

**ASPECT RATIO**

by

Dwight C. Douglas

**DRAFT - NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION**

Copyright 2007 Dwight C Douglas

Dwight C. Douglas  
4 Martine Ave. #606  
White Plains, NY 10606  
(770) 652-8805  
DCDouglas@aol.com

FADE IN:

INT. PLUSH BEDROOM - NIGHT

Two people stand at the edge of a large bed. A YOUNG MAN kisses an older WOMAN and runs his hands from her shoulders to her hips. He gently picks her up and lays her into the love nest. She moans with appreciation and permission. The young stud starts to unbutton her blouse. She pulls away with a look of distress. She looks at the open bedroom door.

WOMAN

Wait, did you hear something?

Dramatic pause. He looks at her and then to the open door.

LOUD BANG (O.C.)

The director, SIMON, throws his headphones down.

SIMON

Cut! Cut! What the mother fuck was that? Jesus, can someone tell me what the fuck that was?

A young beautiful brunette REBECCA MCKENZIE, in her mid-twenties, on her knees picks up an iPod, the source of the interruption. The crew, with cameras surrounding the bed, turn to look. The two actors move away from each other and stand.

YOUNG MAN

Simon, I can't work like this.

The male actor storms off the set. SIMON, the director throws a aggressive stare to the AD BUTCH CASEY, points at the young woman, then makes the sign of cutting her head off with his finger knife.

INT. STUDIO OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Rebecca puts a few things in a cardboard box. Tears run down her face. She puts a toy pistol that has a red flag in the barrel that says BANG in the box. She turns and walks out the door. We see her long hair over the logo of the studio on her jacket. Her tight jeans show off a dancer's shape. The SECURITY CAMERA follows her into the parking lot, she gets into her old used car.

REBECCA (V.O.)

We've all had bad days. Well, I guess getting fired doesn't happen every day, but this is certainly a bad day. Sometimes I feel like I am sleep walking in someone else's bad dream.

INSERT FADE IN SMALL PIP (Picture in Picture) BOX LOWER RIGHT like the e-mail arrival indication. Rebecca in a sweat shirt with reading glasses on stands before a large microphone in a recording booth.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

I keep repeating that line, 'things happen for a reason' and remembering that God will help me.

SMALL PIP BOX FADES OUT

REBECCA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But as my father says, 'when the horse throws you Becky, you've got to get back up there and try again.' Maybe today I get to determine what's right for me. Maybe today, I do something that changes everything.

MUSIC UP - AC DC'S HELL BELLS

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNNY CALIFORNIA STREET SCENES - DAY

MONTAGE

Rebecca drives on the Hollywood Freeway.

The box of office things in the passenger seat vibrate.

Freeway signs whiz by.

She parks the car in Ralph's Supermarket parking lot.

She walks to the store seen through a SECURITY CAMERA.

She comes out of Ralph's crying.

She carries a large bag of chocolate chip cookies.

Sits in her car and eats a cookie.

Parks her car in racially mixed neighborhood.

Walks into a apartment building house.

END OF MONTAGE

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rebecca tosses the box of broken dreams down by the door and looks over to see a short scruffy-long haired rock star-type, DANNY LIEKUS. He sits on a ratty sofa and plays a FENDER GUITAR along with the music. CDs and beer bottles clutter the coffee table. A large MARSHALL AMPLIFIER leans against the wall. A large green plastic bong sits on the coffee table, smokes rises from it. Danny looks up, his eyes are bloodshot.

DANNY

Hey babe.

Rebecca throws her purse on the floor next to the box, walks to the stereo and turns off the music, then plops down on an antique chair.

REBECCA

We need to talk.

Danny reaches for the bong. Then reaches for a beer. Realizes he has both in his hands, puts them both back down with a dumbfounded look on his face.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Danny!

(seething)

I got fired today.

Danny looks at an old plastic "flip digit" wall clock: ELEVEN-ELEVEN. Looks back with a dumbfounded grimace.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

That's the final straw Danny.

(determined)

I'm not going to pay your rent while you sit here smokin' dope all day trying to find some inspiration to write songs.

Danny just sits there. Scratches his head, too stoned to respond.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

I'm moving out. I'll be at my mothers in South Pass.

Danny reaches for the bong, again.

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
 (angry and loud)  
 DANNY! I'm leaving dude. Do you get it? Do you have anything to say to me at all?

Danny looks up, wets his lips, swallows, opens his mouth.

DANNY  
 Ah, LINE! Sorry, line please.

SIMON  
 CUT! Jesus, kid, you'd think that bong was real. Let's take five. Rebecca that was sensational.  
 (to Danny)  
 Get with the script girl, we made some changes.

As we look around the room, we realize we are on another movie set. Rebecca walks slowly to a chair with the word: ACTOR on the back. She sits down and picks up her cell phone from her purse. Dials a number and waits. A crew member hands her a bottle of water.

REBECCA  
 Mom, hi - yes, we'll be done in an hour. Mind if I come by?  
 (taking a swig)  
 Sure, dinner would be good. Can I pick up any...

People are walking around her. She seems distracted, but then regains focus.

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
 Tanqueray, sure. The big one,  
 (concerned but accepting)  
 okay.

INT. COFFEE SHOP NYU CAMPUS AREA - MIDDAY

Two young college men sit at a table. The taller, JOEL, has long hair and a slender build, sits and drinks his coffee. The other man, ETHAN, a rather diminutive short-haired nerdy type, sketches storyboards on a pad.

JOEL  
 I don't know why they just don't give us a camera and let us go out and start shooting movies.

ETHAN

Why do you always create controversy out of everything?

JOEL

Well, as they say,  
(mimicking)  
you cannot have drama without conflict.

ETHAN

And what part of that don't you understand? If everything in the movie was normal, it would be boring. You need conflict to move the plot along.

JOEL

Why can't we just throw a guy into a wood chipper and film that?

ETHAN

You have to tell a story. You have to have something that leads up to that. Something meaningful.

JOEL

Rules. Why so many rules, conventions, systems, methods, structure? You can kill a thousand people in a movie, but if you blow up one damn cow, you've got twenty conference calls with PETA!

Ethan eyes at his watch, then throws his sketch pad in a bag.

ETHAN

Speaking of structure, we have a film editing class in three minutes.

They both get up and dash out the door.

INT. REBECCA'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - LATER

Rebecca grabs a key from under the doormat and lets herself in. Her heels clank loudly on the MARBLE FLOOR as she trots through the foyer, into the kitchen. The house, beautifully decorated, transmits a cold un-lived-in feeling.

In the kitchen, Rebecca finds her mother, FELICIA, an attractive, woman in her mid-fifties.

Felicia lights a cigarette off a burner on the stove top. Rebecca places the bottle of gin on the table and sits down.

REBECCA

Mom! Do you want to set your hair on fire again?

FELICIA

(laughs)

At least I know a good plastic surgeon.

Felicia glides to the kitchen table and sits down. Rebecca notices a full bottle plus another half bottle of Tangueray on the kitchen island. Rebecca pushes the bottle of gin like it's a chess piece on a board.

REBECCA

Mom? Did you really need me to bring you another one?

FELICIA

Oh, those are just props.  
(laughing at her own joke)  
I need the real thing, baby.

Felicia twists the top of the new bottle.

REBECCA

Maybe you should slow down - baby!  
(looking around)  
What's for dinner?

FELICIA

What did you bring?

Rebecca shoots her mother a look of disbelief. She walks over to the large sub zero fridge, opens the door to find nothing but an EXPIRED GALLON OF MILK and some ROTTEN FRUIT. She slams the door shut. She goes to the cabinet and pulls out a single box of pasta. She heads for another cabinet, finds a pot, then walks to the sink. She fills the pot with water, then puts it on the stove and turns the flame up to full blast. Felicia freshens her drink and puffs on her cigarette. Her LIPS ARE WRINKLED from years of her bad habit.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

The patient, Danny, slouches on the retro style couch. The shrink, DR. GLICKSTEIN, sits with perfect posture in front of the couch, pen and pad in hand. His gray hair is more Hollywood than academia. His eyes carry some heavy crow's feet.

DANNY

I hate when you take notes.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

I told you, Danny, it helps me remember where we are.

DANNY

Yeah, well, I just think it's fuckin' rude. Like, I'm some sort of specimen or something.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

Pay my notebook no attention. So, what's happening with that young actress you like?

DANNY

Like I was saying...she took my head and shoved it in a giant pot of boiling water.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

Interesting metaphor. How did that feel?

DANNY

How did that feel...what the FUCK do you mean? How did that feel? How do you think it felt?

DR. GLICKSTEIN

Danny, you need to tell me how it felt. You need to at least open up  
(beat)  
to your feelings.

There is a long pause. Danny laughs.

DR. GLICKSTEIN (CONT'D)

What's so funny?

DANNY

Well, Dr. Glickstein, why the hell do I pay you? You can't connect the words, head in a pot of boiling water and how that would feel?

Movement is heard.

SIMON (O.C.)

Okay, and cut.

Danny looks up with a look of disbelief.



DANNY  
 (defiantly)  
 What's the problem now?

Simon, the director comes into the shot, his back to the camera.

SIMON  
 Hey, let's stick to the script here. I think it's important. The line is, "Funny, what part of my fucked up life isn't funny?"  
 (pulling his hair)  
 And punch out the 'F' sounds, Fucked up and Funny! Got it?

Danny lays back on the sofa and takes a big breath.

INT. REBECCA'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - LATER

Rebecca hovers over the sink, rinses the dishes. Felicia lights up another cigarette from the stove top. She empties a bottle of Tangueray into her tumbler. Goes back and sits down, watches her daughter.

FELICIA  
 You outdid yourself there, kid.

REBECCA  
 (surprised to hear a compliment)  
 Thanks.

Pause.

FELICIA  
 Except for that sauce. Terrible.

Rebecca, focuses on the DISHES, rolls her eyes.

FELICIA (CONT'D)  
 Keeps repeating on me, like hot dogs or something --

REBECCA  
 Okay! I get it. Thanks.

FELICIA  
 Where did you get that recipe, from lover boy, or his mom?

REBECCA  
 (through clenched teeth)  
 Rachel Ray. And not that it matters  
 to you, but "lover boy" and I are  
 finished.

FELICIA  
 (sounding almost  
 delighted)  
 Really? Want to talk about it?

REBECCA  
 No, thanks, I'm fine.

FELICIA  
 That's too bad. I always liked him.  
 What about Rob, you know I really  
 like him.

Felicia smiles and has a sparkle in her eye.

REBECCA  
 Rob? I'd like to keep him a friend.  
 (beat)  
 So, what about you mom? Still  
 seeing Albert? He seemed like a  
 real winner, huh?

Rebecca loads the dishwasher, then waits for a response.

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
 (turning to face her  
 mother)  
 Mom?

Felicia, the drama queen, takes a long drag on her cigarette.  
 Rebecca turns back to the sink to turn off the faucet, takes  
 a deep breath.

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
 What's wrong?

Felicia shakes her head.

FELICIA  
 He asked me to marry him.

REBECCA  
 Really?

FELICIA  
 I laughed in his face.

REBECCA  
You're kidding, right?

Felicia takes a big sip of her drink and laughs.

FELICIA  
I'm not going to marry that drunk.

Rebecca shakes her head, then looks at THE TELEPHONE on the wall and drifts off somewhere else.

INT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S PASADENA APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

A balding man in his late fifties, BERNIE MCKENZIE, sits in a silver wheel chair. He stares out his window at the small yellow and white COMMUTER TRAIN going under his building. The phone rings. He picks up the receiver.

BERNIE  
Hello?

INT. TELEPHONE CALL - INTERLEAVING

Rebecca stands with the phone to her ear.

REBECCA  
Hi Daddy!

BERNIE  
(face lights up)  
Hi sweetie! How are you?

REBECCA  
I'm good, just sitting here with  
mom.  
(pause)  
Hang on a second, she wants to say  
hello.

Rebecca reluctantly passes the phone to her mother.

FELICIA  
Hello, Bernie.  
(pauses)  
Bernie, Bernard?

Felicia looks up and hands the phone back.

FELICIA (CONT'D)  
He hung up on me.

INT. SUBURBAN NEW YORK SEARS STORE - DAY

MARTY, a fidgety, short Italian young man with overly large thick glasses and slicked-back black hair, stands and stares at a 65 inch flat screen TV showing a soap opera. He smiles and moves like the Energizer bunny. He shakes his head, then looks over at THELMA, a tall slender Dutch looking woman walks toward him.

MARTY

(thick New York accent)

What the fuck is this? Look at this fucking screen, are you looking at this Thelma? What the fuck is wrong with this screen? What are those fucking gray bars on the sides? Why the fuck would I spend seven thousand dollars for this fucking TV if the show didn't fit the fucking screen? Are you seein' this Thelma?

THELMA

Marty, we have to get back to the city. We have that lecture today on George Lucas.

Marty looks at her, then looks back at the screen. A Sears sales kid comes over and smiles.

SALES KID

Hello, may I help you? Any questions?

Marty looks up, Thelma grabs his arm trying to pull him away from the glowing screen.

MARTY

Yeah, let me ask you this? What the fuck are those gray bars on either side of the screen?

The sales kid grabs a remote control from the shelf and starts to explain.

SALES KID

Well, ah, that program is not full-screen.

MARTY

No shit, I can see it doesn't fill the fucking screen. Why don't they use the whole fucking screen?

(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

Why the fuck would anyone want to fucking watch that?

Thelma starts to laugh.

THELMA

It's aspect ratio, Marty. You know that. Why you doing this to him? Come on, we gotta catch a train.

Sales kid clicks the remote and stretches the picture to 16:9 aspect ratio.

MARTY

What the fuck did you do? You changed it. You stretched the fucking picture to fit the screen.

Smiling proudly.

SALES KID

Yes Sir, see the TV made it full screen for you.

MARTY

Yeah, but now all the fucking faces are fucking stretched out of proportion, perverted, distorted, warped into unnatural fucking proportions. Look at that woman's butt.

The sales kid just stares and watches them walk away. Marty mumbles as they walk away.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Danny in the fetal position. His eyes well up with tears. He shivers.

DANNY

I feel so lonely, and all alone.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

Isn't that the same thing?

DANNY

(explodes)

You're so fucking insensitive!

DR. GLICKSTEIN

Getting back to this woman.

(beat)

(MORE)

DR. GLICKSTEIN (CONT'D)  
 Why do you think she wanted out of  
 the relationship?

Danny stops shaking. He snaps out of his funk.

DANNY  
 She didn't want out. I asked her to  
 get out. I asked her to leave my  
 place. It was my place, Doc.

Glickstein raises his eye brows and writes down the word  
 DENIAL on his pad.

EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD - DAYTIME

A very well-dressed gay real estate agent, LARRY, walks with  
 Rebecca down a sidewalk. They stop at an apartment complex  
 with a FOR RENT sign in the front yard.

LARRY  
 You will love this one dear. This  
 building is teeming with artists.  
 And you get one free parking space.  
 Come, we have a great 2nd floor  
 unit.

Rebecca smiles and walks with determination.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Rebecca walks from the small kitchen to the sliding glass  
 window that leads to a small porch. She looks out into a  
 courtyard where two men lay by the pool. THEIR SPEEDOS make  
 her giggle.

REBECCA  
 Nice view.

LARRY  
 Yeah, nice guys. Bartenders at our  
 bar, "The Other Team."

Rebecca walks to the hallway and sees a large empty bedroom.  
 The outline of a dropped iron marks the carpet.

REBECCA  
 Have to put a lamp over that, or  
 the bed.

LARRY  
 Well, I've always said, if you  
 can't see it, it's not there.  
 (MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

They're going to redo all the units  
next year.

REBECCA

Okay, I'll take it.

EXT. WEST HOLLYWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD - FEW DAYS LATER

A tall handsome man in his mid-twenties, ROB, helps Rebecca  
carry a computer desk from a small truck to the sidewalk.

REBECCA

Let's put this down for a second.  
This is heavier than I thought.

Rob laughs and lowers the desk to the sidewalk.

ROB

Yeah. I'm glad this is the last  
thing to move. This reminds me of  
when I helped you into your dorm at  
Long Beach State.

Rebecca looks up at her new apartment building then back to  
her friend.

REBECCA

Yeah, you're always there for me.  
Thanks so much, Rob.

Rob pulls out a bottle of water and drinks.

ROB

Hey, come on. We've known each  
other since second grade. Becky,  
what else would I do on a Saturday  
morning?

REBECCA

You'd be doing the same thing I  
would be doing, sleeping.

They both laugh and reload the desk for the journey to the  
new apartment.

INT. COFFEE SHOP MANHATTAN - EARLY MORNING

SHOT IN 4:3 ASPECT RATIO

Ethan sits in the corner reading a New Yorker magazine, while  
Joel reads his text book.

The front door opens and Thelma and Marty appear, he spots the boys through his thick glasses and directs Thelma to follow him.

MARTY

So, what the fuck are we doing here, anyway?

Joel looks up and smiles. Ethan appears annoyed by the disturbance.

ETHAN

Was that a real question, or a statement, or just something to announce your entrance?

Thelma diverts to the counter.

THELMA

(shouts)  
Double-cap, Marty?

Marty nods and then looks back to Ethan.

MARTY

What are you reading?

ETHAN

This story about two gay cowboys who live on a mountain. Make a good movie.

MARTY

What the fuck? Are you high? Who the fuck would watch that shit?

Ethan shakes his head, then brings the magazine back over his face. Joel closes his text book and looks up at Marty.

JOEL

What do you know about aspect ratio, Marty?

MARTY

Thelma-la, get over here.

Thelma grabs two coffees and comes over.

MARTY (CONT'D)

She knows everything about the fuckin' science stuff.

Thelma sits down.



THELMA

And how are my weird brothers  
today?

Ethan smiles knowingly.

JOEL

Do you really have to know every  
aspect ratio of every camera to get  
through this class?

THELMA

Aspect ratio, well, yeah, you have  
to know that stuff. Gotta keep the  
action in frame.

MARTY

Thelma's great at that stuff, go on  
show them!

(points at Joel)

Name a type.

JOEL

Panavision

Screen changes to size

THELMA

2.35:1

Ethan puts his magazine down.

ETHAN

Cinerama

Screen changes to size

THELMA

2.59:1

MARTY

See, she's fucking great at those  
fucking aspect ratios!

ETHAN

Why do you say 'fuck' so much?

Joel laughs.

BACK TO 4:3 ASPECT RATIO

MARTY

(looks at Thelma)

I have no fuckin' idea.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

Rebecca and Rob sit at a small dining table, remnants of dinner on their plates. They laugh.

Rob reaches over and picks up the near-empty bottle of wine in the center of the table, divvies it up between the two of them.

ROB

You know, I'm really proud of you.

REBECCA

Why?

ROB

I don't know, you just -- you came a long way from where you were a year ago. I'm so glad you got rid of that loser.

REBECCA

He's not a loser, he's just not motivated. Lazy, I guess.

ROB

What made the hollywood actress see the light? Why was she wasting her time on someone like that...

Rebecca uncomfortable, reacts to his use of third person.

REBECCA

Well, I just started seeing things differently. Sometimes it's hard to, you know, in the beginning, to really know the whole person?

ROB

Well, whatever it was, you seem happier now that you're free.

REBECCA

No one is really free. There is always something, or someone out there trying to control you.

(slightly smiling)

Dessert?

EXT. FOOD CANTEEN ON A MOVIE LOT - SUNNY AFTERNOON

Glickstein and Danny sit and eat wraps. The small picnic table is filled with discarded plastic water bottles.

DR. GLICKSTEIN  
This is my last movie.

DANNY  
What are you talking about?

DR. GLICKSTEIN  
(tearing up)  
I have a little medical problem I  
have to take care of.

DANNY  
Gee, I hope you're okay.

A golf cart whizzes by with two men dressed as Templar  
Knights.

DR. GLICKSTEIN  
I have AIDS.

Danny sits motionless, then chews again while he looks down  
at his plate as if his next line is written on it.

DANNY  
Man.  
(beat)  
Hey, that's not a death sentence  
anymore.

DR. GLICKSTEIN  
Yeah, I hope you're right.  
(taking a breath)

DANNY  
I mean look at Magic Johnson.

DR. GLICKSTEIN  
Please don't mention this to Simon.  
I just want to get through this  
project without the extra drama.

DANNY  
Yeah, sure, no problem.

Danny takes a large bite of his wrap, then puts it down on  
the paper plate which has THE DIALOGUE written on it in blue  
ink pen.

INT. CLASSROOM AT NYU - EARLY MORNING

The white haired professor, DR. BROWNSTONE, walks to the  
front of the room and looks out at his students.

His tweed jacket has those professor leather patches on the elbows. He takes a deep breath and begins.

BROWNSTONE

Today, we'll talk about Anamorphic widescreen. Who knows what that means?

Thelma raises her hand shyly.

BROWNSTONE (CONT'D)

Yes.

THELMA

It's a cinematic technique for capturing a widescreen picture on 35mm film with a non-widescreen native aspect ratio.

BROWNSTONE

Is the film surface used completely?

THELMA

Only if an anamorphic lens is used. Then, the picture is optically "squeezed" to fit the whole frame, resulting in better picture quality.

BROWNSTONE

Yes, but what else has to happen to make sure the picture looks right on the other end?

The professor points at Ethan. He smiles at him, exposing his admiration for this one student's potential.

ETHAN

The projector must have the same anamorphic lens in order to stretch the image horizontally back to its original proportions.

BROWNSTONE

Yes! That is correct. The lens should not deform the space it captures. Your goal is to make it look as close to what the human eye perceives.

JOEL

What about the HDTV standard, 16:9 widescreen.

The professor turns and shouts.

BROWNSTONE

I do not ever want to hear that word again. THIS IS A FILM CLASS! You are film students, period. TV will never achieve the spatial rendering of a classic painting. FILM can, remember that.

A few students in the back laugh. Marty turns to Thelma and whispers in her ear.

MARTY

Fuckin' A!

INT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S PASADENA APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Bernie sits in his wheel chair. Open containers of Chinese food clutter the table. The bathroom door down the hall opens and Rebecca emerges. She walks toward her father.

REBECCA

Good lunch, dontcha think?

Bernie looks up and blinks his eyes.

BERNIE

It's fine. I just don't want to eat too much. I've got to watch the sugar, you know...

REBECCA

Sorry. Here, let me help you.

She runs over and attempts to close the tops back on the containers. He grabs her arm to stop her.

BERNIE

Please, I'll do it. I don't want to feel useless here.

REBECCA

Dad, what did the doctor say is wrong with your legs?

BERNIE

Oh, nothing, really. Just a little numbness in my feet. I feel bad about not being able to work.

REBECCA

You've been at the university for thirty-five years. They can live without you.

BERNIE

Ah, yes, but can I live without them? I only have short-term disability. Never thought I would be in a wheel chair.

REBECCA

How do you feel?

Bernie drifts off into another place, stares out the window.

BERNIE

I've been a good person. Why is God doing this to me?

Rebecca tries to change the subject.

REBECCA

I moved into a new apartment.

BERNIE

(surprised)  
Really?

REBECCA

Yes, Rob helped me move in.

BERNIE

Rob...that Rob?

REBECCA

Yes, why do you have such an attitude about Rob? Mom always liked Rob.

BERNIE

There's something about him. Let's just leave it there. He's your friend, but I just don't trust him.

REBECCA

Don't start that again daddy. Why do you do that?

BERNIE

Look how smart you are. With that 140 I.Q., you should be doing something more important than memorizing scripts.

REBECCA

Please stop. You know how important movies are. Some of them make people aware of things like the Sudan, and injustices and torture and...

BERNIE

While we sit there eating our buttered popcorn?

REBECCA

...and some people just need to get away from their reality, for a few hours and feel good.

(beat)

What's so wrong with an art form that does that?

BERNIE

Art form? Not that many real art movies are made today, dear.

REBECCA

Well, it's a business.

BERNIE

(laughing)

Yes, that's what everyone says AFTER they've sold out; trying to justify themselves.

Bernie holds his hands up as he makes his point. Rebecca notices the raw redness of his hands.

REBECCA

What's wrong with your hands? Why are they so red?

BERNIE

Oh, just the wheels. They suggest I wear gloves. You know, weight lifter gloves, or baseball batting gloves, or something.

REBECCA

I'll get you some.

He smiles at Rebecca then looks at his raw hands.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT TIME

Rebecca and Rob watch TV. Rebecca laughs hysterically. Rob laughs at her laughing. Large bowls of ice cream sit in front of them.

EXT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Danny stands on the lawn, looks up at the 2nd floor and into the sliding-glass window. The flashing TV screen reflects on the back wall. He peers around nervously.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca laughs even harder, holding her stomach.

ROB  
You love this show!

REBECCA  
I do! That guy is hilarious. I wish  
I could get on a show like that.

ROB  
I love all of that sexual tension.

Pregnant pause.

ROB (CONT'D)  
It's like, you know they're going  
to get back together, it's just a  
matter of when.

REBECCA  
And we all keep watching to see it.

Rob looks deeply in her eyes and moves in closer.

ROB  
It's like, inevitable.

EXT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Danny carefully climbs the wobbly wooden structure, a trellis bolted to the building.



INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

REBECCA

What's inevitable is that I need to go the gym tomorrow to work off this ice cream!

She jumps up and reaches for the remote.

EXT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Danny perches on the top of the trellis, just below eye level with the window. Frustrated, he stretches on his toes to catch a better view. A LOUD SNAP of the trellis sends Danny down to the grass with a THUD. He grimaces in pain, then pulls himself up and limps away quickly.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

REBECCA

What was that?

ROB

Was that on TV?

Rebecca moves toward the window, slides it open. A gust of night air blows in. Rob moves to the window.

REBECCA

No, it's out here.

ROB

(looking down)

That's weird. That thing that holds those vines on the wall. It just fell over.

Rebecca walks all the way out on the porch, leans over the railing. In the distance, she sees a figure limp into the alley behind the building. Holding her arms tightly over her chest, she looks at Rob with a look of fear.

REBECCA

Someone was trying to look in.

EXT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Danny sits in the corner on the floor. The doctor, not amused, sits at his desk.

DR. GLICKSTEIN  
Are you going to act like a child today?

DANNY  
Fuck you.

DR. GLICKSTEIN  
What do you want to do today? Just sit there in the corner like little Jack Horner.

DANNY  
What are you talking about?

Danny pulls himself up and crawls to the large chair. He plops down and scratches his mane.

DR. GLICKSTEIN  
Shall we begin

DANNY  
Yeah, sure. I hurt my back.

Glickstein walks over to his chair and reaches for the pen and pad.

DR. GLICKSTEIN  
Okay, how did we hurt our back?

DANNY  
First person doc; and no notes today.

DR. GLICKSTEIN  
(throws the pad down)  
Okay, Danny, how did YOU hurt your back?

DANNY  
I was trying to see her.

DR. GLICKSTEIN  
I must warn you again...  
(beat)  
...it's called stalking! It's against the law. Do you really know who this woman is, really? You only lived with her for a year, right?

DANNY  
But...

DR. GLICKSTEIN

She might HATE men. She might be just teasing you, playing with you; trying to torture you.

DANNY

I wasn't stalking her. I was just, well, I just turned  
(turning his back)  
to look at her when she passed me at the studio. Must have popped something.

Glickstein shakes his head, knowing how desperate and delusional Danny is.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

So, you work with her?

DANNY

Yeah, we're actors.

Glickstein picks up his pen and pad.

INT. COFFEE SHOP MANHATTAN - MORNING

The four filmmakers sit around a table, eat bagels with cream cheese and sip coffee. Ethan leans back strumming a guitar.

MARTY

So, what are you doing for your screen writing class? You guys have a fucking idea yet? I don't know what the fuck I'm going to do.

JOEL

We got this premise about this Mexican folk singer who causes a revolution.

THELMA

That's intriguing, tell more.

Ethan starts to strum harder and sits up and starts to sing this beautiful love song in Spanish. He MORPHS into this DARK SPANIARD with a dark moustache in a SMALL CANTINA far away. A small mariachi band sways and plays softly behind him.

EL ETHAN

(singing in Spanish,  
SUBTITLES in English)

If the world is such a good place,  
then why do men so choose to fight.  
(MORE)

EL ETHAN (CONT'D)

When as they battle in the desert,  
forest or on the plain. They keep  
telling me it's meant to be and  
always that it's right.

BACK TO THE COFFEE SHOP.

The MUSIC continues in back ground.

MARTY

That's a nice song, although I have  
no idea what the fuck you were  
singing about.

JOEL

He's singing about the pain of  
being an artist. And that he's  
naked to the world.

MARTY

(intriguing voice)  
Then, we need to open up in a  
little Mexican cantina....

BACK TO THE CANTINA

MARTY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And the we shoot it in fuckin' 4:3  
aspect ratio. And as he sings, we  
slowly pull back further and  
further to 16:9 aspect ratio.

EL ETHAN

(singing in Spanish,  
SUBTITLES in English)  
My heart tells me something  
different, but they tell me I am  
insane. I know that what they are  
doing is more than just wrong. But  
all I have to give you is my art  
and just this simple song.  
(pause)  
Just this simple song.

He strums some more. Marty narrates the scene.

MARTY (V.O.)

And as it pulls out, you realize  
that there are all these gun  
barrels focused on him. And just  
when he ends his song ...  
(beat)

...

(MORE)

MARTY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
the audience is just ready to start  
to clap, all the fucking guns start  
to fire. Like the St. Valentine's  
Day massacre. You can hear the  
strings of the guitar snapping  
and...

BACK TO COFFEE SHOP

Thelma, totally cracked up with a large belly laughs.

THELMA  
Did you take your Ritalin today,  
Marty?

Ethan stops strumming. Joel smiles a bit and leans toward  
Marty.

JOEL  
Marty, you can't just kill someone  
in a movie. You have to have a  
reason.

MARTY  
A reason. Gotta have a reason?  
(bites a fingernail)  
Yeah, fuck. I need an idea.

INT. REBECCA'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Rebecca looks into her martini as the sunset warms the room.  
Her mother pours a large drink.

REBECCA  
He just seems so emotionally empty.

Felicia lights a cigarette. Blows out the first puff slowly,  
then sips her drink.

FELICIA  
He's been like that for years.

REBECCA  
Why is he so hostile toward you?  
After all these years - -

FELICIA  
Your father is a snapping turtle.  
Holds on 'til the sun comes up.

REBECCA

I worry about both of you. Mother, you should really stop with the cigarettes already.

FELICIA

It's rather ironic really. He is the one with diabetes. He may lose his feet. And, well, here I am smoking and drinking.

(beat)

You know they did a biopsy?

REBECCA

Biopsy?

FELICIA

Yes, on his lungs. It's much worse than he admits. Your father's clock is ticking, my dear.

(aside)

Quite loud, in fact.

Rebecca puts the drink down as if it is contaminated and looks into HER REFLECTION on the surface of the drink. She closes her eyes.

FADE OUT.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - LATER

Rob knocks on the door. He knocks again. Then slowly walks away. Then the door opens. Rebecca stands in the doorway, her makeup runs down her face. Her eyes are empty.

ROB

Beck, what's up? You look - -

REBECCA

Come in Rob.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - SECONDS LATER

Rebecca leans against the counter in the kitchen. Her arms folded across her chest make a large X.

REBECCA

I just found out my father's very sick. And....

Rob moves close to Rebecca and hugs her.

ROB  
How sick?

REBECCA  
They don't know yet, but it's  
really bad.  
(beat)  
I just don't want to lose him.

Rob moves closer to her body. Rebecca still with arms closed is untouched by his contact. He tries to kiss her lips. She turns away.

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
No Rob. I just don't...  
(beat)  
...that's not what I need right  
now.

Rob slowly backs away.

ROB  
I'm sorry. I just...

Rebecca moves her hands to her forehead.

REBECCA  
I just wanna be alone.  
(looking up into his eyes)  
I need to be alone right now.

ROB  
I understand.

MUSIC UP

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE REBECCA'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Rob ambles to his car. He beeps his doors open, gets in and starts the car, then pulls out. In a car across the street, about 50 feet away, a shadowy figure, slouches in the front seat. As Rob's car passes, his front lights flash on Danny's car. Back in the dark, Danny pulls out a small vile of white powder. He takes a snort in both nostrils and then gets out of the car and walks toward the Rebecca's apartment.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Rebecca picks up the phone, dials a number and looks at PHOTOS of her mother and father, during better times, on her refrigerator door. The phone answers.

REBECCA  
Daddy, did I wake you?

BERNIE (O.S.)  
(over the phone)  
No, I was reading.

REBECCA  
Oh, ah, good. Dad,  
(beat)  
Mom told me about the diabetes. Why  
didn't you tell me.

BERNIE (O.S.)  
Well, Becky, I just didn't want to  
worry you. It's no big deal.

REBECCA  
What about the biopsy?

Long pause on the phone.

BERNIE (O.S.)  
Oh, she told you about that, too?

A knock at the door startles Rebecca.

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
Oh, nothing yet.

REBECCA  
I want to come over tomorrow. May I  
bring you breakfast?

Another knock at the door.

BERNIE (O.S.)  
Yeah, that would be great.

REBECCA  
Say, Dad, I got someone knocking at  
my door. I'll see you tomorrow,  
about nine.

BERNIE (O.S.)  
Yes, nine is fine, sleep tight...

REBECCA  
Good night, daddy.

She hangs up the phone, walks to the front door and opens it  
without asking who might be there.



REBECCA (CONT'D)

Rob, what...

Danny bursts into the apartment and pushes the door closed behind him. Rebecca moves back against the other wall, eyes wide open.

DANNY

Are you shacking up with that Rob guy? I saw him help you move in.

Danny grabs Rebecca around her waist and presses her against the wall and goes to kiss her on the lips. Rebecca tries to push him away.

REBECCA

Danny, what the fuck are you doing here?

Danny keeps putting the moves on her and starts to kiss her neck.

DANNY

Did you miss me? Let's have one more, just for old times. You know how you love it...

Rebecca pushes Danny back against the other wall, leaps to the kitchen and grabs the largest butcher knife. She welds it toward him.

REBECCA

Listen asshole, we are OVER! Do you understand?

DANNY

You think you have the guts to use it?

REBECCA

What do you think?

Danny stops in his tracks and scans the apartment.

DANNY

Okay, but don't you miss me a little?

Rebecca moves toward the door.

REBECCA

You've got to move on. You've got to get out there and see other people and...

Danny cuts her off.

DANNY  
FUCK you. I thought we had  
something special.

Rebecca gives him a unrelenting stare.

REBECCA  
Danny, you gotta leave.

DANNY  
Why? Why don't we talk. You owe me  
that.

Rebecca steps backward to the kitchen and picks up the phone.

REBECCA  
I'm calling the police.

She dials the 9 of 911.

DANNY  
I'm leaving. You win...  
(smiling)  
...this time.

She hangs up the phone hard. Points to the door with the  
butcher knife.

REBECCA  
Get the fuck out. There will be no  
next time.

Danny opens the door and as he walks out, looks back.

DANNY  
(demonic stare)  
You know, I will always love you.

He closes the door. Rebecca springs to the door, chains and  
double locks the door. She leans her back against the door  
with a look of fear and desperation. She focus on the BLADE  
of the knife still in her hand.

REBECCA (V.O.)  
Strangely, I felt empowered by the  
blade of metal. But I also knew he  
would be back and that I would need  
something more convincing.  
Something that will keep him away  
forever. He is not good for me.

INT. NYU CLASSROOM - EARLY MORNING

PROFESSOR WOODBURY stands in front of a full classroom. He sips his coffee, then pushes a dark wool scarf around his neck. He adjusts his glasses and nods his head.

WOODBURY

Good question. That's a very good question. Why do we need structure in our stories?

(looking around)

Anyone?

Joel raises his hand confidently.

JOEL

Well, if we buy into the three act structure, then we need to have certain things happen to mark those units of time.

Woodbury smiles.

WOODBURY

Go on.

JOEL

The tradition is there, and in a way, the American audience has been conditioned to expect certain things. Like by the end of the first act, we should know who the protagonist is, and the antagonist should be clear and....

Joel pauses and looks toward Ethan, as if the answer is written on his face.

JOEL (CONT'D)

The audience should know the hero's central challenge. You know, what conflict must they conquer?

The three act structure diagram is on the white board.

WOODBURY

Very good. Well stated. Everyone, when you are working on your screenplay project, keep those things in mind. Make sure the first act ends with something that propels the story into the next sixty pages - the second act.

(pointing at the board)

(MORE)

WOODBURY (CONT'D)

But, the audience shouldn't feel the structure. They should be so riveted to the story, they don't feel the structure at all.

EXT. OUTSIDE DELMAR APARTMENT BUILDING - MORNING

The sprinkler system hisses and the LA MORNING SKY is still hazy and gray. Rebecca gets out of her car and walks toward the complex with a bag of bagels. She stops and looks both ways before she crosses the street.

INT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S PASADENA APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Rebecca helps her father into his wheel chair from his bed. His unshaven face and UNKEMPT HAIR catches her eye. She wheels him into the hallway.

REBECCA

Do you need a bathroom stop?

BERNIE

I can HANDLE IT.

She throws up her arms and walks down the hallway to the kitchen.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Did you park in the basement?

REBECCA

No, I found a space on the street. Besides, that basement lot is so dark. Gives me the creeps.

INT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S PASADENA APARTMENT - LATER

Rebecca brings two plates of eggs and bacon and toast and places them on the dining table. Bernie tries to stand up, his feet now weaker than ever, cannot support his weight. Rebecca comes to the rescue and eases him into his wheel chair.

BERNIE

...God Damn!

Rebecca moves one of the chairs from the table and wheels her father as close as possible.

REBECCA

We need to get you a taller table.

Rebecca tries to hug her father, but he sits emotionless. She moves away uncomfortably and sits down. She looks at her father and hands him a napkin for his lap.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Why did you ask me about God the other day?

(beat)

Or were you just making fun of me?

BERNIE

No, I was doing something I absolutely abhor in people.

REBECCA

What's that?

Rebecca starts to eat.

BERNIE

Feeling sorry for myself. God was just someone to blame.

REBECCA

Want some coffee?

BERNIE

No, just makes me pee.  
(looking confused)

Rebecca pours a cup of coffee. Then gets up and heads for the refrigerator.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

I guess I'm a little pissed-off that this is happening to me.

Rebecca takes out the creamer, closes the refrigerator door and walks back to the table.

REBECCA

What does God have to do with it? I thought you didn't believe in God.

BERNIE

I asked you if you thought God was doing this to me. I guess I was trying to find someone to blame for me being told I am going to check out early.

REBECCA

You're not going to die, daddy.

BERNIE

I'm going to die. We're all going to die. Don't you get it? I'll be dead within a year or less.

(raising his voice)

THAT'S WHAT THE DOCTOR SAID. And I want to know why YOUR God is doing this to me?

REBECCA

He's not doing this to you. Did you get the results of the biopsy?

BERNIE

So, who's in charge of diseases, or famines, or tsunamis, or wars or homeless people? What about despair? What about stage three inoperative lung cancer?

Bernie coughs. Rebecca takes a deep breath. Moves toward her father, puts her arm around his shoulder.

REBECCA

Oh my God, daddy.  
(bites her lip)

BERNIE

Then tell me...  
(slow and deliberate)  
...if you believe in this holy spirit so much, why is he doing this to me?

Bernie follows his daughter's every move. Rebecca returns to the kitchen, pours the FULL COFFEE CUP in the sink and walks into the bathroom and closes the door. On the other side of the door, she bursts into tears.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Don't feel much like eating.

He pushes the plate away and lowers his head.

INT. SMALL STUDIO APARTMENT IN THE VILLAGE - NIGHT

Thelma pours a LARGE GLASS OF RED WINE and hands it to Marty. Joel sits in the corner smoking a joint. Ethan is pounding away on a small laptop. Joel hands Marty the joint, but he refuses it. Thelma grabs it and takes a large toke. Marty sips his wine and paces. Thelma grabs a beer to chase the smoke.

MARTY

Okay, I been thinking.  
(pacing like a cat)  
This is my screenplay idea for the  
class. Why the fuck am I even  
talking about this? What the fuck?  
I should just make this fucking  
movie?

JOEL

(laughing)  
So, we'll make it. What's the  
premise dude?

MARTY

Dude? What the fuck is that? What  
am I, a fucking cowboy, or what?

THELMA

Just tell him the idea, Marty.

ETHAN

(stops typing)  
Yes, I'm listening.

MARTY

Okay, here it is, right after WW2,  
this Polish guy decides to come to  
America, in the late forties, early  
fifties.

THELMA

So, it's a period piece.

MARTY

Yeah, sure. No, scratch that, too  
expensive. Let's make it, like  
1999, yeah. So, this fucking guy,  
this Polish guy, DOMBROWSKI, is a  
hit man, I mean, he was a fucking  
hit man in his old country, but he  
wants to start a new life. You  
know, he's a fucking immigrant. But  
when he gets here, he realizes that  
all the jobs are going to all the  
Mexicans, so he loses it... and  
well, it all starts when - -

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SMALL APARTMENT IN CHICAGO SUBURBS - NIGHT

At an old fifties vintage Formica and aluminum kitchen table sits an oafish man in his seventies with a flat top hair-cut wearing old gray pants and a sleeveless T-shirt, which highlights his muscular hulk-like frame. LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI looks around his small dwelling and sees pictures of the old country, Poland. A POLISH FLAG sits in a broken vase. In his left hand, Dombrowski holds a large bottle of vodka.

He pours another large glass and drinks. As he puts the glass down for a moment, we hear a KEY IN THE DOOR in front of him. The door opens slowly and HELENA DOMBROWSKI, in her late fifties, enters the apartment slowly as if she's about to defuse a bomb.

HELENA DOMBROWSKI  
(in English)  
Ludwik, How was your day?

Without breaking his glaze, he speaks.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
(in Polish, subtitles in  
English)  
What do you think, woman?

Helena enters the room, closes and triple locks the door. She moves across the room and takes out groceries from a small bag.

HELENA DOMBROWSKI  
We are in America now. Speak  
English. Did you get the job?

Dombrowski takes another large sip and slams the glass to the table and stands.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
NO! I didn't get the fucking job in  
this fucking country because the  
fucking people here think Polish  
people are stupid.

Helena stops, turns to look at him, crosses her arms.

HELENA DOMBROWSKI  
You are in love with the Russian  
vodka I see. Is that such a smart  
thing Louie?

Dombrowski moves to her, grabs her arm firmly, his eyes bulging now.



LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
 Wife, this place is not good. We  
 are not living this goddamn  
 American fucking dream they talk  
 about. We are living like peasants.

Helena pulls away from the pain and returns to the groceries.

HELENA DOMBROWSKI  
 Oh, you wanna go back to Poland;  
 where you were a criminal and I was  
 nothing but a maid.

Dombrowski holds a chair to brace his drunken legs, wobbles toward Helena and then smacks her across the face with an open hand. Her expression drops into complete defeat and tears run down her reddened face. She shakes with fear and anger.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
 I was not a criminal! I was a  
 professional hit man. I was making  
 more money in month, than I make in  
 year in this piece of shit country.  
 In this "land of the fuckin' free",  
 better to be black than Polish.

Helena realizes she'll not win this battle, takes her coat off and walks gingerly toward the bedroom.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI (CONT'D)  
 Maybe I should get a big gun and  
 become a hit man here in America!

Helena stops short of the door, turns half-way toward Ludwik and says in a hushed tone.

HELENA DOMBROWSKI  
 If you do that Ludwik Dombrowski, I  
 will leave you. Do you understand?

Ludwik takes the bottle pours more vodka.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
 (in Polish, subtitles in  
 English)  
 Fuck you. Fuck you and boat you  
 came here on.

Helena goes into the bedroom, closes and locks the door.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. SMALL STUDIO APARTMENT IN THE VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Thelma hangs on every word. Joel waits for some more.

JOEL

Okay, that's pretty good. You've established the premise, and introduced some conflict, but the wife goes into the bedroom, you cannot just leave that sequence there. What happens next?

MARTY

Oh, yeah, it's the next day and..

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SMALL APARTMENT IN CHICAGO SUBURBS - DAWN

Helena opens the bedroom door as the sun is just reaching it. We see Ludwik on the couch, the bottle of vodka dangling from his hand. Helena grabs her coat and tiptoes quietly toward the door. Ludwik stirs, drops the empty bottle to the floor and looks up at his wife trying to leave.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

Where are you going?

She freezes at the front door and slowly turns around.

HELENA DOMBROWSKI

To mass.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

Where's your babushka?

She opens the door and moves through the threshold with determination.

HELENA DOMBROWSKI

How many times must I tell you? We are in America, we do not wear the babushka for church.

She closes the door politely. Dombrowski nods in disgust and then mocks his wife in a high-pitched voice.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

We are in America, we do not wear the babushka

INT. SMALL STUDIO APARTMENT IN THE VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

MARTY

You see, she's going to church.  
She's the good person. She's  
turning to God for the answer.

JOEL

What's a babushka?

THELMA

It's a head scarf, but it also has  
another meaning, in Russian, it  
means grandmother.

MARTY

The covering of the head, this  
tradition, it's God, he doesn't  
want to see the head of a woman.  
Just like the Jews cover their  
heads with those little Yamahas.

THELMA

Be careful Marty.

JOEL

Those are called yarmulkes, from  
the Aramaic, yira malka, which  
means "awe of the King."

MARTY

Yes, this what I am saying. When  
someone covers their head, they are  
saying that they are less than some  
other fucking power. Like the  
Muslim women being submissive.

ETHAN

You have an interesting set of  
characters there, Marty, but you  
don't have a whole story yet.

MARTY

I'll figure that out. You know,  
story lines, back story, plots,  
character arcs, all that shit.

JOEL

You sound like a regular Robert  
Altman there big guy.

Joel stands up next to Marty and looks down on his shortness.

THELMA

Big guy! That's funny.

Everyone laughs at Marty. He takes his thick glasses off and cleans them with a clean white handkerchief.

INT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S PASADENA APARTMENT - LATER THAT DAY

Rebecca sits in a chair, reads a script, while her father sleeps on the sofa. The silence in the room is interrupted when A BIRD LANDS ON THE WINDOW SILL. The bird captures Rebecca's attention. She smiles and looks at her father, then takes a camera out of her bag. She focuses, then snaps a picture of the bird, the shutter wakes her father.

REBECCA

(whispers)

I'm sorry, I wanted to take a picture of the bird. Look.

She reaches over and hands him the camera.

BERNIE

Yes, a wonderful picture Becky.

More silence, then Bernie tries to get up.

REBECCA

I'll help you, dad.

FADE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY AT CHRISTMAS - CONTINUOUS

Bernie walks and looks at the lights.

BERNIE (V.O.)

I was dreaming about walking down Fifth Ave in New York city. It was Christmas time, and all the lights, and children. Everyone was so happy.

SMASH CUT:

Bernie sits up.

REBECCA

I'm sorry about getting so upset before.

BERNIE

No problem. I've studied every form of life on the planet. And each seems to have a different way of dealing with death.

Rebecca puts the script down on the table. Focuses on her father in the afternoon light.

REBECCA

How do we deal with it?

BERNIE

Human beings are not that good at it. We either deny death, or focus on where the person is going AFTER they die. Or just think about ourselves, we mourn for ourselves.

REBECCA

Death is rather morbid. Why do we have to talk about it?

BERNIE

(chuckles)

We live longer than a spider or a termite. Male spiders and termites get to plant their seed once and then they die. I wonder if they know that all that pleasure will lead to death?

REBECCA

But people are living longer now, there are medical advances, you have to keep the faith.

BERNIE

Oh, there is that word again faith. Brought to us by the people who tell me to wear something on my head, or what to eat and what not to eat and how I'm supposed to think. And what I am to believe in and if I don't believe, just like they say, I don't get to heaven, that imaginary place they invented to keep people from doing bad things. A reward for doing good things. They keep telling me that if I do bad things, then I can expect to burn in hell.

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

And then there are these other people who believe that if one flies a plane into a building, they get to go directly to heaven where virgins are waiting for them. Who gave those men the power to tell me, or any other human being what to believe in? Who determined that they are so right and righteous to know the truth? I don't believe in what they say, because I know, life is a damn crap shoot. The sooner you learn it, the sooner you'll be able to get up every morning and realize that PEOPLE DIE.

(beat)

And if you get through today, without falling down dead, YOU WIN. And when you win, you collect your chips, you go home and get some sleep, wake up tomorrow and play some more. It's a damn crap shoot.

REBECCA

And what about feelings? That terrible feeling that you'll never see someone you love again?

Bernie looks down at the carpet and then back up at his daughter. He carefully constructs his next comment.

BERNIE

There's nothing more human than feelings. There's nothing more powerful than love. There's nothing better than seeing a little baby being born and knowing that you helped make another human being.

REBECCA

So, this whole thing called life is not a meaningless journey to the end?

BERNIE

I never said it was meaningless. I'm only trying to say, that whether you are a good person, or a bad person, doesn't matter. When it says Fade to Black on the page, that's what happens. You fade to black, silence, the end, nothing. No reason to think otherwise.

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
 The Pope, the President, Pee-Wee  
 Herman, all the same.

Rebecca smiles at the mention of Pee-Wee, then moves toward him thoughtfully.

REBECCA  
 So, are you ready?

BERNIE  
 Ready, ready for what?

REBECCA  
 You know...  
 (beat)  
 ...the last page?

Bernie stares out his window.

BERNIE  
 Not really. I would be a fool to  
 sit here and tell you I wasn't  
 afraid. Quite frankly my dear, I'm  
 scared shitless.  
 (long pause)  
 I just gotta keep remembering those  
 good times, those special moments.  
 And hang on, as long as possible.

The bird returns to the ledge.

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
 Your friend is back. He's trying to  
 get into my house. The curse of a  
 bird in the house.

REBECCA  
 What curse is that?

BERNIE  
 When a bird is found inside a  
 house, it means death is in the  
 air.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Danny sits in the chair, hands shake.

DANNY  
 Okay, maybe I do miss her. Maybe I  
 miss her too much.  
 (MORE)

DANNY (CONT'D)

She's like in my mind, you know,  
like first thing in the morning,  
and right when I want to go to  
sleep.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

So, you literally can't get her out  
of your head?

DANNY

I don't understand why she left.

Danny looks around the office, itemizing all THE ARTIFACTS  
the doctor has collected from his trips around the world.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

I thought you said you left her?

DANNY

Well, after I told her to leave, I  
mean, after I said I wanted some  
room, she just, well, she...

DR. GLICKSTEIN

She, walked out.

DANNY

Yeah, I guess.

Danny goes into a trance and there's an uncomfortable  
stillness in the room.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

So, that was the last time you two  
were together?

There is a long silence. Danny looks down at his cell phone.

INT. COFFEE SHOP MANHATTAN - MORNING

People sit around the shop. The flat screen TV in the corner  
has a morning talk show on. The screen is only showing 4:3  
aspect ratio with the gray bands on either side.

TALK SHOW HOST

But you do agree that young  
children shouldn't watch violent  
movies and TV shows?



EXPERT ONE

Yes, of course, but this notion that simply watching violent movies automatically teaches and motivates them to --

MOTHER

YOU ARE WRONG! Look at all the guns and all the killing in the streets of America. These video games, TV shows and movies are the reason. That's why we started Mothers Against Movies.

TALK SHOW HOST

But please, Mrs. Johnson, let's de-emotionalize it. Mr. Stephens can you back up your position with research?

EXPERT ONE

Yes, of course. In a study that was conducted in 2006, we saw a dramatic decrease in violent crime when highly violent films were released.

MOTHER

That's ridiculous. How can that be?

TALK SHOW HOST

Mr. Stephens?

EXPERT ONE

There are three reasons we believe. One is catharsis; watching the violence may have a cathartic effect, freeing tensions away from violent acts, like in Aristotle's Poetics.

TALK SHOW HOST

That's interesting. What are the other two?

EXPERT ONE

The second we call detainment. Because the would-be criminal is watching the movie, they are temporarily not available. Once a criminal exits the movie theater, it is too late to engage in crime.

MOTHER

That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

TALK SHOW HOST

Do go on, what is the third reason?

EXPERT ONE

Sobriety. Theater attendance reduces the consumption of alcohol, which in turn, reduces the incidence of violent crime.

MOTHER

What about when they are with their friends watching DVDs and smoking pot and drinking alcohol.

EXPERT ONE

We have no statistics on that.

TALK SHOW HOST

What did your research show?

MOTHER

I've got to hear this.

EXPERT ONE

During the hours of six to midnight, when there is an increase in attendance of one million people to a dramatically violent movie, like a Pulp Fiction, crime was reduced from 1.5 to 2 percent, mostly driven by incapacitation

TALK SHOW HOST

So, what I'm hearing, is that as long as the punks are watching the movie, they aren't doing the crime.

MOTHER

Totally unbelievable! Our statistics show that violence in movies is the cause of every violent crime by people under twenty-five.

EXPERT ONE

That's like saying that because the MPAA has stripped all the sex out of movies, there's been a decrease in rape. There hasn't been.

MOTHER

That's because they didn't do a very good job. There's still too much sex on TV and in movies!

TALK SHOW HOST

Too much sex? Well, I'm not going to go there.

(chuckles)

We have to leave it here, we'll be right back after a message from our sponsor, the makers of Viagra.

Ethan, Joel walk into the shop just as GREEN ONIONS plays on behind the commercial on TV. Marty and Thelma march in to the beat of the music. Ethan looks back to them dancing on in.

ETHAN

It's a comedy. A Minnesota farm boy, a Italian mobster and a Dutch painter walk into a bar.

MARTY

Okay, I got it, next line?

THELMA

The Dutch painter says, these wooden shoes are killing me.

JOEL

The farm boy says,  
(in Norwegian accent)  
what are those shoes you got on there, they look like they're made of wood.

MARTY

(mobster imitation)  
That's the only fuckin' wood she'll get today, Ga-besh?

ETHAN

And in the end, they all suffer from writer's block, with no ticket to get off the island.

They all drop their back packs and sit down.

MARTY

Speak for your fuckin' self, my story is coming together. You see, every human is fuckin' corruptible. Every person has their price.

(MORE)

MARTY (CONT'D)

Most people wouldn't return a fuckin' wallet they found on the street. When desperate people are faced with desperate situations, they do desperate things. See this Dombrowski character is at a bar - -

CROSS FADES

INT. POLISH VILLAGE TAVERN - LATE AT NIGHT

Pictures of famous Polish revolutionaries line the wall. LECH WALESZA'S POSTER hangs behind the bar. Pictures of POPE JOHN PAUL II and polish flags are everywhere. Alone at the bar, Dombrowski polishes off another Vodka. A short man with a scar across his face, "KILLER JOE" GIELEROWSKI, approaches. He speaks in Polish.

KILLER JOE

(English subtitles)

You drink alone, but you drink a lot.

Dombrowski looks up, his eyes are blood-shot and tired.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

(English subtitles)

What do you want? Who are you?

Gielerowski doesn't stop his movement toward the stool next to Dombrowski and sits down like he owns the place. Then shifts into English.

KILLER JOE

My name is Gielerowski, Joe,  
(reaches out)  
Joe Gielerowski.

Dombrowski stares into the SMOKED MIRROR behind the bar and looks at his new friend up and down.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

And what does Killer Joe want with me?

KILLER JOE

I know who you are Ludwik. I might even say, I am big fan.

Dombrowski turns now and looks at Joe's face.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
I don't know you. I don't want to  
know you.

Killer Joe breaks into a hardy laugh. Waves to the bartender  
for two more.

KILLER JOE  
Yes, you do. You know me. I help  
you out of hell.

Dombrowski looks back to his drink.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
What hell? I'm not in hell.

Bartender comes over with a bottle of Russian vodka and two  
large glasses, which he fills half way. Joe hands him a  
twenty and motions for him to keep it all.

KILLER JOE  
You are in hell. You cannot find  
work. You cannot use your talents  
here. You are, nothing but, a white  
American nigger.

Dombrowski doesn't move.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
Go away, you son of whore.

Joe gets up and stands. He's only as tall as Dombrowski who  
is sitting. He gets close to his face and whispers.

KILLER JOE  
Hey Polack! You wanna make ten  
thousand US dollars?

Dombrowski, still stoic, but his eyes shift enough to show  
interest.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
Doing what? What makes that money  
for me?

Joe sits back down, takes a big sip of vodka, sort of gargles  
it before he swallows.

KILLER JOE  
Kill a rapist. One that got away  
with it. A guilty man.

Dombrowski softens and turns slowly. He looks at Joe's eyes,  
he recognizes him now.

He flashes back to a YOUNGER MAN, in Poland on a DARK STREET, who hands him money. And then Dombrowski comes back to the reality of where he is.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
You have wrong man. I am not  
killer. You are killer.

Joe laughs again. He takes a short sip of the drink. Then puts a 1933 Sobieski 10zł COIN ON THE BAR.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI (CONT'D)  
What is that?

Dombrowski knows this. He has done this before. He flashes back again, to a place far away, where a coin is given to him. In the flashback, he puts the COIN IN HIS POCKET and shakes a man's hand. Back to reality, he sees the coin. CU: face of coin.

KILLER JOE  
You know what that is. Tell me, can  
you read the year on the coin?

Dombrowski picks up the coin and smiles. He looks at the coin, and looks at Joe and smiles more.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
ZŁOTYCH, Nineteen, thirty-three.  
That was very good year.

Joe takes a sip and pats Dombrowski on the shoulder.

KILLER JOE  
Yes, good year. Keep the coin, you  
give it back to me when you finish  
the job. Welcome to America, land  
of opportunity.

Dombrowski shakes his head, begins to take a drink, but stops, and toasts Poland. Joe joins in and they drink. The deal is done.

EXT. LOS ANGELES FARMER'S MARKET - LATE AFTERNOON

Rebecca walks along the rows of vendors with Rob, she smiles and flirts innocently with Rob. They come to the end of a row and start to walk toward the broccoli. Rob grabs a LARGE HEAD OF BROCCOLI and holds it up.

ROB  
Say, aren't these the people who do  
the James Bond movies.

REBECCA  
Very funny.

ROB  
(very serious)  
I want to ask you something.

REBECCA  
Okay, ask away Roberto.

ROB  
Who's your favorite James Bond? I  
like Sean Connery.

Rebecca laughs and shakes her head.

REBECCA  
You're silly.  
(beat)  
No question, Matt Damon.

She walks ahead and looks into the afternoon sun, which  
REFLECTS off her expensive sunglasses.

ROB  
He never played James Bond.

REBECCA  
He should have. I prefer Jason  
Bourne to those Bond pictures.

ROB  
Really? You've got to be kidding. I  
would have thought you a Pierce  
Brosnan type.

REBECCA  
You mean Remington Steele?

EXT. PARKING LOT AT FARMER'S MARKET - MOMENTS LATER

Rebecca puts a couple of bags in the back seat. She looks  
deep in thought. Rob plops into the driver's seat. Rebecca  
slowly opens the door and sits down.

REBECCA  
I need your advice Rob.

Rob looks into her beautiful face.

REBECCA (CONT'D)  
I'm having trouble with Danny.

ROB  
What's that little shit up to?

REBECCA  
Well, he's kind of stalking me.

ROB  
Fuck that shit. Let's go right to the police station and file a complaint.

Rob starts the car, puts on his seatbelt.

REBECCA  
I don't need that press Rob. It would only help his career.

ROB  
Well, you gotta do something.  
(pause)  
He's not really dangerous? Is he?

REBECCA  
He's no O.J., but I would like to have something to scare him, if I needed it.

ROB  
You mean, like a gun?  
(answering his own question)  
Something small. You know, one you can carry in your purse.

REBECCA  
Yeah, that's what I was thinking, but I...

ROB  
I got it. We'll go to Wal-Mart and get you a gun. We can go to the firing range. I'll teach you how to use it. You know I wanted to be a cop when I was younger.

REBECCA  
You can get a gun at Wal-Mart?

ROB  
Yeah, this is America, home of the free!

Rebecca shakes her head, then looks out the window. In the crowd, Danny emerges with a bag of fruit.



The car turns quickly and Rebecca closes her eyes, as if to make him go away. She opens her eyes, and he's gone. She says nothing.

INT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S PASADENA APARTMENT - EARLY AFTERNOON

Rebecca enters the apartment. Bernie, in his wheel chair, watches TV news, he clicks off the TV and turns to Rebecca.

REBECCA

Hey, I brought you some fruit. You need to eat properly. Even agnostics need to eat fruit. And look, something else.

Rebecca hands her father a plastic bag. He looks inside.

BERNIE

What's this?

REBECCA

Batter's gloves for your hands. I got you the Barry Bonds model.  
(laughing)  
Just kidding.

BERNIE

Come sit down.

REBECCA

I really can't, Rob's in the car downstairs. We just came from the Farmer's market. He got some things for his mom.

BERNIE

Oh, him. Then, I'll see you some other time.

Rebecca stops as she heads for the door.

REBECCA

Hey dad, you ever shoot a gun? I might have to for this movie.

BERNIE

Yeah, up in the mountains one time. Shot a bunch of tin cans off an old fence. One of those .22 Caliber rifles, you know, like the Rifleman. What was that actor's name? He was a baseball player.

REBECCA  
Conners, Chuck Conners.

BERNIE  
Oh, right. So a movie.  
(beat)  
They don't give you real guns in a  
movie? I am mean - -

They lock eyes, Rebecca disarms him with her smile.

REBECCA  
Just enjoy your fruit daddy.  
(beat)  
And by the way, I enjoyed our  
conversation earlier. I want to you  
stay around for a long time, too.

She skips to the door and leaves.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT

The door opens, a tired and drained Rebecca, closes the door slowly. She looks at THE LOCK, then makes sure the door is locked and bolted. She goes to the kitchen, checks the answer phone for messages; nothing. She grabs a bottle of water and moves to the bathroom.

In the bathroom, she STARTS THE SHOWER, takes off her clothing, takes her contact lenses out and steps into the shower. The water washes over her as she lathers her shapely body with soap. The thoughts of the world drift away and she relaxes in the hot shower.

As the steam rises, we see something on the ceiling of the shower stall. Rebecca blinks and tries to focus. She rinses quickly, reaches out of the shower for her glasses. Now with her glasses on, she reaches up and touches what looks like a BLACK ROUND OBJECT. She gets out of the shower and wraps a towel around her wet body. She gets a small step ladder and gets into the stall and pulls at the object. It comes off the wall and it has a WIRE ATTACHED that comes out of a hole in the tile. She steps backward, now mortified, opens the towel closet door and peers onto the top shelf. She sees the wire from the stall, connected to A SMALL TRANSMITTER. She pulls it out and violently rips the wire out and throws the device against the wall. By mistake, she hits THE MIRROR above the sink. The mirror breaks, and in the mirror we see the panic and fear in her face and the cracks in the mirror. Rebecca breaths in and out forcefully.

INT. SOHO TAVERN - MIDDAY

Thelma and Marty sit at a corner table eating fish sandwiches. Two pints of beer on the table, Marty finishes chewing.

MARTY

Great fuckin' fish. These are great sandwiches. Fish and beer, love it.

Marty looks up and sees Kevin Bacon sitting at the bar having a drink with a larger, older man.

MARTY (CONT'D)

Hey, look at that. That's Kevin Bacon, go figure? I gotta say hello.

THELMA

Be cool Marty. You know how - -

Marty is already up and walks over to the movie star.

MARTY

Excuse me, ah, hi, I'm Marty Salvatore, Kevin Bacon, Kevin?

Marty reaches out to shake his hand, Kevin turns to see who is bothering him.

KEVIN BACON

Hey, howyadoin'?

Marty smiles.

MARTY

Yeah, I'm a big fan, I'm studying film at NYU.

KEVIN BACON

Yeah, good school.

Marty looks down, losing eye contact.

KEVIN BACON (CONT'D)

Say, meet Michael Mihouski, he's an actor. Just here from Warsaw, looking for work.

Marty looks up and moves to shake his hand. Marty's little hand is dwarfed by MIHOUSKI'S LARGE HAND. Marty, looks up and sees his Dombrowski.

MARTY

Wow, great to meet you. Your name again, I'm sorry.

MIHOUSKI

(thick Polish accent)

I am Mihouski, Michael Mihouski.

Marty stares and then finally reacts.

MARTY

Yeah, fuckin' great to meet you.

(turns to Bacon)

I can't believe it, he's the perfect character in this screenplay I'm writing.

Bacon shakes his head, feeling a pitch coming on.

KEVIN BACON

You mean, perfect actor... ACTOR for the part?

Marty looks over at Thelma for help, but she is too far away.

MARTY

Yeah, that's what I meant.

(pauses again too long)

Well, I didn't wanna bother you. Thanks, thanks a lot.

Marty starts to walk away.

KEVIN BACON

Mihouski, remember that name. He's in SAG.

Marty looks back, as if he just saw a ghost.

MARTY

Yeah.

Marty sits down next to Thelma.

THELMA

That big guy would make a great Dombrowski.

Marty points to his forehead.

MARTY

What's the fucking chance that guy would be sitting there with Kevin Bacon?

MUSIC UP: SANTANA'S HOPE YOU'RE FEELING BETTER

INT. SUNSET STRIP DINER - LATE EVENING

Danny finishes up a coffee and THROWS A FIVE DOWN on the counter. PEPPER, a cute petite woman walks over to Danny. In a black tank top without a bra, her large breasts draw Danny's attention. Her curvaceous body moves toward him. She has on shiny silk basketball trunks and flip-flops. Her lips are cherry red, her hair is jet black.

PEPPER

Danny Liekus! You're Danny Liekus,  
yes?

DANNY

You know it.

PEPPER

Where you going Danny boy?

She walks with him as he leaves the diner.

EXT. SUNSET STRIP DINER - CONTINUOUS

Danny lights a cigarette, he offers the girl a smoke.

PEPPER

I usually smoke after my blow-jobs.

Danny stops and looks down at her.

DANNY

What's your name little girl?

PEPPER

Pepper, like salt and pepper.

DANNY

So, where do you usually do your  
smoking?

PEPPER

I don't know, you gotta car?

DANNY

Let me ask you this?  
(taking a drag)  
Are you a groupie, or a  
professional?

Pepper laughs and grabs his arm and moves closer to his side.

PEPPER

Let's just say, I'm a pro, like  
satisfaction guaranteed.

Danny points to his red Ferrari convertible with the top up.

DANNY

Good, I don't hang with groupies.  
Let's take a drive up to Griffith  
Park.

PEPPER

In the park, in the dark. Okay, but  
we gotta agree on the deal Danny  
boy.

DANNY

Get in the car, I got cash baby.

They get in the car. Pepper reaches over and gives Danny a  
SOFT RUB from knee to thigh. He smiles.

DANNY (CONT'D)

What's the ticket for this ride?

PEPPER

Five hundred for the happy ending.

DANNY

You know I always love happy  
endings.

Danny reaches over and grabs the back of her neck and pulls  
her to his face. He lands a hard kiss on her lips. She  
reaches into the back pocket of her trunks.

PEPPER

Yes, but not all movies have happy  
endings Danny.

He pulls away and looks at her face. She smiles and then  
holds up her POLICE SHIELD. With this, a bright police light  
focuses on Danny's car. The flash of light hits his rear view  
mirror. He winces and then closes his eyes.

DANNY

You're not really a...

PEPPER

Danny Liekus, YOU are under arrest  
for the solicitation of a  
prostitute; you have a right to  
remain silent, you have a ...

MUSIC UP: TORI AMOS' CORNFLAKE GIRL

EXT. FIRING RANGE - EARLY MORNING

Rob helps Rebecca with a small gun, shows her how to load, unload, lock and unlock. He hands her the gun and she stands in position with her ear covers on. She holds the gun with a sense of confidence and strength. She fires one bullet, deals with the kick, then fires four more. She looks down at THE GUN IN HER HAND and smiles.

REBECCA (V.O.)

This is even better than a knife.  
This is power to the MAX! Now, no  
one can get in my way, no one will  
bother me. I'm in control.

Rebecca reloads.

INT. COFFEE SHOP MANHATTAN - EARLY MORNING

Marty reads a New York Post and sips a coffee with Thelma typing wildly on a white Mac laptop.

MARTY

What a fuckin' goofball? Stupid  
shit.

Thelma looks up, a bit miffed that Marty has interrupted her train of thought.

THELMA

Who are you talking about?

MARTY

That fuckin' Danny kid, what's his  
name, LIEKUS? He gets in a car with  
a cop, you know, undercover, and  
gets popped. What a fuckin' idiot.

THELMA

He got arrested?

MARTY

Yeah, he thought she was a hooker,  
fuckin' cop.

(taking a hard sip)

You know what I don't get, why do  
these fuckin' rich movie stars, who  
can get pussy galore, have to go  
for this sleaze in a car. What the  
fuck is that about?

Thelma takes off her computer glasses and looks at Marty.

THELMA

Did it ever occur to you, that what they are doing is fun because it is wrong, and dirty and titillates them because it's something they shouldn't be doing?

MARTY

Titillate. Good word. Actually sounds dirty. Good fucking word. You're good with words. How is that scene coming?

THELMA

If you would keep your mouth shut, I would be done already.

MARTY

Whataya gonna do, go on strike?

She puts her glasses back on, scrolls back to the beginning of the scene and starts to read.

THELMA

Here's what I have so far. Dombrowski, in a Cable Tech uniform carries a tool case, walks slowly up the dimly lit hallway and peers at each apartment number.

FADE TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - EVENING

He stops at a door and takes in a deep breath. He looks down at a piece of paper in his hand. He turns on his flashlight to check that he's at the right apartment. He turns off the flashlight and knocks on the door. He knocks again. We hear someone walking to the door. Door opens, safety chain is still latched. VICTOR HICKEY stares from inside the apartment.

VICTOR HICKEY

What do you want?

Dombrowski coughs nervously before he speaks.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

I'm from Cable Tech, to fix your cable.



Hickey furls his brow.

VICTOR HICKEY

I didn't call. I think my cable is fine.

Dombrowski hands the pink piece of paper through the open slit.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

Are you Mr. Hickey, is this the right address?

Hickey pulls the paper into the apartment and reads it. Dombrowski waves his fake ID badge in Hickey's face.

VICTOR HICKEY

Yeah, okay. You know, I haven't had the TV on today - -

Hickey unlatches the lock and opens the door. From Dombrowski's POV: a small studio apartment with a MARILYN MONROE PAINTING on the wall, a cigarette burning in an ashtray, the smoke follows the shape of the starlet's body. A LARGE CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE and one glass sit on the table, the bubbles still actively seeking the surface.

VICTOR HICKEY (CONT'D)

Come in, let's see if it's still out.

Dombrowski enters, closes the door gently. Hickey moves toward a large TV in the corner of the room with his back to Dombrowski, looks for the remote. Dombrowski's hand moves gracefully to his lower pocket and pulls out a Walther PPK with a large silencer attached. With one smooth choreographed movement, like the ballerina extending her arm and hand to the audience, he aims effortlessly. We hear two muffled thuds, two bullets into the back of Hickey's head. The through-and-through bullets hit the flat screen TV. He stands for a while, as if he's part of the ballet, then his knees crumble and he falls just before the coffee table. Dombrowski turns, locks the door, puts the gun's safety on, and returns the gun to his pocket with artistic flair. He puts on black leather gloves.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

There you go, mister rapist.

Dombrowski looks down at the champagne. He looks at the glass and sees the bubbles.

He lifts the glass as if to toast, but gets mesmerized by the bubbles. He looks right into the glass and sees the bubbles rising to the top bigger than life.

FLASHBACK:

INT. SMOKY ROOM IN A POLAND PAST - LATE AT NIGHT

We hear music fading into this memory of Poland. The glass moves out of CU reveals a very fat man sits on an old sofa with two women, dressed to show their bigger body parts. He drinks the celebratory drink like water. Some dripping down his many chins. A small boy walks up to the table and grabs some bread. The fat man, BORIS DOMBROWSKI speaks in Polish.

BORIS DOMBROWSKI  
(English subtitles)  
Stop! That food is not for you!  
That food is for those who fought  
for the liberation of this country.

With this, Boris slaps the boy so hard he falls to the ground. The two women react with sympathy, one gets up to help the young boy. Boris grabs her back onto the sofa.

BORIS DOMBROWSKI (CONT'D)  
Let him be, he must be a strong man  
to be my son. Ludwik, get up, get  
out of here.

Boris takes another swig of champagne. One of the women, disturbed by what she saw, reaches for her babushka and begins to put it on.

BORIS DOMBROWKI  
(English subtitles)  
Please, the night is young. Please  
stay.

Boris takes another drink. ZOOM in on the glass...

DISSOLVE TO:

GLASS in Dombrowski's hand. Dombrowski takes the glass and throws it violently against the bloody body on the floor.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
Motherfucker! You motherfucking  
swine.

He then takes the champagne bottle pours it over the body.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI (CONT'D)

You want champagne, I give you  
whole bottle.

Then he whacks him on the head with the empty bottle, then throws it down. He pulls out a knife, rolls the body over, unbuckles the belt, pulls open Hickey's pants, and in the reflection of the champagne bottle we see him cutting off a body part. He then opens the victims mouth with his knife and inserts the body part in Hickey's mouth.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI (CONT'D)

You like to eat? Eat this, you  
bastard!

He then rolls him over, pulls the pants down exposing Hickey's naked rear, takes the champagne bottle and jams it up his ass. A calm comes over Dombrowski. He smiles, picks up his tool kit, and with a spring in his step, he walks out.

EXT. SAFEWAY GROCERY STORE - EARLY MORNING

Rebecca's car pulls into the parking lot. A song plays on her radio. She sings along. She parks the car, looks in the mirror and fixes her hair, adds some lipstick and taps on the steering wheel, clearly in a good mood.

INT. SAFEWAY GROCERY STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Rebecca wheels her cart around, the store's music puts a bounce in her step. She approaches the fresh vegetables and examines the lettuce and picks up a head.

DANNY

(holding a large zucchini)  
Mine is bigger than yours.

REBECCA

(gasps)  
What are you doing here?

DANNY

Shopping for food. This is my  
neighborhood.

She starts to move away, but then turns back with more confidence.

REBECCA

Danny, we have to get something  
straight.

(MORE)

REBECCA (CONT'D)

(beat)  
RIGHT NOW!

Danny slowly puts the zucchini down and backs away from the cooler.

DANNY

Listen honey, I know you probably think I'm messed up over our little breakup, but I'm moving on.

(pause)

And, if you saw the newspapers, I have my own set of problems right now.

Rebecca grabs a sample carrot from a stand, drops it hard into a display container of dip and bites the carrot in an aggressive manner. Chews and swallows.

REBECCA

Stay away from me. Do you understand.

Danny smiles and then puts on an actor's "I'm about to cry" face.

DANNY

Yeah, sure.

Rebecca pushes her half full cart away, not looking back. Danny looks at her leave, from her hair to her shapely butt to her stunningly long legs. He smiles and picks up the zucchini in a creepy way.

SIMON

And, cut.

Slowly pull back. We see the grocery store is small set on a sound stage. Danny clowns around with the vegetable; places it so that it looks like it's his erect penis. Crew members giggle.

INT. COFFEE SHOP MANHATTAN - EARLY AFTERNOON

Joel sits in a booth by himself reading Roger Ebert's book YOUR MOVIE SUCKS. Ethan walks into the coffee shop and stares a hole in the book cover as he moves toward his brother.

ETHAN

Why on earth are you reading that book?

JOEL

I figure if I know what makes a movie bad, we can avoid other people's mistakes.

ETHAN

That's not the public, that's just one guy.

(beat)

Plus, if you noticed, he's a critic. He never made a movie.

Joel takes a sip of tea and fumbles to a page he bent to find.

JOEL

Good point, but some of this stuff is funny.

(finding a quote)

Like this, he's sitting in a theater watching a movie that is supposed to be funny: "I heard no laughter. Just an occasional cough, or the shuffling of feet, or a yawn, or a sigh, like in a waiting room."

ETHAN

That's brutal.

JOEL

And then this line, about a dog-of-a-movie, he says, 'A film should begin with story and characters, not with a concept and star package.'

ETHAN

Can you say, Catwoman? But, if you have a big star, you get the big budget. I think that guy has his head up his ass.

JOEL

I loved his observations about movie cliches, you know like when a parent arrives late at the kid's recital.

ETHAN

Total cliché. That's in so many movies. Like people always have their key under their doormat, who really does that?

JOEL

Or like, why does a movie with some demonic reference, or the devil, always include the Catholic church? Like Presbyterians or Episcopalians aren't as suitable for going after the devil. Certainly wouldn't involve the Jews.

ETHAN

And all those other stereotypes: Italians are the criminals, Jews are the money grubbing shop clerks, blacks are violent, Polish people are stupid.

(beat)

Must I continue?

JOEL

I'm sure you will.

ETHAN

Stereotypes are the festering rot of the American mind. Exploited by screenwriters to paint simple plot lines for banal characters in simple little movies that get made by simple little directors with large egos and small little penises.

Joel turns a page.

JOEL

You don't have to continue.

INT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S PASADENA APARTMENT - HOUR LATER

Rebecca unloads the bags of groceries at her father's house. The bathroom door opens and Bernie wheels himself out of the doorway into the larger room.

BERNIE

I'll never get used to that. What a pain in the ass.

She hands him a banana. He pushes it back.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Too green, just put it on the banana tree, dear.

REBECCA

I ran into Danny at the Safeway.

BERNIE

What's that goofy kid doing? I saw that story about him on the news. He's really gone down hill hasn't he?

REBECCA

I'm having a little bit of a problem with him.

(beat)

I think he's following me.

Bernie wheels closer to her.

BERNIE

Well, that's not good. Have you called the police?

REBECCA

Boy, that's all he'd need now. Maybe I'm over-reacting. I mean, it could just be a coincidence, I mean, running into him.

BERNIE

That little shrimp, mostly harmless. Who cares?

REBECCA

Rob thinks I should get a gun.

BERNIE

Now, that's the stupidest idea he's ever had. You don't know anything about firearms. Rob suggested that? Boy, that's really NOT a good idea.

REBECCA

Then, what's the solution.

BERNIE

If you see him one more time, you promise me, you'll call the police.

REBECCA

Yeah, sure. But...

BERNIE

And no guns. You'll shoot yourself.

Rebecca turns back to the refrigerator.

INT. CLASSROOM AT NYU - MIDDAY

Professor Woodbury walks to a computer and grabs the mouse. A projector shows the class title APPARENT MOVEMENT on a screen. He clicks the mouse and shows the next slide, a movie of an OLD THEATER MARQUEE.

WOODBURY

Look at this sign from this old theater. You imagine that you are seeing movement, when actually, all that is happening is one light going off then going on, then in a timed sequence the next light does the same.

MARTY

So, what's moving?

WOODBURY

Nothing is moving, your mind creates the illusion of apparent movement.

(clicks the mouse)

As we slow it down, we see the blinking and not the movement.

Classmates react in wonderment.

WOODBURY (CONT'D)

Or this one, do you see the triangle?

Shows a slide of the KANIZA ILLUSION. The class shake their heads yes.

WOODBURY (CONT'D)

There's no white triangle, but you see it. Your mind fills it in.

ETHAN

That's like Lilac Chaser.

WOODBURY

Once again, getting ahead of me Ethan.

ETHAN

Sorry.

WOODBURY

That's okay, this isn't Tarantino, we just want to keep it linear.



Class laughs. He clicks to the next slide.

WOODBURY (CONT'D)

And this is where we use time, space, and color to create something even more amazing. This is called Lilac Chaser, which was first devised by Jeremy Hinton some time before 2005. I want you to stare at the cross in the middle of the screen.

We see the example of LILAC CHASER on the screen. Everyone stares at it, then reacts with "Oh wow's".

MARTY

Yes, I see a blueish green dot appear in the empty spaces.

WOODBURY

Yes, but they aren't really there. When the lilac image is shown for a more than, say 10 seconds, then disappears, a green afterimage will appear. The afterimage lasts only a short time. The afterimage is a simple consequence of adaptation of the rods and cones of the retina. Color and brightness are encoded by the ratios of activities in three types of cones and rods. The cones stimulated by lilac get "tired". When the stimulus disappears, our eyes and brain put in something that really isn't there.

ETHAN

They discovered apparent movement in the early 1900's, but Chasing Lilac, not until 2005. Why did it take so long to discover that?

THELMA

The Internet.

WOODBURY

Well, that's a great place to show it, but the bigger picture here is that we are still learning about the human mind and how our eyes and brains work together.

JOEL

How far can we go with video?

WOODBURY

The military has done experiments with fighter pilots who were able to identify aircraft at blink speeds of 220 frames per second. Anything is possible.

Marty shakes his head.

MARTY

But if we already have apparent movement, and human comprehension at 24 frames a second, why would we ever need to leave film behind.

WOODBURY

Film is expensive. Just like gasoline, there's only so much.

ETHAN

But film is magical. It's not digital, it's chemical, it's an art form.

WOODBURY

Yes, but they have already moved ahead in Japan. They are testing ultra-high definition TV. I've seen it. It looks like what you see with your own eyes.

ETHAN

If one can really trust what one sees?

Woodbury smiles slyly.

WOODBURY

Call it, 'the logic of perception.'

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAYTIME

Glickstein taps his pen on the pad.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

You need to decide what you want Danny. You need to reach out of this state of denial you are in before something bad happens. Do you understand?

DANNY

Yeah, I guess. I mean, how did I know she was a cop.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

You need to think about WHY it happened. Why did you need that? Danny, truth or illusion, which one matters to you?

Long pause. Danny burps and then smiles.

DANNY

Sorry, I must have eaten that corned-beef sandwich too fast. What were we talking about?

DR. GLICKSTEIN

(raising voice)

YOU, we were talking about YOU!

(regaining demeanor)

Listen, maybe you don't see how destructive you are.

DANNY

Okay, I keep thinking about Rebecca and I think I'm still in love with her.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

This is good, continue.

DANNY

I keep having this dream, that she is in trouble. And in this dream, I come to rescue her.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

How do you do that?

DANNY

I don't know, but in the end, she is kissing me and telling me how great I am and how she always loved me.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

You are seeking approval, everyone's approval. That's why you're an actor. It has nothing to do with her, it has to do with your ego, your need for validation.

DANNY

I need to find her. I need to make sure she isn't in trouble. I need to save her.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

You aren't actually trying to find her, are you? I mean, you do realize you cannot invade her world?

(beat)

Do you understand that?

DANNY

Yeah, sure.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

Good boy.

INT. POLISH VILLAGE TAVERN - LATE AT NIGHT

"Louie Louie" plays on THE JUKEBOX. Three people sit at the table in the corner, argue in Polish. Killer Joe sits at the bar with A CIGAR BOX in his left hand and a beer mug in the other. Dombrowski comes through the front door, nervously looks around the room. He sees Joe at the bar and walks toward him.

KILLER JOE

I see what the cat brought in.

Dombrowski sits down next to Joe. Joe waves to the bartender.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

Gielerowski, do you have it?

Bartender approaches.

KILLER JOE

Two shots of da best.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

Well, Mr. Killer Joe, I've done the job.

Bartender puts down two shots on the bar and walks away.

KILLER JOE

First, we drink.

Both men drink back the shots of vodka. Dombrowski wipes his lips with the back of his right hand. Joe hands a cigar box to Dombrowski and he taps his shoulder twice.

KILLER JOE (CONT'D)  
You will like these cigars.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
I must go now.

Dombrowski tries to open the box with his DIRTY FINGERNAILS.

KILLER JOE  
Not here. You must trust me.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
What's there to trust?

Joe laughs and Dombrowski backs away slowly.

KILLER JOE  
Good night, Mr. Dombrowski. Enjoy  
my gift.

Dombrowski walks toward the door as the song lyric hits the line, "We gotta go."

EXT. OUTSIDE THE POLISH AMERICAN BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Dombrowski opens the box and looks down at one hundred one hundred dollar bills in the cigar box. He smiles and walks away briskly. CU: traffic light, it turns red, CU: red light.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - LATE EVENING

A large red candle burns. The smooth jazz music in the background seems to be making the dozen or so candles move with the rhythm. Rob and Rebecca sit on the sofa. She smiles and looks at the empty wine bottle on the coffee table. She closes her eyes and leans back on a large pillow. Rob makes his move.

ROB  
Too much to drink little girl.

REBECCA  
(eyes still closed)  
Yeah, I gotta get some sleep. I  
have a call tomorrow. Small little  
part in one of those slasher  
movies.

Rob leans over and plants a hard sexual kiss on Rebecca's mouth. She opens her eyes and sits up. Her hands push Rob's shoulders.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Rob, ah, I think, well, I think maybe, we should call it a night.

ROB

Okay. You want me to stay?

She stands up and wobbles her way to the kitchen with the empty bottle.

REBECCA

I think maybe we need to keep this, as it is. You are my best friend. I don't want to screw this one up.

ROB

What are you worried about? Just two adults doing what they want to do.

REBECCA

Maybe ONE adult. Rob, I gotta get my mind together right now. You are a darling, but I feel that if we sleep together, you'll go away.

Rob gets up and adjusts his pants to cover his arousal. He grabs the two wine glasses and brings them to the kitchen.

ROB

Okay, but someday, you gotta give me a break. It would be fun to finally get a little closer.

Rebecca fills the bottle with water, then turns it upside and pours the stained water down the drain.

REBECCA

Closer. That's a strange word. Closer for me is emotional and mental, not just sex.

Rob puts the two glasses down, turns away, and slowly moves toward the door. He grabs his jacket from a chair and picks up his BRIEFCASE.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Are you leaving, Robbie?

Rob turns around and looks frustrated.

ROB

You know, I watch you in those movies, and I see someone who is warm and kind and - -

REBECCA

Rob, stop. Those are movies. That's all just make believe. Those are characters saying things and doing things that some writer made up, somewhere.

ROB

Well, I wanna be in one of your movies. I want to be your leading man.

(beat)

Do you get it?

Rebecca throws the bottle into the recycling bin with a bit of force.

REBECCA

I get it Rob. I understand. I know how it works. But...

ROB

But?

REBECCA

... I need some time. I need to let the taste of a bad, extremely codependent kind of a relationship get out of my blood stream.

ROB

You know, there are women who would jump this in a minute.

Rob moves backwards, opens the door and walks out. Rebecca stares a hole in the closed door for a few seconds. Then starts to clean up the kitchen.

REBECCA (V.O.)

Maybe I'm a fool for not giving him what he wants, but there's something keeping me from getting to close to him.

FADE IN SMALL PIP BOX LOWER RIGHT

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - SIMULTANEOUSLY

REBECCA  
 (pauses then underlines  
 something in the script)  
 I'm not sure she would say that?  
 (looks up)  
 May I try something?

On the talk back speaker.

VOICE (O.C.)  
 (filtered)  
 Sure, go head.

REBECCA  
 (clears her throat)  
 I cannot believe he walked out.  
 What a jerk. Another man who wants  
 what he wants, when he wants it.

PIP FADES OUT

REBECCA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 After all those years.... All those  
 years and I thought I knew him.

INT. SMALL APARTMENT CHICAGO - EVENING

TV blares an annoying game show. The door opens and Helena enters carrying a large grocery bag. She looks around the room and sees Dombrowski in a BRAND NEW LEATHER RECLINER. He has a remote control in one hand and a large glass of vodka in the other. Helena POV: scans the room and is astonished to see a LARGE FLAT SCREEN TV. She moves into the apartment to the kitchen area, puts down the groceries. She returns to the living room and faces Dombrowski.

HELENA DOMBROWSKI  
 Where did that TV come from? And  
 the chair?

Dombrowski looks up, his eyes rolling into his head.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
 I bought them. And there is a box  
 on the table there for you.

Helena reaches down and picks up a box. She opens it and finds THREE COLORFUL PATTERNED HEAD SCARFS. She pulls the top babushka up in the air in front of her face. She lowers the babushka and sees Dombrowski staring at the TV.



HELENA DOMBROWSKI  
Where did all this come from?

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
I told you, I bought them.

HELENA DOMBROWSKI  
With what money? You don't work.  
How did you get the money?

Dombrowski stares into space. Helena drops the babushka down onto to the table.

HELENA DOMBROWSKI (CONT'D)  
Louie, tell me the truth!

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
Fuck you! Shut up! I have a job!

Helena runs into the bed room and closes the door behind her.

INT. BEDROOM IN APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Without taking off her coat, Helena opens the closet door and pulls down a worn and OLD BROWN LEATHER SUITCASE. She blows the dust off and opens it on the bed. She puts her clothing in the suitcase and begins to cry.

INT. SMALL APARTMENT CHICAGO - MINUTES LATER

Helena stands at the door with the suitcase by her side. Tears roll down her face; she finds it hard to speak.

HELENA DOMBROWSKI  
I told you I would leave you if you  
went back to your old ways.

Without looking up.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
So what? This is what I do. This is  
how I make money in this country!

HELENA DOMBROWSKI  
And you are proud of this? I'll be  
at my sister's house in New York.  
(pause)  
This will not be good for you  
Louie. You will see.

EXT. STUDIO PARKING LOT - MIDDAY

A golf cart with three producers sits at an angle to walkway between two sound stages. The director Simon whispers something to the producers then turns to Rebecca dressed in old fashioned running outfit with a bandana around her head.

SIMON

Okay, Becky, I know this seems rather strange, but they just want to see you run.

REBECCA

(whispering)

Simon, there are no lines? I thought this was a five or more lines part?

SIMON

(quietly)

Well, let's just see the running, there might be more.

(full volume)

Okay, if you would, Beck, if you just go around the corner there, and then run on my 'action.'

Rebecca slowly walks around the corner of the sound stage and when she gets out of sight, we see her disheartened face.

REBECCA

(under her breath)

Jeez!

SIMON (O.C.)

Action!

Rebecca runs down the pathway, toward the director and then passes the golf cart, not stopping. She runs toward wardrobe on the other side of the lot, without looking back.

SIMON (CONT'D)

(following her)

Great. That's great Beck. Ah, Beck?

(turning to the producers)

I guess she likes to run.

(phoney laugh)

Hey, she's a runner.

INT. WEST HOLLYWOOD BAR - LATE AT NIGHT

Danny makes his way to the bar and notices Kevin Bacon at the end of the bar with two friends. Danny is drunk and blitzed, he moves toward the actor.

DANNY  
Hey, dude, Kevin Bacon, whattsup?

Kevin looks up and looks away, checking for a way out.

KEVIN BACON  
Hey.

DANNY  
Hey, man I guess that six degrees thing is true.

Kevin, noticeably irritated by the interruption, turns to his friends and rolls his eyes.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
So, six-fucking-degrees.

KEVIN BACON  
Say, aren't you Danny Blow-job in your car with a cop?

DANNY  
You know that same cop, Kevin?

Bacon asks for the check, then gets close to Danny's ear.

KEVIN BACON  
Not cool dude!

Danny laughs, not fully getting him.

DANNY  
Yeah, six degrees man.

Kevin grabs Danny's collar forcefully.

KEVIN BACON  
Stop with that shit. I'm sick of that degrees of separation bullshit. Why don't you read that book: TIPPING POINT, and you'll see, it's Rod Steiger who is the six degrees of separation king, not me Jack.

DANNY  
Rod Sterling?

KEVIN BACON

Rod S-T-E-I-G-E-R! Dip shit.

Bacon throws a ONE HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL down the bar and walks away. Danny looks down at the money and then back at the Bacon's departing group.

DANNY

Kevin Fucking Bacon. Wait 'til I tell Becky.

INT. POLISH VILLAGE TAVERN - NIGHT

The eyes of the bartender jolt Dombrowski back out of his day dream. The bartender nods asking if he should pour another shot of vodka.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

Yes, Yes, one more.

Dombrowski throws a TEN DOLLAR BILL on the bar. Killer Joe comes out of the men's room. He walks a bit wobbly. He gets to Dombrowski and puts his arm around him, but leans his body uncomfortably heavy on Dombrowski. He pushes him away and Killer Joe drops into the chair next to Dombrowski.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI (CONT'D)

You are drunk kurwa!

Killer Joe looks up in surprise.

KILLER JOE

You call me that? A dog licked your mouth!

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

Mister Killer Joe, you sleep with the pigs.

Shaking off the curses, Killer Joe gets closer to Dombrowski to whisper in his ear.

KILLER JOE

So, you understand. You can do this, right?

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

But I need more money.

KILLER JOE

Ah, just what I thought, you are the pig.

(burps)

(MORE)

KILLER JOE (CONT'D)

More money, they always want more money.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

This time, twenty. You understand? You want me to kill this woman because she is some kind of CIA assassin or something, but I need to buy car.

Killer Joe reaches into the bowl of pretzels on the bar and takes one into this mouth without chewing.

KILLER JOE

Okay 'polack', to use that word.  
(chews)  
Just don't buy an American car!

Dombrowski laughs.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

Yes, I know, Japanese or German. I have Japanese TV.

INT. SMALL STUDIO APARTMENT IN THE VILLAGE - NIGHT

Ethan lights his cigarette off Joel's and sits down on a old antique reclining chair. Marty and Thelma sit at the small kitchen table reading drafts and marking up the pages.

ETHAN

I love the thinking part. The part of dissecting the character's brain. The psychological motivations of each person.

MARTY

It's not fucking biology Hitchcock. It's just screen writing. So, what are you trying to say?

ETHAN

Why is the big Polish oaf running around killing people?

MARTY

He's pissed off at the fuckin' system. He can't get a break.

ETHAN

Why the obsession with death?

MARTY

I'm not obsessed with death, I'm into violence and pain, there is a fucking difference.

JOEL

But, you haven't answered the central question. What's his belief system? Does he enjoy killing?  
(long drag on the cigarette)  
Feels to me like he's just doing it for the money.

Marty looks at Thelma, then back to Joel.

MARTY

Well, maybe. People do a lot of bad things, for money, for oil, for power, for fame, for God, or just because they think they're fucking right.

ETHAN

Maybe, the only way some people can deal with crime, is to do more crime?

INT. SMALL APARTMENT CHICAGO - NIGHT

Dombrowski sits at the small table with two inch thick wooden dowel rods. He takes a screw driver and tightens the short length of heavy wire that has been fastened to the two rods. He pulls each stick away from each other to test the wire. Satisfied with his work, Dombrowski walks into the bedroom, without taking his clothes off, crawls into bed and pulls a blanket over himself. His sleep morphs into a dream.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SMOKY ROOM FROM POLAND PAST - LATE AT NIGHT

A young boy looks out the window and sees Nazi troops marching through the street. The Swastika waves on the flag. He sees a woman, GAYLENA DOMBROWSKI, running through the street trying to get home. She looks up at the window. The panic in her face is framed with a colorful babushka. Tears roll down her face.

GAYLENA DOMBROWSKI

Ludwik, please do not look.

YOUNG LUDWIK  
Mommy, Mommy, Mommy!

The small boy begins to cry. Then he sees his father taking a large fork and pulling up a GIANT KIELBASA SAUSAGE from a large black pot of boiling water. His father laughs and turns to him.

BORIS DOMBROWKI  
You want this?

A large rifle butt knocks the door knob away. We see Gaylena in a small bed in a nightgown. A Nazi soldier marches to her, rips her clothes off. He lowers his pants, turns and looks toward the boy. His mother's screams drives the young Ludwik to cover his ears with his small trembling hands. He looks up again and sees the soldier finished with his dirty work, turns his body toward the young boy. We see the large kielbasa being held up by his father and we move closer to THE BOILING WATER.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. SMALL APARTMENT CHICAGO - NIGHT

Dombrowski sits up in bed, sweats profusely. He screams and then holds his ears. Shaking, he turns the light on, grabs a bottle on the night stand and takes a large swig of vodka.

INT. LACMA MUSEUM IN LOS ANGELES - DAYTIME

Rebecca pushes her father's wheelchair. The sun shines through her hair, she smiles as they take in the art. Bernie appears to be in good spirits and grabs her hand lovingly.

BERNIE  
This one, stop for a second.

REBECCA  
What is this?

BERNIE  
That's BACK SEAT DODGE '38 by Kienholz, very controversial. Made all those stuffy women out in Glendale all crazy. They wanted to censor the museum back in '66.

REBECCA  
It's junk.

Bernie laughs.

BERNIE

Yes, my dear, it was once said that Edward Kienholz took junk, the symbol of imminent death, and transformed it into art.

REBECCA

I don't get this one?

We look at the work. MUSIC from 1938 plays eerily in the background as we get a 360 degree look at the art. The wire sculpture shows a man and a women in the back seat of an old car making out.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Rather provocative, but why is the man only half way completed.

BERNIE

I think the artist wants you to use your imagination. You know, fill in the blanks. He is attempting to titillate.

REBECCA

Did people really do that in cars back then?

Bernie, with his BASEBALL BATTING GLOVES on starts to wheel himself away, Rebecca follows.

BERNIE

Yes, my darling Rebecca. But remember, it's just art, not life. Life wishes it was so permanent.

EXT. SMALL PARK JOGGING PATH - VERY EARLY MORNING

The thick fog starts to move off. A light breeze rustles the underbrush. In the distance, a jogger's footsteps. As they get closer, we hear the healthy breathing of the runner. Along side the jogging path, a black gloved hand holds the side of the tree, like a male dancer holding his partner's waist.

The jogger gets closer and through the fog, a woman runs forward. The young very fit woman has on a bandana and tight light blue running suit. Her white iPod ear buds wires disappear into her breast pocket. She gets to the big tree in the foreground and slows up.

She bends over slightly, and then becomes erect and starts her slow ending.



Out of her peripheral vision, a dark figure emerges from behind the tree. His arms stretch out to reveal a long wire connected to two wooden rods. His shoe breaks a twig beneath his feet. The woman turns, the wire is around her neck which whips back from the violent force. Her hands come up to protect, but it's too late.

The wire digs into her skin. Her eyes bulge in terror. She gasps for a breath. She tries to scream, but nothing comes out. The wire tightens, blood flows around it and drips onto to her running suit. The man with the black leather gloves shakes his victim like a mouse in the mouth of a big cat. Back and forth until the lifeless form slowly sinks to the ground.

He gently unwraps the wire from her neck. We hear the faint sound of music playing in the ear phones. He reaches into her pocket and grabs the iPod, tears it from the ear buds and throws it into the woods. The sound stops. The dark figure walks into the fog.

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - MORNING

Glickstein sits in his chair, arms folded across his chest.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

You're just going to have to deal with it.

(beat)

I leave Saturday for Europe. I'll be there for a year. I'm sure Doctor Hopkins will be great for you.

DANNY

But why do you have to leave now? We're making so much progress.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

Are we? Have you figured out a way to separate yourself from that woman? I mean, disconnect your emotions.

DANNY

I think my problem is that once I get into a part, I get so far into who the character is, that I sort of, well, become that person.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

And this character, is obsessively in love with this other character, is that what you are saying?

DANNY

Yes, that IS what I am saying.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

And am I to believe that when you finally wrap up that movie, you'll be able to find yourself and disconnect?

DANNY

Man, is this like, that kind of "break-through" session that people talk about?

DR. GLICKSTEIN

That's a myth Danny. People just have moments of clarity. It's what you do with it that matters.

DANNY

So, I just gotta stay away from her until the end of the movie. I mean, in real life.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

(checking his watch)

That's all the time today.

DANNY

Just like that, you look at your watch and we stop and you go to Europe and write your book?

DR. GLICKSTEIN

Yes Danny, I just don't get emotionally involved with the characters in my life. Got it?

Danny looks around the room, shows the separation anxiety kicking in.

DANNY

Yeah, I guess.

Danny gets up and slowly walks out the door.

INT. NYU CLASSROOM - MIDDAY

Marty stands in the Professor Brownstone's classroom with a legal pad in his hand.

BROWNSTONE

Yes, you have to have a protagonist and some kind of force against the hero, classic structure. Do you understand that?

MARTY

Yes, yes sir, but I was wondering how important the message is, you know the writer's cause.

BROWNSTONE

Totally unimportant! You're not supposed to write some protest document, your job is to tell a story. DO YOU GET THAT?

MARTY

Yes, but movies today - -

BROWNSTONE

A movie is not YOUR OPINION, it should be a visceral experience for the audience, not an argument!

Marty stands there motionless.

BROWNSTONE (CONT'D)

You don't win arguments with movies, you tell stories and if the values of the characters you create are strong enough, they just might make someone cry, or laugh, or get mad about something. But you, YOU, are only the filmmaker. You are NOT THE STORY!

Marty slowly sits down and scribbles something on his pad.

INT. USED CAR DEALERSHIP CHICAGO - AFTERNOON

Dombrowski walks around the car lot and sees a very white and clean Korean car with the price tag of \$9,999. He waves over a swarthy sales guy in a bad suit. As the sales person approaches, he points at the small white car.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

I want this one. This is the one.

SALES GUY

You betcha! Let me call my guy at  
the bank.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

No bank. I pay cash.

A smile slowly replaces the frown on Dombrowski's face. His eyes widen like a child's first glimpse of the presents on Christmas morning.

INT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S PASADENA APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rebecca helps her father into his bed. She covers him.

BERNIE

How is your mother?

REBECCA

She's fine. We really haven't  
talked much. But we're going to  
church tomorrow.

Rebecca sits down in a chair by the bed.

BERNIE

Oh, must be communion, she loves  
the red wine.

REBECCA

(chuckles a bit)  
Now dad, be good.

BERNIE

Say, did you get that part? You  
know, in that movie?

REBECCA

That wasn't a part. It was so lame,  
I was supposed to jog down this  
path in the park and this guy  
strangles me with a wire.

BERNIE

Oh my. That's terrible.

REBECCA

Yeah, I had no lines. I may have  
burned some bridges, but I told  
them that I wasn't interested.

BERNIE

Well, you don't even like to jog.

They both laugh.

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
You heading out now?

REBECCA  
No, I brought a book. If it's okay,  
I'd like to stay in the spare room?

BERNIE  
Of course.

REBECCA  
The gay entourage at my building  
are having a party tonight, and I  
wanted to read my book and get some  
sleep.

BERNIE  
Show folk; aren't those your  
people?

REBECCA  
Dad!

INT. REBECCA'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Felicia sits on the sofa with a LARGE MARTINI GLASS in her  
hand. Rob, sits on the chair next to the sofa with a scotch.  
He has this puppy dog look on his face.

ROB  
I just don't understand why she  
keeps pushing me away. We're so  
very close.

FELICIA  
(eyeing the goods)  
Well, Robbie, look at her track  
record. Maybe she doesn't know a  
good man when she sees one.

ROB  
(smiles)  
Thank you, Mrs. McKenzie

FELICIA  
Please Robbie, call me Felicia. You  
know I always thought you were the  
cat's meow!

Rob laughs nervously.

ROB

That's a funny expression.

(beat)

I always thought you were the coolest mom.

(sipping his scotch)

Actually, kind of hot.

Felicia slides closer to Rob and extends her hand to him. He stands, puts the drink down and takes her hand, as if to help her up, but she pulls him onto the sofa. She wraps her arms around Rob's neck and kisses his mouth. First, he acts surprised, then returns a full tongue kiss on her.

INT. PLUSH BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Two people stand at the edge of a large bed. Rob kisses Felicia and runs his hands from her shoulders to her hips and gently picks her up and lays her into the love nest. She moans with appreciation and permission. The young stud starts to unbutton her blouse. She pulls away with a look of distress. She looks at the open bedroom door.

FELICIA

Wait, did you hear something?

EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - NIGHT

Dombrowski's new car runs through THE RED LIGHT. A Police car sits on a side street. Two officers see the violation and pursue. With lights flashing, they race behind the white vehicle that slows down and stops. Both cops get out and move toward the car. One cop looks down and sees that the car has NO LICENSE PLATE. Dombrowski rolls down his windows and slowly opens the door. The cop on the passenger side of the car opens his GUN HOLSTER, turns on his flash light and checks inside. The driver's side cop approaches.

POLICEMAN #1

Stay in your car sir. Driver's license and registration.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

But why do you stop me? I did nothing wrong.

Dombrowski opens his door and PLACES ONE FOOT on the street. The officer who spoke holds his position and UNCLIPS HIS RIOT CLUB.

POLICEMAN #1  
 I said, stay in the car. Please  
 produce your driver's license  
 (shouts)  
 AND REGISTRATION!

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
 Why are you shouting at me?

POLICEMAN #1  
 GET YOUR FOOT BACK IN THE CAR!

The officer slams the frame of the door with his club.  
 Dombrowski jumps and pulls his foot back inside the car.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
 This is brand new car. Stop hitting  
 my car.

Policeman #1 kicks the door closed with his foot.

POLICEMAN #2  
 Where's the license plate? Did they  
 give you a temporary plate?

Now visibly shaking, Dombrowski gets his wallet out and hands  
 his license to the cop.

POLICEMAN #1  
 Where you from, anyway?

The cop looks at the license.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
 My name, Ludwik Dombrowski, 3 Maple  
 Grove, my town, Jackowo?

Policeman #2 points to temporary plate on front seat.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI (CONT'D)  
 The plate, oh, they give me plate.

POLICEMAN #2  
 You're supposed to put it on. You  
 need to have that on the car,  
 (mocks)  
 ON OUTSIDE, you got it?

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI  
 Yes, okay. I will.

POLICEMAN #1  
 And here in Chicago, red means  
 stop, comrade!

The cop hands Dombrowski his license.

POLICEMAN #1 (CONT'D)

This time, just a warning. NOW, get out of here.

(beat)

You got that **Dumb**-Brow-Ski!

Dombrowski puts the car into gear and takes off. He doesn't look back, just mumbles to himself. Police walk back to their squad car.

POLICEMAN #1 (CONT'D)

What the fuck is happening to our country? We're letting anybody in. We're fuckin' doomed.

INT. SMALL STUDIO APARTMENT IN THE VILLAGE - NIGHT

ETHAN

Yeah, that's better. I like the idea of cops. Cops always create this paranoia. You know like in CRASH.

MARTY

And like in FARGO?

JOEL

Hardly, the cop was a pregnant woman. Marty do you even watch movies?

MARTY

Fuck you. I've seen lots of movies.

ETHAN

That doesn't mean you can make one.

THELMA

Now boys, we gotta get this project done. Remember, Woodbury said it's 40% of our grade.

Marty goes back to the keyboard and mumbles.

MARTY

(mockingly)

Do you even watch movies? Fuckin' goofy, fuckin' mickey mouse,

(pretending to type his words)

(MORE)



MARTY (CONT'D)  
fuckin' minnie.... goofy takes  
minnie from behind and....

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

A SHADOWY FIGURE walks down the hall, the LATEX GLOVED HANDS find a key under the mat. Dressed in a dark hoodie, the person goes into Rebecca's apartment. Inside, the man turns on a flashlight and moves quickly into the bed room. His POV: He takes out a large zip-lock bag and goes to the drawer next to the bed. He finds a box of condoms, puts them into the bag. Then he pulls out a JACK-RABBIT VIBRATOR and holds it up, examines it like it's an archeological find, turns it on for a second, then turns it off. He carefully places it into the bag. He slowly closes the drawer.

FADE OUT.

INT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S PASADENA APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

Bernie wheels himself into the living room in his pajamas. He looks down the hall and sees the guest room door closed. He wheels himself over to the TV. As he wheels himself past the sofa, he knocks REBECCA'S PURSE off the couch. As the contents fall onto the deep plush carpeting, he sees it. On the floor, a SMALL REVOLVER tumbles out of her purse.

BERNIE

Oh, shit.

He looks back at the door, still closed. He leans over, and pulls the purse back up into its position on the sofa. He picks up the gun and goes to put it into the purse, but instead, puts it into a SMALL POCKET in the wheel chair. He also sees a small BOX OF AMMO. He puts that in the pocket on the other side. He picks up the rest of what dropped and puts the purse back, making it look as if it wasn't touched. Bernie takes a deep breath, and shakes his head.

EXT. SOUTH PASADENA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - LATE MORNING

The sun shines in Rebecca's eyes, her mother, with sunglasses on, walks up to her. They move toward the front door and the sound of organ music.

FELICIA

Thanks for coming to church with  
me.

REBECCA

Well, thanks, I guess, but you know  
I like going to church.

FELICIA

Yes, I like going, too. It makes  
all those bad things I did from  
Monday to Friday just go away.

REBECCA

What bad things?

FELICIA

Oh, nothing really, just little  
crimes of passion.

Rebecca laughs, they climb the steps.

INT. SOUTH PASADENA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

The COLLECTION PLATE is passed from hand to hand. Felicia drops a ONE HUNDRED DOLLAR BILL in the plate. Rebecca places her offering envelop in the plate. The deacons walk the money to THE MINISTER standing in front. The organ swells to a crescendo. The congregation rises and sings the doxology:

CONGREGATION

Praise God, from whom all blessings  
flow; Praise Him, all creatures  
here below; Praise Him above ye  
heavenly host; Praise Father, Son,  
and Holy Ghost. Amen.

INT. POLISH VILLAGE TAVERN - NIGHT

Dombrowski in his position at the bar. Killer Joe is next to him.

KILLER JOE

You must understand. I cannot keep  
paying you more.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

I don't care about what you say  
Gielerowski. I want fifty-thousand  
to kill a priest.

Killer Joe takes a large swig of vodka and lets out a breath of air.

KILLER JOE

You are becoming an American  
bastard. You are like capitalist,  
like in the bad way.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

Fuck you Joe. I don't give shit if  
he fucked million choir boys up the  
ass, I need money.

KILLER JOE

Okay, but you need to be careful.  
You have become too valuable to my  
business. I should take out an  
insurance policy on you.

Dombrowski grabs Killer Joe around the collar. He releases  
his business partner and backs away.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

You know the price.

Dombrowski gets up. Killer Joe reaches into his pocket and  
pulls out THE OLD COIN and hands it to Dombrowski.

KILLER JOE

Okay, you drive hard bargain. You  
are the best money can buy, so I  
buy you again.

Killer Joe smiles, Dombrowski smiles in a boastful manner,  
not aware that he's being played by his countryman.

INT. SMALL STUDIO APARTMENT IN THE VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

Marty takes a large swig of red wine, finishes THE GOBLET.

JOEL

Most Poles are Catholic, isn't it a  
sin to kill a priest?

MARTY

It's a fuckin' sin to kill anyone?  
Hey, it was one of your guys,  
Moses, who got the Ten  
Commandments. Fuckin' Old  
Testament!

ETHAN

Wasn't that Charleston Heston?  
Isn't he like, totally pro-gun now?

MAN

And fuck you, too!

MUSIC UP: Minor chords, church organ.

INT. PRIEST'S STUDY ST. ATHANASIUS - LATE AT NIGHT

The phone rings on the desk. FATHER BENEDICT answers the phone and acts disturbed by the interruption.

FATHER BENEDICT

Yes, HELLO!

He keeps writing intently.

FATHER BENEDICT (CONT'D)

No, that's fine. I will lock up.  
Thanks for letting me know that  
you're leaving.

(listens)

Yes, thank you, God bless you, good  
night.

He turns back to his work. The stillness of the night permeates the church. From the end of a long dark hallway, LIGHT STREAMS from the small door of the study. Wood creaks, the priest looks up and stops writing for a moment.

He shakes his head and returns to his sermon. Intruder's POV: coming closer and closer. The doorway expands as he moves closer. On a stained-glass window in the church, blood pours from CHRIST'S HANDS bringing out the other shades of red in the stained-glass. In the shadows, demonic eyes of a man on a mission appear.

Dressed in dark PLASTIC TRASH BAGS; one tied around his waist, one like a serape over his shoulders and one tied over his head, the trash bag monk carries a small dark leather bag. Father Benedict pauses, reads what he has written. He looks into the darkness of the hallway. He sees the BLOOD-RED EYES OF THE DEVIL.

FATHER BENEDICT (CONT'D)

Is that you, Rafael? What do you  
want? I thought you were going.

There is a long silence with both men staring at each other.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

I'm the devil. You must answer for  
your sins.

Startled by the strange voice.

FATHER BENEDICT

What sins? WHO ARE YOU! What do you want?

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

I want your life.

The priest slowly backs his chair away from the desk. Without moving his head, his eyes survey the room for a way out.

FATHER BENEDICT

But the Lord decides matters of life and death.

Father, hearing his own words, crosses himself. He looks up and sees this large man dressed in the trash bags. He regains some confidence at the sight of a man dressed in trash bags.

FATHER BENEDICT (CONT'D)

Oh, I see, this is a joke of some kind.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

You make fun of the devil? You make young boys take off clothes. God has his revenge, the devil is his slave.

FATHER BENEDICT

What? You must be....

The Father gets up and tries to walk across the room. With this, Dombrowski brings up from inside the glad bag, a Walther PPK with a silencer and plugs the Priest in his privates three times. As Dombrowski shoots, he names each shot.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The Father bends over and grabs himself, takes a deep breath.

FATHER BENEDICT

Please have mercy.

The priest rives in pain, hyperventilates and backs away from his attacker. Dombrowski points at the wooden wall next to the statue of Christ. Benedict back peddles until he's against the wall.

LUDWIK DOMBROWSKI

Put your hands up, like the Jesus.

FATHER BENEDICT

Please, I beg of you.

Benedict cries openly while he moves his arms up in the sign of the cross. His robe is now wet with blood.

With this, Dombrowski walks over to the wall. The priest leans against the wall trying not to slide down. His legs wobble a bit. Out of the bag, Dombrowski pulls out a large PNEUMATIC NAILER and with one motion, drives a large nail through the hand of the man of the cloth into the wooden wall. Benedict's reflex brings his other hand over to free the nailed palm. Dombrowski pushes the other hand back to its place on the wall.

The priest's body shakes uncontrollably. THWACK, THWACK, THWACK, Dombrowski nails from the right hand of the Father all the way across to the other hand. Then down, like making the sign of the cross from his head to his bloody midsection.

His lifeless neck falls into prayer position. Now in the peaceful silence of the moment, Dombrowski looks up at the FACE OF JESUS and he hallucinates a tear coming off the statue's face. He hears drips, he turns back to see that it's his VICTIM'S BLOOD. He then takes off the trash bags and throws them on the floor. He walks over to the desk and turns off the light.

INT. REBECCA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rebecca turns on the light and in a sheer nightgown walks into the bedroom. She has a glass of wine in her hand and turns the dimmer down low and gets into bed just as GREY'S ANATOMY is ending on TV. She looks at Doctor McDreamy on the screen, then turns off the TV. Rebecca takes another sip of wine, then puts it down on the drawer-table unit next to the bed.

She slips into bed, pulls the silk sheet up to her chest. She lightly TOUCHES HER NIPPLES through the sheet, then moves her hands under the sheet toward her legs. She closes her eyes, and takes a sensual breath. As she starts to pleasure herself, she looks over to THE DRAWER. She slowly reaches over and opens the drawer. She reaches in, and tries to feel for her steely device. She extends her arm deeper into the drawer but without success. She opens her eyes and leans over to look inside. She opens the drawer wider and her eyes follow. There is NOTHING IN THE DRAWER. She jumps out of bed. She opens the second drawer and again, nothing.

REBECCA

What the...

She moves quickly to the other side of the bed and opens those drawers. Nothing. She grabs her robe and puts it on. She turns on the light full blast. And LOOKS AROUND THE ROOM, trying to see if anything else has been disturbed. She moves quickly to the living room, turns on every light on her path to HER PURSE sitting on by the small coffee table. She picks up the purse and opens it carefully. She looks into the purse and slowly takes the contents out one by one. She cannot find what she is looking for and panic seeps across her face.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Oh shit...

She rubs her forehead and has a look of being violated on her face. She snaps her finger, remembering her mistake. She bolts for the door, opens the locks carefully, then opens the door WITH THE CHAIN ON. She sees nothing in the hallway, so she unchains the door. She looks down at the welcome mat in front of the door. And then slowly turns it over. There is NO KEY.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

Fuck!

She slowly backs into the apartment and locks, bolts and chains the door. She leans her back against the door, then slides down to the floor and gets in a NEAR FETAL POSITION on the floor.

EXT. REBECCA'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Rebecca, dressed in a black raincoat, kneels down at the welcome mat and gets the key from under the mat. She enters her mother's home.

INT. REBECCA'S MOTHER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

DRAMATIC MUSIC UP

She TAKES OFF HER SHOES at the door and walks quietly in her bare feet on the MARBLE FLOOR to the kitchen. She sees ROB'S BRIEFCASE sitting on the kitchen table and is drawn to it. She looks around then opens the top. Inside she sees a large box with the label HOME SURVEILLANCE KIT - Easy to install yourself! The windows in the box show a LITTLE CAMERA and a TRANSMITTER. She flashes to the one that she found. She hears a moan from the bedroom. She is drawn to the sound. She walks slowly and cautiously toward the FLICKERING CANDLES at the end of the hall. She gets far enough down the hall to see a reflection in the bedroom mirror of two people in bed. She recognizes ROB'S SHIRT hanging over a chair. She hears her mother's voice from inside the bedroom.

FELICIA

Wait, did you hear something?

Rebecca slowly walks backward, her eyes open in disbelief. She quickly turns around and moves to the door. She grabs her shoes and dashes out the door.

INT. SMALL STUDIO APARTMENT IN THE VILLAGE - NIGHT

A SMALL PRINTER in the corner spits out pages and pages of the script. Marty paces like an expecting father. Thelma is sleeping on the sofa. Ethan comes out of the bedroom in a robe.

ETHAN

It's four o'clock in the morning  
Marty. What are you doing?

MARTY

Just printing it all out. I still  
don't have a fucking ending.

Ethan goes to the refrigerator and opens a bottle of orange juice and takes a drink from the bottle.

ETHAN

Don't they say, there is nothing in  
a bad ending that can't be fixed by  
a great first act.

MARTY

Yeah, no shit Einstein, but I don't  
even have a fucking ending.

Ethan pauses, feels his a couple of days beard growth.

ETHAN

Isn't it 'no shit Sherlock'?  
(winks)  
Why don't you give Dombrowski one  
final challenge?

MARTY

What do you mean?

ETHAN

I mean, put him in a situation  
where he has decide between right  
and wrong.  
(yawns)  
You know, inner conflict?



Marty just stares at Ethan as he walks back to the bedroom, almost as if he is sleep walking. Marty is frozen with the question, while the printer staccatos the new pages.

INT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S PASADENA APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Bernie takes THE GUN out of the leather pocket and looks at it. He OPENS THE CHAMBER. And looks inside. He opens the box of shells and carefully takes out bullets one by one. He loads THE FIVE BULLETS. He closes the chamber. And holds the gun for a second, then puts THE BARREL IN HIS MOUTH. His FINGERS GRIP THE TRIGGER. He pauses, his hand starts to shake and he withdraws the pistol. He puts the safety on and puts the gun back into the leather pocket. He looks out the window at the blinking lights of the city. He flashes on the bird on the window from earlier.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP LOWER MANHATTAN - MORNING

Marty walks along Astor Place and talks to himself. People pass him by, avoiding eye contact. They move away from him quickly.

MARTY

You gotta have a fucking ending.  
But the rule is, oh, fuck the  
rules!

(with some clarity)

But again, you take the audience to  
the place where they expect  
something to happen, then just when  
they think they have it figured  
out, BAM! You do something  
different.

(losing it again)

Not fucking unbelievable, but  
definitely different, but not like  
a fucking piano falls on the bad  
guy.

(beat)

NO, not like that. And you can't  
have it rain frogs, fucking Paul  
Thomas fucking Anderson already did  
that. FUCK! I don't have a fucking  
ending.

Marty keeps mumbling to himself as he continues down the street. An OLD WOMAN crosses the street with an red SQUEAKY GROCERY CART, she's wearing A BABUSHKA. She looks at Marty, her eyes show the fatigue of a long life of pain. She looks like Dombrowski's wife, only aged by decades.

INT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S PASADENA APARTMENT - MORNING

Rebecca sits in a chair, stirs her coffee, her hands shake as she tells her story.

REBECCA

So, I think that Danny came over.  
He knows I always left the key  
under the mat.

BERNIE

That little creep.  
(starting to fume)  
What did he take? Is the key gone?

REBECCA

No, nothing really is missing from  
inside, well, the key is gone.

BERNIE

What did he take Becky?

Bernie rolls closer to his daughter. He puts his hand on her arm.

REBECCA

Remember when I told you Rob was  
going to help me get a gun, a small  
handgun?

BERNIE

You didn't do that? Tell me you  
didn't get a gun. Rob is an idiot.  
(beat)  
Where's the damn gun?

REBECCA

It was in my purse, but I had my  
purse with me.  
(churning mind)  
And I was here.

Bernie turns away and wheels over to the phone. He picks up the phone and shows it to Rebecca.

BERNIE

Is the gun registered?

REBECCA

Yes, of course. But...  
(watching her father)  
You didn't take the gun, did you?

BERNIE

Don't be ridiculous. Now call the police!

REBECCA

Danny must have been in my apartment...

(figuring it out)

...when I was watching TV.

She gets up, walks toward the phone, but then stops.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

I'm going to the police station. You're right, this has gotten out of line. He needs to be stopped.

BERNIE

I would go with you, but - -

Bernie slowly puts the phone down and stares at his daughter.

REBECCA

I love you, daddy. I'll take care of it. I should have done this days ago.

BERNIE

I love you, too. Be strong Rebecca, be strong.

EXT. BACK LOT AT STUDIO - AFTERNOON

The entire crew noshes at the catered wrap party feast. Danny moves through the crowd. He makes himself a large glass of Coke and 151 rum. A make-up lady grabs Danny's arm affectionately as he wobbles away from the drink table.

MAKE-UP LADY

Hey Danny, I just wanted to say that it was a great working with you. You are really something else.

DANNY

Thanks, ah, I'm sorry, you're, ah, make-up, right?

MAKE-UP LADY

Samantha, Samantha Jackson.

(flirty pout)

Here's my card, why don't you call me sometime.

DANNY

Yeah, sure.

Danny moves toward Glickstein, who stands by himself in the crowd.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

Danny, good luck kiddo.

They clink glasses.

DANNY

Yeah, you too.

(almost a whisper)

To your health!

(raising his glass)

You're gonna be alright.

DR. GLICKSTEIN

Lay off the booze, kid. You're starting to scare me.

Danny leans on Glickstein. Glickstein goes face to face with Danny.

DR. GLICKSTEIN (CONT'D)

That was my character. That was in the script.

(beat)

You do remember, that was in the movie, not in real life?

DANNY

Really? Fuck.

MUSIC UP: DEPECHE MODE'S PRECIOUS

EXT. STUDIO PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Danny walks away from the party and finds his parking spot with his NAME ON A SMALL SIGN. He throws the rest of a drink in the hedges and gets into his red Ferrari convertible. The top is down. He guns the engine, backs up and drives off, much too fast for the lot.

He pulls out of the studio entrance and tears off up the street. From his POV, we see things going by at breakneck speed. Then, as we gain more and more speed, the car goes out of control, jumps the sidewalk. PEOPLE SCATTER as the car slams into a METAL POLE almost splitting the car in half.

MONTAGE:

People's reaction on the sidewalk.

Ambulance and fire trucks race to the scene.

EMS people wheel out the stretcher.

Medical Examiner's van sign STAY BACK 500 Feet.

The examiner covers the bloody body of the victim with a cloth.

END OF MONTAGE

MEDICAL EXAMINER

T.O.D. Three, twenty-three.  
Tentative ID: Male Daniel B.  
Liekus.

They push the stretcher into the van and close the doors and the truck pulls away. The camera slowly pulls out from the shot, and we see the crew. The director screams and gives his AD a high five. He moves from the camera area, throws his headphones and runs to a crowd of on-lookers, where he sees Danny who appears in a bit of a daze. Simon gives Danny full body hug and kisses him on the forehead.

SIMON

Now, that's a fucking movie!

Danny smiles and takes a deep breath.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Aren't you glad we had a stunt man  
for that shot?

DANNY

Yeah, but, you wrecked my car.

SIMON

We wrecked two Ferrari's, isn't it  
great?

DANNY

But, my car?

SIMON

You comin' to dinner with us  
tonight?

DANNY

Ah, no, I promised Rebecca I'd come  
to her father's place in Pasadena  
for dinner.

SIMON

That's cool. Dinner at Daddy's,  
must be serious?

DANNY

Yeah, well, he asked me to come  
over, but really it's not, ah, you  
know what I mean?

SIMON

My lips are sealed. Hey Danny,  
thanks for doing this movie. You  
made the movie dude. Call me next  
week, I might have another project  
for you... Ciao

(turning to crew)

Okay, let's get this neighborhood  
back to normal people...

(turning to the onlookers)

We love you... please go see my  
movie!!

In the crowd, Dombrowski appears, with his leather bag on his  
shoulder, slowly walks away, but then slows even more and  
turns, almost in slow motion and looks at Simon. Simon stares  
back, then Dombrowski squints. Simon nods two times.  
Dombrowski acknowledges the order.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE NEW YORK - EARLY EVENING

Thelma, Ethan, Joel and Marty walk the sidewalks with  
thousands of people around them. Marty walks over to one of  
New York's finest.

MARTY

Hey, what's going on, here? Why all  
the people?

The cop just laughs. Marty turns back to his friends.

MARTY (CONT'D)

You see, to lots of people, this is  
fantasy. But to us, this is real.

THELMA

Kinda surreal, really.

MARTY

They all come here to see the  
LIGHTS! And they get to see all  
this for free. Entertained by  
fucking MARKETING! This is all just  
marketing, fucking blinking lights.

ETHAN

It's the comfort of the fire. The primal need to be near the warm fire at night. Primal programming. That's why they feel good in a dark theatre.

JOEL

Good one! The moving images are nothing more than the flickering flames of the fire.

MARTY

We got fucking global warming and energy fucking shortages and all that Al Gore shit, and they just keep adding more fuckin' blinkin' lights here.

THELMA

Can't let the fire go out, Marty.

MARTY

You guys are fucking high.

INT. PASADENA POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

Rebecca sits next to a desk. Good looking LA cop hunts and pecks at the keyboard.

DESK COP

I thought I recognized you. Yeah, that was a good movie.

(looking back to her)

So, this Danny guy, what's the nature of your relationship?

REBECCA

He's just a co-worker.

EXT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

Danny, in an OLD BEAT-UP CAMRY, sits at a security gate. The guard stands over him and doesn't look impressed.

DANNY

(taking sun glasses off)

Listen, I know that I don't have a guest pass to park here, but I'm coming to dinner at Dr. McKenzie's. His daughter's my girl friend, you know, Rebecca.

GUARD

Hang on, let me call him.

At this point, another car pulls behind Danny's car. He looks back, realizing he cannot back up. The guard goes to the phone and dials a number, doesn't take his eyes off Danny, he talks.

INT. BERNIE MCKENZIE'S PASADENA APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

BERNIE

I see. Okay, let him park in a visitor's spot on the basement level.

(pause)

Yes, that's right. I can get there on the elevator.

(beat)

No, no, I'm fine. I'll take care of this. Yes, thank you.

Bernie hangs up the phone and smiles an evil smile.

INT. PASADENA POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

DESK COP

Well, after he forced his way into your apartment, did anything happen?

(smiles)

You know?

REBECCA

No. Well, I got a knife from the kitchen and asked him to leave.

DESK COP

That's not good. You pulled a knife on him.

Rebecca furls her brow.

REBECCA

I'm the victim here.

DESK COP

Yeah sure, Miss, it is Miss, right?

Rebecca nods



DESK COP (CONT'D)

Miss McKenzie, I just need to make sure, before I put this in the report, you know?

(sensing the tension)

I'm just saying.

INT. BASEMENT LEVEL PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

In a dark corner of the parking lot, Dombrowski, dressed in all black, takes the Walther PPK out of a small leather bag. From his pocket, he pulls a large silencer. He carefully lands the silencer on the barrel and gently screws it into place.

From the other side of the parking lot, Danny's Camry comes down the ramp. He pulls around the corner looking for an empty space.

INT. 6TH FLOOR ELEVATOR LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Bernie reaches up, wearing his batting gloves and clicks the down button. The LIGHT OF THE BUTTON, at his eye level, is so bright, he must look away. He looks down into the leather pocket. He checks to see if the gun is there. He looks back to the elevator. The door opens.

MONTAGE:

Danny gets out of the parked car and clicks the lock. He walks toward the elevator.

Bernie wheels himself into elevator.

Dombrowski emerges from the dark corner with his gun at his side.

Bernie watches the floor numbers inside the elevator 5, 4, 3, 2, each ones dings.

Danny clicks his fingers like he forgot something, turns around and walks toward his car.

Dombrowski slides behind a pillar.

Bernie watches 1, P1, P2, B

Danny gets to his car, clicks it open, reaches into the back seat and pulls out a dozen red roses wrapped in green florist paper.

Dombrowski pirouettes from behind the pillar toward Danny.

Danny closes the door and walks toward the elevator.

Dombrowski now behind him, raises his gun, takes aim at the back of his head.

The elevator door opens, Bernie wheels himself out. And sees Danny.

BERNIE  
 (forceful scream)  
 DANNY!  
 (seeing the man with the  
 gun)  
 What the - -

Danny stops in his tracks.

DOMBROWSKI  
 Don't move!

Danny slowly turns around to see the man with the gun.

DANNY  
 Dr. McKenzie, it's me, Danny  
 Liekus.

Bernie moves his hand ever so slowly into the leather pocket.

BERNIE  
 I'm afraid our timing here is a  
 little shitty, Danny boy.

Dombrowski moves closer to Danny.

DOMBROWSKI  
 Drop the flowers, put hands in air.  
 (pointing the gun at  
 Bernie)  
 YOU! Old man, get back on elevator.

THE ROSES FALL to the cement floor. Danny puts his hands in the air. Starts to breath heavily, we hear his heart beats.

BERNIE  
 You need to leave this one for me.

Dombrowski's gun, now back on Danny.

DOMBROWSKI  
 What are you talking about old man?

Bernie moves closer.

DOMBROWSKI (CONT'D)  
I don't want to hurt you old man,  
just go back.

BERNIE  
He's mine. I want him. You see, he  
has been bothering my daughter.  
It's my score to settle.

DOMBROWSKI  
What can you do old man in that  
chair? Just go away, I work alone.

Bernie moves closer.

BERNIE  
(gripping the gun in the  
pocket)  
I said, I will take care of this.  
You just go back into YOUR HOLE.

Dombrowski, panics, turns toward Bernie. Now, Bernie holds  
his gun on Dombrowski.

DOMBROWSKI  
(surprised)  
Mother-fuck-er!

BERNIE  
Two can play at this game. Now you  
need to go away and let me do what  
I came here to do. This is my job.

Danny starts to pee his pants. THE URINE reaches the floor  
and FLOWS TOWARD THE ROSES. Bernie wheels toward the flowers.  
Dombrowski is confused.

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
No reason to waste those beautiful  
roses.

Bernie swoops down and picks up the roses. And stares into  
Danny eyes.

BERNIE (CONT'D)  
You stupid shit.

Bernie rolls backward and lines himself up so he is in front  
of Danny but angled to see Dombrowski behind him.

DOMBROWSKI  
You are crazy bastard. Stop with  
this!

Dombrowski raises his gun and takes aim at Danny's head. Bernie grips his gun tightly.

BERNIE

DUCK!

Danny hits the ground. Dombrowski's gun fires, thud - thud. Then Bernie fires, once and hits Dombrowski in the face. He stands there for a moment, then as he falls, Bernie gets off 4 more rounds into the large man's body. The smoke of the gunfire rises while the echoes of gunfire bounce off all the walls, then silence. Danny cries. Bernie THROWS THE GUN at Danny's face. DANNY BLOCKS IT WITH HAND, then cradles it as his savior. The apartment building security guard comes running down the ramp with a FLASHLIGHT.

INT. PASADENA POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Being distracted by another cop turning up the police scanner.

DESK COP

Bennett, what's going on?

OFFICER BENNETT

There's been a shooting in the parking lot at the Delmar!

REBECCA

Oh my God, that's my father's building.

(grabbing her purse)

I gotta go.

She runs out of the police station.

INT. BASEMENT LEVEL PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER

Rebecca walks quickly down the ramp. The first cop stands before YELLOW CRIME SCENE TAPE. Another officer follows her down the ramp behind her.

CRIME SCENE COP

You can't come in here Miss.

REBECCA

My father, where's my father? He's not answering his phone.

CRIME SCENE COP

Who's your father?

REBECCA

Dr. McKenzie, Bernie McKenzie.  
(freaking)  
Is he hurt?

CRIME SCENE COP

He's in the lobby.

Rebecca turns and runs back up the ramp. As she gets to the top of the ramp, a COP PUSHES DANNY FORCEFULLY into the back of the squad car. Danny stares at Rebecca with COLD EYES OF DESPAIR. She moves toward the lobby, as she passes a cop, she stops to ask.

REBECCA

What's he doing here? What did he do?

SIDEWALK COP

I don't know, but he must have done something wrong, he seems to always have something on his shoes.

INT. LOBBY OF DELMAR APARTMENTS - SECONDS LATER

Rebecca walks in, sees her father, runs to him and hugs him. Tears run down her face.

REBECCA

Daddy, Thank God you're alright.  
What happened?

BERNIE

I was just telling these good men here...  
(extending his hand to them)  
Detectives Barnes and Stafford, I was taking some paper to the recycling bin in the basement, when I happened on this gun fight.

REBECCA

Are you hurt? Are you okay?

BERNIE

I'm fine, but you know I pegged that Danny kid totally wrong.

REBECCA

What do you mean?

BERNIE

I couldn't believe it, he shot that man. Shot him five times. The other guy only got off two shots, before Danny shot him dead.

(beat)

I guess Danny was some kind of professional.

REBECCA

Oh my God. He shot someone?

BERNIE

Yes, with your gun Becky. The one he stole from your apartment.

REBECCA

But...

BERNIE

(cutting her off)

The important thing is, we're all okay. Everything is alright now.

Without thinking, Bernie gets up out of the wheelchair and walks over to the table and picks up the roses, turns to his daughter, then realizes what just happened.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

These roses are for you.

(pauses)

Oh my, I can walk!

Rebecca runs to her father, hugs him and bursts into tears of joy.

DRAMATIC MUSIC UP

INT. LOBBY OF DELMAR APARTMENTS - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Losing his balance, he sits back down and she wheels his chair toward the elevator. She presses the up button and stares down at him. They wait for the elevator, the door opens, she wheels him in and the door closes. In her father's apartment, we see an open window. The bird flies in and starts to eat a small piece of toast on the dining room table.

REBECCA (V.O.)

Daddy never made it to the trial. He was supposed to be the star witness. It seems to take forever for those things.

(MORE)

REBECCA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Danny kept saying that he didn't  
shoot anyone. Always in denial,  
always living in a fantasy world.

FADE UP PIP WINDOW

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - SIMULTANEOUSLY

Rebecca in sweat shirt and reading glasses speaks into the  
microphone.

REBECCA  
But the strange thing, just as it  
looked like the prosecution was  
going to get a conviction and send  
Danny away for life, his highly  
paid defense lawyer finds this lady  
in New York, who claims to be the  
wife of the Polish guy, the dead  
guy, and says that she left him  
because he was some kind of hit  
man. Talk about reasonable doubt.

FADE OUT PIP WINDOW

REBECCA (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
Yeah, you guessed it, Danny got  
off. Typical LA justice. People get  
away with murder in this town. Good  
news for me, Danny moved to  
Bangkok. They say he's a big star  
down there, making movies of  
another nature. And of course, Rob  
and my mother. I never told her I  
caught them. I guess I am in  
denial, but I did tell Rob I never  
wanted to see him again. When he  
asked why, I told him, 'things  
happen for a reason.' I walked away  
and he didn't follow me. I'm so  
glad he didn't follow me.

FADE OUT.

SHOT IN 4:3 ASPECT RATIO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP MANHATTAN - MIDDAY

The filmmakers sit around the table all drinking coffee. They  
look at each other with Cheshire grins.

ETHAN  
That's strange.

JOEL  
I love it.

ETHAN  
I feel like I've seen that ending  
before?

MARTY  
Fuck you Ethan, everything's been  
done before. We're just finding new  
ways to tell the same story.  
(to Joel)  
So, you think it works?

JOEL  
Well, at least it's linear, well  
sort of.

ETHAN  
I found the whole script hard to  
follow, you know, what was real and  
what was the movie.

A long uncomfortable pause, then everyone turns to Thelma.

MARTY  
Well?

She looks down for a while, then slowly looks up to answer.

THELMA  
When you write a screenplay, you  
get too close to it. I really can't  
be that objective.

Marty turns back to Ethan.

MARTY  
But what are you feeling right now?  
That's what's fucking important.

ETHAN  
I don't know what I feel. What am I  
supposed to feel, dude?

MARTY  
(miffed and defensive)  
Well, it's just a fucking movie.  
None of it's real. It's just an  
illusion, man.  
(MORE)



MARTY (CONT'D)

One hundred and seventy-five thousand frames of film. Just like, aspect ratio is some fucking arbitrary size, and those motionless frames only seem to be fucking moving because of some fucking Gestalt brain wiring. It's just a fucking illusion.

(taking a breath)

And we all sit there, and watch it and we are supposed to fuckin' feel something. And sometimes, people just don't get it. And they leave the theater and go back to their little boring lives. It's all just routine and dull as ditch-water until they get to come back and see another movie.

(taking a deep breath)

Fuckin' whack-o! But the good news, we know this...

(motions around the room)

... is all fucking real. We are the ones who are real!

ETHAN

(laughing)

Are you sure? Are you sure about that, Marty?

Marty looks to Thelma. She smiles. She nods.

MUSIC UP.

The screen size slowly moves from 4:3 aspect ratio to 16:9 and as the screen gets larger, we see more. The coffee shop is a set on a sound stage. The director walks into the frame.

SIMON

Cut, that's a wrap.

Every one starts to slowly get up and move from their positions. Then the screen slowly moves from 16:9 to smaller and smaller until it disappears.

FADE TO BLACK.