

N A N C Y     A N D     D A N N Y

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FIRST REVISED  
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A young Woman's Voice is heard over various shots of Kankakee, Illinois. It's Summer, 1974.

A ROAD SIGN on a rural back road reads, *Welcome to the City of Kankakee!* Just below: *Buy Local. Hire Local.*

WOMAN'S VOICE

Some people don't mind simple lives. They look forward to the dusk. The sound of loneliness makes them happy.

CORN FIELDS sit quietly under a fading-sun sky.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I never wanted that life. I wanted to hear the city. Its roar. I did for a little while too, modeled up in windy city itself.

COURT STREET, the primary vein of town. Taverns, delis, nightclubs.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Catalogs mostly; *Sears, Spiegel, Eaton's*. I wasn't one'a the tops, but close to it. I was told that during the years I graced their pages I moved more pant suits than anyone else.

A BOAT LAUNCH RAMP, a Father and Son lower a cruiser into the river.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

They wanted me for lingerie too, but I wouldn't do it. I had a feeling, y'know, that if I did that...well...you can't go back from there. And if I ever met a man... I was right, too. Your Father would never have gone for that kinda business.

THE KANKAKEE RIVER, picturesque, dotted with ski boats, pontoons and bowriders. Summer's here and sunglass days and there's a wonderful BUZZ in the air.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Oh, we had such deep feelings for each other. Of course, I knew he wasn't long for a town like this. The world outside just gave him a better shake at things. I guess I could be mad... But he gave me you, Nancy. I always knew you were special. When you were just five years old, this man came up to me at the mall.

TWO BROTHERS skitter across a wake aboard an inner tube.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Came right up to me and asked if you might be interested in doing some modeling. I said, no, uh-uh, she's too young.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)  
 There's training still to be done.  
 (chuckles)  
 Truth is you probably could've been  
 a star right then. I think part of  
 me just wanted you for myself.

THE YESTERYEAR, an elegant waterfront restaurant. Guests arrive by boat. THROUGH THE RESTAURANT WINDOWS, a packed Saturday night crowd. Tables of well-heeled men and women.

WOMAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)  
 When I was a girl, my Mom would  
 talk about Shirley Temple. How the  
 same word came to everyone's mind  
 when they saw her...Sparkle...

THE KANKAKEE RIVER, ANOTHER VIEW

far away from the action. It's quiescent here, heavenly. A FISHERMAN casts on a sandy shore. A modest current GURGLES.

WOMAN'S VOICE  
 Some people just have it. You have  
 it, Nancy...

CLOSE ON THE RIVER BANK

and the CURRENT LOUDER as it rolls over rocky shoals and -

WOMAN'S VOICE  
 ...You sparkle.

CLOSER STILL ON AN EDDY

leaves and twigs swirl and THE CURRENT EVEN LOUDER NOW. ZOOM IN on the vortex as it GETS LOUDER AND LOUDER and -

INT. BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON RUNNING WATER AND SHAMPOO SUDS inside a sink basin as brown hair is rinsed.

LATER - RUBBER-GLOVED HANDS shake a mixing bottle SHOOSH-SHOOSH-SHOOSH. Hair dye is applied to the brown roots. The thick, murky substance spread to the edges with a brush.

A WIDER SHOT REVEALS

a MODEST BATHROOM with passe tiling, cluttered with beauty-making accessories. A RADIO is set to a rock station.

In the mirror, CONNIE RISH (the voice we've been hearing) stands over the sink applying the dye to an unseen child. She's 30, single mother, more girl than woman and that's intentional: Connie's petrified of aging.

CONNIE  
 When I was pregnant with you, I  
 prayed that you were pretty.

Connie chuckles, almost embarrassed.

INT. CONNIE'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

THE HUM OF A HELMET DRYER. Connie stands over the child smoking a Tareyton 100, watching a kitchen timer wind down. DING! A final drag and Connie takes the dryer hose from the gold hood's aperture. Reaching back, she shuts off the UFO-like hub, removes the cap now and teases the hair.

CONNIE  
Go ahead and stand up, girl.

The young girl stands. WE SEE HER NOW in the vanity mirror. NANCY RISH. The most beautiful 9-year-old we've ever seen. Under that almost white-hot golden hair, the purest unmarked face and the most brilliant cerulean eyes, eyes that stand out in a crowd.

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
You have his eyes.

A long moment. Nancy studies herself fiercely in the mirror.

NANCY  
No I don't. Not at all. If they  
look like anyone, it's you.

That warms Connie who leans close.

CONNIE  
You're the most beautiful girl in  
the whole world, Nancy.

A DISCORDANT CONCERT OF FEMALE VOICES -

INT. MARRIOTT HOTEL, CONFERENCE ROOM - MORNING

A makeshift DRESSING ROOM adorned with a *Miss Dairy Princess 1974* banner and filled with THE FACES OF TWO DOZEN YOUNG GIRLS. Painted with eye shadow and mascara, dabbed with bronzer and foundation. Hair in updos, bouffants, French twists, high walls of hair fortified with hairspray.

And over it all, the VOICES OF MOTHERS peppering their restive daughters with eleventh-hour directives.

Connie and Nancy have found some space in the corner. Connie applies powder blush to Nancy's cheeks, while Nancy spies THE JUDGES as they amble about the Banquet Room. Among them, a middle-aged, HEAVYSET JUDGE. Nancy locks in on him intensely.

CONNIE  
Nancy. Nancy look at me, honey.

Irritated Connie's broken her focus, Nancy turns away.

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
Oh I see. I guess some little girl  
doesn't want Sungold Malibu Barbie.  
It can't be my Nancy. My Nancy has  
every Barbie except that Sungold -

Nancy offers her cheeks again, as Connie knew she would.

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
Mmm hmm.

INT. BANQUET ROOM, MARRIOTT – MORNING

JUNIOR CONTESTANTS circle the stage like dolls on a conveyor belt. A GILDED THRONE sits vacant, a faux jeweled Princess crown atop the pink velvet upholstery waiting to be bestowed.

One-by-one, the girls stand beside the MC and introduce themselves. It's Nancy's turn.

NANCY  
My name is Nancy Elaine Rish and I'm from Kankakee, Illinois. My ambition is to be a model, or an actress on *All My Children*. My favorite hobbies are dancing; singing, getting my nails done, laughing with friends and...

She flashes an impish smile, covers her mouth in an oops.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
...Hot fudge sundaes.

LAUGHS and COOS. It's winning.

Nancy moves along, her eyes instantly lock in on Heavysset Judge like a wanton single girl capturing her target across a bar. When his eyes find hers, they gleam excitedly. By the time she makes her turn, he's become deeply hypnotized.

STAGE – LATER

The NOW-CROWNED DIVISIONAL WINNERS POSE, bouquets in hand.

PUSH IN ON NANCY – front and center. *Junior Miss Dairy Princess*. She's a star. Bright, sparkling, ready to explode.

EXT. NANCY'S BEDROOM – AFTERNOON

GLIDE ACROSS THE WALLS OF NANCY'S ROOM. Pageant sashes, ribbons, trophies, too many to count and not a 2nd Place among them. Underneath each trophy is an accompanying Barbie. Unopened, untouched.

CONNIE (O.C.)  
– next weekend's *Junior Butterfly*.  
Then *Midwest Celebrity*. Seems like we don't have time to enjoy 'em.

We arrive at the end of the shelving where a space has been cleared. Connie places the new *Junior Miss* trophy here. Just below, Nancy deposits an empty box for Sungold Malibu Barbie.

OUTSIDE THE WINDOW, a MOVING VAN is parked next door.

EXT. RISH HOME (BUNGALOW STYLE), BACKYARD — AFTERNOON

Nancy plays with the orange tanned anorexic doll, combing its hair, admonishing it for letting it get so wild.

A RUBBER BALL rolls before her. She searches for its source. A FACE peers over the top of the neighboring fence. JIMMY KEENE, 10, the new neighbor: long-haired and red-blooded.

Ignoring him, Nancy looks back down and continues to comb the doll's hair.

Jimmy VAULTS the fence, and heads over, stopping within inches of Nancy. His eyes never leave her as he bends down to pick up the ball.

JIMMY

Hey.

Nancy sniffs

NANCY

What's that smell? Are you wearing perfume?

JIMMY

No. Aqua Velva. I'll be shaving soon... I'm Jimmy.  
(no answer)  
Who are you?

She stands and looks at him for the first time. Toe-to-toe.

NANCY

That's for you to find out.

She turns away and walks back towards the house.

JIMMY

...Wunna be my girlfriend?

She pauses at the rear door, her back still facing him.

NANCY

You're not my type.

JIMMY

Oh yeah? Well what's your type?

NANCY

Rich and famous.

She smiles to herself, then her face goes slack and she turns back to Jimmy, her expression *laissez faire*.

NANCY (CONT'D)

You can come swimming with me tomorrow if you want.  
(patronizing)  
If it's okay with your *parents*.

He regards her as if discovering a new species, as the BACK DOOR SLAMS shut behind Nancy.

EXT. KANKAKEE RIVER, DOCK - AFTERNOON

Atop a beach chaise, Connie's fallen asleep with an alarmingly scarlet sunburn developing. Nearby, a BEVY OF CHILDREN swim around a dock, Nancy and Jimmy among them.

Nancy climbs up the steps of the slide. Glides down head-first. She surfaces, clears her face.

PSSSK! - something SCREAMS ACROSS THE SKY. A TRIO OF TEENS lighting bottle rockets off a nearby dock.

Just then, Jimmy DIVES into the water, SWIMS over to the teens, ingratiates himself and is quickly lighting his own bottle rocket. PSSSSK!

A queer feeling burgeons inside Nancy. Foreign. New. Mostly it hurts. She swims back toward the dock, SPLASHES some water at Connie who wakes with a start, her sunglasses lopsided.

FEET SHOOSHING THROUGH LEAVES, GIDDY LAUGHTER -

EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

TRACK NANCY AND JIMMY as they play a game of cat-and-mouse. Nancy races past trees; Jimmy chases with abandon.

LATER - SERIES OF SHOTS

Jimmy's lost sight of Nancy. Tries to follow her distant, fleeting footfalls and giggles.

He slides down an ESCARPMENT...Bounds across a thin, BABBLING ROCK STREAM...Scales an enormous fallen HARDWOOD...Pushes through clouds of FOREST SHRUBS...the trail growing rockier, the forest more dense, the trees misshapen...

Finally, he pauses. Through the leaf-thick treetops, daylight is dying fast. For a moment, he almost looks nervous. He stops at the trunk of an ANCIENT ELM, a giant elder statesman towering over the young upstart birch, pine and firs. Then -

NANCY (O.C.)

Scared?

Nancy's head emerges from the ground like a periscope, and then disappears again.

Jimmy nears, looks down into THE NEOLITHIC FISSURE in which she stands: a deep groove in the forest floor.

NANCY (CONT'D)

Use the ladder.

Jimmy descends an OLD WOODEN LADDER propped against one the walls of moss-covered mudstone. Jimmy's entranced by the hidden cleft -

JIMMY

How'd you ever find this?

NANCY  
Everyone's got a place no one else  
knows about it - this one is mine.

JIMMY  
Yeah, right. I know about it now.

NANCY  
(wry smile)  
No you don't... You're lost.

His face changes: he is. Very lost. Turning back to Nancy, her focus is elsewhere. He watches as her fingertips work back-and-forth the scores of an ancient etching in the mudstone. Her hand clears to reveal a long-forgotten declaration of love: *Jimmy Loves Nunu*

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Wow, looks like you've already got  
a girlfriend.

A moment passes.

JIMMY  
That's right, *Nunu*.

In spite of herself, she GIGGLES. Then looks at him with the most piercing stare and then takes off racing away up the trench. He watches her go, glances back at the me + you sentiment in the rock face, and then hightails it after her.

BLACK

**N A N C Y      A N D      D A N N Y**

INT. ALYSSA'S BOUTIQUE - AFTERNOON - 1981

CLOSE ON FINGERTIPS grazing along chiffon blouses.

Nancy, now 16, slender and radiant, drifts through the aisles of this upscale ladies boutique, her hands touching everything as if to memorize a texture or cut to be fitly recalled later. At home. Alone.

BEHIND THE COUNTER, TWO PUFFED-UP salesclerks snoop Nancy.

FIRST SALESCLERK  
Look who's back.

SECOND SALESCLERK  
She was in yesterday.

FIRST SALESCLERK  
I haven't caught her yet. But it's  
not just sticky-fingers with that  
one... She's a collector.

Nancy's radar is tuned-in. She turns suddenly and approaches the counter, eyes fixed on the two women who stiffen.

FIRST SALESCLERK (CONT'D)  
(afraid)  
Can I...help you with something?

NANCY  
When's the Fall line arrive?

FIRST SALESCLERK  
(swallows)  
Sometime in the next two weeks.

NANCY  
Wow. That far away?

SECOND SALESCLERK  
At least. Maybe three.

A long, awkward beat. Nancy seems troubled, like she's staring right through the Salesclerks. Slowly, they realize she's not staring at them at all. Turning their heads, they see the object of her affection: a stunning RED SILK VERSACE DRESS hanging in the display window. Price tag: \$295.

They turn back to Nancy, but she's already out the door standing on the sidewalk. Her eyes careening and caressing the Versace on the other side of the storefront window.

INT. KOEHLER'S DOLLAR STORE, MAIN STREET - AFTERNOON

Connie's in uniform - apron, nametag and *Koehler's* visor - HUMMING blithely as she builds a display of kitty litter.

EXT. KOEHLER'S DOLLAR STORE - SAME

Astride her bike, Nancy watches Connie stack. A MANAGER approaches and points out some flaw he sees in the display. Connie begins taking the boxes down one-by-one.

Nancy looks away in vicarious embarrassment and takes off.

EXT. RIVERVIEW DISTRICT - KANKAKEE - ON BIKE WHEELS TURNING

as Nancy cruises down the road, head swiveling from side-to-side as she takes in the ESTATE HOMES on the tree-lined road.

She stops pedaling suddenly, lets her sneakers scrape the ground and bring herself to a stop. She stares, awed by - THE PRETTIEST HOUSE IN TOWN. Behind wrought iron gates, a long drive winds to a stunning, asymmetrical QUEEN ANNE VICTORIAN MANSION: steeply pitched roofs, turrets, gables. She studies the home, every angle and line, then -

BEEP! Startles Nancy. A MERCEDEZ-BENZ 250 SEDAN has arrived at the gates and is trying to ride through.

IN THE BACKSEAT, two distinguished-looking men in tailored suits: GERALD SMALL, 60s, and his son, STEPHEN SMALL, 40s. Nancy watches as Gerald malignantly scolds Stephen for some unknowable decision.

TAP-TAP-TAP. THE DRIVER pantomimes for Nancy to clear out. Soon Gerald's taken notice and TAPS as well.

Undaunted, Nancy moves her bike *mere inches*, just enough for the Mercedes to slip past.

She watches the car as it travels up the drive and is still watching when THE DRIVER opens the car doors for Stephen and Gerald, and they begin to disappear behind the automatically closing Front Gate.

— PONG-PONG-PONG —

EXT. GRASS TENNIS COURT, COUNTRY CLUB — AFTERNOON

A FOURSOME OF WHITE-SKIRTED WOMEN play a friendly game.

Standing outside the court's perimeter fence, Nancy watches these women of leisure as if she's studying for the bar exam. The women LAUGH following a particularly errant swing. Nancy mimics their laugh. *Ha-ha-ha*. Isn't happy with it, adjusts her inflection - *Ha-ha-ha*.

ROCK MUSIC BLARES from a BMW 3-Series Convertible as it breezes past behind Nancy and swings into the lot adjacent to the courts. The driver, CHAD, 20, popped-collar polo and argyle sweater, lowers his wraparound shades to view Nancy.

He doesn't say a word, instead allowing his wheels and wavy blonde hair to do the talking. Nancy's thinking, when — POP — the trunk opens like an invitation.

INT. PARAMOUNT THEATER — NIGHT

A COUPLE FULLY ENTWINED alone in the BACK ROW necking.

VOICES ON SCREEN  
Hardin called today. He said  
everything should be cleared up by  
next week. I'll get the money  
He apologized for the delay.

A PAIR of HANDS reaches around Chad's head and pushes him away revealing Nancy. Her eyes suddenly riveted to the action on the screen. Matty Walker (Kathleen Turner) and Ned Racine (William Hurt) in the final act of Lawrence Kasdan's BODY HEAT.

RACINE  
They've been stalling. They're  
draggin it out, hoping they'd come  
up with some way to implicate you.

Matty turns and leans against him, looking into his face, full of love.

MATTY  
But they haven't been able to.  
Soon it'll be all ours. That's why  
we've got to hold together, Ned.  
It won't be long, then we'll get  
away from here. Out from under all  
this.

MOVE IN ON NANCY looking as if she is having something tantamount to a religious experience.

MATTY (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
 All we have is each other. I'd kill  
 myself if I thought this thing  
 would destroy us. I couldn't take  
 it.

EXT. RISH HOUSE - NIGHT

Chad lifts Nancy's bicycle from the trunk of his Beemer, sets it down on the sidewalk, and then leans in for a kiss. Nancy lets him have a chaste one. He jumps into his car and is off. She watches him go and then starts walking her bike toward her front door when she suddenly notices -

JIMMY staring at her from across the lawn. He stands next to a HARLEY SX-125 MOTORCYCLE, tank top still sullied from a day of donkeywork. He's 16 now, his long hair and natural build exude a brutish sexuality.

Her face grimaces and she drops her bike moving quickly toward him.

NANCY  
 Jimmy!

He shakes his head knowingly, and immediately disappears inside his house.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
 (caught)  
 Shoot!

She turns on her heels and heads back to her own house.

MATTY (O.C.)  
 Ned, I don't know what you think,  
 but you're wrong.

INT. PARAMOUNT THEATER - DAY

A Saturday matinée at the end of long run. Nancy sits alone in the front row with her neck craned up at the screen, her lips mouthing the words now by heart - albeit a cold one at that.

MATTY/NANCY  
 I haven't done anything to hurt  
 you. I love you. You've got to  
 believe me.

RACINE  
 Keep talking, Matty. Experience  
 shows I can be convinced of  
 anything.

MATTY/NANCY  
 It's all ours now, Ned. We could  
 leave tonight if we wanted. It's  
 over.

NANCY'S FACE a perfect mirror of Turner's matching every nuance of "surprise" and false indignation.

EXT. KANKAKEE RIVER, CLIFF — MAGIC

Quiescent. Peaceful. Then, in the distance, TWO FIGURES DASH TOWARD A CLIFF'S EDGE — *Nancy and Jimmy* — AND LEAP OFF —

SPLOOSH! SPLOOSH! they're swallowed by the river.

RIVER

Nancy surfaces from the jump. Looks around for Jimmy. He's nowhere. The water slowly becomes placid again. Concern registers on her face when —

Jimmy bursts up and DUNKS Nancy!

JIMMY  
Gotcha, Nunu!

She SPLASHES him playfully, then watches as he backstrokes away, enjoying the warm sun on his face.

NANCY  
...Jimmy?

JIMMY  
Mmm hmm.

NANCY  
How come you broke up with me?  
(off his laugh)  
I'm serious.

JIMMY  
The reason was driving a BMW.

NANCY  
Oh, that's so stupid. He's nothing.  
(ala Kathleen Turner)  
*I'd kill myself if I thought this thing would destroy us. I couldn't take it.*

JIMMY  
Quit the act, Nancy. It's okay, really, I get it.

NANCY  
What's there to get?

JIMMY  
Who you are. What you want. I understand, y'know.

She swims out towards him. Wraps her arms around his back.

NANCY  
Sometimes I think you're the only person who does.

He looks back at her. Eyes on eyes. A long, anxious moment. She moves in to kiss him when —

Jimmy slips underwater only to emerge seconds later on the riverbank. Climbs out of the water, mounts a boulder and lays out in the sun. Nancy's indignant.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
That was a cheap trick.

He puts his hands behind his head, shuts his eyes and lets out a very satisfied SIGH.

JIMMY  
End of the rainbow up here, Nunu.  
Better hurry, the sun won't be  
around much longer.

She takes a moment, then swims toward him. Climbs onto the boulder and lays beside him in the vanishing sun.

INT. RISH HOME, NANCY'S BEDROOM - EARLY EVENING

Pageant trophies and Barbies have been replaced by fashion magazine tear-outs of 80's models; banal vignettes of New York, Paris and *Vanity Fair* portraits of relevant actresses. Eddie Money's '*Baby Hold On*' shouts from the *Patrolman* radio.

NANCY OPENS A BUREAU DRAWER. The blouses inside meticulously folded and arranged. Most haven't been worn, price tags still attached. You may very well recognize some of the labels from *Alyssa's Boutique*. Her search ends on three emblazoned words: *Here Comes Trouble*. It's a t-shirt of a cartoon girl with a come-hither smile - Perfect!

THE GUTTURAL BUMBLE OF MOTORBIKE ENGINES.

Nancy moves to the window. Next door, Jimmy's in his driveway wearing a classic racer motorcycle jacket, surrounded by a GANG OF TEENAGE HARLEY SX-125 RIDERS. They're mingling with a PACK OF HOT CHICKS (20s), planning the night ahead. He's the youngest of this group, and strangely its leader.

Plans are set and - VRRMMM! - the bikes start up and Nancy watches yearningly as they vanish down the road

EXT. RIVERVIEW DISTRICT, KANKAKEE - NIGHT

Propitious Victorians on a street lined with old-growth Elms.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)  
We shouldn't be too late...

INT. STEARNS HOME, ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

TOM & ELLEN STEARNS, a handsome, favorable young couple, walk toward the front door, Nancy brings up the rear holding the hand of 4-year-old SCOTTY dressed in a one piece romper.

ELLEN STEARNS  
... and if we are, don't worry, Tom  
will give you a ride home. Lemme  
think if I'm forgetting anything...

She pauses at the door to inventory the contents of her clutch. Tom stares at Nancy's nubile body, envious his son is the one holding her hand.

ELLEN STEARNS (CONT'D)  
Tom? Tom?

TOM STEARNS  
... yeah?

Ellen looks up, shakes her head: *what a ditz.*

ELLEN STEARNS  
Bye, Nancy.

Nancy waves, smiling at Tom. He blushes. The Stearns are off.

INT. GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy reads a magazine on the couch while Scotty beeps, booms and smashes toy trains together.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL - NIGHT

Nancy carries a sleeping Scotty to his room.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM, WALK-IN CLOSET - NIGHT

THE DOORS OPEN and Nancy steps inside. Surveys Ellen's gowns, shoes, cocktails dresses. Runs a finger along each garment.

DETAIL SHOTS -

Nancy separates a group of hangers, locates her 'one': a chic black cocktail dress.

Nancy pulls the dress straps over her shoulders. Reaches her hands back, slides up the back zipper.

She slips on high heels. Dabs her eyes with mascara at the vanity. Puts on diamond earrings. A necklace. A bracelet.

Finally...Nancy stands before the Cheval mirror. The outfit's complete. She looks 10 years older and strangely glamorous, as if she's stepped out of the society pages.

She retreats, glances over her shoulder to the mirror on the opposing wall, keen to analyze every angle. Suddenly, SCOTTY APPEARS in triplicate, reflected like an echo.

Nancy turns to find him standing in the doorway sucking his thumb. An anxious beat: she's busted. The two continue to stare at each other. Eyes on eyes: a Mexican stand-off.

The moment is broken by Nancy. Her eyes narrow and she stares hypnotically at the little boy. And then, as if feeling the beat of a song only she can hear, she begins to Cha-Cha.

Scotty stares, oddly mesmerized.

INT. STEARNS HOME, ENTRYWAY - LATER THAT NIGHT

CLOSE ON NANCY'S PALM as Ellen hands her cash and closes her black velvet clutch. She's drunk.

ELLEN STEARNS  
Thanks for... G'night...

She wobbly trudges up the stairs, leaning on the railing.

Tom appears at the end of the hallway, leering.

TOM STEARNS  
All set?

INT. MAZDA RX-7, MOVING - NIGHT

Tom's fighting to keep his eyes off Nancy. Hard.

TOM STEARNS  
Employed anywhere else this summer?

NANCY  
I lifeguard with my friend Tammy.

Nancy reaches into the purse at her feet. The stretch makes her t-shirt climb up her back and Tom leans for a better view. When he raises his eyes, she's looking at him. He smiles innocuously as she pops the gum into her mouth.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Smells new in here.

TOM STEARNS  
Just a week old now... Ellen's making me return it tomorrow.

NANCY  
*Making you?*

TOM STEARNS  
It's the smart move. With Scotty so young and private schools. *What's next, she says, Grow a beard and head for California?*

He laughs, then goes quiet, pondering his withering manhood.

Nancy puts her feet up on the dash. Switches the RADIO on.

NANCY  
How fast can it go?

TOM STEARNS  
(knows exactly)  
Oh, I don't know. 12A Rotary: 120, 125 tops.

Nancy's looking at him. It's a challenge to turn her on.

Something in Tom's face changes. He turns off the main road. Pushes a button on the panel. Lowers the windows.

He downshifts. The CAR GROANS, coming alive.

The noise and sudden speed alarm Nancy who for a moment seems to regret having posed the dare.

Tom downshifts again. JAMS the gas! THE SPEEDOMETER hits 80. Climbs to 90...100...

He glances over at Nancy. Her hair is a wildfire in the whipping wind. She's smiling now, and laughing.

Downshifts again! The Mazda's PURRING NOW!...110...120...125!

He's exhilarated! Rapture! He LAUGHS and SMACKS the steering wheel - *fuck yeah!* Upshifts and brings the car back to a normal pace. But he's feeling good about himself, bold, and he looks over at Nancy's sunburned legs. She catches it.

NANCY  
You know *Alyssa's* on Main Street?

TOM STEARNS  
It's a boutique, isn't it?

NANCY  
Mmm hmm... where your wife shops.

She shifts her body to face him.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
There's a beautiful Versace gown behind the counter. Red silk. I've been saving up, y'know, but...

TOM STEARNS  
Uh huh.

NANCY  
It's right there in the window.

His denseness is irritating Nancy. One last chance -

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Sometimes I'll go and just stare at it. Picture myself in it. The way it would fit me.

Tom smiles dumbly.

She gives up and puts her head up against the window.

TOM STEARNS  
So where is it you're lifeguarding?

But she's done talking.

EXT. RISH HOME/INT. MAZDA RX-7 - NIGHT

The RX-7 idles by the curb. Nancy's about to open the door when she looks out the window.

JIMMY'S IN HIS DRIVEWAY, straddling his motorbike. A 21-YEAR-OLD BLONDE at his side. He's explaining the gears and she's giggling. His hands slide up the back of her blouse.

Nancy turns to Tom.

NANCY  
Walk me to the door.

TOM STEARNS  
Oh. I'm sorry. Of course.

He steps out of the car. When he walks around to the passenger side, Nancy's still inside. He opens her door.

TOM STEARNS (CONT'D)  
Everything okay?

NANCY  
(sotto)  
The boy next door scares me.

She extends her hand, Tom takes it and she steps out of the car. They walk up the steps to the front door and she turns to him, and stares right into his eyes. He grows increasingly uncomfortable with the attention, especially around these witnesses. Which of course is precisely what Nancy wants.

TOM STEARNS  
Your Mom's probably waiting up for you, don't you think?

Suddenly, she wraps her arms around Tom, looking past his shoulder toward Jimmy, but he's well up to speed and clocking her stagecraft. Something passes between the two: a private understanding, a silent tip of the hat.

Nancy releases Tom as quickly as she embraced him and with little fanfare heads inside.

Tom is confused but manages to make his way back to his not-long-for-this-world Mazda and drive off.

VRMMM! the engine of Jimmy's motorbike growls to life. Blonde wraps her arms around him so tight. They ride off into the night. Blonde hair blows wildly. It is a dancing fire.

INT. THE KEENE HOME - AFTERNOON - FALL - 1991

THE DOOR OPENS to reveal a now 27-YEAR-OLD Nancy, not an ounce of her beauty has faded. She's tall, thin, blonde hair pulled back revealing those drop-dead eyes.

Jimmy's mother, MRS. KEENE, 60s, apron-clad, stumpy and good-natured, stands in the entryway.

MRS. KEENE  
What a surprise! Hi, Nancy.

NANCY  
(offers a measuring cup)  
My mom was wondering if you could loan us some sugar.

## INT. FAMILY ROOM - AFTERNOON

The Zenith TV is set to the Local News. Nancy wanders the room, settles near a sideboard littered with PHOTOGRAPHS OF JIMMY through the formative years; with friends, at proms, on sports teams, posing by his motorcycle: always among an older crowd. The pictures share a single motif: Jimmy's a pacer.

MRS. KEENE (O.C.)  
 (from the kitchen)  
 She must be so glad to have you home... I kinda miss her coming over for coffee in the afternoons though - filling me in on all your goings-on while you were away. New York must have been so exciting. You were there for what?

NANCY  
 (flat)  
 Three weeks.

MRS. KEENE (O.C.)  
 Well, as far as I'm concerned, it's their loss. They should be so lucky to have a girl as pretty as you in their modeling agency - I mean how tall do you really need to be?

NANCY  
 (changing the subject)  
 How's Jimmy?

MRS. KEENE (O.C.)  
 Well, he's very busy these days. Too busy if you ask me. Never know when we're gonna hear from him.

NEWS ANCHOR (O.C.)  
 - Big news for a local company.

Nancy's eyes dart over to the TV. Above the anchor's shoulder, a photo of STEPHEN SMALL, (we recognize him as the browbeaten son from the Mercedes), now in his 50s.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)  
 Mid America Holdings announced today that it's being acquired by Regal International. The deal, estimated to be in the \$60 million dollar range, sees Mid America selling its 11 Chicago-based radio stations and 2 cable television stations to the privately owned radio broadcaster. Mid America Chairman Stephen Small said he hopes Regal will retain most of Mid America's nearly 400 employees.

Shifting back to the pictures, Nancy brings a frame out from behind the others. It's Nancy and Jimmy. Their 9-year-old smiling faces peek out through a pile of leaves.

MRS. KEENE (O.C.)  
 Cute aren't they?

Before Mrs. Keene arrives, Nancy inconspicuously slips the picture frame into her coat pocket.

Mrs. Keene hands Nancy the sugar, fondly reviews a pre-formal dance photo of Jimmy sliding a corsage on Nancy's wrist.

MRS. KEENE (CONT'D)

The two of you always shared such a special bond.

Nancy feels exactly the same way.

INT. GILMORE'S DINER, KANKAKEE - NIGHT - ON NANCY MOVING

ACROSS THE BUSY DINER FLOOR with a coffee pot in hand, plate of french fries in the other. White shirt strategically unbuttoned so the shape of her breasts can be made out. She arrives at a booth, dispenses the fries to a young girl.

NANCY

There you go, doll.

Empties the remaining coffee into the Mother's mug. STROLLS back toward the counter, then pauses upon seeing a TRIO OF POLICE OFFICERS stand to leave and drop two \$5's as a tip.

Nancy sets the *empty coffee pot* on the machine behind the counter, walks that way and begins to gather the dirty plates. In a perfected sleight of hand, she stretches across the booth with her right hand while her left coolly slips a \$5 dollar bill into her apron pouch.

GENE, 50, the Milquetoast owner, approaches. He still lives with his mother. He's probably gay.

GENE

That's not your table, Nancy. Maggie should be doing that.

NANCY

Ah, I'm all caught up anyway.

She CARRIES the dirty plates into the -

THE KITCHEN

leaves them for the dishwasher, finds her burning cigarette in the ashtray and sucks it back to life.

A TOILET FLUSHES. Seconds later TIFFANY, 22, walks out of the employee bathroom, nursing an eight-month belly. She sits on a crate, exhausted, flush.

TIFFANY

Do me a favor, Nancy? Come and get me when I have a table.

Nancy nods, disgusted by the size of her torpedo belly.

NANCY

The heck are you doing still working, Tiff?

TIFFANY  
Lil' Alex is gonna need to eat.

Nancy gathers her order from under the heat lamp and CRUISES back onto the diner floor. BEHIND THE COUNTER, the curmudgeonly JANICE, 60, has discovered the empty coffee pot.

JANICE  
Who left the fucking coffee pot empty again!?

Ignoring it, Nancy gains a booth, dispenses the plates to a TRIO OF LOCAL ELDERLY WOMEN.

NANCY  
Turkey...Tuna...Chicken-Fried...

Moving back across the floor, she's intercepted by Gene.

GENE  
Have you seen Tiffany, Nanc?

Nancy appraises THE GUESTS waiting to be seated: Dad's in a blazer, Mom a pant suit. Kids look well-behaved. Bingo!

NANCY  
Tiff's running a fever. I'll take 'em in my section.

GENE  
You're a lifesaver.

Nancy grabs menus and escorts the family to a booth.

INT. GILMORE'S DINER - NIGHT (3:00 AM)

Nancy's behind the counter staring down at an article in *VOGUE*. It's the model Linda Evangelista. Young, beautiful, the world hers. She underlines certain passages and quotes.

EXT. GILMORE'S DINER - EARLY MORNING (6:00 AM)

Nancy squints from the sun as she walks across the gravel.

INT. RISH HOME, NANCY'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

The room is crowded with color-coordinated garment racks; dresses, skirts, blouses, jeans.

On the bed, Nancy sleeps with a satin sleep mask, duvet and sheets askew. The digital clock reads 2:45 PM.

INT. RISH HOME, FAMILY ROOM - AFTERNOON

Nancy's on the couch smoking a cigarette, the *VOGUE* opened in her lap, the article now fraught with stars and asterisks.

NANCY  
 - honey, I didn't wake up for less  
 than \$5,000...You haven't lived  
 until you've eaten at the Le  
 Meurice in Paris...  
 (didn't like the sound)  
 Le Meurice... Le Meurice...

She consults her *French-English Dictionary* on the coffee  
 table beside the brimming ashtray, still rehearsing -

NANCY (CONT'D)  
 ...We wouldn't get out of bed for  
 less than \$5,000...

INT. MAZDA 929 (NANCY'S CAR), MOVING - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON A CASSETTE TAPE, '*Nunu's Platinum Mix*', inserted into  
 the tape deck. Eddie Money's '*Baby Hold On*' begins as -

Nancy smokes, shakes her shoulders, SINGS to the music.

EXT. THE PLUMSTEAD - AFTERNOON

A worn-down local's tavern. Neon signs announce *Colt Malt  
 Liqour and Schlitz Bull*. The Mazda rolls into the gravel lot.

INT. THE PLUMSTEAD - MOMENTS LATER

A SMOKY CAVE. Nancy enters in a pair of dark sunglasses,  
 walks up to the bar and flags the geriatric BARTENDER.

NANCY  
 Find Kit and tell her Nancy's here.

BARTENDER  
 Find her yourself.

Walking out of the kitchen is KIT, a high school classmate of  
 Nancy's and a waitress here. She's a little firecracker.

NANCY  
 Hey-hey, Kit-Kat.

Kit looks up. At the sight of Nancy, a wide smile awakens.

INT. MCDONALD'S - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON THE KIT'S TOTE BAG as she pulls out a thick binder  
 divided into sections by perfectionist labeled, colored tabs.

Nancy and Kit smoke cigarettes in a booth just outside the  
 'Play Pit', reviewing the binder. It's a veritable  
 encyclopedia of Kankakee's charmed circle: tear-outs from the  
 'Society' page, newspaper columns on corporate mergers,  
 Country Club newsletters and nonprofit donor lists.

Kit's not really a friend, rather a source of information. A  
 girl who works the same circles and pursues similar goals.

KIT  
Too bad about Peter.

NANCY  
Well, he didn't have the will or  
the way.

KIT  
I heard...

Nancy lifts her eyes, studies Kit.

KIT (CONT'D)  
Well, y'know, just...about his wife  
and all. Going to your house and...  
(shrinking)  
She's crazy... As shit.

Nancy focuses back on the newspaper. STEPHEN SMALL is  
pictured at a fundraiser beside his mother, ELAINE.

KIT (CONT'D)  
I tell you my sister's setting me  
up with a dentist from Joliet?

Nancy feigns a yawn: bore me.

KIT (CONT'D)  
Oh! I knew there was something I  
had especially for you.

She digs into her tote and fishes out a *Kankakee Country Club*  
newsletter. Written across the top: **Perfect for NANCY!!!** Kit  
flips through the pages, stops on a circled PHOTO: sandwiched  
between TWO SMILING COUPLES is the 5th wheel: a modestly  
handsome, husky man in his 40s.

KIT (CONT'D)  
Brett Faber. Family owns a buncha  
car dealerships. A little birdy who  
cocktails at the club says he's the  
Last Man Standing at the main bar  
every night.

Nancy stares at the photo, already planning her outfit.

NANCY  
Like shootin' fish. I owe ya, Kit.

A beat. Kit looks like she wants to say something. Finally -

KIT  
Then let me ask you a question.

NANCY  
Okay, shoot.

KIT  
How come you came back?

Nancy looks like she might be vulnerable to such a question.  
Her face takes on a distant look, as if she were splitting  
atoms in her head. Then -

NANCY  
 ...I made a mistake, Kit.

Kit's face wrinkles, surprised by Nancy's admission. Then -

NANCY (CONT'D)  
 New York's not relevant anymore.  
 Read any fashion magazine and  
 they'll tell you the same. The  
 important designers have all left  
 for Paris and London.

KIT  
 You met *some* people while you were  
 there, right?

NANCY  
 Hmm mm. Second stringers, Kit. Users,  
 you know the type.

Kit nods like the lap dog that she is.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
 They didn't care about Nancy - you  
 know what I mean?

INT. RISH HOME, FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

A bomb of craft accessories has exploded on the coffee table as Connie decoupages OLD PAGEANT PHOTOS OF NANCY onto coffee mugs. The years haven't been kind to her. She traded beauty for convenience and got shortchanged. Her skin sags as if invisible fingers are pulling it down and she's put on considerable weight.

She holds the mug up to the light: Nancy with 1st Place in the *Miss Sweat Pea* pageant. Connie smiles, calls upstairs -

CONNIE  
 Nancy, honey, you almost ready?

INT. NANCY'S BATHROOM, UPSTAIRS - SAME

Nancy reviews her cocktail dress before the mirror. Adjusting the sides of the V-neck imperceptibly. Over and over.

NANCY  
 Fuck...fuck...no you fuck...fucker!

Then...she stops abruptly. Tilts her head slowly to the right. A trace of a smile emerges on her face -

NANCY (CONT'D)  
 Ready!

INT. CONNIE'S FORD LTD, MOVING - NIGHT

NANCY'S REFLECTION in the vanity mirror as she lengthens her eyelashes, reviews her make-up, her cheeks, her smile.

Connie drives, cigarette dangling from her lips.

NANCY  
How do I look?

She appraises Nancy. Just like old times. Fixes a hair.

CONNIE  
Most beautiful girl in the world.

Nancy makes a lip fart. The car idles outside a LARGE AND STATELY CLUBHOUSE. Uplighting reveals, *Kankakee Country Club*.

Nancy opens the door and steps out.

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
Hey! What about your coat, goofy?!

NANCY  
(winks)  
Then he won't see me.

CONNIE  
Just like your Father.

The cheer leaves Nancy's face. She glares at Connie.

NANCY  
Don't ever say that to me again.

BOOM - she SLAMS the car door shut.

INT. KANKAKEE COUNTRY CLUB, MAIN BAR - NIGHT

FRIDAY-NIGHT-CROWDED and Nancy pushes her way toward the bar, mindful of the lighting above: she wants to be seen.

She settles on a stool, lights a cigarette and casts her line toward the cliques of haughty men. They sense her gaze like a fire at their backs and when she makes eye contact, they quickly look elsewhere. Nancy scoffs: pussies.

SOME TIME LATER (LATE)

Dead now. Nancy's at a high-top, the ice in her Margarita completely melted. The bartender approaches in a polyester vest. Looks around, then leans close -

PALMER  
How'd things work out with Dr. Caldwell the other night?

She glares at him: *wouldn't you love to know*.

PALMER (CONT'D)  
He didn't feed you that bullshit about letting you use his summer house in Nantucket, did he?

Nancy freezes for a moment, tries to mask her miscalculation and half-succeeds. She flings the full ashtray toward him.

NANCY  
Go dump that out.

Palmer walks away revealing...BRETT FABER...in Nancy's line of sight. Drinking alone, still in a suit, top button undone. She stubs out her cigarette, walks across the bar.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
You got a light?

BRETT FABER  
What happened to yours?

NANCY  
(caught, adjusts)  
Maybe I got tired of reaching into my purse.

She stabs a cigarette between her lips. He lights it.

BRETT FABER  
You here alone?

NANCY  
Now, I am. Came with a friend but then she wasn't feeling well.

BRETT FABER  
All alone and a girl like you. That doesn't add up.

NANCY  
I was never any good at math...

He smiles and she does, too, and -

EXT. KANKAKEE COUNTRY CLUB, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

They STUMBLE out of the entrance. Nancy's laughing.

NANCY  
- we wouldn't get out of bed for less than \$5,000! And the travel - do you travel, Brett?

BRETT FABER  
Sure. Sometimes.

NANCY  
Well you haven't LIVED until you've eaten at Le Meurice! Will you take me back there? Will you?

He pulls her close. They kiss. Desperately. He squeezes her ass. Then - TIRES ROLL OVER GRAVEL. HEADLIGHTS.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)  
Brett?

Brett looks. His WIFE's inside a Chevy station wagon. TWO KIDS in the backseat. Pulled from bed. Tired, cold, bundled like Eskimos. His excitement melts. He lets go of Nancy.

WIFE  
Get in the car, Brett.

NANCY  
You're...married...?

Brett climbs into the car. Wife's eyes meet Nancy's.

WIFE  
(nauseated)  
I know who you are.

The station wagon rolls away. Nancy drunkenly stumbles toward the payphone. Dials a number, shivers and covers herself.

NANCY  
Mom?

INT. GILMORE'S DINER - NIGHT SHIFT

BUSY AND LOUD tonight and Nancy's flustered as she HUSTLES a tray of sundaes toward a booth. Arriving, she doles out the desserts to a MOTHER and a YOUNG DAUGHTER.

YOUNG DAUGHTER  
I wanted whipped cream on mine.

Nancy rolls her eyes, HURRIES back behind the counter, muttering vituperatively along the way. Gene's working the register, taking cash. She crouches down and searches the refrigerator for *Ready-Whip*.

GENE  
Can you take a one-top, Nanc?

NANCY  
Does it look like I can take a fucking one-top?

GENE  
(sotto as he leaves)  
Guess not...geez Louise...

Nancy locates the *Ready-Whip* and upon standing up sees the one-top by the door. It's STEPHEN SMALL. Nancy's wheels turn.

NANCY  
Gene! Gene I'll take him - put him in my section! Gene!

JANICE (O.C.)  
Too late, Princess -

Janice cruises out of the kitchen. Nancy watches as she finds a menu and escorts Small to his table.

LATER

Nancy's on break. Absently leafing through a magazine. Really SHE'S WATCHING JANICE TEND TO SMALL. When Janice leaves for the kitchen, Nancy springs into action. She grabs a coffee pot, checks her look in the glass as she passes, opens her blouse a bit and lands at Small's booth.

NANCY  
Lil' more coffee there?

SMALL  
 (without looking up)  
 I'm fine.

Think fast! She assesses the table: crumbs are scattered.

NANCY  
 Oh, geez. Let me get those for you.

Producing a rag, she leans across the table and wipes it down, hoping Small will look at her. He doesn't. She lets her hand graze his. He draws his hand back sharply and finally looks at her. She's hopeful. Instead she gets, indignantly -

SMALL  
 Have the other girl bring my check.

Burnt-up, Nancy storms off.

INT. MCDONALD'S, BOOTH - AFTERNOON

Nancy and Kit. A cloud of cigarette smoke. Nancy's reading the 'Society' section while Kit reviews a charity newsletter.

NANCY  
 - I was thinking of heading over to the bar at the *Hilton* tonight. There's a legal malpractice conference in town -

KIT  
 Boomer Fleming's party is tonight.

NANCY  
 Done that. Last thing I need is Boomer trying to make me a one-night-stand. Everybody knows he's got herpes.

KIT  
 Heard Jimmy Keene's in town and he might be stoppin' by.

INT. RISH HOME, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Nancy stands behind the window sheers of the front window peering out watchfully at Jimmy's parents house. But there is no sign of Jimmy, just his mother doing some weeding. The woman turns suddenly as if she knows she's being watched, and quickly Nancy recedes behind the curtain.

EXT. PARTY HOUSE (BOOMER FLEMING'S HOUSE) - NIGHT

LOUD MUSIC EMANATES from the estate home. Connie's Ford LTD idles and Nancy climbs out wearing a green cocktail dress.

NANCY  
 I'll call if I need ya.

The Ford drives off.

MOVE WITH NANCY as she walks up the slope of the front yard in those high heels and that skintight dress. She gains the front door and pauses. THROUGH THE DOOR WINDOWS, a crowded foyer, blanketed with PEOPLE DANCING.

Nancy's alone and walking into a party alone is ridiculous. She waits, lights a cigarette and lurks in the shadows.

VOICES: A GROUP OF PEOPLE walk up the lawn. As they enter, Nancy brings up the rear, follows them inside -

BOOMER FLEMING'S HOUSE

LOUDER HERE and Nancy raises her arms, allows herself to be swallowed by the crowd and dances like she's alone.

MEN STARE. Suddenly - a MAN, 30s, is pushed towards Nancy by TWO BUDDIES. He tries to go back, but they force him out again. He crimsons. Doesn't help that he's the worst dancer we've ever seen or that he possesses a face only a mother could love on payday. His large nose looks as if it were broken and never healed proportionally and he appears chronically perplexed, as if he lost his keys and can't remember where he last had them.

This is DANNY EDWARDS.

Nancy accepts the pity case if only to garner herself more attention. And boy she's taking Danny for a ride. Getting close, then retreating. Circling, teasing, tempting: on the whole giving him the biggest hard-on of his life.

Soon the crowd's created a circle and ALL EYES are on them and EVERYONE'S CLAPPING. Danny's buddies nudge one another: *You believe this shit!?*

Danny finds an awkward groove, but he never touches Nancy. He's too shy, too polite. He leans in, over the music -

DANNY  
I'M DANNY!

The song reaches its bridge and she pushes up against his chest. Their eyes meet. It's a moment that lasts much longer than a moment. For Nancy, it's an anonymous pair of eyes. For Danny, she's a miracle. Just when Danny's finding a rhythm -

A HAND GRABS NANCY AND PULLS HER AWAY. It's BOOMER FLEMING, 28. Owner of this house, local coke dealer, and, from the leather fringe jacket and big hair, an avid *Bon Jovi* fan.

Danny watches as Nancy's dragged away. His friends approach. Nudge him. But he's still staring. She doesn't look back.

NANCY AND BOOMER FLEMING

as they leave the crowd, walk down a hallway -

BOOMER  
- You don't wanna hang with those losers. Everyone's downstairs.

NANCY  
What time's Jimmy coming?

BOOMER  
Oh late-late probably.

NANCY  
But you're sure he's coming?

BOOMER  
Yeah yeah, he's coming. Gimme one second, huh.

Boomer pauses, KNOCKS on a door in the hall. Moments later it's opened by a brick shithouse black man, CLARENCE, 30.

While Boomer and Clarence talk in hushed voices, Nancy peers INSIDE THE OFFICE. Another man, GARY, 30, stolid, mustached, weighs cocaine on a Deering scale. There's a lot of it, divided into gram and eighth bags mostly. Finally -

BOOMER (CONT'D)  
You know Nancy.

Clarence nods 'hey' then closes the door, locks it. Boomer and Nancy continue along, DOWN the stairs and into -

#### BOOMER'S BASEMENT

a huge, open space: a boy's wet dream. We do a SLOW 360-DEGREE PAN AROUND THE BASEMENT...

...BOOMER introduces NANCY to some GROOVEY GUYS and GIRLS. But Nancy could give a shit and interrupts with a barrage of questions - *Do you guys know, Jimmy? What time's he supposed to be here? But you're sure he's coming?...*

...MTV on the big-screen TV, a B-52's video...

...THE WALLS are covered with posters; Def Leppard, Chicago Bears, Sylvester Stallone...

...PEOPLE play arcade games, pool, air hockey, smoke pot...

ARRIVE AT NANCY NOW as she takes a seat on a couch. Cocaine's on the coffee table and she razorblades it into lines... rolls a dollar bill...snorts a line...rubs her nose...

VERY CLOSE ON NANCY NOW as she thinks about Jimmy. A smile forms on her face. She puts the straw down to another line -

#### BOOMER'S BASEMENT, SOME HOURS LATER

CLOSE ON THE BIG-SCREEN TV. MTV: *The Cure* now. The lights are very dim and Nancy's fallen asleep on the couch along with some others. She comes to slowly, finds her sight. The clock reads: **3:13 AM.**

## BOOMER'S FOYER — SAME

Just a few dawdlers. Among them, Danny and a friend NICK, 30, vanilla, prematurely balding, chat up two wholesome brunettes in ski sweaters. Danny's aim is a cute windbag, BARBARA.

BARBARA

— right now I'm in Geriatrics but I wanna work in maternity. Babies, y'know. Do you like it here so far? There's not much to do in Kankakee, is there? Some nights it's so quiet I can hear the river 5 miles away.

DANNY

Oh no, there's lots going on. I've been out almost every Friday night.

BARBARA

You're just being nice. I can tell.

The CLICK-CLACK of high heels gets Danny's attention. It's Nancy. Looking around. Briefly, he lets himself believe she's looking for him. Hope fades as Nancy walks up the stairs.

## UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Nancy opens doors she passes, peers inside. Each room empty or filled with SCREWING COUPLES. Then...she sees something —

DOWN THE HALLWAY, a BEDROOM DOOR is open. Nancy makes out BOOMER, CLARENCE and GARY inside. They're talking to a group of unseen men. THERE'S A DEAL GOING DOWN. Boomer opens a kilo of coke. Dips a finger, tastes it. Takes a bump. Then Gary. Then Clarence. Nods all around: *it's good*. Boomer pulls cash from a zipper bag...someone steps forward to retrieve it...

...It's JIMMY KEENE, wearing his classic racer leather jacket. Full head of hair: more handsome and cool than ever.

Jimmy tucks the cash away. The men exit the room.

Nancy hides behind the partition. They pass her one-by-one. Boomer, Clarence, Gary, Four Men in Jimmy's Crew (all very hip, bad, cool). Jimmy's last. As he passes —

NANCY

Jimmy.

He turns. Eyes-on-eyes. He doesn't speak: just smiles at her.

BUSINESS ASSOCIATE

Let's ride, Jimmy.

JIMMY

Gimme five minutes.

BUSINESS ASSOCIATE

Fuck, man, we gotta roll —

JIMMY

Five minutes.

When he talks, they listen. The rest of the crew walks out.

INT. BATHROOM – MOMENTS LATER

Nancy sits on the sink. Jimmy stands before her. They've been sitting here for a few moments just looking at one another.

NANCY  
(finally)  
You just...rode off.

JIMMY  
I had to get out... Kinda surprised  
to see you're back hanging around.

A long beat. Nancy looks into his eyes. He knows what happened in New York. More importantly what didn't.

JIMMY (CONT'D)  
No matter what, it wouldn't have  
been the way you dreamed it anyway.

NANCY  
I hate it here, Jimmy. I hate it.

JIMMY  
Then leave. Get on a bus. Go  
somewhere. You got any money?

NANCY  
Take me with you, Jimmy. I'd be  
great in Chicago.

JIMMY  
Yeah...yeah you probably would.

NANCY  
Well then...?

JIMMY  
Come on, Nunu. Who do you think  
you're talking to? I'm not one of  
your easy marks around this place,  
I know how you're built... and at  
your age, in a town this size, even  
the marks have a pretty good idea  
of who you are.

NANCY  
(unfazed)  
Don't talk that way, Jimmy. C'mon,  
let's go. Let's get outta here.

She slides a hand inside his jacket, under his shirt and rubs his chest. Down to his crotch now. He takes her hand away. She tries to kiss him. He turns his head.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
(earnest, desperate even)  
Don't leave me here... Don't leave  
me here again.

A long beat. He looks like he's making a decision. Finally –

JIMMY  
Alright. Two minutes. Be outside.

NANCY  
 (blooms)  
 Yeah? Jimmy yeah? Huh?

He looks at her, pulls her hair back so he can see her face.

JIMMY  
 Now fix your hair back, Nunu. So  
 you can get under the helmet.

He walks out. Nancy stands, turns on the sink, looks in the mirror. She's excited, anxious: the world is possible!

NANCY  
 (singing)  
*Oh I wanna dance with somebody/I  
 wanna feel the heat with somebody/*

She takes a deep breath. Releases it. She's about to exit when - VRMMM! That familiar motorcycle growl. Stops her cold.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
 Oh fuck!

EXT. BOOMER FLEMING'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

NANCY RUSHES OUTSIDE. All that remains of Jimmy are the taillights of his motorcycle. Slowly even they vanish.

EXT. BOOMER FLEMING'S HOUSE, CURB - MINUTES LATER

Heartbroken and shivering, Nancy smokes a cigarette.

NEAR THE HOUSE, Danny and Nick exit. Nick SEES Nancy on the curb and nudges Danny.

NICK  
 Go over. Oh go see, you pussy.

Danny walks over to Nancy. Hesitantly -

DANNY  
 Excuse me. Is everything alright?

She looks up at him with those beautiful eyes. Sore and red from crying. It breaks his heart.

He takes off his coat and puts it over her shoulders.

INT. PONTIAC BONNEVILLE, MOVING - NIGHT

Nick drives, Danny in the passenger seat. Nancy smokes a cigarette in the back. It's getting smoky. Nick COUGHS.

DANNY  
 You from around here, Nancy?  
 (nothing)  
 I'm Danny and this is Nick.

Nick gives a wave. Still nothing.

EXT. RISH HOME - NIGHT

The Pontiac rolls into the driveway. An utmost gentleman, Danny steps out, opens Nancy's door and walks beside her up to the home. Outside the front door, she stops, takes off the jacket and holds it out for him. He takes it back.

DANNY

Listen, Nancy, I had a real nice time with you tonight and uh, well I was wondering if you might like to do it again sometime soon...?

The very thought of it turns her stomach. She makes a sour face at Danny and walks inside.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

ON A PRECISELY ARRANGED CLOTHING RACK, each garment adorned with a detailed manila tag describing date last worn; persons of note, occasion, and other pertinent information for Nancy to strategize and organize every arrow in her quiver.

CLOSE ON A FINE LINE MARKER HOVERING OVER A MANILA LABEL IN PROGRESS. *September, 17th. Friday. Jimmy and -*

Nancy writes in *Locals*, then reconsiders, crosses it out and fills in *Losers*. She attaches the label to the green cocktail she wore last night, neatly inserts it in the clothing rack.

KNOCK-KNOCK. Connie peeks her head in, dressed for work.

CONNIE

Madeja something.

She hands Nancy a homemade 'sand candle.' It's ghastly.

NANCY

...Thanks, Mom...

CONNIE

See you later, beautiful.

Connie shuts the door.

INT. CONNIE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Connie's 'craft desk' sits in the corner, a poster of Tom Selleck stares down from the wall. Dotting the bureau, Sears portrait photos with varying backgrounds show Connie and Nancy over the years. Alongside these are framed poorly lit HEADSHOTS from Nancy's short-lived modeling career.

NANCY enters the room, bends down and reaches under the bed.

MOMENTS LATER

TEAR SHEETS FROM NATIONAL CLOTHING CATALOGS. All depicting Connie, a real beauty back then. The day pant suits went out of style was the saddest of her life.

Nancy leafs through, until...something hidden between pages. A PHOTO worn from age and consideration. A 3-YEAR OLD NANCY held in her FATHER'S arms, a smiling 19-YEAR OLD CONNIE at his side. He's handsome, almost indecently so, with an easy grin and the earned muscles of a man who works for his wages. Those startling eyes, just like Nancy's, gaze off-camera. As if searching for something else not present in the picture.

She runs her finger over the photo. Touching her Father's face. Then Connie's. So young. Smiling. Beautiful once.

INT. CONNIE'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy stands before the mirror, breathing like she's been scared. And indeed she has been by Connie's unabated descent to normality. Reaching up, her fingers pull down the skin on her face in an attempt to mimic the ravages of age.

Shaken, Nancy stops and puts her hands on the sinktop, shaking her head, convincing herself it won't happen to her.

INT. GILMORE'S DINER - NIGHT SHIFT

AFTER THE DELUGE. Nancy's placing salt-and-pepper shakers in the booths employing her sleight of hand to deposit half the tips in her apron. Something catches her eye and she pauses.

IT'S DANNY. Waiting for a table, hands in coat pockets.

Nancy U-turns, leaves the shaker tray on the counter and approaches the booth of an ELDERLY COUPLE, her back to Danny.

NANCY  
Everything tasting okay?

Torpid nods. Nancy glances over her shoulder to make sure Danny's not being seated in her section when...

...SMALL WALKS IN, shakes Danny's hand. Nancy's confused, watches as they walk to a booth. She strategically moves near their section and begins to refill ketchup bottles.

SMALL  
...that's what Nick said...You were running your own business, no?...

DANNY  
...That's right...it was based over in Bedford, Ohio...

Nancy leans, trying to listen closely -

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)  
Miss? Excuse me, Miss?

SMALL  
...I could use someone like you. For the house, but also with the family restaurant...Come by tomorrow, I'll show you around...

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)  
Miss!? MISS!

Nancy whip-turns to a VERY TINY OLD WOMAN. Stares daggers and MARCHES over to her booth.

VERY TINY OLD WOMAN  
(suddenly timid)  
My fish is cold. I think...?

Nancy SNATCHES the plate away and vanishes into the kitchen.

LATER

Nancy watches Danny's booth at a distance. Janice drops off the bill. Small examines it carefully, lays down some cash, reexamines it and takes a dollar bill back. He turns the bill to Danny now. The men stand, shake hands. Small puts on his coat and exits the restaurant - CLING CLING.

Danny sits back down, adds his half to the bill.

NANCY (O.C.)  
Give her a few extra bucks.

Danny looks up. Nancy stands before him.

DANNY  
Oh hey, hi. Hi, Nancy. I didn't know you uh, you worked here.

NANCY  
Just fill in mostly... I wanted to apologize for the other night. A friend said some really hurtful things earlier and...

DANNY  
Oh no, you were fine.

NANCY  
So anyway... Yes.

DANNY  
What's that?

NANCY  
I never answered you. Yes. Yes I'll go out with you...

DANNY  
Danny.

NANCY  
Danny, right.

DANNY  
You sure? I mean -  
(she nods)  
Well OK uh, when did -

NANCY  
Saturday. 7. There's a place called Vittorio's on Eldridge.

DANNY  
Yeah. Yeah sure. Saturday.

Nancy walks away. Danny puts his wallet away. It's like the wind's been knocked from him. In the best possible way.

NANCY (O.C.)  
Here you go.

It STARTLES him. He jumps. Nancy hands him a napkin with her phone number written on it. Now she's really gone.

INT. MAZDA 929, PARKED - AFTERNOON

From across the river, Nancy spies *The Yesteryear Restaurant* with a pair of binoculars. Inside, Small is giving Danny a tour. They exit to the deck where Danny appreciates the view.

INT. FIRST IMPRESSION BEAUTY SALON - SATURDAY AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON A MAGAZINE TEAR-OUT OF KIM BASINGER as Nancy hands it to a HAIR STYLIST and slips into the salon chair.

NANCY  
- I want it exactly like this, the way they sweep over the eyes -

MINUTES LATER - Nancy's CHAIR is spun around to the mirror. Her hair looks exactly like Kim Basinger's. But Nancy doesn't see it that way. The blood leaves her face.

SECONDS LATER - Nancy STORMS out of the salon -

NANCY (CONT'D)  
- Buncha fucking MORONS!

The STYLISTS stand, apoplectic.

INT. MAZDA 929, SHOPPING CENTER PARKING LOT - DAY

The car is parked and Nancy's SOBBING - *Why? Why? Why? Why?*. She BEATS her fists against the steering the wheel.

Needing a fix, she forages the glove compartment, pulls out a *Glamour* magazine and tears through pages.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM, VANITY - EARLY EVENING

ON NANCY'S FACE. Eyes intense, like she's getting herself psyched up for a sports match. PULLING BACK, we reveal she's staring at herself in the vanity mirror. The *Vittorio's* menu sits atop the wood and items have been circled, starred.

Outside, A CAR DOOR IS SHUT. She doesn't blink.

INT. RISH HOME, FAMILY ROOM - EVENING

Connie's on the couch in her weekend sweats, under a crocheted afghan, watching an episode of *Who's The Boss?*

DING-DONG. Connie stands, opens the door. Danny holds a bouquet of roses, dressed in Dockers and a Sears button-down.

CONNIE  
You must be Danny.

DANNY  
That's right. Danny Edwards.

CONNIE  
Call me Connie. Come in, come in.

DANNY  
Nice wide driveway you got out there, Connie.

Danny steps inside the home. Eyes sweep over the space. Connie's craft projects adorn the walls and side tables; pom pom animals, paper filigree flowers, bottle cap frames.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Wow, someone's an artist, huh.

CONNIE  
Oh yeah. It's Picasso, Van Gogh and Connie Rish.

DANNY  
(dead serious)  
Is that right? Like a team?

CONNIE  
(nevermind)  
Nancy! Nancy honey, Danny's here!

NANCY (O.C.)  
In-a-minute.

CONNIE  
Sit down if you want, Danny.

DANNY  
Oh no. I'm fine standing.

Connie plops back into the couch. Something flaky happens on TV: frying-pan-on-the-head-type moment. Danny ROARS. Then -

CLICK-CLACK-CLICK. Danny turns to find Nancy coming down the stairs in an asymmetrical ruffle-shoulder dress.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
(not a word, just a sound)  
...wow...

EXT. RISH HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Exiting the home, Nancy immediately notes Danny's FORD PICK-UP TRUCK. She's taken aback slightly, but quickly masters this letdown: it could be a weekend car.

Danny jogs ahead to open her door.

INT. VITTORIO'S RESTAURANT, KANKAKEE - NIGHT

Choice Italian. Intimate ambience. Nancy hands the wine list back to the WAITER.

NANCY  
 - the '85 Felsina Chianti. And I'll  
 have the twin lobster tails.

Unbeknownst to Nancy, Danny is already adding prices in his head, hoping he can afford this bill.

DANNY  
 (thinks, vacillates)  
 Y'know, I'm riding a diet. Just a  
 mixed salad for me.

Waiter collects their menus. Nancy leans in, stares into Danny's eyes as though reading them for some deeper insight.

NANCY  
 Talk to me, Danny. Tell me all  
 about you.

DANNY  
 Well, I just moved here from Ohio.  
 Guess it's been about a month now.

NANCY  
 Business reasons?

DANNY  
 Mostly, yeah.

He slathers butter onto a piece of bread. While he chews -

DANNY (CONT'D)  
 I come from a pretty big family.  
 Mom, Dad and four sisters; Cindy,  
 Beth, Sara and Dawn. I'm the baby  
 of the Edwards clan. The girls are  
 quite a bit older than me, though.  
 They all got husbands, kids - all  
 that good stuff. I was kinda the  
 happy accident for my folks,  
 y'know. They call me *Thumper*. See,  
 when I was little I'd stand up in  
 my crib and bang my foot to get  
 their attention, you know, like -

Nancy's eyes glaze over. She leans back in her chair.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
 ... like the rabbit in Bambi?

NANCY  
 Why does every guy feel the need to  
 do that?

DANNY  
 Do what?

NANCY  
 Bore a girl with their mythology.  
 Do you really think that's what we  
 want to hear?

DANNY  
 Oh, I thought you wanted -

NANCY

What I want, Danny, is to know where you're going - the part of your story that might include me.

DANNY

(embarrassed)  
... okay. I'm sorry, Nancy. It's just that, well...

NANCY

What is it?

DANNY

(shy)  
Nothing. It's not -

NANCY

Say it.

DANNY

Well, you're so glamorous, Nancy. I'm surprised you're not a model or something.

NANCY

(brightens at this)  
Well, I was... in New York.

DANNY

Woww. The Big Apple, huh? Would I have seen you in any magazines?

He has unwittingly asked the wrong question.

NANCY

(shifts tone sharply)  
What did I just say, Danny? Does that part of my story include you?

DANNY

No, I guess not.

NANCY

Right...  
(seductive)  
Now, what *type* of *business* are you in? Can you say? You can't, can you? It's some Big Secret, isn't it?

DANNY

Oh no. There's nothing secret about it really -

NANCY

It's radio. No, no, no: TV. It's TV, isn't it?

DANNY

No. Me? TV? No, no -

NANCY

Bigger?

DANNY

Bigger than what?

The waiter arrives with the Chianti and offers Nancy the cork. She sniffs it: a real bon vivant. A sample is poured into her glass. She makes a big show of swirling it, sniffing the bouquet, sipping the wine and allowing all parts of the mouth to experience its flavor. It's interminable. Even the Waiter sighs. Finally, she nods -

NANCY  
(no clue)  
Very earthy.

Waiter pours the wine into their glasses, leaves the bottle.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Do you travel a lot, Danny?

DANNY  
Just to visit clients mostly -

NANCY  
That's the thing with me: I love to travel. Just the other day I spent a whole hour reading an article about the Fontainebleau in Miami.

DANNY  
Miami? Oh I don't go that far.

NANCY  
So this business in Bedford just kept growing and growing. So much so you had to expand and now here you are.

DANNY  
Here I am.

They smile. Nancy offers her glass. CHEERS - CLINK! Upon sipping the wine again, it's bitter. She begins to fish ice cubes out of her table water and deposit them into her wine glass - TINK-TINK-TINK. People stare.

NANCY  
I have a feeling about you, Danny. Things are just gonna burst wide open here for you.

DANNY  
Well I hope so.

NANCY  
Me, too, Danny...

She reaches across the table. Takes his hand in hers.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
...Me, too.

INT. DANNY'S PICK-UP TRUCK, MOVING - NIGHT

Nancy's got a good buzz going as she lets the wind cool her face. She takes in a deep breath. Even the air seems sweeter.

ZZZZ. ZZZZ. The pager affixed to Danny's Dockers glows. He's quick to silence it. But he's thinking. Nancy notices.

NANCY  
(caring)  
What is it?

DANNY  
Oh it's nothing...just one of my clients. I'll just go after I drop you off.

NANCY  
No. No no, go now... If you're not embarrassed to have me with you.

DANNY  
Embarrassed? You? I just didn't want to put you out.

NANCY  
You're not putting me out. I didn't wanna go home yet anyway.

He looks over at her. She's smiling at him.

PICK-UP TRUCK, MINUTES LATER

Danny inspects addresses as he crawls down the road, turns into a drive, stopping in front of the wrought iron gates of - THE PRETTIEST HOUSE IN TOWN.

Nancy shoots forward sharply.

NANCY  
Is this it? Is this the place?

DANNY  
I think so. He said it was 1258.

NANCY  
(absolutely certain)  
1258? This is 1258.

Danny rolls down the window and presses the intercom.

DANNY  
Hi there. It's Danny Edwards.

Nancy waits anxiously. THE GATES OPEN: a portal to another world. She GASPS, grabs Danny's thigh and SQUEEZES IT TIGHT.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
(kinda likes it)  
Everything alright?

NANCY  
(nodding)  
Uh-huh.

The truck progresses and the Queen Anne comes into view. Nancy's face is nearly against the windshield. Her breathing is labored. Her fingers digging deeper into Danny's leg.

EXT. QUEEN ANNE MANSION — SAME

The pick-up idles. VALETS approach and assist Nancy as she steps down and gapes the mansion.

Danny offers his arm. Nancy accepts and they stroll up the walkway like guests arriving at a gala.

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, FOYER — NIGHT

AN AUGUST, CATERED AFFAIR for the THE PRIVILEGED, ENTITLED PEOPLE of Kankakee. A STRING TRIO plays.

Small and his mother, ELAINE, 85, grave-faced and thin, are finishing a conversation with an ATTRACTIVE BRUNETTE, 50.

ATTRACTIVE BRUNETTE  
— Nice to see you, Elaine. Very nice to meet you, Stephen.

When Brunette's safely out of earshot, Elaine's smile fades.

ELAINE SMALL  
What did you think?

SMALL  
Think? We talked for three minutes, Mother. I hardly know her.

ELAINE SMALL  
You hardly know anyone. That's why I waste money on these things...so you'll meet someone. I didn't like her. *Elaine?* How about Mrs. Small? There's William's friend.

Elaine signals an ELEGANT RED-HEAD. But Small's focused on something else: the MALE SERVER, 20s, passing out champagne flutes behind the woman.

SMALL  
Mmm. She's pretty, isn't she?

A moment passes.

ELAINE SMALL  
Stephen? Stephen?

SMALL  
(comes out of his gaze)  
Hmm?

ELAINE SMALL  
That man's here.

She's referring to Danny just inside the front door.

ELAINE SMALL (CONT'D)  
Hurry up and get him in the kitchen. I'll talk to William.

Elaine slogs towards Red-Head.

NANCY AND DANNY

Wait by the doorway. Danny sees Small waving him over.

DANNY

I'll just be a couple'a minutes.

He heads that way. Danny and Small vanish down a hallway.

Alone, Nancy wades through the crowd, soaking in the moneyed gentry; the gowns, the champagne flutes, the chandelier, the grand staircase. Finally, she's where she belongs.

She tilts an ear to the CONVERSATIONS she passes. Topics include children at Northwestern; SEP IRAs, a Mediterranean cruise. Nancy's drunk on life, dreamy. Then -

A TAP on her shoulder. Nancy turns. ELAINE SMALL hands her a pile of dirty napkins and soiled toothpicks. Before Nancy can explain that she's not the help -

ELAINE SMALL

Well...don't just stand there.

Livid, Nancy PUSHES her way through the crowd, not opposed to bumping those in her way as she moves into -

THE KITCHEN

where a PACK OF TUXEDO-CLAD CATERERS stamp around and... someone's head is in the oven. Nancy steps forward to get a better view and slowly discerns -

NANCY

Danny...?

Danny slides out, squints to see Nancy.

DANNY

Oh, hey, Nanc. Almost through. Just a defective bake element here. Thing's totally fried.

NANCY

A bake-a-what? What're you... what're you...doing in there?

The realization comes to her slowly, like bread rising.

INT. DANNY'S PICK-UP TRUCK, MOVING - NIGHT

NANCY SMOKES a cigarette, head against the window. She won't look at Danny who's confused, reliving the night in his head, searching for blind spots. Finally -

NANCY

You're a liar, Danny. If that's even your real name.

DANNY

What else would it be?

NANCY

I saw you in the diner talking with Mr. Small. Oh yeah you're real big.  
 (parrots him)  
*I had my own business in Bedford and I'd be happy to stop by the house, Mr. Small. On-and-on-and-on - yeah big deal you turned out to be.*

A long beat. Nancy FIRES her cigarette out the window.

DANNY

I'm sorry if you feel I did something wrong, Nancy. Yeah, I had a little handyman business in Bedford. I called it *Odds and Ends*.

NANCY

How fucking perfect. The *Odd* part.

DANNY

Business wasn't bad, I just felt like I was spinning my wheels a bit, y'know and...I never really left Bedford. And Nick, the one that drove you home the other night, he's an old friend and -

Nancy's getting bored, rolls her eyes.

DANNY (CONT'D)

- well he said he'd introduce me to some people to help get me started. That's how I met Mr. Small. He needed someone to help out around the house and at that restaurant he's got. I was glad to have the work. That's all there is to it. No lying or pretending to be something I'm not, I'm just, y'know...me.

NANCY

Yeah, whatever.

He SIGHS, unable to hide his disappointment.

EXT. RISH HOME - NIGHT

The pick-up rolls into the drive. Before it comes to a stop, Nancy bursts out, SLAMS the door and stamps toward the home.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

NANCY SOBS ON THE BED. Tries to compose herself but her chest heaves and the sobs return.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - MORNING - A SERIES OF SHOTS

- The digital clock reads 7:15 AM and, strangely, Nancy's wide awake, sitting up in bed, arms crossed, thinking.

- Nancy PACES around the room. The gears are turning.

- Nancy slides out a small filing cabinet from under her bed. Inside: accordion files labeled by name. Tabs include; *Peter Snyder, Esq...Ben Faber (Married Fuckhead)...Jimmy Keene*. Each file contains a history of the relationship: photos, articles, likes/dislikes, outfits worn...

- Nancy stands in the center of the room. Surrounding her on the carpet, photos from the files have been dumped and spread into a circle. The men's faces stare up at her. Each photo is given a cursory assessment and promptly KICKED OUT OF THE CIRCLE upon not living up to Nancy's standards. SOOSH-SOOSH-SOOSH-SOOSH. Over-and-over. Face after face sent out like windblown leaves. Nancy's working up a sweat.

- Finally, ONLY ONE PICTURE REMAINS. It's the photo Nancy lifted from Mrs. Keene's house earlier. Nancy and Jimmy. Her head falls into her hands. Helplessness overwhelms her. She can't see a way out of this. Then...PUSH IN ON Nancy as her head rises above her fingers: an idea flickers to life.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - MORNING

A modest place with an ascetic's sense of comfort. Moving boxes litter the floor, yet to be unpacked and an *Ohio State Buckeyes Football* banner hangs above the twin bed.

The PHONE RINGS shrilly. Danny stirs under the covers, throws a hand over to the night stand, brings the phone to his ear -

DANNY  
*Odds and Ends...Danny...*

NANCY (O.C.)  
I need to ask you something.

He sits up and clears his face.

DANNY  
Nancy...?

NANCY (O.C.)  
Are you serious about us?

DANNY  
What...?

NANCY (O.C.)  
About *ussss*, Danny! Our future together.

DANNY  
Uh, well...yeah sure, Nancy.

NANCY (O.C.)  
Gimme your address. We've got some work to do.

INT. DANNY'S CLOSET - LATER THAT MORNING

WHOOSH! Nancy pushes aside a series of shirts on a closet rod. Takes them down one-by-one, sizes them up and tosses them to the floor.

Danny watches from the doorway as shirt-after-shirt lands at his feet. He's confused and deeply groggy.

Nancy moves to the pants. They fare even worse.

NANCY  
What time is it?

DANNY  
Uh, 8:30. What's this about, Nancy?

NANCY  
Let's go. It opens in a half hour.

INT. RETAIL STORE, DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY — MORNING

NANCY TAPS HER FOOT IMPATIENTLY, waiting on Danny.

DANNY (O.C.)  
I'm not sure this is really me.

NANCY  
Let me be the judge of that.

Danny steps out wearing a Searsucker blazer and white pants.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
You're right. It's not you. Get back in there and try the next one.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY — MORNING

MOVING DOWN A TRAIL OF DEPARTMENT STORE SHOPPING BAGS, wire hangers, tissue paper, size stickers, price tags: the remnants of a full-scale shopping bender.

At the end of the hallway, ARRIVE AT NANCY sitting on the edge of the single bed smoking a cigarette. Tapping her foot.

NANCY  
Hurry up! I've gotta go to work.

Danny comes out of the bathroom in a far more casual outfit. Black t-shirt, stonewashed blue jeans, black leather boots and his hair's slicked back with gel.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Tuck the shirt in.

He tucks the t-shirt into his jeans: *A Rebel Without A Clue*.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Where's the jacket?

DANNY  
It's kinda hot in here, isn't it?

NANCY  
I need to see it with the jacket.

He slips back into the bathroom, reemerges wearing the CLASSIC RACER MOTORCYCLE JACKET. Just like Jimmy Keene.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Okay now walk toward me.

He does, in his usual lumbering gait. The PHONE RINGS.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Don't you dare answer that.

DANNY  
It might be a customer.  
(picks up the phone)  
*Odds and Ends*, Danny...Hey, Nick.

Nancy's BOILING. Gesturing for him to cut it off. Finally -

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Can I uh, can I call you back,  
Nick?... Okay.

He hangs the phone up.

NANCY  
Clogged toilet?

DANNY  
You know Nick. He's helping me  
start-up my business.

NANCY  
Yeah, well there's a new business.  
And no losers allowed. Now go back  
and do it again. Shoulders back,  
hand in your right pocket.

He does exactly as she says. Walks toward her again.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Go again. And get mad.

DANNY  
Mad at who?

NANCY  
Think of someone. Wasn't anyone  
ever mean to you?

DANNY  
I'm from Bedford, Nancy.

NANCY  
What, no one in Bedford ever told  
you your nose was too big?

He touches his nose self-consciously, stalks back down the hall. Walks toward Nancy again, a bit pissed-off. If you didn't know any better you'd think it was Jimmy Keene.

DANNY  
Are we done with this now?

Nancy drops her cigarette in a Coke can and grabs her purse.

NANCY  
You're taking me to dinner  
tomorrow. Be in my driveway by 8.

And she's gone. Danny's more confused than ever.

INT. TGIF FRIDAY'S RESTAURANT - FOLLOWING NIGHT

A Painted Fingernail PUSHES F17 On a GIBSON WURLITZER JUKEBOX. A 45 obediently drops onto the platter, and Eddie Money's *'Baby Hold On'* fills the joint.

Danny messily picks apart a basket of chicken wings. Nancy hasn't touched her fajitas. She's smoking and studying him like a zoo keeper studying the behavior of a new baboon.

NANCY  
You had a lot of customers over there in Bedford, didn't you?

DANNY  
Oh yeah. At least fifty, I'd say.

NANCY  
How'd you keep track of them all?

DANNY  
I had one'a them little Rolodex thingamajigs. Names, addresses, phone numbers, invoice copies -

NANCY  
And these customers, they'd call on you, all hours of the night, to come and fix things?

DANNY  
If there was an emergency, sure.

NANCY  
Come here, Danny. Sit next to me.

He motions to stand -

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Wipe your face first.

He opens a wet-nap, cleans his face. Sits beside Nancy now.

She reaches into her purse under the tabletop, stealthily pulls out a small vial of cocaine.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Have you ever seen this before?  
(he shakes his head)  
I want you to watch what I do.

She taps a bit of coke onto her finger, snorts a bump.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Okay your turn.

She taps another bit onto her finger. Brings it to Danny's nose. He snorts it, looks confused, then swallows hard.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Does it feel good?

He nods, unsure. Rubs his nose. Another tap onto Nancy's finger. Up to Danny's nose. He snorts. His heart beats faster. He leans back in the booth, a bit dazed.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
I think it's time you expanded your business, Danny. You're not utilizing your talent the way you could. The way you should.

DANNY  
Okay... Are you going to help me?

NANCY  
If you want. Do you want me to help you, Danny? Is that what you want?

He looks over at her. She's irresistible. He nods.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
(whispers)  
You like this song, Danny?

DANNY  
... yeah.

NANCY  
Then it's *ours*.

EXT. 'THE BLUE ROOM' NIGHTCLUB - KANKAKEE - NIGHT

Danny watches, as Nancy flirts with the riproided DOORMAN, the guy never taking his eyes off her chest as he reaches down and lifts up the velvet rope. Nancy signals for Danny to follow.

INT. 'THE BLUE ROOM' NIGHTCLUB - KANKAKEE - SAME

MOVE WITH NANCY AND DANNY as they enter the crowded club. The dance floor is a throbbing sea of people. It's a happening place...for Kankakee.

Nancy takes stock of the place. The cool cats and dealers pack into semi-circular booths on the periphery. That's where she notices Boomer, Gary and Clarence.

Nancy and Danny arrive at the bar.

NANCY  
Order me a martini. Get yourself a scotch rocks.

DANNY  
Scotch?

She glares. He understands. While Danny looks for a bartender, Nancy spies Boomer's booth where he is just now being dragged onto the dance floor by a brunette with an impressive rack.

NANCY  
Stay here. Don't move and don't talk to anybody.

FOLLOW NANCY as she pushes her way onto the dance floor, and right into Boomer's line of sight.

BOOMER  
Nancy!

NANCY  
Oh, hey.

BOOMER  
Who are you here with!?

NANCY  
No one. Just my boyfriend.

She signals Danny back at the bar. He's eating maraschino cherries from the bartender's supply. She could burn him.

BOOMER  
(unimpressed)  
Who is *he*?

NANCY  
I met him at your party, dummy. You know him.

Danny's dancing, rolling his shoulders.

BOOMER  
(doesn't remember)  
...Who the fuck is he?

NANCY  
That's Danny Edwards. You know Danny, he was a big operator over in Cleveland.

BOOMER  
Well, what's he doing here?

NANCY  
You're looking at it. Moved down here just to be with me.

Boomer studies Danny. Nancy's about to walk away -

BOOMER  
Bring him by the table. We're all hanging out.

NANCY  
Maybe, yeah. We're not staying long.

AT THE BAR - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy slides in beside Danny. He hands her the martini.

DANNY  
I like this joint. Good vibe, good lighting.

He sips his scotch: the strength stuns him.

She presses up against him.

NANCY  
Tell me something funny, Danny.  
Make me laugh.

DANNY  
Geez I don't know, Nancy. I'm not  
so funny, y'know...  
(chuckles, remembers)  
Well, I did have this crazy dog.

Nancy's already LAUGHING, stealing glances at Boomer's booth.

#### BOOMER'S BOOTH

Boomer slides in. Clarence and Gary (we met them at Boomer's party) are there, each with TWO GIRLS under their arms.

BOOMER  
(signals Danny)  
You recognize that guy over there?

CLARENCE  
Who? Pinocchio?

BOOMER  
That's Danny Edwards, man.

CLARENCE  
Who the fuck is Danny Edwards?

BOOMER  
Big mover in Cleveland. Big mover.

GARY  
So what the fuck's he doing here?

BOOMER  
He's with Nancy.

They watch the bar. Nancy's laughing, hands all over Danny.

GARY  
Gotta have something pretty major  
going for him if that fuckin' tease  
is letting him sniff her ass. How  
long's he in town?

BOOMER  
He's fucking here, man. Like for  
good here.

They're thinking about their own business.

#### AT THE BAR

Nancy's giggling, watching Boomer's booth and giggling and -

Boomer stands, WAVES her over. Nancy smiles privately, grabs her purse and pulls Danny by the hand -

NANCY  
Remember what I said?

DANNY  
Wait. Are these the guys? Now!?

NANCY  
Yes, these are the guys. Yes, now.

DANNY  
Oh. Well now I'm nervous. Nancy?  
Nancy my hands are sweating -

NANCY  
Just remember what we talked about.  
Always answer a question with a  
question. Never look at anyone.

He's nodding, addled. They arrive at Boomer's booth.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Hi guys! I want you to meet Danny.

Hand shakes and hellos all around.

BOOMER  
Siddown, siddown.

NANCY  
We can't really stay... Coupl'a  
Danny's friends are having a party.

BOOMER  
Nancy tells me you just moved into  
town, Danny.

DANNY  
(re: Nancy)  
Can you blame me?

Danny's staring at the wall, nervously TAPPING his thigh. She  
hugs his arm affectionately, squeezes it so he'll stop.

CLARENCE  
What kinda work'd you do in  
Cleveland, bigfella?

DANNY  
Did a lotta work in Cleveland. What  
about it?

GARY  
You looking to do a lotta that same  
work here?

DANNY  
Gotta do something, don't I?

Boomer, Clarence and Gary exchange looks. Finally -

BOOMER  
Why don't you come by the house  
tomorrow, Danny.

DANNY  
(to Nancy)  
Are we around tomorrow?

Nancy FLICKS a zippo and brings the flame to her cigarette.

NANCY  
What time tomorrow?

INT. BOOMER'S ESTATE HOME - TOMORROW NIGHT

BOOMER, NANCY and DANNY walk across the foyer -

BOOMER  
- How much product were you moving  
back in Cleveland, Danny?

DANNY  
You're really gonna ask me that?

BOOMER  
Right. Gotcha.

- into the hallway now. Boomer opens THE OFFICE door and they walk inside. Around a table, Clarence and Gary weigh and cut coke. Clarence nods a 'hey'; Gary chooses to ignore them.

Boomer sits behind a large mahogany desk, Nancy and Danny take chairs across from him. From inside his jacket, Boomer produces an eighth and taps some out onto a mirror.

BOOMER (CONT'D)  
Private stock...  
(as he razorblades lines)  
We've been moving a kilo every two  
weeks. Anything more and you're  
putting it on the radar. You're  
gonna wanna stay clear of the  
Northside. Get in with those people  
and suddenly everything smells like  
shit and chicken grease.

Boomer snorts a line. It's good.

BOOMER (CONT'D)  
Fuck me...

He passes the straw to Nancy. She snorts a line. Danny's turn. WHOOSH. It makes his nose itch and he looks agitated, like he might sneeze.

DANNY  
It's nice, real...y'know. You  
selling this in the clubs?

BOOMER  
This?

Then, as if he failed to realize Danny's quick wit -

BOOMER (CONT'D)  
(laughs)  
... yeah, right. We keep things  
simple. Probably not what you're  
used to, but it's how we like it.  
The cops are cool until you give  
'em a reason not to be.

DANNY  
A reason not to be?

CLARENCE  
Waving your money around. You wanna  
spend, spend someplace else.

GARY  
Like Cleveland.

DANNY  
(innocently)  
Oh yeah?

A tense beat. Gary glowers at Danny. To mollify -

BOOMER  
Be cool, Gar, Danny knows. We'll  
get you set-up with the clubbable  
stuff. C and G cut it to where  
everyone's happy and our man's got  
the club scene down.

DANNY  
Our man? Who's our man?

BOOMER  
Cecil. He's cool.

Clarence approaches and hands Danny a half-kilo of coke. Danny sits very still, looks at Nancy for direction. She smiles and puts the straw to another line of coke.

INT. DANNY'S PICK-UP TRUCK, MOVING - NIGHT

Danny, all smiles in the racer jacket, drives while Nancy watches him turning over future improvements in her mind.

NANCY  
We're gonna need to trade in this  
truck for something else.

DANNY  
But I need this for my work.

NANCY  
That's what I mean, dummy.

Nancy scans the buildings up ahead.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Okay, pull over here. We'll walk  
the rest of the way.

Danny parks in front of a closed pharmacy in the downtown business district, and cuts the engine.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
I bought you a few presents.

She takes a small, cutely wrapped gift from her purse and hands it to him. He unwraps the box. Inside: a LEDGER and a set of BUSINESS CARDS with a Jack-of-all-Trades caricature in overalls.

The name '*Odds and Ends*' is written underneath along with Danny's phone number and, in bold, **24 Hours a Day, 7 Days a Week, 365 Days a Year.**

DANNY

Wow... That even looks like me.

NANCY

I want you to hand them out to your customers. Don't forget, Danny. It's very important that they're always able to reach you.

EXT. 'THE BLUE ROOM' NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

DANNY AND NANCY wait in the long line. Nancy wears sunglasses, head low, using her hand to fence her face.

Suddenly, they're waved ahead by THE BOUNCER and they step to the front. Just inside is a black man, 30s, stylishly dressed in jeans and a sports coat. This is CECIL.

CECIL

Cleveland Danny?

DANNY

Who are you?

CECIL

Cecil man! He's cool, Sam!

Bouncer lets Nancy and Danny into the club. As they walk -

CECIL (CONT'D)

Heard lots about you, Danny. I got you a nice hip hot spot by the bar. Go and get yourself set-up.

Cecil signals two stools at the corner of the bar he's claimed with his jacket, then wanders back into the crowd.

Upon taking the stools, Nancy lights a cigarette while Danny reviews his look and bobs his head to the music, feeling good. Off Nancy's glare, he stops.

Cecil returns, drops off a mustached guy in AVIATOR GLASSES.

AVIATOR GLASSES

(coolly to Danny)

... eightball

Danny thinks to himself. That doesn't work. His eyes shift to Nancy who, with her cigarette hand, nonchalantly raises three fingers. Reaching inside his jacket, Danny produces three bindles and meets Aviator's hand under the bartop. When Danny opens his palm there's \$250 cash in it and Aviator's gone. He stares at the cash like the gudgeon of a magic trick the mechanics of which he still hasn't grasped.

He slides the cash in a ZIPPER BAG. Cecil returns, leaves a PREP for Danny who hands him \$80 under the bar. And waits.

Eyes shift back to Nancy. She raises one finger. Danny palms one bindle to the Prep who casually pockets it and leaves.

Before Danny can put the cash in the zipper bag, Cecil returns with TWO FUN-LOVING BLONDES. He looks at Nancy and -

A SERIES OF TIME CUTS

Danny stands beside an ECLECTIC MIX OF CLUBGOERS, watching Nancy for signals. She touches her earrings. She scratches her chin, rubs her nose, holds up fingers; one, two, three, four. She coughs. Finally -

Danny smiles and shuts his eyes, indicating he's got it all covered. PUSH IN ON NANCY as she watches Danny and WE'RE -

INSIDE THE RISH HOME, FAMILY ROOM

Nancy settles into the couch. On the coffee table: a stack of MEN'S STYLE MAGAZINES. She starts from the top, flips through an 'Esquire,' stops on a photo of Patrick Swayze and -

DANNY'S IN A SALON CHAIR

as Nancy hands STYLIST a tear-out of PATRICK SWAYZE and -

DANNY'S THE VERY PICTURE OF PATRICK SWAYZE

as a BOUNCER opens the velvet rope for him and Nancy. They walk into a NIGHTCLUB where Cecil's waiting and he puts his arm around Danny and points out two stools by the bar and -

WE'RE IN BOOMER'S BASEMENT

as Boomer bangs away on a game of Asteriods. Turns to find Danny walking down the stairwell -

BOOMER  
(smiling)  
Back already?

QUICK DETAIL SHOTS -

CLARENCE AND GARY cut PRODUCT with INOSITOL into a metal bowl -

WEIGH IT on a DEERING SCALE -

FUNNEL IT into LARGE ZIPLOC FREEZER BAGS, seal them -

POUR IT onto WAX PAPER atop Danny's kitchen table and WE'RE -

INSIDE his apartment where he measures PRODUCT on an electronic scale and -

WE'RE UNDER THE BARTOP, ON THE DANCEFLOOR, BEHIND A BANQUET, as BUNDLES IN FAST CUTS are dealt by Danny. His technique improving with each exchange. After a while even we can't catch what he is doing.

ON HIS KITCHEN COUNTERTOP, CASH IS STACKED & BANDED INTO TIGHT BUNDLES. MORE PRODUCT IS PREPARED, NANCY REFINES HIS "LOOK."

SHOEBOX AFTER SHOEBOX FILLED WITH CASH & SLID UNDER THE BED

NANCY'S FLIPPING THROUGH A 'MOTOR TREND' MAGAZINE

pauses on a photo of a Harley Davidson Low-Rider and WE'RE -

INSIDE THE HARLEY-DAVIDSON DEALERSHIP

as Danny straddles that very same Low-Rider. Likes its feel.

IN AN EMPTY STRIP MALL PARKING LOT

Danny sits on the Harley's passenger pillion, Nancy in the rocker seat listening as he instructs her on the clutches, levers and controls on the instrument panel.

LATER - Nancy practices on the bike. Danny watches as she engages and disengages the clutch, pitching her forward and jerking her back. It all resembles a drunken mechanical bull ride and Danny ROARS with laughter...

...Not Nancy. Strangely she's deadly serious about getting this down.

MARRIOTT HOTEL, DANNY AND CECIL IN AN ELEVATOR

DING! the doors open and they walk down a hallway -

CECIL

- I been telling Boomer for years.  
*Go to the Northside. Check out the  
Northside. Lotta opportunities on  
the Northside.* He don't listen.

DANNY

(like he's lived here his  
whole life)  
Yeah, but you go to the Northside  
and everything starts to smell like  
chicken shit.

They KNOCK on a door. FRAT BOY answers, a WILD INITIATION PARTY roars behind him. Danny flashes two eight-balls.

NANCY'S FLIPPING THROUGH A 'GENTLEMAN'S QUARTERLY'

a Kevin Costner feature. *Bull Durham*: slicked-back hair, five o'clock shadow, leather jacket, white button-down and -

THE NEW, FIVE O'CLOCK SHADOW 'KEVIN COSTNER' DANNY

swaggers into a NIGHTCLUB with Nancy on his arm, feeling good. Up ahead, MANAGER removes a 'Reserved' sign from a booth and Nancy and Danny slide in. Danny lights a cigarette. Here comes Cecil with a GROUP OF PARTY GIRLS and WE'RE -

## INSIDE BOOMER'S OFFICE

as Boomer opens the door revealing Danny. Back again.

BOOMER

Fuck, Edwards! You are working it!

## NANCY'S ON THE DANCE FLOOR OF A NIGHTCLUB

Sweating and stoned, watching Danny work a booth. Girls hang on him. Guys want his attention. Cecil escorts groups of people to and fro. It's a revolving door of business.

She smiles at her creation, DANCES MORE FURIOUSLY THAN EVER.

## NANCY CLOSSES A 'SPORTS FITNESS' MAGAZINE

it's the last in her stack. She lights a cigarette, leans back and smiles. Looking to her right, there's a new stack of magazines: Luxury and Style. A smile curls and SHE -

## GLIDES INTO A LORD &amp; TAYLOR STORE

armed with a color-tabbed *Lord & Taylor* catalog under her arm. Up ahead, TWO SALES ASSOCIATES chat -

NANCY

You two. Follow me.

MINUTES LATER - Nancy cruises the store, consulting her catalog, pointing out items; dresses, jackets, scarves. Trailing her, the Associates arms are filling up. Fast.

LATER - First Sales Associate is ringing up the items, while the Second Associate downs a bottled water. Exhausted. The total flashes on the register: **\$5,595**. Blasé, Nancy opens an envelope of cash and begins handing over \$100's and -

## CLOSE ON A REAL ESTATE CONTRACT

as Danny signs his name on the bottom line.

Behind Danny, Nancy's been staring at a COLOSSAL ESTATE HOME, turns to THE AGENT now as though awakening from a dream.

## NANCY EMERGES FROM HER BEDROOM

arms brimming with garments. Connie follows. She's upset.

NANCY

- I'm five miles up the road, Mom.

CONNIE

But I hate the quiet, Nancy.

NANCY

Buy a bird.

A *bird*?! Connie starts to SOB.

CONNIE  
I don't want a bird! I want Nancy!

CLOSE ON A CORKBOARD - NANCY'S OFFICE (ESTATE HOME)

and Nancy pins on images torn from DESIGN MAGAZINES. Specific details circled in RED MARKER notated with Nancy's handwriting repeating a single refrain: **Copy this!**

HOUSEWARMING PARTY (ESTATE HOME)

Nancy's giving Kit the grand tour of the now-furnished home, dragging her through the crowd like a puppy. Each room is an exact replica of one we saw on the corkboard.

Kit strokes a set of balloon curtains.

NANCY  
Those are imported. From Asia.

KIT  
Wowwww. Does Danny have a brother?

MOVING WITH BOOMER, CLARENCE, GARY & THEIR ENTOURAGE

as they walk up NANCY & DANNY'S DRIVEWAY. Eyes registering the HARLEY, GO-KART, and HIS N' HER JET SKIS - a blatant and stupid display of sudden wealth parked in front of the house.

Opening the gate, they enter the BACK PATIO. Beautiful pool, lavish landscaping, lots of folks partying, doing coke.

Boomer watches Danny work the grill in a big chef's hat. Clarence angrily whispers to Boomer, whose eyes never leave Danny. As a herd they head deeper into the party and we're -

ON A LINE OF HOPEFUL CLUBGOERS WAITING OUTSIDE A NIGHTCLUB

Trapped like the others is NICK with a group of LOCAL LOSERS.

Then, Nancy and Danny are escorted to the front by SECURITY. Danny wears shades and Nancy keeps her head down as if paparazzi might pop out and snap her photo.

Nick's face wrinkles: *Is that...no, no it couldn't be...*

INSIDE THE NIGHTCLUB STACKED UP FROM A DISTANCE PASSIVELY OBSERVE THE TWO DEAL UNAWARE OF THE OBSERVER.

OUTSIDE THE NIGHTCLUB

Danny's hand snatches a piece of paper stuck to the windshield of Danny's BMW M3 it reads: *Get rid of this car idiot and slow the fuck down!* He looks nervous and hands it to Nancy who crumbles the paper and drops it to the ground.

## DANNY SITS UP IN BED

He stares off appearing to still be bothered by the note. Finally, he looks down at the ledger on his lap and begins making careful notes: weight measurements, club & customer names, nightly take.

He reaches over and takes cash from a zippered bag, slips a rubber band around it and places it in a shoebox already full of neatly stacked bills piled like cordwood.

## NANCY APPLIES AN AGE-DEFYING LOTION

before the BATHROOM mirror. Shuts off the light, walks into THE ENORMOUS MASTER BEDROOM. But...Danny's not in bed. She puts on her sleeping mask and slips under a satin duvet as -

## DANNY CLOSES THE LEDGER

climbs under the sheets of his single bed and shuts off the light on the night stand.

## NANCY AND DANNY TOUR A MARINA WITH A BOAT DEALER AND WE'RE -

## ON A JET BOAT (THE VERY SAME MODEL NANCY SAW EARLIER)

as it CRUISES ACROSS THE KANKAKEE RIVER. NANCY SUNBATHES on the bow. Danny's at the helm. It's now their boat and for a moment, Nancy almost seems content.

Then - a SPEED BOAT cruises past. SMALL'S AT THE WHEEL, a YOUNG STUD at his side. Nancy's contentment fades as quickly as it bloomed. She watches Small's speedboat vanish.

## CLUB EQUINOX NIGHTCLUB, LADIES ROOM

TWO TEASED-HAIR BLONDES snort coke by the sinks.

## BLONDE #1

Fucking Piekarski! Cocksucker! It's all goddamn baking soda!

## BLONDE #2

Go see Cleveland Danny. Cuts it real fair. He's the best around.

They check their look, their busts and then exit. Nancy emerges from a stall. She's been listening.

## CLUB EQUINOX - LATER THAT NIGHT

Danny, in sunglasses, charms a crowded booth of customers.

Nancy and Cecil stand at a distance, speaking privately.

CECIL  
 - well shit yeah. Everyone knows  
 the way to stretch a product is to  
 step on it. Problem is, people  
 catch on and they don't buy your  
 shit no more.

NANCY  
 Only if they know it's been cut.

CECIL  
 Anyone who parties for real knows  
 when it's been cut... Unless you  
 use Inositol. Inositol don't burn.  
 That's what Boom uses already - but  
 he find out you're messin' with his  
 product and you in some deep shit.

CLOSE ON INOSITOL

dumped into a metal mixing bowl. Danny opens a kilo bag of  
 C&G-cut coke. Using measuring spoons he carefully scoops out  
 the coke and dumps it in with the Inositol. Cecil sits next  
 to him, keeping the math. Across the kitchen table, Nancy  
 reads a magazine, casually overseeing the process.

NANCY  
 Where are we now?

CECIL  
 We're down to 35%.

LATER - Cecil SNORTS a line, smiles to Danny and Nancy -

CECIL (CONT'D)  
 It's perfect. No burn.

Nancy's turn. She puts a straw to the line, SNORTS. She  
 glances over at the magazine: a PORSCHE ADVERTISEMENT OF A  
 WHITE 911 TURBO.

THE WHITE PORSCHE 911 TURBO, MOVING

Nancy positively FLIES along the river, matching the speed of  
 a JET BOAT flitting across the water and WE'RE -

BACK AT THE KITCHEN TABLE

MORE INOSITOL IN THE MIXING BOWL. Danny scoops in some coke.

Nancy snorts lines. They're on a bad bender and their eyes  
 are bloodshot and desperate for sleep.

CECIL  
 That's down to 20%.

Nancy puts a straw to the end of a line of coke and WHOOSH.

NANCY'S DOING MORE LINES

right here in the NIGHTCLUB booth. Totally uninhibited.

An ANGRY MALE CUSTOMER approaches, leans across the booth and fires a gram bag at Danny!

ANGRY MALE CUSTOMER  
T'fuck is that shit, Danny! You  
cheap fucking twat!

Danny, utterly stoned, just stares back dumbly.

ANGRY MALE CUSTOMER (CONT'D)  
I said - WHAT THE FUCK IS THAT -

Before he gets another word out - CECIL'S FIST COMES ACROSS HIS FACE! A WILD FIGHT BREAKS OUT!

Danny doesn't move. Neither does Nancy who leans down to another line of coke. Raising her eyes, she glances BOOMER, CLARENCE AND GARY IN A BOOTH ACROSS THE FLOOR. Watching her.

BACK TO THE KITCHEN TABLE

MORE INOSITOL IN THE MIXING BOWL. Nancy looks across the table at Cecil. Danny's passed-out in the chair.

CECIL  
10%.

NANCY  
(fucked-up)  
Take it lower.

EXT. NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME, BACKYARD - MORNING

FALL NOW. The pool water is murky, the landscaping pallid and scraggy. The jacuzzi is a boiling pot of water. Nancy's arms are on the pavers. She's fallen asleep in here. Last night.

Danny approaches, kneels, shuts off the bubbles and tilts her shades down. The sun frightens her like a loud noise.

DANNY  
We're outta milk, baby. You need  
anything?

She moans something that resembles a no. He lowers her sunglasses over her eyes and she's back asleep.

INT. GROCERY STORE, CHECK-OUT LINE - DAY

Danny holds milk and powdered donuts. ZZZZ. His pager glows.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - AFTERNOON

Danny's on the phone -

DANNY  
 Hey-hey Boom-man, it's Cleveland D.  
 Got your page. I'm uh, across from  
 TGIF's like you said -

THE SCREECH OF TIRES! Danny turns. Outside, a Mercedes pulls up beside his Porsche. CLARENCE AND GARY BURST OUT! Gary takes a crow bar to the Porsche windshield and - SMASH!

Danny ducks. Clarence is coming towards him. He tries to hold the door shut. A struggle ensues which Danny quickly loses. Clarence storms inside. Danny YELLS as Clarence PUMMELS him. The yelling ends when a PALE-HORSE PUNCH CONNECTS WITH HIS NOSE and he collapses like a fold-up chair.

INT. BOOMER'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

DANNY'S FACE. Badly bruised. His right eye is black-blue, swollen shut. Through his left eye he's looking at Boomer, Clarence and Gary as though peering through a dense fog.

BOOMER  
 Half our clients freebase, Danny.  
Half. Did you really think we  
 weren't gonna find out?

Danny's head smarts and he winces.

BOOMER (CONT'D)  
 How you were ever a name in  
 Cleveland, I'll never know. But me  
 and you, Danny, we're done. Over.  
 Don't even fucking think about  
 moving product in this town again.

EXT. NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Danny sits in a chair at the kitchen table, head tilted back, two Q-tips crammed up his nose, ice pack on his eye.

Nancy's across the table in a flowing white nightgown.

NANCY  
 - he said that? *Over*? He used that  
 exact word?

DANNY  
 And *done*. Over and done.

NANCY  
 But did it sound like he meant it?  
 Or was he trying to scare us?

DANNY  
 No, no they seemed pretty certain.

Nancy does a short line, lights a cigarette. Stands. Paces.

NANCY  
 You know, fuck them. I'm sorry.  
 They're scared of us, Danny.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
 We're bigger than all of them now  
 and they think they can just push  
 us out of town. Well we won't go  
 away so easily will we?

DANNY  
 (very willing to go away)  
 Well, y'know, I wouldn't mind -

NANCY  
 (on a roll)  
 We'll cut them out. That's what  
 we'll do.

DANNY  
 How we gonna do that, Nancy?

NANCY  
 (stops pacing)  
 ...We'll go right over em'.

UNDER DANNY'S TWIN BED - A SINGLE SHOEBOX SLIDES TOWARDS US

Danny opens the lid and takes out the last two remaining  
 stacks of cash Nancy hasn't yet had time to spend.

INT. PORSCHE TURBO 911, MOVING - CHICAGO - DAY

Watching out her window, Nancy marvels at the height of the  
 buildings towering over a canopy of changing leaves. The  
 sidewalks bustling with activity. The babel of trains and  
 taxi horns. Everyone's going somewhere.

Danny tilts his head to see out the cobwebbed windshield.

INT. THE DRAKE HOTEL, MICHIGAN AVENUE, CHICAGO - AFTERNOON

Five-star luxury. Nancy and Danny check-in. Receptionist  
 can't help but stare at Danny. That hideous black eye.

INT. THE DRAKE HOTEL, ROOM 312 - AFTERNOON

Nancy applies her make-up in front of the mirror. Her  
 cocktail dress is uncommonly understated: it's the best she's  
 looked in a while.

Danny sits on the bed, shucking pistachios, watching TV.

DANNY  
 Why won't you tell me who you are  
 meeting with?

She ignores the question. He appears in the bathroom doorway.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
 (like a child)  
 C'mon. Who're you meeting with,  
 Nancy?

NANCY  
Just a friend... Order some room  
service if you're hungry.

DANNY  
(excited by this)  
Room service, really?

She hands him the menu.

NANCY  
You just pick up the phone and tell  
them exactly what you want.

She grabs her purse and exits the room.

INT. THE DRAKE HOTEL, HOTEL RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

Elegance personified. Nancy sits at a table for two, waiting. Glancing around at the LAWYERS and BUSINESS-TYPES and their dainty, bird-like WIVES, she feels a bit like an uninvited guest. Oddly vulnerable, vaguely uneasy.

A shadow comes over her shoulder. JIMMY KEENE leans close to her ear. Gives the place a once-over: not his style.

JIMMY  
Let's get out of here.

VRRMMM -

EXT. ASTOR STREET, CHICAGO'S GOLD COAST - AFTERNOON

JIMMY'S HARLEY SOFTAIL cruises down the Elm-canopied road, Nancy's arms wrapped around his waist as she watches in awe of the stately residences: historic, aristocratic luxury.

She squeezes him tighter as the bike slips into the alley of an Art Deco mansion.

INT. JIMMY KEENE'S MANSION, BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

Nancy washes her hands under the british nickle faucet of a one-slab Corinthian marble sink. She finds her game face in the antique mirror, and lets her eyes wander across Jimmy's meticulously laid out Italian toiletries. The only anomaly in the scene, a supermarket container of AQUA VELVA. Nancy lifts it to her nose and inhales deeply.

INT. JIMMY KEENE'S MANSION, GREAT ROOM - SAME

A FIRE ROARS in the free-standing fireplace. Nancy appraises every appointment, runs a finger along each curve.

Unbeknownst to Nancy, Jimmy enters from the back of the room and stops to observe her "shop." She mischievously tilts the mantel mirror askew and he smiles.

JIMMY (O.C.)  
How much, Nancy?

But she's still appraising the room casually, as if Jimmy's come to her for a favor and not vice versa

NANCY

Just enough to get us started again... Danny made the mistake of getting too big. Now we're being bullied out of town. But I guess you already know that.

JIMMY

A version of it.

NANCY

If it means anything, he's leaving Kankakee for Cleveland. Where he made his name.

JIMMY

(laughs, off look)  
Don't bullshit me, Nancy. I know Cleveland. Its names. And I've never heard of any Danny Edwards.

If she's caught she doesn't let on.

NANCY

It's a one-time thing, Jimmy. If you don't want to be a part of it you're free to say 'no.'

JIMMY

I don't want any part of it.

A DOOR OPENS and a BUSINESS ASSOCIATE emerges from a nearby STUDY (we recognize him from Boomer's party).

BUSINESS ASSOCIATE

Jimmy. It's California.  
(sees Nancy)  
You want them to call back?

JIMMY

(shakes his head 'no')  
Just give me a minute.

Associate nods and closes the door.

Jimmy looks at Nancy, thinking, and then walks out of the room. Only now does Nancy allow her doubt to show. But not for long. Jimmy returns a moment later, crosses to Nancy and hands her a piece of paper.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

There's a number inside. If shit goes South with your boyfriend -

NANCY

That won't happen -

JIMMY

If it does...and they offer him a deal for this guy... You tell him to take it.

NANCY

One of these days, I'm gonna have a score even you can't pass up.

JIMMY

Do me a favor: don't tell me about it. Just call me when it's all over and I'll buy you a drink.

They're close. Very close. Enough to kiss. She looks good. And he notices in a way that's different than before.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

There's a cab outside.

He hands her some cash for the fare. She accepts and walks towards the door. Before she's gone -

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Nancy...

She stops, but doesn't turn to him. He doesn't know what to say, or maybe he does, just not how to say it. Finally -

NANCY

I've gotta go. Danny's waiting.

And she leaves.

INT. TAXI, MOVING - LATE AFTERNOON

Nancy lights a cigarette, lowers the window. It was harder than she thought, seeing him. Much harder.

She opens the piece of paper. There's a name and a phone number - **GERRY TIFFANY, # 312-215-7789.**

INT. THE DRAKE HOTEL, ROOM 312 - NIGHT

CLOSE ON THE PHONE PAD. Nancy dials the number from Jimmy's paper and hands the phone to a nervous Danny.

DANNY

Hi there, is this Gerry?

INT. GERRY TIFFANY'S HOUSE, CHICAGO, BACK PATIO - DAY

An ASIAN MAIL-ORDER BRIDE cleans the pool with a skimmer.

GERRY TIFFANY, 50, sits in a patio chair. He looks like the manager of a discount electronics store. He's staring at Nancy and those crossed legs. She's allowing it, but clearly getting bored of the dolt as her cigarette dies away.

GERRY TIFFANY

(hasn't looked at Danny)  
I like you, Danny.

DANNY

Yeah? Wow thanks, Gerry.

Gerry leans forward to see if he can see up Nancy's skirt. She shifts to give him a better view. Not all, of course.

GERRY TIFFANY  
(nodding)  
A lot.

INT. GERRY TIFFANY'S OFFICE - QUICK DETAIL SHOTS

DANNY HANDS GERRY an envelope of cash and -

CLOSE ON A SAFE as Gerry spins the dial, turns the handle, removes a kilo of cocaine and -

DANNY TUCKS THE KILO OF COKE into a duffle bag and WE'RE -

IN GERRY TIFFANY'S DRIVEWAY as THE PORSCHE reverses out of Gerry's drive and FLIES down the road.

INT. PORSCHE 911 TURBO, MOVING - NIGHT

Danny drives, fretted by the still-cobwebbed windshield. Beside him, Cecil's excited.

CECIL  
- Boomer gon' be sorry he never  
listened! Northside gon' make us  
rich, Danny! I know it!

Danny watches the passing ghetto: dilapidated homes, people on stoops looking for trouble. Welcome to the Northside.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK -

INT. GHETTO HOUSE, NORTHSIDE - NIGHT

Cecil pushes the iron door open slowly, looks around.

TWO YOUNG BLACK CHILDREN sit on the couch passing a 2-Liter bottle of Mountain Dew between them. In the Lazy-Boy is an ENORMOUS WHITE WOMAN in an oversized t-shirt of a sinuous rollercoaster. All focused on the TV: *Cop Chases 19.*

CECIL  
Hi there. Alonso in?

Blank stares. Finally, the Enormous Woman BANGS on the wall behind her. Moments later, a tall, broad-shouldered black man, ALONSO, opens a bedroom door.

CECIL (CONT'D)  
There he is.

ALONSO  
Come on back.

Danny and Cecil enter THE BEDROOM and take a seat on a sofa.

Cecil small-talks Alonso while Danny's eyes wander. Bed sheets over the windows.

On the night stand, drug paraphernalia and a pistol. A PREGNANT BLACK WOMAN on the bed smokes a crack pipe, her eyes in some other orbit.

CECIL  
- Danny. Danny. Danny-man!

DANNY  
(snaps out of his gaze)  
Uh? What? What's that?

CECIL  
The shit, man. The shit.

Danny reaches into his jacket, hands Cecil an eight-ball. The Pregnant Woman's staring at him with those big stoned eyes, eyes that have seen a million things. He's sweating, uneasy.

INT. NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME, FOYER - NIGHT

Danny enters, visibly shaken by his visit to the Northside. He hangs his coat on the rack and calls upstairs.

DANNY  
Nancy? Nancy we need to talk about something.

NANCY (O.C.)  
I'm in my room.

DANNY  
Well, I need you down here. Now.

He waits...and waits. Finally he MARCHES UP THE STAIRS, tries her bedroom door. It's locked. He BANGS on it, hard.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Goshdangit Nancy! Open this door!

He SHAKES THE KNOB. Then - CLICK - the lock. He opens the door. Nancy's there in a silk chemise, eyes raised: *well?*

DANNY (CONT'D)  
I can't do it any more. And nothing you can say or do's gonna change my mind. That's all there is to it.

She evaluates him silently, carefully. Decides he's serious and goes digging into her mind's bag of tricks.

NANCY  
Okay.

DANNY  
...Okay?

NANCY  
If you can't do it, Danny, I'm not going to make you... Now come inside. Sit on the bed with me.

Nancy moves to the bed, sits, pats the space next to her indicating for Danny to sit.

Reluctantly, he steps inside and sits beside her on the bed. She switches on the TV with the remote, starts to run her hand through his hair. Rubs his neck and shoulders.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
I'm glad you're home. I missed  
you... Handsome Danny...

DANNY  
There was this girl, her freaking  
eyes were all nuts - and the kids -

NANCY  
You're just tired. We've had a long  
couple of days, haven't we? Want me  
to make it better?

He nods. Furtively, she opens the night stand drawer and produces a bottle of *Aqua Velva* (the very same bottle we saw in Jimmy's bathroom). She pours a bit into her hands, rubs it on Danny's neck; his ears, his cheeks, his hair. All over.

She puts the cologne back in the drawer and lies on the bed. Props her head on her hand.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Danny...  
(he turns to her)  
What are you waiting for?

He's waited so long for this and, as though pulled close by her eyes, he falls onto Nancy and ravishes her.

Reaching over to the night stand, she shuts off the light. Pulls Danny close, her head over his shoulder as she breathes in the *Aqua Velva*. Takes it deep into her lungs.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
(a thin whisper)  
...Jimmy...

INT. GHETTO HOUSE, KITCHEN, NORTHSIDE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON DANNY. Tired, stoned, sweating, but back at it.

Cecil watches as TWO BLACK MEN, 30s, sample some coke.

CECIL  
We got a deal or what, fellas? We  
got other stops still to make.

Fidgety, Danny stands abruptly.

FIRST BLACK MAN  
Hey hey - where the fuck you going?

DANNY  
I gotta piss.

INT. GHETTO HOUSE, BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Danny's taking a piss when - A COMMOTION SWELLS OUTSIDE -

MEN'S VOICES (O.C.)  
 POLICE! HANDS UP! HANDS IN THE AIR!  
 GET ON THE FUCKING GROUND FUCKHEAD!

Danny STARTLES, quickly buttons his pants. Some piss stains through. He moves to the door, opens it. CECIL'S in the hallway, face down, PLAINCLOTHES NARCOTICS SQUAD MEMBERS (led by the Two Black Men sampling the coke) handcuff him.

THE COPS SEE DANNY! He quickly shuts the door. Locks it. Moves to the window, slides it open and tries to wiggle out. His pants get caught. He PANICS as he tries to unhook them.

BOOM-BOOM-BOOM! THE DOOR'S BEING KICKED IN!

DANNY  
 Oh crap oh crap oh crap oh -

BANG! IT'S FLUNG OPEN! THE NARCOTICS SQUAD rushes in, WRESTLE DANNY TO THE GROUND. He WRITHES as they turn him over. Elbows and knees in his back as they handcuff him.

INT. NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

THE PHONE RINGS. Nancy tries to ignore it. Finally can't and reaches a hand to the night stand.

NANCY  
 Hello?...Who is this?...Who?...Oh,  
 what do you want, Danny?  
 (long beat)  
 You got what?

INT. FIRST TRUST BANK - THE NEXT MORNING

Nancy waits as a TELLER pecks away at her computer.

TELLER  
 I'm sorry, miss. Seems a freeze has  
 been placed on that account.

NANCY  
 Well un-freeze it.

Teller laughs. Nancy didn't think it was funny.

EXT. NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME - DANNY'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Nancy takes the shoeboxes out from under Danny's bed. One-after-another. All empty. She's getting angry.

INT. 'THE BLUE ROOM' NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

ON NANCY DANCING TO THE PULSATING MUSIC, her eyes fiercely in game-mode as she scopes BOOMER, CLARENCE and GARY nearby, dancing with a GROUP OF FUN-LOVING HOT GIRLS.

She DANCES her way towards them and positions herself directly in Boomer's sightline. Lifts her arms, gyrates her hips: anything to make herself stand out.

Boomer nudges Gary and Clarence. They stifle laughs. Nancy stares blankly, her mind trying and failing to process the feeling of being ignored. She's as naked as a snake.

DING-DONG -

INT. GERRY TIFFANY'S HOUSE, FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Gerry Tiffany, clad in a terrycloth robe, opens the door on Nancy in a short cocktail dress. She smiles coquettishly.

GERRY TIFFANY  
(looks her up-and-down)  
Oh fuck yeah, baby, you look hot.

He offers his hand. They walk across the foyer -

GERRY TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
What happened to Donnie?

NANCY  
He got boring.

GERRY TIFFANY  
Lucky me. What're you drinking?

NANCY  
A martini. Dirty.

Gerry bites his lip and VEERS to the bar.

GERRY TIFFANY  
Go on outside. Everyone's out back.

Nancy freezes. Clearly she expected to be alone.

NANCY  
Everyone?

Gerry presses a wall switch. ELECTRIC CURTAINS SEPARATE revealing the BACK PATIO. Around the pool, a raucous and weird scene. Older men (some naked) cavort in the pool with foreign women, barely 18. Lots of coke on the tables.

The mirth on Nancy's face melts into a scowl and -

INT. MCDONALD'S, BOOTH - AFTERNOON

- IT'S STILL A SCOWL as she sits across from Kit who is deeply intimidated by Nancy's dark mood and hopes to please as she opens her binder.

KIT  
- I'm sorry, Nanc. I didn't even, y'know, I heard about Danny, but, I didn't realize, all that money -

Nancy whirls her finger: *fuckin' get on with it, Kit.*

Kit offers a KANKAKEE C.C. NEWSLETTER, points to an event photo of a WHITE-HAIRED MAN she's labeled **Nancy! Nancy!**

KIT (CONT'D)  
Richard Dawes. E.S.Q.

MOVE IN ON THE PHOTO OF RICHARD DAWES, ESQ. as -

RICHARD DAWES IS STARING AT -

NANCY from across the MAIN BAR AT KANKAKEE CC and -

NANCY AND RICHARD DAWES ARE IN THE COAT ROOM -

behind the racks. He's kissing her neck, groping her.

NANCY  
Whoa whoa, take your foot off the  
gas a bit there.

But he's not paying attention as he grows aggressive, rough  
even. He tries sliding a hand up her dress. Nancy GRABS it.

RICHARD DAWES  
Oh for fuck's sake! Look at you.

NANCY  
...T'fuck does that mean?

He regards her sadly, as if she were the sole person in the  
world not in on the joke.

RICHARD DAWES  
...You're a slut.

Awareness dawns on Nancy. In a paroxysm of anger, she SLAPS  
RICHARD ACROSS THE FACE. Hard. Over and over -

NANCY  
FUCK-FUCKING-ASSHOLE-FUCKER -

He covers himself, finally FLAILS AN ARM which KNOCKS Nancy  
BACKWARD taking a rack of coats down with her. Looking at her  
atop the furs and minks, Dawes CHUCKLES: she's pathetic.

VOICES nearby. GUESTS APPROACHING. Dawes slips away.

TWO COUPLES enter. See Nancy struggling to her feet. They  
know her and turn their backs.

INT. CIRCLE K, MAGAZINE SECTION - MORNING

Nancy grabs magazine after magazine from the rack. Headlines  
include: The New, Wholesome You. Being His Girl Next Door.  
Getting Rid of the Bad Girl Within.

INT. MALIBU SUN SALON, WAITING AREA - AFTERNOON

Nancy's TAPPING her nails anxiously. Tear-out portraits of  
'wholesome girls' fanned out on the table before her.

STYLIST  
Nancy, honey, be patient.

Nancy SIGHS. Opens an '*Esquire*' from the salon's stock. Flips through the pages aimlessly, until...an article captures her interest. She leans forward...

CLOSE ON THE ARTICLE. WE SEE words: *\$1 million Ransom Paid. Young Socialite Buried, Kept Alive for 80 Hours. Family Paid Kidnappers.* AND PICTURES: High Society. A plywood box. A traumatized Young Girl returned to her Parents.

Nancy unwinding all of it.

INT. NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

THE NEW, WHOLESOME NANCY enters and begins to undress. The answering machine light blinks and she presses it.

ANSWERING MACHINE  
You have 78 New Messages.

DANNY'S VOICE  
Nancy, it's Danny -  
(delete)  
Hey there Nanc uh, it's Danny -  
(delete)  
It's me. Just uh, in jail here -  
(delete)  
Hi, Nancy. It's Danny...Danny  
Edwards calling for you. I guess uh  
you're out...again...

Bored, she leaves for the bathroom. On the empty room -

DANNY (O.C.)  
...I know you're mad at me, Nancy.  
And I want you to know that I'll do  
anything, anything, to make things  
right between us...

Nancy returns in a nightgown and sits on the bed. Suddenly very interested in what Danny has to say.

DANNY (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
Anyway, I got to talking with the  
State's Attorney about my  
situation. He offered to help me if  
I gave him some information about  
Gerry Tiffany.

Nancy smirks.

DANNY (O.C.) (CONT'D)  
And uh, well I guess it was helpful  
cause they reduced my charge and  
they're letting me out. Three more  
weeks and I'm a free bird. It'd be  
real good to see if you if you're  
around and...want to, y'know...

She reaches into her purse, and slides out the *Esquire*.

EXT. NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME - MORNING - 3 WEEKS LATER

A TATTERED FORECLOSURE NOTICE quivers in the bushes.

Nancy exits the home just in time to watch her Porsche being towed away by a REPO MAN. She looks in the driveway. All that remains are the Harley and Danny's old pick-up.

EXT. ILLINOIS STATE PRISON – AFTERNOON

Nancy sits on the open tailgate of the truck, moving this way and that, adjusting her pose.

THE PRISON GATES OPEN and Danny steps out. For a moment, the sun too bright, he doesn't notice Nancy. He looks around dumbly, like walking back in might be his best option.

NANCY  
Yoo hoo!

DANNY  
(squints to see her)  
Nancy? Is that you!?

NANCY  
Hurry up!

INT. NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME – ON DANNY MOVING

From empty room to empty room. All of the furniture is gone. Nancy can be heard busying herself in the kitchen.

DANNY  
– They took it all?

NANCY (O.C.)  
Everything. You didn't think things would just go back to the way they were, didja?

DANNY  
(yes)  
I guess not...

He enters THE KITCHEN where Nancy hands him a dull ham sandwich. Devoid of chairs, he sits on the island.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Where're we gonna live?

NANCY  
My mom said we could move-in with her until we get on our feet.

She sits beside him, offers the 'Jobs' section of the local newspaper and points to an ad she's circled.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
They're looking for a Sales Associate at *Schuler's Hardware*.

DANNY  
Y'know, I think it's time to get out of here. The whole town knows about me.

NANCY  
Knows what?

DANNY  
What I've done. That I've been in  
jail.

NANCY  
You really think a lot of yourself  
don't you?

Danny looks confused.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
No one cares about you, Danny.  
They're much too busy with their  
own problems.

DANNY  
I don't know, Nancy. I've been  
thinking a lot lately. About maybe  
heading back to Bedford. Giving  
*Odds and Ends* another shot.

NANCY  
The *handyman* thing?

DANNY  
(vulnerable)  
I'd really like it if you came with  
me. I know my folks can't wait to  
meetcha and my sisters are dying to  
hear about your days in New York -

NANCY  
I don't want to hear about New  
York! You're a quitter, Danny.

DANNY  
Quitter? No, no I'm a starter -

NANCY  
You're a quitter, Danny. You've  
come all this way and you're about  
to take a major step backwards.

DANNY  
You think going back to Bedford's a  
step back?

NANCY  
You just said so yourself. Going  
*back* to Bedford.

He's suddenly carried away by Nancy's manufactured sincerity,  
She moves in for the kill.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
What you need right now is  
stability. Look right there:  
*Schuler's has served the community*  
*since 1935*. Doesn't that seem a  
little more practical?

Danny bites into the sandwich, and then finally - nods.

INT. RISH HOME, FRONT DOOR - AFTERNOON

Connie's bursting with excitement as she holds the door open for Nancy and Danny carting their belongings in.

CONNIE  
- Oh I'm so happy, Nancy! Hi,  
Danny! So handsome!

She kisses his face behind a stack of Nancy's garments.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy reads a *Cosmo* sitting up in bed.

Danny walks in, hangs his towel, YAWNS. Moves to the bed and is about to climb in when...Nancy holds him off.

NANCY  
I don't think I'm ready for all  
that just yet.

DANNY  
Oh...sure...

She indicates an inflatable mattress box in the corner.

INT. SCHULER'S HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT

Danny, clad in a *Schuler's* vest and nametag, checks in with a PAIR OF CUSTOMERS he passes in the aisle -

DANNY  
Help you folks with anything?

*No-thank-yous.* He continues along, looking for an outlet for his do-it-yourself knowledge, but to no avail.

INT. RISH HOME, FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Danny slumps on the couch while Connie 'scrapbooks' photos from her salad days of modeling.

CONNIE  
This was my '62 spread in *Eaton's*.  
The year of the sweater dress.

IN THE KITCHEN, Nancy files her nails, keeping close watch on Danny and his burgeoning ennui.

INT. SCHULER'S HARDWARE STORE - AFTERNOON

Danny stacks bag after bag of peat moss.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)  
Cleveland Danny?

Danny turns. We recognize the TWO TEASED-HAIR BLONDES from when Nancy overheard them chatting in the club bathroom.

They're dressed for a hot night out, just-purchased keg bucket in hand.

DANNY  
Oh hey – Kelly right? And McKenzie?

BLONDE #1  
Do you, like...work here...?

DANNY  
Oh no, I mean – me? No way –

BLONDE #2  
Tell me about the NeverKink Hoses.

DANNY  
The never-what who?

He follows their eyes to a button on his vest: *Ask Me About Our NeverKink Hoses!*

DANNY (CONT'D)  
What's that all about –

By the time he looks up, they girls are off. Arm-in-arm, CHORTLING as they bounce out of the store. Into a running CORVETTE waiting by the entrance where they promptly let the LEATHER CLAD MALE DRIVER in on their discovery. He lowers his glasses, peers inside, incredulous –

LEATHER CLAD  
(big laugh)  
No-Fucking-Way! Cleveland D!?  
That's just sad.

A REV of the engine, and the CORVETTE roars off.

INT. RISH HOME, KITCHEN – NIGHT

ON AN UNTOUCHED DINNER PLATE: meatloaf, corn, Ore-Ida fries. Danny lethargically pokes at it with a fork.

CONNIE  
Not feeling so hot, sweetie? Or  
just don't like Momma's meatloaf?

Connie CHUCKLES. Danny's too depressed.

DANNY  
I'm gonna head up for the night.

He discards his plate in the sink and EXITS THE HOME.

Connie turns to Nancy. Nancy shakes her head sullenly.

NANCY  
While he was in jail, the men made  
him do certain...*things*.

CONNIE  
(knows those *things*)  
Oh dear.

NANCY  
Mmm hmm.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Danny's on the blow-up mattress, staring up at the ceiling.

DANNY  
Nancy...?

NANCY (O.C.)  
Go to sleep.

DANNY  
...Do you ever think about the way  
things used to be?

Across the room in her bed a twinkle comes to Nancy's face  
Danny's got a captive audience now as she rolls over and  
looks down at him.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Sometimes I think about it...  
walking into those clubs with you  
on my arm...

FLICK - Nancy turns on the lamp and, from a nearby stack of  
magazines, finds the *Esquire* and opens it at the bookmark.

NANCY  
Here. I want you to look at  
something, Danny. It's important.

She offers him the magazine.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
How big is Mr. Small?

DANNY  
Whaddaya mean how big?

NANCY  
His height.

DANNY  
I don't know. 5'10, 5'11.  
(starts reading)  
What...what is this...?

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, MOMENTS LATER

Danny BURSTS out of Nancy's bedroom, turbid and shaking his  
head. Nancy follows -

DANNY  
- Oh no. No, no, no, no.

NANCY  
What're you no-ing about?

Connie emerges from the bathroom, hair up in curlers, As-Seen-  
On-TV 'Abdomenizer' VIBRATING loudly around her waist.

CONNIE  
Hey! What's going on with you two?

Danny RUSHES down the stairs and out the front door.

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
(to Nancy)  
Something wrong, honey?

Nancy gesticulates: *he's lost his mind.*

NANCY  
Nightmares.

CONNIE  
Of those *men*?

Nancy nods, heads downstairs.

EXT. RISH HOME, SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Danny's WALKING in circles, rattled and trying to disabuse his mind. Nancy stands with her arms firmly crossed.

DANNY  
It's crazy, Nancy.

NANCY  
(obdurate)  
No it isn't. You said you'd do anything. I saved the message. Do you want me to play it back for you, Danny?

DANNY  
What I meant, Nancy, was I'd do anything within reason.

NANCY  
Ohhh, ohhh now you're choosing. Is that it? You'll do anything as long as anything is what you want. I see. I know your type.

Takes but a moment for her to produce the requisite tears.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
I can't believe I threw it all away.

DANNY  
...Threw what away, Nanc? I'm still here, we're still together -

NANCY  
Not us! My modeling career, Danny! They were waiting for me in New York, y'know! But I stayed faithful to our love. I believed your *stupid* messages, telling me how much you love me, how you'll do *anything* for me. Yeah, just keep talking, Danny. *Experience shows I can be convinced of anything.*

She SOBS and walks back inside the home.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

In preparation for Danny's inevitable return, Nancy removes a BORA-BORA RESORT BROCHURE from the night stand and sets it open on her lap.

KNOCK-KNOCK. Danny peeks his head in coyly.

NANCY  
I'm bored with you now. Go away.

He walks in anyway and takes a seat beside her. Slowly his eyes follow hers down to -

The three color slick advert, it opens to the image of a glamorous young woman reclining in a chaise on an impossibly white beach above the azure water of the famous atoll. In her hand, a SUNRISE COCKTAIL garnished with every color of the rainbow.

Nancy closes the brochure to reveal THE COVER of the thing, a picture of a COUPLE BEING MARRIED beneath an arbor of orchids against a backdrop of twin palm trees.

And scrawled in bold across the Top:

**NANCY AND DANNY...FOREVER!!**

Without realizing it, Danny's eyes drift over to the *Esquire*. A slight nudge from Nancy and he picks it up. Her arms find their way around his shoulders a bit like a hangman's noose, and drop down into his lap where she turns the pages until she finds the article.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
I miss it, too. Being on your arm.  
They all looked up to us. Everyone  
wanted to be like Nancy and Danny.  
(embarrassed chuckle)  
I used to practice writing my name.  
Over and over: Mrs. Danny Edwards.

DANNY  
I just don't want to hurt anyone.

NANCY  
Hurt? Jesus, Danny, what kind of  
girl do you think I am?

He cranes his neck to meet her eyes, ready to make some valuation. They're cherubic, shimmering.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
No one gets hurt. And we get back  
to where we were. That's what you  
want, isn't it? You said so.

DANNY  
But I...don't even...know how -

NANCY  
Ssshhh...I'll explain it all...

INT. SCHULER'S HARDWARE, LUNCH BREAK - AFTERNOON

Using the photo from the *Esquire* as his guide, Danny sketches a coffin-like box in a composition book.

NANCY (V.O.)  
You'll build the box, Handyman.  
Exactly like in the article.

OUTSIDE SCHULER'S, DANNY LOADS PLYWOOD IN HIS CARGO BED

EXT. RISH HOME, DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Danny LUGS the plywood sheets towards the garage.

NANCY (V.O.)  
I'll make the call to Mr. Small.

Looking up, he SEES Connie in a smock, painting a watercolor-by-number of a Unicorn under a waterfall. He freezes.

NANCY SMOKES AT 'THE YESTERYEAR RESTAURANT' BAR - NIGHT

EYES focused on SMALL eating dinner with a BRUNETTE, 50s. Clearly this is a date set-up by his mother, as Small is more interested in the passing Busboys.

NANCY (V.O.)  
*This is Claire Schneider from the Sheriff's Department. There's been a break-in at The Yesteryear.*

DANNY (V.O.)  
Oh, that's good, Nanc. Claire Schneider.

NANCY (V.O.)  
Shutup.

THE RISH HOME GARAGE DOOR RISES TO REVEAL NANCY - NIGHT

She looks around, expecting something that isn't here - she isn't happy about it.

NANCY (V.O.)  
*You need to come down right away.*

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Danny sits on the air bed, hangdog. Nancy paces, seething.

NANCY  
- Why don't I see any progress?

DANNY  
It's your Mom.

NANCY  
What about my mom!?

DANNY  
She's always here using the garage!

INT. CONNIE'S BEDROOM — LATER THAT NIGHT

Nancy CRIES crocodile tears. Connie sits beside her, consoling, brushing Nancy's hair.

NANCY  
— it's just that, with you always here, me and Danny don't have any, y'know, private time.

CONNIE  
Oh, honey. Why don't I ask Drew if I can pick up some night shifts...

NANCY  
And the garage, too.

CONNIE  
But that's my 'craft shack', Nanc. And I host the gals on Thursdays.

NANCY  
Oh here we go! Enough of the junk.

CONNIE  
(sotto, a bit hurt)  
Not junk...self-improvement...

NANCY  
Mom. It's junk. And if you hafta host, move it inside. Danny needs the space. He wants to try and bring in some extra money for us building birdhouses.

NANCY STROLLS THE SIDEWALK OUTSIDE SMALL'S HOUSE — AFTERNOON

Hidden behind sunglasses, making sure no one's around, she SNAPS photo-after-photo with a POLAROID INSTANT CAMERA.

NANCY (V.O.)  
When he steps into the garage,  
you'll be there waiting for him.

INT. RISH HOME, FAMILY ROOM — NIGHT (LATE)

Nancy watches a rerun of *Falcon Crest* from the couch. Connie breezes past on her way out to work. The instant the DOOR CLOSES, Nancy reaches for a WALKIE-TALKIE.

NANCY  
She's gone.

Seconds later, DANNY BOUNDS DOWN THE STAIRS and WE'RE —

## INSIDE THE GARAGE

HE MOVES Connie's EASEL, holding her work in progress, aside: The toll painting of an Emmett Kelly-like paint-by-number clown face that stares back at Danny.

LATER - Goggle-clad now, he GUIDES A JIGSAW through a carefully marked sheet of plywood and -

## BACK INSIDE NANCY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

THE DIGITAL ALARM CLOCK BLARES. Nancy lifts her sleep mask, a drowsy eye views the clock: **6:00 AM**. She grabs the walkie -

NANCY  
Her shift's over.

## INSIDE THE GARAGE, DANNY SHUTS OFF HIS JIGSAW

lifts his goggles, picks up his walkie -

DANNY  
Copy that, Nanc. Made some solid progress here tonight -

NANCY (O.C.)  
Good, now shut it down, hurry up!

DANNY  
Copy. Shuttin' 'er down.

DANNY PUTS HIS TOOLS AWAY - THROWS A TARPAULIN OVER THE BOX - LUGS THE BOX INTO A CORNER BEHIND THE HARLEY, OUT OF SIGHT.

## EXT. RISH HOME, FRONT DOOR - MORNING

Connie's returning from work just as Danny slogs from the house in his *Schuler's* garb. His eyes weary, sore, red.

CONNIE  
Someone's up early.

He GROANS lethargically and climbs inside the pick-up.

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
...Poor thing.

## NANCY'S BEDROOM, GLIDE ACROSS HER WALL-OF-FAME CORKBOARD

Now adorned with A COLLAGE OF POLAROID PHOTOS: various angles of SMALL'S HOUSE, *THE YESTERYEAR*, SMALL'S MERCEDES, etc...

Stepping up to the board, Nancy pins on an advertisement of *LETHAL WEAPON*. PUSH IN ON MEL GIBSON'S HANDGUN as -

NANCY (V.O.)  
You'll need a gun, Danny.

DANNY DRIVES HIS PICK-UP THROUGH THE NORTHSIDE

DANNY (V.O.)  
A gun!? What for?

NANCY (V.O.)  
Intimidation.

INT. GHETTO HOUSE (ALONSO'S HOUSE), NORTHSIDE - NIGHT

Alonso digs through a box in the closet. Stands now and offers Danny a 9MM PISTOL. Danny appraises its heft.

DANNY  
(clueless, nodding)  
Got a nice weight to it, y'know.

GARAGE, DANNY ASSEMBLES THE CUT WOOD, HAMMERS DOWN NAILS  
and we're beginning to see that a box is taking shape -

NANCY (V.O.)  
*Take Route 102 out to Heiland Road,  
you'll say.*

NANCY'S MAZDA 929, MOVING - A RURAL AREA OUTSIDE KANKAKEE

Route 102. Passing corn fields, silos, barns. A street sign emerges: Weichert North Road. Pulls to the shoulder. Looks down the secluded dirt road flanked by heavy woods. SNAP!

NANCY (V.O.)  
That's where I'll meet you.  
That's where we'll hide him.

Across the street, Nancy watches an ELDERLY FARMER amble the rows of his corn field, teasing the silks, gauging them for the harvest.

INSIDE SCHULER'S HARDWARE STORE, QUICK DETAIL SHOTS OF DANNY

Lifting items: EXHAUST HOSES. LIGHTBULBS. A 12-VOLT MOTOR. WIRE MESHING. A MINIATURE FAN. A DIGITAL TIMER SWITCH.

GARAGE, DANNY PARTITIONS OFF A COMPARTMENT WITH WIRE MESHING  
at one end of the box and INSTALLS A 12-VOLT MOTOR INSIDE.

AT THE OPPOSITE END, DANNY SAWS OUT 6 INCH CIRCLES  
and tests their size against the INTAKE AND EXHAUST HOSES.

INT. RISH HOME, UPSTAIRS BATHROOM – NIGHT

Cloaked in a BLACK MOCK TURTLENECK, SWEATPANTS, GLOVES, and MOTORCYCLE HELMET with tinted visor, Danny stands before the mirror, rehearsing.

DANNY  
Listen to me and no one gets hurt.  
(more earnest)  
Listen to me, palzone, and nobody –

NANCY (O.C.)  
Straighten your shoulders.

Nancy sits on the lip of the bath, painting her toenails.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Add a *fuck* or *fucker*. I'll shove  
*this gun up your asshole, fucker.*

DANNY  
Oh I don't know, Nancy.

NANCY  
(tired, shoos him away)  
Fine. Go practice somewhere else.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, MOMENTS LATER

Danny exits the bathroom, MUMBLING to himself under the bulky helmet as he WALKS DOWN THE STAIRS –

DANNY  
...maybe I don't wanna shove it..up  
your asshole...

...INTO THE KITCHEN...where he opens the refrigerator. Takes out the milk and chocolate syrup. As he mixes the two –

DANNY (CONT'D)  
...How would you feel if someone  
asked you to shove it in your ass?  
I bet you wouldn't like it...

He lifts his visor to have a taste when...HIS EYES VIEW THE FAMILY ROOM: CONNIE and her 'Craft Club' gals. Fifteen or so DIVORCEES and SEPTUAGENARIANS staring right at him. Wide-eyed, disturbed.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Oh hey... Hi there...

ON CONNIE, deeply concerned.

DETAILS SHOTS – NANCY PHOTOGRAPHS PAY PHONES (PEMBROOKE)

– The Mazda rolls into a *Phillips 66*, Nancy rolls down the window – SNAP!

NANCY (V.O.)  
We'll record his voice and use it  
to make the ransom calls...

- The Mazda rolls into a *Sunoco* - SNAP!

NANCY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Mother, it's Stephen. I've been  
 kidnapped. I'm going to be buried  
 alive.*

- The Mazda rolls into a *Circle K* - SNAP!

NANCY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*I'll remain here until a million  
 dollars cash has been paid.*

OUTSIDE THE KANKAKEE COUNTRY CLUB - AFTERNOON

ELAINE SMALL exits with a CLIQUE OF AFFLUENT WOMEN. They share casual farewells and Elaine moves into the lot.

NANCY (V.O.)  
*Don't involve the authorities.  
 You're being watched.*

She looks confused, as if she can't remember where she parked. A FRIEND nears, directs Elaine to her Cadillac.

PAN TO - Nancy watching from inside her Mazda.

NANCY TRAPES THROUGH EAGLE MUNICIPAL PARK

surveying the BALL FIELDS, CONCESSIONS STAND, and the like.

NANCY (V.O.)  
*Drive the money to Eagle Municipal  
 Park. There's a dumpster behind the  
 concessions stand.*

GARAGE, DANNY HOOKS A MINIATURE FAN UP TO THE 12-VOLT MOTOR along with a LIGHT BULB which glows yellow.

NANCY (V.O.)  
*When the money's there, they'll  
 call and tell you where to find me.*

He tests the fan. It spins.

NANCY (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Simple right?

MALE (V.O.)  
 Hmmmm hmm.

NANCY (V.O.)  
*By then we'll be on a plane, flying  
 over Anguilla, looking down at the  
 Cap Juluca.*

EXT. WHITEHALL HOTEL CHICAGO - AFTERNOON

The well-to-do emerge from late model BMW's and Mercedes.

INT. WHITEHALL HOTEL, LOUNGE, - SAME

PUSH IN ON NANCY, smoking a cigarette as she eye-fucks a BUSINESSMAN having a drink with his WIFE across the room. He's game and eye-fucks her right back.

NANCY (V.O.)

One day we'll pass him somewhere.  
Who knows, maybe we'll be in  
Chicago by then. Our eyes will meet  
and he won't know a single thing.

A HAND on Nancy's shoulder. She looks up -

INT. RISH HOME, GARAGE - NIGHT

- OVER THE TOP OF A MAGAZINE, Nancy watches Danny as he connects the DIGITAL TIMER SWITCH to the 12-VOLT MOTOR. He's tired, fading fast. Sensing this, she lowers her *Elle*.

NANCY

What's that?

DANNY

This? Timer switch. Tells the motor  
when to run and when to shut off.

NANCY

(indulging him)

Wowww. Seems so complicated.

DANNY

Ah, I used to install a ton'a  
these. People programming their AC,  
the exterior lights while they're  
away.

(ready to brag now)

I guess it is a little tricky. You  
hafta wire the timer into the motor  
here like this...

Nancy watches as he -

CONNECTS the COLORED WIRES of the TIMER SWITCH into the motor. Opens up the FACE revealing a DISPLAY and a series of buttons: **Day, Time, +, -**.

DANNY (CONT'D)

...Then program in how often you  
want the fan to run. I think for  
us, about every fifteen minutes  
should keep the air moving -

NANCY

Why not just run it the whole time?

DANNY

Motor could burn out, battery could  
die. But the timer here, couple'a  
these guys...

Opening his palm, he reveals two tiny, disk-like batteries.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
...and it's good for about a month.

NANCY  
And you can set that for *any* time?

DANNY  
(swaggering)  
24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

NANCY  
How about...Wednesday.

He punches the buttons: Day, Time, +, -. Shows Nancy.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
Friday? Say...11 AM?

Danny punches again, quicker now, showing-off: Day, Time, +, -. Holds up the display.

DANNY  
Recognize that date?  
(she doesn't)  
It's my birthday, goofy.

NANCY  
Oh. Right. We'll celebrate in  
Anguilla then.

He likes the sound of that. Nancy smiles -

NANCY (CONT'D)  
I'm so lucky I have you, Danny.

He beams like he just won the Lotto.

RISH HOME, THE GARAGE DOOR RISES ON NANCY AND DANNY - NIGHT

THEY LOAD THE WOODEN BOX INTO THE CARGO BED  
of the pick-up truck and cover it with blankets.

WEICHERT NORTH ROAD - NIGHT

as Danny's truck turns down the remote dirt road.

EXT. SECLUDED PATCH OF WOODS (BURIAL SITE) - SERIES OF SHOTS

- Guided by NANCY'S FLASHLIGHT, Danny LUGS the 8ft long box.  
Nancy measures her steps -

NANCY  
Thirty-one, two, three, four -

- Danny shakes a CAN OF SPRAY PAINT, marks an 'X' on a tree.

- FROM A DISTANCE, a FLOOD LIGHT has been hung from a limb  
and it shines down on a shirtless DANNY DIGGING A DEEP HOLE.

— A CLOSER ANGLE: Nancy stands outside the light, hidden in the darkness, watching Danny sweat as she smokes.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
We'll do it tomorrow.

Danny stops momentarily. Then keeps digging.

INT. RISH HOME, GARAGE — NIGHT? MORNING?

Danny's obsessively reviewing the wooden box one final time. Fan, time switch, 12V motor, light bulb, the intake and exhaust hoses which will bring air from above ground.

CONNIE (O.C.)  
Danny?

Danny peers above the box. Connie stands in the doorway staring. HE'S BUSTED. She's coming towards him now —

CONNIE (CONT'D)  
What's...what's going on out here?

DANNY  
Well um uh, this is a uh uh —

NANCY (O.C.)  
Mom!

Connie startled, turns to see Nancy suddenly behind her.

CONNIE  
Oh. Hi, Nancy. I heard banging.

NANCY  
(looking over her shoulder  
and whispering)  
...it's a surprise. Danny's making  
a lemonade stand. For the twins two  
doors down.

Connie could cry: he's coming around! She hugs him tightly.

CONNIE  
Oh Danny! I knew the fog would lift.  
(feels the fan's wind)  
Look at that! There's even a fan to  
keep them cool, Nancy!

She kisses his forehead, smiles proudly then heads inside.

Nancy looks at Danny: his face a tableau of fear and relief.

NANCY  
The alarm didn't go off. Come to  
bed. Try to sleep a little while.

INT. NANCY'S ROOM — EARLY MORNING

Lying in bed beside Nancy, unable to sleep, Danny stares at the corkboard, a veritable blueprint for their plan. The windows are open and the Fall breeze flutters the photos.

As a precaution against his ambivalence, Nancy has placed the resort photo in the center of it all.

She wraps her arms around him and pulls him close.

A CAR DOOR SLAMS -

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - VIEW ON THE WINDOW

Nancy pulls the curtain back. WATCHES Connie's Ford reverse out of the drive. Turns back to Danny sitting on the bed, uncomfortable as a child who needs to use the bathroom.

NANCY  
Get dressed.

A PHONE BOOTH, PEMBROOKE, PHILLIPS 66 - NIGHT (LATE)

Nancy steps inside, deposits a quarter, punches the keys.

NANCY  
Mr. Small?...Sorry to wake you so late, this is Officer Claire Schneider from the Sheriff's Department...I know it's late, sir, but there's been a break-in at The Yesteryear Restaurant -

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Small's in bed, half-asleep, phone to his ear.

SMALL  
- Is there any damage?...Why can't you can't tell me anything? I'm the owner...Oh for chrissakes -

He hangs up the phone, looks at the clock: **2:31 AM**.

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, GARAGE - **2:45 AM**

DARKNESS. Then...A RECTANGLE OF LIGHT as Small opens the house door, depresses the garage door switch.

THE DOOR RISES. Light floods the space revealing...DANNY IN THE ALL-BLACK ENSEMBLE. Crouched like a frightened alien who crash-landed nearby and made its way here for shelter.

Small steps down, nears the Mercedes.

Danny SPRINGS to his feet. An absurd image reminiscent of an ill-conceived mascot for a fledgling sports team.

DANNY  
Gettindaker falzone gettindaker -

Under the helmet, his voice is insensible underwater talk.

Small STARTLES, turns back. SEES Danny; the motorcycle helmet, the 9MM in his hand.

SMALL  
What - what is this - who are - ?

DANNY  
GETTINDAKER! NOW! NOW!

Danny pulls open the driver's door and PUSHES Small inside.  
He slides in the backseat.

INT. SMALL'S MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

SMALL  
What do you want? Why are -

DANNY  
Dake Route IOU tout ta Thailand.

SMALL  
I...I can't hear you.

DANNY  
Dake I-O-U tout to Thailand!

Small's face wrinkles into a question mark.

Danny flips the visor up.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Goddangit! Take Route 102 out to  
Heiland Road. Wouldja listen!?

SMALL  
What's all the way out there?

Danny TRAINS the gun on Small, flips the visor down.

DANNY  
Just whoa.

Small starts the car. EASY LISTENING JAZZ on the radio.

INT. SMALL'S MERCEDES, MOVING DOWN ROUTE 102 - **3:00 AM**

THE EASY JAZZ belies the tempest inside Small's head, growing  
in fury the deeper and darker into the country they advance.  
He STUDIES Danny in the rearview mirror.

EXT. WEICHERT NORTH ROAD - **3:25 AM**

DANNY (O.C.)  
Turn here.

The Mercedes slowly turns down the dirt road.

INT. MERCEDES, MOVING, WEICHERT NORTH ROAD - SAME

The car progresses a rocky jaunt. The dirt road beset by  
dense, dark woods. No one will hear you scream out here.

DANNY  
Pull over. Turn the car off and  
hand me the keys.

Small does just that. Danny takes the keys, hands Small a set of handcuffs.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Put those on.

Small fumbles, finally gets the cuffs on. In the rearview, he WATCHES Danny tie a BANDANA. His eyes size up the environs: these woods, this road, the dark figure in the backseat. His mind searches denouements. All of which end badly.

SMALL  
What are you going to do to me?

Reaching over the seat, Danny attempts to pull the bandana over Small's eyes. Small WRITHES. AN AWKWARD STRUGGLE ENSUES and in the struggle SMALL GLIMPSES DISTANT HEADLIGHTS CRESTING A RISE. This is his chance.

HIS HANDS MOVE TOWARD THE CAR LOCK, LIFT THE LOCK AND —

EXT. MERCEDES/WEICHERT NORTH ROAD — SAME

— SMALL BURSTS OUT! TAKES OFF TOWARD THE APPROACHING HEADLIGHTS. Throws his cuffed hands in the air!

SMALL  
HEY! STOP! STOP! HELP!

DANNY CHASES. TRIPS on his own feet and FALLS FLAT ON HIS FACE, CRACKING HIS VISOR. Gets up dizzily, keeps running, clutching a pulled hamstring.

SMALL'S HEADING RIGHT AT THE HEADLIGHTS. FLAILING HIS ARMS!

THE PICK-UP TRUCK SCREECHES TO HALT an inch from Small.

Small rounds the passenger's side. Tries the door. Locked.

SMALL (CONT'D)  
Open up! I've been kidnapped!

Looks up at the driver...IT'S NANCY. Shocked, frightened, wide-eyed. This Was Not The Plan.

SMALL (CONT'D)  
(SHAKING the handle)  
Lemme in! Lemme in GODDAMNIT!

Danny's approaching like an oversized bobblehead. HE FIRES A WARNING SHOT IN THE AIR! The POP stuns his ears. He ducks.

SMALL (CONT'D)  
Open the door YOU BITCH!

Then...Small's eyes narrow. HE KNOWS: SHE'S IN ON IT.

NANCY FLOORS THE TRUCK! IT TAKES OFF —

THROWING SMALL FROM THE VEHICLE! HE LANDS HARD ON THE GROUND.

As the pick-up FLIES PAST, Danny glimpses Nancy inside. White like she's seen a ghost. The truck disappears. Danny pivots to Small. Prostrated. Out-of-breath. Gash above his eye.

EXT. SECLUDED PATCH OF WOODS (BURIAL SITE) - NIGHT

9MM pressed in his back, Danny leads a staggering, whimpering and blindfolded Small through the woods.

The 'X' marked tree comes into view. Danny stops.

DANNY  
Turn around.

Small abides and Danny lifts his blindfold, hands him a sheet of paper on which a script has been written.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Read it when I say.

SMALL  
(exhausted, reading)  
*This is...Stephen...Mother -*

DANNY  
Wait wait wait - I didn't say.

Danny removes a MICROCASSETTE RECORDER from his sweatshirt pouch. Presses 'record', waits for the cassette to turn, and cues Small.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Annnd...rolling.

SMALL  
*...This is Stephen, Mother.*

EXT. SECLUDED PATCH OF WOODS, WEICHERT NORTH ROAD - 4:00 AM

Danny emerges from the woods. SEES the pick-up at a distance. Inside: the orange glow of Nancy's cigarette.

SMALL (V.O.)  
*Listen to me. This is not a joke.  
I've been kidnapped and handcuffed  
deep inside the woods.*

INT. SMALL'S MERCEDES, MOVING - ROUTE 102 - 4:25 AM

IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR, Danny WATCHES the headlights of the pick-up trailing. There's not another car on the road.

SMALL (V.O.)  
*I'm being buried inside a box.*

The sedan ROCKS as it turns off the road and plunges into a FIELD OF TALL GRASS. Blades assault the windshield. Danny drives a distance, then cuts the engine.

SMALL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*I will remain buried until you pay  
 a ransom of \$1 million dollars.  
 Cash.*

He steps from the car, TOSSES THE KEYS and RUNS BACK THROUGH THE TALL GRASS to the PICK-UP WAITING ON THE SHOULDER.

SMALL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*You will be called again at 10 AM  
 with instructions on where to drop  
 the money. Please stay by the  
 phone. Once the money has been  
 collected you will be told my  
 location.*

SECLUDED PATCH OF WOODS, BURIAL SITE (EARLIER)

Small's finished reading the script and Danny leads him for a few yards until they reach the edge of the hole. It's dug so there's a small slope leading down to the bottom, where the open wooden BOX waits. This is the first time Small has seen any of it and he reacts accordingly, violently throwing himself back up against Danny.

SMALL  
 No. NO! NO! PLEASE! NO!

The men struggle against one another. It all stops when -

VOICE (O.C.)  
 Gimme the gun.

IT'S NANCY. She steps forward, takes the gun from Danny and PUTS IT TO SMALL'S TEMPLE. Her finger hooks the trigger and for a moment it looks as though she might fire...

NANCY  
 Get down there before I put a hole  
 in your head.

He believes her. It's her eyes. Full of wild, insidious light.

MOMENTS LATER, THE HOLE

Danny lays A SHAKING SMALL inside the box. SHUTS THE LID, LOCKS THE HATCHES. Looking up, Nancy peers over the rim. Her direful stare focused directly on him. She WALKS AWAY.

He OPENS the compartment at the top of the box. Inside is the 12-Volt Motor and the Digital Time Switch. Using the buttons, he sets the time switch. The MOTOR HUMS and -

INT. THE WOODEN BOX - SAME

IT'S SO FUCKING DARK IN HERE. SMALL STARTS TO HYPERVENTILATE.

THE FAN BEGINS TO TURN. Small gulps the air like water in a desert.

THE LIGHT GLOWS YELLOW. His eyes dart in all directions. Above his head, wire meshing houses the fan. AND SOMETHING AT HIS FEET. He strains to reach down and picks up a brown bag. DUMPS IT: water, apples, Hershey bars.

SMALL (V.O.)  
*Do not attempt to contact the  
 authorities as someone is watching  
 you right now. I swear to God.*

TOOSH. TOOSH. TOOSH. THE DIRT. TOOSH. TOOSH. TOOSH.

SMALL BANGS HIS KNUCKLES AGAINST THE LID. BANG! BANG! BANG!

DANNY

the hole is filled now, Danny checks the intake/exhaust hoses protruding from the ground, bringing air. They're clear.

BANG! BANG! SMALL BANGING! The ground trembles underfoot.

INT. DANNY'S PICK-UP TRUCK, MOVING - **4:45 AM**

THE GLINT OF A SPEED LIMIT SIGN shakes Danny from his gaze. He checks the speedometer to make sure he complies.

In the passenger seat, Nancy smokes and stares blankly out her window. Knees pulled to her chest. Shaking.

NANCY  
 You were supposed to have the  
 blindfold on. That was the plan. He  
 saw me...He saw my face...

A FREIGHT TRUCK roars past going the opposite direction.

INT. RISH HOME, FRONT DOOR - **5:15 AM**

Nancy enters and RUSHES up the stairs.

Moments later, Danny steps inside, hears Nancy's door SHUT.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy lies in bed, facing the wall. Inconsolable.

THE DOOR OPENS. Danny sits beside her.

DANNY  
 I'm gonna fix this, Nancy. I know I  
 messed up the plan but I'm gonna  
 fix it... I love you...

She won't look at him.

INT. DANNY'S PICK-UP TRUCK, MOVING - **5:40 AM**

NEWSRADIO STATION to NEWSRADIO STATION. Danny switches the dial, paranoid that maybe his name will be mentioned.



TEENAGE CLERK  
Your visor's totally fucked, man.

INSIDE THE PHONE BOOTH, DANNY INSERTS THE QUARTER

ELAINE'S BEDROOM

The RINGING stirs Elaine this time.

ELAINE SMALL  
Stephen? Stephen answer that.

Grudgingly, she sits up.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY — MOMENTS LATER

THE PHONE RINGS as Elaine plods down THE ABSURDLY LONG HALL.  
Up ahead: a phone on a console table. Before she arrives —

ANSWERING MACHINE  
*You have reached The Small —*

Elaine SIGHS, begins the trek back to her bedroom.

INSIDE THE PHONE BOOTH

Danny SMASHES the phone against the cradle. Over and over.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

The PHONE RINGS again.

ELAINE SMALL  
Oh, for God's sake.

Elaine walks back toward the console table. Just as the call  
is about to go to the answering machine —

ELAINE SMALL (CONT'D)  
Hello?

INSIDE THE PHONE BOOTH

Danny presses 'play' —

VOICE RECORDER  
(Danny's voice)  
*Annd...rolling.*

Danny cringes.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

ELAINE SMALL  
Rolling what? Who is this?

VOICE RECORDER (O.C.)  
 (Small's voice)  
*It's Stephen, Mother -*

ELAINE SMALL  
 Stephen? You sound funny -

VOICE RECORDER (O.C.)  
*I've been kidnapped.*

ELAINE SMALL  
 What...who is...who's there?

PUSH IN ON ELAINE, listening intently to the recording.

ELAINE SMALL (CONT'D)  
 Oh my...oh no...wha...what...

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, MINUTES LATER - THESE SHOTS QUICKLY -

Elaine walks into Small's bedroom. Empty.

Elaine walks through the foyer. Empty.

Elaine looks in Stephen's office. Empty.

ELAINE SMALL  
 Oh, Dear God.

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

CLOSE ON A PHONE PAD. Elaine's hand presses 9 - 1 -

A tremor of fear courses through her. Deep, paralyzing fear. She looks around. Windows. Doors. Stairs. Someone's watching. She feels it. Her chest tightens. Knees shake. Can't breathe. She collapses into a chair. And hangs up the phone.

INT. HALL CLOSET - MOMENTS LATER

Elaine stands on her tiptoes to reach a RED DUFFLE BAG.

INT. BASEMENT STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER - MOVE WITH ELAINE

down the basement stairs with the duffle bag, across the floor, into the WINE CELLAR where she separates two TALL STORAGE RACKS revealing a VAULT DOOR. Punches a code on the keypad. CLICK. Turns the spindle wheel handle and WE'RE -

INSIDE THE VAULT

It's about the size of a large walk-in closet. Floor to ceiling shelving houses antiques, porcelain dolls, heirlooms, etc.

But there in the corner is a DEPOSITORY SAFE. Elaine sinks to her knees, masters the dial and...CLICK. THE DOOR OPENS. Stacks of bills inside. So many.

But as Elaine removes a stack, we see that these are no ordinary currency notes. Instead, they're GOLD CERTIFICATES.

Elaine stares at the stack in her hand. Then down at the duffel bag. She's thinking...

BACK IN THE KITCHEN

Elaine sits by the phone, waiting for instructions.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - 6:30 AM

Miraculously, Nancy's managed to fall asleep.

DANNY ENTERS THE ROOM, takes off his the black ensemble, leaves it in a pile along with the motorcycle helmet and the 9MM under that. He sets the alarm clock for **9:00 AM**. Kisses Nancy's forehead, sits on the air mattress with his back against the wall. He'll rest for a bit. That's all. Just an hour. He fights his eyes, but they move...towards...sleep...

EXT. SECLUDED PATCH OF WOODS (BURIAL SITE) - EARLY MORNING

MOVING OVER THE GROUND like a spreading fog...

...towards the BANG-BANG SOUND of SMALL PUNCHING THE LID...

...DOWN THROUGH THE GROUND...

...INTO SMALL'S CLAUSTROPHOBIC WOODEN BOX...

...SMALL POUNDS HIS FISTS AGAINST THE LID. His knuckles are bloody, the skin raw and peeling...

SMALL  
HELP ME! HELP I'M IN HERE! HELP!

ZZZ! ZZZ! A SPARK inside the wire meshing. THE FAN STOPS TURNING. A stream of smoke emanates. THE LIGHT GOES OUT.

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! THE EXHAUST HOSES ARE RIPPED AWAY!

SMALL STARTS TO GASP FOR AIR that isn't there. He begins to hyperventilate and -

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

THE ALARM SOUNDS on the digital clock: a rock station SHOUTS *Baltimora's 'Tarzan Boy.'*

DANNY'S EYES SHOOT OPEN. He exhales his nightmare. SEES his clothes in a pile. BUT THE HELMET'S GONE! SO IS THE GUN! Nancy's not in bed. Eyes move to the clock: **11:00 AM!** He SPRINGS to his feet like his ass is on fire.

INT. RISH HOME – MOMENTS LATER

DANNY RUSHES DOWN THE STEPS. Connie's in the family room dressed in a leotard. Bouncing on a mini-trampoline, HOOTING like an owl to a workout video.

DANNY  
Connie! CONNIE! CONNIE!

She looks up, removes the headphones.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Where's Nancy?

CONNIE  
She went out for a walk –

Just then, NANCY OPENS THE FRONT DOOR. Brushes past Danny as she walks up the stairs. He FOLLOWS, frantic –

DANNY  
Where were you!?

NANCY  
I needed some air.

DANNY  
I can't find the gun. Someone stole the gun, Nancy. Nancy someone –

NANCY  
(re: Connie)  
Sshh you idiot.

DANNY  
(quieter)  
Someone stole the gun.

They enter –

NANCY'S BEDROOM

'Tarzan Boy' still playing on the digital clock.

NANCY  
I did. I threw it in the river.

DANNY  
What'd you do that for?

NANCY  
Because you would've fucked it up.  
Liked you fucked up everything else.

She opens her closet, pulls out her suitcase

He notices the corkboard has been wiped clean.

DANNY  
Where are you going?

NANCY  
I don't know yet. I've always  
wanted to see Belize.

DANNY  
What about You-Know-Who?

NANCY  
You figure it out.

She RUMMAGES drawers. TOSSES garments onto her bed.  
The MUSIC is irritating Danny. He YANKS the plug out.

DANNY  
Wait for me...I can get the money.  
(off Nancy's laugh)  
I'll get it, Nancy...I'll get it  
and we'll go together. Trust me...

She considers him carefully a long moment. Then -

NANCY  
Hurry.

INT. PHONE BOOTH, PHILLIPS 66 (PEMBROOKE) - 12:00 PM

Danny slides in wearing a baseball cap and a fake mustache.  
It's very thick and makes him look oddly Mexican. He deposits  
a quarter, dials, ducks his head -

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

Elaine's sitting in the same chair. She answers the phone.  
(INTERCUT DANNY & ELAINE)

ELAINE SMALL  
Is this Eddie?

DANNY  
Who?

ELAINE SMALL  
Eddie!

DANNY  
This isn't Eddie.

ELAINE SMALL  
Are you sure?

DANNY  
Yes, Maam.

ELAINE SMALL  
(scared now)  
Who are you then? And where's my  
son?

Danny cups a hand to distort his voice. Sounds like a giant.

DANNY  
Drop the money at Eagle Municipal  
Park at the Concessions Stand -

ELAINE SMALL  
Where's. My. Son.

DANNY  
Eagle Municipal Park by the -

ELAINE SMALL  
Is that where Stephen is?

Thrown, Danny decides to lose the deep voice.

DANNY  
No, no!  
(patiently)  
This is the call where I tell you  
where to drop the money.

ELAINE SMALL  
Stephen said, *Mother, you'll*  
*receive a call telling you -*

DANNY  
I know what he said, I told him  
what to say, maam, and and I know  
that I'm late because the alarm  
clock didn't uh... Were you able to  
get the money? The uh the million  
dollars cash or are you still...  
putting that together - ?

ELAINE SMALL  
You Know God Damn Well I Got The  
Money!

DANNY  
No I didn't, I didn't know that,  
but if you do that's great. The uh  
drop-off is Eagle Municipal Park.  
There's a dumpster behind the  
Concessions Stand there -

ELAINE SMALL  
That's it. I'm calling the police.

DANNY  
No, no. No, no, no - if you call  
the cops like you're saying you're  
gonna call the cops, maam, I'm  
telling you right now, I Am Telling  
You Right Now, uhhh...  
(tries to think of some  
threatening, fails)  
You don't wanna do that.

ELAINE SMALL  
Do you really think you're going to  
just get away with this?

DANNY  
(beat, considers this)  
You got one hour.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
 (he's about to hang up  
 when, giant voice)  
 I'm watching you.

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

Elaine depresses the hook switch, then releases it. Her HANDS ARE SHAKING. She's ready to faint. She dials 911.

INT. KANKAKEE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - 12:15 PM

MOVE WITH A DEPUTY SHERIFF as he briskly crosses the floor of the station. KNOCKS on the Chief's door and peeks in.

CHIEF WITTEN, 60, tall, thin, bespectacled, sits behind his desk. Lifts his eyes from the paperwork.

DEPUTY  
 Call came in from Elaine Small.

SHERIFF WITTEN  
Small Small?

DEPUTY  
 Says her son's been kidnapped.  
 They've already made a couple of  
 ransom calls.

EXT. FBI REGIONAL OFFICE, SPRINGFIELD ILLINOIS - 12:30 PM

INT. FBI REGIONAL OFFICE - SAME

Seated at neighboring desks are FBI AGENTS MARK TILLER and TERRENCE DEACON, 30s, hale and hearty.

They eat take-out Chinese. Tiller mulls the Sports page.

AGENT TILLER  
 - Purdue's getting ten. At home.

AGENT DEACON  
 I'd bet the house and car on  
 Michigan. Purdue's dogshit.

AGENT TILLER  
 Ten points at home dogshit?

The PHONE RINGS. Tiller tucks it under his ear.

AGENT TILLER (CONT'D)  
 Tiller.

THE TA-TA-TA-TA OF HELICOPTER BLADES AS -

AN ASTAR HELICOPTER FLIES OVER CHICAGO - 1:00 PM

Tiller and Deacon inside the cabin.

INT. DANNY'S PICK-UP TRUCK, MOVING (WEICHERT ROAD) - SAME

Danny turns down the dirt road, is about to pull to the shoulder when...A FARM TRACTOR IN THE DISTANCE, coming down a hill towards him...

He panics, U-turns. FLIES BACK ONTO ROUTE 102.

EXT. GRASSLAND - 1:45 PM

STRONG WIND FLATTENS THE GRASS as the Astra descends.

Tiller and Deacon deplane and are greeted by Chief Witten.

AGENT TILLER  
(over the helicopter)  
AGENT TILLER! THIS IS AGENT DEACON!

INT. CHIEF'S CRUISER, MOVING - 2:00 PM

Tiller and Deacon are briefed by Witten -

AGENT TILLER  
- How many calls total then?

CHIEF WITTEN  
She seemed foggy on that. First call came in around 6 AM.

AGENT DEACON  
And she waits until noon to call you? Seems strange.

CHIEF WITTEN  
The woman's 85 years old. They told her she was being watched. When we knocked on the door she fainted.

The Cruiser rides past the iron gates of the Small home and the Queen Anne comes into view.

AGENT DEACON  
...Get a load of this place.

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - 2:30 PM

HIGH COMMAND for the KANKAKEE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT. DETECTIVES and DEPUTIES mill about, searching for clues of forced entry while TECHIES prep the phone for a tap.

At the center of the hullabaloo, Elaine sits exhausted and ashen-faced, the day's events have left her weak, shaken and disordered. There's a NURSE on hand checking her vitals.

WITTEN, TILLER & DEACON enter. Witten signals Elaine. Tiller and Deacon approach, slide chairs close.

AGENT TILLER  
Maam, I'm FBI Agent Tiller and this is Agent Deacon.

ELAINE SMALL  
I, I haven't done anything wrong -

AGENT TILLER  
I'm sure you haven't. We'd just like to ask you a few questions to help us along... The ransom call: you were told the money was to be left at Eagle Municipal Park, correct?

ELAINE SMALL  
Well, now there were two calls.

AGENT DEACON  
(off his notes)  
... right. The first from your son and the second from the kidnapper. (Elaine nods)  
And you told The Chief you were able to get the money together.

ELAINE SMALL  
Yes.

AGENT TILLER  
(incredulous)  
A million dollars cash, huh?

ELAINE SMALL  
Yes.

AGENT TILLER  
At what time approximately did you have the money?

ELAINE SMALL  
About...7AM, I guess...

AGENT DEACON  
Mrs. Small, the banks don't open until 9.

ELAINE SMALL  
I...didn't visit a bank. We keep a vault downstairs...

Tiller looks at Witten who promptly moves to investigate.

AGENT TILLER  
Where's the money *now*?

ELAINE SMALL  
With Eddie. I put it inside a bag and left it in the woods.

AGENT DEACON  
Eddie? Who's Eddie, Maam?

ELAINE SMALL  
The man who makes the music. He gets the money.

A beat. Tiller and Deacon exchange a look.

AGENT TILLER  
Maam, your instructions were to drop the money at Eagle Municipal Park. What was the exact location there?

ELAINE SMALL  
No. No, no, Stephen called me -

AGENT DEACON  
We know that, but we're more concerned with the ransom call -

ELAINE SMALL  
I did exactly what I was told! But then I got lost getting back to the car, and the phone call was late -

AGENT TILLER  
You were lost at the park?

ELAINE SMALL  
Yes! No! I was in the woods. *Newton Road*. I, I tried to remember where I was when I left, I couldn't...

She loses her train of thought and is overcome by exhaustion. She struggles to breathe. The Nurse swoops in.

NURSE  
I think that's enough for now.

Just then, Witten returns. Tiller and Deacon stand, the men confer out of Elaine's earshot.

CHIEF WITTEN  
You won't believe this.

SSSKKKK - Witten flips through a stack of GOLD CERTIFICATES. Dates fly by on the bills - all from the 1934

CHIEF WITTEN (CONT'D)  
Gold Certificates. Must be a few hundred grand. Non-sequential serial numbers. How the hell you ever gonna trace any of this?

AGENT DEACON  
Someone passes those around - it'll start ringing some bells.

AGENT TILLER  
Yeah, if they don't wash it first.  
(to Witten)  
Tell me about *Newton Road*.

CHIEF WITTEN  
Well it backs up to the river. Mostly woods over that way.

AGENT DEACON  
How far?

CHIEF WITTEN  
9 or 10 miles.

AGENT DEACON  
And Eagle Municipal Park?

CHIEF WITTEN  
Other direction. Bout 4 miles from here.

AGENT TILLER  
Ransom call comes in at noon. She gathers the money, gets to her car, drives 10 miles to Newton Road, makes the exchange in the woods...  
(Deacon chuckles)  
Drives 10 miles back and yet magically she's here to answer the door when Deputies arrive.

CHIEF WITTEN  
Think she's on the level?

They watch Elaine. The Nurse feeds her yogurt. It spills out the sides of her mouth: she's somewhere else entirely.

AGENT TILLER  
I think she's an old woman who's been through a heulluva'n ordeal. For now let's stick with a firewall around Eagle Park and pray our guy shows up soon.

EXT. EAGLE MUNICIPAL PARK — 2:30 PM — DETAIL SHOTS

Of the UNMARKED CARS patrolling and the PLAINCLOTHES OFFICERS prowling the gently landscaped trails that wind through the manicured man made WOODS.

EXT. EAGLE MUNICIPAL PARK — SAME

It's a warm Fall day. YOUNG CHILDREN run and play around the picnic tables near the CONCESSIONS STAND. Balloons announce a boy's birthday party.

THE DOOR OF A NEARBY PORT-A-POTTY

opens slightly to reveal Danny. He watches the UNMARKED CRUISERS making periodic passes. In his hand, A COMPACT MIRROR which he now angles to gain a VIEW OF THE DUMPSTER. The sun flickers sharply, irritating his eyes. He shifts the mirror. Over and over. Growing agitated, sweating profusely.

THE PARTY MOTHERS

are alerted to Danny by the glints of light. His behavior quickly becomes suspect. He seems to be watching the young boys. Getting himself increasingly worked up. *And what's he doing with his hand?*

DANNY

even more agitated and sweaty than before as he realizes the futility of the mirror schema.

Another Cruiser passes. When it vanishes from sight, Danny leaves the Port-A-Potty and hastily CROSSES to the concessions stand, over to the dumpster where he begins to rummage through the gross, wet trash. Finding nothing.

VOICE (O.C.)

Hi.

Danny turns. A YOUNG BOY, 4, watches him curiously.

DANNY

Oh hey. Hey, bud.

(kneels)

You the birthday boy?

PARTY MOTHER (O.C.)

Billy!

A PARTY MOTHER approaches hastily.

PARTY MOTHER (CONT'D)

Get away from that man, Billy!

She arrives. Pulls her son close, guards him. To Danny -

PARTY MOTHER (CONT'D)

What're you doing here?

DANNY

Me? I'm uh, just, y'know...

He sees the fear in her eyes. Knows what she must be thinking. TIRES OVER ROAD: a Cruiser passes. Danny retreats slowly and, when the Cruiser's gone, he SPRINTS.

INT. RISH HOME, KITCHEN - 3:00 PM - ON NANCY

as she rises from the kitchen table, moves to the phone -

NANCY

Hello?

DANNY (O.C.)

She didn't leave the money. Nancy she didn't leave it where I said to leave it - now I gotta tell her somewhere else to drop the cash -

Nancy HANGS UP THE PHONE.

Connie ENTERS from the garage.

CONNIE

Who was that, sweetheart?

NANCY

Danny...He's acting very strange.

CONNIE  
Tell me about it.

INT. PHONE BOOTH, CIRCLE K (PEMBROOKE) - SAME

Danny hangs up the phone. Inserts a quarter. Dials -

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - OVER THE PHONE RINGING  
UTTER SILENCE as A TECHIE SLIDES ON HEAD PHONES and -  
THE PHONE-TAPPING DEVICE CLICKS, CASSETTE WHEELS TURN and -  
AGENT TILLER LIFTS THE PHONE, HANDS IT TO ELAINE and -  
VERY CLOSE ON ELAINE'S MOUTH -

ELAINE SMALL  
Hello?

DANNY (O.C.)  
You lied to me, maam - Maam you  
lied and said you had the money.

PULLING BACK SLOWLY REVEALING - Detectives, Deputies. Tiller.  
Deacon. Witten. So many. All as still as statues

ELAINE SMALL  
I gave you the money.

DANNY (O.C.)  
See! You're lying again! T'heck are  
you doing that for!?

Elaine turns to Tiller. He signals her to keep him on.

ELAINE SMALL  
Don't get angry.

DANNY (O.C.)  
Yeah, well...too late....

ELAINE SMALL  
I'll get you the money.

DANNY (O.C.)  
You said that last time!

ELAINE SMALL  
Where should I drop it off?

DANNY (O.C.)  
...I don't know anymore. I gotta  
call you back. Stay by the phone.

CLICK. The line goes dead.

Tiller turns to a Techie. He removes his headphones.

TECHIE  
Got it. Call came from a pay phone  
in Pembroke.

AGENT TILLER  
Set up check points triangulating  
every possible entry road - main  
arteries, side streets, service  
roads, all of it.

EXT. KANKAKEE, SHOTS OF THE POLICE FORCE - AS NIGHT FALLS

UNMARKED CRUISERS LEAVE THE STATION, SPREAD OUT OVER THE  
COUNTY LIKE LIQUID

CHIEF WITTEN (V.O.)  
Get out to I-80, Route 102, Carlton  
Road and the Bypass.

CHECK POINTS ARE SET-UP AT I-80, ROUTE 102, THE A12 BYPASS.

AGENT TILLER (V.O.)  
Get eyes on every pay phone in the  
county. Do Not Take Him Until You  
Get Word From Us. If he wants to  
lead us to the site, we'll oblige.

CRUISERS PULL INTO LOTS ACROSS FROM GAS STATIONS - FAST FOOD  
RESTAURANTS - MOVIE THEATERS - MALLS - EAGLE MUNICIPAL PARK.

EVERY PAY PHONE IN TOWN IS BEING WATCHED.

INT. BENNIGAN'S RESTAURANT, BAR - 5:30 PM

LOCAL NEWS on the TV.

Glum and hopeless, Danny picks at an appetizer trio. Dips a  
buffalo wing in blue cheese, eats, then wipes his face.

BARTENDER  
Refill there, pal?

Danny nods.

As the Bartender refills his Pepsi, he notices Danny's  
mustache is lopsided. Decides to ignore it.

NEWS ANCHOR  
*In the news at his hour: police are  
searching for an apparent prowler  
at Eagle Municipal Park tonight.*

The PARTY MOTHER is interviewed beside her son.

PARTY MOTHER  
He was hiding inside a Port-A-  
Potty, staring at the boys.  
(beat, sickened)  
He was doing something strange in  
there. And then he tried talking to  
Billy. Did he touch you, Billy?

Eager to please, Billy nods.

BARTENDER  
Fuckin' pederast.

Danny MOANS agreement, but he's not paying attention.

REPORTER  
*Authorities tonight are looking for  
 a Hispanic male, '6'0', -*

A PHOTO FLASHES on the screen. A crude sketch but CLEARLY  
DANNY with the thick mustache and baseball cap.

BARTENDER whip-turns to Danny.

Danny looks up at the TV. Eyes go wide. He LEAPS from the  
 stool, RUSHES out the door and -

INT. DANNY'S PICK-UP, MOVING - NIGHT - SERIES OF SHOTS

- AS IT ROLLS THROUGH KANKAKEE'S MAIN STREETS, Danny's head  
 on a swivel as he eyes the STRIP MALLS, BURGET JOINTS,  
 CONVENIENCE STORES, frenziedly looking for a drop spot.

Vapor lights glide across his windshield like tracers.

- Glimpsing himself in the REARVIEW, he tears off the  
 mustache and FIRES it out the window.

LATER

The truck is stopped idling behind a zebra arm with flashing  
 lights, the surface road perpendicular to the rigid frame of  
 a massive iron RAILROAD TRESTLE.

NEWSRADIO  
*Police tonight are asking for your  
 help to identify -*

Danny shuts it off. Runs a hand through his hair. Gloom  
 settles over him. Then -

A TRAIN HORN SOUNDS and a commuter train screams past  
 obliterating the view.

He looks away from it, and there, below the struts of the  
 overpass, down a slope overgrown with untrampled wild grass  
 is an almost completely obscured dark creek bed.

That's his spot.

EXT. KANKAKEE STREETS - ON DANNY WALKING

Head down, hands in pockets, seeking a pay phone to make his  
 ransom call. Up ahead: *McDonald's*.

He quickly MOVES that way when...AN UMMARKED CRUISER enters  
 the lot, and circles. It's curious enough for Danny to turn  
 back, his eyes surveying alternatives when he spots -

KROGER'S GROCERY across the street. A Payphone booth out  
 front -

OUTSIDE KROGER'S GROCERY - SECONDS LATER

as Danny nears, the automatic doors open and TWO DEPUTIES step out, chatting casually.

Ignoring Danny who puts his head down veers the other direction.

PAY PHONE AFTER PAY PHONE - FACE AFTER FACE (TIME-CUTS)

DANNY'S MIND betraying him now. The faces lurking near the phones suddenly become spies, luring Danny into their trap.

Each setback increases his anxiety, his paranoia that he's being watched, followed: EVERYONE KNOWS -

His eyes dart, twitch. Sweat forms on his brow.

Finally, overwhelmed, out-of-breath he ducks DOWN A DARK ALLEY. Back against the brick wall, sinking. From the darkness, the CLICK-CLACK of high heels. Nearing.

As the sound gets louder, closer. Suddenly it's a clock inside Danny's head - TICK-TOCK-TICK-TOCK -

Danny stands - RUNS OUT OF THE ALLEY - SPRINTS ACROSS THE BUSY ROAD - DODGING CARS - BRAKES SCREECH! HORNS! SHOUTS!

INT./EXT. DANNY'S PICK-UP - THESE SHOTS QUICKLY

HE OPENS THE CAR DOOR - KEYS IN THE IGNITION - SHIFTS INTO DRIVE - FOOT JAMS THE GAS PEDAL AND -

EXT. WEICHERT ROAD, ADJACENT WOODS (BURIAL SITE) - 7:00 PM

DANNY'S IN THE TREES, RUNNING around frantically. Pointing a flashlight at every trunk. He's been here a while, sweating profusely, shovel in hand, but he's lost. It's growing dark now. He can't find the 'X.'

DANNY DUCKS INTO A PAYPHONE OUTSIDE TASTE-T-FREEZE

still out of breath, searches his pockets for change.

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

Tiller and Deacon pore over a map of Kankakee County.

THE PHONE RINGS. Everyone goes quiet. Same procedure as before. Everyone still as Tiller hands Elaine the phone. (INTERCUT DANNY and ELAINE).

ELAINE SMALL  
...Eddie? Is that you?

DANNY  
(frantic)  
Eddie? What? No!

DANNY (CONT'D)  
Listen to me - listen to me I want  
you to call the police! I want -

ELAINE SMALL  
The police?

DANNY  
Call the police and get them out to  
Weichert Road right now!

ELAINE SMALL  
Is that where Stephen is?

DANNY  
Yes-Yes-Yes!

Witten quietly nods to a few Deputies who leave immediately.

DANNY (CONT'D)  
There's a tree out there in the  
woods. I marked it with an 'X' but  
with all the crap going on and  
lying and now it's night and I  
forgot where the hell I put him!

ELAINE SMALL  
An 'X' on a tree? That's my son?

DANNY  
Out in the woods. Tell them that,  
tell 'em that's where he is.  
(beat, just breathing)  
Maam? I'm real sorry about this.

ACROSS THE STREET, IN AN UNMARKED CRUISER

A DETECTIVE watches Danny leave the pay phone. SNAPPING  
PICTURE AFTER PICTURE as he crosses to his pick-up truck.  
Detective lifts the two-way radio now -

DETECTIVE  
Suspect is a Hispanic Male. 30s.  
Vehicle is a white early-model Ford  
F-Series. Ohio plates. XBR-284.

CHIEF WITTEN (O.C.)  
Copy. Don't take him yet, Edmonds.

INT. UNMARKED CRUISER, MOVING - NIGHT

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD, Danny's pick-up is in view. It  
signals a left turn. Instead makes a U-Turn.

The Cruiser attempts one as well...oncoming cars prevent it  
and he's stuck.

DETECTIVE  
Shit!  
(picks up the two-way)  
I lost him. Made an illegal U onto  
Peckham. He's heading South now.

INT. RISH HOME, KITCHEN — AFTERNOON

DANNY ENTERS, DASHES UP THE STAIRS —

DANNY  
Nancy!? NANCY!?

OPENS NANCY'S BEDROOM DOOR. The HAIRDRYER'S RUNNING as Connie stands over Nancy, teasing her newly-colored hair. Platinum blonde. Connie shuts it off, turns to Danny. He's a mess.

CONNIE  
Danny? Is everything alright?

DANNY  
Can you give us a minute, Connie?

Connie's afraid to leave Nancy alone with Danny in this state. But Nancy nods: it's okay.

Danny shuts the door behind her. Nancy turns to him, smiles.

NANCY  
Do you like the new look?

DANNY  
We gotta go. We gotta go now.

Danny finds a duffle bag. Begins to stuff clothes in.

NANCY  
You got the money?

DANNY  
They know, Nancy! They got my face painted all over the news! Luckily I had the mustache.

NANCY  
What about me?

He shakes his head: *You're fine.*

NANCY (CONT'D)  
I have to tell my Mom, I —

DANNY  
Nancy!

NANCY  
I have to...she's my mom.

DANNY  
...Okay...but hurry up.

Nancy leaves. Danny continues stuffing his clothes into the bag. Opens the closet, notices NANCY'S SUITCASE. Pulls it out...it's light. Unzips it. IT'S EMPTY. His face creases.

Moves to the bureau, slides out the drawers. The clothes she tossed onto the bed are BACK IN PLACE, folded and arranged.

And the CORKBOARD. Once blank, it's now AN INNOCENT COLLAGE of fashion models and actresses.

Before he can think -

CRACK! WINDOWS SHATTERED! POUNDING FEET UP THE STAIRS!

Danny OPENS THE DOOR to find - A SWAT TEAM BARRELING UP THE STAIRWELL! COMING RIGHT AT HIM!

SWAT LEADER  
GET ON THE FUCKING GROUND NOW! NOW!

He's TACKLED. FACE PRESSED TO THE FLOOR, scrunched by a boot heel. He watches as they invade Connie's bedroom.

DANNY  
LEAVE HER ALONE! SHE HAD NOTHING TO  
DO WITH THIS! NANCY! NANCY!

INT. WEICHERT ROAD, ADJACENT WOODS (BURIAL SITE) - NIGHT

HANDCUFFED, DANNY LEADS A PACK OF CIU MEMBERS through the trees (TILLER, DEACON, WITTEN among them). Police dogs sniff at tufts of weeds.

Then...Danny SEES the 'X' tree. A huge look of relief on his face as he moves towards it, kneels down, his hands feeling for the exhaust hoses - the holes are there - but BOTH HOSES ARE MISSING.

AGENT TILLER  
Is this it, Edwards? Edwards?

Danny nods, confused. He's YANKED back by Detectives and watches at a distance as DEPUTIES GO TO WORK WITH SHOVELS.

LATER

DOOMP! They've reached the box.

THE LATCHES ARE UNDONE. THE LID OPENED.

SMALL'S BODY IS LIFTED OUT, passed up and laid on the ground. Face pale, eyes frozen in some electric fright. But...he's not coughing or writhing or moaning. In fact, he's hauntingly quiet. His body a limp sack of bones.

Danny's face goes blank. He falls to his knees.

PARAMEDICS RUSH IN on SMALL'S BODY. High-tech equipment pulled out and hastily put to work.

DANNY HEARS ONLY the whew-whew-whew of futile CPR compressions and ventilations.

INT. BOURBONNAIS POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Agent Deacon sits across from Nancy. Tear tracks mark her face. She's smoking and the ashtray's brimming.

AGENT DEACON  
- did you go anywhere else?

NANCY  
I did some shopping at the mall in  
the afternoon.

AGENT DEACON  
And you can verify all this?

NANCY  
I have receipts... The stores might  
have video cameras, right?

AGENT DEACON  
We'll find out. So you didn't  
notice Danny leave the bedroom?

NANCY  
We don't sleep together. Things  
between Danny and I weren't the  
same after jail. He was scaring me.  
I made him sleep on the floor. When  
I woke up in the morning he was  
there. Agent you don't think I had  
anything to do with this, do you?

He looks at her a long, anxious moment...then smiles.

AGENT DEACON  
We just have to ask the questions.  
Sit tight a minute.

Deacon exits and -

INT. HALL OUTSIDE THE INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS  
joins Tiller watching through the TWO-WAY MIRROR.

AGENT DEACON  
Whaddaya think?

AGENT TILLER  
You heard the mom. The guy was a  
time bomb.

Tiller studies Nancy intently.

AGENT TILLER (CONT'D)  
One last thing...

INTERROGATION ROOM

Nancy lights another cigarette. She's clearly nervous, tense.  
*Could she really have gotten off?*

AGENT TILLER (O.C.)  
...Ask her how the fuck a guy like  
him ever lands a girl like her?

AGENT DEACON (O.C.)  
*That's* the million dollar question.

EXT. KANKAKEE COUNTY JAIL - AFTERNOON

A middle-aged man, RON WINSTON, 50, dressed in a cheap suit lugs a square briefcase into the squat cinder-block building.

INT. KANKAKEE COUNTY JAIL, COUNSEL ROOM - SAME

FBI PICTURES OF DANNY. At the phone booth. The rough sketch of the box. Small dead. Danny's pick-up, motorcycle, etc...

Danny stares blankly at the file. Winston, the appointed public defender sits across from him editorializing the images, but all Danny hears is the SOUND of the PHOTOS being flipped. Then, as though coming up from underwater -

RON WINSTON  
- They're asking for the death penalty, Danny. Danny?

DANNY  
(soft, nearly inaudible)  
I never...meant for him to die...

RON WINSTON  
Danny, those hoses were ripped from the ground. The fan's power was cut.

DANNY  
But I...I checked the fan...

RON WINSTON  
...When you didn't get the money you rode back out to Weichert Road on your motorcycle -

Danny's trying to remember. His head hurts.

DANNY  
...No, no, I never...

RON WINSTON  
...You didn't want to leave any chance he might identify you. But the guilt was too great finally, wasn't it? That's when you made the call to Elaine Small.

DANNY  
He must've pulled them out somehow...by mistake, or...

RON WINSTON  
You're telling me Small pulled the hoses and cut the battery that was keeping him alive? Please, Danny, take the deal. God knows you've caused enough harm.

Then -

RON WINSTON (CONT'D)  
 Elaine Small had a heart attack  
 last night. Died on her kitchen  
 floor.

A moment. Danny's face falls and he starts to hyperventilate.

DANNY  
 That's terrible... terrible. Oh no,  
 it's all my fault.

RON WINSTON  
 Police say she was particularly  
 agitated about the money. That they  
 hadn't recovered it, and that no  
 one would believe her that the guy  
 that did all this was named, Eddie.

A beat. Then Danny suddenly looks up. This name, though he  
 can't place it, is somehow familiar - Elaine having greeted  
 him with this moniker the last time she answered the phone.

DANNY  
 ... Eddie?

RON WINSTON  
 She said she delivered the money to  
 him.

Danny looks even more confused.

DANNY  
 There was never any money.

RON WINSTON  
 Well on that account, the police  
 agree with you.  
 (losing patience)  
 C'mon take the deal, Danny. It's  
 the right thing to do.

DANNY  
 (to himself)  
 Who's Eddie?

INT. KANKAKEE COUNTY JAIL, DANNY'S CELL - NIGHT

Danny lies on the bottom bunk. Staring up at the coils of the  
 box spring above him. Thinking...then, his face changes -

INT. KANKAKEE COUNTY JAIL, PAY PHONE WALL - THE NEXT DAY

A LINE OF INMATES wait behind Danny who is on the phone with  
 Winston. His mind moving too fast for his mouth to keep up.

DANNY  
 - I told you there was something  
*wrong!* Yesterday you said I took my  
 motorcycle out to Weichert Road -

RON WINSTON (O.C.)  
 They matched the dirt on your tires  
 to the dirt at the burial site.

DANNY

I never took the Harley out there!  
I never once rode it out there -

RON WINSTON

They have a witness, Danny... A  
farmer out there by Weichert Road  
saw your motorcycle the morning  
Small was kidnapped.

DANNY

It wasn't me. There's no way -

RON WINSTON (O.C.)

(doesn't believe a word)  
Then who was it? Huh? Who?

A long moment. He doesn't say. Or won't.

RON WINSTON (CONT'D)

If you're gonna take the deal  
you've gotta do it today, Danny.  
Otherwise -

DANNY

(completely demoralized)  
Okay... okay I'll take it... have  
you heard from Nancy? She doing  
alright?

RON WINSTON

Left a couple of messages for her,  
but nothing yet. How bout you?

DANNY

No. She's not real good about  
checking her machine.

A BUZZER SOUNDS. His time is up. Danny looks at the phone.

Then hangs up. He looks up at the guard.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Can I just try my girl real quick?

The man takes pity on him.

GUARD

60 seconds.

Danny nods gratefully, deposits a quarter and dials.

AUTOMATIC VOICE

*Recording 697. Welcome to ATT. You  
have reached a number that is no  
longer in service. If you feel you  
have reached this recording in  
error please hang up and redial...*

Danny hangs up, fishes out the quarter, redeposits it and dials. The automatic voice answers again. He repeats this process, but is interrupted by the guard's hand who takes the receiver from Danny and lifts him to his feet.

INT. DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS BUS, MOVING – AFTERNOON

Danny stares out the window as the transfer bus barrels down a county two-lane.

EXT. STATEVILLE PRISON – AFTERNOON

The bus arrives at the gates of the correctional facility in Crest Hill. A site of 64 acres surrounded by a 33-foot concrete perimeter with 10 wall towers.

INT. STATEVILLE, PROCESSING ROOM – DAY

Danny is strip-searched, deloused, dressed in prison blues, and his head completely shaved.

INT. STATEVILLE, TV ROOM – NIGHT

Nothing glamorous. A concrete room with steel folding chairs. A 20-inch TV is bolted into an iron frame.

*LOCAL NEWS ANCHOR  
And finally tonight, an interview  
with the people closest to the  
notorious Danny Edwards. A murderer  
who police say is one of the most  
cold-blooded killers in the history  
of the state.*

Danny, sits off by himself, wholly uncomfortable. Other Prisoners sizing him up.

Then...ON THE TV...A NEWS REPORTER AT THE RISH HOME. Interviewing Nancy and Connie. Connie's doing most of the talking as Nancy plays the part of the scorned, disbelieving victim. She's dressed like she's going to a funeral, eyes hidden behind dark shades, staring off-camera.

CONNIE  
– that's right. While he was in  
jail the men made him do certain  
things. 'Dirty' things. He was  
never right after that.

This gets a very vocal and amused reaction from the other prisoners in the room.

Danny, confused, knowing this is not true, wondering why Connie is lying.

NEWS REPORTER  
And you saw him building the box?

CONNIE  
Yes. He told us he was making a  
lemonade stand. For the kids.

PUSH IN ON THE TV SCREEN...

NEWS REPORTER  
But it wasn't for the kids, was it?

...GETTING CLOSER...

CONNIE  
No...no it wasn't...

...CLOSER STILL AND WE'RE -

INSIDE THE RISH HOME

...PUSHING IN ON NANCY. We see what she's been looking at. It's a mirror across the room. She gradually adjusts her brooch. Over and over until..the edges of her lips curl into the slightest hint of a smile.

PUSH IN ON DANNY as he begins to get the picture.

DANNY  
(to himself)  
Why are you smiling?

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - MORNING OF KIDNAPPING- 7:30 AM

CLOSE ON NANCY. Asleep. Then...HER EYES OPEN. Not tired or weary. Eyes that are very awake, alert.

She rolls over to view Danny who's fallen asleep on the air mattress. Quietly slides out of bed now, shuts the ALARM OFF, picks up the motorcycle helmet, the 9MM -

EXT. ROUTE 102 - MORNING OF KIDNAPPING - 8:00 AM

Nancy flies down the road on Danny's Harley, blonde hair peeking out under the helmet as she works the levers and clutches with the acumen of one who's been riding for years.

She WHIZZES past THE CORN FIELD. The Elderly Farmer, struck by the engine noise, steps out of the maze and watches as the bike makes its turn down Weichert Road.

EXT. SECLUDED PATCH OF WOODS (BURIAL SITE) - SERIES OF SHOTS

MOVING ACROSS THE GROUND LIKE A SPREADING FOG (the same POV as before)...EXCEPT...it's no fog at all. It's NANCY'S POV - as she approaches the 'X' marked tree and -

Nancy DIGS and DIGS and finally HITS the wooden box -

Nancy lifts the lid of the box. Small stares up at her. The sun burns his eyes and he squints -

Nancy pointing the 9mm at Small, holds the VOICE RECORDER as he reads from a script she's written -

SMALL  
- It's 9:30 AM, Mom. You have exactly **one hour** to drop the money. If you're not home by 10:30 you'll never find me alive. Take Newton Road...

INT. ELAINE'S CADILLAC, MOVING - 9:45 AM

Elaine drives down rural Newton Road, the RED DUFFLE BAG at her side. The road dead-ends abruptly. She's staring at the hardwoods in a large and dense forest.

SMALL (V.O.)  
 ...until it dead-ends. At the edge  
 of the forest, you'll find a bag,  
 inside that bag you'll find  
 instructions.

EXT. EDGE OF THE WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Elaine steps through high grass. There waiting is a BLUE DUFFLE BAG. She unzips it. A NOTECARD sits inside with DIRECTIONS written out.

MOMENTS LATER - Elaine transfers STACK AFTER STACK OF GOLD CERTIFICATES from her duffle bag into the blue one.

SMALL (V.O.)  
 Transfer the money into the bag,  
 and follow the instructions to the  
 letter.

WE'RE IN THE DARK, THEN - A LIGHT GLOWS

ON THE DIGITAL TIMER SWITCH. The display lights up suddenly: **10:00 AM**. Just above it: 'ON' begins to blink.

FOLLOW the colored wires to a 12V BATTERY and their connection to a small BOOM BOX with an already depressed 'PLAY' button. It's RED LIGHT GLOWS, and Suddenly Eddie Money's BABY HOLD ON blares from its' speakers.

EXT. WOODS - MINUTES LATER - A SERIES OF SHOTS OF ELAINE

lugging the heavy duffle bag through PARTS OF THE FOREST, trying desperately to follow the directions in hand. The song's volume increasing as Elaine trudges onward.

SMALL (V.O.)  
 When you hear Eddie Money's  
 voice...

She TIPTOES down an ESCARPMENT. Slips and rides on her ass the rest of the way down...

She TRUDGES across a thin, BABBLING ROCK STREAM. Her shoes SOPPING with water...The WIND is picking up...

SMALL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 ... you will have exactly three  
 minutes and 31 seconds to quickly  
 follow it...

She maladroitly CLIMBS under an enormous fallen HARDWOOD...

She pushes through THICKETS OF FOREST SHRUBS that scrape her arms and chins and neck and debris gets in her mouth.

SMALL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 ...until you see a single giant Elm  
 tree.

She looks around frantically for the tree, and finally sees  
 it, a FAMILIAR ANCIENT ELM.

SMALL (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 Stop there! Do not continue towards  
 the music. Place this note back  
 into the bag and throw it as far as  
 you can in the direction of Eddie's  
 voice. This must be done before the  
 song ends.

She stumbles quickly over to it's trunk. Unzips the bag,  
 inserts the directions, turns her head this way and that  
 trying to get an exact bead on the music, and then hoists up  
 the bag and swings it back-and-forth before letting it fly.

As it arches towards us, it's descent seems impossibly and  
 improbably long - down, down, down, just as the song ends.

EXT. EDGE OF THE WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Elaine emerges. Can't find her direction. This certainly  
 wasn't the way she came in. She starts walking East. No, no  
 that's not it. West now? Doesn't seem right. She freezes.  
 Checks her watch: **10:15 AM**. No time: she heads East.

SMALL (V.O.)  
 When the money's been collected you  
 will receive a call telling you  
 where I can be found. Remember, you  
must be back home by 10:30am!

INT. ELAINE'S CADILLAC - MORNING

Elaine enters. Flustered. Sweating. Turns the car on. The  
clock reads: 10:25 AM.

ELAINE SMALL  
 DAMMNIT! GODDAMNIT!

She throws the Caddy into gear and tears out.

EXT. BURIAL SITE - EARLIER (8:30 AM)

Small stands reading the last of Nancy's script into the  
 micro-cassette recorder.

SMALL  
 Mother, please don't be late.

Nancy hits the stop button and motions Small back into the  
 box with Danny's gun.

She CLOSES THE LID ON THE BOX, LOCKS THE HATCHES, THEN -

OPENS the breathing compartment, PULLS the wires from the 12-  
 VOLT MOTOR, and RIPS THE EXHAUST HOSES FROM THE GROUND -

INT. THE WOODEN BOX - SAME

ZZZ! ZZZ! A SPARK inside the wire meshing. THE FAN STOPS TURNING. A stream of smoke emanates. THE LIGHT GOES OUT.

THE EXHAUST HOSES ARE RIPPED OUT. SMALL STARTS TO GASP FOR AIR that isn't there. He begins to HYPERVENTILATE and -

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - ON NANCY

as she SEES DANNY ENTER THE ROOM IN THE VANITY MIRROR. She conjures a smile, turns to him in that platinum blonde hair.

NANCY

Do you like the new look?

Off that 1,000 watt smile WE'RE BACK -

ON DANNY BEING ESCORTED DOWN F-BLOCK

As he passes other cells. Inmates HECKLING the 'new fish.' Gonna fuck you in your ass, boy, then make you lick my dick!

DANNY

(to himself)

Smiling? ... why are you smiling?

AND IT HITS DANNY ALL AT ONCE. A yoke he cannot bear. His legs fail him. He collapses to the ground.

GUARDS PULL HIM TO HIS FEET. BARKING ORDERS INTO HIS EAR!

He stares up at them blankly. Can't hear a word.

TWO GUARDS, one on each arm, carry him along the concrete concourse, his limp legs dragging behind him. And then, in a final futile plea, he SCREAMS OUT -

DANNY (CONT'D)

YOU DID THIS! YOU DID THIS! TO MEEEE!

His cell bars slide open. GUARDS TOSS HIM INSIDE. THE SOUND OF THE BARS SLAMMING SHUT IS DROWNED OUT BY -

TURNING MAGAZINE PAGES - WHOOSH-WHOOSH-WHOOSH -

INT. GILMORE'S DINER, NIGHT SHIFT - SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Nancy's back in uniform, dully flipping through a *Glamour* behind the counter. The place is empty less a few truckers and vampires. She looks up at the clock: 5:30 AM.

MINUTES LATER - Nancy grabs her coat from the rack. Gene's counting totals at the register.

NANCY

G'night, Gene.

NEWTON ROAD — PREDAWN

Nancy's Mazda approaches the dead-end, pulls to the dirt shoulder where the engine is cut.

Everything still, eerily quiet. She steps from the car, and sets out into the woods.

EXT. DEEP FISSURE IN THE FOREST FLOOR — DAWN

Inside the hole looking up at early light reflected through the forest canopy. FOOTSTEPS and Nancy's face peers down at us.

She climbs down the old wood ladder.

Coolly notices the blue duffle bag. Rolls it over, unzips it.

There's the money. STACKS AND STACKS OF GOLD CERTIFICATES.

She smiles casually, as though there was never any doubt.

Reaches down and yanks the timer from the boombox and manually presses play: *Eddie Money's 'Baby Hold On.'*

She does a little dance over to the mudstone wall. Fingers grazing the primordial stone. As though hearing a voice, she stops. Brushes away some dust and moss until she finds the ancient etching -- *Jimmy loves Nunu.*

EDDIE MONEY'S VOICE BEGINS TO ECHO AS IF FROM A GREAT DISTANCE

INT. STATEVILLE, ISOLATION — NIGHT

Danny, wearing a straight-Jacket, sits on the floor of a padded cell rocking back and forth, back and forth. His lips move to Money's lyrics but he makes not a sound.

THE RHYTHMIC CLAP OF gentle WAVES caressing THE SHORE OF —

AN IMPOSSIBLY BEAUTIFUL BLINDING WHITE BEACH

...and a finger...writing in the sand...as it curls the final letter of - *Jimmy Loves Nunu*

Nancy, clad in a black bikini hiding beneath a white caftan, reclines on a tasteful beige coloured chaise. Wayfarers in place, and a wide-brimmed straw hat to top it all off.

She glances down the beach where A BEAUTIFUL FRENCH COUPLE lounge outside their private bungalow.

Suddenly, her sun is blocked. She glances up to see the backlit face of -

JIMMY KEENE

His torso shirtless and golden. He bends down, and hands her a cocktail.

She squints at the drink and then lowers it, staring off toward the sea at someplace 1,000 miles away from here.

JIMMY  
What's the matter?

A moment. Then -

NANCY  
(lost in herself)  
Just give me a minute...  
... will ya, Jimmy?

He shrugs.

JIMMY  
Sure, Nancy.

Jimmy turns and heads off down the beach.

Watching him go, Nancy looks disturbed, as if something is troubling her, some deep moral dilemma that must be puzzled through alone.

Nancy reaches into her beach bag and retrieves the BORA BORA ADVERTISEMENT she was coveting earlier in the story.

It's now clear Nancy is lying on the exact same beach, wearing the exact bathing suit as the model in the picture, same hat, sunglasses, and thanks to Jimmy, the exact same drink - right down to the glassware.

Looking at the picture, her eyes narrow.

Her arm begins to move ever so slightly to match the position of the hand that's holding the colorful libation in the picture.

She reaches over to adjust the ORANGE MARASCHINO GARNISH until it's precisely as it is in the resort's advert, of a kind with everything else.

Then and only then, does her hand lower the fanciful ad, tucking it back into her bag.

She returns to her exalted pose on the chaise.

Her ample chest rising, and slowly exhaling, and then finally

She smiles. Not a pageant smile, but an expression that is the most genuine and authentic to ever grace her face.

The moment seminal for her - at last a perfect mirror.

Wave upon wave crash upon the shore. Over and over again. As relentless as the strange woman reclining above them.

The names in the sand begin to disappear.

Each wave taking another few letters away.

Until, finally, it's as if they were never here at all.

THE END