

T H E J U R O R

screenplay by

TED TALLY

based on the novel by

GEORGE DAWES GREEN

THIS MATERIAL IS THE PROPERTY OF COLUMBIA
PICTURES, A UNIT OF COLUMBIA PICTURES ENTER-
TAINMENT INC. ("COLUMBIA") AND IS INTENDED AND
RESTRICTED SOLELY FOR COLUMBIA'S USE BY COL-
UMBIA PERSONNEL. DISTRIBUTION OR DISCLOSURE
OF THE MATERIAL TO UNAUTHORIZED PERSONS, OR
THE SALE, COPYING OR REPRODUCTION OF THIS
MATERIAL IN ANY FORM, IS PROHIBITED.

Second Draft
3/18/95

RECEIVED
MAR 21 1995
COLUMBIA STORY DEPT.

1 INT. WESTCHESTER COUNTY COURTROOM - DAY

1

BEGIN TITLES as we see the face of Justice herself, a pre-Raphaelite warrior-goddess with a silken blindfold. Her skin is cracked and stained; paint has flaked from her sword, her dangling scales. Behind her, dark storm clouds, streaks of lightning. PAN SLOWLY DOWN her gowned figure to the happy pink cherubs gamboling by her right foot, the massive serpent writhing beneath her left. At the bottom of this huge mural we LINGER for a moment on a gilt legend: "LET JUSTICE BE DONE THOUGH THE HEAVENS FALL."

FADE IN the sounds of a crowded echoey room - MURMURS, COUGHS, SHUFFLING FEET - and a woman's amplified VOICE.

ANNIE (V.O.)
I'm a single mother. And I'm trying
to be a sculptor...?

INTERRUPT TITLES, as we CUT TO:

A CLOSE SHOT of a woman's face: ANNIE LAIRD, early 30s. Big bright eyes, alive with intelligence and curiosity. An un-studied, affecting beauty, though just now she's under some strain. She seems to speak directly to us.

ANNIE
I have a - well, just a job all day,
and when I get home I take care of my
son. At night with whatever time I've
got left I work on my pieces... I feel
ignorant saying I don't keep up with
the news, but that's just how it is.
It's tough to find any free time.

REVERSE ANGLE - HER POV - as JUDGE WIETZEL - 60s, pale, a flabby complacency - leans in from his bench.

WIETZEL
Ma'am, are you saying you've heard
nothing about this case?

WIDER ANGLE REVEALS a crowded, hushed, courtroom, with the electricity of a big media event. Faded allegorical murals on each wall. Annie is sitting in the witness stand with a numbered sticker ("224") on her blouse. Self-conscious, un-used to the spotlight. A microphone is in front of her.

ANNIE
Well, no, Your Honor. I have heard...
something.

WIETZEL
And would you share that with us?

ANNIE

When I told my son I might be picked for jury duty, he said, "Hey, Mom, maybe you'll get on that big Mafia case."

ANNIE

You know, Louie Boffano - they're gonna try him for popping those guys."

A murmur of LAUGHTER from the spectators' gallery; Annie looks out uncertainly. Judge Wietzel listens patiently.

ANNIE

My son said "popping" somebody means killing them. So I said, "I know that, but who is Louie Boffano...?"

At the defense table, BOFFANO himself watches with a calm smirk. 50s, handsome florid face, silk suit. Beyond him is SAM BOZEMAN, his chief counsel, and TWO ASSOCIATES.

ANNIE

And my son said, "Mo-on, come on. He's the big Spaghetti-O."

More LAUGHTER, O.S., a great building wave of it, from the assembled LAWYERS, MEDIA TYPES, the throng of TRIAL BUFFS. Annie looks out at them, a bit embarrassed.

At the defense table, anxious glances at Boffano, who throws his head back, roars with enjoyment, making a big show of it. His lawyers quickly join in.

Midway back in the gallery, one man is not smiling. EDDIE MARCO, early 40s: burly figure, shrewd quick eyes. He studies Annie, unblinking...

Her innocent, slightly smiling gaze is still drifting about the room: My son is clever, isn't he? As the laughter dies down, Wietzel can't resist a twitch of a smile himself.

WIETZEL

People, please. This is not the Comedy Channel.

He turns back to Annie, charmed by her, even attracted.

WIETZEL

Do you think what your son told you might influence your verdict in this case?

ANNIE

My son is twelve years old, Your Honor.

Eddie takes this in. Flicks his eyes at...

The prosecutor's table, where MICHAEL GLEASON, the D.A. - late 30s, lean, intense, balding - studies Annie closely. Now he murmurs something to one of his ASSISTANTS, who nods, with a quick approving glance at Annie, then jots a note.

WIETZEL

The court is well aware that a trial of this nature can be burdensome for many jurors. You've told us you're a single mother, that your economic situation is somewhat strained. That's enough for me. If you say it would pre-sent a grave hardship for you to serve on this jury - I'll excuse you.

ANNIE

If I did serve, would, um - would I be safe?

WIETZEL

(surprised, frowns)

Perfectly safe. No one will know your name, or where you live. I won't even know your name. But in the unlikely event that anyone ever should approach you, seek to intimidate you in any way, you have only to say a word to me, in my chambers, and that person will be prose-cuted to the fullest extent of the law.

Annie looks down, considering this. A beat.

ANNIE

I'm always nagging my son about accepting responsibility. You know? I try to set an example for him...

WIETZEL

So you would be willing to serve?

ANNIE

Yes, I guess I would... Yes sir.

Wietzel is a bit surprised. He smiles indulgently.

WIETZEL

Well, then. I commend you, young lady

WIETZEL

for your good citizenship, and ask that you return tomorrow for examination by the defense. Thank you, you're excused for now.

He taps his GAVEL. As the spectators shift, rise, or resume their MURMURING, Louie Boffano turns his head, just for an instant, to glance at someone at the back of the gallery.

He gives an almost imperceptible shrug: This one, maybe? Check her out.

Eddie, seeing this, turns to follow Boffano's glance...

On an aisle near the doors, in the back row, we catch a partial glimpse of the shadowy face of another MAN, his cheek propped against his fist. Gold Rolex on his left wrist.

He straightens his index finger, resting it beside his temple, in a signal that Boffano's message is understood. Eddie looks back at...

Annie, who has risen from the witness chair. She seems exhausted, confused about which way to go. A BAILIFF beckons and she follows him, a little unsteadily. On her way out she pauses for a moment, looking at...

The empty jury box, with its twelve blank seats. It looks ominous, somehow, unsettling - like some walled outpost awaiting its garrison.

Finally Annie turns, follows the bailiff out a side door.

Eddie is still watching her, and on his brutal slab of a face is something very like pity.

At the back of the gallery, where Gold Rolex was sitting, there is now an empty space...

MAIN TITLES RESUME - and CONTINUE OVER the following...

2 EXT. ROAD - DAY - HELICOPTER SHOT

2

Annie drives home from courthouse.

3 INT. ANNIE'S SUBARU - DRIVING - DAY

3

Annie, at the wheel of her car, glances at her watch. She frowns; she's late. White clapboard houses drift by, huge old sycamores: a small town neighborhood. Springtime.

4 INT. EDDIE'S BUICK - DRIVING - DAY

4

POV ANGLE following Annie's old green car; we can see her back bumper and license plate...

Eddie, behind his steering wheel, lifts up a cellular phone, reading off her license number.

EDDIE

JXA-385.

5 EXT. MRS. KOLODNY'S HOUSE - DAY

5

POV ANGLE, DISTANT - Annie and her son OLIVER emerge onto a wide veranda, followed out by MRS. KOLODNY, 60s. As Annie pauses to give her some money, Oliver - 12, newly tall, but still sweetly, achingly boyish - hiphops down her steps to the car, swinging his backpack.

MAN'S VOICE

(on car phone)

That's registered under the name
"Annie Laird." Address: 48 Seminary
Lane, Pharoah, New York.

EDDIE (O.S.)

Thanks, paisan. We owe you.

6 INT. ANNIE'S CAR - IDLING, THEN DRIVING - DAY

6

As Annie gets into her car, buckles her seatbelt, Oliver, already seated, is opening a piece of Booger bubble gum.

ANNIE

Hey, guess what? You were a star
today.

OLIVER

Yeah, right. No doubt.

He tosses up the wad of gum, catches it neatly in his
mouth.

ANNIE

Really. The star of county court. I
told them my son called Louie Boffano
"the big Spaghetti-O" and that got a
big laugh.

OLIVER

Wow. You're really on that case?

ANNIE

That's the one. If they take me.

7 INT. EDDIE'S BUICK - DRIVING - DAY

7

Watching Annie's car back down the driveway, then
straighten and accelerate, Eddie pulls out after her. He's
got a street map open in his steering hand. He lifts a
walkie-talkie.

EDDIE

(on walkie-talkie)

She picked up her kid from, it looks like some old broad of a babysitter.

EDDIE

Now we're headed west on Ratner. I make it... away from her own house, and towards you.

8 EXT. RESIDENTIAL SIDE STREET - DAY

8

A dark van is parked behind a thick screen of hemlocks. It's panels read "WESTCHESTER POWER & LIGHT," with an official-looking seal. A shadowy figure sits behind the wheel.

THE TEACHER (V.O.)

She's an artist, Eddie...

9 INT. THE VAN - DAY - PIERMONT OR SOUTH SALEM

9

CLOSE ON the familiar gold Rolex, as a male hand reaches to lower the dashboard CD player's volume: HENRYK GORECKI'S 3RD SYMPHONY is playing. Again the voice - very soft, almost a whisper - of the man we'll know as THE TEACHER.

THE TEACHER (O.S.)

Sensitive. Intuitive. They notice things.

EDDIE'S VOICE

Not me she won't.

10 INT. ANNIE'S SUBARU - DRIVING - DAY

10

Oliver fidgets, excited, as they pass more houses, a park.

OLIVER

Oh, man. I can't believe you're on the Louie Boffano trial. Wait'll Jesse hears this.

ANNIE

No! You're not to tell your friends. Or anybody else. I shouldn't have told you. Listen, Oliver, this is a big secret I'm on this jury. I have to be completely anonymous - you know what that means?

OLIVER

Sure. It means they won't put your picture in the newspapers.

OLIVER

But that won't stop Louie Boffano. If he wants to find you -

He points a finger gun at her, then pops a big bubble.

ANNIE

Oh stop it. This is serious...

She looks over at him for a moment, very soberly.

ANNIE (COND'T)

You know, it wasn't just the old god-father that got killed. They shot his grandson, too. Fourteen years old... I guess I was thinking about you. I guess I thought it was my duty.

OLIVER

Sure.

ANNIE

You see what I'm saying?

OLIVER

Sure, Momba.

He's grinning at her. He knows her very well. She sighs.

ANNIE

OK. And maybe I'm a little worn out with my everyday grind. I thought this might be something different. Exciting.

(She smiles, a little cocky)

Pretty radical, huh?

OLIVER

No doubt.

11 EXT. ANNIE'S HOUSE - DAY

11

The Power & Light van comes slowly down a narrow blacktop, bordered by woods, and pauses for a moment as it reaches a rusty mailbox, on the left, that says "#48/LAIRD." Beside this a weedy, rutted drive leads back towards the house...

POV ANGLE - a two-story wooden bungalow, flaking paint, agently sagging screen porch.

Beyond this an old barn. Many trees and overgrown shrubs surround the place; glimmer of a lake in the distance. No neighbors in sight. No signs of life in the house.

END MAIN TITLES, as we CUT TO:

12 EXT. PARKING LOT - MOVING ANGLE - DAY

12

Annie and Oliver, with his backpack, get out of the Subaru and walk towards a run-down former church, now taken over by offices.

A sign in front reads "Devotional Services, Inc." A dozen other cars are in the gravel parking lot.

ANNIE

I'll need your help, Ols. When the tv's on, we'll have to be careful I don't see anything about the trial. And any-thing in the Reporter Dispatch? You'll have to cut that out so I don't see it.

OLIVER

But you never read the paper anyway. You just use it to wrap stuff.

ANNIE

Just in case. And when the trial's over and we start to deliberate? I'll be se-questered. Means I'll have to stay in a motel. And you'll have to sleep over at Mrs. Kolodny's house.

OLIVER

(alarmed)

Mrs. Kolodny? Mom, she's got a mustache.

ANNIE

You're just jealous.

13 INT. EDDIE'S BUICK - IDLING - DAY

13

POV ANGLE on Annie and Oliver, entering the building.

EDDIE

(on walkie-talkie)

OK, they're goin inna building... "Devotional Services, Ink." Hey, if she's tight with God, she might get weird on us. Y'know? Play hero.

14 EXT/INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH, THEN HALL - DAY

14

CLOSE ON another walkie-talkie, held close to the Teacher's ear in his black-gloved hand. His voice is gentle, calm.

THE TEACHER (O.S.)

She's at work, Eddie. Like us.

The walkie-talkie is dropped into an open doctor's bag, next to a silenced Ruger .22 automatic. Then the gloved hands locate a silver "pick gun," lift it into position, and use it to force open Annie's front door. A soft CLICK; it swings open.

WE FOLLOW the Teacher in, looking past his shoulder...

15 INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE - VARIOUS - DAY

15

POV ANGLE, MOVING - a cheerful cozy jumble: worn furniture, potted plants, throw rugs. Artsy-craftsy. A pair of bikes, male and female, lean against a wall, and there's a lacrosse stick and mask propped in a corner.

IN BRIEF MONTAGE, the Teacher's BLACK-GLOVED HANDS open bureau drawers... Tuck a Hastings 3600 mike into an open electrical socket... Gently replace a wall phone in its cradle, then run a DAK page scanner across a thumbtacked, handwritten list of phone numbers, methodically soaking them into memory...

Finally the hands scan an array on Annie's desk - cancelled checks, letters, datebook - before pausing. One of the hands picks up a small carving from the desk top, turning it curiously, appreciatively...

CLOSE ON the carving: a wooden, female SANTOS FIGURE; her features are Mayan, though her blue gown and halo are more traditionally Christian. Her right palm turns upwards, "boon-bestowing," while her left turns down, "evil-rejecting." She's powerful, a bit unsettling, not at all a cosy, Sunday-school sort of image.

16 INT. DEVOTIONAL SERVICES, INC. - DAY

16

In a drab office, carved out of a larger space with makeshift partitions, Annie sits at a computer, processing mail orders from a stack of envelopes.

In the b.g., OTHER WOMEN, lost in the same drudgery. Her typing is practiced, mechanical. Oliver sprawls nearby on a ratty couch. A textbook is open on his chest; he seems absorbed in it. She doesn't even look up as she says -

ANNIE

Oliver. Math. Now.

Oliver sighs dramatically, then removes the Gameboy he had concealed within his book.

17 INT. ANNIE'S BARN/STUDIO - DAY

17

The black-gloved hands open the rough wood doors of Annie's studio; late-afternoon sunlight streams in.

The elongated shadow of the Teacher falls across the planks of the floor, over a bedlam of tools, thrift-shop odds and ends and onto Annie's sculptures themselves...

POV ANGLE, MOVING - as we see her works-in-progress: wooden crates, on the floor, on work tables. Some are open, empty, others have complex constructions started inside them.

The finished, or nearly-finished, pieces have blank, sealed tops, fronts, and sides, and are mounted vertically on the wall, about chest-high. The wood has been stained, then lacquered. Beneath each of these crates is a brief, coquettish skirt. Above each, a hand-lettered title placard: "A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR"... "ALZHEIMER'S: FOR MOM"... One bears a newspaper headline: "CARDINAL ASSERTS: GOD IS MALE."

THE TEACHER'S POV pauses before this last sculpture, considering its title...

18 INT. DEVOTIONAL SERVICES, INC. - DAY

18

POV ANGLE on a framed poster: a pompadoured, hyper-enthusiastic man in purple minister's robes - Rev. Calvin Mungo - brandishing a Bible in one hand, a microphone in the other. The text advertises a dual-cassette album, Knockin' Satan WAYYY Back!, available ONLY by mail-order (\$29.95).

Annie, who has paused to stare at this, sighs, goes back to her dreary typing...

19 INT. ANNIE'S STUDIO - DAY

19

CLOSE ANGLE - as the Teacher removes one of his black gloves. Then his bare fingers - long, elegant - reach to touch the smooth wooden front of the sculpture box. They glide down the front of the skirt, hesitate at the hem, then sidle up beneath it...

INSIDE THE CRATE - VERY CLOSE - his fingers encounter a pair of huge, hairy coconuts, dangling in a sack of thin mesh. His touch sends these swaying, CLACKING together...

CLOSE ON the Teacher's lips, as he smiles...

20 INT. DEVOTIONAL SERVICES, INC. - DAY

20

Annie is shutting down her computer as her boss, MR. SLIVEY - 50s, bad comb-over, hovers over her petulantly, holding a tray piled high with bundles of unopened envelopes.

MR. SLIVEY
Jury duty? I thought I told you to
 claim hardship.

ANNIE

Sorry. Gotta run. C'mon, Ols.

MR. SLIVEY

Goddammit, I'm tryin to run a business here!

ANNIE

Praise the Lord, Mr. Slivey.

21 INT. EDDIE'S BUICK - DAY

21

POV ANGLE as Annie and Oliver emerge from the building, start towards the Subaru. The boy says something funny; she laughs, slips her arm over his shoulder. Best buddies.

Eddie gives a tiny, almost rueful shake of his head. He starts his engine, lifting his walkie-talkie again.

EDDIE

(on walkie-talkie)

She's gettin inna car, with her kid...

He watches the Subaru head out of the lot, then turn.

EDDIE

Fuck. She's comin your way.

22 INT. ANNIE'S STUDIO - DAY

22

CLOSE ON the Teacher's walkie-talkie, tucked between his shoulder and ear. His voice remains soft, eerily calm.

THE TEACHER (O.S.)

Eddie? What do you think of her?

INTERCUTTING -

as Eddie seems surprised at the question. Uneasy. He puts his car in gear, following the Subaru out of the lot.

EDDIE

What d'you mean, whatta I think a her?
I don't think nothin of her.

THE TEACHER (O.S.)

You don't find her sexy?

EDDIE

Come on. She's a fuckin mommy.

CLOSE ON the Teacher's hands, now gloved again, as they attach a Lartel microphone under the corner of a work bench.

THE TEACHER (O.S.)
I think she's sexy. And also
brilliant. She makes sculptures you
can't see. That you can only feel.

EDDIE
Yeah? Hot shit. You wanna get outta
there? She's comin pretty fast now.

THE TEACHER (O.S.)
Not yet. I want to see her again.

EDDIE
Hey, c'mon. That's not the - Hey.

But the Teacher's gloved hand is dropping his walkie-talkie
into his bag, next to the gun.

23 INT. ANNIE'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

23

There's an oldie on the radio ("Mustang Sally") and Annie
and Oliver sing along, with more enthusiasm than skill...

24 INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE - OLIVER'S BEDROOM - DAY

24

On a shelf is a framed photo: Oliver and a short, dark, at-
tractive woman (DR. JULIET MORSE, mid 30s). They're
grinning by a lake, holding up a tiny fish. The Teacher's
gloved hand comes INTO FRAME, scans this photo...

25 INT. EDDIE'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

25

Eddie tops a rise, sees the Subaru 100 yards in front of
him, just turning into Seminary Lane. He grabs his walkie-
talkie, his voice thick with tension.

EDDIE
(on walkie-talkie)
They're slowin down... turnin now...
Fuck, is that their driveway? It is.
Get outta there, now. You hear me?

26 INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

26

CLOSE ON another framed photo: a longhaired, grinning wild-
man (MICKEY ALVARADO, late 30s), posing in the plaza of a
village with a gaggle of half-naked Indian kids. In the
b.g., tropical foliage, a whitewashed church. The
Teacher's hand comes INTO FRAME, scans this photo...

- 27 EXT. ANNIE HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY 27
- With their car parked in the yard, Annie and Oliver - still singing their song, a capella now - are climbing their front steps, reaching for the screen door...
- 28 INT. EDDIE'S CAR - DAY 28
- Eddie rocks to a halt by Annie's mailbox, staring towards the porch. Sees Annie and Oliver disappearing into their house. A flash of real fear now. Helplessness...
- EDDIE
(on walkie-talkie)
For chrissakes, get out. Get out the
back door. They're in the house...
- 29 INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY 29
- CLOSE ON a framed photo of Annie, standing next to one of her sculptures. Artsy crowd behind her; evidently a gallery opening. The Teacher's gloved hand scans this photo, too. There is a creepy sexuality in the way he caresses her face and body, possessing them...
- 30 INT. FRONT HALLWAY - DAY 30
- Annie and Oliver come down the dark center hallway towards the back of the house, still humming. She drops her pocket-book and car keys on a hall table; he slings his backpack onto a couch. Annie continues on towards the kitchen, Oliver detours into a bathroom, and a split-second later the Teacher looms suddenly into the hallway behind them, emerging from the staircase. He stands sillouetted in the shadows - we can't see his features - staring after Annie for a long mo-moment. Then he turns silently and with astonishing composure walks away from her down the hall and out the front door...
- 31 EXT. EDDIE'S CAR - DAY 31
- Eddie watches the Teacher's dark figure cross the yard and head down the road, towards the distant Power & Light van, parked by a phone pole. He breathes a deep sigh of relief, mingled with disapproval.
- SOUND UPCUT - LAUGHTER, electronic BEEPS and PINGS...
- 32 INT. OLIVER'S ROOM - NIGHT 32
- MOVING ANGLE, CIRCLING SLOWLY around Annie, who sits in the aquarium glow of a computer, with Oliver's game controls. He's at her side, working on a bowl of ice cream.

We catch a glimpse of the screen over her shoulder - a castle dungeon, a muscular blond hero battling trolls - as Annie shrieks.

ANNIE

Aggh! There's another one! What do I do?

OLIVER

Use their own powers against them, Mom.

ANNIE

What powers? Where? What do I, they're coming!

OLIVER

This button, here. No, this one! They're so aggressive, they walk right into it.

33 EXT. A STONE COTTAGE - PHAROAH - NIGHT

33

A simple one-story house, only a few miles from Annie's. Isolated, nearly absorbed into its surrounding woods. A "SOLD" sign in front. One window is lit in the attic.

OLIVER (V.O.)

Now get the other one, Mom! Get him! Get him! Yes!

ANNIE (V.O.)

YESSS!

34 INT. STONE COTTAGE - ATTIC - NIGHT

34

CLOSE ON a stack of hi-tech equipment: reel-to-reel tape-decks, radio receivers, speakers. Each channel on the receivers is labelled: "KITCHEN. LIVING RM. ANNIE'S BR..."

ANNIE (V.O.)

They're dead? You're sure? I really did it?

OLIVER (V.O.)

Chill out, Momba. Those guys are toast.

ANNIE (V.O.)

(another shriek)

Oh my GOD! What's that?

OLIVER (V.O.)

That's a spider, Mom. No sweat. It's only a Death-Spider.

The Teacher's hand reaches INTO FRAME, flips OFF the switch labelled "OLIVER'S BR." A moving tape reel stops.

THE TEACHER (O.S.)

No, I don't like the accountant. Or the postal worker... I know that, but tell Louie he's wrong. Tell him, it has to be done my way, and this is the one I want. "Annie Laird."

CLOSE ON the Teacher's other hand as it switches OFF a cellular phone, then sets it down. His fingers rest lightly on it for a moment.

THE TEACHER (O.S.)

(softly)

She's my girl...

35 EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - DAY

35

Annie, lugging a wrapped sculpture, steps cautiously over a lumpy Soho sidewalk. NOISY taxis and trucks in the b.g., other PEDESTRIANS. Maneuvering one hand free, she opens a glass door and enters a building.

Lettering on the door reads "GAZARRAGA GALLERY."

36 INT. GAZARRAGA GALLERY - DAY

36

A sign announces the current show - "HERMETIC VISIONS" - and in the b.g. we can see, among other works, three of Annie's "Grove Boxes" along one wall. Annie nods to LAINIE, the as-sistant at the reception desk, as she wearily sets down her heavy bundle. Lainie smiles, indicating a direction.

LAINIE

Hey Annie. Check it out.

Annie looks towards her exhibited sculptures...

On the wall by each label... one after another, bing bing bing... are fat red sticker dots, indicating sales.

As Annie is still reacting, amazed, we hear a raspy voice.

INEZ (V.O.)

His name is Mark Cordell...

37 INT. INEZ'S OFFICE - DAY

37

INEZ GAZARRAGA, 60s, is a huge woman in a caftan. She sits at her desk, smoking, while Annie ignores a cup of tea.

INEZ

He came in yesterday, we talked. This guy knows his shit. He collects Marden, Cindy Sherman. Buys for himself, and also for friends. And now, kiddo, he buys you.

ANNIE

I don't understand. Is he a dealer or what? What does he do for a living?

INEZ

Hel-lo? Am I talking here? I've just sold three of your sculptures to a power. And he's dying to meet you.

ANNIE

Inez, I'm ecstatic. It's just, I'd like to know where my pieces are going.

INEZ

Sweetcheeks, no offense, but up until now they haven't exactly been going anywhere. Hmm? I asked him, he gave me a runaround. He gave me vague.

ANNIE

And that was OK? That was good enough for you?

INEZ

Well, that plus a check for twenty-four thousand dollars.

Taking a slip of paper from her drawer, she extends it.

INEZ

Half of which, my angel, is yours.

Annie takes the check, staring at it. She has never held this much money in her whole life. She looks up at Inez, almost lightheaded. Inez beams back at her.

38 EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

38

Annie emerges from the gallery, still in a state of dizzy happiness. As she starts away, a man's voice stops her.

MAN'S VOICE

Annie Laird?

She turns. A MAN is just turning away from a cab, which drives on. Handsome, early 40s. Pale eyes, longish hair, great cheekbones.

MAN

It is you, isn't it...? Inez said you might be here this morning, so I took a chance. I'm so glad I caught you.

Annie looks at him quizzically. He offers his hand. He has a charming, lopsided smile. He wears a Hugo Boss suit.

MAN

Sorry. Mark Cordell. I, ah - I just bought a few of your pieces.

Annie is surprised, happy. This hunk is my new patron?

ANNIE

Oh yeah, I have a, a check in my purse. Thanks. Thanks so much.

CORDELL

Inez showed me your picture. In the catalogue. It doesn't do you justice.
(beat)

Listen, this is - gosh. Spur of the moment, but - I'd really love to talk to you. Would you have time for lunch? On me?

Annie is surprised. To cover it she glances at her watch.

ANNIE

It's eleven-thirty. I have to be up-state by two. I have jury duty.

He groans sympathetically, then smiles again.

CORDELL

Half an hour? I know a great place.

39 EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY

39

In a vine-trellised courtyard, Annie and Cordell are well along in their elegant lunch. In the b.g., other DINERS fill the dozen or so tables; WAITERS slip quietly about.

CORDELL

We're in, let's say, Japan... Where a wealthy industrialist - call him Mr. Kawamoto - has become indebted to a Mr. Okita. Never mind how.

Annie nods. A beautiful spray of orchids rests between them.

CORDELL

Mr. Okita is a yakuza. A gangster. But by no means a mere thug. He's a graceful man, he's cultivated.

He dabs his lips with his napkin. She listens curiously.

CORDELL

So. How can Mr. Kawamoto discharge his debt to this man? This yakuza. Not with cash, of course, that would eventually draw the attention of the authorities. So instead he gives Mr. Okita a work of art. Perhaps a small sculpture by a New York artist.

Annie pauses in her eating. Smiles uncertainly. He shrugs.

CORDELL

Not valued too dearly. Perhaps half a million yen. Five thousand dollars. But it's the thoughtfulness of this gift that touches Mr. Okita.

He takes a precise sip of his wine, sets down his glass.

CORDELL

Time passes. Two years? And, as luck would have it, the artist's reputation grows. And so one day Mr. Kawamoto buys back the same sculpture, paying twenty million yen, which he writes off as a business expense. Now everybody's happy.

ANNIE

And what about the sculpture? What do they do with that - throw it out?

CORDELL

Why should they? It's worth two hundred thousand dollars.

ANNIE

But not really.

CORDELL

But it is. Really. By then, it is.

A WAITRESS has appeared, starting to remove their plates, but Cordell raises his hand just slightly, glancing at her.

CORDELL

Is it - Lisa? Not now. Please?

The waitress, a pretty young blonde with a diamond above her nostril, blushes a little.

WAITRESS

Sorry, Mr. Cordell.

He bestows on her his most charming smile: No problem. As she moves off, Annie still seems wary.

CORDELL

It's important that you understand this. What I send over to Japan, or to Europe, is the best art in the world. The most daring, most moving, the most original.

CORDELL

By artists who have everything going for them except some notion of how to further a career. That's what I do. Your job is just to stay in your studio and make your boxes.

ANNIE

(irritated)

My job? Gosh, it's so nice to know I'm still involved. Listen, I already have a dealer. And I'm really not much into -

CORDELL

Sleazy patrons...? "Sorry, Duke," says Raphael, "but you're corrupt and you boil your enemies in oil, so I'll just go slip off into obscurity."

At her flash of annoyance he leans closer. Very intense, though his voice remains low.

CORDELL

Annie, what do you think I get out of this? Money?

CORDELL

I don't make money on these things. I don't need to. What I do for a living, I do well. But look, it's your career. Have it your own way.

Annie looks back at him, pondering his clear friendly eyes. That skewed, reassuring smile...

40 INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

40

Annie is rifling through her closet, unsatisfied with the dresses she has to choose from. Loudly -

ANNIE

It's not a date.

41 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

41

Oliver and JULIET MORSE are sprawled on the floor with glasses of lemonade, playing Monopoly. She wears a faded green surgeon's scrub shirt over jeans, and has dark circles of exhaustion under her eyes.

JULIET

Oh, no. 'Course not. He's only gorgeous, thoughtful, and rich as Croesus. Doesn't approach your usual standards.

ANNIE (O.S.)

Jules will you stop it? This man is my potential patron. Not a potential - whatever.

Juliet rolls her eyes at Oliver: Oh please. He grins. He's got a hopeless adolescent crush on her. Annie appears in the doorway, holding a couple of dresses on hangers.

ANNIE

Are you sure you're okay about this? I mean, with the hospital?

JULIET

Hey, I'm great. I got almost three hours' sleep last night. I think I can still get some pizza up to my face. And if my beeper goes off during the movie, Oliver can help me take out somebody's spleen.

OLIVER

(delighted)

Gross!

JULIET

C'mere. Lemme you where that is.

She starts tickling him. As he giggles, trying to tickle her back, they roll happily across the game board, scattering the pieces. Annie shakes her head at their antics, goes back into her bedroom.

42 INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

42

Annie, now dressed to go out, sits at her vanity, fretting over her hair and makeup. She feels a bit rusty at all this. Juliet, on the edge of the bed, has traded her lemonade for a glass of red wine. Her voice is low, conspiratorial, with an edge of lascivious fun.

JULIET

- so I'm patching up this black kid in the ER, gunshot wound in the thigh, right? And I'm swabbing, I'm probing him, and I swear to God - where's the O-Man?

ANNIE

Upstairs. He can't hear us.

JULIET

Annie, I swear to God, this kid had the most beautiful cock you've ever seen in your life.

ANNIE

Juliet!

JULIET

It's like, it was like, flared out near the head...? I mean it had wings, this thing, like a cobra. And I'm trying not to stare at it, you know - when all of a sudden -

ANNIE

No.

JULIET

(giggles)

Yes! It starts rising up at me -

ANNIE

No! In the emergency room?

JULIET

Yes! Right in front of two nurses, this dorky resident, and my anesthesiologist! And Annie, I got so excited, I almost stitched my thumb to his butt.

Both women are laughing by now, gasping, but trying to stifle themselves. Annie glances up anxiously at the ceiling.

43 INT. OLIVER'S ROOM - DAY

43

Oliver is stretched out, his ear to the floorboards, by his outspread homework. The women's LAUGHTER can heard, below, their low VOICES talking again. He turns over onto his back, staring at the ceiling - both troubled and aroused to hear Juliet and his mom talking this way.

44 INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

44

Juliet is wiping a happy tear from her eye.

JULIET

Oh, God... I sure hope I didn't hallucinate that kid. It would be so nice to think he really exists.

She sees that Annie's own laughter has faded. She's staring into the mirror, troubled by something.

JULIET

What. What is it?

ANNIE

Oh, I don't know... Jules, what if I'm doing the wrong thing, and just - confusing the issues with this guy? I mean, I wish he just liked my art for itself. You know? Or me for myself. Or, I don't know.

JULIET

Annie, come on. Give yourself a little more credit.

She crosses to stand behind Annie. Puts her hands on her shoulders. The two women look at each other in the mirror.

JULIET

I'm so proud of you. I mean it. You never stopped dreaming. You wanted to make art, you struggled, but you kept at it. And now the whole damn world's about to find out what I already knew - that you're for real. The best.

Annie's eyes are shining. She smiles her gratitude, and Juliet grins back at her.

45 EXT. ANNIE'S FRONT YARD - NIGHT

45

Under a bright, moonlit sky, Mark Cordell's bronze Jaguar XJS pulls off Seminary Lane and crunches down Annie's driveway, stopping in front of the darkened house.

46 INT. THE JAGUAR - NIGHT

46

Cordell is smiling, animated. Annie is intrigued.

CORDELL

Christ, listen to me. I'm on a roll now.

ANNIE

No, go on. I've heard of the Tao, but I don't really understand it. Isn't that some kind of religion?

CORDELL

More of a philosophy, really. A way of seeing things. Sometimes it gets pretty obscure, but a lot of it is very compelling. Become a valley, stop struggling, and everything will flow to you... I believe that. Don't you?

ANNIE

I don't know. I've never thought about it... I guess I don't get to talk to a lot of people with - so many ideas.

CORDELL

(laughs)

So much clutter in the head, you mean.

She smiles. A brief pause as they look towards the house.

CORDELL

I'm really looking forward to meeting Oliver. He sounds like an amazing kid.

ANNIE

He's out with a friend tonight. To tell you the truth, Ols can be a bit of a pain when it comes to - gentlemen callers?

(Cordell smiles)

He gets really possessive, sometimes. It's his age.

CORDELL

Well. He's the man of the house, isn't he?

She smiles at him, a little high on wine, on his company, on the silvery magic of this spring night.

47 INT. ANNIE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

47

In near-darkness, lit only by moonlight through the windows, they enter her studio. She closes the door behind them. She has her high heels in her hands.

ANNIE

I hate the light in here. Wait a minute, I'll get a candle.

Dropping her shoes, she digs in a drawer for matches. She lights one candle, then another, setting them down on a work table. He is looking at the row of finished Grope Boxes.

CORDELL
Should I just -

ANNIE
Any one. Go ahead.

He picks a sculpture labelled "THE DREAM OF GIVING NOTICE." Hesitates, then puts his hand beneath the skirt, up into the wooden box.

The further he reaches, the lower he has to crouch, till finally he's kneeling in front of the box.

CORDELL
I can feel a keyboard... computer keyboard?
(She nods)
Something rough on the keys. Is it sandpaper?
(She nods)
Ouch. Then my fingers are hitting... wires. Stiff wires. This is what... a cage? My hand is trapped in a birdcage...?

She looks at him, smiles. She is lighting more candles, set-ting them out.

CORDELL
The door is open, but I can't quite - squeeze through it. I can feel a breeze, though. On my fingertips, just out of reach. How is that?

ANNIE
Electric fan. Tripped by a light beam.

CORDELL
Annie, it's wonderful... My God you're good... And it's not just a dream, you know. You can give notice. You don't have to do anything but make your art from now on.

She smiles at him, self-conscious but also excited. He grins, blushing a bit.

CORDELL
Actually, this is - this is a little embarrassing.

ANNIE
What.

CORDELL

(laughs)

Well, reaching under this skirt.
Feeling your - private stuff...

She sets a final candle on the window. Turns. Looks at him.

CORDELL

But I guess that's the whole idea,
isn't it? Groping in the darkness.
In that womb.

She is silent. The air between them tingles, charged. He rises, coming closer to her.

CORDELL

The lure of the forbidden. What we
can't see, but want to touch... Are
you hidden, too, Annie? Are you here,
in one of these boxes?

He is quite close now. She indicates the other sculptures.

ANNIE

Why don't you find out.

CORDELL

How?

ANNIE

Reach out. Feel.

CORDELL

Which one?

ANNIE

Take your pick.

For a moment he's about to kiss her, and she's about to let him. She's totally open to him, vulnerable, excited. Instead he brushes back a strand of her hair. Gently, softly

CORDELL

But I've already felt them.

ANNIE

No, no. All these I just finished.

CORDELL

I felt them yesterday.

He smiles. Her own smile starts to fade: bewilderment.

ANNIE

Yesterday? I didn't know you
yesterday.

CORDELL

But I was here.

She's struggling to understand. But his face looks suddenly different. Cold, wrong. A flash of fear in her eyes. She takes a step towards the door, but he cuts off her path.

THE TEACHER

No.

He motions. Trembling, she sits on a bench. He pulls a stool over in front of her, perches there. Face to face.

THE TEACHER

Annie, listen to me now. You're in danger. And your son is in danger.

ANNIE

Oliver? What? Where's my -

THE TEACHER

He's with Juliet. Remember? Your doctor friend?

Annie's face crumples.

ANNIE

Please...

THE TEACHER

Such an extraordinary child, isn't he? So funny, so perceptive... Remember last night, when you two were playing that video game? "Chill out, Momba."

Her eyes are wet. Her voice seizes up. She tries again.

ANNIE

How - how do you know -

THE TEACHER

When I heard you two laughing I swore I'd do everything I could to get him through this. Annie. Do you hear what I'm saying? This is a dangerous time for him. With no father to guide him - really, I don't know why people won't wear motorcycle helmets, do you...? But Oliver could stray. Make some childish error. We could lose him, Annie.

(snaps his fingers)

That quick. She flinches. His voice is so soft it's nearly a whisper.

THE TEACHER

You of all people should know that accidents do happen... But if we work together, I know we can keep him safe.

THE TEACHER

And your friend Juliet, she'll be safe too. Uncle Bert and Auntie Marge, down in Titusville, Florida...? Cousin Rita, bless her heart, and ol' Herb with his sciatica? They'll be fine. Everyone you care about, they'll all be safe as churches.

THE TEACHER

Do you understand me? Nod your head. Do as I say.

(She nods)

And you - all you have to do is wait. All right? Be very patient. And then at some point you'll be asked to say two words. Two, precisely. Do you know what they are, Annie? Have you guessed?

She shakes her head, slowly. He leans in close to her, his lips almost touching her ear, and says softly, casually -

THE TEACHER

"Not guilty."

48 EXT. ANNIE'S STUDIO AND HOUSE - NIGHT

48

A yellow moon hovers over the trees. Leaves rustle in the breeze. Annie's candle glows in the studio window.

49 INT. THE STUDIO - NIGHT

49

ANNIE'S POV, as she turns the pages of a sheaf of stapled Xeroxes - newspaper clippings, headlines, photos: "MAN KILLED IN MACHINERY AT SAVANNAH PULP MILL... FT. WORTH COUPLE MIS-SING... FIRE CLAIMS THOMASVILLE BEAUTICIAN..."

THE TEACHER (O.S.)

Sadly enough, the Witness Protection Program is not all it's cracked up to be.

Annie shakes her head, pushing these horrors away. He leans INTO FRAME from behind her, crouching over her shoulder.

THE TEACHER

But Annie, if you decide to go to the police anyway...?

THE TEACHER

Then Louie Boffano goes down and I go down with him. And someone close to you will be hurt beyond repair. Because not even the government can safe-guard everyone you know, wherever they are, for the rest of their lives. True? Self-evident?

He circles in front of her, squatting on his haunches. His face looms very close to hers.

THE TEACHER

So please, Annie, please. Will you believe me...? Will you help us?

Her breath is ragged, breaking up.

ANNIE

I can't. I wouldn't be, I'll just, I'll cry. I'm a crybaby.

ANNIE

I won't be able to stop crying, they'll take me off the jury, they'll...

THE TEACHER

You think if the judge sees you crying he'll excuse you from the jury?

ANNIE

He, he'll have to.

THE TEACHER

But if he did excuse you, then we'd have to suspect some kind of betrayal on your part.

ANNIE

Oh God, no, I wouldn't say a word, never, I swear -

THE TEACHER

That's not a way out. I wish it were. But Annie, there's only one way out. We need you.

ANNIE

But I can't. If he's guilty I can't. Please! You don't know me, I can't lie. People always know. And he did kill them, didn't he? That old man, and that boy, he killed both of them!

His eyes betray a flash of annoyance, impatience.

THE TEACHER

The boy was an accident. As for the old man, he was a stone cold killer himself. Don't waste your compassion on that -

Her telephone suddenly RINGS, sending a shock of panic up her spine. She stares at it. Looks at him. He rises, hands her a handkerchief.

THE TEACHER

Wipe your tears. Then answer it.

ANNIE

What do I say?

THE TEACHER

Say you're upset. Say your date turned out to be a creep.

She manages to stand. Stumbles over to lift the phone.

OLIVER'S VOICE

Mom?

ANNIE

Yeah.

50 INT. PIZZERIA - NIGHT

50

Oliver's on a pay phone in a crowded, NOISY pizza joint.

OLIVER

You all right?

ANNIE'S VOICE

Yes.

OLIVER

Mom, what's the matter?

INTERCUTTING -

as Annie sniffs, wipes her face. The Teacher is standing very close to her; he can hear Oliver's voice.

ANNIE

Nothing. I didn't have a good time. With that guy. I'm all right.

OLIVER

What'd he do, Mom?

Juliet is sitting in a booth, where their pizza is waiting. She looks at Oliver questioningly. Troubled, he gives her a "thumbs down." She sighs, shakes her head.

ANNIE

He didn't do anything, he just - how was the movie?

OLIVER

Totally lame. Not scary at all. Mom, you sound really weird. Is that guy still going to buy your boxes?

ANNIE

It doesn't matter. Say hi to Jules. Take your time, I'm OK. Don't hurry home.

She hangs up numbly. The Teacher smiles approvingly.

THE TEACHER

See? You're a better liar than you thought.

THE TEACHER

(She is silent)

By the way, I am going to purchase your boxes. And these too, if you'll sell them. My regard for your talent is genuine.

She looks at him, disgust now mingled with her fear.

THE TEACHER

Annie, I know this is going to be a scary time for you. And lonely. But anyone you tell, you're putting their lives at risk, too. Do you follow that?

She gazes away, at nothing. Finally nods.

THE TEACHER

Good. Then that's all for now. When I need to see you again I'll send for you. Someone will say to you, "I met you at the bakery." Do what he tells you. What will he say?

ANNIE

"I met you at the bakery."

THE TEACHER

Very good.

He goes to the door, opens it. A swirl of wind; the many candles dip and flare. He turns back, looks at her.

THE TEACHER

Annie, this will all be over before you know it. And after that our paths will never cross.

Another of his charming, lopsided smiles. Then he's gone.

She rushes to the work table, seizes a hammer. Backs away from the door, gripping it in both hands, but then feels foolish, furious: no one is left to smash. Her legs weaken; she sags down into a corner. Suddenly she is sobbing...

51 INT. OLIVER'S ROOM - NIGHT

51

Oliver, home again, is asleep in his bed. Peaceful, innocent, blissfully unaware of any threat...

52 INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - NIGHT

52

Annie, now in jeans and a sweatshirt, is staring in at him from his doorway. Haggard, her eyes haunted.

Abruptly in the distance her PHONE RINGS. A sharp spasm of fear. Pulling his door shut, she turns, looks reluctantly towards the stairs.

53 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

53

Standing over her desk phone, sure it's the Teacher again, Annie has to will her hand to reach for the receiver.

ANNIE
(on phone)

What.

A brief silence. Then a distant voice, a scratchy connection.

MICKEY
(on phone)
Hi, Annie. What's up?

ANNIE
(on phone)
Mickey...? Oh, Jesus, how are you?

54 INT. HOTEL LOBBY - GUATEMALA - NIGHT

54

MICKEY ALVARADO, whom we recognize from his photos, stands at a pay phone in the tiled lobby of a modest hotel. He lookscareworn, unshaven. Beyond him, an open archway to the cobbled street, tropical foliage.

MICKEY

(on phone)

I'm great! I had to meet some reporters down in Huehuetenango, so I'm treating myself to a shower and a night in a hotel bed. Thought I'd grab this chance to call you. We haven't talked in - God, how long?

INTERCUTTING -

as Annie is almost tearful with relief, hearing his voice. She's looking at a framed WEDDING PHOTO on her desk: Annie and her late HUSBAND, with Mickey as their grinning best man, throwing rice. They all look about 20; caught in a joyous, anything is possible, rock-and-roll moment. Her santos figure sits next to this.

ANNIE

I don't know. Spring? In the spring?

MICKEY

How the hell are you guys? How's Oliver?

ANNIE

We're OK. We're...

But now she's looking at the cord of her phone. Following it with her eyes to... the wall connection. Where the covering plate looks slightly askew. A sliver of bright, unfaded paint now showing... With another stab of fear, she knows the Teacher is listening.

ANNIE

We're OK.

MICKEY

Annie, did you get the carving I sent you? Santa Armida? She was supposed to bring you good luck for your gallery opening.

Annie looks at the santos, moved. With an effort she forces harshness into her voice.

ANNIE

Hey, Mickey...? I really don't want to talk to you. OK?

Mickey is confused. He rubs his temple. A pause.

MICKEY

What. This isn't a good time?

ANNIE

There isn't any good time...

55 EXT. THE TEACHER'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

55

MOVING ANGLE, coming down past leafy branches towards the roof of the stone cottage. Through a skylight we see the Teacher, standing by his surveillance equipment...

ANNIE (V.O.)

Just because we were once friends, a million years ago, doesn't mean you can just pop up in my life whenever you feel like it...

56 INT. THE STONE COTTAGE - ATTIC - NIGHT

56

CLOSE ON the receiver channel labelled "LIVING RM PHONE." A tape deck spools slowly, recording this conversation.

ANNIE (contd., V.O.)

I've got somebody with me now...

The Teacher moves INTO FRAME, listening, his face close by the moving reel. He's wearing a robe.

ANNIE (contd., V.O.)

And he doesn't like these phone calls. OK? And frankly neither do I.

The Teacher nods at this, pleased by her obedience. He turns to go, with the tape still turning...

INTERCUTTING -

As Mickey is hurt by her abrupt dismissal.

MICKEY

Annie? What's wrong?

Annie is torn; she feels an aching need to confide in him.

ANNIE

Just leave me alone, Mickey. I mean it.

Mickey finds himself holding only a DIAL TONE.

57 INT. THE TEACHER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

57

A sparsely but elegantly furnished room. In the bed, a NAKED WOMAN is under the covers, her back to us. As the Teacher presses "PLAY" on a portable CD player, she turns, looks at him with a drowsy smile. It's Lisa, the cute blonde waitress with the diamond in her nostril.

The strains of GORECKI'S 3RD SYMPHONY fill the room as he smiles, slides into bed be-side her, takes her in his arms, kisses her. She responds hungrily.

His hands caress her breasts as she MOANS. She and the Teacher move together, starting to make love, their passion building quickly...

Her eyes shut. Her face is strained, ecstatic...The Teacher's face, above hers, is calm, controlling. But just for an instant, as he stares down at her...

Her features become those of Annie, staring back at him. Frank and unafraid. With even a hint of challenge in her eyes. Her lips are closed, though, so it must be Lisa's GASPS we're still hearing, louder now, almost like SOBS. This SOUND CONTINUES, OVER, as we CUT TO...

58 INT. ANNIE'S UPSTAIRS HALL - NIGHT

58

CLOSE ON Annie. Her cheeks are stained with tear-tracks, but she's stopped crying now; from somewhere deep inside she's found new strength, determination. She has taken up a position outside Oliver's room, sitting with her knees up, her back to his door. Lying on the floor, close by her hand, are her hammer, a crowbar, and a butcher knife.

We hear, OVER this image, the TEACHER'S TAPED VOICE - a bit distorted, the recording quality is poor...

THE TEACHER

(on tape)

Louie, listen to me. I need your decision. About Sal. We can't put this off any longer.

MOVING ANGLE, pulling slowly down the hall, AWAY from Annie, emphasizing her lonely, sleepless isolation...

BOFFANO (on tape)

(sounding harassed)

I got a problem! OK...?

59 INT. COURTROOM - TWO WEEKS LATER - DAY

59

MOVING ANGLE, as we register the faces of the twelve chosen JURORS, men and women, black and white; they turn the pages of their transcripts in unison, following the text of this surveillance tape. We END on Annie, pale, tired-looking, very tense at hearing the Teacher's familiar voice.

BOFFANO

(on tape)

And I'd like my problem to go away.
Jesus Christ. Do I have to rent a fuckin billboard?

Some of the jurors look up from their transcripts, glance at one another over this seemingly damning evidence.

At the defense table, Boffano watches unperturbed as Sam Bozeman, his lawyer, leans over, shuts OFF a tape player. Then rises, turning towards the witness stand.

BOZEMAN

Mister DiCicco. You were present with Louis Boffano when that phone call occur-red. A conversation between him and the man known only to you as "the Teacher." Isn't that correct?

PAULIE DeCICCO, 40s, an overweight, mean-looking goombah, sits impassively on the stand.

DECICCO

Yeah. I was there.

Bozeman nears the stand.

BOZEMAN

And you testified last week that it was this same man, this "Teacher," who actually engineered the so-called secret alliance between Mr. Boffano and the Cali drug cartel. Isn't that so?

DECICCO

Yeah.

The D.A., Gleason, watches this line of questions warily.

BOZEMAN

Wasn't it this "Teacher" who was also the first person to insist that Salvatore Riggio, the head of the Carmine crime family, would have to be eliminated? Because he was bitterly opposed to such outside partner-ships?

DECICCO

Yeah. That's why Sal got whacked.

Annie glances at...

Louie Boffano, who is unruffled, gazing calmly at his former capo. They might be the dearest of friends.

BOZEMAN

Who is this man, Mr. DeCicco? Why is he called "the Teacher?"

DECICCO

Cause when you see him, school's out.

Bozeman, playing to the jury, relishes this phrase.

BOZEMAN

"School's out..." Meaning - ?

DECICCO

Fuck d'you think it means? You're dead.

A ripple of LAUGHTER. Judge Weitzel frowns.

WEITZEL

The witness will refrain from swearing.

BOZEMAN

Sounds like a pretty scary guy. Pretty smart, too. He must be, if nobody knows his real identity.

DECICCO

Just Louie. The Teacher, he ain't a made guy. He does special jobs for Louie.

BOZEMAN

Isn't it really the other way around?

DeCicco looks at him, puzzled. Bozeman faces the jury, making eye contact. Annie is closest to him.

BOZEMAN

It sounds to me from these wiretaps like this "Teacher" makes all the important decisions. Like he's the real boss.

DECICCO

Nah, uh-unh. Louie's the boss.

BOZEMAN

Do you know what a puppet is, Mr. DeCicco?

Gleason is on his feet instantly.

GLEASON

Objection!

BOZEMAN

Sorry, Your Honor, I'll rephrase the question.

Crossing back to his desk, he stoops, comes up with a paper bag. When his hand comes out of the bag, it's wearing a cloth puppet. Walrus mustache, a scowl; it looks just like him.

BOZEMAN

This is a puppet, isn't it?

GASPS from the courtroom. The puppet wheels to face Bozeman, then begins squealing.

BOZEMAN

"No I'm not! I'm the boss! You're the puppet!"

Above the roar of LAUGHTER, Gleason is on his feet again, objecting, and Weitzel is pounding his GAVEL, furious.

DECICCO

Louie Boffano was no puppet!

WEITZEL

Mr. Bozeman, what is the meaning of this?

Now Bozeman, mock-sheepish, dunks the puppet back into the paper bag. But it fights its way out again, squealing -

BOZEMAN

"Sorry, Your Honor! I don't know any better! I'm just a puppet!"

WEITZEL

Sit down, Mr. Bozeman. SIT DOWN!

DECICCO

He's no puppet! That's a lie! Who the hell's gonna believe that?

As the GAVEL pounds, the lawyers SHOUT, and the spectators LAUGH, Annie is a small island of quiet amidst the chaos. She looks over at Boffano....

With his naughty little smirk, he's like a schoolboy on detention. He gazes at the jury - "How'm I doin', guys?" - and just for an instant his eyes linger on hers.

Annie looks quickly away, her face burning. The hearty LAUGHTER, in the b.g., SEGUES into the LAUGHTER OF TWO BOYS, as we CUT TO...

60 INT. OLIVER'S ROOM - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON)

60

CLOSE on a COMPUTER SCREEN as an animated dragon suddenly gets a morphed addition: a giant penis, curling upwards.

Oliver and his friend JESSE - 12 years old, glasses, blond buzz-cut - ROAR with happiness at their own wit. A shadow falls over them; Oliver looks up...

Annie is standing in his doorway, holding a newspaper. A strange bitter look in her eyes.

ANNIE

What's he doing here?

OLIVER

Jesse? What do you mean, what's -

ANNIE

You're supposed to be doing your homework. Goodbye, Jesse.

Jesse rises, bewildered. He slouches past Annie; we hear his FOOTSTEPS fading down the stairs, as Oliver stares at Annie. Stung, red-faced.

OLIVER

Mom, that's not fair. It's not even six o'clock yet, how come -

ANNIE

Who the hell's been cutting up the newspaper?

She holds it up. The front page has a big missing oblong.

OLIVER

I did.

ANNIE

This was about the trial, wasn't it?

(He is silent)

I looked through this whole newspaper, I can't find anything about the trial.

OLIVER

You told me to. You told me to cut out anything about the trial.

ANNIE

Oh, Jesus. You never do anything I ask you to, why the hell did you do this? Did they say Boffano was guilty?

OLIVER

I don't, I don't know!

She's grabbing his arms, squeezing them, but he's even more frightened by her voice. Her terrible eyes.

ANNIE

What do they want you to think? Do they want you to think he's guilty?

OLIVER

Mom, you know he is! What difference does it make what the paper says?

ANNIE

I don't know that. Nobody knows that yet. That's what we still have to decide!

OLIVER

But he is guilty! Everybody says he is!

ANNIE

(suddenly very scared)

Who? Who says? Who have you been talking to about this?

He's crying now, he can't help himself.

OLIVER

About the trial? Nobody! You asked me not to.

ANNIE

Yeah? Well I'm not asking anymore. I'm tel-ling you, you talk to anybody about this trial, and this is what I'll do, I'll take your bike and run the car over it, I'll take your computer and throw it out the win-dow, I'll - I'll smash every single one of your goddamn tapes -

OLIVER

Mom.

ANNIE

I'll smash - I'll smash -

OLIVER

Mom.

She stares at him.

OLIVER

You've got...to stop.

She does stop. Slowly coming back, as if from a great distance. Her own eyes are moist now.

ANNIE

Oh, Ols... She lets go of his shoulders. Her hands flutter uselessly, wanting to caress him, to touch his face.

OLIVER

Don't touch me!

Then he rushes from his room, leaving Annie to stare after him helplessly, miserably...

61 INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

61

Annie pushes a half-filled cart past rows of cereal boxes. Oliver trails her listlessly.

In the sour fluorescent light, they both look like sleepwalkers. She turns, hearing -

A MAN'S VOICE

Hey, I know you.

A stocky man in a windbreaker, with a brutal face. His own cart is nearly empty. It's Eddie Marco.

EDDIE

You're the artist. The box lady.

He gives them both a friendly smile. Annie is still blank.

EDDIE

From the bakery, don't you remember?
I met you at the bakery.

Annie fights back a wave of nausea. Of pure fear. But Eddie, smiling, is looking at Oliver.

EDDIE

Hey, is this your boy?

Annie forces her voice to work. Somehow she remains calm.

ANNIE

Hon, we need some... what are those frozen things you like?

OLIVER

RoboPops?

ANNIE

Go get some.

Oliver shuffles off. Eddie waits till he's gone. Then heperuses the cereal boxes, like volumes in a library.

EDDIE

Tomorrow. Early. You know where the Park and Ride is? In Banktree, off 684?

ANNIE

Yes.

EDDIE

You wait there. Eight o'clock. I'll come, you get in my car. Got it?

ANNIE

Yes.

EDDIE

You OK...? You look kinda woozy.

ANNIE

I'm all right.

She's looking in the direction Oliver went. He follows her gaze, then hesitates, almost embarrassed.

EDDIE

I got a kid too... I got one just a little oldern him.

Annie looks at him, surprised. He goes on, awkwardly.

EDDIE

I know what you're goin through. But you do what they say? You'll be fine. Really.

ANNIE

(a beat)

What's your name?

He looks at her, surprised.

EDDIE

You don't wanna know my name. How can I - I can't tell you my name.

ANNIE

What do I call you, then?

EDDIE

Don't call me nothin. Or call me -

He looks around, sees a display of Johnny Appleseed granola.

EDDIE

Call me Johnny, I don't give a shit.

Oliver, coming back with two boxes of RoboPops, gives no sign of having heard this. He dumps them into the cart, averting his eyes from Eddie's wary gaze.

ANNIE

OK, Johnny. Thank you. For what you said, thank you.

Eddie looks at her a moment longer, nods, then pushes his cart away. In his huge hands it looks almost like a toy.

Annie turns away, but Oliver watches Eddie go, marking this strange man with a sharp, curious glance...

62 INT. ANNIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

62

At her desk, by lamplight, Annie writes a letter. She's in her bathrobe.

Mickey's photo is there - the one where he's posing with the village kids - and her santos figure.

ANNIE (V.O.)

Dear Mickey. It's the middle of the night and the bastard wants to see me again tomorrow and I wish so much I could talk to you. Just - see your face again and hear your jokes. You used to say, "Hey, Annie, art is your talent. Mine is sticking my nose in where it doesn't belong."

ANNIE

But you're a good man, Mickey, even if you'll never admit it...

She looks up, staring at the darkness outside her window.

63 EXT. DIRT ROAD - GUATEMALA - DAY

63

POV ANGLE - the body of a YOUNG MAN lies sprawled on a rural road. His hands are bound behind him; marks of torture on his bare back...

Mickey, kneeling over this corpse, examines it carefully. Saddened, but not shocked; he's seen too many. A photo ID clipped to Mickey's shirt identifies his employer: "AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL."

ANNIE (V.O.)

Every day you're risking your life down there for the things you believe in. Trying to make this a better world. While I've just been trying to shut the world out. To never let it hurt me or Oliver again...

Mickey exchanges a glance with the TWO INDIAN MEN who are with him. Weathered faces, straw hats; an air of bodyguards, or guides. Then he pulls a camera from his knapsack, starts taking photos of the body.

64 INT. OLIVER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

64

The door opens a crack, hall light streaming in across Oliver, who's lying in bed with his eyes shut. Annie is checking up on him, probably for the fifth time tonight.

ANNIE (V.O.)

But guess what, Mickey? The world finds you anyway. Somehow it always finds you...

Gently she closes the door. Then in the darkened room Oliver opens his eyes, looking in her direction, very worried.

65 EXT. MICKEY'S HOUSE - T'UI CUCH - DAY

65

Olive-clad SOLDIERS file out of Mickey's simple house carrying cartons of his books and papers. Through the open door, we see it's been ransacked, trashed. The soldiers pass Mick-ey, on his porch, held at gunpoint by an arrogant TENIENTE. This man looks for a moment like he's about to pistol-whip him, but thinks better of it as he considers...

The massed VILLAGERS of T'ui Cuch, drawn up in a silent, ominous, protective semicircle facing Mickey's house.

ANNIE (contd., V.O.)

You once told me you thought I had so much pent up inside me, so much passion and strength, just waiting to be revealed, if I would only let them out...

The officer spits on the ground between Mickey's feet. Then follows his squad to their jeeps, as the villagers sullenly part to let him through.

Mickey, on his porch, breathes a sigh of relief.

66 INT. ANNIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

66

Annie's pauses in her writing. Picks up the santos.

ANNIE (V.O.)

Oh Mickey. Tell me where that strength is, because I can't find it. And I could really use some right now. I don't think I'm going to make it through this...

67 INT. MICKEY'S HOUSE - T'UI CUCH - NIGHT

67

Mickey sits on the edge of his cot, which is draped with mos-quito netting. He's more or less restored this room to order. He's looking at a framed photograph, its broken glass now mended with tape: Annie and Oliver, tanned, in tee shirts and shorts, posing in this same village during a visit.

ANNIE (V.O.)

You have to help me, Mickey. You have to come here and show us the way out, you have to take us away from all this...

68 INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

68

Standing at her stove, Annie holds the letter she's just written. She hesitates, then finally touches it to one of the burners till it catches fire. She lifts it up, flaming. When the flames are scorching her fingertips, she drops the page into her sink. Then watches, with tears in her eyes, as it turns to blackened ashes.

ANNIE (V.O.)

I love you and miss you... Annie.

69 EXT. A RESERVOIR - DAY

69

Annie sits on a rocky shore, looking across rippled watertowards a forest of evergreens. The Teacher comes INTO FRAME, kneels beside her, with a look of concern.

THE TEACHER

How are you holding up, Annie?

ANNIE

Fine.

His Jaguar is parked at a distance, next to Eddie's Buick. Eddie is over there, smoking, keeping lookout. Now and then he glances their way.

THE TEACHER

And Oliver? Is he all right?

Her eyes flash. She can barely contain her anger.

ANNIE

Why don't you tell me? You listen to every word we say.

THE TEACHER

(hesitates)

Look, I know this won't be welcome, but I'm going to say it. You're being too hard on your child. Suppose he guesses what's going on?

ANNIE

He won't guess. He's just a kid.

THE TEACHER

And you've cut yourself off from Juliet, that's wrong. She'll start to worry, she'll come around with questions. This Mickey, who is he? A boyfriend?

ANNIE

What difference does that make?

THE TEACHER
Answer my question.

ANNIE
He's just some old pest, he calls a lot. You want to kill him?

THE TEACHER
Annie.

ANNIE
Go ahead, kill him. Do me a favor.

THE TEACHER
I don't want to kill anyone. I only want to get this over with. Quietly. Painlessly. Annie, you have to help me. We have to work together.

ANNIE
I'll do what I can! All right? You son of a bitch.

THE TEACHER
(gently)
You can do more than you think you can. The Tao says, "The softest thing in the universe/ Overcomes the hardest thing in the universe."

He sits beside her. Tosses a pebble in the water, and for a moment contemplates the widening ripples.

THE TEACHER
Annie. At the courthouse yesterday. Did you understand our strategy?
(She nods)
What's our strategy, Annie?

ANNIE
That Louie Boffano didn't order the killing. He's in the mob and maybe he's a bad guy but he's, he's a figurehead. He doesn't really give the orders.

THE TEACHER
Good. That's right. But if he's not guilty, who is? Who did kill Salvatore Riggio?

She stares at him.

ANNIE
You did.

His smile crawls up one side of his face. A beat.

THE TEACHER

You think I'm the Teacher?

ANNIE

Aren't you?

THE TEACHER

I would have you believe it. The Teacher scares you, doesn't he?

(She is silent)

And if I can keep you scared, Annie, I can save your life.

Some strands of hair have stuck to her wet cheek. He reaches out, slides his finger under them, pushes them back into place. She is rigid, doesn't breathe. He looks with pride at his chosen one. With almost a lover's tenderness.

THE TEACHER

You and Oliver, I can still save you both. Can't I...?

70 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

70

CLOSE ON a remote-controlled court TV camera as it WHIRS to a new position, focussing on... ANGELA RIGGIO, late 60s, widow of the slain mob boss, who is on the stand. A wisp of a woman, but her back is straight. She struggles to hold back tears. The D.A. is standing.

GLEASON

I'm sorry, Mrs. Riggio, but we have to get through this. This masked man, who broke into your bedroom, who told you that he was sent by Louie Boffano... This man who had just shot your husband, right in front of you... What did he do next?

MRS. RIGGIO

The door open and my, my, my -

She waves her hand in front of her. Lowers her eyes.

GLEASON

Did someone come into the room, then? Someone else?

MRS. RIGGIO

My Tomasino. My little one. Fourteen years old... He come in, and he say, "Nonna, you OK?" And then, then he see my Sal, dead -

She stops, gasping a little. Judge Wietzel is concerned.

WIETZEL

Do you need some time, Mrs. Riggio?
Would you like to take a break?

She shakes her head, anguished. Gleason presses gently.

GLEASON

What happened next, please?

MRS. RIGGIO

The man, he turn around and he see my
baby. Then Tomasino run away. And I
try to, I try to... but he don't care.

MRS. RIGGIO

He, he run after him. And then I hear
the shot. He shot, he -

She is sobbing. Gleason hands her a handkerchief.

Annie, watching, is horrified. So are the jurors around
her. She looks at...Boffano, who seems bored by this
testimony. Doodling.

71 INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

71

CLOSE ON a microwave oven, as it gives THREE BEEPS. Oliver
leans INTO FRAME, opens the door. In the b.g. a TV is ON,
its volume VERY LOW. Oliver reaches in with oven mitts,
gingerly removes a tray that holds two steaming chicken pot
pies. He sets these on the kitchen table, where he's
already arranged, with a sad attempt at normalcy, flatware,
plates, neatly folded paper napkins. Then still wearing
the mitts, he crosses to the doorway, shouts towards the
stairs.

OLIVER

Mo-om! It's ready!

After a moment, Annie calls dispiritedly from her room.

ANNIE (O.S.)

Start without me.

OLIVER

(under his breath)

No doubt.

Tugging off the mitts, he sits at the table. He looks at
his dinner, sighs. Then he forks open his pie, carefully
starts removing the peas. The little TV, flickering away
on a coun-ter, catches his attention: Mrs. Riggio, on the
stand, is staring contemptuously at Bozeman and Boffano.
A superimposed graphic reads "TAPED EARLIER." Oliver uses
a remote to RAISE THE VOLUME. He watches, intensely
curious.

MRS. RIGGIO (on TV)
 You know why he keep on killing? Huh?
 Because nobody stand up to him,
nobody.

BOZEMAN (on TV)
 Objection!

MRS. RIGGIO (on TV)
 His own lawyer scared of him!

WIETZEL (on TV)
 Mrs. Riggio, please -

She waves the judge away in curt dismissal.

MRS. RIGGIO (on TV)
 Ah, you scared too.

72 INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

72

Annie is watching furtively, in her bedroom, with the SOUND turned way down. A REPORTER appears on camera, against a backdrop of the courthouse steps.

REPORTER (on TV)
 And then, in perhaps the most dramatic moment of this trial so far, Angela Riggio turned, pointing directly at the jurors themselves...

The reporter is replaced by the taped image of Mrs. Riggio. Her fierce gaze, her accusing claw, pointed at the off-screen jury, now seem aimed directly at the watching Annie.

MRS. RIGGIO (on TV)
You scared.

Annie, frightened and ashamed, stares at the TV screen...

73 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

73

Oliver rises, comes closer to his TV set. Staring at Mrs. Riggio as she points accusingly. A GABBLE OF NOISE in the taped courtroom - objections and accusations, O.S., Wietzel's gavel - but Oliver's mind is far away, racing. Feverishly making connections. The man who so upset his mom on her date. That man in the grocery store.

Her strange, harsh behavior... Trembling, he looks up towards his mom's room, then back at the TV screen. He mouths the words, almost silently.

OLIVER
 "You're scared..."

74 EXT. ANNIE'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY (LATE AFTERNOON) 74

The green Subaru follows a winding country blacktop through pastures, stands of hardwoods in full spring leaf. Annie and Oliver are inside; he's wearing his purple lacrosse uniform and holding his stick.

75 EXT. OLIVER'S SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY 75

The Subaru pulls off the road onto the school grounds, passing the sprawling red brick buildings, the physed fields. The fields are deserted, so are the bleachers.

The parking lot also seems empty as the Subaru slows, turns a corner...

76 INT. ANNIE'S CAR - DAY 76

Annie, already puzzled by the absence of other cars, other players, now sees something that surprises her even more. She brakes to a stop, staring out her windshield...

HER POV - Juliet's Saab is parked just ahead, in the shadow of the building. And Juliet is leaning against it.

Annie turns, looking at Oliver. He's flushed, guilty.

OLIVER

Oh man. Did I get it wrong again?
Maybe they're using the old practice
field. Wait here, lemme check.

He jumps out of the car, runs off. Annie gets out, too, shouting after him.

ANNIE

Oliver! Get back here!

But he's gone, running along a path towards another field. Annie turns. Juliet is walking towards her. Taking her arm firmly, leading her away from the cars...

JULIET

We need to talk.

ANNIE

(resisting)

This is a setup. Isn't it? Did my
kid put you up to this?

JULIET

I had to find some way to talk to you.
You've been avoiding me for weeks.

ANNIE

What about calling me on the damn telephone -

JULIET

No good if your phone is tapped. OK?

Annie stops, with a spasm of fear. Looks at Juliet.

JULIET

Don't worry. Nobody knows. Ols rode his bike to my house yesterday, and that's where we talked. He's a smart kid, Annie.

(a beat)

So what is it? Talk to me.

Annie looks back at her, frightened, but also feeling the enormous weight of her secret...

77

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

77

Annie and Juliet sit on soft-slung swings. Oliver can be seen in the distance, taking half-hearted practice shots with his stick, and often looking their way. Juliet is silent for a long moment, pondering.

JULIET

OK... OK. You go to the judge. Tell him you want out of this trial. Tell him - tell him your kid's sick. He was just diagnosed with leukemia.

ANNIE

Oh come on, Jules. He'll never buy that.

JULIET

He has to. Because you'll bring him a note from your doctor. From me.

Annie is surprised. Juliet is warming to her invention.

JULIET

We send Ols to Long Island, to live with my folks for awhile. OK? And then - then we send a message to this bastard. Tell him to meet you again at that reservoir. And when he does you'll say, "Come near me again and I go to the cops with everything."

JULIET

And if anything happens to me? Then my friends will go to the cops."

ANNIE

And he'll say "what friends?"

JULIET

And that's when I'll wave to him.

(Annie stares at her)

I'll be standing right across the lake from you guys, with a video camera. Taping the whole thing. OK? And that's, well, I mean that's it, that's all.

ANNIE

(pause)

That's it? That's your plan?

JULIET

Well, that plus getting a whole night's sleep. Yeah.

ANNIE

I don't know. It sounds sort of crazy.

JULIET

You're right. I'm running about a quart low on caffeine right now, so I'm not even thinking straight. The way you're handling it, going along with them, that's probably a lot smarter.

ANNIE

Then why do you suggest -

JULIET

Because I don't take orders very well. From monsters I don't take them at all. But that's just me, Annie. It's your life we're talking about. And your kid's life.

Annie turns, looks at Oliver in the distance, as she struggles with this awful decision. She looks back at Juliet...

78

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - MINUTES LATER - DAY

78

Annie and Oliver stand together by the lacrosse net, watching Juliet's car leave the grounds. As she passes them, she smiles, briefly holding up one fist for solidarity. When she's gone, Annie turns, looks at her son.

ANNIE

Once we're back in the car, you don't know anything about this. OK? Not a word. Not a question.

ANNIE

You make one slip and everything is ruined, do you understand?

He nods, wide-eyed. No matter how powerfully he's imagined all this, it stuns him to hear her confirm it.

ANNIE

Say it. Say, I'll never talk about this in the car.

OLIVER

I'll never talk about this in the car.

ANNIE

Or in the house.

OLIVER

Or in the house.

Seeing the fear in his eyes, she hugs him fiercely. He hugs her back. Her voice is very low, almost a whisper.

ANNIE

You were right, it's one of Boffano's men. He says I have to vote "not guilty" or he'll hurt us.

OLIVER

I knew something was really wrong, Mom. I knew it.

ANNIE

I'm glad you figured it out, Ols. I'm glad you went to Juliet. It frightens me but I'm glad. Now we're going to turn this thing around, OK? You believe in me?

He nods. Annie hugs him fiercely, and he hugs her back.

79 INT. COURTHOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY

79

Annie stands scanning a boxed directory on the wall, but averts her face as a pair of LAWYERS walk by, deep in talk. One of them ogles her furtively. Then finding the listing she wanted, she hurries away down the hall, her footsteps ECHOING on the marble floor...

80 INT. JUDGE WIETZEL'S CHAMBERS - OUTER OFFICE - DAY

80

Annie locates a door whose brass plaque reads "JUDGE HERBERT K. WIETZEL." She pushes through this, entering the reception area as a SECRETARY looks up from her desk, alarmed.

SECRETARY

Miss? You're not allowed in this -

Through an inner doorway, Annie can see right into Wietzel's private office. He's half-turned from her, pulling on his robe. She never stops moving.

ANNIE

I'm sorry, I can't, I can't tell you why but I've got to see him.

As the startled woman rises, Annie walks right by her, steps into Wietzel's office, and shuts the door behind her.

81 INT. WIETZEL'S OFFICE - DAY

81

Wietzel turns, looks at Annie. A flash of surprise and worry, as if she might be carrying a gun.

ANNIE

I'm sorry. I need to see you. You know who I am?

He steps back from her, taking refuge behind his desk.

WIETZEL

Yes... Yes you're a juror. Open that door please.

ANNIE

I have a problem. I have to talk to you, alone.

The secretary looks anxiously in at the door. The judge hesitates, then finally nods to her: It's OK. Leave us. The woman takes a long, grim look at Annie; when she finally backs out, closing the door, Annie is relieved. She takes a seat, but Wietzel is wary, remains standing.

WIETZEL

Let me just explain to you that when you come into my chambers, it's not a trivial thing. You don't come in for a chat. When a juror visits a judge, this can have serious consequences.

A withering chill in his voice. She stares at him. Is he making some sort of a threat?

WIETZEL

Now, if you have a real problem and you still want to talk about it, I'll call the defense attorney and the DA, and we can -

ANNIE

No.

WIETZEL

Excuse me?

ANNIE

I want to talk to you alone. I don't, I don't want them. I only want to talk to you. Alone. She opens her handbag, pulls out her letter from Juliet.

WIETZEL

You can't talk to me alone. And whatever that is, I don't want to see it. Not without all the attorneys present.

She stares at him, suddenly fearful. Is he in with them? Does Boffano own this man too...? Her voice is very soft.

ANNIE

What - what are you telling me? Are you telling me I've made a mistake?

WIETZEL

Ma'am, what I remember about you is that I gave you every opportunity to get out of serving on this panel. But you insisted. You wanted jury duty. You recall?

Annie nods, feeling numb. The judge purses his lips.

WIETZEL

So. You want to serve, you don't want to serve. You have some problem but you don't think the defendant has a right to hear about it. Well I think you're wrong. He happens to be on trial for murder. Now, shall I see if I can locate his counsel?

He lifts his phone. Looks at her. We hear the DIAL TONE. She rises, slowly. Puts the letter back into her purse.

ANNIE

No... no, I've changed my mind.

She backs up a step, then turns and walks out, as he stares after her. Gently he returns the phone to its cradle.

82 INT. COURTHOUSE ROTUNDA - DAY

82

Annie comes down the broad marble staircase feeling dazed, exposed, very vulnerable. She pauses in the rotunda, suddenly nervous about exiting through the front doors. A JANITOR, mopping the floor, pauses to look at her.

Feeling his gaze she backs away, then turns, blindly picking a different route out of the building. Almost in panic now.

83 INT. BACK HALLWAY - DAY

83

Hurrying down a back hallway, too fast, Annie grabs for a door handle and almost collides with a PAIR OF COPS, entering the building, carrying takeout food.

One man drops his coffee. He curses under his breath as she brushes past, muttering an apology. They watch, irritated, as she hurries away past trash cans and a dumpster, then disappears.

84 EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

84

Annie, looking tired and upset, emerges from a grocery store with two full bags of groceries. She pauses, seeing something ahead that startles her...

Eddie Marco is sitting on a bench, waiting. He looks up at her, his eyes grim.

85 EXT. COUNTRY TAVERN - DAY

85

Annie's Subaru follows Eddie's Buick into the gravel parking lot of a restaurant called "VIC'S," nestled in the deep woods north of Pharoah. Old sedans, pickups. She pulls in next to Eddie, stops. He gets out, motioning for her to do the same. As she does so, she sees...

The Teacher, coming out of the restaurant with a man (RODNEY) who appears to be dead-drunk. The Teacher guides him over to a huge white ramshackle Cadillac, props him against it. Then looks at Annie and gestures to her: Come.

As Annie walks over, the drunk man - greasy hair, big black horn rims, green plastic golf jacket - leers at her.

THE TEACHER

Annie, I want you to meet Rodney.
Rodney, this is my friend Annie.

Annie looks at the man uneasily. He slurs his words.

RODNEY

F-friend? Hah! This chick's a fuckin knockout. Fuckin Knock Out.

THE TEACHER

Rodney here is a gallon of sewage that's backed up from New York City.

RODNEY

(grins)

Hey, f-fuck you, asshole.

THE TEACHER

I've offered to drive Rodney home in his car. I think he's had a little too much. Will you please ride with us, Annie?

He opens the passenger side door for her. Annie, confused and scared, looks across the lot at Eddie.

But his face is blank; no sympathy now. Finally she has no choice but to climb into the Cadillac.

86 INT. RODNEY'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

86

Annie sits in tense silence as the big white clunker flashes along past evergreens. The Teacher, at the wheel, is now wearing Rodney's absurd windbreaker. He's manic, too cheer-ful. A scary intensity in his pale eyes.

THE TEACHER

Our Rodney is not making a great success of his sojourn on Earth. He's a drunk. He's an imbecile.

He tilts the rear-view mirror: Rodney lies in the back seat, curled fetally around a scotch bottle. Snoring softly.

THE TEACHER

But he never forgets who his friends are. And his friends keep his head above water. Even after all his DUI's, he's still got a valid license. Amazing, isn't it?

The Teacher reaches behind him with one hand, plucking the horn rims from Rodney's face. Then he puts them on. He grins at her impishly.

THE TEACHER

Hey. How do I look?

ANNIE

What are you doing?

THE TEACHER

I'm doing Rodney. I want to see what life looks like through Rodney's eyes. Annnd... yes. Just as I feared. It's a blur.

He gives the wheel a sudden twist; the car lurches dangerously. Annie nearly tumbles against him.

As she clutches at the dashboard, his eyes widen mischievously. He grins.

THE TEACHER

Oops.

87 EXT. A DIFFERENT ROAD - DAY

87

The white Cadillac rounds a curve, then swoops down a hill onto flatter ground, passing a corn field, open meadows, then finally the familiar grounds of Oliver's school. A practice has recently ended; a few last, straggling TEENAGED BOYS are still in the bleachers, changing shoes.

Another, carrying his stick, hurries towards a waiting minivan. The white car races by without slowing.

88 INT. THE CADILLAC - DRIVING - DAY

88

Annie slides her eyes away from the school, trying to keep her face neutral. The Teacher glances past her to the playing fields. Then looks at Annie, his eyes glittering.

THE TEACHER

Lacrosse. They say it's the most dangerous sport in the country. Well, if it weren't dangerous the boys wouldn't play it, I suppose.

(beat)

Your son Oliver, he plays lacrosse, doesn't he?

A shiver of fear goes through her. Her voice wobbles.

ANNIE

What are we doing here? Where are you taking me?

THE TEACHER

We're on a tour, Annie. Sightseeing in Rodneyland. You've been so cooped-up lately. Well, I mean, except for your little outing to visit Judge Weitzel.

She stares at him, stricken. He is shaking his head sadly.

THE TEACHER

Annie, Annie... Did you think you were my only resource? That courthouse is a sieve. Who nailed you, Annie? Who? Care to guess? That kindly-looking janitor? Hard to get by on his salary. Or what about all those fat cops, with their meatball subs?

THE TEACHER

Gotta make those payments on the ol' Barcalounger. Or even the dear judge himself, with his little gambling problem...? I'm everywhere, Annie. I'm everybody. Look - I'm even Rodney.

Annie stares ahead, desperate, her mind whirling. He laughs, twisting the wheel playfully from side to side.

THE TEACHER

Look at me, Annie. I'm Rodney Grosso, I'm drunk, I'm a piece of human garbage and I know it.

THE TEACHER

I'm getting old and fat and that scares me, but on the road I'm still a young buck, so I take this curve too fast -

89 EXT. THE CADILLAC - LOW ANGLE - DAY

89

CLOSE ON the right-side tires as they skid briefly off the road, kicking up dust and gravel, before finally regaining the asphalt...

90 INT. RODNEY'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

90

Annie braces herself, hands on the dash. Panicky now.

THE TEACHER

Oops... I sure am one lousy driver! Somebody's got to stop me. Do you think you can stop me, Annie?

ANNIE

No. No, please, I'm -

THE TEACHER

Do you think you can contend with me?

ANNIE

No, no, I didn't mean... I didn't tell the judge anything, I didn't, please!

THE TEACHER

But it takes a bolt of terror, doesn't it? It takes riding shotgun with Rodney Grosso.

ANNIE

Yes!

Annie glances at the speedometer: 85. She looks up. They're coming into a straightaway, a long shallow saddle, sloping gently, pastures to either side. He raises his voice.

THE TEACHER

You could put the Teacher in jail, oh yes, Annie. You could sizzle Louie Boffano. But what are you going to do about this drunk at the wheel? Hmm? I'm lost, I look down the road and it's just a blur, but I think - yes, I think I see some kid on a bicycle -

Annie stares through the windshield...

HER POV - way down there, half a mile, it's a boy on his bike, headed home. Purple lacrosse shirt, upright stick.

Annie flings her hand out to grab the Teacher's arm.

ANNIE

No!

91 EXT. THE ROAD AHEAD - DAY

91

Oliver is tooling along on his bike, helmet safely in place, humming to himself. No idea at all of the white blur behind him, approaching in the distance...

92 INT. RODNEY'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

92

The Teacher stares at Annie's hand, till she forces herself to release his sleeve. He smiles.

THE TEACHER

Don't you trust the Teacher, Annie?

ANNIE

Yes. I trust you! Yes.

THE TEACHER

But it's like trusting in the whim of God, isn't it? This random Rodney, he does whatever he pleases. He just drifts...

He lets the car slide out into the left lane. The pastures are just a green smear, whipping by. Annie puts her wrist to her mouth, bites at it, staring through the windshield.

THE TEACHER

The least error, and you're plunged into hell... Annie, what if he should suddenly wake up and see he's in the wrong lane? He overcompensates -

He turns the wheel sharply and floors the accelerator, and suddenly they're aiming straight at Oliver. Six hundred yards away... five hundred...

93 EXT. THE ROAD AHEAD - DAY

93

Oliver is on the right-hand shoulder, the same side as the car. As it roars down behind him, on a killing path, he is still unaware of it. Four hundred... Three hundred...

94 INT. RODNEY'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

94

Annie is curled into a terrified ball, her feet almost on the dash. She claws at her own face, screaming.

ANNIE
OH GOD! OH GOD! PLEASE!

THE TEACHER
Who will protect you?

ANNIE
THE TEACHER!

THE TEACHER
Who will shield you?

ANNIE
THE TEACHER!

THE TEACHER
Did you say the judge?

ANNIE
NO! JUST YOU! JUST YOU! MY GOD! MY
GOD! PLEEEEEEEAASSSE!

She slams her hands against her door, the seat, her feet are kicking the dash, she is screaming, screaming, her eyes locked on that purple shirt dead ahead of them...

95 EXT. THE CAR - DRIVING - LOW ANGLE - DAY

95

The right-side tires hit the ragged shoulder, stay on it, bouncing hard, clods of dirt hurtling aside, as...

96 INT. THE CAR - DRIVING - DAY

96

Annie is thrown forward, then sideways, by the force of this, her seatbelt barely holding her. For a moment she's stunned, loses sight of Oliver.

She slams her hands against the passenger window, screaming, she pushes her cheek against it, where is he, where is he - and then just for a split-second, for one instant, his startled face is right next to hers, he's half-turned on his bike, stunned to see the car so close, as -

97 EXT. SHOULDER OF THE ROAD - DAY

97

The Cadillac flashes past Oliver, its side mirror missing him by inches, and -

98 INT. THE CADILLAC - DRIVING - DAY

98

Annie whips her head around and sees him back there -

He's standing there, under a sycamore, holding his bike and staring after them. The car's passing has kicked up a storm of leaves, and as he rapidly recedes into the distance these swirl and swoop around him, like a thousand whispers: He's alive. He's alive. He's alive. He's alive...

99 EXT. A QUARRY - DAY

99

Annie - shivering, almost feverish - stands near Eddie, who has to half-support her, one hand on her elbow. His Buick is parked on a dirt road on the stony heights above a quarry; the Teacher's Jaguar is parked ahead of him. Eddie and Annie are watching...

The Teacher, as he leans into Rodney's idling car, in the road, adjusting the drunk's position behind the wheel. Rodney, wearing his golf-jacket again, is semi-conscious, MUR-MURING. Satisfied at last, the Teacher gently restores Rodney's glasses to his face. When Annie tries weakly to say something, the Teacher turns, looks at her curiously.

ANNIE

You can't... You can't let him drive.

THE TEACHER

That's true, Annie. He might kill somebody.

He reaches in, nudges the gearshift into "Drive", then quickly whips his arm out as the car starts moving, rumbling down the dirt road...

Eddie and Annie watch - she in numbed horror, he with no more than professional interest - as...

Rodney's Cadillac plows through a curve, crackles through a screen of saplings and weeds, then disappears over the cliff's edge...

NEW ANGLE, FROM BELOW - as the car plunges a hundred feet down the rocky face and splashes into the quarry, sinking quickly into the black water. A few big bubbles rise.

Annie stifles a cry, turning her face into Eddie's shoulder. He reacts awkwardly, not knowing what to do. As the Teacher approaches, he notes their momentary closeness, without comment. Turns her face to him, tenderly, with his fingertips.

THE TEACHER

You and I, Annie, all of us - even Rodney - we're just floating in the stream of the universe. And it's useless to strive against that. Do you understand now?

She nods, unable to speak. He holds her eyes a moment longer, then says softly to Eddie, without turning his head.

THE TEACHER

See she gets home safely.

He strides over to his Jag, climbs in, and drives off.

Annie is silent, trembling. Eddie separates from her, almost embarrassed. She leans weakly against his car.

ANNIE

Why did he do that?

EDDIE

You mean Rodney? Ah, Rodney was crud. He woulda killed somebody his self, sooner or later.

She looks at him. He knows what she really meant. A beat.

EDDIE

Look, we hadda scare you. For your own good. If you'd a really said anything to that judge, we'd a killed you for it. Maybe your boy, too.

ANNIE

(pause)

You said you had a child, Johnny.

EDDIE

Eddie. My name is Eddie.

She looks at him. He looks back at her for a moment.

EDDIE

Yeah. Daughter. Fourteen.

Her eyes makes him uncomfortable. He glances away.

EDDIE

I don't make war on women, OK? This ain't me.

ANNIE

Then why do you let him do it?

EDDIE

You got too many fuckin questions.

(pause)

He killed that Riggio kid and he didn't have to. It didn't mean nothin to him, any more than Rodney. I still don't get it.

(pause)

What I'm sayin is, you scared him, Annie. And you don't wanna do that. OK? You don't never wanna try that shit again.

100 INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

100

Oliver sits at the table, unable to concentrate on his homework. He looks up uneasily at...

Annie, who stands at the stove stirring a saucepan. A pause.

OLIVER

Mom? Maybe we'll go out later? Get some ice cream?

ANNIE

No.

OLIVER

I wanted to - tell you about my day.

No response. She looks sour, moody, the old anger back again.

OLIVER

Did you talk to Jules today?

She wheels on him, scared, putting a finger to her lips.

ANNIE

Shh.

A beat, then she speaks again, in a normal voice.

ANNIE

Juliet? No. Do your homework.

He stares at her for a moment, then flips open his notebook, scribbling furiously with a Flair. He holds up the page, which reads: WHAT'S WRONG?

She crosses to sit beside him. Opens a different notebook, writes something, spins it for him to see: DON'T EVER MENTION HER NAME IN THE HOUSE. EVER.

He writes: WHY? WHAT HAPPENED?

She writes: TELL YOU LATER.

101 INT. THE TEACHER'S COTTAGE - ATTIC - DAY

101

The Teacher sits in lotus position, meditating, on a prayer mat. Incense curls from a burner by his knee. Apart from a futon, some books, and a couple of large duffel bags, the wooden floor is bare. The attic is "finished", i.e., dry-walled and with dormer windows.

CLOSER ANGLE as his eyes slowly open: something's not right. He becomes aware of a SOFT, SCRATCHING SOUND. He glances to his right, towards...

His awesome display of hi-tech surveillance equipment, the components neatly arranged against the wall on a wire rack system. The SOUND is coming from his speakers.

He reaches out one languid hand, picks up a remote control, aims it at his amp. Pushes a button. The SCRATCHING SOUND GETS LOUDER...

102 INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

102

CLOSE ON Oliver's pen as it SCRATCHES across his paper. He shows her another note: MOM WE GOT TO FIGHT HIM.

Annie shakes her head. She writes, turns her pad towards him: IF WE FIGHT HIM, HE'LL KILL YOU.

He looks at her, finally writes: I'LL TAKE THE CHANCE.

She glares at him. She's gripping her pen in a fury, almost tearing her paper: IF WE FIGHT HIM, HE'LL KILL ME.

That stops Oliver. He stares at her, very scared...

103 INT. THE TEACHER'S COTTAGE - DAY

103

The Teacher stands by his equipment, hyper-alert. Pondering. The SCRATCHY SOUNDS have STOPPED. After a moment, with a thought forming, he looks at his wire shelves, sees a book there: Tibetan Meditations. He picks this up, opens it to the blank flyleaf. He picks up a pen, writes quickly on the page. Scratchscratch. He leans his ear closer to the page, scribbles again. Scratchscratch. His expression changes. It's the same sound he's been hearing from Annie's house. As he stares at the speakers, we see his mind working: Now the boy knows, too...

104 INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

104

Annie stands at the sink, holding their scrawled pages. She lights them with a match, holds them flaming a moment, then drops them into the sink. She turns...

Oliver is staring at her, wide-eyed. Near tears. She goes to him, kneels before his chair. Her own eyes are moist as she takes him in her arms, very quietly. She kisses his cheek, his hair, almost feverishly. His arms go around her neck; they cling to one another like drowning people...

105 INT. THE TEACHER'S COTTAGE - DAY

105

The Teacher pushes buttons, rewinding his tape. Stops it, listens. SILENCE. Rewinds again, listens... there.

OLIVER (on tape)
I wanted to - tell you about my day...
Did you talk to Jules today?

A soft, indistinct SOUND, a momentary pause. Then -

ANNIE (on tape)
Juliet? No. Do your homework.

The Teacher stops the tape, rewinds, punches up the volume. When he plays this segment again, we can hear the SOUND very distinctly. It's Annie shushing her son.

ANNIE (on tape)
Shh.
(beat)
Juliet? No. Do your homework.

The Teacher turns...

On ONE wall of the attic, across from his electronic racks, we see a visual catalogue of Annie's life. Photos of her house, grocery store, laundromat. Maps of her movements. Copies of photos we've seen in Annie's own house - friends, relatives, Mickey. These artifacts are labelled, dated, cross-referenced, minutely annotated. The display is frightening, almost unhinged in its obsessive detail: the Annie Museum. Centered, almost like an altar, is a large facial closeup of Annie, and beside this, a grainy enlargement of her santos figure.

The Teacher comes closer to this wall, pondering one particular photo... Juliet and Oliver, with their fishing rods, laughing by the lake. ANGLE MOVES CLOSER, onto Juliet's face, as...

The Teacher stares at her features, his eyes shining with a cold malevolence...

106 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

106

Juliet herself, in her white doctor's jacket, strides down a corridor, laughing and flirting with TWO MALE INTERNS. She pauses, seeing...

Annie, lurking by a corner. Grim, furtive, her eyes darting in every direction. Then they meet Juliet's.

107 INT. SUPPLY ROOM - DAY

107

Juliet sits on a stool, between aluminum cabinets, as Annie paces uneasily in the cramped aisle. The door is closed.

ANNIE

You've got to leave us alone now.
Forget you ever met us.

JULIET

He knows out about the judge...

ANNIE

He knows everything. None of us is
safe. Not unless I go along with him.

JULIET

What does Oliver think?

ANNIE

I guess he thinks we ought to be
heroes. But he's wrong...

108 EXT. MRS. KOLODNY'S HOUSE - DAY

108

Oliver, with a suitcase at his feet, stands on his sitter's front porch. He looks miserable. Mrs. Kolodny is beside him.

ANNIE (V.O.)

The courtroom part is over. Now the
jury's going to be sequestered. Mrs.
Kolodny's going to keep him till we
get a verdict...

Annie, in her Subaru, backs down the driveway. She pauses in the street, looking back, gives them a sad little wave.

ANNIE (V.O.)

He's upset, he's pissed at me. But
he's promised to keep his mouth shut,
and that's all I really care about...

Mrs. Kolodny waves back, but Oliver turns on his heel, his face dark, and storms into her house...

109 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

109

Annie lies awake in a twin bed, unable to sleep. Outside the window, a neon sign ("CARUSO MOTEL") is blinking. She turns over, restlessly, and her haunted eyes seem to be staring straight into ours.

ANNIE (V.O.)

You've got to promise too, Juliet.

JULIET (V.O.)

What? That I'll abandon you?

110 EXT. MOTEL ENTRANCE - DAY

110

Under the concrete awning of the Caruso, the JURORS file on to a bus. COPS are standing guard. Annie comes out of the motel, follows the others dully as they troop up the bus's steps...

ANNIE (V.O.)

That you won't tell anyone. Ever.
It's my life, Juliet. What you said,
remember...?

111 EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - DAY

111

The jurors' bus zooms down the highway, preceeded and followed by highway patrolmen on motorcycles...

ANNIE (V.O.)

My life. And my child... Promise me.
Swear it.

JULIET (V.O.)

(hesitates)

I swear I won't tell anyone.

112 INT. JURY ROOM - DAY

112

CLOSE ON the strong hands of the jury's FOREWOMAN as she finishes opening and reading a pile of little yellow slips.

FOREWOMAN (O.S.)

Guilty... Guilty... Guilty...

(a slight hesitation)

Not guilty... Guilty.

The "Guilty" slips go in one big pile, on the left side of a partitioned wooden tray, while the "Not Guilties" - just two of these - go into the right side.

WIDER ANGLE, showing the twelve jurors gathered around a long table in a basement room of the courthouse. The only daylight comes from high casement windows. A silence.

The Forewoman looks up at the others. She's a large black woman, authoritative, a teacher in civilian life.

FOREWOMAN

On the first ballot I count ten
"Guilties" and two "Not Guilties."

Annie is amazed and relieved to have some company. But WIRY ACCOUNTANT, sitting next to her, just looks irritated.

WIRY ACCOUNTANT

All right, wait a minute. I mean, I'm sorry. But can I, can I say this?

FOREWOMAN

Sure.

WIRY ACCOUNTANT

How can anybody think the guy's not guilty? I just - who voted not guilty? Can I ask that?

PASTY MUSICIAN

Yeah, c'mon, what's the deal here?

FOREWOMAN

You can ask. But nobody has to say if they don't want to. I don't think.

Annie draws a breath. That's all it takes - all eyes swing towards her. She's very aware of their combined scrutiny.

FOREWOMAN

What's your reasoning?

ANNIE

Well... I just... The government's witnesses all seemed like maybe they had an axe to grind. Against Boffano.

BLACK STOCKBROKER

I guess so. Shoot a woman's husband right in front of her. Damn.

There's some LAUGHTER at this, nods of agreement.

PASTY MUSICIAN

And that guy that shot him? That guy in the mask? He told Mrs. Riggio he was sent by Boffano.

ANNIE

She was terrified... I'm sure the prosecution is coaching her.

GROANS of disbelief at this. PLUMP HOUSEWIFE speaks up, looking shy and confused.

PLUMP HOUSEWIFE

Well, what about that other witness,
that mob "captain." What was his name?

BLACK STOCKBROKER

DeCicco. Paulie DiCicco.

PLUMP HOUSEWIFE

Yeah. You don't believe him, either?

ANNIE

He made a deal with the government.
He's just looking to save himself.

RETIRED LOCKSMITH, a garrulous old crank, chimes in.

RETIRED LOCKSMITH

She's right. I wouldn't trust that
bum to feed my pet rat. I vote "Not
Guilty," too.

PANTSUITED MATRON

(amazed)

You have a pet rat?

WIRY ACCOUNTANT

Oh for crying out - they've got him on
tape! He said, "I want my problem to
go away." It's an open and shut case!

RETIRED LOCKSMITH

So you say. But not to me, and not to
this young lady here. For us, it's
comme ci, comme ca.

WIRY ACCOUNTANT

"Comme ci comme ca?"

RETIRED LOCKSMITH

It's French. It's French my friend.

WIRY ACCOUNTANT

Oh put a sock in it, pops.

Suddenly they're all gabbling at once, arguing, even SHOUT-
ING. The Forewoman SLAPS her hand on the table, and
finally manages to restore order. She glares at them.

FOREWOMAN

Let's keep it civil, folks, because it
looks like we might be in here a
little longer.

GROANS all around, angry glances at Annie.

FOREWOMAN

Now. Let's take it one step at a time. We'll start by reviewing the prosecution's evidence.

Annie, looking around the table, is feeling a bit better. If only she can stand firm. But for how long...?

113 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

113

MOVING ANGLE shows curtains blowing softly - the slider to the little balcony is open - then the remains of a takeout meal - burgers, fries - resting on a coffee table. Then twin beds. Plump Housewife is a motionless lump in one of them. Annie lies in the other, once again unable to sleep.

The phone RINGS, surprising her. Plump Housewife rolls over, MURMURING in her sleep. Annie picks up the receiver.

ANNIE

Hello?

THE TEACHER (on phone)

Is your roommate asleep?

Annie freezes at his voice. It takes her a few moments to collect herself, look towards Plump Housewife. A whisper -

ANNIE

Yes.

THE TEACHER (on phone)

Hang up the phone. Go out on the balcony. Close the door behind you.

A CLICK as he hangs up. Slowly, a little dazed, she obeys.

114 EXT. ANNIE'S BALCONY - NIGHT

114

Annie comes out, wearing a sweater over her nightgown. She shuts the slider, then looks around, puzzled...

The parking lot below her is half-filled. No one standing there. A police car is parked down at the corner; she can make out the dim shape of TWO COPS inside it. Beyond this, in the near distance, one of the Hudson River bridges; a heavy stream of cars is crossing this, taillights shining brightly, weaving. A sudden MURMUR, close at hand -

THE TEACHER (O.S.)

Annie.

Startled, she turns. He has materialized on the adjacent balcony. Silent, all in black, wraithlike. Alarmed, she throws another look at the police car. Calmly he passes her a pack of cigarettes and a lighter.

THE TEACHER

Light one. Pretend to be smoking.

Trembling, she does so. She won't meet his eyes.

THE TEACHER

It's risky to talk. But I wanted you to know you're never out of my thoughts.

She looks at him, disgusted, then away. He studies her.

THE TEACHER

Did you fight for us today?

ANNIE

I tried.

THE TEACHER

Will we win?

ANNIE

No.

THE TEACHER

Why not?

ANNIE

He's guilty. The others, they all know it.

He looks at her sadly, shakes his head.

THE TEACHER

Annie. Annie. If the jury hangs, if there's a mistrial...? The people I work with, they'd punish you just to punish me.

ANNIE

(surprised)

I thought - if I just - if I keep voting not guilty -

THE TEACHER

No, no, we need an acquittal. You have to win this for us.

She stares at him, startled and angered by this escalation of demands. What he's asking is impossible. Unthinkable.

THE TEACHER

That's why I chose you. Out of all the jurors, I chose you to carry our case because I know who you are when you wake up. When your passion boils.

ANNIE

I can't turn black into white!

THE TEACHER

You can do more than you think you can. "Guard your senses. Temper your sharpness. Simplify your problems."

Annie throws down her cigarette. She seems ready to snap.

THE TEACHER

Look at me, Annie.

(a beat; she looks at him)

You say to the other jurors, "Riggio was killed because he stood in the way of progress. A new kind of empire.

THE TEACHER

And Louie Boffano could never have created such an empire. He could not have compelled it. And the jurors will believe you, Annie. You know why?

He starts to laugh, he can't help himself. As if he were letting her in on the secret joke of the world.

THE TEACHER

Because it's true! It happens to be true... Annie, you could have done this thing, if you'd wanted to. You and I, we're very much alike. We're artists, we're intelligent... But Louie Boffano?

He laughs again. She stares at him. The possibility crosses her mind that for once his every word is credible. He leans across his railing. His voice so soft.

THE TEACHER

Shall I share a little something with you? He's not even going to be around much longer. My Bolivian colleagues despise publicity.

Annie gestures towards the motel, the sleeping jurors.

ANNIE

But they don't know that!

THE TEACHER

They don't know anything. They're ants.

ANNIE

I can't do it! I'm just one out of twelve.

THE TEACHER

No. One out of twelve million.

He points at the bridge, the thick stream of lighted cars.

THE TEACHER

Look at them, Annie. All those other little ants... Living out their little ant lives. Clinging to their little ant comforts. So safe, so mediocre, because they've never been given the gift of terror. Never shivered alone in a closet, stinking of their own fear... Extraordinary actions, extraordinary people, can only arise after we've been destroyed and reborn... I know this, Annie. And I know this about you.

She stares at him, transfixed. His eyes seem to gleam with a pale fire.

THE TEACHER

You're on your own now. You can do this. But you should know that I'll always be with you...

He gently takes her palm, places something into it - a small, shiny object. She looks at it...

ANNIE'S POV - a wireless Lartel microphone.

She looks up, stares at him. He smiles.

THE TEACHER

Every step of the way.

115 INT. JURY ROOM - DAY

115

CLOSE ON Annie's pocketbook, slightly open, resting by her legal pad and pens.

ANNIE (O.S.)

Two people testified about the Teacher...

PULLING AWAY, we see the jurors around their table. Charts of evidence behind them, a blackboard filled with scrawls, lists, questions. They've all turned towards Annie, who's speaking forcefully.

ANNIE

He's mentioned on the surveillance tapes. And you don't want to admit that he even exists?

WIRY ACCOUNTANT

I just don't know who he is.

ANNIE

You don't have to know who he is! You only have to know how powerful he is! Can't you see that? Didn't that get through to you -

PASTY MUSICIAN

Annie. No need to raise your voice.

Annie turns, looks at his friendly smile. A new ally...?

116 INT. THE TEACHER'S ATTIC - DAY

116

The Teacher stands at his electronics rack, adjusting the dials as he listens to Annie's VOICE.

Her reply, when it comes, is softer, more conciliatory.

ANNIE (V.O.)

You're right. Sorry, everybody. I get a little carried away, sometimes...

DISSOLVE TO:

117 INT. COURTHOUSE LOUNGE - DAY (LATER)

117

In an atmosphere of fluorescence and vending machines, the jurors have divided into twos and threes, eating from trays at small formica tables. A little apart from the rest, Annie is sitting next to Pasty Musician.

PASTY MUSICIAN

I don't know, Annie. I just - I don't know.

ANNIE

It's a very confusing case. Really. And I think we're all feeling that.

She puts her hand on his, comfortingly. He looks at her hand for a moment, then up to her smiling face. Hesitates.

PASTY MUSICIAN

You know, if you ever want to try kayak-ing on the Hudson? I mean, after this is all over... I'd be glad to take you with me.

ANNIE

Oh, thank you. I'll think about that.

As she does her best to look smitten, he grins back.

DISSOLVE TO:

118 INT. JURY ROOM - DAY

118

Annie is up now, pacing. Hoarse but still going strong. Her eyes are everywhere; she's working the room.

ANNIE

Think of how they sounded when they said his name. The Teacher. Almost whispering. Big tough mob guys, and he's got them shaking.

WIRY ACCOUNTANT

Oh bullshit!

FOREWOMAN

Barry. Hey. But Annie waves her off. She leans on the table, staring.

ANNIE

No, no, Arlene, let him say what he feels like saying. Go ahead, Barry. This is important.

WIRY ACCOUNTANT

There's nobody called "the Teacher" on trial here!

ANNIE

That's right. That's right. But there's also nobody saying that Boffano pulled the trigger himself. Barry, think about it.

He won't meet her eyes. Suddenly seems less sure of himself.

WIRY ACCOUNTANT

I just, damn it - Boffano, he's the boss. Isn't he? I mean, they work for him.

PASTY MUSICIAN

Well, Barry, I don't know. I think maybe Annie's got a point here.

Annie rewards him with a quick tired smile.

DISSOLVE TO:

119 INT. JURY ROOM - NIGHT

119

MOVING ANGLE on the jury's evidence display: organizational charts of the Carmine drug empire, photos of Boffano, DeCicco, Riggio, etc....

ANNIE (O.S.)

They've got a deal with the Sicilian mafia...

PAN DOWN to the table, now covered with scrawled papers, full ashtrays, crumpled donut bags...

ANNIE (O.S.)

They've got the government of Curacao, and Jamaican runners, and Dutch Antilles money-laundering, and Japanese investments...

END PAN on the piles of voting slips: now there are only three "Guilties" left.

Annie is in a hot quick fury, drawing a sort of manic exhilaration from her own performance. We can see how the others have wilted in the face of her passion, her certainty.

ANNIE

They've got this whole huge web, and one spider sits in the middle of it, one guy scheming the whole thing - and you think it's Louie Boffano?

She slaps at a photo of Boffano, mocking that smug, smirking, slightly plump face.

120 INT. THE TEACHER'S ATTIC - NIGHT

120

The Teacher, like Annie, is pacing. More concerned now; he knows she's reaching a critical juncture.

PLUMP HOUSEWIFE (V.O.)

I don't really understand about all the evidence...

121 INT. JURY ROOM - NIGHT

121

Plump Housewife is looking up at Annie, very troubled. A soft but firm voice.

PLUMP HOUSEWIFE

The wiretapping and, and the money-laundering...? But I know a little boy got killed. An innocent little boy...

PLUMP HOUSEWIFE

And I know that if we set this man free, he'll go back to selling drugs. And hurting other people. Annie, I don't need any evidence for that. I know it.

Probably the longest public speech of her life. The other jurors are moved by her emotion. Even Annie is shaken, momentarily at a loss...

122 INT. THE TEACHER'S ATTIC - NIGHT

122

The Teacher is anxiously still, standing close by his speakers. Hardly breathing. The moment of supreme crisis, and he knows it. What will Annie do? Have they lost?

123 INT. JURY ROOM - NIGHT

123

Annie sits down next to Plump Housewife. More gentle now, but just as insistent. Struggling to control her emotions.

ANNIE

I know what you're thinking, Patty. You're thinking we've got to protect the children. There's all this chaos, and it keeps getting worse and worse and there's nowhere we can go to get away from it... I've got a son myself, not much older than your twins. And I'm terrified that something might happen to him someday.

She pauses. No one breaks in. They're hanging on her voice.

ANNIE

But the law is... the law says that if they don't prove that Boffano committed the crime he's charged with - prove it beyond a reasonable doubt - then we have to set him free. We have to, even though we hate it. And you just - I don't know, you pray you get him next time.

Retired Locksmith nods approvingly. Pasty Musician is in love with her. Even Wiry Accountant is grudgingly impressed.

ANNIE

I'm a woman. A single working mother. And a widow. And I've seen just about how far gets you in this society. I want justice. I care about justice...

ANNIE

But if we try to twist the law, even just a little, for the best of reasons...? Then the law loses whatever strength it has. And then my child's in more danger than ever before. And yours too, Patty...

Patty stares back at her, red-eyed, her lip trembling. But finally gives a little nod to show she understands. Annie looks from her to the others. She's nearly in tears.

ANNIE

And we, in this room? We will have failed to save what's most precious to us. We will... have... failed.

She looks at them. Eleven faces look back at her. No one moves. No one speaks.

124 INT. THE TEACHER'S ATTIC - NIGHT

124

The Teacher, standing by his speakers, pumps his fist. His face is transformed into a look we've never before. Awed by her. Enraptured.

THE TEACHER

(whispers)

You are beautiful...

SOUND UPCUT - MURMURS, SHUFFLING, a crowded room...

COURT CLERK (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, have you reached a verdict in this matter?

125 INT. COURTROOM - DAY

125

The Forewoman is standing, facing the CLERK and, beyond him, Judge Weitzel. Annie, sitting closest to the Forewoman, has her eyes cast down; she looks utterly miserable.

FOREWOMAN

We have.

All eyes move to Boffano, standing at the defense table, with Bozeman beside him. For the first time Boffano betrays a twitch of uncertainty, of fear.

COURT CLERK (O.S.)

As to count one in the indictment, murder in the second degree, do you find the defendant guilty or not guilty?

The packed courtroom is utterly hushed. Waiting.

FOREWOMAN

Not guilty.

A momentary pause, as if all the air had been sucked from the room. Then BEDLAM. UPROAR. Reporters swarm into the aisles, racing for the phones outside. Boffano's friends, family, his assembled foot soldiers, all CHEERING, LAUGHING. GROANS and ANGRY SHOUTS from other spectators. Weit-zel is pounding his GAVEL, but it's hopeless...

From the wall above, the faded face of Justice looks sadly down over this scene...

Gleason, the D.A., sits amidst his staff, the wreckage of his hopes, in utter disbelief. And growing fury. He turns, glaring towards...

The still celebrating Boffano. Bear hugs among his legal team, big sloppy high-fives. Boffano pauses, a little breathless, to look at the jury box...

Annie, in the front row, is numb with self-loathing. She looks up, and for a moment her eyes lock with...

Boffano's, who favors her with a little smirk. And even, in his gleeful arrogance, an unmistakeable wink.

Annie drops her gaze as if stung. The UPROAR CONTINUES in the b.g., as we see...

CLOSE ANGLE ON - Gleason, who has caught this little exchange. He reacts, his mind racing with suspicions, his anger finding a focus, as he stares across the room at Annie...

126 EXT. BOFFANO'S HOUSE - DAY

126

Beefy HOODS in dark suits and shades flank the front door of the "Vittoria Social Club," checking credentials, frisking, and finally granting admittance to a stream of WELL-WISHERS as they exit their Lincolns and Caddies at the curb. WE FOLLOW one COUPLE inside, where we see...

127 INT. BOFFANO'S HOUSE - DAY

127

A raucous victory party/dinner in full swing. Banners overhead ("WELCOME HOME, LOUIE!"), MUSIC over loudspeakers, BIG-HAIRED WIVES, MOB ASSOCIATES, even some KIDS, eating at the thirty or forty round tables, or congregating between them. CAMERA PICKS UP Louie Boffano, making a sort of royal progress through the room - handshakes, backslaps, laughing. At his side is FRANKIE, a huge man, Boffano's most trusted bodyguard.

WE FOLLOW as they make their way to the back of the restaurant, where Eddie waits by the double doors to the kitchen. He pushes one of these open, Boffano goes through, followed by Frankie and Eddie; after a moment MORE HOODS materialize smoothly, blocking the swinging doors.

128 INT. BOFFANO'S BEDROOM - DAY

128

Preceded by Eddie, Boffano and Frankie make their way through the big kitchen, ignoring the KITCHEN WORKERS, who do their best not to stare. At the very back of the room they turn left down a short connecting hallway that leads to the back door, and just before this they pause. Eddie unlocks a door there and remains outside as the other two enter...

129 INT. BOFFANO'S CLOSET - DAY

129

A room full of dirty table linens, soiled chef's jackets in piles on the floor. Frankie closes the door behind them, as Boffano pauses, smiles...

The Teacher is waiting there, leaning against a laundry cart. He straightens as Frankie comes over, frisks him quickly and expertly. There's no sense of anything unusual in this pro-cedure; it's like a handshake. Frankie removes the Teacher's Ruger .22 from its holster in the small of his back, then shoves it into his own straining waistband. He turns to Bof-fano, nods.

The formalities done with, Boffano comes to the Teacher, takes him by the shoulders. He looks him in the eyes, his own eyes shining with pride and satisfaction. Then hugs him.

He speaks quietly, without turning his head.

BOFFANO

Frankie.

Frankie goes to another cart, reaches down, groping into the stained cloths. He pulls out a black attache case, brings it over to the Teacher, as he and Boffano separate. He opens it, showing stacks of neatly bundled hundreds. The Teacher nods.

BOFFANO

For the jury woman. And a down payment on Paulie DeCicco.

Frankie snaps the case shut, hands it to the Teacher, who considers its weight for a moment. He looks up at Boffano.

THE TEACHER

She's not going to be a problem.

Boffano looks at him, a flicker of surprise. Waits for more.

THE TEACHER

I control her. She does what I say.

BOFFANO

She's a loose end.

THE TEACHER

But I'm not through with her.

Boffano's mouth twists into a slow, lascivious grin. The Teacher smiles back, encouraging Boffano's line of thought. But then Boffano shakes his head.

BOFFANO

Nah, I don't think so. Kill her.

He turns to go: the meeting is over. But as Frankie reaches to open the door for him, the Teacher's voice comes again.

THE TEACHER

I'll buy her back.

Boffano turns. Now openly surprised. Frankie is also staring at the Teacher.

THE TEACHER

I'll buy her life from you.

He tosses the attache; Frankie catches it.

THE TEACHER

Paulie you can have for free.

Boffano stares at him. Puzzled, wary - but also amused by the sheer ballsiness of this. He barks with laughter.

BOFFANO

You think she's worth it?

The Teacher looks back at him. His strange pale eyes expressionless. Boffano stares at him a few moments longer, weigh-this. The air is thick with tension. When he finally speaks, all traces of humor are gone.

BOFFANO

Just so we understand. You buy this woman, she's yours. Your responsibility.

The Teacher nods. Boffano looks at Frankie. Looks back at the Teacher. Then shaking his head, he opens the door, goes out. Frankie, holding the attache case, pulls the Teacher's Ruger from his waistband, tosses it to him. A little moment between them; they don't like each other.

Then Frankie goes. As the Teacher holds his gun, his face betrays a hint of re-lief; he really didn't know how this would go. He stands for a moment looking at the Ruger, then tucks it away.

130 INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

130

Another "party" is in progress: Juliet has brought over a gallon of ice cream and a chocolate cake with a candle stuck in it. She glances at Oliver, who is silent, miserable. His ice cream melts, nearly untouched. She looks at Annie, who's equally morose. Finally Juliet can't stand it.

JULIET

OK, I'll talk. "Jules, we're so glad to see you again." Thanks, O-Man. "I hope you haven't been too worried about us." Worried, Annie? Heck no. I'm just happy you're finally going to be able to get your life back together. "Say, tell us about your new boyfriend." I'd love to! His name's Paul, he's a child psychologist, he's got this great apartment in the city -

ANNIE

I really don't want to hear about your latest conquest right now. OK?

Juliet is hurt, but covers it with a rueful shrug.

JULIET

Annie, this is a celebration. You're free. It's over.

Oliver's face is dark. He rises abruptly, shoving his chair back, then rushes out of the room. They hear him POUNDING up the steps.

Annie looks at Juliet for a few moments, dismayed, then hurries after him.

131 INT. OLIVER'S ROOM - NIGHT

131

Oliver is sitting on his bed as Annie opens his door. He looks up at her, near tears.

OLIVER

What if it was me, Mom? What if I was the kid that got shot?

She's miserable, awkward. Trying to find the words.

ANNIE

But you're not... You're not because
I wouldn't let that happen.
Sweetheart, I protected you.

OLIVER

How could you help those guys...?
Mom, how could you go in there and
just lie like that? You totally let
them get away with it!

She goes to the bed, sits beside him. Strokes his hair.

ANNIE

Honey, I know this is hard to accept.
It's hard for me, too. But don't you
understand? I did this for you. So
you'd be safe -

OLIVER

Safe? I don't even know you anymore!
It's like you're one of them!

ANNIE

(stung)

You can't say that. You can't say it!

He is sobbing, red-faced. He pushes her away.

OLIVER

I hate them! You hear me...?

He struggles to his feet. Crosses his room, quick furious
strides, shouting towards the walls, the overhead light,
anywhere that a bug might be planted.

OLIVER

Turn up your goddamn volume, you
creep! I hate you!

Alarmed, she tries to intercept him.

ANNIE

Be quiet!

OLIVER

(pulling free)

I'll get you, I swear to God, I'll
find a way, I'll beat you myself -

ANNIE

Oliver, shut up!

OLIVER

- you son of a bitch! I'll get you!
I'll kill you...!

Annie manages to get both her arms around him, holding him; he struggles wildly but can't break her grip. Then all at once he goes almost limp, sobbing, and turns his face into her neck. Annie is crying too, helpless, ashamed. She looks up, her eyes meeting...

Juliet's, as her friend stands in Oliver's doorway. Hovering there in embarrassed sympathy, not knowing what to say.

132 INT. THE TEACHER'S ATTIC - NIGHT

132

MOVING ANGLE as we slowly approach the Teacher from behind. He's sitting at a small table, eating his dinner, with GO-RECKI'S SYMPHONY playing softly in the b.g. Annie and Oliver's SOBS can also be heard... We can't see his features, but from the set of his neck it's clear he's heard this whole exchange. He takes a single, precise sip of his white wine, then carefully sets down his glass.

133 INT. ANNIE'S STUDIO - DAY

133

Annie, in a sweatshirt and jeans, walks slowly among the tools, crates, and raw materials of her sculptures, looking about. She feels like a stranger in here. An imposter.

She pauses by one nearly-finished piece, flicks a switch. Vapor puffs from a steam machine, while a pair of rotors WHIR about, lashing with hundreds of satin snakes. Letting these strike her hand for a few moments, she tries to summon some spark of interest in the work. She looks up...

The covering-box for this piece is suspended overhead; it dangles from chains.

She disengages the pawl on the winch, slowly lowering the heavy box into position over the sculpture. But as it comes down to eye level, she reacts, surprised...

A single long-stemmed red rose lies atop the box. And a card, on which is written: "I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE YOU."

Annie, staring at this summons, begins to tremble. He is still in her life, even now. He won't leave her alone...

134 INT. DEVOTIONAL SERVICES, INC. - OFFICE AREA - DAY

134

Annie has returned to work; she sits typing at her computer, as bleakly as ever, under the beaming face of the Reverend Calvin Mungo. A shadow falls over her.

A MAN'S VOICE

Annie Laird?

She looks up...

The MAN standing there, a stranger (CAREW), wears a tweed jacket over khakis. Early 40s, attractive. He leans down over the corner of the desk, bringing his face almost intimately close to hers. His eyes survey the other WORKERS in the room; he's smiling and relaxed for their benefit. His voice stays very low.

MAN

Get up quietly. Speak to no one.
Follow me.

He indicates something with his eyes. She looks down...

In his cupped hand, where only she can see it, is an I.D. wallet, showing his photo and a cop's badge.

She looks up, trying to mask her dismay...

135 INT. DEVOTIONAL SERVICES, INC. - SANCTUARY - DAY

135

In a corner of the former church's sanctuary, now used mainly for storage, Annie sits uneasily facing the D.A., Michael Gleason, as well as Carew and two other police detectives, BEARD and WALTERS. In the b.g., piled-up pews, stacks of cartons, broken stained-glass windows.

CAREW

What can you tell us about a man named Roger Boyle?

ANNIE

Never heard of him.

CAREW

No? But he called your motel room when you were sequestered. He took the room next door.

ANNIE

Must've been a wrong number.

CAREW

The funny thing about Mr. Boyle is, he doesn't exist. Credit card, home address, even his company name - all fake.

He leans over from behind her, his face very close.

CAREW

We'd really like to meet Mr. Boyle.

Annie is silent. Gleason's intense stare is unnerving her. But when he finally speaks, his tone is unexpectedly kind.

GLEASON

You know what, Ms. Laird? We don't think you did this for money. We think these guys scared you. They're still scaring you. But now it's time to stop being scared.

ANNIE

I'm sorry, I have no idea what you're talking about.

GLEASON

If you help us, testify for us, we'll put you somewhere safe. You and your boy.

She is silent, torn. Gleason is getting annoyed. He pulls a cellular phone from his jacket, hands it to Carew.

GLEASON

Send a car to the kid's school, right now. Have him picked up.

Carew starts dialing.

ANNIE

No! Stay away from my son!

(Carew stops)

You put us in danger just by getting near us! Don't you bastards understand that?

A silence. Gleason glances at Carew. Back at Annie.

GLEASON

In danger, Ms. Laird? From what?

ANNIE

From the man in the moon. Let me out of here.

CAREW

Ms. Laird, we're trying to help you. But you have to cooperate.

ANNIE

Well I can't.

She rises, but a flash of steel in Gleason's voice stops her.

GLEASON

Suppose we had an unfortunate leak to the press. To the effect that you were cooperating.

GLEASON

That'd make a great story, wouldn't it? "Juror Brings Tampering Charges Against Boffano."

Annie stares at him. Going pale in her fury, her fear.

ANNIE

You do that, and they'll kill my child.

GLEASON

No they won't. If you help us they'll have too many other things to worry about.

ANNIE

Fuck you! You don't know them!

GLEASON

Ms. Laird, I've spent the last fourteen years of my life locking these punks away. They always threaten. Always. But they don't do squat. Let us help, that's what we're here for. Who else will protect you?

Annie is quiet, a long moment, hesitating. Walters is about to speak, but Gleason shakes his head, just slightly, to silence him. Finally Annie looks up at them.

ANNIE

Look, I'm not saying no, but I'll need some time to think about it.

GLEASON

How much time?

ANNIE

Just, just a day or two. But keep your people away from us. You want to watch me, OK. But don't let anyone know you're watching. You hear me?

Gleason glances at Carew. Then stares at Annie, measuring her. Calculating the odds. Finally he pulls a card from his pocket, scrawls something on it.

GLEASON

You've got twenty-four hours. When you're ready to talk, find a secure line. Dial this number. You can trust anybody in this room.

He hands her the card. Frightened, Annie stares at the four faces, one after another. Male. Impassive. Strangers. Is one of them a spy for the Teacher...?

136 EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

136

POV ANGLE on Juliet as she emerges from the hospital, goes to her parked car, in a dimly-lit corner of the lot, and unlocks the door.

ANGLE APPROACHES HER, from behind, till she becomes aware of soft FOOTSTEPS. She turns, surprised and with a jolt of fear, and sees...

The Teacher, walking towards her, an overnight bag over his shoulder. His eyes are intent, predatory... As he reaches her, Juliet stands looking at him a moment longer, a trace of surprise still on her face. Then she reaches a hand to the back of his neck, pulls his lips down to her own, embraces him hungrily. She separates, panting, staring at him; he smiles, langorous, confident in his powers. Kissing him again, she turns, pushing him back against the car. She's hot, impatient, quickly aroused. Her lips slide down to his chin, his neck, his chest; she breaks off, smiling up at him wickedly, before her head sinks further down, O.S.... Accepting this pleasure, his head arches back towards the roof of her car; as this MOTION CONTINUES -

137 INT. JULIET'S CONDO - BEDROOM - NIGHT

137

- his head drops onto a pillow on Juliet's bed. He stares up at her ceiling, his eyes far away. After a few moments Juliet moves up, INTO FRAME. She's straddling him, rubbing her hips against his groin. Her blouse is open, her face flushed. He's frustrating her, not responding.

JULIET

What. What's wrong?

THE TEACHER

Juliet? Would you do a favor?

She grins, nuzzling his chest.

JULIET

I already did. Now it's your turn.

He lifts her chin. Turns his pale eyes towards her.

THE TEACHER

No, for your friend. For Oliver.

JULIET

(puzzled)

Oliver?

THE TEACHER

A huge favor.

JULIET

I don't understand. What is it?

He rises, plucking two Kleenex tissues from her bedside table.

Then from his overnight bag, on a chair, he withdraws three blister packs of pills and a bottle of Ron Botran, handling them with the tissues.

THE TEACHER

Will you take these?

She stares at him, mystified.

JULIET

What are they?

He tosses them onto the foot of the bed.

THE TEACHER

Secobarbital, amobarbital, and rum.
If you take them now, take them
quickly, you can save Oliver's life.

She sits up in bed, turns on a lamp. Blinking.

JULIET

Paul, what on earth are you talking
about?

Setting down the tissues, he lifts his silenced Ruger from the bag, places it gently on a bureau. Then he begins to re-button his shirt. She stares at the gun. Then his face. Her voice is a whisper.

JULIET

Who are you?

THE TEACHER

You haven't figured that out yet? I'm
Annie's friend.

She is stunned. Breathing hoarsely. Pulls her blouse closed.

JULIET

You... bastard, you -

THE TEACHER

When you sent Annie to that judge?
When you were putting Oliver at risk,
this boy you love so much? Then you
had ice in your veins. You felt like
such a heroine. Now I ask if you can
be a real heroine. And take his
place.

JULIET

What... why -

THE TEACHER

I told Annie what I'd do if she betrayed me. And I'm a man of my word.

She stares at him. He's between her and the door. Her eyes move desperately, looking for some weapon. He picks up the Kleenex again, begins to move about the room, expertly removing his fingerprints. Calm, unhurried.

THE TEACHER

The trouble is, Annie didn't believe me. Not really, not in her gut. Then you interfered, and now the police are with her. Babysitting her, waiting for her to break... Which way do you think she's going to go? I think she'll go with her new friends. Unless she gets some kind of signal. A little taste of grief, just enough to make her afraid. I'd rather not kill the boy, you see. She'd become unstable. So that's where you fit in.

He drops the used tissue into his bag, then picks up the Ruger. He gestures towards the pills and rum.

THE TEACHER

It'll be so easy for you. Simple and sweet and painless... And I'll be right here with you.

He crosses to sit at the foot of her bed, the gun cradled in his lap. His voice as soft and earnest as ever.

THE TEACHER

Juliet, will you do it? Will you help me to save Oliver...?

Her eyes are haunted. Staring at the pills. Open but unseeing. Now they slip shut...

138 INT. ANNIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

138

The receiver of the wall phone drops INTO FRAME, dangling, as Annie rushes AWAY FROM CAMERA towards the front screen door, pushes through it, grabs up her morning newspaper, ripping frantically through the pages. We hear a woman's TEARY VOICE on the receiver, still talking.

TEARY VOICE (on phone)

- always told everybody at the hospital how much she loved you...

TEARY VOICE

Annie, who could do this? We're all
just in shock here...

139 EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

139

CLOSE ON the newspaper, in Annie's hands, and an article
headlined "LOCAL DOCTOR IS SUICIDE." With a smiling photo
of Juliet.

Annie, staring at her friend's face, begins to shake...

140 INT. STUDIO - DAY

140

MOVING ANGLE as Annie, screaming, sobbing, grabs up a long-
handled garden shovel, swings it in a rage against the
glass panes of the studio door, shattering them. Then
against a casement window. Flying shards spray the air;
one of them slices her cheek but she ignores it. Then she
turns on her sculptures, swinging the shovel in great
furious two-handed arcs against them. She is howling like
a maddened animal.

Finally spent, she flings away the shovel. Gasping for
breath, on her knees. She finds herself staring at "THE
DREAM OF GIVING NOTICE," which has been reduced to splint-
ers. She picks up the bent bird cage, and its door sags
open... As she stares at this, a new thought seems to be
forming; through the haze of grief we see in her the begin-
nings of a deadly resolve...

141 INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

141

Annie opens her top bureau drawer, tossing aside underwear,
until she finally locates... a pair of passports. Hers and
Oliver's.

142 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

142

Annie sits at her desk, hastily scribbling a letter. The
santos figure sits before her. She finishes her letter,
seals it quickly. Then her eye is caught by the framed
photo of Mickey posing with the Indian kids.

143 INT. KITCHEN - DAY

143

Annie stands at her kitchen sink with a pile of Mickey's
letters, photos of him. She pulls apart a frame, yanks out
a photo, rips it to pieces, stuffing them down her garbage
disposal, then starts in on the rest of the pile. Her mind
is racing, very clear; even through her grief, she feels
the exhilaration of taking action...

144 INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

144

In a duffel bag, we see a pile of folded clothes, and Oliver's Gameboy. On top of this, Annie gently places two treasures she can neither destroy nor part with: her wedding photo and one of Juliet...

145 EXT. SEMINARY LANE - DAY

145

POV ANGLE, from a distance, as Oliver rides his bike up to the house, stands it on the porch, then goes inside, lugging his backpack. Annie's Subaru is still parked out front.

In a dark-grey government sedan, one of the WATCHERS lowers his binoculars, makes a note on a clipboard.

146 INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE - FRONT HALL - DAY

146

Oliver shuts the front door behind him, looking around.

OLIVER

Mom...? Mom...?

The house seems strangely quiet. He is beginning to be a little nervous when he hears her VOICE from upstairs.

ANNIE (O.S.)

Up here.

147 INT. OLIVER'S ROOM - DAY

147

He comes into his doorway, stops in surprise...

The room is nearly dark; its blinds shut. His computer screen is lit up; a game is playing in "demo mode," but with the SOUND OFF...

Annie stands by his desk putting the finishing touches on an impromptu sculpture. Using stuffed clothing, modelling busts, and wigs, she has constructed what looks like two people sitting at his computer: a mother and son. She looks at him, holding a finger to her lips.

ANNIE

I thought we might play a little game.
What do you think?

She motions him to stand back, stay in the hallway. Puzzled, he does so. He is looking at the cut on her cheek, her feverish eyes.

OLIVER

Sure, Mom.

She pushes buttons on his keyboard, restoring the LOUD SOUNDS of the game. Then she steps to one side of his window, swivels the blinds to an open position. Late afternoon sun streams through the cracks, hitting the dummies. She turns, slips out of the room. As she passes Oliver, she motions for him to follow her.

148 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

148

Annie raises a hand for Oliver to wait. He stops. She pauses for one last look around - a final search, and a farewell. Her gaze falls on... the santos figure on her desk. Quickly she crosses, snatches this up.

149 EXT. BACK YARD - DAY

149

Annie slips quietly out the back door, looking around cautiously. No one in sight. She has the big duffel slung over her shoulder. She turns, motions for Oliver to come. They ease the door shut, then sprint across the little strip of backyard, into the woods...

150 INT. THE TEACHER'S COTTAGE - DAY

150

The amplified PINGS and BEEPS of the computer game echo through the nearly-empty space, as...

The Teacher, in lotus position on his mat, reacts with boredom and annoyance. He picks up his remote and with a flick of his finger shuts OFF his speakers...

151 EXT. FILLING STATION - DAY

151

MOVING ANGLE as Oliver, panting a bit, has trouble keeping up with Annie's grim, determined stride. They hurry down a wooded lane, reaching a filling station, where she heads towards a phone booth. He is worried by her strange intensity, this erratic behavior.

OLIVER

Mom, what's up? Where are we going?

ANNIE

Tell you later.

OLIVER

We should talk about this, Mom.

ANNIE

I don't want to talk about it.

OLIVER

Well, OK, but maybe you should talk to Jules. Does she know where we're going?

ANNIE

(a beat)

Wait here. I'm going to call us a cab.

Something in her face, as she thinks of Juliet, frightens him. But she's already slipped into the booth, shutting the door before he can ask another question.

152 INT. DARK-GREY SEDAN - SEMINARY LANE - DAY

152

Det. Beard is sipping coffee from a thermos. Det. Walters glances up from his magazine towards...

Oliver's window. Two figures, sitting at the desk, can just be made out through the blinds...

153 INT. JFK AIRPORT - CHECK-IN AREA - DAY

153

Annie walks back towards Oliver from a ticket counter; she has just one ticket folder in her hand. Other PASSENGERS come and go in the b.g. He is sitting with the duffel bag. His eyes are stricken with foreboding.

OLIVER

It's Juliet, isn't it... Something's happened to her.

Annie hates this. Hates it. But finally cannot spare him.

ANNIE

They made it look like suicide.

His face crumples. She sits beside him, clutches his hands. She has a passion, an intensity, greater than we've ever seen in her. She cannot let him see how terrified she is.

ANNIE

Oliver, listen to me. I need you to be strong now. Stronger than you've ever been. Juliet would want that, too. She'd want us to fight back.

He stares at her. Tears streaming down his cheeks.

OLIVER

What're we gonna do?

ANNIE

I'm going to the police. Just like you always said I should. They'll look after me. But darling, just for a few days, just until it's over, I have to know you're in a safe place. One that only we know about.

OLIVER

What d'you mean?

ANNIE

If you stay here they'll try to control me through you. They might even take you away from me -

OLIVER

No! I'm not going anywhere! I'm staying with you. Mom, you need me.

ANNIE

With you around I can't even think straight. I can't be as strong as I need to be... Oliver, please. You're all I've got. I can't lose you.

He is shaking his head, trying to rise, but she grips his hands tighter. Tears in her own eyes.

ANNIE

Listen to me. Listen. Everything you need is right in this bag. There's a letter for Mickey, too. It'll be just like when we went down there together, last summer. Remember? Soon as you land at Guatemala City, change some dollars. Take a taxi to the bus terminal, buy a ticket for T'ui Cuch. I'll be with you again in just a couple days.

OLIVER

Why can't you come with me? We'll stay down there, Mom, we'll be together and never ever come back. Mom, please.

ANNIE

Sooner or later this man will find us, wherever we try to hide. So I've got to set things right... We can beat him. We can do it, Oliver, but only if we're stronger. Will you help me? Will you do what I'm asking?

He looks at her, a long moment, then finally nods. She hugs him fiercely, her eyes shining.

ANNIE
God I love you.

154 INT. THE TEACHER'S COTTAGE - ATTIC - DAY (DUSK)

154

The Teacher climbs the steps into his attic, breathing hard and sweating from a five-mile run. He scoops up a towel, dabs his face and neck with it as he shuts his door, then crosses to his electronics rack, flips ON the switch labelled "OLIVER'S BR." The shrill SOUNDS of the video game are still playing... His expression changes. He turns DOWN that channel, quickly monitors several others: "ANNIE'S BR"... "KITCHEN".... "LIVING ROOM." Each of these channels is silent. His face darkens as he crosses his floor, scoops up a cellular phone, punches a speed-dial number.

155 INT. EDDIE'S HOUSE - QUEENS, N.Y. - DAY (DUSK)

155

Eddie picks up a RINGING phone in his den.

EDDIE (into phone)
Yeah.

INTERCUTTING -

As the Teacher crosses to his wall display, staring at the photos in the "Annie Museum."

THE TEACHER (on phone)
Something's wrong. She's gone.

EDDIE
Gone?

THE TEACHER
She's up to something. We've got to find her.

EDDIE
Why would she run? Why now?

THE TEACHER
She's in a vulnerable state. A friend of hers died last night.

EDDIE
What friend?

THE TEACHER
That doctor.

At the end of a hallway, Eddie can see his WIFE and TEENAGED DAUGHTER, setting the dinner table. He is sickened.

EDDIE

Oh Jesus, what'd you do that for?

THE TEACHER

There's no suspicion of foul play.

EDDIE

Fuck you, "no suspicion." OK? Fuck you. Annie did what we asked her to. Now let her go.

The Teacher is staring at his enlarged copy of a photo from Annie's house. Her smiling, happy face, at the gallery open-ing. He reaches to touch her.

THE TEACHER

Eddie, be truthful. You love her too, don't you? How can we let her go?

Eddie, gripping his receiver, is very troubled by this. As he hesitates, not knowing how to respond, we hear a SOUND UPCUT - Gleason's voice.

GLEASON (V.O.)

Ms. Laird, if you won't tell us where your son is, how can we shield him...?

156 INT. DEVOTIONAL SERVICES - SANCTUARY - NIGHT

156

Annie sits on a table, her flannel shirt hiked up in back, as a POLICEWOMAN stands behind her. She is taping a tiny Technodyne transmitter, no bigger than a matchbook, to Annie's armpit. It's antenna wire runs along her bra strap.

Gleason, Carew, and Walters face her. Walters wears headphones and is adjusting the controls of a mobile receiver. In the b.g. other COPS are still setting up desks, phone lines, etc., creating a temporary command post.

ANNIE

I don't want you to shield him. I want you to do your job.

GLEASON

What's my job, Ms. Laird? Tell me my job.

ANNIE

Your job is to investigate murders. Like that of Juliet Morse.

GLEASON

We're doing that. It takes time.

ANNIE

But you do believe it was murder? It was murder, you know. The Teacher killed her.

GLEASON

What I believe doesn't much matter without evidence. We're doing our best, Ms. Laird. You'll just have to trust me.

ANNIE

I talked to you one time, and my best friend got killed. Now you're saying I should trust you, and everything will be OK...? No. No. From here on out, I'll trust myself.

She looks back at Gleason, unflinching. The policewoman pulls her shirt back down, smooths it. Carew crosses for a critical scrutiny.

CAREW

Looks good to me. Steve?

Walters, in his headset, nods: I'm receiving her perfectly.

CAREW

(to Annie)

OK. What's our bailout code?

ANNIE

"I'm getting a headache."

CAREW

Very good. If you say that, one of the mobile units will get to you within two minutes. If he decides to pat you down -

ANNIE

He won't. He thinks I'm timid, he's used to me being timid. He'd never touch me if I didn't want him to. He likes to be thought of as a gentleman.

They look at her. She looks back at them steadily. A pause.

GLEASON

OK then. We're all set.

157 EXT. A BUS IN GUATEMALA - DRIVING - DAY

157

An ancient bus GROANS its way around a mountain curve, as tropical forests stretch away into the distance. Crates, suitcases, sacks and bicycles are strapped to the roof...

158 INT. THE BUS - DRIVING

158

Oliver stares out at his window at the passing scenery. He's the only Anglo aboard; the seats and aisle are packed with INDIANS, all ages and sizes, with their sacks, boxes, a few cages of live chickens, even a tethered goat.

ANNIE (V.O.)

Dear Mickey. I'm sorry there was no way to warn you about this. Or ask your permission. But you're more of a father to Oliver than anyone he's ever known. I trust you to keep him safe, and raise him right...

In the seat next to Oliver, an INDIAN BOY about his age (JUAN CALMO) is looking with shy interest at the Gameboy in Oliver's lap. Noticing this, Oliver turns the machine on, hands it to the boy.

ANNIE (V.O.)

If I don't make it, tell him that at least I tried. That I didn't give in, not this time... Tell him there is a possibility for justice in this world.

Juan Calmo smiles, his dark eyes shining, as he touches the controls uncertainly. Oliver grins, shows him how to place his fingers...

ANNIE (V.O.)

Tell him that I loved him very much.

159 INT. ANNIE'S STUDIO - DAY (DAWN)

159

MOVING ANGLE as, in the early twilight, Eddie silently opens the side door to Annie's barn, slips inside. Looking around, he is startled by the broken glass, the shattered artworks. He pulls a .38 from inside his windbreaker, then makes his way carefully across the floor, trying not to crunch on the glass. As he comes around a corner, he is surprised to see...

Annie sitting there, waiting patiently. Dressed now in a fresh blouse, jeans. She looks at him calmly.

ANNIE

Where is he?

EDDIE

(pause)

Annie, I wanted... I wanted to tell you something. I mean, I wanna tell you what I think about all this -

ANNIE

You know what? I really don't give a
shit what you think.

He stares at her, another moment. Not mad but hurt.

160

EXT. CLOSED-UP COUNTRY RESTAURANT - DAY

160

Eddie's Buick pulls off the highway next to a boarded-up restaurant, its rusted sign CREAKING in the wind. The Teacher's Jaguar is already waiting there...

Annie gets out of Eddie's car, crosses around it. Watches as the Teacher comes towards her. He starts to say something, but she puts a finger to her lips, shakes her head. He stops, surprised. She points to her chest. Then she looks up and down this stretch of rural road. No cars, no people... Eddie is watching through his open window, puzzled...

Annie slowly unbuttons her blouse. She hesitates, then holds back the sides. Looking steadily at the Teacher...

Between her breasts, a tiny microphone is clipped to her bra. Eddie looks at the Teacher, amazed. The Teacher smiles slowly. His eyes shining with pride at his most perfect pupil...

Annie tugs gently at the surgical tape under her armpit. Uproots the transmitter, disengages the antenna wire from her bra. Then leaning in past Eddie, she carefully sets the whole contraption on the seat next to him. When she comes back out of the window, she finds herself looking right into Eddie's eyes. He starts to speak; she shakes her head. Then she pulls a note from her jeans pocket, hands it to him. Eddie opens it, reads -

ANNIE (V.O.)

"Eddie, don't say a word. Drive
around, anywhere. Give us half an
hour, pick me up here."

He looks back at her; their eyes hold, a long moment. Hers with a kind of plea. His concerned. Finally, and it seems reluctantly, he nods. She backs away from his car... The Teacher and Annie watch as Eddie's Buick pulls out of the lot. He turns, looks at her. She is re-buttoning her blouse. Her eyes averted. A pause.

THE TEACHER

What do you think of them?

ANNIE

Who?

THE TEACHER

Your new friends. The minions of the law.

ANNIE

They're dickless wonders.

THE TEACHER

(smiles)

They're only trying to protect you, Annie. Oliver, too. They have him now, I presume?

She nods, finishing her shirt. Then looks up at him fiercely.

ANNIE

I hate you, you know that. I'd kill you if I could. For what you did to Juliet, I'd kill you ten times over...

He looks back at her steadily. She can't face his pale eyes, and her voice falters.

ANNIE

But at least - at least you're not weak, like those cops. Fumbling bureaucratic bastards. I hate you. But I don't... I can't disrespect you.

He stares at her. His voice is a tense, pleased whisper.

THE TEACHER

Annie.

She looks up at him. Tears of anger in her eyes.

ANNIE

Don't smile at me. Don't you ever fucking think you can smile at me, you son of a bitch, after what you did to my friend.

She turns away, walks a few angry strides. He starts to follow, to touch her, then thinks better of it. She stops, her back to him. Her voice, when it comes, is barely a whisper. A softness has crept into it, something yielding, more like resignation.

ANNIE

What I hate the most...? What I hate the most is that you were right. I am stronger.

(pause)

I went back into my studio again and looked at all my old work.

ANNIE

And it all seemed so - safe. No guts,
no pain, no fire... That's the way my
whole life was. Smother the passion.
Anything that frightens me, lock it
out. Eyes down, keep marching... And
now I don't want to live like that
anymore. Little and scared. I can't.
Does that please you, you bastard,
what a good student I am?

He swallows, rapt with attraction, the intensity of his
love.

THE TEACHER

Yes.

ANNIE

What I've learned from you - you've
changed me. I do hate you. I can't
lie about that. But that's... that's
not all I feel.

The Teacher stares at her, almost holding his breath.

THE TEACHER

Annie...

161 INT. EDDIE'S BUICK - DRIVING - DAY

161

Eddie is driving along, with Annie's transmitter still
lying on the seat beside him. He glances at it, then
grins, an idea coming to him. He reaches over, turns on
his RADIO, surfing through some channels...

162 INT. DEVOTIONAL SERVICES - SANCTUARY - DAY

162

Carew, Beard and Walters are hunched anxiously over their
receiver. Walters winces and pulls off his headset. They
hear a LOUD RAP SONG, and look at one another, mystified...

163 EXT. A MEADOW - DAY

163

Annie and the Teacher have walked beyond the restaurant,
into a rocky meadow thick with spring wildflowers. Ringed
by hills; beautifully peaceful.

ANNIE

What I don't understand, though - you
have more strength than anyone I've
ever met. But still, you work for
Louie Boffano. For that, that -

THE TEACHER

Dickless wonder?

ANNIE

Well. If he's a friend of yours -

THE TEACHER

(laughs)

Louie Boffano's not anyone's friend.
He's a cockroach. I already told you,
he'll be dead within a year.

ANNIE

He won't give up without a fight.

THE TEACHER

He'll never even see me coming. Any
more than Riggio did.

Annie sits on a boulder, considering this.

ANNIE

Riggio and Boffano... Rodney Grosso.
Juliet. Am I next?

He kneels beside her, gazing at her intently.

THE TEACHER

Annie, no. Don't you see? I was
always there, waiting for them. I was
their destiny. Just like you've
always been mine...

He reaches for her hand, then hesitates. An odd moment of
delicacy. Of vulnerability. Then does take it. She looks
down at their two hands, trembling.

THE TEACHER

The Tao has delivered you to me. A
magnificent gift. Not looked for, not
sought after, but simply set before
me... A creature of fire and air... a
vessel of pure power..... a vessel of
pure power.

She can hardly breathe. He strokes her palm with his
finger-tips, the lightest touch possible.

THE TEACHER

Annie...? Annie, I'm sorry you hate
me. Because I love you. I do love
you. Our two spirits are linked
forever.

He turns to look at her. A pause. She reaches up and lays
her hands on his temples and draws his face down to hers.
She is weeping as their lips brush, the softest kiss
imaginable. They separate for a moment.

Her tears are on his lips, he can taste them. He stares at
her. Then leans in again, but she pulls back.

ANNIE

No. Too soon.

She rises, starting back towards his car. He follows her quickly, blocking her path. She won't meet his eyes now. He wants to touch her again, to take her in his arms. But again that odd delicacy; he restrains himself.

THE TEACHER

Will you - see me again?

She can't speak. Tears still on her cheeks. For a moment she looks as if she's going to shake her head. Then -

ANNIE

Soon. Give me some time. Please.

164 EXT. T'UI CUCH - GUATEMALA - DAY

164

MOVING ANGLE as we see INDIAN MEN AND WOMAN kneeling in the village plaza, arranging masses of flowers into decorative patterns: preparations for a festival. Men on ladders are stringing lights up, while another group erects a viewing stand. Mickey, kneeling with a hammer, is among these men. He looks up, hearing a COMMOTION...

A bus is coming to a stop in the dusty plaza, with a triumphant HONKING, much clashing of GEARS. Swarms of excited KIDS race towards it, SHOUTING happily as the first PASSENGERS begin to emerge...

Mickey, seeing something that amazes him, rises slowly to his feet...

Oliver has stepped out, with his duffel, and stands blinking in the hot sun. Juan Calmo, beside him, is looking around excitedly, until his eyes meet Mickey's. He shouts.

JUAN CALMO

Sen-or Alvarado! Sen-or Alvarado!

Mickey, puzzled but happy, begins walking towards the boy...

They meet in the middle of the plaza, as Juan Calmo and his young FRIENDS crowd around them, pleased and curious. For an awkward moment neither the man nor the boy know what to say, or do. Then Mickey throws his arms around Oliver in a hug. Oliver hugs him back, almost tearful in his relief.

CAREW (V.O.)

What the hell were you doing out there on Route 22?

165 INT. DEVOTIONAL SERVICES - SANCTUARY - DAY

165

Annie sits on a folding metal chair, peeling the transmitter and wires from under her shirt, while Carew circles furiously. Gleason watches, suspicious.

ANNIE

He told me to get out of the car.

CAREW

Yeah? How come we didn't hear that?

ANNIE

He motioned me, OK? But after a couple minutes nobody showed up, so he motioned me to get back in again. You figure it out. But right now I'm exhausted and I'm going home.

She rises, tossing the transmitter to Carew. Gleason blocks her path.

GLEASON

Sit down. I want to know what's going on in your head.

Annie stares at him furiously.

ANNIE

What's going on in my head? My child. That's all. Just my child.

GLEASON

Sit down.

She's right in his face, her eyes flashing.

ANNIE

You want more out of me today? Then arrest me.

ANNIE

Get me a lawyer, let's see what he says. Go ahead, do it.

(Gleason is silent)

And meanwhile, get fucked.

She walks straight out of the room. Gleason stares at Carew in angry frustration. Carew hurls the transmitter against the wall.

166 EXT. BOFFANO'S RESTAURANT - DAY

166

Boffano, in rolled-up shirtsleeves, sits at a table by his pool. He is reading a newspaper and drinking espresso. In the b.g., elaborate landscaping, a stucco mansion.

Frankie and two other bodyguards, ANGELO and DOM, sit nearby, play-ing cards. Seeing them stand up, ease their jackets open, Boffano himself turns, looks...

Flanked by another pair of dark-suited HOODS, Annie is striding towards him. Eddie trails her. In the distance, the main gate of this walled compound; Annie's Subaru is parked just outside.

As Boffano watches in surprise...

Annie stops, ten feet away; Frankie has stepped forward, blocking their path. He looks at Eddie, incredulous.

FRANKIE

Are you oughta your fuckin mind?

EDDIE

It's OK. Louie's gotta hear this.

Annie steps around Frankie. Coming closer, on her own. Very much alone now, as Eddie hangs back. She looks at Boffano.

ANNIE

Do you recognize me?

Boffano looks at her, a long moment. Looks at Eddie. Then back at her. A puzzled smile, with no humor in it at all.

BOFFANO

Yeah, sure. What do you want?

ANNIE

I have something for you.

She reaches one hand behind her back. Immediately guns blossom in Frankie and the other hoods' hands; hammers are COCKED. Annie freezes, looking into the barrels. Eddie raises both palms.

EDDIE

It's OK.

Annie's hand reappears, empty. She looks at Eddie, scared. He gives her a little nod of encouragement: Go ahead. Just like we discussed it.

Annie walks slowly closer to Boffano as he stares first at her, then at Eddie. Dangerously confused.

ANNIE

It's a peace offering. I want to make an arrangement with you. I give you a gift. And I promise I won't co-operate with the cops. Then you leave me alone. Me, my family and my friends.

BOFFANO

I'm not interested in your gift.

ANNIE

Oh yes you are.

Her hand moves behind her back again, to her waistband, then reappears holding an Olympia minicassette recorder.

ANNIE

Just \$49.95 at K-Mart.

Boffano looks at the tape recorder. Then at Annie. We see a glint of curiosity in his cruel eyes.

167 INT. THE TEACHER'S COTTAGE - DAY

167

CLOSE ON a cellular phone as it RINGS. After a few moments the Teacher's hand comes INTO FRAME, lifts the receiver to his face.

EDDIE (on phone)

It's me. Louie wants a meet.

The Teacher is instantly curious. Stands staring towards the photos in the Annie museum.

THE TEACHER

When?

168 INT. A PAY PHONE - DAY

168

Eddie stands at a pay phone at a highway rest stop. Cars WHIZZING by in the b.g.

EDDIE

Today. 6 p.m. The parkway.

INTERCUTTING -

as the Teacher takes this in. A beat. His voice remains calm, thoughtful.

THE TEACHER

In broad daylight, Eddie? In front of others?

EDDIE

He said it's important.

THE TEACHER

But why such urgency?

EDDIE

He says he was right in the first place. About Annie. We can't trust her. He wants her taken out.

A spark of something nameless, deep in the Teacher's eyes.

THE TEACHER

What about you, Eddie? Do you want her "taken out," too?

EDDIE

What do you mean?

THE TEACHER

I was under the impression you've developed a certain fondness for her.

EDDIE

Yeah, well. That's history. This is business. Y'know?

Eddie's a good liar, but not good enough to fool the Teacher. He's now alert in every fiber, sensing some nameless danger.

THE TEACHER

Sure, Eddie. I know.

He hangs up. Then crosses slowly to his electronics rack, where he picks up his Ruger semi-automatic. He stands very still, his mind racing, considering the heft of this in his hand...

169 INT. JFK - CONCOURSE - DAY

169

Amidst a stream of other departing and arriving PASSENGERS, Annie hurries down a long corridor, lugging a suitcase...

170 EXT. HUDSON RIVER PARKWAY - DAY (DUSK)

170

Boffano's black stretch Lincoln sits in a deserted recreation area, on a bluff overlooking the river. Frankie, Angelo and Dom stand by it, smoking, chatting. They look up as...

The Teacher's bronze Jaguar purrs down the exit ramp and comes to a halt sixty feet away.

The Teacher emerges, walks towards Boffano's car.

As he approaches, Boffano and Eddie open their doors, climb out of the back seat. The Teacher is smiling, cheerful, as Frankie intercepts him, frisks him, the usual ritual, which the Teacher endures patiently. Frankie smiles at him, this time with a hint of extra enjoyment.

He removes the Ruger, which he sticks down past his fat belly into his waistband. Then nods to Boffano.

FRANKIE

He's clean.

Boffano slips his arm around the Teacher's shoulders, gives him a hug, a little too hard.

BOFFANO

Can't be too sure, huh, pal?

He smiles. The Teacher smiles.

BOFFANO

C'mon. Walk with me. We need to talk.

As they stroll slowly towards the picnic tables, Eddie, Dom, Angelo and Frankie follow at a respectful distance.

BOFFANO

More than ten years we've been working together. Isn't that right?

(the Teacher nods)

And anytime you got some fancy idea, some new thing you wanted to try, well hell, I had the manpower, I had the organization, we worked it out. And we both got rich. More than ten years, huh?

THE TEACHER

This is a long speech from you, Louie. I'm honored.

He smiles. Louie smiles too. Indicates a picnic table, where they both sit. Eddie and the others pause twenty feet away. watching warily.

BOFFANO

But you know what? I don't know the first thing about what makes you tick. Isn't that funny? In all those ten years, I never learned a thing.

THE TEACHER

Really? And I think of myself as such a simple man.

Boffano takes Annie's minicassette recorder from his pocket, setting it down on the table. Then pushes "play."

THE TEACHER'S VOICE

"Louie Boffano's not anyone's friend. He's a cockroach...."

The Teacher is stunned. Boffano stares at him.

THE TEACHER'S VOICE

"I already told you, he'll be dead within a year."

As the Teacher grasps the full impact of Annie's betrayal, a shadow crosses his face, something we've never seen there before. Pain and humiliation. Real hurt.

ANNIE'S VOICE

"He won't give up without a fight."

THE TEACHER'S VOICE

"He'll never even see me coming. Any more than Riggio did."

Boffano reaches out a thick finger, stabs the stop button. He leans across the table, closer to the Teacher. His voice is sour with contempt. His face a chilling mask.

BOFFANO

This woman that you paid money for?
That you think is in love with you...?
She wants you fucking dead.

The Teacher is slowly recovering. Coming back into himself from some far away place. But Boffano is brisk for business.

BOFFANO

(to the others)

Get it done.

Angelo, Eddie and Dom step quickly forward, pulling out their handguns. Dom puts the muzzle of his Glock onto the Teacher's temple.

DOM

Move.

The Teacher rises, looking for a moment at Eddie. Understanding that he was also part of this betrayal. Eddie looks back at him, unflinching. The Teacher remains eerily calm as Angelo and Dom each take one of his arms, leading him off towards the bluffs. Eddie follows...

Boffano stares after them for a moment more, then turns on his heel, starting back towards his limo. Frankie dutifully follows...

The Teacher and his three executioners reach a low rock wall. Far below this are rusty railroad tracks, then the brown tumbling river. The Teacher looks down at this lonely place for a moment, sighs.

THE TEACHER

Eddie, can I make a request? For old time's sake?

EDDIE

What.

THE TEACHER

I want you to do something for me. I want you to take one last good look at Frankie.

Eddie turns. Dom and Angelo look, too...

Boffano is just getting into the back seat of the limo, as Frankie shuts his door. Then Frankie maneuvers his own bulk into the driver's seat, the car rocking a bit. Shuts his door, too...

Eddie looks at the Teacher. A split-second of alarm in his eyes - it's just starting to register as -

CLOSE ANGLE - the Teacher shakes his wrist; a remote control device drops from his sleeve into his palm and he presses its button, all in the same motion, as we see...

INT. BOFFANO'S LIMO - FRONT SEAT - DAY (DUSK)

CLOSE ON the Teacher's Ruger, in Frankie's waistband, as it suddenly ERUPTS in an EXPLOSION - flames, blood, chunks of flesh all splattering outwards, as...

EXT. BOFFANO'S LIMO - DAY (DUSK)

The interior of the car, seen through its shattering windows, becomes a horrifying, almost instantaneous fireball. We have a brief glimpse of Boffano, in the back seat, his mouth open in a scream, his body engulfed in flames...

EXT. THE BLUFFS - DAY (DUSK)

Angelo, stupefied, is still staring at this disaster as the Teacher twists, seizing his gun hand, aiming it, making him squeeze the trigger, the 9mm spitting bullets into...

Dom's head and neck, as he CRIES OUT, tumbles, and Eddie is whipping around, ROARING, his own muzzle flaming towards the Teacher..

But hitting Angelo instead, whose body the Teacher has yanked between them; then even as Angelo SCREAMS, begins to fall, the Teacher is aiming his dying gun hand at Eddie, FIRING again and again, as...

Eddie staggers backwards, his chest a bloody horror, before staring at the Teacher in surprise. His gun falls from his hands and he collapses like a rag doll.

The Teacher crosses, looks down at him curiously. Eddie is trying to speak, through bloody lips, but can't.

THE TEACHER

How is it possible that you're still alive?

He kneels beside him, tossing aside the empty Glock, and picks up Eddie's own .38. In the b.g. the Lincoln is still a CRACKLING mass of fire. Softly, gently -

THE TEACHER

This was all about trying to protect her son. I see that now. He's keeping her from being reborn... I won't let her be an ant, Eddie. I must give her the gift of terror.

Eddie's lips are still moving, but helplessly. The Teacher leans closer, a whisper -

THE TEACHER

Embrace the Tao.

He cocks the gun, aims it at Eddie's face. As Eddie stares back at him - defiant, unflinching - we hear the ROAR OF A JET PLANE...

171 INT. AVIATECA PLANE - FLYING - NIGHT

171

Annie, wrung out with exhaustion and nerves, stares down through her window at the New York City skyline. Finally, mercifully, tilting away below her. She takes a deep breath, exhales. The first moment of true relief she's felt in many weeks. She lets her head drop back, squeezes her eyes shut. Only to open them again, a few moments later, as...

The Teacher takes the seat next to hers.

THE TEACHER

Annie. What a surprise.

A scream boils up inside her. Gently he places his hand behind her neck. His eyes are very bright. A soft murmur.

THE TEACHER

Annie, I begged you to believe me. I begged you. But now I can't change what's going to happen. And we both know what that is. I'm going to have to see you holding the body of your dead son in your arms.

He pulls her towards him, obscenely, forcing her to embrace him. She struggles, pushing hard, crying out.

ANNIE

No - NO...!

NEW ANGLE - as a uniformed AIRLINE STEWARD is anxiously touching Annie's shoulder. She slaps at his hand, pushing him away, still frantic as she reawakens. The Teacher has disappeared.

STEWARD

Miss? Are you all right?

Annie stares at him, wild-eyed. Coming slowly back to herself, but still haunted by her nightmare...

172 EXT. SEMINARY LANE - NIGHT

172

Detectives Beard and Walters, in their dark-grey sedan, suddenly peel away from their surveillance post near Annie's house. As they accelerate, we catch a snatch of POLICE-BAND RADIO through their open windows.

POLICE RADIO

- Taconic Parkway, Cedar Glen
overlook, repeat, five confirmed
DOA's, and the car is Louie Boffano's -

Walters sticks a flashing mars light on the roof, and Beard punches on the SIREN as they speed away. They pass a side road, where we can make out the silhouette of a car idling without its lights: the Teacher's Jaguar...

173 INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

173

MOVING ANGLE across the chaos of an almost frenzied search: books ripped from shelves, papers, the scattered drawers of Annie's desk, flung impatiently across the floor along with their contents... The Teacher SLAMS shut a final drawer, frustrated. He looks around, concentrating fiercely, Where has she gone, where, there's got to be a clue here somewhere... He starts towards the stairs but something stops him. He turns, his eyes probing again, trying to absorb nuances out of thin air. Something feels different here, some-thing is missing... There.

POV ANGLE, MOVING CLOSER - to Annie's desk. To the spot on it, now bare, where her santos figure used to sit...

174 INT. THE STONE COTTAGE - NIGHT

174

ANGLE ON the Teacher's enlarged photo of the santos figure, next to a shot of Annie's face. PAN to him, kneeling on his floor, racing through a stack of other photos. Juliet, Annie, Oliver, more Juliet, more Oliver - wait. This one...

CLOSE ON the Teacher's copy of the photo of Mickey, posing with the Indian kids in the plaza at T'ui Cuch. Whitewashed church behind them...

The Teacher reaches for a magnifying glass, holds it over the photo. He leans closer, his pale eyes gleaming with excitement...

MAGNIFIED ANGLE - MOVING from Mickey's face to the church... then up past its front doors to a large niche in the wall. Where we see a familiar, life-sized santos carving: the model for Annie's copy...

175 EXT. T'UI CUCH, GUATEMALA - CHURCH - DAY (DAYS LATER)

175

The life-sized santos figure is lifted by VILLAGE MEN from her niche above the church doors, then gently, reverently passed down to waiting hands below. She is set into standing position on a litter, decorated with flowers, then this litter, in turn, is lifted to the shoulders of eight sturdy men. CHEERS break out from the assembled SPECTATORS as the santos rises, beginning her festival journey...

176 EXT. MARKETPLACE - PARKING AREA - DAY

176

Nearby, close to the open-air marketplace, a chartered bus is just pulling into position; several others are already parked. TOURISTS begin to emerge from it, quickly mingling with the throngs of local spectators. Most of these tourists appear to be Hispanic, city families out for a day in the country, but a few anglos are mixed in - hippies, retirees, even middle-class vacationers. We FOLLOW them towards...

177 EXT. PLAZA - DAY

177

The center of the celebration. Crowds of INDIANS in gaily-colored huipils fill the big plaza. Many of them are joyously drunk, and some are wearing masks - deer, dog, jaguar. Everywhere we look there are impromptu entertainments underway - jugglers, a fire-eater - brilliant masses of cut flowers, elaborately woven paper decorations, and a general b.g. throbbing of MARIMBAS, BASS DRUMS, and CHILIMIAS...

POV ANGLE as the santos procession, accompanied by banners and musicians, starts a slow circuit of the plaza.

This sight is greeted by more CHEERS, LAUGHTER, excited SPANISH and INDIAN VOICES, all adding to the general din. Mickey has to speak loudly to make himself heard.

MICKEY (O.S.)

Once a year, at Carnaval, Santa Armida makes a tour of her village...

MOVING ANGLE as Mickey guides Annie through the happy chaos in the center of the plaza. She is trying, not very successfully, to get into the spirit of all this.

MICKEY

Then she leads her people to victory
again over the conquistadores. See?
There's one now...

A gaggle of excited CHILDREN are chasing a CONQUISTADORE in clownish armor. He wears a painted wooden mask with exaggeratedly anglo features - pink cheeks, curly blond hair and giant mustaches. He shouts at the kids in a falsetto voice, mock-threatening with his sword, to their delight. But when one kid sneaks up and kicks his rear, the conquistadore cries out in fright and runs away, pursued by the giggling kids.

MICKEY

Nobody can party like a bunch of
Mayans. That's one of the things I
love about them.

Annie smiles, but still looks tense. Her eyes are restlessly searching...

The faces in the crowd. So many people, so many strangers. Even the shadows between buildings seem menacing to her... Mickey has followed her gaze. He looks back at her.

MICKEY

Are you OK?

ANNIE

I don't like being away from Oliver.

MICKEY

He's with the other kids. It's a great honor that they've made him part of all this.

She nods, still tense. He touches her arm.

MICKEY

Annie, you're safe here. You're among friends. These people may look gentle, but they've been fighting oppressors for five hundred years.

(grins)

Besides - who's gonna mess with Santa Armida?

She tries to smile, but he sees she's still wary.

178

EXT. MARKETPLACE - DAY

178

POV ANGLE as a 10-year old girl in a beautiful huipil smiles shyly, posing for a photograph...

The Teacher lowers his instamatic, smiling back. He's wearing a flowered shirt under a khaki jacket, and has a camera bag slung over his shoulder. He kneels to bring his face closer to hers.

THE TEACHER

Como se llama?

GIRL

Margarita.

THE TEACHER

Margarita. That's a very pretty name. Tell me, Margarita. Conoze un muchacho, un Americano, se llama Oliver?

She shakes her head shyly. He smiles.

THE TEACHER

De acuerdo. Gracias.

He pats the child on the head, then turns, walks on. She watches him curiously...

179 EXT. FOUNTAIN - DAY

179

As the litter bearing Santa Armida continues its circuit of the plaza, it passes a stone fountain, or pilas, where a gang of village BOYS are gathered, putting the finishing touches on their warrior costumes. Juan Calmo is there, and Oliver beside him. Oliver grins, waving happily to Annie and Mickey, who are making their way towards him through the crowd. They wave back...

180 EXT. MARKETPLACE - DAY

180

The Teacher moves through an area of open-sided, thatch-covered huts, where VENDORS are doing a brisk business in fruits, cigarettes, colas, souvenirs. His eyes are everywhere, searching, absorbing the details of the fiesta. He stops a MAN WITH A GOLD TOOTH and a tray of boiled nuts.

THE TEACHER

Podria ayudarme? Conoze un muchacho, un gringo, se llama Oliver Laird?

GOLD TOOTH

Oh-levar? Ah, si, si. El gringito? Si, si.

THE TEACHER

Y donde esta?

GOLD TOOTH

Ahorita?

He turns, scanning the plaza. Suddenly points.

GOLD TOOTH

Oh-levar.

The Teacher turns, sees...

Oliver, in the distance by the fountain. Juan Calmo, evidently the leader of the "warriors," waves his spear for the others to follow him, and they fall into place behind the marching litter. As he goes, Oliver dons his mask - a distinctive yellow one with a fierce expression...

The Teacher tosses a quetzel note to the vendor, then takes a handful of nuts, pops one in his mouth.

THE TEACHER

Gracias.

WE LINGER for a moment on the ragged man, as he watches the Teacher set off after Oliver. His dark eyes and Mayan face are as enigmatic as a stone carving.

181 EXT. PLAZA - DAY

181

Annie and Mickey are trying as best they can, in the press of the crowd, to follow the procession, keeping Oliver in sight...

His bright yellow mask can be seen bobbing along, amidst all the others. The marimbas and bass drums are POUNDING; the spectators are CHEERING the saint and her warriors, who now move up to form a vanguard...

Elsewhere in the crowd, the Teacher is slipping through, also keeping an eye on Oliver. He pauses as he spots...

HIS POV - Annie and Mickie, about forty yards away. Many spectators are between him and them; they haven't seen him.

The Teacher's expression darkens as he stares at Annie. He alters his course, keeping well clear...The entire procession now turns, leaving the plaza, heading off into the maze of narrow village streets. The boy warriors are leading the way, with Santa Armida, the musicians, and swarms of spectators following them...

CLOSE ON Annie, turning in confusion...

HER POV - heads in the crowd, faces - but she has lost sight of Oliver.

An almost solid mass of people in front of her; the "parade" route collapses in on itself, after the saint has passed, and everyone is milling in the dirt street.

ANNIE

Where'd he go?

MICKEY

This way.

He takes her hand, leading her towards a shortcut, down another lane, between adobe huts with thatched roofs. But progress is slow; their way is impeded by the sheer press of bodies.

182 EXT. DIRT LANE - DAY

182

The Teacher stops a passing MAN IN A STRAW HAT.

THE TEACHER

Por favor. Yo soy un amigo de Oliver Laird. The, the, what's the word? Procession -

STRAW HAT

Procesion, si.

THE TEACHER

Where are they headed? A donde van?

STRAW HAT

El campo.

The man points, and the Teacher's gaze follows. He looks back at the man, smiles.

THE TEACHER

El campo. Gracias.

Straw Hat nods. His eyes follow as the Teacher moves on...

183 EXT. EDGE OF THE VILLAGE - DAY

183

As the warrior boys reach the edge of the village, racing ahead of the procession, they pause...

Standing in a rocky field, at the foot of a steep hill, are the CONQUISTADORES, played by men of the village. They are drawn up in a menacing line of battle with lances, shields, swords, banners. One man steps forward and sounds a challenging TRUMPET blast...

The spectators are spilling out of the village lanes, forming a huge semi-circle to watch as Juan Calmo signals his own warriors to spread out, ready for battle.

Oliver, in his yellow mask, moves happily out to one wing, clutching his spear. He looks at the boys on either side of him to see how he should perform...

Annie and Mickey are in the crowd, trying to make their way closer to Oliver...

At a signal from Juan Calmo, all the warriors SHOUT and run forward, attacking the Spanish line. The conquistadores also give a great SHOUT, and there is a general melee. Stylized fighting, in which the warriors seem to be getting the worst of it, many of them dying with extravagant theatricality. We catch a glimpse of Oliver, happily crossing spears with a Spanish knight...

Elsewhere in the throng of spectators, the Teacher also is making his way towards the front...

Just as the Mayan cause seems doomed, the litter bearing Santa Armida is brought forward, and a score of bottle-rockets, set into the edge of it, are fired off, more or less simultaneously, with loud WHISTLES and BANGS. Other celebrants unroll long bolts of cloth, waving and shaking them above the ground, in stylized representation of an earthquake...

The conquistadores react to Inez's miraculous appearance, and to the trembling earth, with a great show of fright, throwing down their weapons and turning to run, scattering in every direction. The spectators CHEER lustily, as the surviving warriors begin to give chase. It's a chaotic scene, a free-for-all, with the participants scattering in every direction. Just at this moment, the CHURCH BELL in the village begins TOLLING...

ANGLE ON Oliver, who breaks off his pursuit of a fleeing knight. He pulls off his mask, listening to the bell for a few moments, startled. Then he turns away, running towards the foot of the nearby hill...

ANGLE ON Annie, as she also reacts to the bell. She looks at Mickey, startled and frightened. He looks back at her tensely. She turns, searching for Oliver...

HER POV - the scene is chaotic. Conquistadores, warriors, and spectators all mingling together. Oliver is nowhere in sight now...

Annie starts hurrying through the crowd, with Mickey close behind her...

ANGLE ON the Teacher, who looks back towards the church tower. The steady slow TOLLING CONTINUES, like a dirge. The Teacher hesitates, but finally decides this must be part of the pageant.

He turns, looking for Oliver, but for several moments can't locate him... Where is he, where is - There!

HIS POV - a long earthen stairway or ramp zigzags up the side of the hill, and now he can clearly see Oliver, still carrying his yellow mask and spear, his robe flowing behind him, climbing this stairway. Four of the other boy warriors are running along behind him... The Teacher smiles with relief. His eyes travel higher up the slope, to...

The crest of the hill, overlooking the village, where he sees a mass of crumbling stone ruins. The boys seem to be headed in that direction...

The Teacher sets off towards the earthen stairway, running hard now...

184 EXT. EARTHEN STAIRWAY - DAY

184

Oliver, Juan, and three other boys reach the top of the path, then run onto the flattened crest of the hill...

The Teacher is sixty paces behind them but coming fast. He's breathing a bit harder now, his face shining in the hot sun-light, his pale eyes lit with their own mad fire...

185 EXT. CREST OF THE HILL - DAY

185

The Teacher reaches the top of the hill, stops to draw a deep breath. He wipes his face with his sleeve, then draws Eddie's .38 from his camera bag, tosses aside the bag. He looks down towards the village...

Scores of celebrants and spectators are still milling about down there, near the statue of Santa Armida; they seem oblivious to the private drama he's about to enact. He turns, looks around...

Dry, patchy cornfields up here. Thatched or cinderblock huts, sapling fences, small plots of vegetables. But all the inhabitants must be down at the fiesta; it's quite deserted. And there, less than eighty feet away, he sees...

Oliver in his yellow mask and robe. Standing on the old ruined wall of a great hacienda. No sign now of the other boys; perhaps they've scattered into the ruins. After a moment Oliver turns, sees the Teacher. Sees his gun.

THE TEACHER

Oliver. I don't believe we've met.
I'm a friend of your mother's.

Alarmed, Oliver turns, disappears into the ruins...

The Teacher smiles, lopes towards the ruins...

186 EXT. RUINED HACIENDA - DAY

186

In utter silence, like a wraith, the Teacher ascends the stone steps, then passes under a great carved archway and into a courtyard. He stops, looking around...

Weeds in the cracks. Mounds of crumbled stone and dirt, heavily overgrown with vegetation. There's no sign of Oliver. Several passageways lead off of this courtyard. Some have retained their low doorways and stone roofs; others, partially collapsed, look like walled trenches.

The Teacher is troubled. It's utterly still in here. Spooky quiet, except for the now distant TOLLING of the bell. He wipes his face again, then chooses a passageway. He slips inside it...

187 INT. RUINED HACIENDA - DAY

187

The Teacher, gripping his gun, makes his cautious way down a dark passage. Every ten yards or so, a shaft of sunlight angles in through a wrecked window, piercing the gloom. He is straining to hear any sound... He comes to a bend in the passage, eases around the corner, sees...

Another corridor. Three more openings off of it. HIS POV shifts from one to another...

He hesitates, wary of becoming disoriented in this labyrinth. Then he hears a SOUND, a skittering of small stones. It seems to come from the doorway on the right. He COCKS his revolver, then slips cautiously through the narrow opening...

HIS POV - MOVING - as the Teacher eases down this passageway. At the far end is a rectangle of bright sunlight...

188 EXT. CHAPEL - DAY

188

The Teacher emerges into the nave of a ruined chapel, which forms a sort of amphitheatre, open to the sun, bordered by crumbling walls. At the far end are a series of stone archways, with a shaded bay or chancel behind them. Staring into the shadows down there, the Teacher can just make out...

Oliver's crouching form, the yellow mask and robe; he's trying to hide behind one of the pillars.

The Teacher smiles. He walks slowly down the weedy nave towards the unmoving figure. His gun by his side. Twenty feet, fifteen... Oliver still hasn't moved, and he's trapped now, he can't escape... ten feet. The Teacher stops, enjoying his power. Then slowly he raises his gun, starting to aim... until suddenly something catches the corner of his eye. Stops him. Shocks him..... Ten feet. The Teacher

Sitting to one side, on the stump of a fallen column, is Annie's little copy of Santa Armida. The carving that was missing from her desk when he last searched her house...

ANNIE (O.S.)

Become a valley, and everything will
flow to you...

The Teacher freezes. Then very slowly turns his head...

Annie is standing twenty feet behind him, in the shadowy doorway of one of the passages. She's holding a shotgun, aimed at his back.

ANNIE

I believe that. Don't you...?

The Teacher looks up, surprised again as...

One by one, MALE VILLAGERS begin to appear, straightening up into view along the ruined walls, levelling their shotguns and old hunting rifles across the ramparts. Twelve in all, a campesino jury. Quiet, stoic men, turning their hands to a needful task. Among them we recognize the gold-toothed Vendor and Straw Hat. Mickey is also there, unarmed.

The Teacher looks back at Annie, a wild light in his eyes. Almost a kind of pride. He begins to laugh.

THE TEACHER

Annie. I begin to think - I've taught
you too well.

He laughs harder. A rising frenzy. Then suddenly his right hand is whipping up, aiming, SHOOTING Oliver, as...

Straw Hat BLASTS his shotgun, and...

The Teacher's gun hand disintegrates in a bloody spray; his .38 and three of his fingers skitter across the stones...

Annie flinches, shocked...

The Teacher is spun about, falls to his knees. He stares at his ruined hand, shakes it contemptuously, as blood spatters his face and chest. He looks into the shadows...

Where "Oliver" is now revealed to be no more than his mask and cape, tumbled over onto his spear.

The Teacher looks at Annie again, as his face contorts into that familiar crooked grin.

THE TEACHER

Annie...

Oliver and Juan Calmo suddenly appear beside Mickey, looking down at the Teacher. Annie sees her son, is upset.

ANNIE

Go back! You're not supposed to be here.

OLIVER

So what? Here I am.

Annie's gun is shaking as she tries to hold it level. The Teacher's pale eyes piercing into hers as he kneels on the ground in front of her.

ANNIE

Then turn around... Turn around, Oliver.

OLIVER

No!

MICKEY

Annie, it's OK. We've got him, OK? He's unarmed. He can't hurt you now.

ANNIE

He'll kill my child.

MICKEY

No. He can't. He's going to prison for the rest of his life.

ANNIE

He'll get out. He'll kill my child!

MICKEY

Annie, don't do this... You don't have to. You'll regret it.

The Teacher's soft voice comes. Gentle, hypnotic.

THE TEACHER

Listen to Mickey. Listen to all of us, Annie, because we love you...

VERY CLOSE ANGLE - on the stones behind him, where his gun lies just out of reach. His left hand slides behind his back, hidden from Annie, his bloody fingers inching towards the grip...

THE TEACHER (O.S.)

Think of your child... Think of Oliver. He'll carry this moment the rest of his life...

Annie stares at him, wavering. His face is very pale. Soaked with sweat. He struggles fiercely against his pain...

THE TEACHER

Is this really... what we want to teach him? That killing can sometimes be justified? That you and I just might have become - the same, after all...?

A subtle shift in his posture; behind his back, his hand has gripped the .38. Her gun barrels are trembling. Tears in her eyes; she can't find the breath to speak. But Oliver does.

OLIVER

My Mom could never become like you.
You're a lying no-good sack of shit.

The Teacher stares at Oliver. A moment of surprise, and pure hatred. Then, as we see...

SLOW MOTION - CLOSE ANGLE - his left hand flicking forward with the .38, his legs driving him upwards...

The entire nave EXPLODES in gunfire, the SHOTS coming so close together they sound almost like one, as...

The Teacher's body bucks and lurches, bullets impacting everywhere, yet incredibly he's still staggering forward, holding the gun, still trying to aim it, until finally he sinks to his knees in front of Annie, right before her horrified eyes, where he gives her one last despairing look. His eyes roll up in his head and he topples sideways.

Annie stares at the Teacher's body, more shocked than relieved. Unable to grasp yet that her long nightmare has finally ended. Oliver jumps down from the crumbling wall and hurries to her side; they hug each other fiercely...

DISSOLVE TO:

189 EXT. T'UI CUCH - DAY

189

HIGH ANGLE, LOOKING DOWN, as we see a procession of villagers, hundreds of them, streaming towards the open doors of the church, following the statue of Santa Armida as she is borne inside for the ritual of thanksgiving that traditionally concludes the fiesta. We hear a CHOIR of voices, OVER, singing a Te Deum...

190 INT. CHURCH - DAY

190

MOVING ANGLE as we see, along a wall in one corner of the sanctuary, a series of shrines or memorials. Photos of departed loved ones, each surrounded by fresh flowers and burning candles... The final photo we come to is that of Juliet.

Annie's hand and Oliver's hand come together INTO FRAME, both of them holding a single taper as they use it to light a candle to their friend.

ANGLE on their faces, in the flickering light, as they kneel together before the photo. Sorrowing but also relieved; all three of them, at last, having found a kind of peace. Annie looks up, and the CAMERA follows her gaze as she sees...

The murals on the church walls: bold, freshly painted, extraordinarily vivid folk art. A legion of angels, vanquishing demons, casting away skeletal Death... the souls of men and women and children, flying joyfully towards heaven... and floating above all, like Justice incarnate, the wise, powerful, and compassionate face of Santa Armida herself...

THE END.