty, it's prints, like fingerprints. I'm looking at what I wrote --

(the notepad)

-- "getting the prints in the right place." Then he says, "Now we got the prints lined up, we're good." Fingerprints. You hear me?

DANNY hesitates, blindsided by what she's just said, a silence she misinterprets --

CARLA

Danny, please, I'm so sorry, I've been a wreck all afternoon thinking about what we said. And I started thinking how it must look to you, and I *know* that feeling, when you're

(MORE)

CARLA (CONT'D)

so used to being by yourself that
you just give up on people -- where
it's easier to turn it all off than
try anymore. We just -- neither one
of us -- we want to be together --
I know we do -- we just don't have
any practice, so we keep stumbling
through it. I don't care about the
ticket. I mean, I do, I don't want
you to go, but that was just me being
all wound up from my sister and the
hospital and the whole anxiety of it.

(her whole heart in it)

I want you to be safe, Danny. I want
you to walk out of there right now
and come here and we'll make it okay.
We can do that. I know we can...

(moment)

Oh, God, just say something, so I
know you understand.

DANNY rocked and doing everything he can not to show it.

DANNY

I do. I understand. I really do.

CARLA

You've gotta call me back.

DANNY

I'm working on it. Thanks for the
heads up. I mean it.

And DANNY hangs up. Blistered. Searching for a game face.

MARCO

What the fuck was that?

DANNY

Bullshit. This place I'm staying,
there's some beef about the room.

CUT TO

CARLA IN HER APARTMENT. Standing there. Freefalling...

CUT TO

DANNY LEAVING THE CLUB. He's on his way out with the BOX
OF GUEST PASSES. Eyes tight. Mind racing and...

FLASHBACK -- a moment -- we're in THE CLUBHOUSE --
VICTOR is handing him MARCHAND'S GUN --

DANNY HEADING ACROSS THE DANCE FLOOR...

*FLASHBACK -- now we're in THE BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR --
TERRY's telling him he's got to take MARCHAND home --*

*MARCO
Don't forget his bag.*

DANNY HEADING FOR THE FRONT DOOR...

*FLASHBACK -- this time it's MARCHAND'S BEDROOM --
DANNY standing there with MARCHAND'S BRIEFCASE --*

FINALLY TO

TENTH AVENUE. One minute later. DANNY dumping THE BOX OF GUEST PASSES INTO A GARBAGE CAN, as we --

CUT TO

THE CLUB ALLEY. MARCHAND just coming out the back door. And he's changed -- he's wearing a shitty windbreaker and a baseball cap. Coming out slowly. Sneaky. Looking around. HIS LEXUS parked right there, but he's not taking the car, he's pulling his collar and heading toward the street, as --

THE CAMERA SWINGS TO FIND

DANNY tucked in the shadows. Watching the whole thing.

CUT TO

THE CLUBHOUSE DOOR. Minutes later. DANNY with LATEX GLOVES, reaching above the door, searching for -- THE KEY...

TAKING US INTO

THE CLUBHOUSE. DANNY moving through the dark. Careful. Brisk. Cabinet...bureau...desk...shelf... But what's he looking for?

Bingo

MARCHAND'S GUN -- the gun Victor handed him -- DANNY with A RAG -- wiping it clean. Mission accomplished. Backing away, when he stops --

MARCHAND'S COAT hanging there by the door. DANNY doing a quick Fagin through the pockets -- CIGARETTES...CONDOMS... CAR KEYS...LIGHTER...leaving everything but...

THE CAR KEYS. Those he wants. Grabbing them, just as
HIS PHONE STARTS RINGING -- DANNY rushing to get it quiet,
 looking to see who's calling --

It's her. It's Carla. He can't. He can't talk to her.
 He wants to -- badly -- but he's bailing and he's got to
 keep her out of it. Turning the phone off, as we --

CUT TO

CARLA with a dead phone in her hand, trying not to panic,
 as we --

CUT TO

THE CLUB ALLEY. A TAXI pulling up. MARCHAND getting out.
 He's still wearing the "disguise" he had on when he left,
 except now he's carrying THE BRIEFCASE -- clutching it like
 a baby -- hustling down the alley toward the club and --

CUT TO

A BINOCULAR POV OF THE CLUBHOUSE as the lights come on and
 MARCHAND comes rushing in. And if there were any doubt as
 to his state of mind, it's quickly clarified because he's
 disappearing for a moment...

Then he's back with a A BOTTLE OF VODKA -- no time for a
 glass -- taking a long, panicked slug, and now, what's he
 doing? He's taking THE BRIEFCASE -- where? -- we lost him!

REVERSE TO

DANNY AT THE WINDOW -- binoculars scanning -- where'd he go?
 -- where's the briefcase? -- and then --

CUT TO

THE CLUBHOUSE LIVING ROOM. MARCHAND coming back for more
 vodka, but now without the briefcase -- sucking down another
 deep, nerve-settling pull, as we --

CUT TO

THE CLUB. Here comes DANNY pretending he's returning from
 dropping off the guest passes --

MARCO

(he's been waiting)

Took you long enough.

CUT TO

THE CLUBHOUSE BATHROOM. MARCHAND at the sink. Trying to pull his shit together. He's got to calm down and sell his alibi. Trying to be a guy who just took a nap, as we --

CUT TO

THE CLUB/MAIN BAR. DANNY and RIO settling into their stations as the place starts to get going. DANNY's eyes shifting out toward the floor now because --

THERE'S

MARCHAND making his alibi entrance, Strolling to A LARGE CENTER BOOTH. Pure theatre. Like he's been here all night.

REVERSE TO

DANNY pouring himself a drink. This is it. If he's gonna make a move, it's gotta be now. Downing the courage, and --

THE CASH REGISTER. DANNY popping the tray, quick slipping a couple hundred into his pocket.

HIS KIT BAG. DANNY reaching under the bar to where it's stashed, just pulling it out, when --

MARCO (OS)

Yo, Dee...

DANNY freezes. Drops the bag. Rising to see --

MARCO

Listen, later, I talked to Bix,
you and me, we're gonna run uptown
and pick up Terry's new car.

DANNY nods, forcing himself to stay cool. A task that's about to get infinitely more difficult, because --

RIGHT THERE

CARLA at the bar! But not. This is Carla like we've never seen her. Like maybe no one's ever seen her. The make-up. Push-up. Heels. Short skirt. A total makeover.

MARCO

(smile for Carla)

How you doing?

CARLA smiles back. DANNY about to freak, until he realizes that MARCO has no idea who she is.

MARCO

(back to Danny now)

So look, I gotta cut out now and see some folks, let's say I come back for you around midnight, yeah?

DANNY nods. CARLA smiling. MARCO heading off, as we --

HARD CUT TO

THE STAFF BATHROOM -- DOOR FLYING OPEN! -- DANNY with CARLA in tow -- locking the door behind him and --

DANNY

(quiet, desperate, urgent)

Listen to me, because I am so not fucking around -- you have to get outta here and get out fast!

CARLA

Are you coming with me?

DANNY

It's too late! It's over.

CARLA

What do you mean? What've you done?

DANNY

I haven't done anything, that's the gag! You were right -- about the prints -- but they're mine -- it's my prints. They're setting me up! It's Marchand, the guy that owns this place. It's his wife -- it's her jewelry -- he's ripping off his own house.

CARLA

(lost)

She's part of it too?

DANNY

No!

(no time, but no choice)

Terry and Victor, they got their teeth into Marchand. He owes them, I don't even know? A couple hundred grand? It's them -- the three of them -- they're in it together.

CARLA

What does that have to do with you?

DANNY

I'm the patsy. I'm not here to do the job, I'm here to take the rap. That's why they came after me, they've been fattening me up for this from the day I got out.

CARLA

Why? Why do they need you?

DANNY

Because if they set me up they get everything! Terry gets the stones, Marchand gets the insurance, and the cops get a closed case. I'm supposed to end up with a bullet in my head and a diamond in my pocket in a parking lot somewhere.

CARLA

So we'll just...

(grasping)

We'll just go! If you're not here, it can't happen.

DANNY

It's too late! Marchand's done it. The shit's upstairs! It's up there right now! It's going down tonight. Teddy and Victor are gonna be back here in an hour. The only thing I've got going is a head start. I've got some cash and Marchand's car keys. I gotta get as far away as I can and buy some time. Stay alive. See what happens. That's all I can do.

CARLA

No.

DANNY

No? What do you mean, no?

CARLA

(incredulous)

You're just gonna let them do this?

DANNY

I need time!

CARLA

That's what you're giving them!

DANNY

Like I have a choice.

CARLA

You do!

(fearless suddenly)

Take them out. Do what you told me.
Never Wound an Enemy.

DANNY

(incredulous)

Are you high? What do you think?
You think this is the office?

CARLA

I know how to do it.

DANNY

I don't want to hear it!

CARLA

(but she won't stop now)

They don't know about us. They have
no idea that you're onto them.

DANNY

I'm not getting you involved!

CARLA

It's too late! I'm involved.

DANNY about to respond, when -- KNOCK!-KNOCK! --

WAITRESS VOICE (OS)

(through the door)

You gonna be long in there?

DANNY

(calling back)

Hang on!

He turns back. CARLA waiting for him. Resolved.

CARLA

What happens if the stuff's just not
there?

DANNY blindsided by this. Wavering, as we --

CUT TO

MARCHAND IN THAT BIG BOOTH. As we left him, except now he's been joined by A COUPLE MODELS and there's A WAITRESS bringing food and another round of drinks and --

REVERSE TO

DANNY AT THE BAR. Watching this. Like carefully.

CUT TO

THE BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR. JOSE and ANOTHER MEXICAN PORTER have been taking out garbage. They're just coming in from THE ALLEY, passing THE BEER CAGE UNDER THE STAIRS as they head back toward the club for another load, and --

THE CAMERA FINDS

CARLA in the shadows, waiting for them to pass. Taking off her heels. And there she goes, UP THE STAIRS and --

CUT TO

MARCHAND AT HIS TABLE -- laughing with THE MODELS and --

CUT TO

DANNY laying out drinks and --

CUT TO

CARLA AT THE CLUBHOUSE DOOR -- poised there -- listening -- making sure she's alone -- reaching up for THE KEY and --

CUT TO

TERRY AND VICTOR IN THE BACK OF A LIMOUSINE -- on their way back from Atlantic City and --

CUT TO

DARKNESS -- THE CLUBHOUSE -- CARLA inside -- moving through the shadows -- looking for the briefcase --

CUT TO

DANNY AT THE BAR -- he's got CUSTOMERS -- making change --
trying to keep an eye on Marchand, and --

BIX

Danny!

(down the bar)

Gimme two bottles of Dom...

DANNY nods, but the cooler's up the line -- squeezing past
RIO to get there and --

CUT TO

CARLA IN THE DARK CLUBHOUSE BEDROOM -- there's A CLOSET,
sort of a half-assed accordion door thing -- she's been
digging around in here, but it's empty and --

CUT TO

DANNY STILL KNEELING AT THE COOLER -- the bottles he wants
are all the way at the back and shit is falling and he's
jumpy and going too fast and --

CUT TO

CARLA COMING OUT OF THE BEDROOM -- heading for THE KITCHEN
-- everything rushed -- nervy -- tension building and --

CUT TO

DANNY COMING BACK WITH THE CHAMPAGNE -- but he's starting to
freak, because --

HIS POV

IT'S NOT CLEAR ANYMORE! -- it's too busy -- there's A CROWD
gathered around that big booth and --

BIX

Hey!

(over here, wake up)

Put it on Marchand's house check.

DANNY nods -- trying to stay cool -- trying to follow BIX as
he weaves out toward the floor and --

No...

MARCHAND'S SEAT IS EMPTY!

CUT TO

CARLA IN THE CLUBHOUSE KITCHEN -- no luck -- she can't find it -- looking everywhere -- shelves -- cabinets, and then --

AT HER FEET

WATER ON THE FLOOR -- ice cubes melting -- like they fell there and --

CUT TO

MARCHAND COMING THROUGH THE BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR -- passing THE TWO PORTERS lugging garbage, as he turns the corner that lead ultimately to the stairs and --

CUT TO

CARLA PULLING OPEN THE FREEZER -- bingo -- light -- magic -- THE BRIEFCASE! -- she's got it! -- just closing the door, as HER PHONE STARTS VIBRATING and --

CUT TO

DANNY WITH HIS PHONE BEHIND THE BAR -- mayday panic --

DANNY

Get out! Get out now! I lost him!

CUT TO

MARCHAND CLIMBING THE CLUBHOUSE STAIRS -- drunk enough that he's almost stumbling and --

CUT TO

CARLA COMING OUT OF THE KITCHEN -- rushing back -- through the dark -- toward the door and --

CUT TO

MARCHAND pulling his keys and --

CUT TO

CARLA stopping -- cold -- THE DOOR -- it's jiggling! --

CUT TO

MARCHAND -- he is drunk -- wrong key -- trying again and --

CUT TO

THE BEDROOM -- CARLA sprinting in! -- where to hide? -- no time -- it's dark -- there -- yes! -- DIVING IN THE CLOSET -- pulling closed the folding door --

JUST AS

MARCHAND COMES INTO THE CLUBHOUSE -- turning on lights as he heads into THE LIVING ROOM and --

CUT TO

DANNY AT THE BAR -- starting to freak -- PEOPLE ASKING FOR DRINKS -- everything pressing in --

RIO

(behind him)

You okay? You're sweating...

DANNY

I don't know. Something I ate...

CUT TO

CARLA HIDING IN THE CLOSET -- terrified -- fighting it -- straining to hear what's going on, but she can't, so she's turning her "ears" to their highest setting and EVERYTHING GETTING INCREDIBLY LOUD AND SIBILANT NOW and --

CUT TO

MARCHAND IN THE LIVING ROOM -- snorting up a huge line of coke and --

CUT TO

CARLA IN THE CLOSET -- listening -- lost -- what's he doing?

CUT TO

MARCHAND ON HIS FEET -- amped now -- good to go -- about to leave, when he hesitates -- turning toward THE KITCHEN and --

CUT TO

DANNY LEAVING THE BAR -- pushing past A COUPLE WAITRESSES waiting for drinks -- ignoring them -- ignoring everything now -- pretending he's about to be sick and --

CUT TO

MARCHAND IN THE KITCHEN staring at THE EMPTY FREEZER --

MARCHAND

....NNNNOOOOO!!!!

CUT TO

CARLA IN THE CLOSET -- hearing this and --

CUT TO

MARCHAND -- apoplectic -- confusion and fury and coke and vodka all storming together in a chaotic, disbelieving squall of madness -- double taking -- triple taking -- like if he checks again it might be there and --

MARCHAND

-- NO! -- FUCK! -- FUCKING NO! --
(just on and on, as we--)

CUT TO

CARLA IN THE CLOSET -- and no! -- oh, God, she can hear him! -- HE'S MOVING! -- HE'S IN THE BEDROOM! -- lights on now -- SOMETHING FALLING -- A LAMP -- GLASS BREAKING and --

CUT TO

DANNY IN THE BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR -- looking for Marchand --

CUT TO

MARCHAND IN THE BEDROOM -- rampaging -- blindly -- rooting the sheets -- the windows -- where? -- how? --

MARCHAND

FUCK!!!
(swinging now and--)

CUT TO

CARLA IN THE CLOSET -- no time to scream -- react -- anything -- MARCHAND'S FIST SMASHING INTO THE DOOR! -- CHEAP WOOD SPLINTERING! -- HIS FIST RIGHT THERE -- *inches from her face!* she's ready to fight -- scream -- anything, and then --

CUT TO

MARCHAND recoiling -- pulling away -- his hand -- he's cut -- FUCK! -- the pain rallying some pragmatic part of his consciousness and --

CUT TO

THE BASE OF THE STAIRS -- THE TWO PORTERS -- they heard
the commotion -- looking up toward The Clubhouse --

DANNY
(from behind them)
What's going on?

CUT TO

MARCHAND plowing out the THE CLUBHOUSE DOOR and --

CUT TO

CARLA IN THE CLOSET -- trying to breath -- to think --

CUT TO

MARCHAND RACING DOWN THE STAIRS --

MARCHAND
WHAT THE FUCK'RE YOU DOING?

THE TWO PORTERS staring up at him --

JOSE
(innocent concern)
Nothing...we hear you...it's okay?

MARCHAND hesitates -- their blank curiosity making it clear
they've got nothing to do with this --

MARCHAND
Who else has been back here?
(coming down fast)
WHO ELSE?

CUT TO

DANNY UP THE CORRIDOR -- thinking fast -- grabbing a CASE OF
BEER -- trying to make it look like he's working and --

CUT TO

CARLA -- she's out of the closet -- careful and terrified,
but determined -- she's got to get out of here -- braving a
look-see and --

HER POV

THE DOOR IS OPEN -- she's alone here --

CUT TO

DANNY PASSING THE LIQUOR ROOM -- just about to turn the corner that leads back to the bar, when --

MARCHAND

(behind him)

HEY! HEY YOU! HEY, WAIT UP!

DANNY turns -- MARCHAND jogging toward him -- THE TWO PORTERS sort of following behind and --

CUT TO

CARLA AT THE CLUBHOUSE DOOR -- the coast is clear -- it's now or never -- clutching HER SHOES and THE BRIEFCASE as she sucks it up and --

CUT TO

DANNY standing there with that case of beer -- pretending he's got no idea what's going on --

MARCHAND

(breathless, wild)

Who? Who told you to get beer?

DANNY

Nobody, I'm running out.

MARCHAND nods, he's buying it...

MARCHAND

Next time get a cold case, asshole.

(guess not, because--)

He just pulled A GUN! DANNY freezes. THE PORTERS too.

MARCHAND

(to The Porters)

Go! Get the fuck out! Vamanos!

CUT TO

CARLA IN THE ALLEY -- she's out! -- running barefoot toward the PUSHCART GARAGE and --

CUT TO

THE CLUBHOUSE -- but wild -- chaotic -- handheld -- MARCHAND out of his mind, dragging DANNY through the apartment -- beating him and SCREAMING -- DANNY bleeding and stunned and --

MARCHAND

-- WHERE? -- WHERE IS IT? -- WHERE? --
(just over and over, and--)

DANNY

-- I don't -- I don't know! -- I don't
know what you're talking about! --

CUT TO

THE PUSHCART LANDING -- CARLA just arrived -- already
flipping out -- it's bad -- she knows it -- scrambling for
THE BINOCULARS, as we --

CUT TO

MADNESS -- HANDCUFFS SNAPPING SHUT! -- DANNY'S WRISTS pinned
behind him -- A BATHTUB filling fast -- MARCHAND -- he's got
DANNY by the neck -- slamming him down under the water and --

MARCHAND

-- WHERE! -- WHERE IS IT? -- TALK! --
(and then jerking him up--)

DANNY

(sputtering, gasping)
-- don't -- what you -- can't --

MARCHAND plunging him back down and --

CUT TO

CARLA'S BINOCULAR POV -- a partial view of THE BATHROOM --
DANNY'S FEET -- kicking -- struggling and --

CUT TO

THE CLUB ENTRANCE. TERRY AND VICTOR have just arrived --
easing through the crowd -- past the rope and --

CUT TO

DANNY -- gasping! -- jerked half-dead from the tub --

MARCHAND

-- YOU THINK I WON'T KILL YOU? --
YOU THINK I'M SOME KIND OF PUSHOVER
BITCH? -- WHERE? -- TELL ME NOW! --

DANNY

-- don't know -- don't -- swear --

Wrong -- back down into the soup, as --

MARCHAND

FUCK!!!
(because--)

THE CLUBHOUSE PHONE JUST STARTED RINGING and --

CUT TO

CARLA COMPLETELY FLIPPING OUT -- what can she do? -- call 911? -- give back the case? -- no time to think --

CUT TO

MARCHAND -- scrambling! -- he's got DANNY out of the tub -- handcuffing him to A STEAM RISER there in the bathroom as THAT PHONE KEEPS RINGING and --

CUT TO

TERRY AT THE BAR ON A HOUSE PHONE -- getting edgy -- where the fuck is Marchand? -- why isn't he answering? -- just about to give up, when --

TERRY

(finally--)
Hey, what's going on? Why the fuck aren't you down here? I told you to profile.

CUT TO

MARCHAND ON THE LIVING ROOM PHONE -- panicked and trying to cover it --

MARCHAND

We're good. It's good. I'll be down in a minute.

TERRY/PHONE

No. We're coming up.

CUT TO

DANNY SLUMPED ON THE BATHROOM FLOOR. And he's bad, but not as bad as he's pretending to be, because here comes --

MARCHAND

This is it, asshole!
(grabbing Danny by the throat--)
You got anything to say, you better do it now, because this shit is just about to get way out of my control!

DANNY shaking his head like he doesn't understand and --

MARCHAND
(throwing him down)
SHIT!!!!

CUT TO

CARLA ON THE LANDING -- scrambling -- looking for something
-- there -- on the floor -- THE FLASHLIGHT and --

CUT TO

TERRY AND VICTOR WALKING THROUGH THE BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR and --

CUT TO

MARCHAND PACING THE CLUBHOUSE -- trying to think -- trying
to breathe -- what the fuck's he gonna do? --

CUT TO

DANNY IN THE BATHROOM -- battered -- but conscious enough
to see there's something moving on the wall -- A SHADOW --
A REFLECTION -- what the hell is that? --

CUT TO

CARLA WITH THE FLASHLIGHT -- it's her -- she's shining it
across the alley, trying to get his attention and --

CUT TO

TERRY AND VICTOR CLIMBING THE CLUBHOUSE STAIRS and --

CUT TO

DANNY struggling -- sliding his hands up the steam pipe --
making his feet -- he's got an angle at THE WINDOW and --

HIS POV

THE FLASHLIGHT -- from the garage -- it's her!

CUT TO

HER BINOCULAR POV -- there he is -- he sees her --

CARLA
What do I do now? Say something!

CUT TO

TERRY AND VICTOR KNOCKING AT THE CLUBHOUSE DOOR and --

CUT TO

DANNY -- HIS LIPS -- they're moving -- he's talking to her!
-- rushing -- silently -- telling her what to do and --

CUT TO

CARLA -- HER LIPS -- following him -- getting it and --

CUT TO

DANNY stopping -- turning suddenly -- some new sound from
beyond the door -- TERRY and VICTOR must've just come in and
MARCHAND's blubbing at them and trying to explain what's
happened and THE VOICES ARE GETTING LOUDER and --

CUT TO

CARLA WITH THE BINOCULARS nodding and "listening" and --

CARLA

...yes...yes....yes...

CUT TO

TERRY STORMING THE BATHROOM -- kicking open the door --

TO SEE

DANNY half-conscious on the floor and --

TERRY

Get him up!

CUT TO

MARCHAND'S BRIEFCASE -- popping open -- FIFTY GLASSINE
ENVELOPES loose in here -- CARLA -- HER HANDS -- quickly
working one of them open and --

DIAMONDS! -- there must be twenty gorgeous stones in each
one of these little packets and now --

CARLA -- fast -- as fast as she can -- pulling FIFTEEN OF
THE ENVELOPES out of the pile -- just about to close the case
when she grabs ANOTHER HANDFUL and --

CUT TO

THE CLUBHOUSE. VICTOR and MARCHAND tearing the place apart, looking for the briefcase. DANNY in a chair, bloodied and beaten and --

TERRY

Talk to me, Dee. Talk to me while there's still something I can do about this...

DANNY

(barely)
...don't know...don't understand...

MARCHAND

Cut his eyes out!

TERRY

(wheeling on him)
SHUT THE FUCK UP, ASSHOLE!

MARCHAND spooked -- backing off, as THE CLUBHOUSE PHONE BEGINS TO RING and --

VICTOR

(grabbing it)
Yeah?

CUT TO

CARLA AT THE OTHER END OF THE LINE --

CARLA

Vin?

CUT TO

THE CLUBHOUSE LOUNGE and --

VICTOR

(to Marchand)
It's for you.

MARCHAND

What?
(but taking it)
Who's this?
(like he's baffled)
What? What the hell're you talking about? Get outta here --
(as he's slamming down the receiver and--)

TERRY

Who was that?

MARCHAND

I don't know...

TERRY and VICTOR trading a look as THE PHONE STARTS RINGING AGAIN and this time TERRY'S jumping in -- hitting the button before MARCHAND can do anything and --

CARLA'S VOICE

(suddenly on speakerphone)

Vin?

MARCHAND about to protest -- silenced instantly as VICTOR jams A PISTOL up under his throat and --

CARLA'S VOICE

(sounding very anxious)

Vin, was that you? You're still there?

TERRY

("doing" Marchand)

I'm here.

CARLA'S VOICE

We're gonna miss our flight!

TERRY

Where are you?

CARLA'S VOICE

You're not picking me up?

(then like she's suddenly suspicious--)

Who is this?

(then, "click" and--)

Suddenly there's nothing but a DIAL TONE and a very bad vibe in the room --

MARCHAND

No...

TERRY

(pure ominous calm)

What's the game, Vin?

MARCHAND

...this...this...this is bullshit...

TERRY

(to Victor)

Get em both in the bathroom.

MARCHAND

(drunk, baffled, stunned)

Terry, why? -- why would I? -- WHY?

TERRY

Where's your car keys?

CUT TO

GLASS SHATTERING! -- A CAR ALARM BLARING! -- TERRY just cracked open MARCHAND'S LEXUS -- scrambling around inside -- HANDS digging -- searching and --

Hello. There's THE BRIEFCASE. Tucked under the passenger seat. Just where Carla left it.

CUT TO

MARCHAND AND DANNY CUFFED TOGETHER IN THE BATHROOM -- one hand each on either side of the steam pipe -- MARCHAND with his mouth taped shut -- DANNY just all fucked up, bleeding and broken and swollen and yet --

He's doing something -- fishing with his free hand in his pocket -- searching for something -- A KEYCHAIN! -- rushing it to his mouth -- biting it -- bending it -- trying to shape it into a tool and --

MARCHAND -- eyes wide -- desperate -- hopeful -- knowing they're doomed if something doesn't happen fast and --

CUT TO

THE CLUBHOUSE DOOR. There's TERRY with THE BRIEFCASE --

VICTOR

You gotta be kidding...

TERRY

(killer calm)

You believe this fucking guy?

CUT TO

DANNY -- HIS FREE HAND -- THAT PIECE OF KEYCHAIN -- he's trying to pick the lock on the handcuffs! It's too hard to get an angle on his cuff, and it doesn't matter because either one will free them, so MARCHAND's trying to hold his cuff steady while DANNY scrapes and digs and --

CUT TO

THE KITCHEN. TERRY and VICTOR need a plan. And quick.
GUNS -- VODKA -- ATTACHE CASE -- all on the counter --

VICTOR

-- I want to hurt him first --

TERRY

-- we don't have time! --

CUT TO

CARLA -- THE BINOCULARS -- swinging away from THE KITCHEN --
BECAUSE

THERE -- IN THE BATHROOM -- something's moving -- there's
MARCHAND! -- he's standing and --

CUT TO

INSIDE THE BATHROOM. MARCHAND -- cuffs off -- hands free
-- ripping the tape from his mouth -- backing away -- eyes
wild -- he's making a move -- putting a finger to his lips,
"quiet" -- slipping out the door and --

DANNY just laying there. Useless. Watching him go...

CUT TO

CARLA'S BINOCULAR POV -- scanning -- there's TERRY and VICTOR
still plotting in the kitchen -- and nothing in THE BATHROOM
because Danny's on the floor -- but there --

MARCHAND -- on the move -- in his hand, THE BERETTA!

CUT TO

DANNY ON THE BATHROOM FLOOR. Sitting there. Bloodied and
spent. Just about to try and stand, when suddenly --

BLAM!-- BLAM-BLAM! -- BLAM-BLAM!-BLAM! -- six gunshots.

And then silence.

CUT TO

CARLA -- pale -- frozen -- BINOCULARS locked in place as if
she were paralyzed, except if she were paralyzed she wouldn't
be shaking the way she is and --

HER POV

OUTSIDE THE KITCHEN. TERRY AND VICTOR dead on the floor.
 MARCHAND slumped by the door, just about to join them.

SWINGING SUDDENLY TO FIND

DANNY AT THE BATHROOM WINDOW -- propped there -- waving --
 "Listen!" -- LIPS MOVING -- desperate to relay some final
 instruction and we're still in the midst of that, as we --

CUT TO

TENTH AVENUE. POLICE CARS SCREAMING from three different
 directions toward THE CLUB and --

CUT TO

THE CLUB ENTRANCE -- CHAOS! -- PEOPLE pouring out -- COPS
 fighting their way in and --

CUT TO

THE BATHROOM DOOR -- kicked open! -- TWO COPS -- weapons
 drawn -- standing there -- ready for anything and --

COP #1

We got another victim in here!
 (because there's--)

DANNY on the floor. Unconscious. Handcuffed to the steam
 pipe. All the alibi he'll need.

CUT TO

TENTH AVENUE. All the madness of a New York disco massacre.
 SIRENS and LIGHTS and NEWS TRUCKS and...

THE CAMERA FINDS

CARLA walking away. Her new skirt. And her heels. And the
 twenty packets of diamonds she's got stashed in her bag.
 Teetering away from the club. The ever-expanding knot of
 lights and activity receding behind her. Those heels
 clattering with increasing confidence as she disappears down
 the avenue, and we --

DISSOLVE TO

A PRISON VISITING ROOM. Day. Wives and kids on one side of the glass. Inmates on the other. Shabby old telephones to talk. Families. Faces. Guards. All the sadness and desperation you'd expect.

UNTIL THE CAMERA FINDS

CARLA AND DANNY. Time has passed. She looks great, dressed up for him like she always does on visiting day. He looks healthy and healed. The two of them so lost in conversation that they almost don't hear THE "TIME'S UP" BELL that's just started ringing in the background -

CARLA
(on that phone)
If it's Christmas...

DANNY
Sometimes they shave a couple weeks.

CARLA
That would be so great.

DANNY
He's gonna try. It looks good.

CARLA
I never get a tree. I'm gonna get one this year.

DANNY
Hell, we can have ten trees.

She smiles. He smiles. And then there's this GROAN that runs through the room because the GUARDS just cut the line. Time is up. The phones don't work anymore and --

DANNY
(silent, through the glass)
"I love you."

CARLA touches her lips. Yes. She knows, and --

CUT TO

A PASSENGER BUS. The visitors bus. The tragedy express just pulling away from the prison. Packed. Tired kids. Exhausted moms and grandmothers. Skin flash gang girls looking worse for the long day. Everything amped with sadness, farewell and the awareness of that long ride home --

UNTIL THE CAMERA FINDS

CARLA in her window seat. As the bus pulls away and the babies start wailing and the kids are fighting and their moms are yelling at them to shut up and the whole thing just turns into this godawful tin can full of noise and anxiety and...

CARLA takes off her hearing aids.

And the world goes silent. Nothing but a gentle murmur and the hum of the road as the bus rolls along.

And she's smiling. To herself.

And we fade out...

THE END