

YOU

WERE

NEVER

REALLY

HERE.

Screenplay by Lynne Ramsay

Based on the novella by Jonathan Ames

GOLDENROD REVISIONS: 8.29.16
GREEN REVISIONS: 8.24.16
YELLOW REVISIONS: 8.17.16
PINK REVISIONS: 8.5.16
BLUE REVISIONS: 7.25.16
WHITE SHOOTING SCRIPT: 7.14.16

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1

INT. TITLES SEQUENCE

1

Close-up: An adult man's mouth under water (Joe). He gulps in water.

E.C.U:

A CLEAR PLASTIC BAG, filled with air, stretched smooth.

The inside surface mists - droplets of moisture form - break into miniature rivulets...

O.S. The whisper of a BOY'S VOICE (Young Joe) counting down -
'...1001, 1000, 999, 998, 997...'

With a sharp inhale the clear plastic inverts.

The face of A MAN (Joe) as the bag is suddenly sucked hard onto his skin, distorting his features into an inhuman mask.

O.S. The boy's counting suspends. The faint beat of a pulse rises to replace it.

The man exhales. The bag balloons again, clouding with his breath. The man breathes again, slowly, the plastic bag balloons and inverts.

O.S. The boy's monotone whisper resumes -

'...996, 995, 994...'

The man never blinks beneath the plastic, eyes unseeing, its rise and fall around his mouth and nose the only sign of life.

TITLES END.

2

INT. HOTEL ROOM, CINCINNATI - NIGHT

2

MONTAGE - glimpses of a methodical process. Camera tight, sounds heightened...

A GIRL'S FACE, filling the frame - a passport style photograph...

...16-years-old, smiling, a hint of lip gloss and eye shadow, lightly Latin features. The image appears to dance and flicker with an inner light.

Slowly at first the picture darkens, then rapidly distorts and blackens. With a HISS fire and smoke erupt through the girls face as the photograph curls up in flame.

WIDER: The burning shards of photograph drop into a small metal trash can.

The rising smoke is staunched with a heavy bound book dumped onto the rim of the trash can -

HOLY BIBLE

QUICK CUTS: A man's hands, pries open a cell phone - pink case, appliqué plastic gemstones, dangling charm - removing the battery and SIM card.

Large tacky gold earrings slide into a zip-lock plastic bag. A cheap gold necklace follows; the pendant reads 'SANDY'. The bag is sealed.

The hands hold open a white plastic laundry bag. Items laid out on the bed are -scooped into the bag one by one:-

A baseball cap...

A roll of silver duct tape...

A bundle of heavy duty black plastic zip ties...

CLOSE ON: A ceiling smoke detector as the condom that has been stretched over it is pulled free.

The blackened scraps from the trash can are shaken into the laundry bag.

A flip form prepaid cell phone as it strains between gloved hands. With a CRACK the hinge shatters. The two halves go into the laundry bag.

A BALL PEEN HAMMER, lying the length of a bathroom hand towel. FRESH BLOOD on its head. The hammer is wiped with the towel and both items drop into the laundry bag. The bag is closed tight.

3

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR, 2ND FLOOR, CINCINNATI - NIGHT

3

Low angle on the man's torso as he emerges, the laundry bag dangling at his hip.

CLOSE ON the bag as he makes his way stealthily down the dingy corridor.

Rounding a corner a WOMAN hones into view.

The man hangs back. With her back to him the Woman tweaks down the hem of her barely there skirt, then struts away to the waiting elevator.

CUT TO:

A hotel cleaning service trolley, left by the door to the service stairwell. The man dumps the bag in the trash and slips through the door.

4 INT. HOTEL LOBBY, CINCINNATI - NIGHT 4

The check-in desk is unmanned.

O.S. The 10 O'clock headlines on WKRC Local 12 news.

The man moves silently from the stairwell fire door, his head shrouded by his jacket hood.

A portable TV flickers in a back room - a glimpse of the fat belly of the RECEPTIONIST in front of it as the man glides past...

He stops short of the glass doors leading into the street as a POLICE CRUISER'S lights kick in outside.

Head down, he pauses to one side of the doors, his back pressed against the wall.

THE MAN'S VIEW: through the doors is a sliver of street activity - the Police Cruiser idles 20 yards from the Hotel as cops on the sidewalk size up the local dregs.

The Hotel Receptionist moves an unseen item of food from his lap to his mouth.

Tensions rise on the street, a cop's hand drops to his holster...

The Hotel desk phone rings. The Receptionist begins to stand eyes still glued to the screen...

The Man swiftly doubles back through the lobby to the service stairwell..

5 INT. NIGHT. HOTEL CORRIDOR 1ST FLOOR, CINCINNATI - NIGHT 5

The man slips from the stairwell, past the open elevator and down the corridor to the fire exit doors at the far end...

Throughout his-passage through the hotel nobody has seen him.

6

EXT. CINCINNATI HOTEL FIRE EXIT, BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

6

HIGH ANGLE as the fire exit swings open and the man slips out.

CLOSE ON: His impassive face - hard, mask-like, mournful eyes.

This is JOE (35-45), plaid shirt, jacket, baseball cap under raised hood.

JOE'S POV of the ground, dozens of dead birds litter the alleyway around the exit.

Ahead of him a BLACK SUV eases across the mouth of the alleyway, slowing to a halt.

Joe turns in the opposite direction...

Out of the shadow of a doorway, a MAN steps out behind him, arm aloft, brandishing a blackjack.

Joe senses something behind him... The presence of life...

The coming of violence...

He turns in time to catch the blackjack on his left shoulder instead of taking a brutal blow to the head.

Joe grabs his assailant's wrist.

Joe brings his forehead down like a brick into the bridge of the man's nose... The sickening sound of splintering bone.

Blinded by red pain the man begins to double up. Joe brings his knee up hard into his jaw.

He goes down, strings cut, paralyzed by fear.

Joe swings his head from left to right, shakes out his left arm, trying to get life into it.

The assailant alone in the alley, vomits.

7 EXT. CINCINNATI STREET - NIGHT

7

The passenger door of a yellow cab slams shut to reveal its emblem;

G&Y Cab of Cincinnati.

JOE (O.S.)

Airport.

8 INT. CINCINNATI TAXI - NIGHT

8

CLOSE ON: the tired lined mouth of the ELDERLY CAB DRIVER as he replies with a grunt.

CUT TO:

Joe stares ahead.

Joe's POV in the rear view mirror as the cab driver's lips dip in an out of view in the strobing streetlights.

The driver appears to silently mouth.

"You"

"Were"

"Never"

"Really"

"Here"...

Each word appears on screen as a title, then fades, as the driver appears to speak them.

9 INT. NYC AIRPORT ARRIVALS HALL - NIGHT 9

CLOSE ON the spinning pad of a floor polisher - its DRONE reverberates around the empty arrivals hall.

CUT TO:

WIDE on a lone TEENAGE GIRL asleep on a bench, her head propped on her knapsack.

Bent double at a water fountain, Joe watches her from across the gleaming concourse, his face shaded under the brim of his cap. He takes a mouthful of water.

CUT TO:

10 INT. LA GUARDIA AIRPORT ARRIVALS HALL - MOMENTS LATER 10

Joe's fingers tapping digits on a pay phone.

CUT TO:

Joe's mouth pressed to the receiver.

JOE

It's done.

He hangs up.

11 EXT. KENSINGTON, BROOKLYN - NIGHT 11

The suburban neighborhood sleeps through the dead of night.

Joe steps out of an NYC Yellow Cab and waits on the kerb; watching till it turns out of view at the far intersection.

With his head down he walks to the other end of the avenue before slinking a footpath between blocks.

12 EXT. MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT 12

Joe approaches the back entrance to the house on the end of a row and stoops down, removing a THIN WOODEN BATON from under the door sill. He slips it behind the drainpipe.

Taking care to make no sound he turns his key in the lock and eases the back door open.

O.S. The faint METALLIC SOUND of footsteps and the clink of glass.

His hand still on the door Joe's attention is on the fire escape of the block overlooking his house.

CUT TO:

A SKINNY TEENAGE BOY (MOISES, 14) crouches on the 3rd floor fire gantry, his body frozen as he holds down smoke from the joint in his hand. A 2nd BOY is climbing through an open apartment window to join him - two beer bottles in one hand.

Moises and Joe's looks hold.

A beat - Moises' expression melts from recognition to fear as he lets go of his lungful of marijuana.

Joe turns away, closing his back door behind him.

13 INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT 13

Joe stands in the doorway to the living room as cold light dances on his face.

O.S. TV sound blaring - *The Bad and the Beautiful* on TCM

JOE'S MOTHER (80s) - in house dress and slippers - is asleep in a chair. On the wall above her a framed photograph of JOE'S LATE FATHER in Marine Corps dress uniform. The TV reflects on the glasses slumped on the bridge of her nose.

Joe flicks off the TV plunging the room into stillness.

He removes her glasses with care, setting them down on a table beside her HEARING AID.

14 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT 14

Joe stands at the foot of the stairs. His mother is obscured from view by the bannister.

JOE'S MOTHER (O.S.)
I'm not a baby.

She steps into view as Joe steps back to let her pass. She takes the stairs, moving at a snail's pace, one step to the next.

ON Joe as he watches her tedious progress upstairs.

15

INT. BEDROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

15

Joe places his mother delicately on her bed, drawing up the covers.

The window is ajar. The curtain billows as a chill blows through the room.

CLOSE ON: Joe as he pulls the window to.

O.S. A sharp creak from the bed.

JOE
It's freezing Mom...

He turns back to the window. His hand rests on the handle.

A beat.

In one fell swoop Joe fastens the window shut and breaks from the room, never looking back over to his Mother's bed.

16 OMITTED 16

17 INT. JOE'S BEDROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT 17

Joe lies rigid on top of his bed covers. His eyes pop open, he cannot move, he tries to scream, no sound comes out, an episode of night terrors. (o.s) The sound of dripping water. He struggles to let out a moan. He is now awake, sweating.

Joe sits up in bed, we see a vicious bruise on his left shoulder. His body, a network of scars.

O.S. Water POURS and SPLASHES insistently

In one clean move Joe bolts from the bed to the door.

18 INT. HALLWAY, MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT 18

Behind Joe as he watches his mother from his bedroom.

The bathroom door is ajar.

The Mothers pewter hair, reaches her waist. She is wrapped in her robe, giving herself a shampoo in the hand basin. She rinses, then throws her head back, like a young woman. The hair snaps out in an arc, like a long silvery rope.

OFF Joe's look - the floor of the bathroom is awash with soapy water. Joe sighs at the sight of the soapy water cumulating on the floor.

19 INT. BATHROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT 19

Joe on his hands and knees, works a towel to soak up the soapy water from the tile.

20 INT. KITCHEN, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAWN 20

The radio is on - very loud - a 40'S CROONER.

Joe stands in the kitchen, wearing a suit and tie. His mother's frail wrinkled hands smooth out his unkempt hair, her hands move to his beard which she also attempting to groom.

JOES MOTHER'

Why do you hide that beautiful
face?

She then straightens and adjusts his tie. Joe's face, mildly annoyed.

CUT TO:

Joe's mother's frail hands crack two eggs into a frying pan, the sizzling oil mute beneath the drone of the radio. Her deaf ears oblivious to the noise.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON Joe's fingertip as it pokes into the middle of one of the frying eggs, destroying the perfect *sunny side up*. She turns to him, annoyed.

He smiles at her. She can't help but laugh. Then shoos him away, turning back to the stove.

Joe sits at the kitchen table.

He faces his mother's back.

His mother glances back to him.

She smiles turns back.

Joe's POV CLOSE ON his mother's frail hands as she struggles to lift the weight of the frying pan from the stove.

21 INT. KITCHEN, MOTHER'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING (LATER) 21

Joe and his mother sit at the table in silence, their breakfast finished.

O.S. The radio still droning.

She is looking at him, questioning. She widens her eyes asking without words... 'Where have you been?'.... 'What do you do?'

She tilts her head, raises her shoulders - her eyes searching his with sympathy and a deep resignation.

Joe mimics her gesture like a mime.

She throws her hands up - mad at him - and moves unsteadily to clear the plates.

Joe puts his hands over hers to stop her, takes the plate and moves to the sink. She watches his shoulders as he begins to wash-up.

A21 INT. JOE'S BEDROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY. A21

Joe sits on the edge of his bed, his shirt slipped down off one arm. He holds an ice pack to the deep bruise blooming across his right shoulder. Frozen. The other hand works a stress ball for exercise..

JOE'S MOTHER (O.S.)
Joe?.... Joe?

Joe visibly tenses.

B21 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE BATHROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY. B21

Joe stands resting his forehead against the wall. O.S. We hear the sound of the toilet flushing. Joe moves away with resignation.

22

INT. LIVING ROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY

22

TCM blares from the TV. Joe's mother watches from her armchair.

Joe sits on a couch close to his mother, he is falling asleep. His tie is undone, his suit jacket resting on a chair.

O.S. OLD WESTERN ON TV - COWBOYS AND INDIANS GUNFIRE.

- 23 EXT. DUSTY GROUND - DUSK (**JOE'S MEMORY**) 23
- CLOSE ON: A pair of girl's BARE FEET lying on dusty ground. Her heels intermittently kick at the earth beneath her.
- A miniature ditch dug in the sand.
- 24 INT. LIVING ROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY (**LATER - BACK TO PRESENT**) 24
- Blinding sunlight glints off a framed photograph of a YOUNGER JOE in ceremonial military dress.
- Sunrise touches the living room walls.
- Joe's Mother is in her armchair in front of the TV.
- 25 EXT. JOE'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 25
- Through the LIVING ROOM WINDOW - Joe's Mother stares past the TV to the street. A smile on her face, turns to a darker past memory...
- 26 INT. JOE'S BEDROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY. 26
- Joe sits upright on a chair that he's dragged into the open doorway of the walk-in cupboard. DRY CLEANING covers hang by his head.
- CLOSE ON - Joe's feet. His shoelaces are untied. He uses one foot to lever off a shoe. He places a socked foot onto the floorboards ahead of him - the floorboard creaks as he places his weight.
- A bare patch of skin above Joe's sock reveals an old but pronounced scar.
- Joe has a belt looped around his neck, the end of the belt is looped over a clothing rail, he pulls tightly on the belt.
- 27 INT. DINING ROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 27
- Late afternoon sun.
- Joe & his Mother are sat across the corner of the dining table. Open in front of them is a large mahogany CUTLERY CASE. They are both engrossed in polishing its contents. Joe's mother sings "A you're adorable" as they clean, they both sign out each letter of the alphabet.

The Mother's frail hands move slowly. Joe buffs like a machine.

He holds a silver SOUP SPOON right in front of his mother's mouth. She exhales onto the back of the spoon. Joe gives it a finishing rub.

28 INT. DINING ROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY (LATER) 28

CLOSE ON - JOE prizes open a tin of BICARBONATE OF SODA.

Heavily tarnished silverware lies in a baking tray on the dining table - larger items, serving spoons, a ladle.

Joe scatters BICARBONATE onto them.

He unscrews the cap of a bottle of white vinegar and passes it to his mother.

With trembling hands she pours it over the cutlery. The Bicarbonate foams up impressively.

29 INT. DINING ROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON. 29

CLOSE ON: Joe Mother's hearing aid, tucked behind her ear.

She is back in front of the TV - a blanket across her knees.

At the dining table Joe fits the last of the immaculately cleaned silver back into its case.

JOE'S MOTHER (O.S.)
How's Janice?

CLOSE ON: a FORK slots into it's place.

JOE
We broke up in High School Mom.

The MAHOGANY CASE in closed and latched.

29A EXT. ANGEL'S BODEGA - NEXT MORNING 29A

Joe stands caddy corner looking towards the window of a bodega. He checks his watch; 9AM.

30 INT. JOE'S BEDROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - LATER 30

Joe sits on the edge of the bed, he is wearing jeans and sleeveless T-shirt, his hands wrapped around his own neck, pressure applied to his throat, his face, beat red.

JOE'S MOTHER (O.S.)
Joe... Joe..

Joe lets out a deep sigh, Joe on the verge of tears.

LATER:

Joe sobbing like a baby.

31 EXT. REAR ENTRANCE, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 31

Joe takes the baton from its hiding place behind the drainpipe and stoops to carefully position it under the door sill - tucking it out of casual view - then slips into the deserted alley.

He has a way of moving quickly, invisibly. Hardly anyone has seen him enter this house, ever.

32 EXT. SIDE STREET ACROSS FROM SIXTY THIRD DRIVE - DAY 32

Joe leans against a wall. He watches the store across the street.

'ANGEL'S BODEGA'...

'24/7 'ALWAYS OPEN!'

33 EXT. APARTMENT ABOVE ANGEL'S BODEGA - DAY 33

Joe's POV - a STOUT MAN comes to the upstairs window. He peeps through the dirty net curtains, then moves out of sight.

34 EXT. SIDE STREET ACROSS FROM SIXTY THIRD DRIVE - DAY 34

Joe checks his watch (black, analogue dial, Military issue).

...a few seconds till 10 a.m.

Joe's POV - in the Bodega window, a sign reading:

Egg and Bacon Sandwich \$1.50. In removable letters, like a cinema sign.

The silhouette of the same stout man from upstairs reaches into the window display and removes the sign.

Beat.

The man replaces the sign. The letters now read:

Egg and Bacons Sandwich \$1.50

Joe registers the misspelled sign - his cue from the dead drop. He heads across the road to the Bodega.

35 INT. ANGEL'S BODEGA - DAY 35
The shop is empty of customers.

O.S. A crude bell ring from the opening door.

Moises, the tall skinny kid who spotted Joe entering his Mom's house, busies himself rearranging goods on the shelf beside the counter. He immediately averts his gaze from Joe. His hands are shaking.

The loud clatter of a stack of tomato cans falling to the floor. They roll asunder in an aisle.

ANGEL, a stout middle-aged man, emerges from the stock room with an angry look to Moises.

Joe quickly moves towards the stockroom, Angel follows.

36 INT. ANGEL'S BODEGA, STOCK ROOM - DAY 36

Angel grabs a small step stool and places it on the floor, he climbs up and reaches into a broken ceiling tile. His hand fishes around for a moment, he pulls out an envelope that he hands to Joe.

Joe opens the envelope, takes out a bound \$5000 wad. He skims \$500 and hands it back to ANGEL, who immediately pushes it into his shirt top pocket.

ANGEL

The man called... He wants to see you. Right away.

A small army of cockroaches scoot across the chipped floor tiles between the two men.

JOE

Did your son tell you he saw me?

ANGEL

(like a military response)
He was with friend, just a coincidence.

JOE

Did he tell you where he saw me?

Angel hesitates.

ANGEL

No, I knew you wouldn't want me to know...

(a beat)

(MORE)

ANGEL (CONT'D)
 Moises didn't mean to see you,
 he's a good boy....

Joe eyes bore into Angel, it is clear he isn't lying.

Joe gives a slight shrug of resignation and closes his eyes slowly and gently, almost as if he is falling asleep whilst standing. He skims another \$500 from his wad and hands it to Angel.

There's a looks of sadness in Angel's eyes as he takes it - this is severance pay and he knows it. His days as Joe's dead drop have been terminated.

Joe exits the back room without speaking, moving in the liquid way that is his custom.

37 INT. QUEENS PLAZA SUBWAY STATION, F LINE PLATFORM - DAY 37

Joe stands sentinel on the platform edge, his baseball cap pulled low.

Further up the platform a YOUNG WOMAN with a bruise under her eye stares impassively toward Joe.

O.S. The rattle of an approaching train rises in volume.

CLOSE ON Joe's feet as he begins to step across the yellow line that marks the platform safe zone. Mid stride his foot hovers momentarily over the precipice...

CUT TO:

The train strobes onto the platform with a deafening battle of brakes and metal. Joe is gone.

38 INT. MIDDAY. MANHATTAN, 38TH STREET AND 8TH AVE - DAY 38

From the end of the corridor lobby Joe walks towards us.

Elevator doors begin to close around our view until a suited arm appears in the field of vision and holds them back. The doors shiver then begin to slide open again. Joe ignores them and steps neatly off to one side - out of view.

CUT TO:

A BEIGE ACCOUNTANT TYPE slouched in the elevator - The man who held the closing doors back. He scowls at his gesture being ignored.

Joe shades his eyes under his baseball cap, hits the bottom of the stairwell. The Accountant shrugs, the elevator doors push shut.

39 INT. MCCLEARY'S OFFICE, 8TH FLOOR - MORNING

39

A man has his head tipped back, a blood soaked tissue clamped to his nose. He breathes methodically through his mouth... *

He lifts the blood soaked tissue for Joe to see.

MCCLEARY

How are you? *

JOE

I didn't try to kill myself today.

WIDER - The room is cluttered with ornate floral displays parked up on the floor and filing cabinets.

MCCLEARY

(laughing) *

The Cincinnati kid... Parents
are... florists... *

Joe rubs his bruised shoulder. And smiles. He reaches forward and grabs some candy from McCleary's desk, his tone shifts... *

JOE

Get rid of Angel's number I'll
find a new service.

MCCLEARY
(a little thrown)
Okay no problem...

McCleary reaches for the Rolodex and scoots it to the middle of the desk.. A big fat drop of blood splashes onto the white index cards.

MCCLEARY (CONT'D)
...You could just call me
directly.

Joe, eyes still closed.

JOE
Why am I here?

*

McCleary sighs.

MCCLEARY.
State Senator Albert Votto...

Joe plays with the candy as McCleary continues.

*

MCCLEARY
I ran his father's security in
the 80s?... Lost touch with him
after the arraignment, then -
poof - aneurysm burst in his
brain...

*

*

*

McCleary wipes the last of the blood from his nose.

Joe now half asleep, closes his eyes again.

MCCLEARY (CONT'D)

The wife, Votto Jr's wife,
kills herself a couple of years
ago. Not a good look in
politics. Their daughter's been
running away from home ever
since. Picked up by the Albany
police every time. A 'problem
child'.

(beat)

Are you fucking going to sleep
again on me you bastard?

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

Joe now awake.

MCCLEARY (CONT'D)

Votto calls me this morning,
she's been missing all weekend.
Doesn't want the cops involved -
now that he's in Senator
Williams camp. Too much heat
from the press.

*
*
*
*
*
*

JOE

...What's the lead?

*

MCCLEARY

He got an anonymous text...

*

Joe, barely listening.

*

JOE

Uh, Uh.

(beat)

MCCLEARY

(beat)

He wants to meet you in person.

*
*

McCleary reaches out a sealed brown envelope.

JOE

You're fucking kidding... why?

*
*

MCCLEARY

Five grand. That's ten percent
of your cut.

*

McCleary catches Joe's look as he slides the envelope forward...

He consults a sheet of paper on the desk.

MCCLEARY (CONT'D)

[His Club] Be there at 2 P.m... And
try and behave. Remember Joe, 4 out
of 5 people enjoy Gang Rape.
Where shall I have your flowers
sent?

*
*
*

JOE

You keep them John, they really
tie the room together.

McCleary references the photo of his [deceased] wife.

*

MCCLEARY

Josephine loved flowers and
shit, God bless her. Never saw
the point to them myself - die
anyway and stink up the place.

*
*
*
*

McCleary indicates at the brown envelope on the desk.

Joe stands, takes the brown envelope, taps it against
McCleary's desk, heads for the door.

*

JOE
Thanks John.

*

MCCLEARY (O.S)
Josephine Two'll be out of dry
dock thanks to this. Gonna
drive her through the harbour
with a fucking firework parade.
You, me, steaks and cold
beers... the setting sun...
Whatcha say to that...

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

Joe filps McCleary the bird.

*

40 OMITTED 40

41 INT. SERVICE STAIRWELL, OFFICE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER 41

CLOSE ON: Joe's feet pounding rhythmically down the steps.

Joe's POV - a rush towards the fire door at the foot of the stairs.

The low end HISS rising in pitch and volume...

42 INT. LOBBY, LOTTE NY PALACE HOTEL LOBBY - DAY 42

Joe checks his watch - 1:45pm. Joe sits in the lobby of the Lotte hotel. Joe notices a group of young Chinese girls who are laughing and taking selfies.

They wait with their high-end luggage, a bellhop comes and puts their luggage on a cart. Joe takes notice of a distinct mole on upper lip of one of these girls.

43 INT. TRUCK, NYC DOCKS, FBI RAID - NIGHT (FLASHBACK) 43

QUICK CUTS, CLOSE ON TWO DEAD GIRLS. CHINESE, A DISTINCT MOLE ON ONE OF THEIR UPPER LIPS.

CLOSER: The mouth strained wide...

44 INT. LOBBY, LOTTE NY PALACE HOTEL LOBBY - DAY 44

Joe, at odds with the finery of the ornate lobby, moves with purpose towards the elevators. Old-school bellhops hold the doors open for the clientele.

Joe breezes by, pulling the peak of his ballcap low over his brow. He steps neatly through the door to the service stairwell.

45 INT. SERVICE STAIRWELL, LOTTE NY PALACE HOTEL - DAY 45

Joe makes his way up, head tucked low, his face obscured from the gaze of the CCTV cameras on every landing.

46 INT. GOVERNOR'S SUITE, LOTTE NY PALACE HOTEL - DAY 46

A YOUNG MALE ASSISTANT (20s) opens the double doors.

A huge suite, sumptuously decorated - original artwork on the walls.

A hard, high backed dining chair has been placed facing the sofa. It stands isolated on a sea of thick carpeting.

A HANDSOME MAN (40s) is sitting on a sofa, elegantly dressed. He takes to his feet, bounds to Joe.

VOTTO

Albert Votto...

(offering his hand)

Joe isn't it... Joe or Joseph?

The Assistant delicately closes the double doors behind him, leaving Votto and Joe alone. Joe is sweating hard from his walk up the 52 flights of stairs.

JOE

Joe...

Votto has Joe's hand in a firm handshake. He places his other hand on top of Joe's - intimate, smiling warmly.

VOTTO.

Thank you for taking the time
to see me Joe.

(beat)

McCleary said you were the best
in the business...

(grins)

Joe still breathing heavy from his walk. Votto releases his
grip.

He gestures Joe to sit.

VOTTO

My father's the one who knew
McCleary I was just a boy.
Trusted him with his life.

They sit, a sleek coffee table lies between the two men.

Joe removes his baseball cap.

VOTTO.

So... ex-FBI, ex-Marine Corps

Joe nods.

VOTTO

Iraq or Afghanistan?

JOE

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq in
Ninety One.

VOTTO

Nobody died in that one right?

JOE

(deadpan)

Nobody died.

VOTTO

We fight good wars sometimes.
That was a good one.

JOE

...Afghanistan in 2001, Iraq
2003.

VOTTO

...A decade in service.
(beat)
And the FBI?

JOE

Sex-trafficking task force...
My work for McCleary... more or
less the same thing.

Votto's phone on the coffee table buzzes. He glances at it,
doesn't pick up. It drops to voicemail, stops
vibrating...then buzzes again.

Votto snatches it up, skims his thumb down the screen.

VOTTO

Fuck.
(As if the name of the
state capitol were
poison)
Albany. (something about
political stuff)

He stands and grasps a clear plastic file and places it in
front of Joe.

VOTTO (CONT'D)

I got a text message this
morning. Anonymous.

Joe reads the text as Votto paces.

VOTTO (CONT'D)

(by heart)
'Your daughter is at 544 West
38th street I couldn't live
with myself if I didn't let you
know'....

Joe leans forward and leafs through the loose assortment of
print-outs in the file - scans of Family photographs.

A PRETTY LITTLE RICH GIRL on a pony.

AN EXTREMELY ATTRACTIVE WOMAN (40s).

Joe slides a small instant photographic print from the back of the file. Overexposed by the flash, a close-up selfie of the girl - she is giving a cute sidelong look and has her index finger raised to her lips in a "Shhhhh" gesture.

JOE

When was this taken?

VOTTO

It's the most recent.

JOE

Was her hair still long when...

VOTTO

Yes.

(Beat)

She has beautiful hair...
They never found her body
(his voice wavers)

Joe watches as Votto picks up a pack of Marlboros from the arm of the sofa.

Votto tears into the seal and draws a cigarette to his mouth. He pats down his pocket searching for a light. He takes the cigarette from his lips, looks at it pitifully.

VOTTO (CONT'D)

(nervous aside)

\$25,000 a night and the State
of New York won't even let me
light this on the terrace...

Votto picks up his phone, scrolls through his messages, hands it to Joe.

JOE

Whoever sent the message
would've bought the phone...

VOTTO

(overlapping Joe)

...It must be someone I know.

JOE

...sent the text, threw the
phone away.

VOTTO

The police closed the
investigation I was left to
bury an empty casket.

(MORE)

VOTTO (CONT'D)

(beat)

You can't know what that feels
like...

Votto picks up one of the photos of Nina.

Joe places Votto's phone down on the coffee table.

Votto paces, turning his cigarette pack in his hands.

VOTTO (CONT'D)

(on his back)

Do you have children Joe?

Another photograph - formally posed, the girl wears a white party dress as Votto holds her in an embrace, their eyes both closed, his chin resting on the crown of her head.

Joe selects the earlier selfie of the girl AND A FAMILY PORTRAIT - NINA between Her Mother and Father.

JOE

I'll need these.

Votto nods. Joe slips it into his shirt top pocket.

JOE (CONT'D)

Does your daughter take any medication? Girls are often kept sedated with morphine derivatives.

VOTTO

Anti-depressants... her mother lived on them.

VOTTO (CONT'D)

What happens now? Let me give
you my number.

He has his phone in his hand.

JOE

I don't have a phone.

Votto begins to pour himself a drink from a brandy
decanter.

JOE (CONT'D)

You go to the Senton Hotel, 39
West 27th St. Room 719.
...do not park out front.

VOTTO

...Room 719.

Votto, takes a beat, then...

VOTTO (CONT'D)

You'll find her for me Joe. I
know you will.

Joe stares ahead. Votto nods, grateful. Then realizing...

VOTTO (CONT'D)
Her name's Nina. Did I mention
that?

47 OMITTED 47

48 INT./EXT. CAR RENTAL - DAY 48

The CAR RENTAL REP's hand (scarlet false nails) pass a set of keys through the window.

Joe smiles charmingly. As he heads for the door, he passes complimentary pastries and coffee - he picks up a paper napkin from a pile...

49 EXT. CAR RENTAL LOT - DAY 49

Joe approaches his car - a Black 4-door Cadillac sedan.

CUT TO:

Joe pulls out of the Enterprise lot.

50 INT. RENTAL CAR, 38TH STREET - DAY 50

Joe's POV through the car window. He slows to a crawl as he sizes up 544 west 38th Street.

CLOSE ON: the keypad intercom, a security camera under the porch.

51 EXT. RENTAL CAR, MIDTOWN BASEMENT CAR PARK - DAY 51

Joe's RENTAL CAR drives down the entrance ramp, turns at the bottom and weaves in amongst parked cars.

52 INT. PHARMACY - DAY 52

Joe, basket in hand. He drops in surgical adhesive tape and plastic bottle of rubbing alcohol.

CUT TO:

On another aisle Joe picks up a tube of glue.

CUT TO:

The CASHIER rings up Joe's items, make up removal wipes, a box of sanitary napkins. Last out of the basket, a can of Coke and bottle of mineral water.

Joe grabs a Hershel Bar from the rack beside the cash register and adds it to the other items.

53 EXT. CHINATOWN RESTAURANT - NIGHT 53

Joe slips down the steps of a basement entrance in front of a restaurant window.

(Several beats) Joe ascends the basement steps. He carries a plastic bag emblazoned with CHINESE CHARACTERS and the logo of an electrical goods vendor.

54 INT. MIDTOWN APARTMENT BUILDING CORRIDOR - NIGHT 54

Joe exits the service stairwell.

55 INT. MIDTOWN APARTMENT BUILDING CORRIDOR - NIGHT 55

A PREPPY UPSCALE COKE DEALER's hands. A clear plastic vial with a printed prescription label - *Phyceptone* - containing 5 white pills is passed to Joe's hand, in exchange for \$100 cash.

56 INT. HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT 56

He picks out a roll of DUCT TAPE, a BOX CUTTER and CABLE TIES.

ANGLE ON: a BALL PEEN HAMMER. Joe glances at the hammer.

57 EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - NIGHT 57

Manhattan bustles. Gaudy lights silhouette people moving each and every way like ants along the side walk.

The street lights play across Joe's face - green, blue, yellow...

He carries the hardware store bag. His eyes, shaded under the baseball cap, occasionally catch a glint of colored light but never blink.

58 INT. MIDTOWN BASEMENT CAR PARK - NIGHT 58

OFF BLACK: The trunk of the rental car swings open, revealing Joe standing over it. He dumps his 'tools' in the trunk.

ANGLE ON: all of Joe's shopping, laid out neatly inside.

The lid of the trunk slams shut.

59 INT. RUSSIAN BATHS LOWER EAST SIDE, STEAM ROOM - NIGHT 59

NAKED MEN are shadows in the heavy fog of steam and greenish light, heads bowed, eyes closed - sweating it out - a Romanesque mist of pot bellies, muscles, tattoos.

Joe, his eyes half open, half closed, like a cat.

He stares at the naked bulb on the tiled wall opposite him.

O.S. A low rumble

CLOSE ON the bulb as it's enveloped in steam.

CUT TO:

60 INT. COLD ROOM, RUSSIAN BATHS LOWER EAST SIDE - NIGHT 60

Joe lies on the surface of the pool.

61 EXT. US MILITARY BASE, KUWAIT - DAY (**JOE'S MEMORY**) 61
The searing midday sun.

A young Afghan girl is walking towards the camera, hand outstretched.

A younger, Joe (20s fresh-faced, dressed in army fatigues) is on the other side of a chainlink fence.

He sits on a crudely made bench, drinking coffee, eating an MRE.

Beyond Joe 6 soldiers mill about and dance together to a 1991 Pop Hit playing from a parked vehicle in the background.

He takes note of the girl, reaches into his pocket and pulls out a bar of chocolate.

62 EXT. KUWAIT DESERT 62
The girl smiles, candy bar in hand, turns from Joe and runs away.

63 EXT. KUWAIT - LATER 63

Joe looks up to the lone tree where the girl is sitting in the shade.

A TEENAGE BOY (15) has approached her - he is standing above her, holding his hand out.

The girls shakes her head, "No".

The boy shouts something inaudible at the girl, his face suddenly aggressive. She shakes her head again, trying to hide the chocolate in the folds of her skirt.

The boy pulls a makarov pistol from his pocket - he shoots the girl in the stomach, snatches the chocolate from her hand and runs off.

A slow pool of blood forms around the girl as her bare heels kick fast and furtively at the dusty ground.

64 EXT. US MILITARY BASE, KUWAIT - LATER STILL 64

Joe's POV - the girl's legs are still kicking through the dust but with increasing sluggishness.

CLOSE ON: the girl's heels intermittently kick at the earth beneath her - a miniature ditch dug in the sand with her effort to retain life.

CLOSER STILL: The movement of her heels begins to falter.

65 INT. LOCKER ROOM, RUSSIAN BATHS LOWER EAST SIDE - NIGHT 65

Joe washes his hands in the sink, in the mirror he notices a ghost like figure crossing behind him.

Water runs from the faucet. We notice the pulse in his shoulder.

66 INT. RENTAL CAR, MIDTOWN BASEMENT CAR PARK - NIGHT 66

Joe is wearing a new WORKMAN'S JACKET. A sales tag hangs from the sleeve. He yanks it off.

His hands open the centre console between the driver and front passenger seat - he neatly stashes the duct tape, cable ties and a box cutter.

CUT TO:

The glove compartment flips open - rubbing alcohol, surgical tape, make up wipes and sanitary napkins are placed inside.

CUT TO:

The bottles of water and can of Coke are slotted into the dash mounted drinks holders.

CUT TO:

Through the car windscreen: Joe, focused, is sat in the drivers seat.

He unsheathes the hammer and weighs it up in his hand. It sits well.

Joe slides it into his left hand inside jacket pocket.

67 EXT. MIDTOWN BASEMENT CAR PARK EXIT - NIGHT 67

Joe's rental car exits the parking garage.

68 INT. RENTAL CAR, MIDTOWN STREET - NIGHT 68

Joe's eyes are dark and inscrutable in the shadow of his baseball cap. Rainbow hued illumination plays across his set jaw.

CUT TO:

Joe's POV - Manhattan streets - late night NYC.

69 EXT. 38TH ST - NIGHT 69

Joe's rental car turns into the end of the road.

The street is book ended by modern apartment buildings, one at 3rd Avenue and one at 2nd Avenue.

70 INT. RENTAL CAR - NIGHT 70

The engine note drops as Joe slows to a crawl.

CUT TO:

Joe's POV - A 3-storied brownstone on a street of brownstones.

All the windows are sealed shut by metal curtains, insuring total privacy.

A young TOWEL BOY carrying a laundry sack up the stairs, punches in a code into the door and disappears inside.

71 OMITTED 71

72 OMITTED 72

73 INT. RENTAL CAR - NIGHT, LATER 73

CLOSE ON: Joe's wristwatch - the minute hand ticks by...

CUT TO:

THE REAR VIEW MIRROR - we see a high end black town car pull up outside the brownstone. A WELL DRESSED MAN in a high end suit walks down the stairs. The driver of the town car steps out and opens the door for him. The driver gets back in the car and it pulls away.

CUT TO:

LATER STILL - Joe sat in the car in a fugue state, simultaneously alert and peaceful.

74 INT. FBI SURVEILLANCE CAR, NYC DOCKS - NIGHT (**JOE'S** 74
MEMORY)

A younger Joe is wearing a standard issue FBI nylon jacket. He sits behind the wheel of his cruiser, rains bears down on the windscreen.

CUT TO:

Joe's POV - beyond a chain link fence, A refrigerated truck with *SUNFLOWER MEAT CORP* and Chinese characters emblazoned on its flank stands on the quay side.

Its cab door is open, the engine is running.

There are two parked cars between Joe and the truck, TWO PAIRS OF MEN are standing beside them in discussion - a deal is going down.

Joe checks his watch...

The men's discussion appears inscrutable and ongoing

TASK FORCE COMMANDER (V.O.)
 (broken by bursts of radio
 static)
 Wait... Wait....Nobody moves ...see
 the money

CUT TO:

JOE'S HANDS grip the steering wheel, his knuckles whiten in frustration and anger...

The distant sound of the truck engine running over rises in volume.

Joe's eyes shrouded in darkness.

The sharp sodium street light throws sad shadows of raindrops onto Joe's rigid face, his jaw tenses.

Fumes continue to plume from the truck's exhaust...

75 INT. RENTAL CAR, 38TH ST - NIGHT (**BACK TO PRESENT**) 75

CLUNK - the windshield wipers kick in automatically. With a JUDDER they clear the shadow of accumulated raindrops from Joe's face.

CLOSE ON: Joe's eyes - the crawling retreat of distorted water patterns in the wiper's wake. His 1000 yard stare draws into closer focus.

Rear-view mirror: Joe watches as...

The TOWEL BOY, in jeans and a thick hooded sweat shirt, emerges from the brothel front door - sent out on an errand.

Joe studies him - he's clearly not a 'John' or security.

He darts from the car.

76 OMITTED

76

77 INT. RENTAL CAR, 38TH ST - NIGHT

77

The towel boy is shoved into the back seat of the car.

Joe makes quick work with the cable ties, duct tape.

He binds Towel Boy's wrists behind his back with a cable tie, then fastens his legs together at the ankles and the knee.

Towel Boy's eyes start to focus, he gasps a little less audibly.

Joe eases off the back seat, exits the rear door and returns to the drivers seat. He faces forward, eyes locked back on the rear view mirror.

JOE

How many security inside?

Towel Boy is too scared to answer. Joe's hand lowers to rest on the box cutter, his thumb poised over the blades sliding mechanism.

JOE (CONT'D)

Two?

TOWEL BOY
(whispers)
Two.

JOE
Where are they?

Towel Boy hesitates...

JOE (CONT'D)
(refining the question)
Where in the house are they?

TOWEL BOY
You promise you won't kill me.

JOE
Yes.

Towel Boy hesitates, not out of cunning, just fear.

TOWEL BOY
(speaking quickly, half
gasping)
One guy guards the first floor,
with the cameras, and one guy on
the second floor. He sits in the
hallway.

Joe takes the picture of Nina from his shirt breast pocket
and hits the overhead light. He holds the snapshot in front
of Towel boy's face.

JOE
Do they have a 'playground'? Is
this girl inside?

TOWEL BOY
Playground?

JOE
Underage girls.

JOE (CONT'D)
Is the girl in the picture inside?

Towel Boy is mute.

JOE (CONT'D)
(quietly, forcefully)
She's not the same as the others...
American... Well spoken.

JOE (CONT'D)
(pushing the photo closer
to TB's face)
She might look different. Her
hair...

TOWEL BOY
Maybe...
Thinner... blonde hair, cut short?
I don't know...
...I'm not lying to you mister. I
swear I don't know!

Joe let's this terror hang.

JOE
Where is she...

TOWEL BOY
Third floor.

JOE
Any other men?

TOWEL BOY
Rich guys.

JOE
Do you carry any keys?

TOWEL BOY
No...

JOE
What's the code for the front door?

TOWEL BOY
3-4-9-2...

Joe nods.

In one movement he is out of the driver's seat. He crosses the front of the car and reappears at the rear passenger door.

CLOSE-ON: Towel Boy's eyes widen at the betrayal.

78 EXT. BROTHEL STEPS - NIGHT 78

(The following sequence is shot from CCTV Point of view until otherwise stated)

Joe walks up the brothel steps, his eyes shaded by his baseball cap, he punches in the code to the door.

CUT TO:

79 INT. BROTHEL HALLWAY - NIGHT 79

A LARGE SEATED MAN sits reading a magazine.

Joe is immediately on him.

The hammer strikes the Guard on the cheek bone sending him into the wall.

80 INT. BROTHEL STAIRWAY - NIGHT 80

Joe - he takes two steps at a time.

A SECOND GUARD at the landing.

Joe swing the hammer two handed like a baseball bat sending it into the man's sternum - he doubles up.

Joe continues along the corridor.

CUT TO:

- 81 INT. BROTHEL, HALLWAY - NIGHT 81
- A NAKED SKINNY MAN WITH A MASK IS THROWN OUT OF THE DOOR WAY. Joe delivers a closing blow to the man. He continues down the hall, the CCTV camera lingers on the doorway, a small girl (9) wearing a night dress wanders out of the doorway and into the hallway in a daze.
- 82 INT. BROTHEL, 'PLAYGROUND' HALLWAY CORRIDOR - NIGHT 82
- Another CCTV angle, joe approaches a closed door, he opens it, about to enter...
- 83 INT. BROTHEL, BEDROOM 2 - NIGHT 83
- (WE TRANSITION FROM CCTV FOOTAGE BACK TO FILM)
- This room is dark, illuminated only by a UV 'black light' above the head of a single 'cot' bed.

A YOUNG GIRL (13/14) lies on top of a white sheet.

Joe walks towards her.

Her skin has a spectral glow.

...NINA?

Joe takes the photograph from his top pocket.

The girl's eyes are closed. He puts a hand to her cheek - no reaction. He gently raises one eyelid between his finger and thumb. For a moment there is a bright blue iris and a dilated pupil before her eye rolls back.

Joe is taken aback. It's HER.

Her neck arches back into the pillow and her whole body begins to stiffen.

Joe leans in and levers the girl's thin body into a seated position. Her head and arms flop forward like a rag doll. He lifts her chin with his free hand.

JOE

Nina... NINA.

He snaps his fingers loudly beside her ear.

JOE (CONT'D)

Nina. Come on Nina. You can hear me. Look at me. Can you say your name Nina.

A SHARP intake of breath and the girl's head lolls forward again.

Joe firmly cups her tiny face in his hand. Her eyes flicker open for a moment. Her lips move against each other.

It is barely audible but she is counting.

She is in the 700's.

CUT TO:

The BIG SISTER, a skinny, diet pill blonde in a silk robe and artificial tits bursts into the room. She clutches a cell phone in one hand.

BIG SISTER
(hysterical, Eastern
European accent)
Fuck is YOU?

Joe advances on her, grabbing her elbow violently, prizing the cell phone from her grasp.

JOE
Get her dressed.

Joe throws the Big Sister towards Nina. In shock she gets her off the bed. The only additional clothing in the room is a pair of childish frilled pop socks.

Joe reaches the cell phone jammer from his jacket pocket. He slides the switch on its side, the green LED blinks off. He puts it away and then wrenches off his jacket.

Joe advances again on the Big Sister and thrusts the jacket at her to dress Nina with.

With his other hand he dials 911 on the Big Sister's cell phone and clamps it to her ear.

JOE (CONT'D)
Police department.

He glares into her eyes. She understands.

JOE (CONT'D)
Gunshots...

The Big Sister looks confused.

BIG SISTER
Gunshots...

The call connects. The distant female voice of the emergency services dispatch can be heard on the other end...

911 DISPATCHER
911, what are you reporting?

BIG SISTER
Gunshots!

911 DISPATCHER
What's your address?

Joe shoots her a stern look...

911 DISPATCHER (CONT'D)
Where are you speaking from now?

Joe holds his look... The Big Sister is terrified, she can't speak. Joe snatches the phone from her ear.

JOE
544 East 38th Street

911 DISPATCHER
Who is in the hou...

Joe throws it to the floor and drives the heel of his boot into it - smashing it completely.

JOE
Leave.

She looks at him, fear in her eyes, shakes her head.

JOE (CONT'D)
Now....Go!

She shakes her head vigorously. Punches her own hand repeatedly on her head.

She is paralysed with fear, won't move.

Throughout all this Nina has stood dazed and silent in the middle of the room

Joe snatches his hammer up, grabs the sheet from the bed, wraps it once around Nina and scoops her off her feet.

84 INT. BROTHEL, 'PLAYGROUND' HALLWAY - NIGHT 84

Borne aloft in Joe's arms Nina floats through the door of her room and along the playground corridor, her COUNTING DOWN a barely perceptible whisper below the piped music.

85 INT. BROTHEL 2ND FLOOR - NIGHT 85

The 2nd fallen Guard still fills one half of the width of the corridor, slumped on his knees, head cowed forward against the wall.

A NAKED JOHN stands in the corridor, blocking Joe's passage. He grasps a 7" hunting knife in one hand. His chest is emblazoned with an Eye of Providence tattoo.

Joe gently lets down Nina. She ahead stares implacably.

The rise and fall of Naked John's chest. The Eye of Providence stares unblinking...
CLOSE ON: Nina's face.

(O.S.) The sound of the almighty collision of BODIES.

86 INT. BROTHEL, 1ST FLOOR - NIGHT 86

The EMPTY STAIRWELL.

Joe's feet step over the sprawled body of the first Guard as he marches to the front door, seemingly in step with the dull thud of techno music from the P.A. Nina's tiny socked feet follow a pace behind.

87 EXT. BROTHEL - NIGHT 87

At the top of the stoop Joe peers down the street - no cop cars.

About six minutes have elapsed since Joe entered the brothel.

With the girl light in his arms, he moves quickly to his rental. In one delicate move he has Nina in the front seat. She is all but out of it; but not completely.

Stepping around the trunk of the car Joe flings open the rear passenger door and drags Towel Boy out by the shoulders and dumps him on the sidewalk.

CLOSE ON: A storm drain opening. Joe crouches by the kerb as he fits the bloodied hammer through the opening, dropping it as deeply as his arm will reach inside. The cell phone jammer from his inside jacket pocket follows the hammer into the storm drain.

88 EXT. 38TH ST - NIGHT 88

Joe's rental car pulls away. Towel Boy lies motionless on the sidewalk. Silence reigns...

89 EXT. RENTAL CAR, MIDTOWN - NIGHT 89

CLOSE ON: Nina through the passenger window. A cascade of reflections and rainwater play across the glass as she stares into the middle distance. A cop car passes sirens and lights blaring.

CLOSER - her lips as they murmur. She continues her counting down.

90 INT. BASEMENT CAR PARK - NIGHT 90

A squeal of wet tires reverberates around the near empty car park as the rental pulls in and cruises to a quiet corner.

The engine's killed.

91 INT. BASEMENT CAR PARK - MOMENTS LATER 91

Joe relaxes his grip on the steering wheel.

Nina's gaze is fixed on him... on his right arm.

She reaches forward and touches him with her fingertips. There's a 2" knife cut through his shirt and blood is soaking through. Joe hasn't noticed till now.

Nina stares at her fingertips, mesmerized by the scarlet blood coating them.

Joe unbuckles his seat belt and flips open the glove compartment. He removes a sanitary napkin and rubbing alcohol, he pours some on the napkin and places it over his wound.

CLOSE ON: in the rear view mirror, Joe's mouth clenches tight against the searing pain, jaw set as his teeth grit hard.

She continues to watch with fascination as Joe goes through the process of attending to his wound.

NINA

What do I call you?

Joe hands her a make-up wipe to remove the blood from her fingers.

Joe reaches for the can of Coke and chocolate and hands them to Nina.

NINA (CONT'D)

Where are we going?

CLOSE ON: Nina's fingernails as they strain to open the ring pull. She abandons it half cocked and hands it back to Joe. He pops it open.

JOE

I'm taking you home Nina.

NINA

How do you know my name?

JOE

Your Father told me your name.

Nina alternates sips from the Coke can with squares of chocolate.

NINA

Is he angry at me?

O.S. The sound of an approaching car - the clump as it takes the entrance ramp to the car park, the dry echo of tires on concrete...

Joe's eyes fix on the rear view mirror as the headlights of an anonymous sedan sweep past his car. He turns the ignition key just enough to fire the electrics and adjusts the angle of his door mirror.

In the mirror he can see the sedan as it pulls up, an indistinct figure at the wheel. Joe wipes a discreet porthole in the condensation building up on his window to reveal - a man in a tuxedo and black tie as he hurries away in the direction of the exit ramp. Satisfied, Joe turns his attention back to Nina.

She has eaten almost all the chocolate, some of which has smeared onto her lips and cheeks. A crudely drawn smiley face adorns her passenger window.

Nina burps. She raises a hand to her mouth and peers over it - surprised and off guard.

Joe's face wears a massive grin in response.

Nina offers Joe the last square of chocolate in the packet. He shakes his head.

Nina is unwavering in her offer.

JOE

It's the last piece...

NINA (O.S.)

...It's not the last piece in the world...

He takes it from her and puts it into his mouth. He closes his eyes and allows himself to relax back into his seat.

O.S. - A distinctive clunk as Nina releases the latch of her seat belt. A rasp as the nylon belt retracts.

Joe looks over to her.

NINA (CONT'D)

I need to go...

JOE

We have to stay here.

Nina's look is one of confusion and disappointment.

CUT TO:

The passenger door of the car is wide open. Joe stands sentinel beside the door, arms folded around his jacket, head tipped forward. He cautiously steals a look up to the security camera perched at the top of a concrete support pillar opposite him then dips his eyes to the ground again.

O.S. The sound of running water.

A stream of liquid, dark against the pale concrete floor of the parking garage, runs from under the door of the car behind Joe, pooling near his boots.

He edges to one side to avoid Nina's amassing pee.

NINA (O.S.)
What's your name?

JOE
(Beat)
Joe.

NINA (O.S.)
I've finished Joe.

CUT TO:

Nina and Joe are back in the car. She no longer wears Joe's jacket.

Nina leans forward and grabs the bottle of pills, she shakes them. She fails to open the bottle, Joe takes it from her. He demonstrates taking off the cap, he then puts the cap back on and stashes the bottle OUT OF HER REACH.

Nina sits back in her seat.

She slips the straps of her nightie off her shoulders then begins to hitch the hem up her tiny thighs. She meets Joe's gaze with a look of mute seduction and raises her forefinger to her lips in a gesture of 'shhhh'.

ON Joe.

NINA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Don't tell Mommy...

Wordlessly Joe leans past her, grasps the dangling seat belt buckle.

Nina flings her arms around him and buries her face in his chest.

Joe firmly draws the seat belt back across her, untangling her arms from around his neck, breaking the moment - a simple signal that she should stop.

Nina slumps into her seat. Her head rolls back to the passenger side window. The smiley face on the glass beside her has begun to run - tears of a clown.

CUT TO:

From outside the glass CLOSE ON Nina

Her eyelids draw closed; asleep.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON: Joe's wristwatch; 4:02 am

Nina is fast asleep.

92 EXT. SENTON HOTEL - NIGHT 92

The rental car pulls up right out front, its pouring again.

A BELL-HOP GUY (20's, iPod earbuds) rounds the corner and heads towards the hotel. In his hand he clutches a pair of well-worn drumsticks.

A beat later ANOTHER MAN (30's, acne scarred, homebrew neck tattoo) emerges, throwing his rucksack over his shoulder. The two have an exchange as they cross paths, he then disappears along the street.

Joe takes the room key (card) from the glove compartment.

The bell-hop guy has his back turned whilst he struggles into an ill fitting jacket.

93 INT. LOBBY, SENTON HOTEL - NIGHT 93

Kitsch lounge musak pipes soothing piano into the low rent surroundings.

Joe carries Nina 'piggy back' past the reception booth. Her hair sticks to her wet face, she is still dozing, her dirty bare feet hang loosely by Joe's side. He takes to the bottom of the stairs.

On Joe's back as he disappears from view.

The Bell-hop taps out a 'rim shot' on the reception desk with his drumsticks oblivious to Joe's entrance.

94 INT. STAIRWELL, SENTON HOTEL - NIGHT 94

Musak from the lobby fades, giving way to a heightened mix of sounds passing through closed hotel room doors - porn, moving furniture, a muffled cry.

Joe carries Nina.

She rests her head on his shoulder, hovering between sleep and wakefulness - obscenely childlike in the harsh lighting.

NINA
(whispered, barely
audible)
Mommy went away.

JOE
(gently rocking her)
Shhhh.

95 INT. SENTON HOTEL, ROOM 719 - NIGHT

95

CLOSE ON the photographs Joe took from Votto. Nina holds them between finger and thumb, studying them intently.

The OVEREXPOSED SELFIE -

NINA (O.S.)
Is that me?

She is sat in the one armchair in the room, Joe's jacket drawn around her shoulders. Joe reaches in with a wet wipe and smooths away chocolate smears from her face.

JOE
Uh-huh.

As Joe wipes, Nina pulls a face. Joe takes a fresh wipe. As it hones in towards Nina's face she deliberately goes CROSS-EYED. She bursts out giggling.

ON JOE - He cannot help but smile.

He stands to throw the used wipes into the hotel room trash can.

CLOSE ON the family portrait photograph. Nina covers over her FATHER'S FACE with her thumb. Then cover's over her MOTHER'S FACE with her other thumb.

Nina lowers the photo, her eyes drawn to the TV screen which flickers away with the sound down, she reaches for the remote and begins to channel-hop.

A 24h newscast - an accident scene in midtown Manhattan, police line, emergency lights. Followed by a montage of archive shots of a suited middle aged man giving a speech at the U.S. Senate - the name 'Senator Williams' on the chyron.

NINA
The crying man.

Her finger points to the TV.

Joe looks up. The news cast cuts to a studio anchor, a portrait photograph of SENATOR WILLIAMS emblazoned with "SUICIDE?" displayed beside them.

O.S. The electronic mechanical sound of the room key unlocking the door.

Joe immediately stands and darts to the door.

It opens.

The drumming BELL HOP stands in the doorway.

A BRIGHT FLASH OF LIGHT and the explosion of a firing gun. His forehead erupts.

CLOSE ON: Joe's face as the BELL HOP's blood spatters over him.

TWO MEN with raised pistols.

The ALPHA of the pair twitches his gun, gesturing Joe into the living area of the room, seating him at the foot of the bed next to Nina, she turns the tv off.

The OTHER MAN holsters his weapon and crosses to Nina, slinging her over his shoulder like a money sack. He heads for the door.

NINA (CONT'D)

(O.S.)

...Joe?

CLOSE ON: Her tiny feet disappear out of view as the door snaps shut.

NINA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(Louder but muffled
through the door))

...JOE...

Alpha stands over Joe, raises his gun full stock...

ALPHA

(RE: Nina)

Cute.

In an instant Joe propels himself from the bed. He lunges full length towards the coffee table, planting his palms on its top surface, launching it across the floor into the Alpha's knees.

A cellphone flies from the Alpha's hand as he crashes forward, his legs now pinned between the splintered table and the far wall.

CUT TO:

Joe moving in rapid, assured movements as he claws himself up the teetering man. In three solid grasps of the man's clothing he has himself level with his torso - going for control of his wrist and the weapon...

The man tries in vain to angle the 9mm on Joe.

A SHOT rings out.

Alpha chops at the back of Joe's head with the butt of the gun, landing a sharp vicious blow.

CUT TO:

A FLASH OF RED.

Joe keeps climbing. Both men collapse into the remnants of the crushed coffee table.

Joe's left hand is on the wrist that holds the pistol. He pushes it away.

His eyes are screwed shut against the pain of the blow to his head, some unseeing snake part of his brain takes over. Everything is impression and feeling.

O.S. A deadened gunshot....

CUT TO:

...smacks straight into the CEILING MIRROR ABOVE THE BED, fracturing the glass right across its length...

We see the last of the struggle in the fragmented reflection. A cubist tableau - two distorted figures writhe on the deep red carpet.

A THIRD GUNSHOT RINGS OUT.

For a moment it's impossible to tell who has the upper hand.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON, Joe gets both hands under Alpha's chin and with all his strength pushes the man's head back past any natural angle. The NECK SNAPS.

Alpha goes still.

Joe rolls off panting, his vision returning, the blurry room coming slowly back to focus.

He scrambles to his feet, takes the man's pistol.

CLOSE ON: The photograph of Nina as Joe snatches it up.

96 INT. SENTON HOTEL HALLWAY, 7TH FLOOR - NIGHT 96

Joe, the pistol in one hand, hauls ass down the hallway. A BLOOD SPOT falls on the floor as he makes for the window and onto the fire escape.

97 EXT. SENTON HOTEL, REAR FIRE ESCAPE - NIGHT 97

Dropping from bottom level of the fire escape gantry Joe lands hard.

98 INT. ALL-NIGHT BODEGA, MIDTOWN MANHATTAN - NIGHT 98

A bottle of rubbing alcohol, cotton wool roll, roll of gauze and a carded pair of NEEDLE NOSE ELECTRICAL PLIERS - pushed across the counter.

Behind a scratched plastic window the cashier barely registers Joe or what he is buying, his eyes fixed on a small TV on the counter.

O.S. TV news program covering the apparent 'suicide' of Senator Williams IN SPANISH.

The TV news cuts to an outside broadcast.

A taxi's caved in roof - the scene flashes red and blue from emergency vehicle roof lights.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.S. IN SPANISH)

...Senator William's political and private life have dogged him since 2012 when an out of court settlement was reached with the parents of a girl below the age of consent...

Joe pays cash. There is BLOOD on his hands and the \$50 bill he pays with.

His RIGHT HAND CHEEK is swollen. Thick blood mattes his jaw and throat.

The cashier doesn't raise an eyebrow.

99 EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN - NIGHT 99

Joe propped up against the side of a building, rain falls around him. A stray dog, sniffs around the area.

Joe eases the PLIERS into his open mouth. He digs around taking time to get purchase, deep inside.

Joe suppresses the need to scream.

EXTREME CLOSE UP: A BROKEN TOOTH - a Molar, split in two.

Joe's bloodied fingertips set it down.

Joe collapses back.

(O.S.) Nina's whispered count down.

NINA
481, 480, 479...

Her counting overlaps into the VOICE of an 8-YR-OLD-BOY...

8-YR-OLD BOY'S VOICE (O.S.)
478, 477, 476...

100 EXT. DOCKS, FBI RAID - NIGHT (**JOE'S MEMORY**) 100

CLOSE ON: the rear doors of the refrigerated truck...

A heavy padlock. Several FBI agents stand by with flashlights fixed on the truck.

CLOSE ON- Dollar bills slowly flapping in a puddle.

Heavy duty bolt croppers bite into the hardened steel.

With a GASP of rushing air the tall rear door of the truck swings open to reveal Joe.

Rain streams from the brim of his cap.

JOE'S POV - the gloom of the truck interior gives way to a tableau resembling Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa*...

...TWENTY FOUR CHINESE GIRLS.

IT IS TOO LATE.

They are all dead.

Their barely clad bodies entwined in the dark, eyes open, heads cast back, mouths agape.

CLOSE ON Joe: closing in on his narrowed eyes.

CLOSE ON two of the dead girls. Neither older than 14, their faces framed by long black hair, cheeks pressed together in eternal embrace.

CLOSER STILL - A distinct mole on an upper lip. The mouth strained wide...

O.S. The rising pitch of a dialling tone.

FADE OUT:

101 EXT. MIDTOWN, MANHATTAN. NIGHT 101

Joe leans against a battered pay phone. He fishes the receiver to his ear. His cheek is wrapped with a pad of gauze, crudely taped in place. Blood is smeared over his face and hands like iodine.

It connects straight to a phone company digital voicemail.

O.S. McCleary's voice mail.

SYNTHESIZED 'ROBOT' WOMAN
You've called...
(a beat followed by gruff
man's voice)
McCleary...

Joe immediately hangs up.

102 EXT. MCCLEARY'S STREET - DAWN 102

A simple, white clapboard two storey affair backing on to an ocean view. A pristine 20 year old CADDY is parked in the driveway - a 90's 'classic'.

A Manhattan Taxi U-turns and diminishes towards the turn off.

Joe watches till he sees the blink of its signal light then passes the gleaming Caddy towards the rear of the house.

103 INT. MCCLEARY'S HOUSE, KITCHEN SIDE ENTRANCE - DAWN 103

With a brisk move from Joe's outline a pane in the door glass pops through, falls and shatters.

CLOSER STILL - Joe's free hand reaches through and feels out the latch...

104 INT. MCCLEARY'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAWN 104

Joe moves through the kitchen. O.S. Radio on in the adjacent living area.

A HUGE PERSIAN CAT laps at a vast pool of milk from an upturned carton beside the sink. It looks up to meet Joe's gaze. Then returns to the milk.

The splattered microwave door hangs open.

An old school coffee percolator stands beside the fridge.

An 1/8th inch of stewed coffee bubbles furiously in the bottom of it's glass jug. Joe pulls the plug at the wall.

105 INT. MCCLEARY'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAWN 105

McCleary's bed is unslept in, the flowered bedspread tucked in neatly on all sides.

Make-up tubs, compacts, perfume bottles and atomizers are arranged in an ordered crescent on the dresser.

106

INT. MCCLEARY'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAWN

106

Joe is sat on the sofa.

Around Joe is evidence that this is McCleary's place of sleep. A feather pillow and blanket, a few empty beer bottles, an old fashioned porno mag, 'Power & Motoryacht'.

CLOSE ON, A framed photo on a cupboard - A younger, slimmer McCleary, shoulder to shoulder with SENATOR VOTTO SNR - the spit of his son. Beside them stands the 20 year old Votto Jr. McCleary is being handed a gold clock for 10 years service, the mood is jovial - smiles all round.

Other photographs line the walls and mantelpiece - marking the progress of McCleary from state trooper - to a more portly man in a suit.

Interspersed are photographs of McCleary and his wife. Different ages but all images of a loving couple...

A black and white wedding picture of the once handsome pair cutting the cake....

Halloween fancy dress costume - they are Laurel and Hardy.

From the deck of a yacht, they beam at the camera in a tight embrace. She is noticeably more gaunt, a silk scarf tied around her head hiding her lack of hair.

The Persian Cat leaps onto the coffee table. Its back arches as Joe runs his hand across it.

CLOSE ON Joe's palm - bright red streaks. The Persian Cat's fur and tail are spattered with blood...it's FRESH.
Joe tenses.

107 INT. MCCLEARY'S HOUSE BEDROOM - DAWN 107

CLOSE ON: Joe pulls open the bedside drawer.

A ROYAL BLUE COLT PYTHON SNUB NOSE. Joe spins the chamber - fully loaded.

A107 INT. MCCLEARY'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAWN A107

Car keys with the familiar Cadillac logo on the key ring.

JOE'S HAND - he grabs the keys.

108 INT. MCCLEARY'S CADDY - DAY 108

Joe looks like death - driving as fast as the limit allows.

Sweat dots his brow, he constantly checks the rear view mirror and the few passing cars on the road.

He winces, pops one of the painkillers he bought from his Midtown drug dealer. It is almost impossible for him to part his lips.

His head lolls slightly forward.

O.S. The SOUND OF THE CAR ENGINE, loud, quickening, continues over:

109 INT. LIVING ROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT (JOE'S MEMORY) 109

CLOSE ON: 8-yr-old Joe bare chested, standing poker straight, facing a wall.

8-YR-OLD JOE
(voice as an adult)
I must do better sir. I must do
better sir. I must do better. I
must do better...

8-yr-old Joe begins to falls asleep, his head bows forward almost grazing the chintzy wallpaper.

8-YR-OLD JOE (CONT'D)
(voice as an adult)
I'm fucking up.

As it's just about to touch the wall...

- 110 INT. MCCLEARY'S CADDY - DAY (**BACK TO PRESENT**) 110
JOE'S HEAD jolts himself upright, slaps his face, HARD.
Speeds up...
- 111 INT. MCCLEARY'S OFFICE BUILDING, ELEVATOR - DAY 111
O.S. The manic sound of a FLY BUZZING, trapped in the
fluorescent light.

CLOSE ON: Joe propped against the back wall of the elevator -
The doors begin slide shut in front of his face...

112 OMITTED 112

113 INT. MCCLEARY'S OFFICE - DAY 113

Joe lets himself into the room.

The room is a jungle of gaudy wilted flowers. McCleary's
body sits at his high backed desk chair. He is wearing a
towelling dressing gown and slippers - eyes closed, mouth
slightly agape.

The only sign of disarray is the shattered Rolodex, its index
cards spread out across the glass top of the desk like a
blackjack table.

JOE
(under his breath)
Oh John.

CLOSE ON: the Rolodex card bearing Angel's details as Joe
turns it over in his hands. Dried blood foxes the edges.

O.S. Dialling tone and three digits punched...

From UNDERNEATH the glass tabletop - CONGEALING BLOOD pools
around McCleary's hands where they rest on the top surface,
his fingers bent and mangled.

911 DISPATCHER (O.S.)
What's your emergency?

JOE (O.S.)
Rego Park, fire department... It's
urgent...
(beat)
...Yeah I saw smoke coming from an
old lady's house. 1138...

114 INT. ANGEL'S BODEGA STOCKROOM - NIGHT (**IN JOE'S** 114
IMAGINATION)

CLOSE ON: The terrified face of Moises. He opens his mouth
to speak. His lips synchronize with Joe's call.

JOE (V.O.)
...Sycamore, a red brick house.

WIDER: Moises is on his knees facing his father. A gun pressed to the back of Angel's head.

The EXPLOSION of muzzle flash...

Blood sprays into Moises' face.

115 INT. MCCLEARY'S CADDY, IN FRONT OF JOE'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - 115
DAY

Lights, no siren...

FIREMEN haul themselves back into the cab of their fire truck.

The caddy parks up opposite.

Joe sits forward, scanning the view through the windscreen...

The Fire Truck pulls away, revealing a black Dodge Challenger - conspicuous on the genteel street.

116 EXT. BACK ALLEY, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 116

Joe looks up to the low roof at the rear of the house.

117 INT/EXT. JOE'S BEDROOM - DAY 117

Through the window we see Joe haul himself onto the low roof at the rear of the house. He continues to climb up to the 2nd floor.

118 OMITTED 118

119 INT. MOTHER'S HOUSE, MOTHER'S BEDROOM - DAY 119

Joe drops into view onto the exterior balcony. He turns to the window.

CLOSE ON: Joe's face as he stares in.

120 INT. BEDROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 120

Joe's POV of his Mother on the bed - A PILLOW OVER HER FACE. There is a tear in it and powder burns scorch the pillow case.

He stares down at her from the bedside.

O.S. The CREAKING of floorboards in 2 separate places - 2 sets of footfalls. The sound of a drawer being pulled open, the crash of cutlery hitting a floor....

121 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY (**FLASHBACK**) 121

CLOSE ON: 8-yr-old Joe's shins, angry red welts, his stockinged feet step over a specific floorboard.

122 INT. JOE'S BEDROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 122

8-yr-old Joe crouches in the wardrobe. Hiding inside a PLASTIC DRY CLEANING BAG, his shallow breathing distorts his face.

8-YR-OLD JOE
(internally)
313, 312, 311...
(beat)

O.S. CREAKING of shoes on the downstairs floorboards, the muffled sound of a man's raised voice - GROWLING.

8-yr-old Joe holds his breath, listens, terrified.

O.S. SLAPS and THUDS, a woman MOANING ...SOBBING.

8-yr-old Joe breathes again in relief. His face red with shame.

8-YR-OLD JOE (CONT'D)
(internally)
310, 309, 308...
(beat)

O.S. More SLAPS and SOBS.

8-yr-old Joe clamps his hands over his ears.

123 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY (**BACK TO** 123
PRESENT)

Joe stands at the top of the stairs.

Unobserved he can see shadows moving in the living room and dining area downstairs.

O.S. Music from the kitchen radio drifts up.

124 INT. BEDROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 124

Joe lifts the scorched pillow from his Mother's face. He reaches down.

CLOSE ON: Joe gently sets her glasses on the bedside table alongside her hearing aide.

The left lens is shattered, dripping with blood.

125 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 125

O.S. One set of footsteps moves to the front door.

Joe's eyes are closed, head tilting from to one side to the other as he maps the movements below him. The sound of the radio fades as the sounds of movement increase.

O.S. The sound of footsteps walking over CUTLERY on dining area floor.

126 INT. LIVING ROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY (**FLASHBACK**) 126

The SILVER CUTLERY and mahogany case sparkle on the living room floor.

Joe's Mother is slumped beside it.

His Father's feet stride away, a bottle of whiskey swings in his free hand.

A Ball peen HAMMER drops to the floor.

8-yr-old Joe watches from underneath the sofa.

His Mother stares at him. Blood runs from her ear.

127 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 127

Joe is at the top of the stairs. Eye's closed in concentration. His finger moves onto the trigger of McCleary's gun.

128 INT. STAIRCASE - HALLWAY, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY. 128

Joe comes down the stairs like an express train, gun drawn. One continuous move takes him as he spins, firing two shots in quick succession.

A long EERIE SILENCE broken by the beep of an incoming text message and the faint sound of a Gunman's fingernails scratching at the floor.

REVEAL - One gunman keels over. Dead. The other is on his belly, crawling away towards the kitchen.

129 INT. KITCHEN, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 129

Staying low Joe stands over to the body of the dead Gunman. He rifles through his jacket pocket for his phone - reads the text...

"is he there yet?"

Joe types, *"all quiet"* and hits Send.

CLOSE ON: Joe's hand filling a glass of water from the faucet.

The same 1990 Pop hit heard in Kuwait plays from the radio. He grabs a CHINTZY TEA TOWEL then slides down the sink unit to the floor.

CLOSE ON: the bottle pills from the Midtown drug dealer - Joe shakes out 2 pills. He downs one...

The 2nd Gunman lies slumped across from Joe. He's in bad shape, bleeding out from the bullet to the stomach.

Joe, tosses the Gunman the chintzy tea towel.

The Gunman uses his free hand to limply clutch it to his stomach to staunch the bleeding.

Joe crawls towards him, feeds him the other pill, holding the glass of water to his lips.

Joe pulls himself into a sitting position beside the Gunman.
The Gunman looks at him, unfocused.

JOE
Where's the girl?

A HARD CUT in the O.S. Radio music. Later in the song, a different tempo. Time has passed.

GUNMAN
Far away...

A HARD CUT in the O.S. Radio music.

GUNMAN (CONT'D)
(eyes glazed)
Safer than her dirty old man.

Joe is now on the other side of the gunman. He rests his fingers on the man's neck - feeling his pulse.

JOE
You work for him?

GUNMAN
...the other way round.

The gunman smirks, looks about to pass out.

GUNMAN (IN SYNC WITH LYRICS ON THE
KITCHEN RADIO) (CONT'D)
I wish someone had talked to me
like I want to talk to you.

JOE
What do you have on him?

GUNMAN
...I ran out of places and
friendly faces... [...].. I've
been to paradise but I've never
been to me...

He sparks out.

A HARD CUT in the O.S. Radio music.

Joe nudges the gunman again

GUNMAN (CONT'D)
The Mother knew.

The gunman's suddenly wide awake staring with hyper alertness.

He reaches for Joe's hand, takes it and holds it tight.

JOE
Where's the girl?

The gunman stares at him. Past him. Joe gently takes the Gunman's hand that still clutches the blood-soaked chintzy tea towel to his stomach.

GUNMAN
Her old man knows.

He presses it firmly over the Gunman's nose and mouth.

130 INT. JOE'S BEDROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY (LATER) 130

O.S The SCREECH of duct tape —wrenched from the roll.

In the mirror: Joe has redressed the gauze on his JAW. He smooths a strip of silver duct tape over the dressing, sealing in his neck and lower ear.

131 OMITTED 131

132 OMITTED 132

133 INT. BEDROOM, MOTHER'S HOUSE - DAY 133

CLOSE ON: Joe's hands lift his mothers feet.

He gently removes her tiny floral slippers, placing them on the floor at the foot of her bed.

CLOSE ON: Joe's face as he lifts his mother up delicately by the shoulders. Her frail back comes into view.

Long silver hair falls loose from its chignon.

Joe blinks, almost cracking for a second.

He lays his mother gently back down on the bed.

Joe combs her tangled hair smooth with the brush from her dresser.

CLOSE ON: the hairbrush as he sets it down on the bedside

table. Wisps of silver hair waft from it.

Joe picks up a lipstick. He holds it to his nostrils, inhaling. Closes his eyes.

134 OMITTED 134

135 INT. MCCLEARY'S CADDY, QUEENS STREETS - DAY (LATER) 135

Joe drives out of Queens.

CLOSE ON: Joe's finger as he toggles down the window switch.

O.S. The garbage bag ripples noisily in the breeze

CUT TO:

Joe's sunken eyes rimmed with cold sweat - glued to the rear view mirror.

In its reflection the black plastic clings to his mother's face, defining the outline of her features like a death mask.

Joe sends the window back up.

136 EXT. APPROACH TO GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - DAY (LATER) 136

The Caddy takes the Harlem River Dr. North to the lower level of the George Washington and crosses into Jersey.

137 INT. MCCLEARY'S CADDY, WOODLAND, NEW JERSEY - DAY (LATER) 137

Joe drives across a river dam.

138 EXT. WOODLAND, NEW JERSEY - DUSK (LATER) 138

FROM BEHIND: Joe winds through woodland down a steep dirt path, cradling his mother's body as his footfalls falter on the uneven ground.

The arching branches open up to reveal the edge of a vast lake.

139 EXT. WOODLAND, LAKESIDE, NEW JERSEY - DUSK 139

The shrouded form of Joe's Mother lies *in state* across a broad rock at the water's edge.

CLOSE ON: Joe's hands precisely placing a neat row of personal effects, the photograph of Nina, McCleary's gun, amongst the foliage at the edge of lake.

CLOSE ON: Joe's hands as he scoops up a heavy flat rock.

140 EXT. WOODLAND, LAKE - DUSK 140

UNDERWATER: Joe's feet stumble across the coarse shale of the lake bed.

Joe wades chest deep into the river pushing his Mother's corpse ahead of him. Flat rocks weigh her down so that she barely touches the surface of the water.

He gently immerses the plastic bundle and with his fingertips tears open a small hole to the side of her head.

Snow white hair pours out into the black water, wafting like reeds.

Silently the black plastic crimps and flexes as air leaches from it. As Joe walks deeper the small body slowly sinks below the surface in his arms.

The water reaches his eyes.

UNDERWATER - The pockets of his suit bulge with rocks from the lakeside.

He takes another step forward and disappears under the surface.

CUT TO:

UNDERWATER: In a limitless black void Joe and his mother are in embrace.

The black *shroud*, cocooned tight around her. She seems tiny, the size of child as he clings to her.

Her silver hair loosens and wafts in the water, whirling around his head and shoulders...glinting, beckoning strands of light.

Joe's mother's shroud descends into the depths.

Joe drifts away from her.

A CRACK, muffled, from above the surface of the water...

A WHOOSH and almighty subaqueous CRASH as a thirty foot mass of dead tree smashes into and under the surface, almost on top of Joe, its branches spearing out underwater...

Joe's eyes snap open in an underwater churn of bubbles and trunk...

On his wide eyes...

He closes his mouth, his chest clenches.

JOE'S POV - UNDERWATER, against a limitless black void, the diaphanous figure of NINA, her nightdress flowing around her.

141 EXT. HUDSON RIVER, PANINADES - DUSK 141

FOLLOWING JOE - His clothes are dripping wet. The rhythm of his sodden shoes the only sound.

O.S Nina's countdown continuous...

NINA'S VOICE (O.S.)
220, 219, 218..

142 OMITTED 142

143 OMITTED 143

144 INT. AMTRAK 'EMPIRE SERVICE' TRAIN - NIGHT 144

Joe's head leans against the glass of the window. His SUNDAY
SUIT leeches moisture into his seat.

O.S Nina's countdown continuous...

NINA'S VOICE (O.S.)
217, 216, 215..

Her voice merges with the beat of train tracks.

Joe stares unblinking through the business compartment
window. Nearby, a man reaches for his suitcase from an
overhead, he walks up the aisle, Joe takes a moment to notice
his black shiny shoes.

CUT TO:

145 EXT. SHERATON ROOFTOP, NYC - NIGHT (**IN JOE'S IMAGINATION**) 145

O.S. The whisper of NINA'S COUNTING, 97, 96, 95...

CLOSE ON: A man's shiny black shoes are slipped off of his
feet, we follow his feet up onto the ledge of a roof.

NINA (O.S.)
Don't tell Mommy...

*A MONTAGE of images and dialogue - overlapping and confused -
underscored to the rhythm of the train tracks...*

146 OMITTED 146

147 INT. BROTHEL (JOE'S IMAGINATION) 147

Senator Williams cries, Nina with her back turned to him.

CUT TO:

148 INT. LOTTE NY PALACE HOTEL - DAY (JOE'S IMAGINATION) 148

Senator Williams cries, Votto takes it in.

CUT TO:

149 INT. LOTTE NY PALACE HOTEL - DAY(JOE'S IMAGINATION) 149

...Votto has Joe's hand in a firm handshake. He places his other hand on top of Joe's - intimate.

GUNMAN (O.S.)
(pained, whispered)
We cleaned up his mess.

CUT TO:

150 INT. PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT (JOE'S IMAGINATION) 150

The smiley face on the car window beside Nina has begun to run - tears of a clown.

CUT TO:

151 INT. LOTTE NY PALACE HOTEL - DAY (JOE'S IMAGINATION) 151

CLOSE ON: Votto raises his forefinger to his lips in a gesture of secrecy.

CUT TO:

152 INT. SENTON HOTEL - NIGHT 152

CLOSE ON: Nina's tiny feet disappear out of view as the door to room 719 snaps shut.

CUT TO:

153 EXT. LAKE - DUSK

153

A GIRL'S PALE BARE FEET (Nina's) dart between black tree trunks, stuttering in and out view.

The briefest of glimpses, then she is gone.

A153 OMITTED

A153

154 INT. JOE'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT 154

Joe's face as the clear plastic bag is suddenly sucked onto his skin, distorting his features into an inhuman mask.

VOTTO (O.S.)
Her name is Nina did I mention
that.

CUT TO:

155 OMITTED 155

156 INT/EXT. RENTAL CAR. VOTTO'S CONSTITUENCY OFFICE - DAY 156

Few signs of life as a solitary intern mans the phone.

Across the street Joe watches the campaign office from the front seat of a RENTAL CAR. He is wearing the dishevelled Sunday Suit.

He lifts a Hershey bar to his mouth and takes a bite of chocolate.

A SLOW ZOOM. Closer on Joe.

Votto exits his constituency meeting accompanied by TWO SURLY BODYGUARDS—in dark suits.

They lead him to his Car.

On Joe - his attention drifts from Votto to his bodyguards. As one opens the rear door of Votto's car a concealed gun holster peeps through his jacket opening. The 2nd Man has a grasp on Votto's elbow as he edges him into his seat. Both men wear earpieces.

Joe watches as the car slowly pulls away - Votto's face in the rear is set in a grim expression.

CUT TO:

Joe's hand balls up the HERSHEY wrapper and drops it on the passenger seat. It lands beside 5 other identically screwed up HERSHEY WRAPPERS.

157 INT. MOTEL ROOM, BATHROOM, ALBANY- NIGHT. 157

Steam rises from the bathtub.

A SLOW ZOOM.

The bare bulb illuminating the room shimmers in the steam.

Joe lies in the water with a wet face towel obscuring his eyes and mouth.

A SLOW ZOOM.

CLOSER on Joe. His breathing under the towel is wet and laboured. His eye sockets sunken.

158 OMITTED 158

159 INT. MOTEL ROOM, ALBANY - NIGHT. 159

Joe's SUNDAY SUIT hangs on the back of the bathroom door, wrapped in an ALBANY DRY CLEANER'S plastic bag.

A ball peen hammer, duct tape & cable ties lie on the motel bed.

O.S. The sound of tearing DUCT TAPE. A pause in the tearing sound. WET Laboured breathing...

160 INT/EXT. JOE'S RENTAL CAR, COUNTRY ROAD - DUSK. 160

Joe's hands rest on the wheel of his hire car.

The distant shape of Votto's car traces ahead on the country road.

JOE drives, his eyes implacable - fixed on the road ahead.

A WHITE RABBIT - flaring in the glare of car headlamps.

It runs ahead - mesmerically - in sync with the speed of car

CUT TO:

Nina's feet.

Running fast in the road ahead.

161	EXT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE, BETHLEHEM - DUSK	161
	A MANSION built in colonial style. Joe steps into view, hammer in hand.	
162	EXT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE, BETHLEHEM - DUSK	162
	Joe runs towards camera hammer raised.	
163	EXT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE, BETHLEHEM - DUSK	163
	Another angle of the mansion.	
	All is dark except one lit window on the top floor.	
163A	EXT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE, GATE BETHLEHEM - DUSK	163A
	Another angle of the swimming pool.	
164	EXT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE, GATE, BETHLEHEM - DUSK	164
	The 1st Bodyguard lies face down, incapacitated.	
165	INT. KITCHEN WILLIAMS' HOUSE - NIGHT	165
	Joe moves through a brightly lit kitchen leaving a guard down in his wake.	
166	INT. HALL, WILLIAMS' HOUSE - NIGHT	166
	Joe slowly moves through the house, hammer in hand.	
167	OMITTED	167

168 OMITTED 168

169 INT. STAIRCASE, WILLIAMS' HOUSE - NIGHT. 169

Joe gently climbs the staircase. The hammer jutting from the back pocket of his pants.

169A OMITTED 169A

170 INT. WILLIAMS' HOUSE, UPPER LANDING- NIGHT 170

Padding through the plush carpet.

He moves along an upper landing, on his left, the open door of a regal master bedroom, empty. The king size bed is undisturbed.

Joe moves on through the long wood-panelled corridor, he is drawn to the mysterious sound of muffled music.

NINA' VOICE (O.S.)
(whispered, overlapping)
Shhhh... 91, 90, 89

171

INT. BEDROOM, WILLIAMS' HOUSE - NIGHT

171

In Joe's imagination. Williams fixes the toys on the shelves, a doll's house with tiny furniture, teddy bears. He smells Nina's pillow. Touches the material of her clothes to his cheek. Smooths out her bed...

On Joe as he approaches the foot of the bed. He stops and stares. We hold on Joe's face as his look suddenly changes.

We see Williams, slumped to the floor, his throat is slit, blood has pooled around his lifeless body.

We cut back to Joe, the shock fades from his face and gives way to a gamut of emotions. He laughs, he cries, he is full of rage, he is exhausted, he falls apart. There is nothing left of Joe.

Joe begins to mumble something indiscernible, he repeats something, again, and again, each time it grows a little louder and louder again.

JOE

I must do better sir, I must do
better sir, I must do better sir, I
must do better sir...

Joe repeats it, again and again, over this repetition, an amazing high energy pop song swells to full pitch. He stops repeating himself. He listens to the music, Joe is euphoric, elated, light.

172 INT. STAIRCASE, WILLIAMS' HOUSE - NIGHT 172

On his way down and through the house after discovering Williams' corpse, Joe will see Joe's Mother, Joe's Father, and FOUR CHINESE GIRLS.

Joe descends the stairs as though in a trance.

He see the hand of an old lady. It is Joe's Mother.

JOE'S MOTHER

(Singing)

A you're adorable, B you're so
beautiful, C you're a cutie full of
charms...

172A INT. ROOM, WILLIAMS' HOUSE - NIGHT 172A

Joe sees a young boy standing head against a wall in a room.
It is his 8-year old self.

8-YR OLD JOE

I must do better sir, I must do
better sir, I must do better sir, I
must do better sir...

He sees a man with a towel over his head, like the men in the
Russian baths. It is Joe's Late Father.

172B INT. DINING ROOM, WILLIAMS' HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 172B

Joe comes upon Nina wearing a new outfit. On the table is the
remains of a meal for two. A whole chicken, half devoured. An
empty bottle of wine, dregs in a glass. A split fruit bowl.

Nina has blood on her and has a cutthroat razor.

Dialogue and action between Joe and Nina TBD.

Nina and Joe leave.

173 OMITTED 173

174 OMITTED 174

175 OMITTED 175

176 OMITTED 176

177 OMITTED

177

178 OMITTED 178

179 EXT. GAS STATION - DAWN 179

Joe stands sentry at a gas pump. The dollars slowly climb on the digital display. It is interminable.

180 EXT. ROAD SIDE DINER - DAWN 180

Joe is sat at the table. His gaze is fixed on where he was previously standing.

Eileen Barton's *If I Knew You Were Coming I'd Have Baked A Cake* drifts from a tinny PA, reflecting off plastic surfaces. A few travellers now populate the diner...

A MIDDLE AGED MAN sat beside an oxygen tank, drawing breath through a hand held mask - A WOMAN and her TEENAGE DAUGHTER, schoolwork spread in front of them - AN ELDERLY COUPLE loudly discussing an imminent hospital visit - A PAIR OF SUITS, commuters, en route to the city.

Joe sucks the last drops of a milk shake from a metal cup. Joe has drank it too quickly, he has a brain freeze. It is painful, but he works through it, he then reaches for a second milkshake from a group of three other empty milkshake glasses.

A cacophony of voices rises above the music, punctuated with the wheeze of oxygen inhalation...

VOICES (O.S.)

But you gotta take your pills
Frank...

40 X 23 equals...

I can't take it anymore...

Drives like a dream...

Staring straight ahead Joe reaches into his overcoat pocket. He pulls out McCleary's snub nose.

The muzzle pushes firmly under his chin...

NINA'S VOICE (O.S.)

11, 10, 9...

THE GUN FIRES.

An EXPLOSION of blood Exit wound gore and matter spray in all directions, splattering tables, chairs, donuts and diners.

The commuter couple and their breakfast plates. But they keep on eating.

The man with the oxygen mask. But he keeps on gulping.

The woman and her daughter. Math homework now inked in red.

The Elderly Couple... Blood dripping from the OLD LADY'S wobbling chin as she slurps a fork full of runny egg into her mouth. The Old Man pours a huge dollop of syrup over his bloody pancakes.

OLD LADY

Easy on the syrup Frank, you know
you're not allowed tha...

ELDERLY MAN, FRANK.
(through a mouthful)
Goddammit! I can't have shit!

Blood pumps over the edge of Joe's table and flows thickly to the tiled floor. A WAITRESS'S feet nimbly step over the spreading pool, a brimming coffee decanter in her hand.

WAITRESS (O.S.)
Joe?

Joe (alive), turns measuredly to face her.

The Waitress is Nina.

She looks down at Joe, lifting the coffee decanter to indicate she's offering a refill...

Joe looks down to the ground. Beside the pool of blood Nina's bare feet.

NINA (O.S.)
Joe?....

Joe looks up...

Smiles at her as he holds up his cup.

JOE
You saved my life.

CUT TO:

The WAITRESS (35) smiles, fills up Joe's cup.

WAITRESS
I know I need at least five cups in the morning just to get the engine running.
(beat)
You OK honey?...
(beat)
You look like death.

Joe smiles at her.

JOE
I just woke up.

WAITRESS
(rote)
Well have a nice day.

JOE
(sincerely)
You have a nice day too.

He looks out the window.

The Waitress catches his eye line, takes in the view.

She turns and heads back to the other waitresses who are cooing over a mewling newborn in its mothers arms.

Above the low buildings of the Travel Plaza orange dawn catches fire along the edges of the grey shroud sky.

JOE (CONT'D)

It's a nice day.

CUT TO
LATER:

CLOSE ON: a \$100 bill, tucked under the edge of Joe's coffee cup.

A bloody thumb print glistens over the treasurer's signature.

The Waitress takes the bill from the table and blankly stares off.

Joe is gone.

181 EXT. ROADSIDE DINER - DAY 181

Joe strides across the parking lot. His face is focussed, his movement is purposeful.

OFF BLACK the trunk of the rental swings open, revealing Joe. He tosses the Glock in.

Joe POV: - The dead Gunmen's pistols, suppressors, McCleary's revolver, three new hammers - the tools of his trade all in triplicate.

182 INT. JOE'S RENTAL CAR, ROADSIDE DINER - DAWN 182

Joe fires his car's ignition, the radio comes on.

CLOSE ON, Joe sat behind the wheel.

183 EXT. ROAD SIDE DINER - DAWN 183

Joe's car pulls out of the diner's lot.

NINA'S VOICE (O.S.)
8, 7, 6...

184 INT. JOE'S RENTAL CAR, INTERSTATE 95 - DAWN 184

The first rays of the rising sun flare the lens with searing white light illuminating the freeway sign.

CLOSE ON: Joe, his eyes fixed on the road ahead, his face set with a look of sheer determination.

NINA'S VOICE (O.S. CONT'D)
3, 2, 1.

CUT TO Black.
