

Shooting Script
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SCREAM FOR HELP

Original Screenplay

by

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1. EXT. NEW ROCHELLE STREET. NIGHT.

It is the early hours when any place takes on a mystical look. Street lights splash illumination onto shuttered shops, some bearing the architecture of yesteryear and the lettering of today. A statue, once the center of attention, now stranded between two converging roadways, looks down on the now silent town. TITLES COMMENCE.

2. EXT. SECOND STREET IN NEW ROCHELLE. NIGHT.

Another street, lights blinking, a cop car cruises by, from one building a flag flops to and fro, making a strange flapping sound. TITLES CONTINUE.

3. EXT. STREET BY CITY HALL. NIGHT.

The neat lawns and trees, it is fall and leaves flutter down into the sidewalk outside. The imposing red-brick towers over empty parking spaces. Some paper blows past. TITLES CONTINUE.

4. EXT. STREET BY BEECHMONT AREA. NIGHT.

A garage in the main road is featured as one of the neon lights flash. We PAN to the other side of the street. Imposing stone pillars flank a wide road leading uphill to a tree-lined street, so full of trees you cannot see the houses set back from the roadway. We ZOOM INTO this area, as if entering a quieter, but at night, more ominous world. TITLES CONTINUE.

5. EXT. STREET IN BEECHMONT. NIGHT.

The white-painted stones that sit at intervals along the grass verges stand out in the gloom of dawn. We move through areas of great opulence. Grand houses, their inhabitants asleep. A dog barks. TITLES CONTINUE.

6. EXT. STREET BY CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Trees wave their branches, depleted of most of the leaves. Set well back from the road, almost invisible through the trees is a particularly large house. We MOVE IN toward it. TITLES CONTINUE.

7. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

The moonlight silhouettes a large, expensive, colonial style house. The nearest neighbor is hundreds of yards away. We ZOOM slowly in to an upper window. At first there seems to be no reason for closing in toward it, but, as we get closer, we can make out a face, inside, staring out. As we get very close we see it is a sixteen year old girl, her blonde hair spills over her thin shoulders in messy profusion. TITLES END.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

My name is Christina Ruth Cromwell.
Everybody calls me Christie. I'm
sixteen and I live in New Rochelle,
New York.

She turns from the window.

8. INT. CHRISTIE'S ROOM. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE returns to her desk. She snaps on a small desk light. It illuminates an open diary in which she has been writing. She sits and thinks for a second, before picking up the pen again, she writes.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

My stepfather is trying to murder
my mother. Nobody believes me,
so I'm writing this down in case
something happens to me. Maybe
somebody'll read it and do
something.

She looks up, thinking what to write next. She looks round to her bed.

DISSOLVE TO:

9. INT. CHRISTIE'S ROOM. NIGHT.

It is now totally dark except for the moonlight. CHRISTIE is whimpering, in troubled sleep.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

It began several weeks ago. I was
having a nightmare when a strange
sound echoed up through our house.
I awoke to another nightmare, a
real one this time -

The water pipes in the bathroom reverberate with a dull thud as though someone is pounding them from the floor below. CHRISTIE cocks a sleepy eye from her bed and

9. CONTINUED:

stares into her bathroom through the open door. She is a pretty teenager, still a girl, but on the verge of womanhood. As she listens the sound dies away. She is about to roll over and go back to sleep when a door creaks somewhere downstairs. Alarmed, she crawls out of bed, throws on her bathrobe and slippers and pads for the door to the hallway.

10. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. SECOND-FLOOR HALLWAY & LANDING. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE pauses outside the door, listening intently. She hears nothing but silence. Suddenly a floorboard groans in a room below. She steals on tiptoe toward the landing. She stops, peering down the stairway into the darkness of the portico below. Nothing moves down there, not even the shadows. She slowly walks down the stairs.

11. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. PORTICO. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE stops at the foot of the stairs, facing the front door. Her body tense, listening to the house settle. To her right is the swinging door into the kitchen, to her left a long hallway leading to the study and the door to the basement. CHRISTIE swings about and peers into the moonlit recesses of the living room.

12. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

She comes to a halt in a spill of moonlight. The wind moans outside on the patio. Tree branches stroke the side of the house. She hears a door in the hallway off the portico creak open and whirls, stealthily retracing her steps.

13. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. PORTICO. NIGHT.

As CHRISTIE steps into the portico the overhead light snaps on. She finds herself facing her stepfather, PAUL FOX. He is dressed in his bathrobe, almost movie star handsome, just beginning to run to fat as he slips into his early forties.

PAUL

Hi, Christie.

CHRISTIE

I heard a weird sound down here --

PAUL

It must have been me moving around.

13. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

No, this was like some kind of
banging on the pipes.

PAUL

I didn't hear it. I was in the
study doing some paper work.

Her gaze flicks to the ornate wall clock. It reads three
in the morning.

CHRISTIE

At this hour?

PAUL

I couldn't sleep.
(with a yawn)
But I'm tired enough now.

PAUL starts up the stairs only to realize CHRISTIE isn't
following. He turns back.

PAUL

Aren't you coming?

CHRISTIE

No, now that I'm up, I think
I'll have a snack.

PAUL

Okay. Don't forget to turn out
the lights.

He continues up the stairs, CHRISTIE's eyes narrow with
suspicion as he disappears down the landing above.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

Good-looking, isn't he? Nice,
too. Which is how he stole my
mother away from my dad. Only
I knew he was lying to me that
night. I just didn't know why --

She turns and heads down the dark hallway for the door to
the study.

14. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. STUDY. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE opens the door, turning on the light to stare at
the desk. It's clear of papers, but there's a stack of
files, as though Paul might have finished work. Her face
mirroring her uncertainty, CHRISTIE flicks out the light
and withdraws, closing the door behind her.

15. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. HALLWAY BY BASEMENT & PORTICO. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE starts down the dark hall back toward the portico and its friendly light when she hears a door creak open behind her. She turns to find the door to the basement has seemingly swung open of its own volition. Curious, she walks to the door, opening it completely, and staring down the stairwell into the blackness below. She hears nothing but basement sounds, the dripping of a leaking pipe, the hiss of the forced air heater at work, the distant groans of the foundation settling. Her curiosity satisfied, she closes the door firmly. She retraces her steps into the portico, snaps the light off, and trudges up the stairs to her bedroom above. The shadow-ridden hall is plunged into complete darkness; all except for the door into the basement. Its lacquer veneer picks up an errant moonbeam and it glistens wetly in the dark.

Slowly the sound of a pipe dripping somewhere in the basement below grows louder, water hitting concrete with monotonous regularity, every splat becoming more pronounced, more ominous with every passing second.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

I should have sensed something
was wrong that night, but I
didn't. If I had maybe no one
would have been killed the next
day --

16. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. DAY.

CHRISTIE walks home, school books under her arm. She slows as she sees several police cars and an ambulance parked in front of her house. She breaks into a run as two white-coated ATTENDANTS wheel a sheet-covered BODY out the front door.

She skids to a halt before her house as the ambulance roars away, sirens wailing. She turns to the COP standing by the squad car.

CHRISTIE

What happened?

COP

Someone died, I guess.

She stares after the ambulance. Then her gaze snaps back to her front door, her eyes flooding with fear.

CHRISTIE

(almost to herself)

Mom?

16. CONTINUED:

She charges the front door, yelling.

CHRISTIE

Mom!

17. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

Christie's mother, KAREN CROMWELL FOX, reaches out and pulls her to a halt. She is a pretty woman, almost beautiful, in her late thirties. She shushes her daughter with a finger.

KAREN

Shhh --

The room is a bit dark, no lights on. COPS, MEN from the CORONER'S OFFICE and the POWER COMPANY, stand about listening to the maid, SEUDI, do her best to tell her story. She is a spare woman in her late fifties, and talking isn't easy for her.

SEUDI

(caught mid-sentence)

-- I was up here waxing the floor when I heard this crackling sound like frying bacon. That's when the lights began to flicker and went out --

KAREN drags her daughter out of the room so she won't hear the gruesome details.

18. INT. THE PORTICO. DAY.

They step into the comparative quiet of the portico.

CHRISTIE

What's going on?

KAREN

The man from the power company came to read the meter and electrocuted himself.

CHRISTIE

How did it happen?

The overhead lights snap back on as the circuit breaker box in the basement below is repaired. Both women stare up at the suddenly blazing chandelier above them. CHRISTIE drops her gaze back to her mother's face.

18. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

What happened?

Before KAREN can answer, BOB DEALEY, the town police chief, emerges from the living room. He is a tall man in his mid-fifties, fit and trim.

BOB

Mrs. Fox, can I ask you a few questions?

KAREN

Surely.

The two adults disappear through the swinging door into the kitchen, leaving CHRISTIE alone. Voices echo up from the open basement door, drawing her down the hallway toward them.

19. INT. HALLWAY BY BASEMENT DOOR. DAY.

THREE MEN from the power company emerge from the basement, brushing by CHRISTIE, so busy talking they hardly notice her.

1ST MAN

Dumb son-of-a-bitch. Never should have touched that box, not when it was wet. He must've seen the busted water pipe.

2ND MAN

Yeah, but who would've seen the puddle on the floor? Not me.

3RD MAN

Yeah, it could've happened to anyone --

They disappear into the portico. CHRISTIE stares down the basement stairs. She steps forward into the dimly lit well below.

20. INT. THE BASEMENT. DAY.

It's quiet. The lights are on, but the room is vast, trailing off into darkness in every direction.

20. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE stops above the circuit breaker box. It's brand new, obviously just replaced. Above it is a water pipe, a new coupling covering the old. She stares at it, trying to understand what happened. And in her head, the SPLAT, SPLAT, SPLAT OF DRIPPING WATER begins. Her gaze drops to the floor directly below where the dripping water must have formed a puddle, providing a perfect ground for whoever stepped up to the breaker box. The splat of dripping water is monstrously loud now. She whirls and charges for the stairs.

21. EXT. STREET BY JANEY RALSTON'S HOUSE. DAY.

CHRISTIE peddles her old Schwinn madly down a tree-lined suburban street, skidding to a halt before a modest middle-class house. It is in sharp contrast to Christie's own much larger, much more expensive home. She dumps the bike to the ground and bounces up the porch steps, crashing through the front door.

22. INT. JANEY'S HOUSE. PORTICO. DAY.

CHRISTIE stops, getting her bearings. Rock music blasts out of the upstairs bedroom. CHRISTIE charges up the stairs.

23. INT. JANEY'S HOUSE. SECOND-FLOOR HALL. DAY.

CHRISTIE rushes down the hall and smashes through a bedroom door.

24. INT. JANEY RALSTON'S ROOM. DAY.

CHRISTIE

Janey, I've got to talk to you --

She's halfway across the room before her words, swallowed up by the rock music anyway, die on her lips. She skids to a frozen halt. Two teenagers her own age, JANEY RALSTON and JOSH DEALEY, had been locked in the act of love. Now they stare up at her from the rumpled bed, as shocked to see her as she is to see them. CHRISTIE backs for the door, JOSH pulls the sheet over him to cover his nakedness, and JANEY jumps out of bed naked and searches for her clothes amid the jumble on the floor. She is a red-haired, freckled teenager, already a woman, full-bodied and heavy breasted. She grumbles to herself as she dresses.

24. CONTINUED:

JANEY

Jesus Christ, Cromwell, don't
you ever knock.

CHRISTIE's gaze is stuck to JOSH and his trim, well-muscled
young body. The sheets are bunched up in a V around his
crotch. CHRISTIE suddenly whirls and tears for the door.

25. INT. JANEY'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DUSK.

CHRISTIE comes through the door and stops above the sink,
staring out the back window. Dusk is falling and the trees
and lawn furniture, even the slat fence, have turned gloomy
and forboding. JANEY comes through the door behind her,
and flicks on the overhead light. She studies CHRISTIE's
turned back.

JANEY

What's bothering you?

CHRISTIE

You promised to tell me before
you did anything with a boy,
remember? We've done all our
other 'firsts' together. Summer
Camp, Girl Scouts, even that
double date with --

JANEY

Christie, you're being a prude.

CHRISTIE

(her temper flaring)
I am not a prude. You just could
have told me, that's all.

JANEY

What's wrong with you anyway?

CHRISTIE

Nothin' --

JANEY smiles at what she thinks is the truth.

JANEY

It's because you're still a
virgin, isn't it? That's
why you're so upset.

25. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

I'm upset because my stepfather
just tried to murder my mother.

JANEY stares open-mouthed at CHRISTIE as JOSH breezes into
the room and heads for the fridge. He is fully dressed
now, a good-looking boy, dark-haired and well-built.

JOSH

Hi, what's going on?

JANEY

Christie thinks Paul Fox is
trying to murder her mother.

JOSH opens the fridge and rummages through it.

JOSH

No shit?

CHRISTIE

I'm telling the truth, Josh Dealey.
Your father's over at my house
investigating it right now.

JANEY

What happened anyway?

CHRISTIE

A man from the power company got
killed. He touched this fuse box
in our basement that had shorted
out.

JOSH

What's that got to do with Paul
Fox?

CHRISTIE

He made it short out.

JOSH glances up from the sandwich he's making at the
counter.

JOSH

Anybody ever tell you you watch
too much T.V.?

CHRISTIE

Anybody ever tell you for a police
chief's son you're a real idiot?

25. CONTINUED:

JOSH opens his mouth to make an angry retort and JANEY steps in between them.

JANEY

All right, you two --

CHRISTIE

(back to Janey)

Don't you see, Janey, you've got to help me. I need your car to follow him, find out what's going on -

JANEY

Why don't you borrow your mother's?

JOSH

She's only got a dinky Learner's permit. Shouldn't have flunked Driver's Ed.

CHRISTIE

I didn't flunk. I dropped out 'cause I was sick.

JOSH

Yeah, in the head.

JANEY throws him an irritated glance.

JANEY

Shut up, Josh.

He shuts up, going back to his sandwich-making. CHRISTIE grabs JANEY's hand, pleading with her.

CHRISTIE

Oh, please, Janey, help me --

JANEY stares into her best friend's face for a moment. Finally:

JANEY

No.

CHRISTIE

Huh. Why not?

JANEY

You've been crazy to get Paul Fox ever since he married your mother. That's why you went to that shrink. To get over this stuff --

25. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

I am over it.

JANEY

Oh, yeah?! I am not going to drive you all over town just because you have some nutty fantasy --

CHRISTIE

It wasn't a fantasy. I found the love letters Paul Fox wrote to Mom. They were mailed while she was still married to Dad.

JANEY

That doesn't make him a murderer.

CHRISTIE

It makes him a bad person. Certainly not nice like my Dad is. And when Mom realizes that, she'll want him back --

JANEY

(cutting her off)
Christie, I said no!

Furious, CHRISTIE whirls and charges out of the room.

26. INT. JANEY'S HOUSE. PORTICO. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE slams out the front door just as JANEY, followed by JOSH, emerge from the kitchen, running after her.

JANEY

Christie!

27. EXT. STREET BY JANEY'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE hops on her bike and peddles furiously away from the house. As the moments pass, her face sets in grim lines of determination and she peddles even harder, almost flying down the street.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

I knew I was right about Paul Fox, even if they didn't believe me. And I was going to prove it, too, no matter what --

28. EXT. STREET BY CROMWELL DATSUN DEALERSHIP. DAY.

CHRISTIE waits on her bike across the street from the car lot. It's a large, prosperous business with a showroom/office and a service area surrounded by a sea of used and new foreign imports. A huge sign: 'Cromwell Datsun', towers over the lot.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

I ditched school the next day, waiting at the dealership my Mom owned. She'd inherited it from her Dad along with a lot of the rest of the town. Paul Fox was just a salesman there when she met him. Of course, he was the sales manager now. Thanks to her --

A spanking new red 280Z pulls out of the lot into traffic.

29. EXT. STREETS AND AN INTERSECTION. DAY.

CHRISTIE peddles like crazy after the car, zigzagging in and out of traffic to keep up. He takes a left and so does she, falling behind as he accelerates, catching up as he slows at a stop sign, but always managing to keep him in sight. He suddenly speeds up, running a light. She brakes to a halt at the intersection, staring in frustration at the cross-traffic that blocks her way.

DISSOLVE TO:

30. EXT. THE SAME INTERSECTION, MORE STREETS TO RESIDENTIAL AREA. DAY.

CHRISTIE waits at the intersection the next day, balanced on her bike, now in different clothes. PAUL suddenly drives past and CHRISTIE peels out of hiding between two parked cars and races after him for all she's worth. This time she manages to follow him for several more blocks than the day before, the streets turning from business to residential. PAUL suddenly takes a sharp left and disappears down a suburban street. CHRISTIE is several moments behind him. By the time she takes the turn he is gone. Her face falls as she brakes to a sharp halt, staring down the deserted street.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

I'm not the type to get discouraged.
Just mad.

30. CONTINUED:

She hops off her bike and throws it to the ground, giving it a good whack with her foot in helpless frustration. Then she jumps on it a few times for good measure.

DISSOLVE TO:

31. EXT. THE SAME RESIDENTIAL STREET. DAY.

The next day. The 280Z turns the corner and drives down the same street as the day before. It hangs a right. CHRISTIE is there waiting. She zips out of hiding behind a tree and takes off after the sports car.

32. EXT. STONE AVENUE AND AREA BY BOHLE HOUSE. DAY.

CHRISTIE turns down the street only to see the 280Z is gone. Furious she picks up her speed, peddling hard to reach the end of the street and see which way the car has turned. She's two houses past a modest bungalow when she notices PAUL's car sitting in the drive. She brakes to a sharp halt, staring at the house in between pants for breath.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

And then, eureka! Who needs
Thomas Magnum when they have
Christie Cromwell?

She hops off the bike and leans it against a tree, giving the house a closer inspection. It's the kind of place that's always a rental, never a home. It's long and narrow, sitting on an equally long and narrow lot with a single-car garage at the back. Both the house and garage show signs of more than benign neglect. CHRISTIE creeps up on the house, using trees and shrubbery for cover, but soon getting bored with that she races for the nearest window toward the back.

33. EXT. BRENDA AND LACEY BOHLE'S HOUSE. DAY.

CHRISTIE inches along the side of the house, working her way toward the front. She peers in one window after another, only to see empty rooms. Through the third window she sees PAUL FOX having an intense, whispered conversation with a woman in the living room. The room is dark, but not so dark that CHRISTIE can't recognize she's staring at one of the most beautiful women she's ever seen.

34. BRENDA BOHLE is no more than twenty-five. She's dressed in a satin sheath, a designer thing that must cost more than the house. Whatever she and PAUL are talking about, it's serious. He touches her wrist to emphasize a point, an unlit cigarette in his other hand. Instead of answering him, BRENDA scratches a match and lights his cigarette for him, their eyes meeting, hers grabbing his and holding them in a tight embrace. There's a sensual electricity in the moment that even CHRISTIE at her age can't miss. It makes her suck in her breath and sends emphatic heat flashes stabbing through her body.
35. She can't hear what they're saying; they're far across the room, their voices muffled by the window drapes. CHRISTIE tries to silently crack the window so she can hear. It's a slow, nerve-racking process. Just as the glass begins to slide up, she hears the back screen door slam shut.
36. She glances toward the back of the house and freezes. LACEY BOHLE, his arms full of garbage, stares at her from the back corner. He's late twenties, tall and stringy with that starved look of an Appalachian coal miner. His eyes burn into hers, eyes that are like a cloudless desert day, arid and dead. He suddenly shouts at her, dropping the trash and taking a step toward her.

LACEY

Hey, you!

37. CHRISTIE steps backward, stumbling over a huge glass aquarium that's been placed outside on cinderblocks to clean. It crashes to the ground, splintering in a million broken pieces.
38. CHRISTIE whirls and tears off across the yard at a dead run, catching just a glimpse of PAUL and BRENDA within the living room, glancing up from their ever-so-intimate conversation, surprised by the sudden noise.
39. EXT. STREET BY BOHLE HOUSE. DAY.
- CHRISTIE leaps onto her bike and tears down the street, LACEY watching her from the lawn. PAUL bursts out the front door just in time to get a good look at her before she disappears around the corner.
40. EXT. STREET BY CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. DAY.
- CHRISTIE wheels up off the sidewalk and into the drive, peddling for the huge, three-car garage.

41. INT./EXT. GARAGE. DAY.

She skids to a halt, staring at Paul's red 280Z, parked in the last stall over. Its presence takes her breath away for a moment.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

I was really scared for a second when I realized he'd beaten me home. And then I said the hell with it. After all, I had the goods on him, not the other way around.

42. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM, PORTICO. DAY.

CHRISTIE slips through the kitchen door into the portico, and peers around the archway into the living room. She sees PAUL with his back to her at the wet bar, making himself a drink. She starts to tiptoe across the hardwood floor, headed for the stairway and the safety of her room. He turns just in time to see her.

PAUL

Christie.

She freezes.

CHRISTIE

Yes.

PAUL

Would you come in here, please.

43. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. DAY.

She stops at the far end of the room. He gazes at her sadly.

PAUL

I saw you at the Bohle house. Would you mind telling me what you were doing there?

She gazes down at her feet.

CHRISTIE

Nothing.

PAUL

You think peering through windows of other people's houses is nothing?

43. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE
(her temper rising)
Leave me alone, Paul --

PAUL
What you did was wrong --

CHRISTIE
(outraged)
What I did was wrong? What about
you? Or don't you consider
cheating on my mother wrong?

He's stunned into silence. Finally:

PAUL
Is that what you think I was
doing there?

CHRISTIE
That's what I know you were
doing.

He takes a deep breath, asserting self-control and moves
toward the couch, motioning for CHRISTIE to sit.

PAUL
Sit down, Christie. We have
to talk.

CHRISTIE
I don't have anything to say
to you.

He passes the couch, putting his drink down and continuing
to move toward her. She starts to back away from him.

PAUL
Look, Christie, I know you'd
rather have your father here
than me, but that's no reason
to go making up lies about me --

He keeps moving toward her, stretching out his hand to her
as she continues to back away.

PAUL
Christie --

CHRISTIE
Stay away from me!

44. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. PORTICO. DAY.

She backs into the portico as PAUL continues to come toward her until she bumps to a halt with her back against the wall, trapped.

PAUL
Christie, what's wrong with you?

CHRISTIE
I know that man getting electrocuted was no accident. I know you were in the basement that night shorting that fuse box.

He stares down at her, trying to comprehend what she's said.

PAUL
Christie, you can't be serious?

CHRISTIE
Only it wasn't that man from the power company you expected to touch that box, was it? It was Mom!

PAUL
Christie, please --

PAUL reaches for her as she cowers away, about to break for it and run. Suddenly the back door is heard slamming shut followed by KAREN yelling out cheerfully.

KAREN (O.S.)
Hello, anybody home?

CHRISTIE
Mom!

KAREN comes through the swinging door from the kitchen just in time to have her daughter run into her arms. She comforts her, glancing up at PAUL.

KAREN
What's going on, Paul?

PAUL
(trying to shrug
it off)
Nothing. Just a small argument --

CHRISTIE breaks free of her mother and whirls on PAUL, pointing an accusing finger at him.

44. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

He's lying. I caught him cheating on you and he doesn't want me to tell you.

KAREN

(stunned)

What?

CHRISTIE

He also fixed that fuse box in the basement so it killed that man --

KAREN

Christie, that was an accident. The Police Chief himself said so --

CHRISTIE

He was wrong.

(KAREN just
stares at her)

Don't you understand? Paul was trying to kill you so he can get your money.

Taking her by the shoulders gently, KAREN tries to soothe her.

KAREN

Christie, calm down. You're hysterical.

(to PAUL)

What is this all about?

PAUL

I gave a demonstration ride to a prospective customer today, a Miss Bohle. Christie saw us together --

CHRISTIE

You never gave her any ride.

PAUL

(wearily)

I was about to when you interrupted.

(back to KAREN)

You see, Miss Bohle's car was in the garage. She asked me to pick her up at her home since she couldn't come to the agency.

44. CONTINUED:

PAUL (cont.)
Her brother caught Christie
peeking in the window.

KAREN turns to her daughter, shocked at her behavior.

KAREN
Christie, how could you --

CHRISTIE
It's bullshit, Mom --

KAREN
Christie, don't talk like that --

CHRISTIE
He's having an affair with this
Bohle woman. I've been following
him --

KAREN
(cutting her off)
Following him? How?

CHRISTIE
On my bike. You see he's been --

KAREN cuts her off, staring at her in disbelief.

KAREN
On your bike?

CHRISTIE
Yeah, you see he's been going
to the same place every day,
so I just waited wherever I
lost him the day before --

KAREN
Oh, Christie, would you please
stop it.

CHRISTIE keeps on, a driving note of urgency in her voice.

CHRISTIE
But, Mom, you should have seen
the way he lit her cigarette.

KAREN
(all patience gone)
Christie, stop it!

44. CONTINUED

CHRISTIE
Okay, don't believe me. Wait
until he kills you!

Furious, hurt and frustrated, CHRISTIE whirls and charges up the stairs to her bedroom, leaving PAUL and KAREN staring worriedly after her.

45. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. DUSK INTO NIGHT.

CHRISTIE slams the door behind her and crosses to the window, staring out at the gathering shadows. Dusk is drawing into night, covering the backyard in gloom, robbing it of its prettiness, somehow turning the lovely flowers, trees, and shrubs into threatening, chaotic things. The bedroom door swings open behind her and KAREN steps into the room. She turns on the light, dispelling the gloom.

KAREN
(softly)
Christie, are you all right?

CHRISTIE
(bitterly)
If you mean, do I need to go
back to the shrink, the answer
is no.

KAREN
(slowly)
Christie, do you realize how
you're hurting me?

CHRISTIE
What do you mean?

KAREN
You're accusing the man I married
of trying to murder me.

CHRISTIE
But he is --

KAREN
In your mind. Not in anybody
else's. Paul just told me all
about Miss Bohle. She's a nice
girl who clerks at Martin's
department store. She even
supports her older brother
who's out of work.

45. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

But --

KAREN

And I believe Paul, Christie.
Because I know he loves me.
Otherwise I wouldn't have
married him. Now you don't
believe that and we both know
why, don't we?

CHRISTIE turns away, unable to meet her mother's probing
gaze.

CHRISTIE

Dad doesn't have anything to
do with this.

KAREN

Doesn't he? Aren't you still
blaming Paul for my divorce?
Isn't that why all this is
happening?

Plagued by her own sudden self-doubts, CHRISTIE's voice
rises in strident denial.

CHRISTIE

No! I know what I saw today.
I do --

PAUL appears in the doorway.

PAUL

Everything getting straightened
out up here?

KAREN throws him a frustrated glance.

KAREN

I'm afraid not.

CHRISTIE turns on PAUL, throwing one last accusation at
him, the one she's most sure about.

CHRISTIE

Well, there's one thing I know
for sure. You lied to me the
other night about being downstairs
working. You were in that basement.
I know you were. You left the
door open.

45. CONTINUED:

PAUL's gaze shears away from hers, seemingly heavy with guilt. CHRISTIE turns to her mother.

CHRISTIE

Look at him. See, he is lying!

KAREN looks at her husband.

KAREN

You'd better tell her Paul.

PAUL

But it'll ruin the surprise.

KAREN

Getting this straightened out is more important than any surprise.

He nods, slowly turning for the door.

PAUL

Come on, Christie --

He disappears out the door and down the hall. CHRISTIE hangs back, unwilling to follow. Her mother looks at her. CHRISTIE follows her out reluctantly.

46. INT. THE BASEMENT. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE comes down the steep steps behind the adults. They stop before a large thin object swathed in wrapping paper. PAUL steps back so CHRISTIE can see it.

PAUL

Here, Christie, this is for you.
I meant it as a surprise for
your birthday.

KAREN

That's what he was doing down
here the other night. Sneaking
it in from the car through the
storm doors so you wouldn't know.

She nods at the closed door that leads up a short flight of stairs to the double-storm doors and the outside. CHRISTIE stares at the gift, beginning to feel the first twinges of self-doubt.

46. CONTINUED:

KAREN

Go on, open it. It's not going to bite.

CHRISTIE attacks it, ripping the paper away. Disappointment overtakes her as she guesses the nature of her gift. She steps back, finally finished, staring at an expensive, ten speed racing bike. Her face is stony. KAREN watches, growing impatient with her.

KAREN

Well, aren't you going to thank Paul?

CHRISTIE

(flatly)
Thank you, Paul.

KAREN

Is that the best you can do?

CHRISTIE

A car would've been nicer.

KAREN

Christie, if you saw the wrecks that come into the agency, you'd know why I don't want you to have a car. Not until you go away to college anyway.

She turns on her heel and walks quickly up the stairs, disappearing down the hall. PAUL follows her, stopping to glance back from the stairs.

PAUL

Well, if you want to follow me again, you'll at least have an easier time of it on that bike. It has ten gears, you know.

With a smile, he disappears up the stairs and down the hall. CHRISTIE stares after him.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

I hated him so much it made me wonder if maybe I was imagining things --

Her gaze shifts to the new circuit breaker box on the wall and the water main just above it. The SPLAT, SPLAT, SPLAT of the DRIPPING WATER begins to grow louder in her head. Her gaze drills into the box.

46. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

And then I decided I had to find out for sure. I had to. Because if I was right Mom might be the next person to die --

47. EXT. NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL. DAY.

A nice school set in grounds, with a lake.

48. INT. NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL, CORRIDOR. DAY.

CHRISTIE walks hurriedly down the corridor, dodging her way through the STUDENTS. At the far end she sees JOSH talking and laughing with THREE GIRLS, all cheerleader types. One of them, PATTY SEA, is particularly attractive and obviously enjoying the attention he's paying her. The THREE GIRLS take off just as CHRISTIE arrives.

CHRISTIE

Where's Janey?

JOSH

I don't know. I talked to her last night and she said something about being sick.

CHRISTIE

Well, you'll just have to help me follow Paul's girlfriend then.

JOSH

Christie, I haven't got a car, remember?

CHRISTIE

Yeah, but my mother does.

JOSH

You want me to help you steal your mother's car? You are crazy.

CHRISTIE

No, I'll steal it. I just want you to ride with me. In case a cop stops me. You have the license, remember?

48. CONTINUED:

He looks at her like she is crazy.

JOSH

I don't believe you. You're willing to steal a car, but you're afraid to get a traffic ticket. So long, nutso --

He takes a step away. CHRISTIE's face hardens.

CHRISTIE

I'll tell Janey you've been coming on to Patty Sea if you don't help me.

JOSH freezes, slowly turning to stare at her.

JOSH

You're really a little shit, you know that.

CHRISTIE walks for the exit doors. He unwillingly but inexorably follows.

49. INT. DATSUN IN GARAGE OF CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. DAY.

Karen's Datsun Maxima sits in the garage. CLOSE ON the key turning to start the car's engine. Seated on the passenger side of the front seat is JOSH. CHRISTIE ready to drive.

JOSH

You sure you know how to drive?

She grips the wheel none too certainly.

CHRISTIE

Yeah, sure. My Dad taught me.

JOSH

He left town months ago. You had any lessons since then?

CHRISTIE

Tons.

She jams the shift from neutral into first, stripping the gears. CHRISTIE catches a dirty look from JOSH, smiles back with false bravado, revs the engine, and pops the clutch.

50. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. GARAGE. DAY.

The CAR ROARS out of the garage and down the drive, braking sharply as it turns into the street.

51. EXT. STREET BY CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. DAY.

Gears grind as CHRISTIE searches for second and doesn't find it. The car stalls in the middle of the street. CHRISTIE tries to start the car - only succeeding in running the battery down. JOSH watches this for a few minutes, listening in disgust as the generator tries to fire the plugs and fails.

JOSH

You flooded it.

CHRISTIE

No, it always starts cold in the morning.

JOSH

It isn't morning and how would you know?

CHRISTIE

Mom says so and fuck you, Josh Dealey.

The engine fires, hiccups, and revs as CHRISTIE stomps it, kicking out a cloud of black smoke from the tailpipe. She looks at JOSH triumphantly. She finds second, not first, and lets the clutch out a bit more slowly this time.

52. The Maxima lurches down the street, starting in second, eventually finding a smooth 30 miles per hour. It disappears around a corner.

53. INT/EXT. DATSUN IN RESIDENTIAL STREET. DAY.

CHRISTIE holds onto the wheel for dear life, unable to believe she's driving so well.

JOSH

Where we going?

CHRISTIE

To Martin's. That's where this Brenda Bohle works. When she leaves, we'll follow her.

CHRISTIE brakes at a stop sign.

54. INT/EXT. DATSUN IN TOWN STREET. DAY.

CHRISTIE turns down a busier street; a much busier street.

JOSH

What happens if she doesn't
leave?

CHRISTIE

Then we'll just keep on waiting
till she does.

His eyes cruise her body, the boyishly thin hips, the androgynous dress of a girl who hasn't given boys much thought yet; dirty jeans and a man's torn workshirt. CHRISTIE's attention is glued to the road ahead. JOSH does a fair imitation of Burt Reynolds.

JOSH

Yeah, and what'll we do while
we wait?

CHRISTIE

(totally oblivious
to his insinuation)
I don't know. We should've
brought our homework.

He rolls his eyes heavenward, muttering under his breath.

JOSH

Oh, shit --

She hears him out of the corner of her ear and turns to look at him.

CHRISTIE

What's wrong?

She doesn't see a car change lanes directly in front of her. He does, stiffening with very real fear as they threaten to rear end it.

JOSH

Hey, look out!

In a panic, she jams on the brakes. The car jerks to a halt, stalling, causing the cars in back to stop, much to their driver's annoyance. The Datsun gathers a few irritated horn blasts. The generator can be heard grinding as CHRISTIE tries to start the car again. The honking cars make CHRISTIE more nervous than she already is. JOSH cuts a look from the back window to her, and tries to scoot over her.

54. CONTINUED:

JOSH

Here, let me drive --

She punches him away, still flipping the ignition key.

CHRISTIE

This is my mother's car. I'm responsible for it.

The engine catches. She slips into gear, much more smoothly this time, and accelerates nicely, joining in the flow of traffic. JOSH looks out the side window, bored and irritated. He seizes on her sedate pace to express his overall displeasure.

JOSH

You drive like an old lady.

CHRISTIE

At least I'll get us there alive.

JOSH

Yeah, and probably three hours too late. This Brenda woman could be gone by now, you know.

CHRISTIE's face pales as this sudden realization grips her.

CHRISTIE

Oh, yeah, you're right.

55. She hits the gas peddle. The car picks up speed. JOSH stiffens in his seat as they begin to pass cars.

JOSH

I was only kidding.--

They almost sideswipe another car, still accelerating.

JOSH

Hey, slow down, would you --

CHRISTIE

I'm trying --

56. She glances down between her feet. The gas peddle is pasted flat to the floor. She stops blindly kicking at it and reaches down between her legs, grabbing the peddle, and pulling. The rubber peddle comes loose in her hand, but the metal lever beneath stays stuck to the floor.

56. CONTINUED:

She sits back up, her eye catching the speedometer on the way. They're over fifty, heading quickly toward sixty on a road with a max speed of forty miles per hour. JOSH has stayed rigid in his seat the entire time, his gaze glued to the road ahead. He sees a gasoline tanker lumbering along directly ahead of them, 'Danger, Flammable', posted to its backside. He screams:

JOSH

The brake, hit the brake!

57. CHRISTIE jams both feet down on the brake.

58. The car fishtails around the tanker, the brakes fighting the tires, the engine revving madly, both at cross-purposes. The brake linings begin to smoke as the shoes dissolve and the tires continue to spin, burning rubber.

59. The car threatens to swerve out of control.

CHRISTIE

It's no use!

She takes her feet off the brake. The car shoots ahead, lunging for a double line of cars waiting for the light to change at an intersection less than a block away. Both CHRISTIE and JOSH stare at their impending death rushing toward them on the other side of the window.

JOSH

The ignition, turn the ignition off!

CHRISTIE is stiff with shock, unable to move. He screams at her again.

JOSH

Goddammit, kill the engine!

60. JOSH rips the key out of the ignition. The interior of the car is plunged into deathly silence, nothing but their adrenalin-charged breathing heard now. JOSH wipes the sweat out of his eyes.

JOSH

Pull it over to the curb.

61. CHRISTIE does as ordered, turning the wheel a quarter of an inch to the right before a loud click is heard from the steering column.

61. CONTINUED:

JOSH

What's wrong?

CHRISTIE

The wheel, it's locked --

JOSH

Oh, shit, the anti-theft thing --

62. He glances out the front window, sees a YOUNG MOTHER pulling out of a grocery store parking lot directly into their path, a BABY in a carry all slung over the seat beside her. He whips his foot over the hump in the floor and stomps it down with all his might on the brake.
63. The brakes lock, skidding the car to a halt on a sharp diagonal, the front end plowing into the side of a parked Mustang.
64. CHRISTIE slowly raises her head, recovering from the shock of what almost happened. Her gaze fixes on the hood of the car, her eyes drilling into it almost as though she had x-ray vision and could peer through the metal into the guts of the engine. JOSH glances at her, breathing hard, trying to calm his nerves.

JOSH

You all right?

CHRISTIE

(almost to herself)

He did this --

JOSH

What are you talking about?

CHRISTIE

Paul Fox. He fixed this car
so it'd kill Mom the first
time she drove it.

He stares at her, his face flushing with anger.

JOSH

You're out of your fucking
mind.

CHRISTIE

No, you don't understand.
This was no accident --

64. CONTINUED:

He blows up, yelling at her.

JOSH

You almost kill both of us
because of your lousy driving
and now you want to blame it
on your stepfather? No, no
way, Jese --

65. He slams out the door, and walks quickly down the street
as PEOPLE gather around the accident.

CHRISTIE

Oh, shit --

66. INT. THE GARAGE AT CROMWELL DATSUN. DAY.

JERRY, a youngish mechanic, probes the guts of the car.
He straightens up, holding a small spring out in the
palm of his hand for her to see. It's no more than
two inches long and a quarter inch wide.

JERRY

This accident wasn't your fault.

She takes it from his hand, peering at it closely.

CHRISTIE

What is it?

JERRY

What almost killed you. The
carburetor spring. It snaps
the throttle back into place
after you step on the gas.
It broke.

CHRISTIE

How?

JERRY

(hesitantly)

Don't know. Bad when it came
from the plant, maybe.

She glances at his face and sees the disquiet there.

CHRISTIE

What's wrong?

66. CONTINUED:

JERRY

Nothin'. Only they don't break often. In fact this is the first one I ever saw.

CHRISTIE

(her eyes narrowing)

What are you trying to say, Jerry?

JERRY

I'm not trying to say anything. Just awful funny, that's all.

He dives back under the hood of the car as though trying to avoid further discussion. CHRISTIE stares at the spring, trying to decide what to do. She suddenly whirls and dashes for the open doors of the garage.

67. EXT. CROMWELL DATSUN, SERVICE AREA & SHOWROOM. DAY.

CHRISTIE races out of the service area, and across the large lot, charging into the huge showroom.

68. INT. DATSUN SHOWROOM. DAY.

CHRISTIE dodges the new cars on display, gathering surprised glances from the SALES PEOPLE her mother employs. She goes out.

69. INT. KAREN'S OUTER OFFICE. DAY.

CHRISTIE races through the outer office, hardly nodding at HELEN, her mother's secretary, a rather plain, efficient girl.

CHRISTIE

Hi, Helen --

She barges through a door into the inner office, labelled in large gold letters, 'Karen Cromwell Fox, Pres. Cromwell Datsun'.

70. INT. KAREN'S OFFICE. DAY.

The office is large, luxuriously appointed, and empty.

CHRISTIE stands there, suddenly at a loss for not having found her mother. HELEN appears in the doorway.

70. CONTINUED:

HELEN

If you're looking for your mother, she and Paul left early. Did they know you were still here, honey?

With one quick glance down at the spring in her hand, CHRISTIE tears out of the office.

71. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE, KITCHEN. DUSK.

CHRISTIE bursts through the back door, the spring in her hand, looking for her mother.

CHRISTIE

Mom!

She slams through the swinging door into the portico.

72. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. PORTICO & STAIRWAY. DUSK.

She stands in the dim light, looking into the living room, then down the hall to the study, searching for her mother. Suddenly she hears a woman whimpering on the second-floor. She charges up the stairs, the carpeting muffling her footsteps. The whimpers are heard again.

73. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. SECOND-FLOOR HALLWAY. DUSK.

She slows to a halt as she realizes the muted cries aren't of pain, but of pleasure. She creeps slowly forward down the hall toward the door to her mother's bedroom. As she draws closer she sees the door isn't fully closed. The sounds are louder now, PAUL's harsh breathing, her mother's muffled moans, their whispered, tender words. Stealthily, CHRISTIE peeks through the crack in the door into her mother's bedroom.

74. INT. KAREN'S BEDROOM. DUSK.

PAUL and KAREN are making love, covered in a whirl of white sheets, black forms etched in the light of dusk. He's on top of her, her legs splayed beneath him, their lips pressed together, their bodies slowly grinding against each other.

KAREN

Oh, God, Paul, I love you so --

PAUL

I love you, too --

75. EXT. CORRIDOR BY KAREN'S BEDROOM. DUSK.

Watching it all, repulsed and fascinated at the same time, CHRISTIE finally tears her eyes away and staggers blindly down the hall toward her own room.

76. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. DUSK.

She closes the door softly behind her and stumbles to her bed, throwing herself crosswise across it, her closed fist holding the spring stretched out over the floor. Outside the last light of day is fading. She can still hear the faint sounds of her mother and stepfather making love. With her free hand she convulsively grabs the pillow and presses it over her ear, just lying there, staring emptily into space.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

All I could think about was how
I had to have definite proof if
I was going to convince my mother.

(a moment)

That and how I'd never heard
sounds like that coming from my
mother's room in all the years
she'd been married to Dad --

Her fist dangling over the edge of the bed slowly opens and the spring drops to the floor and rolls unnoticed and forgotten under the bed.

77. INT. NEW ROCHELLE PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL. LIBRARY. DAY.

JANEY sits at a table doing a bad job of trying to study. CHRISTIE barges through the door and hurries to the table, plopping down beside her. Both girls speak in a whisper so as not to disturb others; especially the prune-faced LIBRARIAN sitting behind a desk near the front door.

CHRISTIE

I've been looking all over for
you. I've got to talk to you.

JANEY

I want to talk to you, too.

There's misery in JANEY's eyes, but CHRISTIE is too obsessed with her own problems to notice.

CHRISTIE

You feel better today?

77. CONTINUED:

JANEY

Some. Look, where can we go to
have some privacy?

CHRISTIE

You have your car with you?

(JANEY nods)

C'mon, we can talk as you drive.

The two girls leave, CHRISTIE in the lead.

78. EXT. STREET BY SIESTA MOTOR COURT. DAY.

BRENDA BOHLE drives her two-year-old Buick Skylark into the parking lot. Farther down the street, a Chevy K car stops by the curb and sits idling.

79. INT/EXT. CHEVY K-CAR, BY SIESTA MOTOR COURT. DAY.

Both girls stare at the motel. The place has seen better days, and that was a long time ago. CHRISTIE glances impatiently at JANEY.

CHRISTIE

Well, don't just sit here. Go
around to the back.

JANEY

Christie, we still haven't
talked.

CHRISTIE

Later. This is more important
than anything else right now.

JANEY gives up and pulls the car back out into traffic, heading for the corner and a right turn.

80. EXT. ALLEY AT BACK OF 'SIESTA' MOTEL. DAY.

The Chevy drives down the alley and parks behind the motel. CHRISTIE points to a car, a red 280Z parked next to theirs.

CHRISTIE

There, I told you. That's
Paul's car.

JANEY shifts her gaze from the car to her best friend.

80. CONTINUED:

JANEY

What do we do now?

CHRISTIE

You just wait here.

CHRISTIE crosses to the back stairway to the second-story of the stucco motel and begins to climb.

81. EXT. SIESTA MOTEL. DAY.

CHRISTIE comes to the landing and gazes out over the motel. It's a large two-story L-shaped structure with rooms on both levels, a parking lot and office facing the street. She sees Brenda's Buick parked in a stall below at the far end of the building.

She pads along the open air corridor, beginning to slow as she approaches the car parked below, peeping through the window of every room as she passes. There's no one in sight except a couple of CLEANING WOMEN working the rooms on the level below. But the parking lot is dotted with cars, a number of rooms obviously occupied, their drapes drawn tightly shut.

82. Having checked four windows to four separate rooms, CHRISTIE crouches at the fifth. Through a slit in the venetian blinds, she sees PAUL FOX and BRENDA BOHLE inside the dim interior of the room. The window has been cracked for ventilation and she can hear their words although her view is limited by the blinds.

83. INT. MOTEL ROOM. DAY.

An open bottle of scotch is on the desk, a drink in PAUL's hand. He lies stretched out on the bed, watching BRENDA BOHLE. She is an even more obviously sensual creature than when CHRISTIE first glimpsed her through the window of the house on Stone Avenue. Now she's totally herself, soft and sultry, supremely confident and in total control of the man who watches her so intently from the bed.

PAUL

(caught mid-sentence)

I'm trying, you know --

BRENDA

Not hard enough. My brother keeps grumbling about all the time you're taking --

83. CONTINUED:

PAUL

Do we have to talk about it now?

She gives him a long look, smiles, and answers slowly.

BRENDA

No. We don't have to talk about anything now --

She grasps either side of the neck of her blouse and slowly rips it open, popping button after button until she's laid herself bare to the navel. She isn't wearing a bra. Her breasts are spectacular, full without being overripe, seemingly immune to the laws of gravity. PAUL sets his drink down and comes off the bed toward her.

84. EXT. SIESTA MOTEL. DAY.

CHRISTIE backs away from the window and breaks into a headlong dash down the open corridor toward the back stairway.

85. EXT. ALLEY. BACK OF SIESTA MOTEL. DAY.

CHRISTIE emerges at the bottom of the stairs, shouting at JANEY and gesturing for her to come and come fast.

CHRISTIE

Janey!

JANEY steps out of the car.

JANEY

What?

CHRISTIE

Come on, they're doing it.

JANEY reaches back inside the car and locks all the doors, reappearing by the driver's side to lock it with her key. CHRISTIE hops about with frustration.

CHRISTIE

Would you forget that stupid car?

JANEY locks the last door and runs to meet her.

86. EXT. SIESTA MOTEL STAIRWAY. DAY.

The two girls bound up the stairs, CHRISTIE in the lead.

JANEY

What were they doing?

CHRISTIE

Fucking!

JANEY

What?

CHRISTIE

Yeah, you've got to see it so
when I tell my Mom you can
back me up --

87. EXT. SECOND-FLOOR OPEN AIR CORRIDOR, SIESTA MOTEL. DAY.

They sweep breathlessly around the corner of the landing only to skid to an immediate halt.

88. Halfway between them and the open door to Brenda's motel room stands PAUL FOX. He is bent over the ice machine, filling the plasticized bucket in his hand with cubes. He's disheveled but fully dressed. He glances up and sees the two girls.

89. All three of them, him and CHRISTIE and JANEY spend a frozen moment that seems to last an eternity staring at each other.

90. He suddenly drops the ice bucket and launches himself toward them. CHRISTIE grabs JANEY.

CHRISTIE

Run!

They whirl and dash for the stairs.

91. EXT. ALLEY. BACK OF SIESTA MOTEL. DAY.

They fly down the back step, hitting the macadam on a dead run, splitting up as they dodge among the parked cars. JANEY stops by hers, frantically digging in her purse for her car keys. CHRISTIE skids to a halt, glancing over her shoulder. PAUL is hurtling down the stairs after them. CHRISTIE screams at JANEY.

CHRISTIE

Janey, come on!

91. CONTINUED:

JANEY glances up and sees PAUL bearing down on her. She whirls and runs to meet CHRISTIE, the two girls tearing down the alley. PAUL rounds the end of a car in full pursuit only to slip on an oil patch and fall to his knees. By the time he regains his feet, the girls are disappearing round a corner and into the street.

92. EXT. STREET AND HOUSE NEAR SIESTA MOTEL. DAY.

CHRISTIE sprints full-out. She glances over her shoulder and sees JANEY falling behind.

CHRISTIE
Come on --!

She cuts a hard right across the front yard of a three-story, old house and around the back, JANEY does her best to keep up.

93. EXT. BACKYARD OF HOUSE (AND SECOND HOUSE) NEAR SIESTA MOTEL. DAY.

CHRISTIE leaps the lawn furniture and shrubs, vaulting over the fence into the adjoining back yard like a Decathlon winner, doing it for the pure joy of it. JANEY huffs and puffs behind her, gradually slowing and always taking the easier way.

94. EXT. SECOND HOUSE AND STREET BY IT. DAY.

CHRISTIE races around the side of the new house and over the front lawn and onto the sidewalk. She casts another glance over her shoulder and sees JANEY lumbering to a halt.

CHRISTIE
Hey, what's wrong?

JANEY doubles over with the dry heaves, trying to upchuck what isn't in her stomach. CHRISTIE rushes back to her, alarmed.

CHRISTIE
You all right?

JANEY
I'm sick.

94. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

Yeah, you're not kidding.
Come on, lean on me.

She puts JANEY's arm around her shoulder and helps her
down the street.

CHRISTIE

How long's this been going on?

JANEY

Since last week.

CHRISTIE

You oughta go see a doctor,
maybe.

JANEY

I did. Yesterday.

CHRISTIE

What'd he say?

JANEY

I'm pregnant.

CHRISTIE stops dead, staring at her friend.

CHRISTIE

(softly)

Jesus, no kidding?

JANEY

No kidding. It's what I've
wanted to talk to you about
for the last three hours.

CHRISTIE

Gosh, Janey, I'm sorry. I
didn't know.

JANEY

How could you? You wouldn't
give me the chance to tell you.

They start down the street again, JANEY leaning on CHRISTIE.

CHRISTIE

Josh's?

JANEY

Yeah. And he was my first,
too. Just my luck, huh?

94. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

Does he know?

JANEY

No.

CHRISTIE

Why didn't you use some protection,
your mother's pills or get him
to wear something?

JANEY

I didn't think about it. What
difference does it make now
anyway?

They walk further down the street in silence. JANEY
regaining sufficient strength to let go of CHRISTIE.

CHRISTIE

What are you going to do?

JANEY

Get an abortion, of course.

CHRISTIE

How?

JANEY

I don't know, but there's got
to be a way. Everybody else
is doing it.

CHRISTIE

Don't you think maybe you should
tell Josh? I mean, doesn't he
have a right to know?

JANEY

Why? It's not like he's going
to marry me or anything?

CHRISTIE

How do you know that?

JANEY

Oh, come on, Christie. Even
if he wanted to, I wouldn't.

CHRISTIE

Why not? You must love him,
otherwise you wouldn't be
sleeping with him.

94. CONTINUED:

JANEY smiles sadly at her, amused and touched by her friend's innocence. They step off the sidewalk and begin to cross the street.

JANEY

Christie, you're simple sometimes.

CHRISTIE

Why? What's wrong with what I said?

JANEY

Nothing if you live in the eighteen hundreds, I guess. I slept with Josh because I wanted to sleep with him, nothing more.

CHRISTIE

(shocked)

Are you serious?

Her spirit reviving, JANEY dances away from her friend, poking fun at her and yet serious at the same time.

JANEY

Give me a break. I'm only seventeen, just like you. I'm not going to settle down right now. I want to party and travel, I've got my whole life in front of me --

95. The scream of an accelerating engine tears CHRISTIE's attention from JANEY. She glances back just in time to see a flash of a car roaring toward them out of nowhere, only fifty feet away, picking up speed fast.
96. A million impressions split CHRISTIE's attention. It's a late model Ford, maybe, maybe not, the tinted windshield obscuring the identity of the driver, glinting chrome, spinning hubcaps, screeching tires.
97. She shoves JANEY aside, screaming a warning as she dives for the safety of the curb.

CHRISTIE

Look out!

JANEY catches her balance and turns to see what has frightened her friend so.

JANEY

What -- ?

98. The car smashes into JANEY, kneecap high, flipping her over the hood and bouncing her off the roof, sending her flying thirty feet through the air in a horribly slow parabola of death.

CHRISTIE comes out of her roll as the car roars away glancing up just as JANEY smashes into the blacktop with a thud, crushing bone and splitting flesh.

CHRISTIE
(tentatively)
Janey?

No reaction from the body, not even a twitch, just blood seeping from the mouth and nose. CHRISTIE screams.

CHRISTIE
Janey?

She stumbles to the crushed heap that was once her best friend, falling to her knees and clasping it in her arms. She begins to rock to and fro with it.

99. INT. A HOSPITAL CORRIDOR. NIGHT.

KAREN CROMWELL sits at a bench comforting MRS. RALSTON, Janey's mother. Janey's FATHER and PAUL FOX stand above the two women, conversing quietly. They are grouped before the swinging doors to an operating room, anxiously awaiting word from within.

CHRISTIE sits removed from them all, nursing her fury and sorrow on a bench farther down the hall. She is unable to hear, but she watches them. She sees a SURGEON, his white smock blood-stained, emerge through the operating room doors. MRS. RALSTON and KAREN rise, their husbands joining them as they listen to the DOCTOR's hushed words. The air is suddenly rent by MRS. RALSTON's wail of grief, and she collapses in her husband's arms as KAREN watches helplessly.

100. A young POLICE OFFICER approaches PAUL FOX from the other end of the corridor and whispers in his ear. PAUL walks over to CHRISTIE.

PAUL
Christie --

She averts her eyes so he won't see the fury in them.

CHRISTIE
Yes.

100. CONTINUED:

PAUL
She's dead. Died on the
operating table --

He waits a moment for CHRISTIE to react; she doesn't.
He goes on.

PAUL
The Police Chief would like
to ask you a few questions.
Do you feel up to it?

CHRISTIE
(dully)
Yes.

She rises. PAUL gently puts his hand on her arm.

PAUL
Thanks for not telling your
mother about what you saw
today.

CHRISTIE
Would she have believed me?

PAUL
Probably not, but I appreciate
it anyway. I won't see Miss
Bohle anymore. That's a promise
between you and me.

CHRISTIE
Just like you won't kill people
anymore, right?

She takes a step away, but he tightens his grip on her
arm, stopping her.

PAUL
What's that supposed to mean?

She doesn't answer; she just stands there staring at him
as her meaning slowly seeps into his consciousness. He
opens his mouth to speak, but the YOUNG OFFICER
inadvertently comes over and cuts him off.

OFFICER
Police Chief's waiting, Christie.

CHRISTIE pulls away from PAUL and walks down the hall with
the COP.

101. INT. OFFICE IN HOSPITAL. NIGHT.

BOB DEALEY rises from behind the desk of his commandeered office as CHRISTIE is ushered into the room. The YOUNG COP closes the door behind her, leaving the two of them alone.

BOB
Hello, Christie. I'm sorry
about Janey.

CHRISTIE
Does Josh know yet?

BOB
No, tell him when I get home.
Have a seat.

He sits; she doesn't. BOB picks up a pencil to jot down whatever she has to say.

BOB
I want you to tell me everything
you remember about the accident.

She's emotionally exhausted, beyond hysteria, yet not out of shock.

CHRISTIE
It wasn't an accident.

BOB
Pardon?

CHRISTIE
Janey was murdered.

BOB
By who?

CHRISTIE
Paul Fox.

BOB
Why would Paul want to murder
Janey?

CHRISTIE
He didn't. He was trying to
kill me.

BOB
Why would he want to do something
like that?

101. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

Janey and I saw him at the Siesta Motel out on Grand with this woman, Brenda Bohle. She works at Martin's. He was afraid I'd tell Mom. Only now there's no one to back my story up.

BOB

How can you be so sure Paul Fox was responsible for Janey's death?

CHRISTIE

He's trying to murder my mother. He's tried several times already. That meter man was one of his attempts --

BOB

Christie, that was an accident.

CHRISTIE

They all look like accidents. Mom's car went out of control yesterday while Josh was with me. It almost killed us. Ask him.

BOB

(slowly)
All right, I will.

CHRISTIE

If that isn't enough, check the motel. Brenda was the one who got the room. Paul's car was parked out back. I'd recognize it anywhere. It's a red 280Z. You'll find Janey's car there. Paul spotted us and we had to run for it.

He jots it all down.

BOB

Was it the 280Z that hit Janey?

CHRISTIE

No, it was some kind of American make.

(she shrugs)

Paul can get any car he wants off Mom's lot.

101. CONTINUED:

BOB
I'll look into it, Christie.

CHRISTIE
Thank you, Mr. Dealey.

She turns for the door only to pause with her hand on the knob.

CHRISTIE
Oh, Mr. Dealey --

His eyes haven't left her.

BOB
Yes.

CHRISTIE
Tell Josh, tell Josh --

Her voice begins to quiver and break, tears welling up in her eyes at last as the enormity of her personal loss hits her.

BOB
What?

CHRISTIE
Tell him I'm sorry about Janey --

102. INT. PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL CORRIDOR. DAY.

CHRISTIE walks down the empty hall, all the classes in progress, all the students in them except for her.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE
After that I thought everything would be fine. I'd stay out of Paul Fox's way until the Police Chief had enough proof to arrest him. Simple, right?

Her heels click against the concrete floor as she picks up her pace.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE
Then a couple of days later I got the note from the Principal's office --

103. INT. PRINCIPAL'S OUTER OFFICE. DAY.

She walks into the office to find the principal, MR. PEACOCK, an energetic youngish man, conferring with his SECRETARY.

CHRISTIE

You wanted to see me, Mr. Peacock?

He glances up at her without smiling.

MR. PEACOCK

Not me, Christie. The Police Chief. He's waiting for you in my office.

He nods toward the door to his inner office. She approaches it with mixed feelings of hope and trepidation.

104. INT. PRINCIPAL'S INNER OFFICE. DAY.

BOB DEALEY turns from the window.

BOB

Come in.

CHRISTIE lets herself into the office, closing the door behind her. She approaches the desk, her face alight with barely concealed excitement.

CHRISTIE

You wanted to see me, Mr. Dealey?

He just stares at her, his face revealing nothing. She can't stand the suspense and bursts out with the question.

CHRISTIE

You found out something about Paul Fox, right?

BOB

I found out you're just about the worst kid I've ever dealt with.

She's stunned into near speechlessness.

CHRISTIE

What -- ?

He rides right over her.

104. CONTINUED:

BOB

And I've dealt with some pretty bad ones. Car thieves, runaways, even child prostitutes, but you're the first one I ever met who used her best friend's death to try to smear an innocent man.

She finally bursts out with words.

CHRISTIE

What are you talking about?

BOB

Your stepfather. He was no more at that motel yesterday than he murdered Janey Ralston.

CHRISTIE

How do you know that?

BOB

Because I checked. At the time of the hit and run he was with your mother at the dealership.

CHRISTIE

Okay, so he had someone else do it for him. He was still at that motel yesterday.

BOB

He wasn't registered.

CHRISTIE

I told you it was Brenda Bohle who was registered there, not him.

BOB

Her brother says he was with her on her lunch hour.

CHRISTIE

He's lying. Someone at the motel must have seen one of them. Did you ask?

For a moment the Police Chief becomes distinctly uncomfortable.

104. CONTINUED:

BOB

Fortunately or unfortunately,
you picked the wrong motel.
Nobody registers at that place
by their right names and nobody
sees anybody else there. Or at
least they won't admit to it.

CHRISTIE

What do you mean?

BOB

I mean it's an adult passion pit.
People go there to cheat on their
spouses.

CHRISTIE grasps at a straw.

CHRISTIE

What about Janey's car? Did
you find that there?

BOB

That proves that you two were
there, not much else.

CHRISTIE

But we wouldn't have left the
car if we hadn't been running
for our lives. Paul Fox was
chasing us. Can't you see that?

He looks at her, almost admiringly.

BOB

You know, you're awfully good.
A real little actress. I might
even have believed you if I hadn't
talked to your mother.

CHRISTIE looks at him in horror.

CHRISTIE

Oh, my God, you didn't tell her
about this?

BOB

I certainly did, and she told me
all about how you blame Paul Fox
for her having divorced your father.
She also told me about your therapy
and all the wild accusations you've
been making --

104. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

But they're all true --

He cuts her off.

BOB

Now you listen to me. I never,
repeat never, want to see or
hear from you again. If I do,
we'll have more than just words,
you and I. Now go on, get out
of here.

She stumbles for the door, pausing a moment to glance back
at him, silently pleading for understanding with her eyes.
He isn't buying.

BOB

Keep going.

She fumbles her way out the door.

105. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. DAY.

CHRISTIE walks to the kitchen door.

106. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

CHRISTIE comes through the back door, still in shock from
the meeting with the Police Chief. She dumps her school
books on the table and goes out the swinging door into
the portico.

107. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. PORTICO & STAIRWAY. DAY.

She's halfway up the stairs when her mother appears behind
her from the study down the hallway.

KAREN

Christie.

CHRISTIE stops, filled with dread for what she knows is
coming.

CHRISTIE

What are you doing home?

107. CONTINUED:

KAREN

Waiting for you. I figured you wouldn't want to stay in school, not after talking to the Police Chief anyway.

A moment passes as they both stare at each other silently.

KAREN

You can't actually believe any of the things you said about Paul? Can you?

Their eyes lock. A moment passes.

KAREN

My God, can't you tell the difference between reality and fantasy any longer?

CHRISTIE

Can't you? You're the one he's trying to kill, you know.

KAREN

You're just saying that because you blame him for my divorcing your father.

CHRISTIE

Well, wasn't he responsible?

KAREN

If things hadn't been over between your father and I, Paul never would have happened.

CHRISTIE

(snapping right back)

Maybe over for you, but not for Dad. If he had half a chance, he'd be back here in two seconds.

KAREN stares at her daughter with new understanding.

KAREN

Is that what's behind all this? You think if you break Paul and I up, your father will come back to you?

CHRISTIE turns away, refusing to meet her gaze.

107. CONTINUED:

KAREN

Christie, he's not coming back.
He's found another woman in
Chicago. They're even living
together.

CHRISTIE

(growing hysterical)
Stop it! It's not so.

KAREN

Then perhaps you'd better call
him, Christie. Ask him yourself
if he wants to come back.

CHRISTIE stands there frozen for a moment, then she charges
up the stairs.

108. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. DAY.

She slams through the door and grabs her phone off the
bedstand and dials long distance direct. She waits a
moment for it to ring. KAREN fills the door frame behind
her, watching her as she waits for someone to pick up on
the other end.

The phone is suddenly answered by a woman, an obviously
very young woman.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Hello.

CHRISTIE is momentarily disconcerted by the voice, catches
her mother staring at her, and plunges ahead.

CHRISTIE

Is John Cromwell there?

WOMAN'S VOICE

No, I'm sorry. He's out at the
moment. Can I take a message?

CHRISTIE is too stunned to answer. She just holds the
phone to her ear.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Hello? Is anybody there?

CHRISTIE slowly replaces the receiver, staring blindly
ahead. KAREN looks at her sadly.

108. CONTINUED:

KAREN
I'm sorry, Christie. But you had
to know --

KAREN leaves, shutting the door softly behind her. Tears begin to roll slowly down CHRISTIE's cheeks as the moments pass.

109. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

JOSH walks toward the front door.

110. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE lies on the bed, fully clothed, staring at the ceiling. It is dark. The doorbell rings. She doesn't react. It rings again and again.

111. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. STAIRWAY AND PORTICO. NIGHT.

The portico light snaps on from the landing above. CHRISTIE slowly descends the stairs. She crosses to the front door, turns on the porch light and opens it. JOSH stands on the doorstep.

JOSH
Hi.

CHRISTIE
Hi.

He steps inside.

JOSH
Dad told me about what happened
in school today. I thought maybe
you could use some company.

She goes and sits on the bottom step of the stairs. He glances about the empty house.

JOSH
Where are your folks?

CHRISTIE
They went to the Rotary Club dance.

She rests her chin on her hands, looking forlorn.

111. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

Mom grounded me. Like for the
rest of my life.

He goes and sits beside her.

JOSH

Give her a couple of weeks.
She'll calm down.

CHRISTIE

It won't make any difference by
then. She'll be dead.

JOSH

Are you still on that?

CHRISTIE

(flaring at him)
I am still on that because it's
true. Paul Fox is trying to kill
my mother.

JOSH

(backing off)
Okay, okay --

She settles, looking at him closely.

CHRISTIE

Josh, would you help me break
into Brenda Bohle's house. She's
the one who's seeing my stepfather --

JOSH

Oh, come on, Christie --

CHRISTIE

(grabbing his arm)
No, listen, the house is only over
on Stone Avenue. You don't have
to do anything. I'll break in,
you just keep watch outside.

JOSH

(pulling free)
Christie, stop it!

A moment passes. She slowly lowers her head, beginning
to cry.

=

111. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

Mom's going to die, Josh. Just like Janey.

He softens, putting a comforting arm around her shoulder.

JOSH

Christie, don't you see what you're doing? You're going crazy blaming yourself for Janey's death.

CHRISTIE

(bursting out)

It was my fault. I knew how dangerous Paul Fox was. She didn't.

He places a finger over her lips.

JOSH

Christie, shhh --

Tears slide down her cheek. He brushes one away. Then before he knows it, he's kissing her. And before she knows it, she's kissing him back, a kiss that lasts several moments. She suddenly pulls away.

CHRISTIE

Josh, stop it.

He tries to kiss her again. She abruptly rises to her feet and heads for the door.

CHRISTIE

You'll have to leave.

JOSH

Why?

She opens the door and turns to him.

CHRISTIE

Because I want you to, that's why.

He rises to his feet and goes to her, stopping by her side.

JOSH

What are you scared of?

CHRISTIE

Nothing.

111. CONTINUED:

JOSH

You're afraid of what you were
feeling when we were kissing,
weren't you?

He leans forward to kiss her again. She pushes him back.

CHRISTIE

Josh --

He grabs her around the waist, pulling her toward him.

JOSH

C'mon --

She slaps him hard, making him let go of her. She backs
away, exploding at him:

CHRISTIE

You're just like my stepfather.
All you can think about is sex.
What about Janey? Did you care
about her at all, Josh? Or were
you just using her until you
could find someone prettier to
screw?

He explodes right back at her:

JOSH

If I had, I sure wouldn't be putting
the make on you, would I?

He takes a step for the door only to whirl back on her.

JOSH

Let me tell you something. You're
not the only one in the world who
hurts. She was my girlfriend,
remember. All you care about is
destroying your stepfather. And
not because Janey's dead, but
because he married your mother!

He storms out the door leaving her staring after him.

112. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

JOSH strides rapidly down the front walk. CHRISTIE bursts
out of the door behind him.

112. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

Josh --

He doesn't stop.

CHRISTIE

Josh --

(she grabs his arm,
dragging him to a
halt)

I'm sorry.

JOSH

Sorry isn't good enough.

He goes to jerk away, but she only tightens her grip.

CHRISTIE

I want to go to bed with you.

He stops and looks at her, their eyes locking.

JOSH

You mean it?

She nods. A moment passes. They slowly begin to walk back
toward the front door, hand in hand.

113. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

They enter the dark room, CHRISTIE goes to the bed, JOSH
stops at the door to reach for the light switch. She
turns back.

CHRISTIE

No, don't --

He stops, watching as she self-consciously disrobes in the
dark. He begins to take his clothes off as she slips into
bed, taking her underwear off beneath the sheets where he
can't see her. She looks at him as the last of her clothes
come off.

CHRISTIE

Josh, there's something you should
know --

JOSH

I already know. You've never done
this before. Janey told me. It'll
be all right.

113. CONTINUED:

Naked he slips under the sheets with her.

CHRISTIE

No, it's about Janey --

He smothers her with kisses before she can finish.

114. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. GARAGE AREA. NIGHT.

The 280Z pulls into the drive and disappears into the garage. A moment later PAUL and KAREN emerge, walking toward the back door. She's leaning on his arm, obviously not feeling well.

115. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

JOSH is on top of her, both of them under the sheets. He's partially inside her, trying to thrust deeper in his excitement. She whimpers, her face clenched in pain. He stops, rising to his elbow to stare down at her.

JOSH

You all right?

CHRISTIE

I'm sorry, it just hurts so much --

116. The room light suddenly snaps on, JOSH jerks up, rolling off her. He and CHRISTIE stares at the open doorway. PAUL FOX stands there, dressed in evening clothes, smiling at them.

PAUL

Well, and what have you two been up to?

JOSH hops out of bed, hurriedly throwing his clothes on. CHRISTIE pulls the sheet over herself to cover her nakedness. PAUL's face darkens as he watches JOSH.

PAUL

Use the front door and try not to meet my wife on your way. She's in the kitchen making a pot of tea.

JOSH throws CHRISTIE a glance as he half-stumbles, half-hops to get his last Adidas sneaker on.

116. CONTINUED:

JOSH
Look, Christie, I'll --

PAUL
(cutting him off)
Out!

JOSH darts past him out the doorway, half-dressed. PAUL and CHRISTIE stare at each other as they listen in the silence to JOSH's footsteps fade down the hall.

CHRISTIE
What are you and Mom doing home
so early?

PAUL
She wasn't feeling well. Between
the Police Chief and you today,
she wasn't up to a night on the
town. God only knows what she'd
do if she found out about this.

He takes a step to leave. She stares at him in open
amazement.

CHRISTIE
You're not going to tell her?

PAUL
(stopping and
turning back)
I'm not like you, Christie. I'm
very forgiving of other people's
sexual foibles. Even yours.
Good night.

He turns for the door again just as she withdraws her hand
from under the sheet. Her fingers have blood on them.

CHRISTIE
Oh, my God, I'm bleeding!

PAUL
(turning back)
What?

117. She leaps out of bed, dashing for the bathroom with the sheet
around her. He screams at her, his voice etched with fear.

PAUL
No!

She freezes, staring at him questioningly.

117. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

I'm only going to the bathroom.

KAREN's voice echoes up from the portico below.

KAREN (O.S.)

What is it, Paul? Are you all right?

He casts a panicked glance at the door to the hallway and shouts back.

PAUL

Fine. I just caught my finger in the door.

KAREN's footsteps can be heard below disappearing back into the kitchen. CHRISTIE stares at him.

CHRISTIE

What's wrong with you? You didn't catch your finger in any door.

118. He suddenly springs into motion, darting past her to shove the bathroom door open. A towel laid across the doorjamb to fully seal the room slides back across the tile floor. CHRISTIE suddenly puts a hand to her face and steps back, staring into the dark bathroom.

CHRISTIE

Gas!

119. PAUL pulls out a handkerchief, clamps it over his face, and rushes into the bathroom.

120. INT. CHRISTIE'S BATHROOM. NIGHT.

He throws the window fully open, a good breeze whipping the curtains back and quickly clearing the room. He falls to his knees by the space heater built into the wall, and slides back the bottom panel, exposing the pilot light. It's out, a gas coupling leading to it unscrewed.

CHRISTIE appears in the doorway, watching as he reconnects the line, shutting off the deadly hiss of escaping gas.

CHRISTIE

(slowly)

Now I know why you weren't going to tell Mom about me and Josh. Because soon I was going to be dead --

120. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE (cont.)
 (as the truth sinks
 in on her)
 My God, you're going to kill me,
 too.

121. He ignores her, flicking the bathroom light on. A two-inch electrical spark leaps from under the switchplate. CHRISTIE stares at it, realizing this was the detonator that was meant to blow her to Kingdom Come.

CHRISTIE
 Of course, you have to kill me.
 If Mom dies I get her money, not
 you.

He gives her a short, nasty smile and goes to slip past her out the door. She grabs his arm, stopping him.

PAUL
 I don't know what you're talking
 about, Christie.

CHRISTIE
 (nodding at the wall
 heater and the light
 switch)
 All this.

PAUL
 (smiling)
 All what?

122. As her helplessness sinks in on her, she lets go of his arm and he slips out of the room. She leans back against the wall, paralyzed by fear, her gaze snapping back and forth between the wall heater and the light switch.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE
 I suddenly realized why he didn't
 care what I thought. Nobody would
 believe anything I said. Not my
 mother, not the police, not even
 Josh --

Her eye catches her hand. It's still covered with her own blood.

123. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. DAY.

It's early morning, the dew still on the grass, the house bathed in sunshine.

123. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE'S VOICE
I didn't know what to do. And then
the next morning Paul made my mind
up for me --

124. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. DAY.

CHRISTIE is dressing as she hears her mother walking down
the hall outside her closed bedroom door.

KAREN (O.S.)
Snap to, Christie. I don't want
you missing the school bus again.

CHRISTIE hurries up as she hears her mother call out again,
just about to start down the stairs.

KAREN (O.S.)
I'll put the coffee on, Paul.

CHRISTIE is just snapping up her jeans when she hears her
mother scream out in mortal terror, followed by the dull
thumping of a body falling.

125. EXT. PORTICO AND STAIRWAY OF CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. DAY.

KAREN is tumbling, horribly, down the stairs.

126. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY. DAY.

CHRISTIE races down the hallway toward the stairs.

127. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE, STAIRWAY AND PORTICO. DAY.

She skids to halt at the top of the stairs, staring down
into the portico. Her mother lies crumpled at the bottom
of the stairs. PAUL kneels by the side of the seemingly
lifeless body. Horrified, CHRISTIE walks slowly down
the stairs, her gaze fastened on PAUL.

CHRISTIE
(almost to herself)
You did it, you finally did it --

PAUL
Christie, quick, call an ambulance.

127. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE ignores him, continuing her horrified progress down the stairs. KAREN groans in pain and moves. CHRISTIE stops, thunderstruck to realize her mother's still alive. PAUL turns on her impatiently.

PAUL

Christie, for Christ sake, call
an ambulance!

128. CHRISTIE rushes back up the stairs, headed for the phone on the landing. She grinds to a sudden halt, staring at a bent riser on the fourth step from the top, a riser that was bound to catch an unwary high heel and spill its owner to her death or certain injury. Her mother groans again. CHRISTIE tears her gaze free, racing once more for the phone.

129. INT. EMERGENCY ROOM IN A HOSPITAL. DAY.

KAREN lies on an examination table, her right leg in a plaster cast from her kneecap to her ankle. A DOCTOR stands over her, smiling benignly down, PAUL beside him. CHRISTIE sits in a corner, holding her tongue and anxiously watching all three.

DOCTOR

(caught mid-sentence)
-- just a clean break. You can
stay the night or go home today
if you want.

KAREN

I'll go home today.

CHRISTIE's head jerks up in alarm. The DOCTOR leaves. PAUL glances at his watch and turns to KAREN.

PAUL

I'd better call the office, tell
them where we are. Then I'll
take you home.

KAREN nods; they exchange smiles and PAUL hurries out of the room. CHRISTIE approaches the bed.

CHRISTIE

Mom.

KAREN

Yes, darling.

129. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

Please, don't go home. Not for a night or two anyway.

KAREN

Why not?

CHRISTIE

I'm afraid something will happen to you, something even more terrible.

KAREN

Christie, you're not back on that again, are you?

CHRISTIE

Mom, that riser was bent up so you'd trip.

KAREN gives her an annoyed look.

KAREN

Christie, please, don't start again. I must've bent it when I tripped.

CHRISTIE

Mom, Paul did it, I know he did -

KAREN

(all patience gone)
Christie, stop it!

CHRISTIE

Just because I lied to myself doesn't mean you have to. Oh, Mom, don't you see -

PAUL comes into the room pushing a wheelchair. CHRISTIE shuts up. He senses the tension between the two women.

PAUL

Something wrong?

KAREN

No, no, nothing at all.

PAUL helps her out of bed and into the wheelchair as CHRISTIE stands by, helpless to anything more now than watch.

129. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE'S VOICE
I suddenly knew what I had to do -

130. EXT/INT. BOHLE HOUSE ON STONE AVENUE. DAY.

Hidden by the shrubbery, CHRISTIE peers at the side of the house. She wears a Polaroid Sonar camera around her neck. She can see Paul's red 280Z sitting in the street.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE
I went to the Bohle house that
afternoon and waited till Paul
showed up. Then I waited some
more and then -

She picks a blind spot on the side of the house and dashes for it. Reaching it, she slides along the stucco exterior. She pauses to peer through a window into the living room. She sees LACEY BOHLE sunk deep in a chair, watching a Woody Woodpecker cartoon on the flickering TV screen and cracking his knuckles. CHRISTIE slides along the outside wall, hearing muffled groans and whispered words of pleasure as she approaches the open window to Brenda Bohle's bedroom.

131. She peeks over the sill and is immediately transfixed. Inside PAUL FOX and BRENDA BOHLE are locked in the act of love. BRENDA is on all fours before PAUL, while he is on his knees entering her from behind. He has one hand sunk deep in her mane of luxurious hair, pulling her head back. CHRISTIE's eyes widen.

BRENDA
Fuck me, Paul, fuck me!

He gasps as the rhythm of his thrusts pick up.

PAUL
I'm coming, I'm coming -

132. CHRISTIE shakes herself out of her trance, sticks her camera over the window ledge, and pushes the button! The flashcube explodes, transfixing both BRENDA and PAUL in a wash of white light, momentarily blinding them both. CHRISTIE whirls away from the window, unknowingly catching the snapshot against the side of the window, knocking it free. She flees for the safety of the shrubbery and the adjoining yard.

133. INT. BOHLE HOUSE, BEDROOM. DAY.

BRENDA and PAUL are too stunned by what's happened to notice the snapshot falling to the floor just inside the window, obscured behind a large floor plant. BRENDA screams for help as she and PAUL grab their clothes.

BRENDA

Lacey!

LACEY's huge feet can be heard thumping down the hallway from the living room.

134. EXT/INT. BOHLE HOUSE AND STREET. DAY.

CHRISTIE skids to a halt behind a large tree and reaches for the picture she expects to be hanging from the front of her camera. It isn't there! She looks around frantically to see if she's dropped it. It's nowhere in sight.

135. CHRISTIE retraces her steps to the shrubs, peering over the ground she just covered. It's not there either. Her gaze zooms in on the bedroom window and the ground just outside it as she mentally narrows the possibilities of where the picture might be. She can see the interior of the bedroom through the window. It seems deserted now. She backtracks at a dead run, speeding directly for the same blind spot on the exterior wall she chose before.

136. She reaches it and peers in the living room window. She sees PAUL, BRENDA and LACEY - their hurried words muffled by the glass. She slides along the wall, reaching the still open window to the bedroom. She looks at the ground around her feet. No picture.

137. CHRISTIE peeks her head in the bedroom, searching the room with her eyes. She boots herself halfway through the window for a better look, and hears the front door slam shut. Voices come from the front lawn.

138. She drops back to the ground, casting a glance along the side of the house. She sees PAUL walking across the lawn on a diagonal for his car. One backward glance and he's bound to see her standing there. She scrambles over the windowsill and into the bedroom.

139. INT. BEDROOM OF BOHLE HOUSE. DAY.

It's quiet. The bed's a mess, the sheets still damp from Paul and Brenda's aborted romp. CHRISTIE begins to search

139. CONTINUED:

the area closest to the window, behind the drapes, under the bureau and throw rug and among a pile of dirty clothes on the floor. Just as she's about to look behind the planter she hears footsteps crunching through the dirt along the outside wall of the house. Someone's approaching the bedroom window. LACEY'S VOICE rings out.

LACEY (O.S.)

Back here, you say?

BRENDA (O.S.)

Yeah.

140. CHRISTIE flattens herself against the bedroom wall and begins to inch toward the door into the hall, all thought of retrieving the lost picture gone as the threat of discovery becomes very real for her. She freezes as LACEY steps into view outside the window, his back to her.

141. EXT. BOHLE HOUSE. DAY.

LACEY looks over the yard in the direction CHRISTIE fled before retracing her steps. BRENDA stands at the front corner of the house watching him.

LACEY

Well, she isn't here now.

He begins to swing around, just about to look through the window into the dark recesses of the bedroom.

142. INT. BOHLE BEDROOM. DAY.

Just before his glance must find her, CHRISTIE slips through the door into the hallway.

143. INT. BOHLE HALLWAY. DAY.

CHRISTIE stands to the right of the door into Brenda's room, her back pressed against the wall. Through the open doorway, unseen by her, LACEY steps up to the outside of the bedroom window, about to shut it.

144. LACEY notices, on the sill, a bit of dirt that Christie left behind when she crawled into the room. He touches it, running it between his thumb and forefinger. He peers into the dark room with interest. He glances down. He

144. CONTINUED:

sees the dropped picture, sticking out an eighth of an inch from behind the planter! He reaches for it, his large body rattling the window frame.

145. Scared by the noise, unable to see LACEY, and sure he's coming through the window for her, CHRISTIE breaks for it and flees down the hall toward the living room.

146. INT. BOHLE LIVING ROOM. DAY.

She's halfway across the carpeted floor when she hears a key turning in the front door. She skids to a halt as the knob slowly turns. She whirls and flees as the door begins to open, disappearing back into the hall just as BRENDA steps into the living room.

147. INT. BOHLE HALLWAY. DAY.

CHRISTIE runs down the hall toward the kitchen. An angry voice booms out of the back room, followed by the slamming of the back door.

LACEY (O.S.)

Hey, Brenda!

148. CHRISTIE skids to another halt, realising LACEY has walked around to the back of the house and into the kitchen! That way of escape is cut off! She glances back the way she just came, only to hear BRENDA calling from the living room.

BRENDA (O.S.)

Yeah?

LACEY (O.S.)

I thought you said you didn't like it.

CHRISTIE's head snaps back toward the kitchen. LACEY's voice is drawing closer.

BRENDA (O.S.)

Like what?

149. CHRISTIE's head snaps back in the opposite direction, toward the living room. Both voices are drawing closer at the same time, trapping her in between, only seconds away from appearing at either end of the hall and seeing her standing there. She fumbles for the door closest to

149. CONTINUED:

her, and steps through it an instant before LACEY and BRENDA appear at opposite ends of the hall. His face is dark with rage. They advance on each other.

LACEY
Fucking Paul Fox.

BRENDA
What are you talking about?

150. INT. BOHLE BATHROOM AND CORRIDOR OUTSIDE. DAY.

CHRISTIE stands, her ear pressed to the door, listening as they both approach closer from opposite ends of the hall.

LACEY (O.S.)
You goddam well know what I'm
talking about. Look at this.

151. CHRISTIE looks for a way out. There's only one, the window directly behind her. She hurries to it, fumbling to get the latch open and raise it, the angry voices in the hallway covering the sound of her effort.

BRENDA (O.S.)
Where'd you get that?

LACEY (O.S.)
That girl took it. She must've
dropped it when she ran.

152. CHRISTIE hesitates, glancing back at the closed door, realizing they're talking about the picture she'd been looking for.

BRENDA (O.S.)
So what's a picture prove? I've
told you I've got to keep sleeping
with him until he kills his wife
and kid. Then we can do what we
want with him.

LACEY (O.S.)
Liar!

153. CHRISTIE hears a bony hand smack into tender flesh; it's LACEY slapping BRENDA just outside the door. BRENDA screams in pain, her body slamming into the bathroom door, rattling it in its frame.

153. CONTINUED:

BRENDA (O.S.)
Goddamn it, Lacey, stop it!

LACEY (O.S.)
You're fucking him because you
enjoy it. Is that how you get
off, having him and me at the
same time?

154. LACEY slaps her again, harder this time, the crack of skin smacking into skin like a rifle shot in the silent house. BRENDA screams again. CHRISTIE comes unfrozen, opens the window, in order to crawl out only to realize at that moment a screen covers the opening! The bathroom door handle begins to rattle as BRENDA searches for it on the other side of the door, facing LACEY, her back to the door. She's crying now, her voice quivers with fear.

BRENDA (O.S.)
Lacey, I told you, we don't get
anything until he kills them.
Then we can blackmail him for
everything, but he isn't going
to do it unless I keep pushing
him.

LACEY (O.S.)
How? By fucking him every day!

BRENDA (O.S.)
Yes, it's the only way -

155. He hits her again, maybe a punch this time because she smacks the door from outside the bathroom with her body hard, almost bowing it inward. CHRISTIE forgets about escape and dives for the bathtub. She manages to slip through the shower curtain just as the door flies open and BRENDA steps into the room, slamming it behind her and locking it, pressing her body against it, talking through the door, trying to calm LACEY down. A red handprint where he's slapped her mottles the beautiful flesh of her cheek.

BRENDA
Lacey, please, you're my husband,
you're the one I love -

156. Behind the shower curtain, CHRISTIE reacts to this, then slips all the way down in the tub, sinking as far as she can below the rim, listening to what's happening just outside the plastic shield.

156. CONTINUED:

LACEY (O.S.)

Let me in.

BRENDA

Lacey, just listen to me for
once -

157. LACEY kicks the door with his foot, once, twice, the wood beginning to splinter, three times, the lock snaps and the door flies open. In the bathroom, BRENDA backs across the tile floor, mortally afraid. LACEY steps into the small room and slowly advances on her, he has murder written all over his face.

BRENDA

Lacey, no -

He backhands her, really hard this time. The blow bounces her off the wall, slamming her into another. She slides to the floor, stunned and bleeding. LACEY watches her try to crawl to her knees, standing above her, staring down, breathing hard, almost ready to kick her to death.

158. In the tub, hidden by the shower curtain, CHRISTIE shudders with fear, jamming her hand into her mouth and biting down hard on her knuckles to keep herself from whimpering.

159. LACEY straightens up, his momentary madness seemingly passed. BRENDA kneels on the floor, her head lowered, blood slowly dripping out of her nose and dappling the white tile.

LACEY

Go on, wash your face -

He reaches for the tap to the tub!

160. Inside the tub, CHRISTIE draws her feet back and stifles an involuntary scream as LACEY's rough hand reaches through the curtain and turns the cold water on. It splashes her ankles, but she doesn't dare move.

161. In the bathroom BRENDA pulls herself to the edge of the tub, leaning on the rim for support, putting the weight of her body against the shower curtain.

162. Within the enclosed tub, CHRISTIE stares at the bulging outline of Brenda's body pressing against the opaque plastic. She glances up as the shower hooks begin to pop

162. CONTINUED:

beneath Brenda's weight, threatening to bring the whole shower curtain down! BRENDA's hand, the first two fingers smeared with her own bright red blood, grab the edge of the curtain at the far end of the tub. The hand begins to draw back the curtain as CHRISTIE watches, horrified.

163. The doorbell rings! BRENDA's hand pauses. CHRISTIE stops breathing. The doorbell rings again.

LACEY

Who's that?

BRENDA

I don't know.

It rings again. He tosses her a towel.

LACEY

Here, clean yourself up and answer it.

164. Within the tub, CHRISTIE watches as the hand suddenly lets go of the plastic shower curtain and disappears. CHRISTIE takes a breath at last. Outside the tub, BRENDA and LACEY step into the hall, going in opposite directions, she for the living room, he for the kitchen.

165. Several moments pass. CHRISTIE peeks out from behind the shower curtain, sees the room is empty and climbs out of the tub.

166. INT. BOHLE HALLWAY. DAY.

CHRISTIE sticks her head out the door and looks in either direction. No-one there. She hears the front door open, followed by voices. Her head snaps in that direction as she recognizes one of them.

JOSH (O.S.)

Is this the Smith residence?

BRENDA (O.S.)

No one lives here by that name.

JOSH (O.S.)

You sure. I mean this is the right address -

BRENDA (O.S.)

I said no one lives here by that name. Now get lost!

166. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE hears BRENDA slam the door in JOSH's face. She darts out into the hall, running in the direction of the kitchen. She dashes through the second door she reaches.

167. INT. BRENDA BOHLE'S BEDROOM. DAY.

She races across the room to the window LACEY closed, and begins to slide it open, casting a worried glance over her shoulder toward the lengthening silence in the hall. The window comes fully open. She throws one leg across the sill, about to climb out. A pair of strong hands snap into view, grabbing her from outside, one covering her mouth, the other dragging her roughly through the window.

168. EXT. BOHLE HOUSE. DAY.

LACEY slams her against the side of the house so hard it knocks the breath out of her. He holds her pinned to the wall, one hand about her throat, able to squeeze the life out of her if he chooses. She stares up at him, waiting helplessly to die. He flashes her a totally unexpected smile, happy, almost friendly.

LACEY

Hi.

169. LACEY lets her go and steps back. She stares at him unbelievably. His smile broadens. He pulls the Polaroid she took of PAUL and BRENDA from a back pocket and hands it to her.

LACEY

Here.

170. CHRISTIE stares at it, then at him, not daring to move, not knowing what to do. He jerks his head toward the street, indicating the direction in which he wants her to go.

LACEY

Go on, get out of here -

171. CHRISTIE takes off like a shot, speeding across the lawn and down the sidewalk.

172. EXT. STREET BY BOHLE HOUSE. DAY.

JOSH backs reluctantly down the street, his gaze still on the Bohle house. CHRISTIE suddenly races into view. He dashes to meet her.

172. CONTINUED:

JOSH
Hey, Christie!

CHRISTIE
Josh!

They come together in a joyous embrace on the sidewalk, JOSH swinging her about in his arms, both kissing the other.

CHRISTIE
Oh, Josh, you saved my life. If you hadn't rung that doorbell -

He lets her go and she steps back.

CHRISTIE
How'd you know I was here?

JOSH
When you didn't show up for English class I got worried. I kept remembering what you'd said about wanting proof.
(pause)
I also wanted to tell you I was sorry.

CHRISTIE
For what?

JOSH
For last night.

CHRISTIE
Oh, forget it.

She starts to walk down the street toward home. He falls in beside her.

JOSH
No, it's important. Look, I didn't mean to hurt you like I did. It's just that sometimes I'm so horny I don't know what I'm doing.

CHRISTIE
It's okay. I understand.

JOSH
You do?

172. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

Yeah. Sex is just plain horrible.
For everyone. Look at this.

She hands him the Polaroid. He gives it a long glance and then passes it back to her.

JOSH

Well, I guess that takes care of
your mother and Paul Fox.

CHRISTIE

I guess -

JOSH

Look, making love isn't always
terrible, you know. I mean people
don't go around hurting each other
all the time.

CHRISTIE

(with a depressed shrug)
Yeah, I guess. I don't know.

He pulls her gently to a halt, staring down into her face.

JOSH

Christie, it wouldn't be like
that again between you and me.
And it wouldn't be like in that
picture. I promise.

He kisses her, slowly pulling back. She doesn't react;
she just stares back at him. Finally:

CHRISTIE

Josh, I don't want to hurt your
feelings, but I don't want to go
to bed with you again. I don't
want to go to bed with anybody
ever again. I'm sorry.

She turns and walks away. He watches her go, not knowing
what to say or do.

173. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

CHRISTIE bangs through the back door, yelling.

CHRISTIE

Hey, Mom -- !

173. CONTINUED:

PAUL comes through the swinging door from the portico. She stops dead. He hurries across the floor toward her.

PAUL
Give it to me --

CHRISTIE
(backing away)
Leave me alone --

He grabs her, shaking her so hard her teeth rattle.

PAUL
Give me that picture --

KAREN enters through the swinging door on crutches, her leg in the cast. He stops dead, glancing over his shoulder at his wife, his fingers still digging into CHRISTIE's shoulder.

KAREN
Let her go.

PAUL releases CHRISTIE and steps back, nervously wiping his mouth as his wife hobbles further into the room.

KAREN
What's going on here anyway?

PAUL
I asked her a simple question
about where she'd been and she
called me a vile name and --

CHRISTIE
He's lying. And this time I can
prove it.

174. She pulls the Polaroid from her back pocket and passes it to KAREN. Her mother glances at it, her eyes turning instantly sick. She stares up at PAUL.

PAUL
Look, Karen, I can explain
everything --

KAREN's gaze falls back to the picture, her face turning pale.

PAUL
Just give me a chance, that's
all I ask --

174. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE backs out of the room, leaving them alone, watching PAUL plead with his wife.

PAUL
It's not like you think it is
at all --

175. INT. PORTICO AND STAIRWAY. DAY.

The voices from the kitchen follow CHRISTIE as she walks up the stairs.

KAREN (O.S.)
Don't touch me!

PAUL (O.S.)
I'm not going to hurt you. I
just want you to understand.
It was a simple affair, nothing
more --

CHRISTIE disappears down the landing.

176. INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY. DAY.

As she walks toward her room, she hears her mother slam out of the kitchen followed by PAUL.

KAREN (O.S.)
I don't want to talk about it.

PAUL (O.S.)
We have to talk about it.

KAREN (O.S.)
I want you out of this house now!

CHRISTIE disappears into her room.

177. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. DAY.

As CHRISTIE crosses the room, she hears her mother yelp in pain, followed by PAUL's raging voice from below. She turns toward the door into the hall, listening.

PAUL (O.S.)
That's for every time I kissed
you and wanted to throw up.

CHRISTIE heads for the door.

178. INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY. DAY.

She walks down the hall toward the landing, PAUL's voice becoming louder now.

PAUL (O.S.)

You think it's for your money.
You think that's why I was trying
to kill you. Well, it wasn't.
I've always hated you. It started
when I was a kid, watching you drive
past with your rich daddy in his big
car, knowing you were born with
what I'd never have.

179. INT. STAIRWAY AND PORTICO. DAY.

CHRISTIE comes to a stop at the landing, staring down at PAUL in the portico below, watching him scream at her mother through the archway into the living room.

PAUL

(savagely)

Well, I finally got rich, by
marrying you. I never loved you.
The sight of you made me sick.
Touching you, talking pretty to
you, it all made my skin crawl.
Think about that for the rest
of your life!

He turns and slams out the front door. CHRISTIE descends the stairs, her mother's sobs growing louder with every step she takes.

She reaches the portico, moving out into the center of the floor. She sees her mother through the archway, sprawled across the living room couch. CHRISTIE walks into the room.

180. INT. THE LIVING ROOM. DAY.

CHRISTIE gazes down. KAREN is weeping. CHRISTIE kneels by her side.

CHRISTIE

Mom --

She brushes a tear-stained tangle of hair from KAREN's face and sees a slender trickle of blood running down her chin from a cut lip.

180. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

Oh, my God, he hit you --

KAREN turns away, hiding her face under her arm.

KAREN

Go away, Christie --

CHRISTIE rises, taking a step toward the kitchen.

CHRISTIE

I'll get you a cold towel --

KAREN

Just go away, please --

CHRISTIE stands there, unsure of what to do. Her mother speaks again, her voice filled with pain and the need to be left alone.

KAREN

Please --

CHRISTIE turns and slowly walks back to the portico, headed for the stairs and her room.

DISSOLVE TO:

181. INT. CHRISTIE'S ROOM. NIGHT. (BACK INTO THE PRESENT)

CHRISTIE sits as she did in the opening shot of the film, at her desk, writing in her diary.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

-- and so here I sit, finishing my story. I'm trying to figure out what I've learned from all this and I guess it's something I never wanted to know.

182. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

As she continues to talk we see the house, wrapped in the darkness of night, only the lights in the living room and Christie's room on.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

Love kills and hurts you if you choose the wrong person. Like Mom did.

182. CONTINUED:

Slowly we pull back, almost as though 'The End' will appear at any moment on the screen.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

Or it makes you do terrible things, like Paul and Brenda and Lacey.

We stop pulling back, and suddenly a figure steps into the picture, then another to the other side, both MEN, one of them carrying a pistol in his hand.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

All my life I've wanted to love and be loved. Now suddenly I'm not so sure.

183. The two figures move toward the house, a third comes into view walking behind them. It is LACEY, BRENDA and PAUL. They advance inexorably on the defenseless house as Christie's unsuspecting voice rolls on.

184. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE gets up and goes to her window and freezes. She sees PAUL FOX and BRENDA BOHLE momentarily fixed in a shaft of moonlight in the backyard, crossing toward the house.

CHRISTIE

Oh, my God --

She dashes for the door.

185. INT. STAIRWAY AND PORTICO. NIGHT.

She plunges down the stairs.

CHRISTIE

Mom!

She dashes for the living room.

186. INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

She skids to a halt above the couch where her mother lies, grabbing her and hauling her to a sitting position.

CHRISTIE

Mom, quick, we've got to get out of here.

186. CONTINUED:

KAREN
What is it, Christie?

CHRISTIE
I just saw Paul and Brenda Bohle
in the backyard. They're coming
to kill us.

KAREN looks out the French doors into the shadow-swept
backyard.

KAREN
I don't see anybody.

CHRISTIE
Mom, don't argue.

187. She almost manhandles KAREN off the couch and into the
wheelchair.

KAREN
Christie --

CHRISTIE
Mom, please!

KAREN allows herself to be helped into the wheelchair.
CHRISTIE pushes her mother for the front door.

188. INT. THE PORTICO. NIGHT.

She drags the wheelchair to a halt as she hears a key
being turned in the front door from the outside.

CHRISTIE
Oh, my God, Paul's still got
his key --

She pulls KAREN toward the kitchen, banging through the
swinging door back first.

189. INT. THE KITCHEN. NIGHT.

She whips the wheelchair around, pushing it toward the
kitchen door. She stops it, reaching in front of her
mother for the door knob.

CHRISTIE
We made it --

189. CONTINUED:

She opens the door to find herself facing LACEY BOHLE.
He smiles at her.

LACEY

Hi.

CHRISTIE backs away, pulling her mother with her. The swinging door from the portico opens behind her. PAUL and BRENDA enter the room, blocking that exit. PAUL smiles at his wife and stepdaughter.

PAUL

Well, here we are again, just
one big happy family.

CHRISTIE makes a grab for the wall phone. PAUL punches her in the side of the head just as she gets it in her grasp, sending her smashing to the floor. PAUL replaces the receiver on the hook.

PAUL

If you hadn't shown your mother
that picture, none of this would
be happening. Not yet anyway.

CHRISTIE tries to crawl to her hands and knees. PAUL kicks her in the ribs, sending her back to the floor gasping for breath. BRENDA steps over the stunned girl's body on her way to the fridge.

BRENDA

Don't make her bleed. Otherwise
you'll have to clean it up.

KAREN is struggling to rise from her wheelchair to her daughter's aid. BRENDA pushes her back with two fingers.

BRENDA

Sit.

PAUL turns to LACEY.

PAUL

What do we do now?

LACEY

Put 'em in the basement until
about one in the morning. That's
a good time for a burglar to break
into the house.

190. He grabs CHRISTIE and hauls her to her feet. PAUL spins his wife about to face him.

PAUL

What do you think of Lacey's plan, honey? I'll have tried to stop the burglar, of course, and been knocked unconscious. Needless to say, he'll kill everyone in the house. Except me.

KAREN looks at him in horror.

KAREN

Paul, you can't do this --

PAUL

(cutting her off,
nodding at Lacey)

Not me, babycakes. Him!

191. He whirls her about to face the swinging door into the portico, glancing at CHRISTIE in LACEY's firm grip.

PAUL

Look Christie, no hands --

He breaks into a run, pushing the wheelchair, aiming his wife for the door. He lets go. With a pause, KAREN is propelled through the door, out of control.

CHRISTIE

Mom -- !

There is a scream from the portico as the wheelchair upsets, spilling KAREN across the hardwood floor. CHRISTIE struggles and LACEY lets her go, she dashes after her mother.

PAUL and LACEY exchange grins and follow her. BRENDA finds a Tab in the fridge and reaches for a glass and some ice.

192. INT. THE PORTICO. NIGHT.

KAREN is sprawled on the floor, her overturned wheelchair beside her. CHRISTIE is trying to help her rise.

CHRISTIE

Mom, are you all right -- ?

Before she can answer, LACEY jerks KAREN upright and drops her back into the wheelchair PAUL has just set right. LACEY grabs CHRISTIE by the arm as PAUL leads the way, pushing KAREN toward the hall corridor.

192. CONTINUED:

PAUL

This way.

LACEY follows, dragging CHRISTIE along.

193. INT. HALLWAY BY BASEMENT DOOR. NIGHT.

PAUL opens the basement door.

PAUL

The girl first.

LACEY sidearms CHRISTIE through the door.

194. INT. THE BASEMENT. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE falls into the darkness, trying to find something solid. She hits the banister, grabbing hold, and partially breaking her fall. She tumbles the rest of the way down the stairs, disappearing into blackness.

Up at the top, framed in the doorway, stand the two men, KAREN in between them in her wheelchair. PAUL leans down and hisses in KAREN's ear.

PAUL

These are for all the times I
said "I love you" and wanted
to throw up.

He sends the wheelchair and KAREN over the lip of the landing. With a scream, she falls out of the chair and plunges down the stairs, her heavy cast thumping against wood. PAUL peers down barely able to distinguish the two still forms of his wife and stepdaughter lying at the bottom of the stairs.

PAUL

See you at one tonight, Karen,
darling.

He closes the door, plunging the basement into almost total darkness.

195. For a long moment, there's no sound. Then KAREN's stifled weeping can be heard. CHRISTIE shakes her head to clear it, and crawls to KAREN, reaching out to grasp her hand, pulling herself up beside her.

CHRISTIE

Mom, it's all right --

195. CONTINUED:

KAREN

(almost to herself)
He never loved me, all these
months he never loved me --

CHRISTIE struggles to her feet, and searches blindly for the overhead bulb, finally turning it on, bathing the large room in harsh light. She falls to her knees beside her mother who's curled up in a fetal position, still crying. CHRISTIE tries to take her in her arms and comfort her.

CHRISTIE

I love you, Mom -- We'll find
a way out --

KAREN is lost inside her own pain and fear. Her gaze fastens on the narrow pair of barred windows in the wall. They open to the outside at almost ground level.

KAREN

Help, have to get help --

196. She drags herself up, using a box to levers herself to a standing position. She clumps across the floor, dragging the cast after her until she reaches the window. She unlatches it with shaking hands and throws it open to scream for help between the bars. CHRISTIE leaps after her, tackling her from behind, and clapping a hand over her mouth, stifling her scream. The two women fall to the floor, KAREN flailing at her daughter, trying to break free, CHRISTIE holding on for dear life.

CHRISTIE pins her to the floor. KAREN stops struggling, her body going limp. Slowly CHRISTIE takes her hand away from her mother's mouth.

CHRISTIE

Mom, if you scream they'll hear
us. They'd be down here to kill
us before you took a second breath.

KAREN slowly nods, wetting her lips with her tongue, struggling for sanity again and winning.

KAREN

(slowly)
You're right. I just panicked --

CHRISTIE lifts her head.

CHRISTIE

Mom, the storm doors, the storm
doors to the outside. They're
not locked, are they?

196. CONTINUED:

KAREN turns to stare at the door in the wall, it leads up a short flight of stairs to the storm doors, the outside, and freedom.

KAREN

No. No, only that door. And
it locks from the inside.

They struggle to their feet, moving as quickly as they can. CHRISTIE reaches the door first, throwing it open. She glances back triumphantly at her mother, and then takes her under the arm, helping her to hobble through the door.

197. KAREN pauses on the first of the six short steps, watching CHRISTIE as she places her hands against the double-wood doors, laid at a slight upward angle to the ground outside. CHRISTIE pushes. The door on the right opens an inch or two. She glances back at her mother.

CHRISTIE

C'mon --

KAREN hobbles up the steps as CHRISTIE lifts the door farther open.

198. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE BY STORM DOORS. NIGHT.

PAUL FOX stands directly above the door as it opens, chain and padlock in his hand. He grins as CHRISTIE's hand starts to emerge from the opening between the two doors. He stomps down on the door with all his weight.

199. INT. THE BASEMENT. NIGHT.

The door slams back into place, catching CHRISTIE's fingertip. With a scream of pain, she whirls down the steps, grabbed by her mother. KAREN holds her tight, trying to comfort her.

KAREN

Easy, easy --

KAREN takes hold of CHRISTIE's hand.

KAREN

Here, let me look at it --

The fingertip is mashed, blood seeping through broken skin and a torn fingernail, already turning black.

199. CONTINUED:

KAREN

Wrap this around it --

She tears a piece of her blouse loose and binds the wound. A laugh is heard through the storm doors, followed by the sound of chains being wrapped around the double-door handles on the outside and being padlocked into place. KAREN glares up at the door.

KAREN

You bastard! Hurting an innocent child --

PAUL (O.S.)

She's a slut. I caught her in bed fucking that little friend of hers, Josh Dealey. That's how innocent your daughter is.

CHRISTIE throws herself against the door, shouting through the wood.

CHRISTIE

Okay, maybe I did sleep with Josh. But Josh loves me. Not like you and Brenda, Paul. She doesn't love you. She loves Lacey!

200. She hears him stop dead on the other side of the door, as though she's caught his attention.

CHRISTIE

You think he's Brenda's brother, don't you? Well, he's not. He's her husband and he hates you for sleeping with her. And she doesn't even like you. She's only doing it so they can get my mother's money. Do you hear?

No answer. She screams at the closed, silent door.

CHRISTIE

Once we're dead, they'll blackmail you for all the money you got from my mother!

Faced with silence, the unmoving door and her own pain and frustration, she begins to weep. KAREN takes CHRISTIE in her arms and rocks her.

KAREN

Easy, honey, easy --

201. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE BY STORM DOORS. NIGHT.

PAUL lies on the storm doors. It is totally black except for the moon, not a star in it. His face hardens with suspicion followed by growing fury. He stares up at the night sky.

202. INT. THE KITCHEN. NIGHT.

PAUL comes in. LACEY sits at the table, eating some eggs BRENDA's cooked up. They float in grease. She's at the sink cleaning up. LACEY glances up as PAUL closes the door.

LACEY

You get it locked?

PAUL

Yeah. They're not going anywhere.

LACEY nods and throws a glance at BRENDA.

LACEY

You got some katsup, honey?

She hands him a bottle from the counter.

LACEY

Thanks --

PAUL watches as he takes it from her. He sees the way LACEY's hand lingers on hers a split second too long to be strictly fraternal.

203. INT. THE BASEMENT. NIGHT.

KAREN and CHRISTIE sit on the concrete floor, resting against the wall, under the harsh glare of the naked light bulb. KAREN has her broken leg sticking out straight in front of her; CHRISTIE nurses her crushed finger, the makeshift bandage already soaked in blood.

CHRISTIE

What do we do now?

KAREN

Get out of here. There's got to be a way.

CHRISTIE

There isn't.

203. CONTINUED:

KAREN

There's always a way, Christie.

The lock, then the door at the top of the stairs to the hall opens: PAUL stands there, staring down at them.

PAUL

Christie.

She looks at her mother. KAREN nods. CHRISTIE rises to her feet and climbs the stairs until she faces PAUL.

PAUL

What you told me through the storm doors, prove it.

CHRISTIE

How?

PAUL

I'm going to take you back into the kitchen. You just follow my lead and slip into the conversation whatever you heard them say. I'll watch their reaction.

CHRISTIE

Lacey'll kill us both.

PAUL

No, he won't.

He slips a Llama .9mm automatic out of his coat pocket, lets her see it, and slips it back in. She takes a step back down the stairs, away from him.

CHRISTIE

I won't do it.

PAUL

You do it and maybe I'll find a way out of this for you and your mother. You don't you're both going to die.

She stares at him, her upper lip curling in disgust at what she sees.

CHRISTIE

You're gonna kill us anyway. No matter what you say. You have to.

204. He grabs her around the throat, about to choke her in his anger. KAREN's voice rings out from below.

KAREN

Christie, do what he says.

CHRISTIE and PAUL look down at KAREN; then CHRISTIE nods her acquiescence.

205. INT. THE KITCHEN. NIGHT.

LACEY glances up from his coffee as PAUL pushes CHRISTIE into the room. BRENDA's at the sink where she's drying the dishes.

LACEY

What's she doing here?

PAUL

She's going to make some blueberry pancakes. She makes great pancakes.

CHRISTIE moves to the kitchen cabinet, taking down the pancake mix.

BRENDA

I can make pancakes.

PAUL

The kid makes them better.

BRENDA

How would you know? You ever taste my pancakes?

LACEY

Shut up, Brenda. The man wants the girl to cook for him, let her do it.

His gaze never leaves PAUL. He smiles at him.

LACEY

Right, Paul?

PAUL doesn't smile back. His gaze shifts from LACEY to CHRISTIE, waiting for her to make her move, his hand resting on the gun butt just inside his jacket pocket. CHRISTIE returns from the fridge with a quart of milk and begins to mix the batter in the bowl. BRENDA returns to the sink and her dishes. CHRISTIE speaks, keeping her head bowed and her eye on the bowl.

205. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

How long have you and Lacey been married, Brenda?

BRENDA freezes. LACEY looks up at CHRISTIE from the table. PAUL watches.

BRENDA

You got it all wrong, kid.
Lacey's my brother --

CHRISTIE

Oh, come on, Brenda. I was hiding in your house when you two were fighting. I heard everything. I know Lacey's your husband --

LACEY leaps for her.

LACEY

Shut up!

PAUL rises from the table, the gun in his hand.

PAUL

Freeze!

His gaze, that of a broken-hearted lover, snaps between LACEY and BRENDA, but the gun stays trained on LACEY.

PAUL

You bastards, lying to me --

BRENDA

I wanted to tell you, Paul, but I was afraid I'd lose you.

PAUL

Liar!

BRENDA

I'm telling the truth. He doesn't mean anything to me. It's you, you're the one I love --

206. Close enough now, she launches herself at PAUL. The gun barrel starts to swing in her direction. LACEY twitches toward PAUL. The gun barrel snaps back to cover him, and BRENDA's all over PAUL, both of her hands clamping on to his gun arm and dragging it down.

206. CONTINUED:

The gun fires into the floor. LACEY throws himself at PAUL, slamming him against the wall. They struggle for the pistol.

207. CHRISTIE edges around the room as the fight goes on, until she has the freedom to make a break for it. She dashes out the swinging door.

208. INT. PORTICO AND HALLWAY. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE races through the portico into the hallway. She stops before the basement door, turns the key left in the lock, and throws the door open.

209. INT. THE BASEMENT AND HALL ABOVE. NIGHT.

KAREN struggles to her feet as CHRISTIE bounds down.

KAREN
What happened?

CHRISTIE
They're fighting -- C'mon,
we have to get out of here --

She half-helps, half-drags her mother to the stairs.

KAREN
Christie, I'll never make it --

CHRISTIE
Yes, you will --

They start climbing the stairs, CHRISTIE drags KAREN up, the cast thumping against the wood.

KAREN
I can't do it, go on, run --

210. CHRISTIE just drags KAREN after her. They're almost to the top when LACEY suddenly appears. He holds a badly beaten, semi-conscious PAUL by the nape of the neck. He looks down at the two women, his gaze drilling into CHRISTIE. He shakes PAUL at her.

LACEY
Here, I thought you'd like to see
what your big mouth got you --

210. CONTINUED:

He slams PAUL against the side of the door frame, holding him there with his manic strength.

LACEY

Nothing, that's what it got you!

211. His tone drops back to a disconcerting, conversational tone.

LACEY

And you know what's going to happen now? We're gonna kill both of you and Paulie here's gonna say he tried to stop it. That's why he got beaten by the burglar, only the burglar escaped. Paulie's gonna be a regular hero. And then he's gonna give me and Brenda a whole big chunk of the inheritance. Aren't you, Paulie?

PAUL does his best to say "yes" through his split lips, but only manages to mumble. LACEY throws him into the hallway. He's heard crashing to the floor. BRENDA crowds in behind LACEY to look over his shoulder at CHRISTIE and KAREN.

LACEY

The next time you hear me coming,
it's to kill you.
(he checks his
watch)
That's about two hours from now.
(he throws them
a smile)
Have a nice wait, ladies.

He slams the door in their faces. They hear the lock turn. CHRISTIE and her mother sink down on the stairs.

CHRISTIE

We're dead.

KAREN pulls herself erect, using the banister.

KAREN

No, we're not. You are not going to die. Do you understand?

212. She glances around wildly, her gaze fixing on one of the barred windows at ground level in the far wall, the one she threw open earlier.

KAREN

That window, maybe you can squeeze through the bars --

CHRISTIE

I'm not leaving you.

KAREN

You have to, Christie. It's no good both of us dying, not when you have a chance to escape.

CHRISTIE

(stubbornly)

I'm not leaving you.

213. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

The phone rings in the empty room.

214. INT. THE BASEMENT. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE and KAREN freeze, turning to gaze at the locked door to the hallway above them, listening to the faint, persistent ring of the phone.

CHRISTIE

(to herself)

Josh --

She rises to her feet, walking up several steps until she can press her ear to the door. They're suddenly flooded with irrational hope.

CHRISTIE

It's Josh, I know it is --

The phone stops ringing.

215. INT. THE KITCHEN. NIGHT.

LACEY stares in the direction of Christie's room as the last ring dies away. He looks at PAUL who sits at the kitchen table, an icepack held to his swelling eye. BRENDA sits across from him.

215. CONTINUED:

LACEY

I told you it'd stop --

The phone in the kitchen suddenly rings as whoever it was that tried Christie's line switches to her parents' phone. LACEY's gaze flicks back to PAUL.

LACEY

Answer it.

PAUL doesn't move. The phone keeps ringing.

LACEY (cont.)

If you don't answer it, whoever it is may come over here. If that happens maybe the cops won't be far behind. If the cops arrive, I'll tell them how you gave me that car from the lot to run down Christie's little girlfriend --

216. INT. THE BASEMENT. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE's face is still bright with hope as she listens to the phone ringing. Then it stops. She and her mother stare at each other.

KAREN

They've answered it.

217. INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

PAUL is on the phone talking. BRENDA and LACEY watch him tensely.

PAUL

-- I told you, she doesn't want to talk to you. Now don't call here again!

He slams the phone down.

PAUL

That should take care of the little bastard.

(to Lacey)

Satisfied now?

LACEY smiles.

218. INT. THE BASEMENT. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE and KAREN sit on the steps thinking. CHRISTIE's gaze falls on the new circuit breaker box just below the water pipe with its new coupling.

CHRISTIE
There's only one way.

KAREN
What?

CHRISTIE
I'm going to have to kill them.

She slowly rises, walking down the stairs to the box, touching it, almost stroking it with her fingers.

219. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Lights are on in the kitchen and portico, nowhere else. The street is deserted and quiet, all the other houses in the neighborhood dark, their occupants long ago safely asleep in their beds.

220. INT. THE KITCHEN. NIGHT.

LACEY sits at the kitchen table, meticulously cleaning the Llama automatic he took from PAUL.

221. INT. THE LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

PAUL is asleep on the couch. BRENDA sits in front of the T.V., the volume on low, catching the tail end of David Letterman's late night talk show. The loudest sound in the room is the clock. It reads 12:32. As we watch, the big hand clicks forward one notch to 12:33, a minute closer to one o'clock, the killing hour.

222. INT. THE BASEMENT. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE stands at the top of the stairs, KAREN is below, next to the circuit breaker box.

CHRISTIE
You ready?

KAREN
On the count of ten --

222. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

On the count of ten --

She turns to the door, shouts through the wood.

CHRISTIE

Hey, Brenda --!

223. INT. THE LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

BRENDA glances up from the T.V.

CHRISTIE (O.S.)

Hey, Brenda --!

She heaves herself out of the chair.

224. INT. THE HALLWAY. NIGHT.

BRENDA stops in front of the basement door.

BRENDA

Yeah?

225. INT. BASEMENT. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE almost presses her lips to the door.

CHRISTIE

I have to pee.

BRENDA (O.S.)

Squat and do it down there.

226. INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT.

BRENDA retraces her steps down the hall away from the door. CHRISTIE's voice is heard.

CHRISTIE (O.S.)

The cops will find traces of urine. It won't add up when we're supposed to have been murdered in our beds.

BRENDA grinds to a halt, unable to think of a ready answer.

227. INT. THE BASEMENT. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE waits nervously, she hears the key turn in the lock, she turns and gives her mother a grin and the high sign. BRENDA opens the door, a .22 revolver in her hand. She motions CHRISTIE into the hall, closing and relocking the door behind her.

At the bottom of the stairs, KAREN slips the panel to the circuit breaker box open, reaching out and taking hold of the main switch, ready to throw it. She begins to count out loud.

KAREN

-- one thousand and one, one thousand
and two, one thousand and --

228. INT. PORTICO AND STAIRWAY. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE walks toward the lavatory just inside the front door. BRENDA walks close behind her, the gun trained on her back. CHRISTIE silently counts in her head.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

-- one thousand and seven, one
thousand and eight --

She opens the lavatory door, she's just beginning to close the door behind her -

BRENDA

Leave it open.

CHRISTIE's internal voice keeps rising with tension and anticipation.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

-- one thousand and nine, one
thousand and ten --

All the lights go out plunging the house into total darkness. CHRISTIE rams the door fully open, smashing it into BRENDA. Her pistol flies out of her hand, skittering across the floor. CHRISTIE plunges toward the door into the kitchen as BRENDA falls to her knees, searching for the dropped gun and cursing.

PAUL can be heard coming off the couch in the living room, awoken by the noise.

PAUL (O.S.)

What's going on in there?

229. INT. THE KITCHEN. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE smashes through the door only to run into LACEY. She spins off him as he stands confused in the dark.

LACEY
Brenda, that you?

BRENDA screams from the portico.

BRENDA (O.S.)
She's escaped, Lacey!

CHRISTIE steps into the moonlight near the kitchen window. She opens the cutlery drawer and grabs a knife. LACEY launches himself at her.

LACEY
You little bitch --

He catches her by the arm, spinning her about. CHRISTIE comes around with a butcher knife in her hand. She slashes him across the arm. He screams and steps back. She slashes at him again and misses, trying to kill him. He fumbles for his pistol in his waistband, drawing it out. She sees it wink in the moonlight, whirls and dashes for the door into the portico, the darkness swallowing her. He yells after her.

LACEY
She's headed right for you. Stop her!

230. INT. THE PORTICO. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE crashes through the door. She sees BRENDA's shadowy outline near the front door, raising her pistol. CHRISTIE looks left, PAUL's bulk fills the archway to the living room. She jerks to a stop to hear LACEY smash through the door right behind her. She falls into a crouch and races across the floor to the opposite wall where she freezes. LACEY stops just inside the swinging door into the portico and probes the darkness with his eyes. It's pitch black; he can't see a thing. No one can.

LACEY
Brenda?

BRENDA
Yeah.

230. CONTINUED:

LACEY
Where is she?

BRENDA
I don't know. In here somewhere.

LACEY
Paul, you there?

PAUL's voice answers from the darkness of the archway.

PAUL
Yeah.

LACEY
All right. You and Brenda stay
where you are. I'm going to flush
the brat out --

231. He moves into the center of the darkness, his hands patting the empty air, searching for CHRISTIE. PAUL listens to his progress across the hardwood floor. Just before LACEY's hand must touch her, CHRISTIE darts for the living room, heading to one side of PAUL. He senses her sudden movement and takes a step to his left, grabbing her.

PAUL
Got her!

232. He grapples CHRISTIE to her knees. She strikes down with the butcher knife, sinking it three inches into his thigh. With a scream of pain, he lets her go, staggering back, clutching the wound in his leg. CHRISTIE darts back into the portico past LACEY. He makes a grab for her and misses her by a hair's breadth. She finds the stairway wall and inches along it, feeling with her hands to orient herself in the darkness. The other three stand silent, waiting for CHRISTIE to give herself away with some telltale noise. The only sounds in the portico are PAUL's whimpers and LACEY's ragged breathing. CHRISTIE slides silently along the wall, drawing slowly closer to BRENDA's shadowy outline by the front door. CHRISTIE raises the blade to strike at her.

233. She suddenly bumps a table, sending a vase crashing to the floor. BRENDA whirls in the direction of the noise and fires. The bullet ricochets off a metal sconce on the wall and whines across the room, burying itself in the ceiling molding above LACEY's head.

233. CONTINUED:

LACEY

Jesus, Brenda, stop it. You'll
hit one of us.

234. No one moves. Especially not Christie who crouches by the bottom of the stairs, the knife gripped tightly in her hand. She begins to rise for another try at one of them, being as quiet as she can. Suddenly PAUL's voice is heard.

PAUL

Would this help?

235. He flicks his Bic. He, LACEY, and BRENDA all see CHRISTIE crouching at the foot of the stairs. She throws the butcher knife at PAUL before any of them can react. He ducks, dropping the lighter as the knife hits the wall behind him and clatters to the floor. LACEY dives for where he last saw CHRISTIE. Her shadow bounds up the stairs and disappears down the landing. He pauses on the steps as PAUL finds his lighter on the floor and fires it up again.

LACEY

(to Brenda)

Go into the basement, get the
lights on --

He disappears up the stairs, followed by PAUL with his weak flame.

236. INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY. NIGHT.

LACEY stops at the top of the stairs, peering down the darkened hallway.

LACEY

Come on out.

No sound. He walks down the hallway, the Llama automatic in his hand.

LACEY (cont.)

If you don't want me to kill you
right now, come out.

He stops and peers into the open doorway into CHRISTIE's room. Nothing. He continues on down the hall.

237. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

She has her back to the wall at the side of the open door into the hall. Her gaze falls on her desk. She creeps to it, opening the top drawer, softly. A two-inch penknife lies there. She reaches for it, inadvertently hitting a box of paper clips. They fall toward the floor.

238. INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY. NIGHT.

LACEY whirls as he hears the soft sound of the box falling. He stares at the open doorway he just passed and then begins to retrace his steps.

239. INT. CHRISTIE'S ROOM. NIGHT.

He peers into the dark room, shadow and moonlight intertwined. He steps in, gun raised.

LACEY

I know you're in here.
I know you're not going anyplace,
not with your mother downstairs --

240. INT. CHRISTIE'S BATHROOM. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE stands next to the locked door, the pitiful penknife, blade opened, in her hand. It's a gesture of defiant futility; she knows it; she just has no choice. LACEY's voice snakes under the doorjamb from her bedroom.

LACEY (O.S.)

So why don't you come on out?

241. The overhead light in the bathroom snaps on as power returns to the entire house. A two-inch long blue electrical spark shoots out from under the light plate switch, a reminder of Paul's aborted death trap. CHRISTIE stares at the light switch, renewed hope suddenly flooding her eyes. Her gaze drops to the wall heater. She pockets her penknife and falls to her knees, prying at the plate that covers the pilot.

242. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

LACEY is peering under the bed. All the lights are on in the room. He hears the scrape of the wall heater plate coming loose in the bathroom. He approaches the

242. CONTINUED:

door, talking in a child's taunting singsong voice.

LACEY

Aha, I know where you are --

243. INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE has the heater plate off and frantically works with fumbling fingers at the gas line.

LACEY (O.S.)

Come out, come out, said the big
bad wolf. Or I'll huff and puff
till I blow your house down.

The coupling won't unscrew. CHRISTIE twists it for all she's worth with both hands, the metal slipping in her sweaty grip.

LACEY (O.S.)

Come out, you little cunt!

244. He slams the door with his foot, splitting the panel. The coupling loosens in CHRISTIE's hands, turns and comes free, gas spilling into the enclosed area. CHRISTIE leaps to her feet, snapping the light off, letting the spark jump joyfully in the darkness. She unlocks the door.

CHRISTIE

Coming --

245. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

She steps into the room, closing the door firmly behind her, listening to make sure the latch catches. She stands before LACEY like some recalcitrant schoolgirl, head lowered, hands behind her back. LACEY stares at her.

LACEY

Look at me --

He points to his shoulder where she slashed him. His shirt is damp with blood.

LACEY

You did this --

246. Before she can speak, he slams her a blow to the side of her head with the flat of his closed fist. She is flung across the room. He advances on her as she tries, stunned, to reach her knees, trying to get away from him. She manages to rise and staggers through the door only to fall in the hall. LACEY advances on her.

247. INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY. NIGHT.

He steps up to her as she struggles to clear her head and regain her feet and backhands her. The blow sends her reeling down the hall, skidding along the wall to the landing where she falls again.

248. INT. STAIRWAY, LANDING AND PORTICO. NIGHT.

She struggles to rise as LACEY advances down the hall toward her, BRENDA and PAUL stand in the portico below, watching. LACEY grabs CHRISTIE by the throat and starts to force her over the balcony railing. She slowly loses her balance, her feet coming off the rug as he tips her up and over, back first off the railing to her doom below.

LACEY

Time to die, sweet child --

249. There is a loud knock at the front door! LACEY freezes. PAUL and BRENDA stare at the door.

PAUL

Who is it?

JOSH (O.S.)

Josh, Josh Dealey.

LACEY drags CHRISTIE back onto the landing. He jams the gun barrel against the side of her head.

LACEY

(whispering)

One word, it's your brains all over the wall --

He looks down at PAUL, hissing to him.

LACEY

Get rid of him.

PAUL points to his bleeding thigh, wrapped in a makeshift bandage, and hisses back.

249. CONTINUED:

PAUL
I can't. Not like this.

250. The knock at the door comes again, louder this time.

PAUL speaks through the door.

PAUL
What is it, Josh?

JOSH (O.S.)
I want to see Christie.

PAUL
It's the middle of the night,
for Christ's sake. Go home before
I call your father.

JOSH (O.S.)
I'm not going home till I see
Christie.

PAUL glances up at LACEY with a gesture of helplessness.

LACEY
Stall him.

LACEY drags Christie down the stairs.

PAUL
Okay, Josh. Just let me get her
out of bed.

At the foot of the stairs, LACEY presses the gun barrel
against CHRISTIE's forehead.

LACEY
Now you listen, cunt. You get rid
of him or I'll kill not only you
and your mother, but him, too.
You got it?

CHRISTIE looks into his eyes; they're totally mad.
She nods. LACEY turns to BRENDA, whispering hoarsely.

LACEY
Brenda, cover the old lady --

251. INT. HALL AND BASEMENT. NIGHT.

BRENDA hurries down the hall and throws open the basement door. KAREN, her face bloodied from being pistol whipped, stares up at her from the bottom of the basement steps. BRENDA raises her .22 and sights down the gun barrel at her. She looks at LACEY.

BRENDA
I got her covered --

252. INT. PORTICO/HALL. NIGHT.

LACEY turns to CHRISTIE.

LACEY
You understand now? She's the first to go, then you and the boy.

CHRISTIE swallows hard and nods. He shoves her into the portico, moving farther back into the shadows of the hallway. PAUL FOX disappears behind the archway into the living room. CHRISTIE walks to the front door, taking one last glance to her side down the hallway before opening it. LACEY stands there, his gun raised, aimed right at her head. CHRISTIE turns back to the door and opens it.

253. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. FRONT DOOR. NIGHT.

She stares at JOSH, hanging on the door, blocking his view so he can't see farther into the portico nor step around her.

CHRISTIE
Hi, Josh. What are you doing up at this hour?

JOSH
I had to see you.

CHRISTIE
Oh, yeah. What about?

JOSH
I called earlier and your stepfather answered. He wouldn't let you come to the phone.

CHRISTIE
So? He's an asshole.

253. CONTINUED:

JOSH steps closer, dropping his voice, whispering intently.

JOSH

What's he even doing in the house?
Didn't you show your mother that
picture of him and that woman?

CHRISTIE

Oh, yeah, I did. But Mom forgave
him.

JOSH

(shocked)
She did? Even after seeing that
picture?

CHRISTIE

You know what they say. Love is
blind.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

(in her head)
Oh, Josh, can't you see I'm lying --?

He looks at her, dressed in her street clothes. Her
eyes blaze with mute hope as she watches his suspicion
grow.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

(in her head)
Oh, he can, he can --

JOSH

(slowly)
What are you doing dressed?

She does an emotional about face, suddenly internally
switching directions.

CHRISTIE

I was still up doing some homework.

JOSH

At one in the morning? Something's
wrong, isn't it?

CHRISTIE

No, of course not --

253. CONTINUED:

JOSH

Look, I want to come in and talk
to you --

254. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. PORTICO AND HALLWAY. NIGHT.

She glances over her shoulder. She sees LACEY snap
the safety on the automatic to off. JOSH pushes
against the door.

JOSH

C'mon, let me in --

255. EXT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. FRONT DOOR. NIGHT.

In a sudden burst of fury, she pushes him out the
doorway.

CHRISTIE

Listen, you little asshole,
I'm being punished. After you
were through with me the other
night, I was bleeding all over
the place. Mom found my clothes
and I had to tell her why.

JOSH

What we did wasn't wrong. We care
about each other. Did you tell
your mother that?

CHRISTIE

I couldn't.

JOSH

Why not?

CHRISTIE

(really exploding at
him)

Because I don't care about you, you
stupid idiot. I don't even like you.
I just wanted to lose my cherry to
someone, anyone, even the garbageman.
I didn't care. Now leave me alone!

256. She slams the door in his face. He stares at it, too stunned to move as he hears the lock turn on the other side of the door.

JOSH
(to himself)
Christie --

He stares at the door long after it's been slammed. The outside porch light snaps off. He continues to stand there as the portico light inside also goes off. Finally he turns away and walks toward the street.

257. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. PORTICO AND HALLWAY. NIGHT.

PAUL FOX stands and peers through the curtain at JOSH's receding figure. LACEY, BRENDA behind him, stands in the hallway before the open door to the basement, holding CHRISTIE by the throat. He looks at PAUL by the portico window, whispering to him.

LACEY
Is he gone?

PAUL
Yeah.

LACEY shoves CHRISTIE toward the open basement door. BRENDA grabs his arm.

BRENDA
Let's kill them now and get it over with.

PAUL
Not until we clean up in here.

The hardwood floor of the portico is spotted with his and Lacey's blood.

PAUL
It's my ass. This place looks like a slaughterhouse. The cops will be suspicious.

LACEY and BRENDA exchange glances.

LACEY
Maybe he's right. If he gets busted, we don't get any money.

He heaves CHRISTIE through the basement door.

258. INT. THE BASEMENT. NIGHT.

The door slams as CHRISTIE crashes down the stairs.
KAREN crawls to her.

259. INT. CHRISTIE'S BATHROOM. NIGHT.

The room is dark, the door and window closed. We see the lethal light switch, just waiting to be turned on, and then the wall heater down to the floorboards. We see the loose coupling spewing gas, the hiss growing louder and louder with every passing second.

260. INT. BASEMENT. NIGHT.

KAREN holds CHRISTIE in her arms.

KAREN

You all right, darling?

CHRISTIE

(blinking to bring the
world back into
perspective)

Yeah, I guess --

She sees her mother's face: it is a bruised mess, caked with blood and just beginning to swell. CHRISTIE reaches out, almost touching a gash with trembling fingers before she stops.

CHRISTIE

What happened?

KAREN

I tried to stop Brenda from
turning the lights back on.

CHRISTIE

Oh, Mom --

She starts to cry. KAREN gathers her up even more close in her arms.

KAREN

It's all right, baby, it's all
right --

CHRISTIE allows herself to be comforted, her face hidden from her mother. Then slowly we hear her thoughts.

260. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

Oh, Josh, please don't believe
what I just told you, please
don't --

261. EXT. STREET BY CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

JOSH is walking away. He suddenly stops, his face hardening. He slowly turns and stares back at the house. A moment passes, then he turns and races full-out down the street toward home.

262. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. BASEMENT. NIGHT.

CHRISTIE has the circuit breaker box open. She's used her penknife to unscrew the individual circuits from their mountings in the box. They look like large, thick switches. She's pulled them out a few inches from the box exposing a wire at either end. One wire is the main lead from the street, the other the feed into the house. She's used the blade of the penknife to scrape away a good chunk of insulation from the lead of each breaker. They carry 440 volts of lethal electricity apiece. She's now at work on the last one, going at it slowly, careful to grip the pocketknife by its plastic handles, equally careful not to touch the blade against any metal part of the box. KAREN watches her tensely.

KAREN

You're going to kill yourself --

CHRISTIE

Not if I don't ground it --

She keeps scraping away insulation, exposing more and more copper wire.

KAREN

Where'd you learn this?

CHRISTIE

Shop. It's the best elective I
ever took at school. Even if all
the other girls did laugh at me.

263. Finished, she changes blades on the knife, pulling out a nub used as a screwdriver. She goes to work on the

263. CONTINUED:

water main above the circuit breaker box, prying back the coupling. It slowly begins to drip, water splatting off the top of the metal box. It almost immediately begins to work its way through a loose joint at the back of the box, running down the metal plate. KAREN hobbles to CHRISTIE's side, both of them watching as the water starts to drip off the bottom of the box to the floor. KAREN's gaze returns to the box.

KAREN

How long before it shorts out?

CHRISTIE

I don't know.

264. She closes the panel, forcing the breakers and their naked wires back into the box, pressing them against the backing which is growing increasingly wet.

CHRISTIE

But I know it'll short out and whoever touches it will die.

KAREN

What about a ground?

CHRISTIE's gaze drops to the floor. A puddle is slowly collecting at their feet. Both women stare at it.

CHRISTIE

That's the ground.

KAREN

Just like that man from the power company --

CHRISTIE

Yeah, one of them upstairs --

265. The door flies open at the top of the basement stairs. LACEY stands there, BRENDA crowding in behind him. Both carry their pistols. CHRISTIE turns quickly away, hiding the penknife.

LACEY

Ready?

266. CHRISTIE, her back to them, quickly switches blades, bringing out the longest one she can find. She turns back to look up the stairway, hiding the knife in her waistband behind her back.

CHRISTIE

Ready.

She and her mother start up the stairs.

267. INT. PORTICO AND STAIRWAY. NIGHT.

LACEY and BRENDA herd their two prisoners into the portico where PAUL waits for them.

BRENDA

Where do we kill them?

LACEY

Upstairs in their beds. C'mon --

He grabs CHRISTIE and starts to drag her upstairs. PAUL looks at KAREN.

PAUL

She's too goddamn much trouble to get upstairs with that cast on. I'll do it down here.

LACEY

What about the police?

PAUL

(shrugging)

So they'll think she heard a noise and got out of bed to investigate.

268. He takes the gun from BRENDA's hand. LACEY starts up the stairs, dragging CHRISTIE behind him. She looks back at her mother who tearfully watches her.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

(in her head)

Oh, God, please, no. Let the lights go out. Please, God, please!

Nothing happens. CHRISTIE flings herself down the stairs toward her mother, tearing free of LACEY's grasp.

CHRISTIE

Mom!

269. KAREN yanks away from BRENDA. She and CHRISTIE meet at the bottom of the stairs, grasping and holding on to each other. LACEY moves down the stairs toward CHRISTIE, PAUL crossing the portico floor toward KAREN with BRENDA's gun in his hand.

LACEY

C'mon --

He grabs CHRISTIE and tries to rip her free from her mother's embrace. PAUL tries to do the same with KAREN.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

(in her head)

Please, God, give us a chance.
The lights, the lights --

270. Her grip on her mother starts to slip. She fights to hold on, talking out loud in her desperation, expressing her inner thoughts without realizing it.

CHRISTIE

The lights, please, the lights!

PAUL

What lights?

271. He glances up suspiciously at the chandelier overhead. LACEY grips the banister with one hand for support and uses the other to really tug at CHRISTIE.

PAUL

Goddamnit, c'mon --

272. CHRISTIE comes loose from her mother, whipping the penknife out from behind her back, slams the blade down into the back of LACEY's hand, the one that grips the banister, driving it right through his palm and into the wood below. He bellows in pain, involuntarily jerking back. He slices through his entire hand, separating forefinger and index finger from the last two in a running gaping wound. He screams again in agonizing pain.

CHRISTIE

(grabbing her mother)

Mom, run!

PAUL jams his gun right into her face, freezing her.

PAUL

Where?

272. CONTINUED:

He smiles down at her and cocks the pistol. She stares into the barrel, no time left to run, no place to hide. She straightens up slowly, swept by the calm assurance she's going to die. She begins her last prayer.

CHRISTIE'S VOICE

(in her head)

Dear God, please forgive me and my mother for our sins. And let Josh know I didn't mean what I said to him --

PAUL's smile grows wider. He begins to squeeze the trigger. The lights go out! KAREN launches herself at PAUL, hitting his gun arm just as he fires. The shot goes wild. The house is totally dark now. CHRISTIE bounds up the stairs as PAUL drags himself after her, slowed down by his bad leg, but not so much so that he isn't moving quickly.

273. INT./EXT. COP CAR IN STREET OUTSIDE CHRISTIE'S HOUSE.
NIGHT.

JOSH sits next to his father, BOB, as both of them listen to the echo of the gunshot.

JOSH

You believe me now?

BOB

Yeah. Yeah, I believe you --

He reaches for his police radio.

274. INT. PORTICO AND STAIRWAY. NIGHT.

LACEY nurses his hand. He snarls at BRENDA.

LACEY

Go fix the lights in the cellar --

She disappears down the hallway. LACEY turns his gaze on KAREN, his eyes filling with a killing rage. She backs away from him, through the archway into the living room. He slowly begins to follow her, dripping blood from his terrible wound.

275. INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

KAREN hits the coffee table and, thrown off-balance by her cast, tumbles to the floor. LACEY stops above her and raises the .9 mm automatic. He aims right at her heart and begins to squeeze the trigger.

276. INT. THE BASEMENT. NIGHT.

BRENDA feels her way toward the circuit breaker box. She steps directly into the puddle of water and reaches up, grasping the front panel with her hand to open it.

277. A huge shower of blue and yellow sparks explode from the box and run the length of her body. Every limb goes rigid and trembles, her body smoking and turning black as she screams her death rattle, her hair frizzing, her clothes beginning to smoke, her perfect complexion turning to charcoal.

278. INT. THE LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

LACEY whirls away from KAREN, just before he pulls the trigger, transfixed by BRENDA's scream. He yells in the direction of the basement door.

LACEY

Brenda?

No answer.

LACEY

Brenda!!

He dashes into the portico, leaving KAREN behind, alive and forgotten.

279. EXT. THE HOUSE. FRONT DOOR. NIGHT.

BOB throws his body against the door. It won't give. He turns to his son.

BOB

C'mon --

They race around to the side of the house toward the back. The gathering wail of police sirens is heard in the distance, setting every dog in the neighborhood to barking.

280. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

PAUL hobbles into the dark room, holding his gun ready. He gazes around. The room seems empty. His eyes fall on the bed. He painfully walks toward it, his gun pointing at the mattress.

PAUL

I know you're under there.
Come on out.

Nothing. He takes another step toward the bed.

PAUL

Okay, make me stoop. But it's
the last thing I'm ever going
to do for you.

281. He starts to bend, painful for him with his wounded leg. He suddenly hears a faint hissing from behind him, and turns to stare at the closed door to the bathroom. He smiles.

PAUL

Ah, that's where you are --

282. He limps toward the door. From under the bed where she is hiding, CHRISTIE sees his legs as he gets closer to the bathroom door. He reaches for the doorknob, expecting it to be locked. It turns easily in his hand. Under the bed, CHRISTIE draws back, curling up in a ball, putting her arms around her head for protection, knowing what's about to happen.

283. INT. CHRISTIE'S BATHROOM. NIGHT.

PAUL whips the door open, his gun ready. He steps into the room flicking on the light switch.

284. There is just a split second where his face is illuminated in the blue flash of the electrical spark, just a second where it can be seen he realizes he's walked into his own deathtrap.

285. Then the gas-filled room goes up in a blinding flash of fire.

286. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

The explosion blows PAUL and most of the interior wall of the bathroom across the bedroom, destroying everything, in a flash of fire. He smashes into the wall spread-

286. CONTINUED:

eagle to the side of Christie's bed, leaving a two-foot impression in the plaster and a great deal of blood behind as he slips to the floor, a dead sack of broken bone and ruptured organs. The bathroom is gone, the bedroom already a mass of flickering flames, spreading rapidly.

287. EXT. BACK OF CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

JOSH and his father pick themselves up off the grass where the concussion knocked them. They stare up at the second story where Christie's room was, the ground around them littered with debris. There's no exterior wall left to her room, a large portion of the second-story wall and roof gone. Flame is licking out of Christie's room and across the shake roof. BOB stares at the ruin in horrified amazement.

BOB

Jesus --!

JOSH comes out of his shock, realizes whose room it is that he's just seen destroyed, and flies for the French doors into the living room.

JOSH

Christie!

288. INT. CHRISTIE'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

JOSH hurtles through the glass door, he stumbles to his hands and knees, leaping back to his feet, and racing into the portico.

289. INT. PORTICO AND STAIRWAY. NIGHT.

He dashes up the stairs, screaming her name.

JOSH

Christie!

290. INT. THE BASEMENT. NIGHT.

LACEY sits with BRENDA's charred body in his arms. He's been weeping in the dark, but the sound of JOSH calling and the police cars pulling to a halt outside the house make him look up at the ceiling above. Just behind him can be seen the door to the storm doors and the outside.

291. INT. CHRISTIE'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

JOSH fights his way through the flames and destruction into the bedroom. One wall is completely gone, two others aflame, the fire racing rapidly across the ceiling. He calls her name, prevented from searching what was once called the bathroom by the rapidly growing flames and heat.

JOSH

Christie!

(nothing)

Christie!

He hears her groan from underneath what's left of her bed. He tears the mattress away and half the box spring, finding her semi-conscious on the floor underneath. He half-drags her, half-carries her toward the door and safety.

292. INT. PORTICO AND STAIRWAY. NIGHT.

The front door is battered down and COPS, followed by FIRE FIGHTERS, spill into the portico and spread throughout the house. JOSH comes down the stairs, supporting CHRISTIE around the waist. As they reach the bottom, she manages to just mumble.

CHRISTIE

Mom?

BOB is helping KAREN into the portico from the living room.

BOB

Right here.

Mother and daughter embrace.

293. EXT. JOSH'S HOUSE. DAY.

Dawn is just breaking, washing the modest house with clean, hard light. Karen's Datsun Maxima is the only car in the drive.

294. INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM. DAY.

CHRISTIE lies in bed, her mother sitting by her side, dressed to leave.

294. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE
(caught mid-sentence)
-- but why do you have to go?

KAREN
Bob Dealey wants me to go through
the remains of our house with him.

CHRISTIE
He's still looking for Lacey
Bohle, isn't he? That's why
you're going back, to make sure
he's dead.

KAREN
Don't say things like that,
Christie.

She hobbles for the door on her crutches.

CHRISTIE
Mom -- I want to know he's dead
just as bad as you do.

Their eyes meet; they understand each other. KAREN
nods.

KAREN
I'll send Josh back to keep you
company.

295. KAREN lets herself out of the room, closing the door
behind her. CHRISTIE turns to look out the window.
There's a bluejay sitting on a branch, singing in
the growing sunlight. She smiles.

296. EXT. JOSH'S HOUSE. DAY.

KAREN comes out the back door, gets in her car, pulls
out into the street, and drives away. A few moments
pass. A MAN's form steps into view, just one side of
his body visible. Blood drips from a terrible wound
in his hand. He starts to walk toward the unprotected
house.

297. INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM. DAY.

CHRISTIE turns over in bed, seeking sleep. Somewhere
below on the first floor, a door faintly closes. Her
eyes snap open. She waits, listening. Nothing. Her

297. CONTINUED:

eyes begin to droop. A floorboard creaks in the outside hall. Her eyes snap open and she sits up in bed, completely awake, staring at the closed door to her room.

CHRISTIE

Mom?

No answer.

CHRISTIE

Josh?

She stares at the door, her fear growing.

298. INT. JOSH'S HOUSE. SECOND-FLOOR HALL. DAY.

LACEY picks up a large ornamental candlestick from a table. He hefts it in his good hand. He smiles and takes another step toward the closed door to Christie's room.

299. INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM. DAY.

She cowers away from the door. She knows someone is out there.

CHRISTIE

Josh?

(her hysteria growing)

Josh, is that you?

She hears the front door slam and footsteps coming up the stairs.

300. INT. JOSH'S HOUSE. SECOND-FLOOR HALLWAY. DAY.

LACEY stops a step away from her door, hearing someone coming up the stairs. He ducks into a room across the hall just as JOSH hits the landing.

JOSH

Hey, Christie, what're you yelling about?

301. INT. JOSH'S BEDROOM. DAY.

He enters and closes the door. CHRISTIE flies into his arms.

301. CONTINUED:

CHRISTIE

Oh, Josh, I was so scared --

He holds her close, stroking her hair.

JOSH

About what?

CHRISTIE

I thought you were Lacey, coming back to get me.

JOSH

Don't be dumb. He's a million miles away by now.

She looks up, renewed fear all over her face.

CHRISTIE

Then he did escape? He's crazy.

JOSH

Don't worry. They'll catch him.

302. He kisses her, his kiss deepening. She resists, finally pushing him away so she can look up at him, her eyes still flooded with fear. He kisses her again, holding her close until her fear begins to melt. She softens in his arms, meeting him with her body. They twirl toward the bed. They fall back onto bed. JOSH stares deeply into her eyes, and whispers:

JOSH

You know something. I really do care about you --

CHRISTIE smiles, her eyes suffused with love, her lips meeting his in a kiss that seems like it must last forever. A bright red drop of blood drops onto the white pillowcase an inch from her eyes. She glances up to see LACEY, but before she can scream, the candlestick smashes JOSH across the back of the neck. He goes limp on top of her, unconscious, pinning her to the bed beneath him. CHRISTIE, helpless now, looks up into LACEY's grinning face.

LACEY

Crazy, huh?

He rips JOSH's body off her, almost laughing at her terror as she scrambles across the bed away from him.

302. CONTINUED:

LACEY

This is for Brenda --

303. He reaches for her just as her hand disappears beneath the pillow. He grabs her by the hair, raising the candlestick to brain her, and jerks her toward him. She comes off the bed at him, surprising him, pulling a huge butcher knife out from under the pillow and bringing it along with her.
304. Before he can do more than see it flash in the early morning sun, she jams the blade into his belly, forcing him off the bed and across the floor, ramming him into a wall, not letting go until she's sure she's driven the blade right up to the hilt in his body. Only then does she step back.
305. LACEY clasps the knife handle in his hands, life draining slowly out of his face and eyes. He twists away from the wall like a broken corkscrew and collapses on the floor, dead.
306. JOSH slowly regains consciousness behind CHRISTIE on the bed. He raises his head to stare at the body, the blade protruding from the stomach. He turns his gaze on her.

JOSH

How did you know?

CHRISTIE

I just knew. You see, I've learned something about love --

JOSH takes her in his arms and holds her close from behind. Her eyes, desolate, never leave the body.

THE END