

westphalia

A Screenplay

By Alec Calder

Trigger warning (sexual assault) on p. 91.

Endnotes begin on p. 129.

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"WESTPHALIA"

OPENING CREDITS – BLUE TEXT ON BLACK SCREEN

V.O.: Over the sounds of WIND and CARS DRIVING on asphalt, a PUNK SONG plays: a SUBWOOFER warms up, then the GUITAR RIFF begins, a gnarly shred in a 3-3-2 rhythm, joined by a CYMBAL CRASH on the fifth bar, a SNARE DRUM ROLL on the eighth, and on the ninth, the full band. (N.B.: The song's profanity is bleeped out but still conspicuous.)

FRONTWOMAN (V.O.)

(a hoarse, hard wail)

It's alive!

Take it out back and shoot it!

Take it out back and

Send it to perdition!

Mutually assured destruction!

(chorus, sung twice:)

Bitch, go get my switchblade!

Go get my switchblade!

Bitch, go get my switchblade!

I gotta shank this motherfucker now!

(breaks for eight bars

as the riff persists)

It's a joke!

A sick, fucking joke!

I shot it! It's dead!

It's still on its feet!

It better not be fucking conscious!

She repeats the chorus, then the song enters a bridge: the drums break, the guitar falls to piano, and the BASS SOLOES jazzily for eight bars. The singer returns, and the band crescendoes from a sinister mumble to their opening volume:

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

How do I know

That you're not dead just like him?

Acting like you do?

What if I'm the last cunt

Alive on this fucking planet?!

After another SNARE DRUM ROLL on "Alive", the band attacks on the chorus, repeating it ad infinitum, and on the third repeat, a wordless baritone backing vocal and a THEREMIN enter. This noise goes on for half a minute before fading, segueing to the gravelly voice of a male DISC JOCKEY.

(N.B.: All characters, unless otherwise noted, speak with the South Boston accent.)

DISC JOCKEY (V.O.)

That zombie horror classic was "Switchblade" by Goiterfetish, easily their best-known song from their sole album "Par for the Course" from 'eighty-one, and that was probably the last time I heard that song. I did go their Amherst gig that year, and lemme tell ya, their lead singer, I don't recall her name offhand, but she was this classic fiery redhead, gorgeous gray eyes, very chesty, huge ass—swear to God, she's still one o' the sexiest broads I ever saw, but she played so hard to get, she was havin' none of it with any o' the guys after the show, and I didn't even try. Maybe she only went for guys with goiters, who knows. So that was a trip down memory lane there: wicked song, gotta give that album another listen, "Par for the Course" by Goiterfetish. W.Z.O.Z. one-oh-four point seven, this is Ex-Con Connor here, it is twelve-ten inna A.M., June sixteenth, nineteen eighty-six, Bloomsday as they call it in Ireland. The hoops draft is tomorrow, and guys, if you don't know at this point who Red's using the second pick on, that's a real nice rock you must be livin' under; five'll get you ten, the Celtics are drafting Len Bias of the U.-Maryland Terps. Y'know, we're the N.B.A. champs, I can't imagine what it musta took for Red to wrangle that second pick from the Sonics—frankly, folks, I don't even think we deserve the second pick, but hey, we got it and we got it specifically to use on Bias 'cause we know there's no way he wasn't gonna get snatched up early, and if you seen this guy play, you know: this is a whole one-man dynasty right here. I can't wait.

OPEN:

INT. BEDROOM — IN OR AROUND BOSTON, MASS. — MINUTES LATER

REGAN CROAKE lies supine on a salmon quilt and a mountain of pillows, gazing O.S., wearing only a sapphire pendant. She's in her mid-20s, boasts an uncannily curvy swimmer's physique, and has wavy red hair shorn at the neck. Bratty, cagey, enigmatic. Aspergerian (as we'd call it at the time of this writing). O.S., "De Profundis" by Dead Can Dance plays on VINYL at medium volume. Regan is the Goiterfetish vocalist, yet her speaking voice is much more lilting:

REGAN

When you see me like this, what d'you
wanna do to me?

(A hitch.)

Better yet, don't say it, just do it.

Brief beat. JUDD IVORS drops onto the bed, wearing only dog tags. He's her age, with a strong resemblance to Len Bias. Suave, yet also pensive. He nestles between her legs, pins down her left thigh with his right hip, enters her, and pumps slowly as she GRUNTS her approval. Long beat, as they savor each other. (N.B.: Judd does not have an accent.)

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Can I call you Lenny?

JUDD

(stops thrusting)

You're on that gravy train now?

REGAN

Ha! I knew I wasn't the first.

JUDD

Yeah, I been gettin' it a lot lately.

(resumes thrusting)

Wouldja be his groupie if I let you?

REGAN

Fuck yeah, I would. I'm not even into
the hoops, I just watch it for him.

JUDD

Wouldja do a three-way?

REGAN

Oh God yes. If we ever meet him. And if you're down for it.

JUDD

Anything for you, Frog.

REGAN

You're a keeper.

(She SMACKS his ass.)

Fuck me harder, stackjack.

He quickens his pace. She closes her eyes, and her grunts turn into MOANS. Their bodies tense and strain. He kneads her breasts, and squeezes the pendant between them.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Oh yeah, worship my tits.

JUDD

I love your tits.

REGAN

I love your penis.

His hand presses down on her abdomen. Her moans lengthen—

LATER

They face each other from opposite ends of the bed, sweaty and spent. The music has CEASED.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

—whereupon, this genius takes the opportunity to speculate that all I was into was guys with goiters.

Judd convulses with laughter, gripping the bed. A beat.

JUDD

Hell, that name was your idea. I mighta thought the same thing—

Regan chucks a pillow at him. He keeps cackling.

REGAN

Eat shit.

A beat. The laughter eases. Regan checks a wall clock.

JUDD

Sharon sure fucked up, didn't she.

REGAN

How?

JUDD

You didn't hear? It's your line of work. She was the driver on the oxy stickup near Winthrop, she's doing a twenty at Framingham.

REGAN

Are you shittin' me? That was her?

JUDD

Thought you was gonna tell me.

REGAN

I would if oxy was my bailiwick.

(Brief beat.)

Unbe-fuckin'-lievable. And she was the one, took the breakup hardest.

JUDD

Yeah. She wound up in a bad place.

REGAN

She believed inna band. Believed in a lotta romantic bullshit. Cowboys, joyrides, the American Dream. Shoulda guessed how she'd turn out.

She reaches toward a lamp, and the room GOES DARK.

INT. METHADONE CLINIC — WAITING ROOM — MORNING

Regan, in coral scrubs, hands a clipboard with papers and a pen to SIOBHAN—early 30s, heroin addict, with long sleeves and a big purse—from behind a half-open reception window. "Tortured Heroine" by Clock DVA plays on the INTERCOM.

SIOBHAN

Thank you.

Siobhan heads to the nearest available seat, beneath a surveillance camera perched in the corner, among a motley group of idling addicts. She tilts the clipboard at an angle, careful to hide from the camera's view what rolls into her lap when she lifts the clip: a small plastic bag with a capped syringe, a tourniquet, a rubber cup, and a wrapped condom inside. Siobhan crams the bag into her purse, then uncaps the pen, and starts filling out the form. In the window, a NURSE in matching scrubs walks up behind Regan, who now skims the Globe, and retrieves a box of hand wipes from a cabinet. Regan twists her head to her.

REGAN

What was the fat guy's deal?

NURSE

His Q.T. was over five-ten.

REGAN

(returns to the Globe)

Big surprise.

NURSE

Makes two this month.

FRONT OFFICE

Next to the window, beneath a shelf holding a gallon of jade green methadone and a stack of paper cups, is a POLICE SCANNER, volume turned low, with a thin layer of STATIC:

OPERATOR (O.S.)

(on the scanner)

I haven't heard bean-shit from Geddes all morning, could someone gimme his ten-eighteen? Clear.

GEDDES (O.S.)

(on the scanner)

Geddes O.N. I'm a nine John outside the dolly clinic on Watt Street, just doin' some good ole-fashioned ninety-four-C recon. Clear.

Regan's eyes lift from the paper. This has her attention.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

The prodigal son returns.

GEDDES (O.S.)

Go fuck yourself twice, you fuckin' prick. How the fuck else am I s'posed to make the quota?

OPERATOR (O.S.)

You think tackin' "twice" onna end o' that makes you a real poet, don'tcha.

The nurse espies Regan, and the scanner, curious.

NURSE

You can hear that low?

REGAN

Course I can.

(peers past the window)

Plainclothes. Outside.

NURSE

Christ.

REGAN

(rising)

Can you hold down the fort?

NURSE

I can try.

Regan heads for the door as the nurse takes her place.

WAITING ROOM

Regan enters, and darts to Siobhan, hovering over her.

REGAN

Give it back.

SIOBHAN

(pauses on her form)

What?

REGAN

Gimme back the kit. Now.

SIOBHAN

What for?

REGAN

I got a scanner at my desk. Pigs are casin' the joint as we speak—

SIOBHAN

I haven't had a hit in two days!

Regan's out of patience. She dives into the purse, pulls out the needle kit, and keeps it in front of her, hidden from the camera, as she deftly blocks Siobhan's grasp.

REGAN

You get caught with it in Mass State, it's a felony.

(She stuffs the kit under her scrubs.)

Here's what's gonna happen: they're gonna harass you. Your muscles are toneless, you're the easiest target in this whole place. The catch is: they cannot search you without a warrant, that's the law, so you tell them clearly they don't have your permission to search you. You wanna invoke the Fourth Amendment. Not the Fifth, the Fourth. Ya got H. on you?

SIOBHAN

No, I'm not that retarded—can I get a needle anywheres else?

REGAN

You know where the Gallery is?

(Siobhan nods.)

Swing by there tonight, nine P.M.

SIOBHAN

(A hitch. She relaxes.)

Alright, I'll be there.

REGAN

Alright, now finish the form, give it back to me, go do your business, when that's done, take a deep breath, walk outta here casual. I got the scanner. I'll step in if they get rough.

Regan goes to the door. Siobhan looks after her, awestruck, then recovers as well as she can and resumes work on the form. A hitch. Regan reappears in the window and slaps the nurse on the back; she stands and exits with the wipes. Regan sits, opens a drawer O.S., moves the kit into it, closes it, and returns to the Globe. A beat. She glances up at Siobhan, focused on her form, then back at the paper.

EXT. THE IVORS HOUSE — BACK PORCH — EARLY EVENING

Regan, Judd and his parents, JUDD SR. and COLETTE, early 50s, sit at a table in front of a puddingstone wall under an overcast sky, eating lobster rolls and potatoes. Judd Sr. has a welterweight body; Colette is statuesque, with a beehive 'do and a teal-green muumuu. Regan now has on a magenta nylon shirt and denims. The Judds are dressed casually. (N.B.: Sr. and Colette do not have an accent.)

JUDD

Did you see that game against, who was it, Chapel Hill—?

JUDD SR.

You bet I did!

JUDD

—where he swiped the ball away and scored on his own rebound?

JUDD SR.

And on his way down, he had his arms stretched out like this.

(demonstrates)

"Look, ma! I'm Jesus on the cross!"

All four laugh at that. Brief beat. Sr. raises his glass.

JUDD SR. (CONT'D.)

Here's to Larry Bird giving the baton to Lenny Bias.

COLETTE

Here, here!

REGAN

Sláinte!

They raise and clink their glasses, and drink. A hitch.

COLETTE

You watched the finals, right, Regan?

REGAN

Nah, I actually don't follow sports all that much. Sacrilege, I know. I mean, of course I know all about Bias, I know the name and the face, but truth be told, that's about it.

Judd, calculatedly, does not react to that.

COLETTE

Well, that's curious, if you're going to a draft party tomorrow.

REGAN

It's for McSorley, too. Forty years since his last drink.

COLETTE

Ah. I see.

(Brief beat.)

Which reminds me: I got some good news to share.

REGAN

The shoppin' center's down?

COLETTE

The shopping center is down! Signed the letter of intent Friday.

REGAN

Excellent! Good for you. She told you guys, right?

Both Judds nod in the middle of bites of food.

COLETTE

City gave us all the row homes on Lenehan and Plusquellic. That whole block, gone by Christmas.

REGAN

What happened to Quincy?

COLETTE

Lenehan's even worse. Easier to get on the fast track. We got the whole neighborhood to lobby for it.

JUDD

Is that where the crack house is?

COLETTE

They got all sorts of drugs there. You know what else they got there, I just learned? Clean needles.

JUDD

No way.

COLETTE

People in the community are actually giving them the needles—

JUDD SR.

That's 'cause of H.I.V.—

COLETTE

I know that, Judd, but don't these people bother to think that one shot could kill 'em faster?

(A hitch.)

Cold turkey. Only way. That's what saved Gladys.

They continue eating. A beat. Regan puts down her fork.

REGAN

Mind if I use the ladies' room?

COLETTE

Not at all.

Regan rises, pats Judd on the chest, kisses his scalp, and goes into the house through a sliding door.

INT. COLETTE'S STUDY – SECONDS LATER

Regan closes the door furtively, and turns on a lamp. O.S., a FAUCET runs. She shuffles to a canarywood desk strewn with papers and rounds it. She picks up one page, skims it, puts it down, and repeats. She broods, for a long beat.

Her fingers tease a manila folder atop a pile, which she opens on a letter headed by a lavender-bordered logo for LAVENDER, WAGHORNE & IVORS, and quickly flip through what turn out to be several copies of it. She leans over the letter, gripping the desk, and reads it. Brief pause.

REGAN

Cunt.

EXT. THE IRISH GOODBYE — SUNDOWN

Establishing: an unremarkable Paddy pub with a sage-painted wood front and a brick-walled second story with an oriel. A turquoise '84 Lotus Excel hugs the curb, and parks. Regan steps out from the driver's seat.

INT. BARROOM

A hand holds up a mason jar a third-full of bills and coins with an oblong slit cut into the lid. Taped to its front is a photo of a strawberry blonde woman with her baby daughter in her lap. The other hand's fingers point to introduce:

VANESSA (O.S.)

This here's Clodagh Forbes. She's a law student at Queen's Belfast, wants to help out women who were inna Magdalene asylums, her aunt was one of 'em. The daughter is Cassidy, she's about eighteen months.

The hand drops to the face of VANESSA NIHILL, who stands at the back of the room. Late 20s, lanky, with an ash blonde pageboy cut, dyed silver at the tips, and punkish sheer tanks and cargo pants. A blunt, dead-eyed angel of death.

VANESSA

Her father—not necessarily Clodagh's husband—is away fightin' the Tories, and needless to say, money is tight. Every cent you chip in helps Clodagh with tuition, and keeps the wee baby fed. Wallets out, thanks in advance.

Dim, ambient lights; sauna-like walls. A good crowd for a Monday. From one of the scarlet vinyl booths, a patron offers a bill; Vanessa goes to him, and he donates. O.S., on the SPEAKERS, "Second Skin" by The Chameleons starts up.

Regan enters, meets Vanessa nearby, and pulls out a wallet.

REGAN
Annual Bloomsday fundraiser?

VANESSA
Real fuckin' tearjerker.

Regan stuffs a bill into the jar, and replaces the wallet.

REGAN
When's the soonest I can see Irv?

VANESSA
Comin' to the party tomorrow?

REGAN
Tell him it's urgent.

They part ways. Regan goes to the back corner, where, at the short end of a cherrywood bar with brass trim, three peers of hers cradle Rob Roys in shot glasses. TIERNEY GASAWAY is half-Black, passing for Irish, with dreadlocks tied back in a ponytail and an androgynous outfit of black leather and culottes. A hopeless romantic, but not without cunning. Around the bend from her is BROOKE SPELLACY, short and chestnut-haired with a hair wall and no-frills clothes. Aimless, cynical. Between Brooke and the wall sits URSULA BAMBRICK, a tall, broad-shouldered ginger in silk blouses and jeans. A more tactful riff on Regan. Brooke and Ursula have swimmers' figures; Tierney is wirier, not as healthy. Regan sits next to Tierney and beckons the bartender.

ALL THREE
Hey, Frog!

REGAN
As if we aren't gettin' plastered
enough tomorrow.
(to the bartender)
Cuba Libre. Onna rocks.
(to her friends)
I miss anything?

TIERNEY
No.

Everyone giggles at that deadpan. Brief beat.

BROOKE

We were discussin' how Ursula is Penelope.

URSULA

Stay outta my shit.

REGAN

Oh damn—Cedric got another tour?

URSULA

No need to repeat it.

BROOKE

Not to mention all the suitors nippin' at your heels.

URSULA

I vaguely recall tellin' a little bitch to stay out.

TIERNEY

Neville put some more poetry about his penis on her answering machine.

URSULA

Wait till you hear his last one, it might just be his masterpiece, I'll be fucked if he can top it.

REGAN

I woulda castrated that perv by now.

All three bristle at that remark. The Cuba Libre slides down the counter into Regan's hand with no drop spilled; she takes a gulp. The talk that develops is punctured with laughter, and the four women's words often overlap:

BROOKE

I like Molly Bloom better. Monogamy is a fuckin' crock.

URSULA

Molly Bloom is pathetic. Penelope waited twenty years, Molly Bloom didn't last twenty fuckin' minutes—

BROOKE

The Odyssey is a myth, and everythin' about Penelope is as big and dumb a myth as Cyclops and all that other bullshit. What kinda bitch this day and age would wait twenty years—her pussy would turn to rust—

TIERNEY

All our pussies gonna turn to rust.

BROOKE

—and you could still love the guy, but sooner or later, you gotta start thinkin' about yourself. Molly and Leo loved each other, right, Frog?

REGAN

Course they did. All Blazes Boylan was good for was his potted meat.

Tierney's eyes fall on a claret splotch of Kaposi's sarcoma visible on her wrist. Briskly, she reaches into her sleeve, pulls out a wristwatch, covers the splotch with it, and tightens the strap. None of the other three notice this.

BROOKE

Exactly. All this talk of eternal true love and faithfulness and blah-blah-blah, it's a buncha horseshit. Romance. Wears. Off.

(A hitch.)

Plus which, how're you so sure what Cedric's doin' in Berlin?

REGAN

Oh. Oh.

URSULA

That question is fuckin' retarded.

REGAN

Y'know, Odysseus and Leo weren't faithful neither.

TIERNEY

Oh yeah, he had that Calypso bitch.

URSULA

Cedric is not fuckin' Odysseus.

BROOKE

I'm not sayin' that. I'm sayin' he's fuckin' a Bavarian beer hall bitch, with a Garibaldi jacket and two big-ass jugs foamin' at the rim—

URSULA

Now, you're just bein'—Cedric is not havin' an affair. And it's not about what you or I know, it's a matter o' trust. We trust each other. Like we trust the laws o' science. How the fuck could you expect us to be apart for one minute, never mind a tour o' duty—how the fuck could you even function in this world if you only trusted what you saw? And not even, for some guys. You'd go ape-batshit—tell you what, Brooke: you seem happy with your approach to guys, you let me be happy with mine.

BROOKE

Eh. Blaine's actually growin' on me.

The other three scoff at Brooke's double standard.

REGAN

Alright, what I do need to know 'bout this wicked cock o' the month?

TIERNEY

He's some bathead, looks like Art Garfunkel fucked Biff Tannen.

BROOKE

He's comin' tomorrow, and I'm tellin' him you said that.

TIERNEY

I triple dog dare you—

REGAN

(to Ursula)

He wasn't at the discotheque, was he?

That was abrupt. Just like that, all the humor is squelched from the talk. Regan doesn't seem cognizant of this.

URSULA

Nah, he was by Alexanderplatz that night. He had friends there, though. None injured. Thank God.

(Pause.)

Homer. Joyce. Fuck all that. Berlin's got couples livin' on opposite sides of a wall five years longer'n fuckin' Penelope ever had to wait, all 'cause one of 'em picked the wrong day to go to the groceries or some other shit, and there's no way they just moved on to someone else anymore'n they'd turn into Communists overnight.

REGAN

I'll drink to that.

She does. Tierney and Brooke nod in concession to Ursula. The life is back in the party.

URSULA

Yeah, you better. You're lucky your guy left the Army.

REGAN

That I am.

(Brief pause.)

So whose car are we takin' tomorrow?

Brooke raises her hand. Tierney and Ursula point to her.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Oh why, 'cause it's the wagon? Have you even paid it off yet?

BROOKE

Will you get off? Traffic's gonna be a dick tomorrow night, anyway.

REGAN

How the fuck has that shitbox not been repoed yet?

BROOKE

I keep it in my garage at night.

REGAN

She keeps it in her garage at night.
That's an accomplishment.

BROOKE

Fuckin' A. Car can't get repoed past
the property line.

REGAN

Says who?

BROOKE

Says Mass State law.

REGAN

Bull-fuckin'-shit.

BROOKE

You wanna bet?

REGAN

How the fuck is the repo man s'posed
to do his goddamn job?

TIERNEY

Good question.

A beat. Then, slowly, an emerging gust of laughter puffs
their cheeks, bursts out of their mouths, and persists.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE GALLERY — NIGHT

A column of abandoned row homes like brownstone dominoes on
a sharp incline. The street signs at the corner, white on
green, read "Lenehan Avenue" and "Plusquellic Road". The
Lotus passes a stoplight, swerves to the curb, and parks.

Across, a man with white beard and sideburns and a Celtics
jersey sits on his porch, a Pilsner in hand, and glares
ahead in contempt. This is GILLIAN TARP. More on him later.

INT. STUDY — THE GALLERY

Addicts at various stages of regress sit against the walls,
all perfectly languid, needles in arms or on their way to.

Sitting on a cushion against a built-in bookshelf crammed with books is EUGENE, early 40s, shaggy-haired, decked in camouflage, with a Purple Heart on his neck. Siobhan, with her purse, sits next to him, transfixed at his anecdote:

EUGENE

Then, the sniper caught him inna shoulder, and for one split second, I thought right there, that was it. No fuckin' way—I will never forget the sight o' that bullet slammin' him back into that hill. Thought it'd be the last thing I'd ever see—and yet, somehow, he kept his foot on that Betty. Not a day goes by, I try to figure out—I'll never know how the fuck—guy musta been strong as a horse, he was able to do that.

Regan enters, a needle kit in hand, through an archway that looks into the front hall. Brooke follows, sits in a chair, and observes the room. Regan goes to the bookshelf, notes Siobhan's presence, and browses, half-listening to Eugene:

EUGENE (CONT'D.)

And he didn't skip a beat. I mean, the rest o' the squad was onna ground already, we got Charlie comin' into the clearing, A.K.s blazing, and Spencer's the only one not scared shitless enough—he just took out his Sig and popped 'em off one by one. Pop, pop, pop—one bullet a gook, that's all it took. And all under sniper fire comin' from I don't know where the fuck—if he hadn't been in camo, he woulda been dead by then.

Regan pulls out a copy of Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance and reads the back blurb.

SIOBHAN

Meanwhile, what you're thinkin' is, if you kept playin' dead, the mine mighta blown you up, but if you moved, you'd get shot.

EUGENE

Exactly. And then, the medic came down, made right for Spencer 'cause he was closest, grabbed his collar, and just as he's about to pull him off and get us all killed—oh, he was a fast bastard—he smacked him away and screamed, "My foot's on a Betty! Get everyone else!" and then got right back onna Sig no sweat. So I was the first guy he pulled outta there, and we passed another medic on our way up, and I'm sure the same stupid scene was repeated with him.

REGAN

Hey, Siobhan.

Siobhan looks up. Regan tosses her the kit; she catches it.

SIOBHAN

Oh wow. You're a good egg.
(to Eugene:)
Keep goin'.

As he talks, Siobhan empties the kit, takes from her purse a water bottle, a lighter and a heroin baggie, fills the cup with water and H., and melts the H. with the lighter.

EUGENE

I got to the convoy, and out the corner o' my eye, inna back of a truck, I saw a blanket. And I just thought, Betty bounces three feet, gives me 'bout a second, I could wrap Spencer round the boulder, he's got a chance. So I took it and wrapped it around me and ran down there like a bitch, pure adrenaline. And I got to the edge o' the clearing, and—he musta run outta ammo—Charlie was swarmin' to him like rabbits in heat, and then—boom. Bastard made a run for it. Wiped out the whole fuckin' platoon. Saved the convoy. And we got the hell outta dodge, and the aces took care o' the rest.

SIOBHAN

Did the aces get the snipers?

EUGENE

I sure as shit fuckin' wish.

The heroin is liquefied. Siobhan shuts off the lighter, puts down the cup, uncaps the syringe, dips it into the tincture, and very slowly draws back the plunger. Eugene looks at Regan and the book she's holding.

EUGENE (CONT'D.)

You picked one o' the best books onna whole damn shelf.

REGAN

Thanks for the hype.

(to Siobhan:)

You read the Commandments, right?

SIOBHAN

Yeah, yeah.

REGAN

Three strikes, and you recite 'em by memory or leave. Even if you're high.

Regan exits into another room with the book. Siobhan flicks the needle to pop the air bubbles, more than she has to.

EUGENE

You wanna guess what Spencer's reward was? ... Silver Star.

SIOBHAN

Shame he didn't live to see it.

EUGENE

Nah, it's a fuckin' insult is what it is. If he hadn't been a nigger, he woulda won the M.H. no question. ... A noncom once told me he woulda had to step onna mine deliberately to be in that league—can you fuckin' believe that shit? And had I saved him, I mighta gotten the Bronze Star. With Valor. ... Speedy Spence. Goddamn.

Eugene sighs and stares ahead. Siobhan puts the needle aside, rolls up her left sleeve, ties a loose knot in the tourniquet, puts her arm in the loop, and tightens the knot below her elbow using her free hand and her teeth. Across, a younger addict lazily tosses a used needle overhand at a crimson Sharps bin tacked to the opposite wall. He misses.

BROOKE

Gavin, go pick that up and toss it proper. Fifth Commandment.

Gavin broods at Brooke for a beat, then pushes himself up, trudges to the needle, obeys her order, and returns to his place. Siobhan injects the heroin, undoes the tourniquet, and lies on her side. Her body dissolves.

FRONT HALL

Regan, taking a circuitous route, moseys in from a door at a right angle to the archway. She walks toward the stairs and gazes on a poster taped to a cupboard door.

REGAN'S P.O.V. — THE POSTER:

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. ONE NEEDLE, ONE HIT. | 6. NOTHING STUPID. |
| 2. NO DEALING. | 7. NO RELAPSES. |
| 3. NO MIXING. | 8. NO SEX. |
| 4. NOTHING OUTSIDE THE ROOMS. | 9. NO DEATH. |
| 5. NOTHING ON THE FLOOR. | 10. SILENCE IS GOLDEN. |

Regan keeps gazing, and smiles—with pride.

INT. BAIL BONDS OFFICE — DAY

An adipose, balding man, mid-50s, in short sleeves with a tie and suspenders, tallies up bills on a calculator. A billboard ad on the wall gives his name, MARTY O'TREHY, and profession. The office is a marvel of hoarding. A window behind him looks out onto a fire escape.

Vanessa enters with a knapsack, wearing a Red Sox cap, a bomber jacket and gloves. Marty looks up, and freezes.

VANESSA

Mornin', Marty.
(She sits down.)
You busy?

Marty's at a loss. This is a surprise. Inconvenient, too. He gestures to the calculator.

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

Won't be long.

(She takes out cash.)

I just got eighty bucks here says Gasaway chokes in March.

MARTY

Who the fuck told you—?
(trails off)

VANESSA

—that you been runnin' dead pools onna H.I.V. poz? ... Lotsa folks. Word o' mouth, it's a fickle thing.

Long beat. Marty considers it.

MARTY

The half-nigger. Been gettin' quite a few on her.

He pushes himself up, turns around to face a safe atop a file cabinet, and starts fiddling with the combination lock. Vanessa pockets the cash, and spies the window.

VANESSA

Pisgah view you got there.

MARTY

You get used to it.

VANESSA

You take bets on Warren Kilfeather?

MARTY

Course I took bets on him, why?

VANESSA

Just find it bold you did that with one o' McSorley's best friends.

Marty opens the safe. Before he can reply, Vanessa pulls out a Beretta, racks the slide, takes a cushion from behind her, holds it against the muzzle, and FIRES into his back.

His body slams into the cabinet and slumps to the floor, leaving a smear of blood. O.S., he GURGLES. Vanessa rises, rounds his desk as fast as she can with the clutter, aims through the cushion, and FIRES again, point blank. Marty goes SILENT. Pause, as she eye-fucks his corpse.

All that Vanessa does next, she does with expert speed and precision. She tosses aside the cushion, holsters the gun in her pants. Goes to the door—locks it. Goes to the safe, pushes back the door, notes several tall stacks of cash. Takes a stack, sees that there's mold on the bills. Slips her knapsack off her back—zips it open. Empties the safe of all cash. Pulls out a row of small black leather pocket calendars with names written on them in Wite-Out. Moves them into the knapsack. Zips it closed.

A beat. She closes the safe. Returns the knapsack to her back. Steps around Marty, careful to avoid blood. Unlocks the window. Pushes it open, with effort, making a SCREECH. Looks behind her. Listens for noise. Hears none. Kicks out the screen. Sticks out one leg, then her upper half, then her other leg. Uprights herself—looks around—glides O.S.

EXT. REGAN'S HOUSE — LATE AFTERNOON

A stucco bungalow, spotted with kudzu. The Excel pulls into the driveway and parks. Regan, in scrubs, gets out, locks the car door behind her, walks down the stone path to the front door, sees a package on the front step—and pauses.

INT. THE HOUSE — LIVING ROOM — SECONDS LATER

The package is on a table. Regan's hands slice the tape with a box cutter, and open it. A beat. She puts down the blade, reaches in, takes out and unfurls an indigo linen banner, shield-shaped, with text embroidered in silver:

WOMEN'S 50 FREE
REGAN AISLING CROAKE
SENIOR — '78 — 26.88

REGAN (O.S.)

Goddamn it.

SECONDS LATER

Regan is on the phone. She paces the room.

REGAN

Could you patch me through to Coach Quantrell? ... I know her; she might still be in. ... Tell her it's Regan.

Pause, while she waits. She's not happy about this. Then:

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Maureen? ... I'm doin' fine, how're you? ... Oh, that's great. Send her my kudos. ... Well, I got my banner inna mail, and I don't know if anyone's told you, but we started a tradition where— ... Nah, more like ice cream. Maudlin Maverick, somethin' like that. ... Would you mind?

She sits down on a couch, grabs a ballpoint pen, clicks it open, poises it above a pad, and waits for a hitch. Then, she starts scribbling, urgently.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Dominique ... Ereau ... E-R-E-A-U. ... Not Haitian? ... Gives me a little thrill to think of a woman o' color on that wall. What was her time? ... Wow. Full tenth. Medley record in jeopardy? ... As I thought. What's her number?

INT. THE IRISH GOODBYE — BARROOM — NIGHT

Regan, Tierney, Brooke and Ursula sit at a booth drinking virgin Anita Bryants. Regan wears a blue suede vest. The place is much more crowded than it was the prior night. On the SPEAKERS: "In the Gold Dust Rush" by Cocteau Twins.

REGAN

Twenty-six—I dare her to make half a minute with my tits!

BROOKE

Jealous.

REGAN

Go flick a dick. If Amber Plannery hadn't put me outta commission with that fuckin' padlock, I woulda been a body length faster.

BROOKE

We'll never know.

REGAN

A tenth today, a twentieth tomorrow,
a hundredth next year, and one day,
some lucky bitch sets the record that
lasts forever. There is a limit. And
part o' me still wants to reach it.

URSULA

Betcha the guys reach it first.

REGAN

Depressing. But true.

TIERNEY

Ya still got the medley, right?

REGAN

For now.

(A beat.)

But really, fifty-free was the one I
was proud of. The only fight inna
medley is transitions. Fifty-free is
the real test. Everything's gotta be
perfect. One cunt hair outta whack
and you're fucked. Fastest bitch in
Westphalia, that's the title I liked.

TIERNEY

You only say that 'cause you know
deep down the real test is the two
hundred fly, which you crapped on.

BROOKE

Here we go again—

TIERNEY

Rather I kept my pecs of steel than
have your rack—

REGAN

Buuuullshiiiiit!

Henceforth, as before, the talk rumbles with laughter.

BROOKE

Is any-bitch else here even remotely conscious of how every time we have this retarded argument over who's the best and what's the hardest and blah-blah-blah, we all argue for the one we broke the record in? Isn't there enough Bias for one night?

URSULA

You got an alternative?

REGAN

No, she doesn't. Bias is unavoidable. Y'know what, let's embrace it, let's each make our own case once and for all. Tierney, you have no case, the fly is fuckin' impractical. Kid's drownin' inna Bay and the lifeguard swims the fly? Parents would sue.

URSULA

The water's choppy and the current's against you, lifeguard better go with the breast. Moderation.

REGAN

Wanna bet?

Ursula gives her the droit and the bras d'honneur at once.

BROOKE

You two talk about life and death. Me, I'm inna water, I'm in my Zen mode, that's what the back is good for. Can't see no one but yourself.

TIERNEY

You're not wrong.

REGAN

No, you're not.

Vanessa approaches the table, sans cap and gloves.

VANESSA

Ursula, Regan, you're up.

Ursula and Regan slide out of the booth.

TIERNEY

What's goin' on?

REGAN

Business with McSore-ass. We'll be right back.

VANESSA

So that's what you call him.

The three of them glide through the throng, toward a door next to the bar's short end. Brief beat. Brooke leans in.

BROOKE

Think you could edify me on exactly what inna fuck the Cocteau Twins are singin' about?

TIERNEY

If you're tryin' to figure out the lyrics, you're missin' the point.

Brooke grins, shaking her head. Tierney takes a sip.

SPIRAL STAIRCASE

Vanessa walks up, Regan and Ursula behind her, lazier.

REGAN

You think Blaine gave Brooke a time?

URSULA

I do look up to Brooke's patience.

REGAN

So don't I. I woulda boxed Judd's ears by now, he came this late.

HALL — SECOND STORY

A white oblong with doors. The three walk in and down. Vanessa reaches the end door, and turns to the other two.

VANESSA

Ursula first. Shouldn't take long.

MCSORLEY'S OFFICE

IRVING MCSORLEY tunes a Bösendorfer, twisting a pin gently with the lever. He's in his mid-70s, bullet-headed, portly, and wears a goldenbrown tweed over serge and corduroys. Economical, chilly, but scrupulous. Photos on the wall show him as a WWII vet (Europe) and active in local politics. Vanessa and Ursula enter. He doesn't react. He puts aside the lever, strikes a tuning fork pitched at C, and plays the C key one octave above middle. It's crystal. He plays the opening chords of Stravinsky's Les Noces while softly humming the singing part. He gets lost in it for a long beat. Every note is perfect. He stops.

MCSORLEY

Your tip on O'Trehy checked out.

URSULA

And?

MCSORLEY

You could argue he's at peace.

Long beat. Ursula is unfazed. Vanessa manages to look even more inert. McSorley goes to sit at his desk, in the oriel, and swivels his chair to face them.

MCSORLEY

Reckon he wanted a side gig without payin' more rent.

URSULA

Would you've let him?

MCSORLEY

Fuck no. I didn't let him do our boys in 'Nam, this was even worse. It was exploitative. Cheap bastard. Anyway—

From a drawer, he flashes a wad of mold-stained cash.

MCSORLEY (CONT'D.)

This is the money bet on your friend Gasaway, trebled. My gift to her.

He tosses the wad to Ursula; she catches. A beat. Ursula mulls over something.

URSULA

Tierney don't talk that much—

MCSORLEY

Someone saw her inna E.R., it ain't quantum physics, Bambrick. Secrets in Westphalia tend to be open, you know that. Whoever's inna know is inna know. Not even I can control it.

VANESSA

Same deal with her parentage.

URSULA

(shooting her a look)

You say that like it's an issue.

VANESSA

Not particularly.

A beat. Ursula turns back to McSorley, cooling down.

URSULA

Anythin' else?

MCSORLEY

Not unless you got somethin'.

URSULA

Been thinkin' about tickin' the juice up to eleven.

MCSORLEY

Like Spinal Tap's amp?

URSULA

Regan called that amp "a keen satire of our number system." 'Cause it's based on tens.

VANESSA

Sounds like something she'd say.

MCSORLEY

Ten to eleven, a wee higher price for the bettor, but on our end, it adds up. Real clever, Bambrick. I'll put it onna A.P.B. this week.

URSULA
 I appreciate that.
 (goes to the door)
 See you downstairs?

MCSORLEY
 In a minute. Send in Croake.

URSULA
 Will do.

HALL

Regan leans against the wall, sort-of patiently. Ursula reenters, and hands the cash to her.

URSULA (CONT'D.)
 This goes to Tierney. Courtesy o' the
 late Marty O'Trehy.

REGAN
 I heard.

URSULA
 Better you do it than I.

REGAN
 Kissed by genius, that man was. First
 guy he's whacked out in years.

URSULA
 Less we talk about it, the better.

Ursula slaps her on the back and exits down the hall. Regan stuffs the cash in her pants, goes to the door and enters

MCSORLEY'S OFFICE

She lets the door slam behind her and ambles past Vanessa, straight to the desk.

REGAN
 Happy anniversary.

MCSORLEY
 I wish.

Regan sits down, and hits the ground running:

REGAN

Some real class acts you've sent to the clinic lately. Vinny who needs the triple bypass, he has T.D.P.s, and Mister Boylston Street I saw today, looked like he was one potato chip away from keelin' over, his Q.T. was five-ten. I wouldn't blame no one for turnin' them away.

MCSORLEY

Did you think I thought it'd be easy to find guys who could sell wafers who're willin' to go to that place?

REGAN

There's no shortage of guys who can sell wafers—

MCSORLEY

Save your breath, Croake. I know your angle. I'm not about to start payin' skeezers to sling that shit.

REGAN

Then who the fuck—why are we even sellin' to these fat cats? We're s'posed to be helpin' the addicts take the edge off. You got outta the dope trade, and now, you're gettin' these rich fucks hooked on methos. You don't see the irony in that, see how maybe that could backfire?

MCSORLEY

Rich fat cats, that's generous. What about guys my age, just had a major surgery and the morphine ain't doin'? What about union boys injured onna job and they can't get workmen's comp 'cause they can't afford an attorney and they're too fuckin' proud to ask him to take the case pro bono? Much less be caught dead in that clinic.

REGAN
Perhaps I misjudge.

MCSORLEY
"Perhaps." ... I'll meet you halfway,
find some healthier guys. That all?

REGAN
No. Unfortunately.

Regan takes out from her vest, unfolds and hands him the
Lavender Waghorne letter. Pause, as McSorley processes it.

MCSORLEY
That's your Gallery.

REGAN
We know who's onna Zoning Commission?
(Brief beat.)

MCSORLEY
And you got no issues goin' against
Judd's mother on this?

REGAN
What she don't know won't hurt her.
They were lookin' at some brutalist
outcropping in Quincy. Just put 'em
there. Can't see why not.
(Long beat.)
You don't just move outta your house.
I put too much work into the Gallery.
I'm not givin' it up for jack.

Pause. McSorley puts down the letter. This is irking him.

MCSORLEY
Zoning Board of Appeals. ... Do we know
when they meet?

VANESSA
Wednesdays, usually.

MCSORLEY
Tomorrow, then.
(Long beat.)
There's a better way to do this than
what you're thinkin'.

BARROOM — A FEW MINUTES LATER

The music has PAUSED. ON THE SCREEN of the T.V. above the bar, N.B.A. Commissioner DAVID STERN stands at the podium:

DAVID STERN

With the second pick in the N.B.A.
draft, the Boston Celtics select ...
Len Bias—

NOISE snuffs out the rest. The crowd filling the room erupts in applause, cheers, high-fives and fist-pumps. Regan reenters, stuffing another wad of molded cash into her vest. The noise alarms her. She ekes out a smile as she maneuvers through the crowd, to the booth, where she high-fives both Brooke and Ursula at once. She has to SHOUT:

REGAN

You call this an anticlimax?!

They laugh at that. Regan turns to the T.V. ON SCREEN, Len Bias, in a white suit, stands next to Stern, completely satisfied. Regan bites her lower lip, indulging the sight of him as rapidly as she can, then turns back to the booth.

REGAN

Where'd Tierney go?!

BROOKE

Outside!

Brooke points to a backdoor, perpendicular to the one going upstairs. Regan heads for it.

EXT. BACK ALLEY

Tierney leans against the wall between the backdoor and a dumpster, beneath a fire escape, having a good cry. Regan steps out, and Tierney abruptly stifles the tears. Regan just stands there, unsure how to proceed. A beat.

TIERNEY

I'm sorry, I—

REGAN

Don't be. Let it out.

TIERNEY

It's let out.

REGAN

You sure 'bout that?

TIERNEY

Yeah. ... Just wish I'd known you could get this shit from lickin' pussy.

A beat. If Tierney is acting, she's making it look easy.

REGAN

What was your last T-cell count?

TIERNEY

Four-sixty. Lowest yet.

REGAN

Not funeral prep range.

TIERNEY

What was your godfather's last count?

REGAN

Oh, Warren musta been inna teens. But he kept fightin' to the end. Made him feel better. That's the key: just keep fightin' for more time no matter what. That's how I'll go down.

Tierney relaxes. That actually puts things in perspective. Brief beat. Regan slaps her on the shoulder, and takes out the wad of cash from her pants.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

I call this green therapy.
 (tosses it to Tierney)
 Gift from McSorley. Ursula blew a whistle, that's part o' the reward.

TIERNEY

(eyes the cash)
 Why is there mold on these?

REGAN

You really give a shit?

TIERNEY

No.
 (pockets the cash)
 Remind me to thank him.

REGAN

Thank him.

O.S., inside, "In the Heat of the Night" by Sandra starts PLAYING. Regan goes to another dumpster up against the opposite wall, closer to the alley's exit onto the street. She crouches next to it with her back on the wall, hoists her pants to her knees, and relieves herself.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

We're gonna have a good night. Ship up to B-Town, crawl all the pubs with good enough craic, get banjaxed—

TIERNEY

Not me.

REGAN

That's why you're drivin'. Remember:
 I got hosies on shotgun.

Brief beat. Regan finishes, brings her pants back up, and rises. Tierney looks oddly suspicious.

TIERNEY

Can I ask you somethin' blunt, Frog?

REGAN

Sure.

TIERNEY

How'd you get Irv fuckin' McSorley to stop sellin' heroin?
 (Brief beat.)

REGAN

This onna record?

TIERNEY

I'm writin' a feature onna decline o' the dope business. Could use some perspective. ... C'mon, Regan, you know I don't name my sources.

REGAN

No shit. What I'm thinkin' is what to do when McSore-ass reads somethin' inna Globe and figures there's only about X number o' people who know this beat writer who coulda told her that, and no one ever really liked rats in this town, now did they?

TIERNEY

Then, tell me somethin' he can't trace back to you.

Tierney folds her arms, and waits with mock patience. Brief pause. Regan paces the alley, speaking with tact:

REGAN

You can give up Warren. He ran Irv's race wire inna 'thirties. But don't make it more'n speculation, I don't want it to sound like pussy-pity.

TIERNEY

Was he a fag?

REGAN

Doubt it. He had a knee replacement in 'eighty-one and they botched the blood transfusion.

TIERNEY

Christ.

REGAN

You don't have a notepad?

Tierney jabs her index finger toward her temple twice.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Really?

TIERNEY

(half-shrugs)

If I took notes, you'd be hunnin' me to burn 'em.

REGAN

Good point.

(A beat.)

What you don't write is McSorley's a bottom-line capitalist and he read the cards and saw that the demand's for coke. What you do write is—and this is gospel I'm about to tell you, I'd kill to hear an argument against this—each generation has its own drug. In World War Eye-Eye, it was amphetamines, they jacked the whole armed forces on that, both sides, Irv and Warren included, and the Tour de France wouldn'ta survived otherwise. After that, benzos. Sixties, acid. Seventies, dope, with a side of angel dust. You know the rest. The caveat being that crack will peak, decline from there, and it will be replaced. No guessin' by what—could be the scuba divin' high for all I care—but it's inevitable. All in season. Have fun while the kitchen's still hot.

TIERNEY

I could use that.

REGAN

Glad to help. Ain't like this is gonna beat the Molasses Explosion Sundae protest.

(acts as an old woman)

"I was sixteen years old when that happened—I still smell that doggone rum smell every time I walk into the Old North End!" That's gonna go down as your masterpiece.

Tierney chuckles, but it fades ominously. It takes a beat for Regan to realize her faux pas.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Oh shit, that came out wrong—

TIERNEY

No worry—

REGAN

Still—

TIERNEY

Regan, don't apologize. Don't ever. I know whatcha meant.

(Long beat.)

So, ya takin' Dominique to the Mav?

REGAN

Where else?

TIERNEY

I had to take Erin Kneafsey. Aims to be ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Liechtenstein's small enough that they just lump it in.

REGAN

She has better odds'n we ever did.

(Brief beat.)

Did I tell you I finished The Lost Language o' Cranes?

TIERNEY

That ending—

REGAN

Fuckin' brilliant.

TIERNEY

The father comin' out to the son. And the book earns that ending.

REGAN

That's what makes it so good.

TIERNEY

And it just leaves 'em like that, unresolved, y'know. And I love that. I think it's perfect. Say no more—

REGAN

Want me to show you somethin'?

Regan takes out a ruby sobriety coin with "40 YEARS" carved into it. Tierney plucks it, and gives it a closer look.

REGAN (CONT'D.)
Handcrafted by yours truly. It's ruby
'cause it's the fortieth.

TIERNEY
Isn't that a gem? How'd you get it?

REGAN
You'd be surprised how much Warren
left me.

TIERNEY
Left you that fuckin' bungalow.

REGAN
And paid off the mortgage.

A beat. Regan moves in closer, cheek to cheek with Tierney, to pride herself of her work. Then, their eyes lock. A longer beat. Tierney registers something; her eyes smolder, and her fingers graze at a strand of hair on Regan's face.

TIERNEY
You look good in this light.

Regan backs away, bewildered. Tierney realizes her blunder.

TIERNEY (CONT'D.)
Sorry, I didn't—I usually got a good
instinct for that.

REGAN
Not tonight, clearly. Plus which, I
got a boyfriend.

TIERNEY
Which one is it?

Regan has to make some effort to look more indignant than bemused. O.S., Sandra fades out, and "The Calling (Mk. II)" by Death in June replaces her.

REGAN
What're you talkin' about?

TIERNEY
Is it 'cause you're straight or is it
'cause you're taken?

REGAN

How am I s'posed to answer that—?

TIERNEY

Well, if it's 'cause you're taken, then maybe you are what I thought you was. If it's 'cause you're straight, then maybe you and Judd ain't so pie-in-the-sky after all.

REGAN

And I can't pick both?! Even if both are facts?! Real slick, Tierney.

(A hitch.)

My first crush was gay, I been there, I know what it's like, but—you come between me and Judd, I bite.

On "bite", she snatches back the coin, and opens the door.

TIERNEY

(muttering)

Could do better'n a fuckin' deserter.

Regan stops, SLAMS the door, and stares acid into Tierney.

REGAN

What the fuck does that mean to you?

TIERNEY

Not much. Just wouldn't want my Army boy to desert me is all.

REGAN

Oh, that's what you're jealous o' Judd for, draggin' out his furlough to spend a few extra days with me. You wanted me to throw him out—?

TIERNEY

Alright, I get it, he wouldn't desert you. Has he apologized for the crap he pulled inna Goiterfetish days?

REGAN

That was years ago—

TIERNEY

And I could spend years tryin' to figure out why you gratify a fucker like that while better men out there can't get squat! Could you? Have an easier time hearin' Cocteau Twins lyrics. It's hypocrisy. It's ass-backwards logic. ... Makes me lose my head like Vic Morrow. Makes no sense.

Long beat. That really pisses Regan off. She closes the distance between them. Tierney doesn't wince.

REGAN

Are you fuckin' retarded? I don't need to make sense to you. I don't need to be logical or ethical or moral or just or reasonable or whatever the fuck your no doubt highly subjective interpretations o' those words happen to be. Who I am and what I do and who I fuck and how I fuck him doesn't need to fit with any of your standards whatsoever. You oughta know better, comin' from this place: I decide what I do with the sovereign domain that is my body! My brain reigns as queen, and my heart, my soul, my eyes, my ears, my voice, my mouth, my arms, my legs, my skin, my tits, my ass and my cunt answer to her alone! She is judge, jury and executioner, and it will never be a democracy! Anything less is rape!

Tierney just stares at her, stoic, silent, absorbing the onslaught with no complaint. Pause.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Y'know somethin' Warren liked to say?
"Power is the right to hypocrisy."

Tierney moves to respond, but before she can, the backdoor flies open, Ursula on the threshold.

URSULA

Code red. The wagon is gone.

Regan and Tierney exchange looks of shock, their argument forgotten. All three run out of the alley, toward the

ROAD OUTSIDE THE I.G.

Across from the pub, Brooke staggers up and down a vacant parking space, and bangs her head against a meter. The three others U-turn into the otherwise empty road. Tierney wrests her into her grasp and soothes her with bromides in her ear. Regan and Ursula halt and witness it. Pause.

REGAN

Wanna bet Blaine's the repo man?

That conjecture gets no dispute. Long beat.

URSULA

Well, fuck're we s'posed to do with the rest of our evening?

INT. BASEMENT — HOURS LATER

Onstage, a HARDCORE PUNK BAND performs a raucous, static-soaked cover of That Petrol Emotion's "Tightlipped". The mosh pit has devolved into chaos; an incoherent mêlée of punk denizens, the four girls and many in Celtics garb among them, shove and throw haymakers at each other, wild and unprovoked. The errant hand of one young PUNK smacks Regan on the ass; she answers promptly with a knee to the nuts. The punk seizes his groin, falls back-first onto the ground, and puts his karmic pain into a cathartic HOLLER:

PUNK

Woووو! Rock and roll! Rock and roll!

INT. THE CLINIC — FRONT OFFICE — DAY

Regan, in scrubs, is hung over and struggling to hide it. A cup of coffee steams at her side. She props herself up with her fists under her chin and her elbows on the desk, her baggy eyes looking more at the window than through it. On the INTERCOM: "Night Train" by Steve Winwood. Long beat.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE THE CLINIC

It's a lonely raw umber cube on a boulevard. Geddes and a ROOKIE—both in plainclothes, with holstered guns—tussle with an ADDICT, a youngish Black woman.

ADDICT

Get that warrant—!

GEDDES

I'll show you a fuckin' warrant! Up
against the wall—now!

ADDICT

I don't see no warrant—!

ROOKIE

Up against the wall or we're takin'
you in for resisting—!

A cop car pulls up, its SIREN sounding once, and JARLATH FLOOD steps out of the driver's seat. He's Regan's peer, alabaster, with curtained blonde hair and glasses, in a silver blazer, black turtleneck and khakis. Aspergerian. Priggish, nervy. He flashes his badge.

FLOOD

I.A.D.! You got probable cause?

A beat. The cops are caught way off-guard.

GEDDES

Are you fuckin' blind—?

FLOOD

Alright, so we're at a metho clinic,
what if she's onna wagon?

ROOKIE

She could give us her dealer.

ADDICT

I ain't givin' you jackshit!

FLOOD

You wanna file a complaint, ma'am?

ADDICT

Oh please.

FLOOD

Alright, we're done here. Let her go.

GEDDES

No fuckin' way—

FLOOD

You really want a brutality case over this? No consent, no cause. Let her go and take your recon elsewheres.

A beat. Geddes scoffs at Flood and walks away. The rookie locks eyes with the addict, points at his eyes, then at hers (he's bluffing), then takes his cue and joins Geddes. The addict rolls her eyes and trots in the other direction.

INT. FRONT OFFICE

REGAN'S P.O.V. — Through the clinic's glass doors, Flood is visible idling by his car. Brief pause. Then, he meets eyes with Regan, and does a double take.

Regan averts her gaze—too quickly. Big mistake.

EXT. OUTSIDE

Flood looks into the clinic, his gaze inscrutable, for a beat. He ponders the road, then gets back into his car.

INT. FRONT OFFICE

Regan is still in shock. A beat.

FLOOD (O.S.)

(on the scanner)

Croake, I know you're listenin'. Go to channel twelve. Over.

Brief beat. Regan hesitates, then turns a knob.

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

Take your lunch at noon, meet me at the Secret Miracle. Wouldn't ask if it wasn't urgent. Over and out.

INT. GARAGE — SAME TIME

Judd closes the hood of a chartreuse Jaguar with a Maryland front license plate; Sr. is across the car from him. Judd wears a St. George's University T-shirt. O.S., the WHIRS and BUZZES of other car repairs in progress.

JUDD SR.
Mind taking this to Brockton?

JUDD
As if it's my choice.

Sr. tosses a coin underhand over the hood; Judd catches it.

JUDD SR.
Find a payphone if it breaks down.

JUDD
It won't.

Sr. laughs and steps away as Judd opens the driver's door.

INT. THE JAGUAR — MOVING — CANTON, MASS. — MINUTES LATER

Judd takes a smooth ride down the Turnpike, "Memory Serves" by Material on the F.M, with all windows down. Long beat. He takes a left off the Pike, glides past a gas station, and hits a red light. Outside, a stocky guy ambushes him with a spray bottle and squeegee. This is NEVILLE. He has a dent, more so than a scar, in front of his right temple.

NEVILLE
Hey brah! Dash for a dollar!

JUDD
Hell no, man! I just cleaned this!

Suddenly, Neville's face brightens, and he makes frantic gestures of happy surprise. He can't believe his luck.

NEVILLE
Lenny Bias!

JUDD
You think I'm—oh, get fucked, man!

NEVILLE
Oh, c'mon, brah! You drive Maryland plates—everyone in town says you're at Reebok—!

Judd breaks out in LAUGHTER. Neville approaches his window.

JUDD

This ain't even my car, dude!

NEVILLE

Hey, here's my Westphalia welcome.

He moves the squeegee and bottle into his elbow, takes out a baggie of cocaine and tosses it into Judd's lap.

NEVILLE (CONT'D.)

Good to have you here, brah.

Neville hustles toward the gas station, pumping his fist and whooping. Judd looks after him, and just keeps laughing and shaking his head in disbelief. The light turns green; O.S., behind him, a car HONKS TWICE. Judd flings the baggie out the shotgun window, straight into a storm drain.

JUDD

If I was Len Bias, don'tcha think I'd have my crew with me right now?

The car behind HONKS again. Judd resumes driving.

INT. THE SECRET MIRACLE — AROUND NOON

A hole-in-the-wall Portuguese café, with photos of Pelé and his contemporaries, beaches in Rio, and capoeira dancers on the wall, and FADO MUSIC on the INTERCOM. Flood and Regan sit at a booth. He's devouring a lunch of bacalhau, eggs, potatoes, tomatoes and olives, with water; she's working on a caldo verde, with more coffee. Long beat.

FLOOD

You're hung over.

REGAN

Spare me, Flood. Hardcore is dead.
It's been dead.

FLOOD

Reckon that also explains why you can be with Judd now.

Regan flings her spoon into her soup, and rolls her eyes.

REGAN

That what you brought me here for?

FLOOD

No. I got a tip on your Gallery.

A beat. Regan calms down, and resumes consuming her soup.

FLOOD (CONT'D.)

But now that you brought it up—

REGAN

Oh God, here it comes—

FLOOD

—guess I could get some things off my chest.

REGAN

Internal Affairs, pigs o' the pigs—

FLOOD

I prefer to see it as watchin' the watchmen—

REGAN

Fuck you and the cunt you came out—

FLOOD

Don't disrespect my mother—

REGAN

What kinda mother doesn't teach her son not to harass women like this—?

FLOOD

There she goes again, sayin' I harass women like some Dartmouth hippie, let Valerie Solanas get to her head—

REGAN

I have never let that ball-cuttin' bitch Valerie Solanas get to my head —how did you know I had a scanner if you wasn't stalkin' me?

FLOOD

How do the junkies comin' out your clinic always get the drop on us? Talkin' warrants and shit?

Regan considers this, and nods. It's a good answer. A beat.

FLOOD (CONT'D.)

What makes Judd a better man than me?
Askin' genuinely.

A hitch. Regan detests Flood, but she does give away an iota of concern at the despondent tone of that.

REGAN

What're you're talkin' about—?

FLOOD

Let me recap: you said I harassed you. Sexually harassed. Like a perv, like what I did shoulda gotten me fired from a job or somethin'. First, you was alright, then you said you needed space for a day or two, after that, you made me a pariah, and then you fuckin' snapped. You threatened to sic Warren on me, which means you threatened to sic McSore-ass on me. Made me afraid for my life. All over a look in my eye and a few things I said, and I didn't even mean jack. And I never really felt like I got an adequate chance to defend myself—

REGAN

I've told you—I wasn't comfortable with romance inna band—

FLOOD

What about Judd? What about all his cracks about his balls and your mouth and his dick and Sharon's cunt? Lemme tell ya, you tried to kick me outta the band for what I did, you shoulda kicked Judd out the country. So what was it, me or the band? Did you and Judd have it back then? Did you ever really give a fuck about the band? Is me at my best lower'n Judd at his worst? What the fuck am I s'posed to do then? What? Do you not see how fuckin' wojus that is?

Brief pause. Regan's stopped eating again. She might be genuinely humbled. She just as well might not be in the mood for a variation on the debate she had with Tierney.

REGAN

You felt cognitive dissonance.

FLOOD

Exactly.

REGAN

So Goiterfetish was you at your best?

FLOOD

My most honest.

REGAN

Okay, you was honest with me, you saw me as a comely Irish piece of ass—

FLOOD

That's not how I saw you—

REGAN

Then what did you see me as?

(A hitch.)

Askin' genuinely.

Brief pause. Flood chews on a flake of salt cod, and on the question. He puts down his fork, and swallows the bite.

FLOOD

It's hard to articulate. I do admire your command of language.

REGAN

Gift of gab.

FLOOD

It's not that, though.

(A hitch.)

You have this ... aura about you, this —blunt attitude, this brain, this energy, this charm. Your voice, your whole being, it's equal parts honey and venom. It invigorated me.

(MORE)

FLOOD

(CONT'D.)

Made me wonder what'd come out of us puttin' our heads together. For both of us. You won every debate you had, put everyone on defense, even when you was wrong. You know all the guys wanted you, but not just for that. They wanted to harness—they wanted to earn you—earn your respect, your trust, they wanted to be worth you, but they hardly knew where to begin, enigmatic as you are. Thought it was one thing, it turned out the other—

REGAN

What if I just want the male Frog?

FLOOD

(snaps his fingers)

Lemme add this, then. ... You recall, in school, the kids who came in onna short bus? Who didn't talk?

REGAN

The autistics?

FLOOD

Yeah. I was fond of 'em. Made friends with some of 'em. I felt this uncanny bond with 'em, y'know. We didn't connect with others, wasn't sure how to act around 'em, and they always blamed us for not payin' attention, not bein' inna know on the shit they kept us out of. Only they seemed like the retards. Felt like "Switchblade", where it turned out they were the zombies, and we was the ones in onna joke. ... Almost felt like ... I was one of 'em. Only I talked. Chose to talk.

REGAN

So you felt like a ... antisocial?

FLOOD

Yeah.

REGAN

And you thought—what, just 'cause I was inna loony bin that one time—

FLOOD

You asked. I gave my answer.

Brief pause. Regan digests it all, and mulls her response.

REGAN

I don't agree. I don't like being pathologized, diagnosed.

(Brief beat.)

But ... I see where you're comin' from.

A beat. Flood sighs in relief, and resumes eating.

FLOOD

Not that I'm proud o' what I did.

This floors Regan. And she shows it, clearly.

FLOOD (CONT'D.)

I've pushed to be a better man, don't know what else to do. Spent a lotta time wonderin', what if I'd acted different. We coulda been friends. Band coulda made it big—

REGAN

I don't look back. ... We was who we was and we did what we did and we got a moderately successful college radio hit out of it, which is pretty damn swell considerin' we feared each other. And we hurt each other. More'n we meant to, but still. That said, I've moved on. I've changed, Judd's changed—somethin' grew between us after Grenada—and I know you've changed. Hell, you're the first guy who's been a dick to me who's come back and said he's sorry, you coulda done a lot worse'n that. And what you did at the clinic, I appreciate that. I recognize that. And—I forgive you.

FLOOD

I don't want forgiveness. ... I want redemption.

REGAN

You want redemption, you could go to Bangkok, build a fuckin' pagoda—or you could tell me that tip you got.

Flood finishes his bite. He retrieves a manila folder and passes it across the table to Regan. She opens it.

REGAN'S P.O.V. — Her hands flip through several black-and-white surveillance photos of her and Brooke, in winter gear, in front of the Gallery, stepping out of a station wagon, peering around them, and walking inside.

FLOOD

Repo agency. They tail you, sell the film to the data broker, and law enforcement from there. I keep my eyes out for forbidden fruit. Can't cross the property line, shit like that. You'd be surprised—

REGAN

Oh, I can imagine.

FLOOD

Our friend, Brooke what's-her-face—

REGAN

Brooke Spellacy.

FLOOD

How's she tied up in this?

REGAN

She quit the bathhouse, I hired her to bounce weeknights.

FLOOD

I see.

(A hitch.)

I know the broker. Sells all sorts o' shit to McSorley.

Regan's eyes flick up from the folder. This is a problem.

FLOOD (CONT'D.)

You gotta start thinkin' what're you gonna do if he gets wind o' this, thinks you're gettin' sloppy.

Pause. Regan closes the folder, puts it aside her on the bench, takes her soup bowl with both hands, sips the rest of the soup from the rim, and brings it down.

REGAN

I appreciate you tellin' me.

FLOOD

Not to mention, Lavender Waghorne—

REGAN

I know. That'll get solved. Tonight—

FLOOD

I gotta ask, since we're bein' frank, are you sure that's the best loca—?

REGAN

Best one in this town.

FLOOD

Are you sure—?

REGAN

Positive. It's my place, my choice, my responsibility. I'm not riskin' leavin' my friends out onna street. They're stayin' there.

(A beat. Flood yields.)

And one more thing. Everythin' to do with Goiterfetish, would you mind if we just—never brought it up again?

FLOOD

Not at all.

REGAN

Thank you. I appreciate that.

Pause. Flood moves a stray olive to Regan's bowl. They both exhale a chuckle at the gesture. Both seem content.

INT. AMPHITHEATER — DOWNTOWN BOSTON — NIGHT

Adults in their business attire crowd rows that ascend to the back. Colette, her hair down and in a chignon, is among them, wearing a sharp violet waistcoat. With her are LORCAN LAVENDER and PERRY WAGHORNE, both mid-50s, chubby, balding. Lavender is a dour pushover; his clothes match his name. Waghorne is pragmatic, officious; he wears darker tones. As someone else walks away, DEREK SUGRUE, mid-30s, steps to the front podium with a briefcase and a prepared statement. He's slim, with oily auburn hair, a badly dated mustache and muttonchops, and nerdy attire, with a pocket protector.

SUGRUE

Chairman, Board Members: my name's Derek Sugrue, I chair the Westphalia Museum and Historical Preservation Society. I speak with regard to the recent letter of intent filed with the Zoning Commission by Lavender Waghorne to build a shopping center at what is currently the twelve hundred block of Lenehan Avenue in southwestern Westphalia. The issues with this neighborhood have been discussed at length at many other Board of Appeals meetings and, I imagine, do not need to be dwelled upon here. However, the Society would like to respectfully dissent against the pending demolition of the Lenehan Avenue houses, as they are of unique and irreplaceable cultural and historical value to the community.

As Sugrue talks and shuffles through his papers, the faces of Colette and (a few seconds behind) her colleagues slowly show how absolutely blindsided they are.

SUGRUE (CONT'D.)

The houses in question were first constructed in the eighteen-thirties as tenement houses by and for some of the suburb's earliest residents, who were mainly textile workers from Westphalia in Germany. As a result, they have some unique architectural ...

(MORE)

SUGRUE

(CONT'D.)

... facets about which I will go into further detail shortly. While some of these families peeled off to Lowell, of course, most of them stayed on and formed a vibrant community unit that lasted through World War One, when anti-German sentiments sent virtually all of its members into self-exile, and the Irish moved in. A plurality of these families were Mennonites who, through the antebellum decades, gave sanctuary to many survivors of the ill-fated Brook Farm utopia—

INT. REGAN'S HOUSE — LIVING ROOM — SAME TIME

Regan lies on the couch, in an "I SHOT J.R." T-shirt and torn jeans, reading Stegner's Angle of Repose. The hangover is on the downswing. The doorbell RINGS. She puts the book down on the page, rises, ambles to the front door, unlocks it, opens it, and walks away. Judd enters with a pizza box; he closes and relocks the door behind him.

JUDD

Feelin' better?

REGAN

Kinda. ... Last hangover ever, my word.

Judd slips out of his shoes. Regan moves to the kitchen, and retrieves two glasses from a cabinet and a liter of Dr. Pepper from the fridge.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Barbecue on Juneteenth?

JUDD

Yeah. Just come whenever.

He drops the pizza box onto the table and himself onto the couch. Regan uncaps the bottle and fills both glasses with soda, each time letting the fizz descend and replacing it with more soda, until the brown reaches the brim.

JUDD (CONT'D.)

You're not alone.

REGAN

Not alone?

JUDD

I was bringin' this shitbox back to Stockton—Jaguar, Maryland plates—and a squeegee guy in Canton mistook me for Lenny B.

REGAN

You know what you shoulda done, you shoulda forged his autograph.

JUDD

Ha! Light wasn't red for long. He did gimme an eight-ball, though.

Regan reports a laugh at that. She recaps the Dr. Pepper bottle and returns it to the fridge.

REGAN

Didja snort it?

JUDD

No. I chucked it.

REGAN

Up your ass.

JUDD

Shut up.

She laughs some more. Judd pries open the pizza box; a pie strewn with veggies smokes. She walks up, drops herself next to him, and gives him a glass. They tugs at slices, briefly fighting to cleave bread and cheese.

REGAN

(after Dolph Lundgren)

"I must break you."

They get their slices out, and start eating. Brief beat.

JUDD

Dealer was a weird-lookin' fella. Gimpy. Had a scar right here.

He indicates where. Regan halts, the slice at her mouth.

REGAN
Holy shit.

JUDD
What?

REGAN
You ran into Neville.

JUDD
Ursula's ex?

REGAN
I think he got that scar by playin'
Russian roulette.

Judd guffaws so hard, in spite of himself, that he drops his slice back on the pie.

REGAN (CONT'D.)
Fuckin' retard. I shoulda known at
squeegee, how the fuck does he not
get run over ambushin' guys like that
comin' off the Pike? And then, he
tries to sell 'em coke. McSorley
shoulda whacked him out years ago.
(A hitch.)
Shaft in Africa's on at eight, if you
give a shit.

Judd's laughter eases. Regan grabs a remote and turns on a T.V. to a SITCOM. She and Judd lean back and watch, eating and drinking, settling in. Long beat.

INT. STAIRWELL OUTSIDE AMPHITHEATER — ABOUT AN HOUR LATER

The three name partners argue in hushed, enervated tones:

COLETTE
"Unique architectural facets"—I've
never heard such bullshit in my life!

WAGHORNE
Colette, trust me, you don't wanna
fuck with these Jane Jacobs types.
(MORE)

WAGHORNE

(CONT'D.)

One call to the press and they turn the whole town against you, I seen it happen to better men than me.

Sugrue enters with his briefcase and walks past the trio and down without seeming to notice them. Colette sees and moves to confront him, but restrains herself.

COLETTE

What's the press got on us? They got shit on you two? Those houses are about to collapse! The neighborhood wants the drug den gone!

LAVENDER

All the junkies are gonna do is move somewheres else. Do we really want a press battle over this?

WAGHORNE

I sure as shit don't. We build at the Quincy warehouse, we don't havta tear down jack. We save the city millions. It's a no-brainer.

COLETTE

We've already signed the L.O.I.!

WAGHORNE

And can rewrite it just as easy.

LAVENDER

Let the history boys deal with the junkies if they want.

A beat. Colette glances back and forth, doesn't know which of them to look at, who to be angrier with.

COLETTE

How're we ever gonna get business in Westphalia again?

WAGHORNE

Trust me, Colette, we're takin' the least fucked option.

COLETTE

So you're really givin' up on this.
Right now.

LAVENDER

Two outta three.

A beat. They all just stand there, totally at loggerheads.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THE AMPHITHEATER – MINUTES LATER

Colette drifts down the sidewalk, away from the stream of people exiting the building. She is staggered. Long beat. She fishes in her pocketbook, takes out her car keys, poises them, looks up, and stops.

Vanessa, arms folded, is leaning against the back of what is apparently Colette's car, a slate-gray Buick, parked at the curb. She gives away a hint of bemusement.

VANESSA

Wanna know what killed your project?

INT. REGAN'S HOUSE – GUEST BEDROOM – SAME TIME

Sparsely furnished. A gurney, the bedding clean and long unused, sits in the center with an I.V. pole. In front of it, a sole window lets in a dying lapis skylight. Regan and Judd gaze over the gurney. A beat.

REGAN

He saved my life. You don't know what I'd do, return the favor.

JUDD

Saved your life? For real?

Brief pause. Judd, almost on instinct, leans against the wall. Regan sits on the gurney across from him, facing the window, the right half of her face framed in the light.

REGAN

Guess I never really told you. They bussed the blacks to us, as you know. McSorley said fight it to the death. Stay with the goddamn herd. Move fast and break things.

JUDD

We had guys from the N.-double-A.C.P. tell us do the same.

REGAN

Course they did. All those clit-zits wanted was pandemonium. I just wanted a fuckin' education, didn't think I was askin' for too much.

(A beat.)

I was deflowered by color. Sophomore year. He was almost as hot as you. I didn't give a shit 'bout much else.

JUDD

How did you not get murdered?

REGAN

Mom and Dad disowned me—best thing ever happened to me. I ended up with Warren, and he went to McSorley and told him up front: "Look, there're feminists, and then there's Regan. She's gonna be with who she wants, and no one's gonna stop her, not you, not me, no one. I don't think she's even aware of what she's doin'. She don't deserve to get killed for it." And he was right. No man's known me better. So McSorley put the mark o' Cain on me, and I was a free bitch. Warren hadn't done that, this place woulda been firebombed. Course I still had to put up with all the cunts callin' me "jive honky" and—

(She stops herself.)

JUDD

Nigger-lover?

REGAN

Had that word spray-painted on this house. Took months to clean it off. Some days, I can still smell the turpentine. ... And the fights, those were fuckin' halcyon. Nearly got hit with a longshoreman chain once.

(MORE)

REGAN

(CONT'D.)

... The water, that was the only place I got my due respect. Those records was the only thing that got me the respect I was due, and I don't care how unsportsmanlike it is, all I wanted was for those records to stand forever, throwin' a big fat perpetual fuck-you inna faces of everyone in that class that deserved it. Those records said Regan Croake was here. And now they're all but gone and all I'm remembered as is the slut who liked 'em tall, handsome and dark. ... And y'know what the real irony of it is? I hated that. That that's how I had to get respect. They respected my body, not me. But I guess that's just high school. All brawn, no brains. Social Darwinism. Domination and sadism. No need to outsmart 'em, all ya gotta do is punch 'em inna face.

JUDD

And they split us on the color line and never looked back.

REGAN

Yeah. That they did.
(A beat.)

JUDD

Night of the Patty Hearst verdict, Trevor and I were coming back from a donut joint in Rox, his favorite. You know Trevor, old school Panther type. He was driving. ... Pig rode up behind us, blared his siren. Trevor went through the checklist. He was driving the limit, plates okay, taillights fine. He knew better than to pull over. So did I, young as I was. ... It was like the fucking derby trying to lose his ass. Then, he took a hard left at 'Maica Pond and the pig musta hit the skids. Struck a log and rolled right in. Chappaquiddick-like.

Brief beat. Regan isn't disturbed at all.

REGAN

That was you and Trevor? I remember they pulled that ham out in July.

JUDD

That's the one.

(A beat.)

Trevor kept driving. I didn't argue. Slept okay. We've never discussed it, and we don't got to. To this day, I still don't blame him.

REGAN

I don't blame him neither.

JUDD

Before then, I'd been going back and forth, wondering if I had it in me to join the Army. That night, I knew. That's how I knew I had what it took. To fly Cobras and kill Commies. Real Commies. ... So that's my battle story.

REGAN

Leave a cop for dead, join the Army, that's some true shit right there.

A hitch. They both giggle at that, then temper themselves, and brood, for a little while.

INT. THE BUICK — STOPPED AT A RED LIGHT — MINUTES LATER

Colette's driving. Vanessa's in shotgun. A beat.

COLETTE

Not particularly comfortable going there this time o' night.

Vanessa, nonchalant, lifts her shirt, showing Colette the Beretta holstered in her belt loop.

VANESSA

We'll be fine.

She drops her shirt, and turns her eyes on the stoplight.

INT. REGAN'S HOUSE — GUEST BEDROOM

Judd is alone, still against the wall, arms folded. Long beat. He's waiting for something, but what? A slight befuddlement ekes into his face. He ambles to the door.

HALL — LEADING TO LIVING ROOM AND KITCHEN

Judd enters. The last door to the left (his right) is ajar. Between that and Judd, the "I SHOT J.R." shirt lies on the floor. He sees that and grins, open-mouthed. He hoists his shirt over his head and lets it join her shirt, then goes past the other door, which leads into a

BASEMENT

He treads down a flight of stairs, passing Regan's socks on one step, her jeans further down. He unbuckles and unloops his belt and drops it, brimming with expectation. His feet reach the garnet carpet at the bottom. He looks around at the billiards table and the cream walls before spotting—at a seating area across with a phonograph on a shelf, vinyl spinning, and a row of records on a prie-dieu beneath it—Regan, posing with her feet shoulder-width apart and the WOMEN'S 50 FREE banner around her torso, eyes on Judd.

REGAN

Still wearin' clothes?

Judd drops trou, and boxers with it. He goes to the couch, stops, returns to his pants, fishes a wrapped condom out of the pocket, then throws himself on the couch, and tosses the condom to the side. A hitch.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

How d'ya do it when I'm not around?

Judd sinks deeper into the couch, and starts masturbating with both hands. Regan watches him, eyebrows raised.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Fingertips?

JUDD

Yeah. Pressure points.

REGAN

That's hot, keep doin' that. I like watchin' it grow.

A beat. Regan, still ogling him, wrests her arm from the banner, reaches to her side, and drops the needle. "Slow Pulse Boy" by And Also the Trees STARTS UP.

REGAN

How long you edge for?

JUDD

Oh, you think I'm just gonna spill it all over this joint.

REGAN

No. I just thought ... it's somethin', never really came up between us.

JUDD

Small wonder. I doubt I've done this since we started doin' it.

REGAN

Bullshit.

JUDD

I'm serious. Haven't needed to.

REGAN

Now that is flattering.

She goes to a large electric fan, letting the banner slide down to show the sapphire pendant and her figure framed in absinthe-green lace lingerie. She turns on the fan; the wind blows back the banner and her hair. She shoots Judd a look, and as the DRUMS KICK IN and the GUITAR and BASS intensify, she launches into a burlesque dance, using wind and banner as props, wrapping, unwrapping, contorting, athletic, driven, focused, committed. She opens and closes her eyes, surrendering to the music. Judd watches, rapt, his arms moving to the beat. This goes on for a while.

EXT. THE GALLERY

An establishing beat. The Buick crawls forward into the avenue, hugs the curb, and parks.

INT. THE STUDY

A typical night here. There's one lamp on. Eugene orates to anyone who may care to listen—Siobhan, Gavin, the addict harassed outside the clinic earlier, et al.

EUGENE

Anyone got any citric? Anyone here beside me know that that's the one difference between Coke and Pepsi? Citric acid. Pepsi has it, Coke doesn't. Can't make that up.

Enter Vanessa and Colette. Colette gets goose bumps.

VANESSA

I can't tell ya nothin', but I can show ya. Have a look around. See if you find somethin' ... familiar.

COLETTE

I am not going on a scavenger hunt.

VANESSA

It ain't that, it's hot-and-cold. All in plain sight, in this room. Give it a few minutes. You'll see.

Colette sighs, and starts marking the room's perimeter, watching her step, likely just to humor Vanessa. As she searches, Eugene continues his rant:

EUGENE

I mean—it's like one day, this guy makes this fuckin' corn syrup tonic, calls it Coke, sells it as a cure-all, maybe actually puts some fuckin' cocaine in it, gets a patent for it—billionaire overnight. This other guy buys a bottle o' the shit, takes it to the lab, toys around with it, then—total fuckin' serendipity, he puts some citric in it, tastes it, and he realizes, it makes the drink sweeter. So he gets his own patent, pulls the name Pepsi outta his ass 'cause it peps you up, I guess, ...

(MORE)

EUGENE

(CONT'D.)

... and three guesses what happened.
Billionaire overnight. And everyone
who's anyone is soilin' themselves
over this seismic new invention
called Pepsi—and you know the rest.

Colette eyes a dozing addict with an unopened needle kit
next to her. She picks it up, studies its contents for a
hitch, goes to Vanessa, and holds it up.

COLETTE

Looks professional.

VANESSA

Gettin' warmer.

INT. REGAN'S HOUSE — BASEMENT — A FEW MINUTES LATER

Regan and Judd stand facing each other, kissing. She's now
jacking him off, slowly, ruthlessly teasing; his hands are
on her ass. The lingerie and banner are gone; the pendant
isn't. The record is on the next track, "Maps in Her Wrists
and Arms". (The album is Virus Meadow.) She nibbles his
chin, then his Adam's apple, and licks the sweat off his
collarbone, left to right. They're both in a fugue state.

REGAN

Wanna feel these lips on your penis?
(kisses his right pec)
Your throbbing head?
(then the left)
Rollin' down the shaft?
(then the center)
Flick your scrotum with my tongue?

JUDD

I once thought deep-throating was
overrated.

REGAN

And then you met the Frog.
(licks his face)
Fuckin' Tom o' Finland stud.
(kisses his chest)
I'm not stoppin' till you come.

She drags her lips down the line of his abs—slowly—very slowly—as he struggles to even his breathing—

INT. THE GALLERY – THE STUDY – A FEW MORE MINUTES LATER

Eugene spies Colette, who's still searching the premises.

EUGENE

(to Vanessa)

Who is this woman?

VANESSA

Don't mind her, 'Gene. She's with me.

(A beat.)

EUGENE

Fuckin' absurd. What the fuck am I doin' here, Purple Heart on my neck and shrapnel in my ass, and the guy who added citric to a Coke goes down in history as a fuckin' genius? He didn't do jackshit.

Colette stands over Eugene, ignoring him, her eyes wavering along the bookshelf, then falling back on Vanessa.

VANESSA

(mouthing)

Hotter.

Colette looks side to side. Brief beat. Then, she spots something big, and slinks toward it.

COLETTE'S P.O.V. – MOVING – Tucked into a row of books at the shelf end, a gallon of methadone rests with a stack of small paper cups and a glass measuring cup, stained green.

EUGENE (O.S.)

It's like addin' caramel to a Three Musketeers and callin' it a Mars Bar. And look at how much money the Mars Bar fuckers make.

Colette is floored. Vanessa walks up behind her.

VANESSA

Yeah. You been gypped.

Colette turns around and glares at her, then looks behind her and does a double take, seeing something else. She stumbles around Vanessa, toward it.

COLETTE'S P.O.V. — MOVING — INTO THE HALL — On the "TEN COMMANDMENTS" poster on the cupboard door.

EUGENE (O.S.)

Now that I think of it, there ain't much a difference between coke and heroin, neither. Easy ways to live and die. Ain't no difference.

Colette's figured it all out. She names the one responsible as if handing down a jail sentence:

COLETTE

Regan.

INT. REGAN'S HOUSE — BASEMENT

Judd, back on the couch, HOWLS in orgasm, his body quaking, once, twice, thrice. He leans into it; his noises go quiet without losing their stamina. Regan, fellating him below, doesn't let up—she almost doesn't even react. The album is now on the third track, "The Dwelling Place". Pause, as the climax dissipates. Regan lifts herself up to meet his gaze, rolling his fluids around her mouth, and they sync their breathing. Both are perfectly satisfied. She strokes his chest and kisses him, giving him back his semen, which he swallows willingly. Their lips part. She sits atop him, rests her head on his shoulder, and gazes straight at the audience. The look on her face could not be more radiant.

INT. THE BUICK — MOVING — MINUTES LATER

Same as prior. Colette drives as if on autopilot.

VANESSA

Pull up here.

She pulls up to the curb, and STOPS. Long beat.

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

She's got a point about one o' those Commandments. Silence is golden.

A beat—not that Colette needs it to get the message.

COLETTE
I won't say nothin' to the cops.

VANESSA
Good idea.
(opens her door)
I know you're shocked, you oughta be.
Think you're okay gettin' home?

COLETTE
I drove this far, didn't I?

VANESSA
That you did.

Vanessa unbuckles her seat belt and exits the car. A hitch.

COLETTE
You were right to tell me, Vanessa.

VANESSA
(ducking to face her)
I know.

Vanessa SLAMS the car roof for emphasis, closes the door, and walks off. For a pause-length, Colette does nothing.

INT. REGAN'S HOUSE — BASEMENT — AN HOUR OR SO LATER

On the couch, in the darkness, Judd lies atop Regan. He's asleep; she's on her way. She strokes his hair. The music has CEASED. O.S., the WIND whistles. Brief pause.

REGAN
(discreetly)
Don't ever doubt I love you.

INT. THE CLINIC — WAITING ROOM — DAY

A typical day: Regan at her window, etc. "Regenisraen" by Game Theory is on the INTERCOM. Longish pause. Then:

ADDICT #2
Am I the only one here who heard that
Len Bias died?

That gets everyone's attention. A Greek chorus develops:

ADDICT #3

No, you ain't. I heard, too.

ADDICT #4

What do you mean "died"?

ADDICT #2

Died like Elvis and J.F.K. They took him to a hospital down in D.C. this mornin', he's dead and gone.

Regan is a captive audience. She is stunned.

ADDICT #4

Oh my God.

ADDICT #5

Un-fuckin'-believable.

ADDICT #4

How did it happen?

ADDICT #2

They're not sayin'. Coulda been car accident, drugs—

ADDICT #5

No fuckin'—how does he even get onna Terps if he's usin' drugs?

ADDICT #3

They do that shit all the time, they just better at hidin' it than we are.

ADDICT #4

And I'm sittin' here thinkin' he's gonna be our Michael Jordan.

INT. THE LOTUS — PARKED IN THE LOT ADJACENT

A beat. Through the windows, the clinic's back exit is seen flying open. Regan sprints to the car with her keys. She unlocks and opens the front door, jumps in the driver's seat, turns on the radio, and turns up the volume. She's left the door open and doesn't seem to be aware of it.

EX-CON CONNOR (O.S.)

(on the radio)

—believe me, I am just as in shock as I'm sure you all are. Thirty-six hours ago, not even, this guy was on his way to the Garden, this was our whole damn franchise right here—and of course he himself had all of it to look forward to, he made it to the top, had a great career ahead o' him—and now he's dead? At—how old was he?—twenty-two? That's—this is horrible. I—I want this day to end.

She shuts off the radio, closes her eyes, clasps her hands to her mouth, and breathes deeply, trying to withstand the blow. Brief pause. She opens her eyes, looking ahead.

REGAN'S P.O.V. - THROUGH THE DASHBOARD - Across the street, outside a barbershop, a man with a fresh buzz cut sobs in the arms of a friend. Cars pass them by. Long beat.

Regan drops her hands, and stares.

REGAN

Fuck.

INT. THE IVORS HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

A high-ceilinged, middle-class environs, with Afrocentric woven rugs hanging on terracotta walls. Colette and both Judds sit facing a T.V. Of the three, Colette looks the most haggard. O.S., from the T.V., CHOPPER ROTORS whir.

ANCHORWOMAN (O.S.)

(on T.V.; no accent)

—there you can see them moving the body into the wagon. Again, for those of you just tuning in, this is breaking news, we're reporting live from Riverdale, Maryland, where college basketball player Len Bias, who was picked second overall by the Boston Celtics at the N.B.A. draft Tuesday night, has been pronounced dead at age twenty-two. No word on the cause of death at this time—

JUDD
Tonight still on?

COLETTE
Maybe. I gotta see who's in the mood.

JUDD
Regan says she'll come.

JUDD SR.
Regan's no longer invited.

A beat. Of course Judd didn't see that coming.

JUDD
Why?

Long beat. Sr. and Colette slowly make eye contact, each waiting for the other to break the news first.

INT. THE GALLERY - HALL - LATE AFTERNOON

Regan enters, closing the door behind her. She stands there and broods. Long beat. Brooke steps out from the study, and they embrace, tightly, and part.

BROOKE
Everyone's been chockablock around the radio all day. Every station. Gone too soon, blah-blah-blah, I never heard anythin' like it.

REGAN
Does anyone know what happened?

BROOKE
No. That's what we're waitin' on.

Regan shakes her head. They walk into the

STUDY

Siobhan wanders around the room, heaving a boom box at face level with the antenna up, searching for a signal. All she gets is STATIC and fragments of speech. Gavin cuts a line of cocaine. Eugene is his usual self.

EUGENE

Y'know what this whole thing reminds me of, in a weird way? "Centerfold". That guy woulda never—that guy had no fuckin' clue his crush had it in her to show herself off to the world like that 'cause he never knew her. All he is to her is a fan, in high school and when he buys the shag-rag. And that's all we ever woulda been to Len fuckin' Bias. So whatever killed him, it's gonna be a fuckin' shock.

SIOBHAN

Hold on, I got somethin'!

She's in the corner across from the bookshelf. She balances the boom box in one hand and, with the other, turns the tuner slightly, and the volume up. The voice of a REPORTER comes through cleanly. Siobhan returns the free hand below the boom box. Regan and Brooke stand in the center of the room, listening, with everyone else.

REPORTER (O.S.)

(on the radio; female;
no accent)

—ninety-point-nine F.M., we have an update on the day's top story, the death of Boston Celtics draftee Len Bias. We're now hearing from at least one local news source in Maryland that Len Bias had cocaine in his possession at the time of his death—

The room's REACTION drowns out the rest. Gavin very quickly snorts his line before realizing what he's just heard.

EUGENE

I knew it. I fuckin' knew it.

BROOKE

Gavin, what've I told you, no C. inna H. room! Third Commandment!

Gavin hardly hears this. He leaps up, his foot dashing the rest of his baggie against the wainscoting, and out of the study, past a startled Brooke, and up the stairs.

BATHROOM

Gavin bolts in, drops to his knees at the toilet, lifts the lid, sticks his fingers down his throat, and makes a harsh rattling sound. Nothing comes out.

STUDY

The reaction dies down. Siobhan shuts off the boom box, puts it on the floor, and goes to sit by Eugene.

SIOBHAN

Well, that answers that.

EUGENE

Ya heard it here first, folks. I said I knew we wouldn't know. And who the hell woulda guessed that.

A beat. Regan and Brooke sulk, looking dazed and lost.

REGAN

Lemme go check on Gavin.

EUGENE

Regan, wait.

(Regan looks at him.)

Before I forget—somethin' fried went on last night. Ness brought a guest—

SIOBHAN

Oh yeah, the black woman—

EUGENE

Real bougie. Did not belong.

REGAN

Whose shift was it last night?

BROOKE

Deirdre's, I think.

EUGENE

She never showed.

REGAN

Next time you see her, tell her her ass is sacked. I gotta see Gavin.

HALL

Regan enters and climbs the stairs. She stops midway and pinches her forehead, contemplating something. Brief beat. Then, she waves her hand in dismissal and resumes going up.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Just a big fuckin' coincidence ...

INT. URSULA'S STUDIO APARTMENT - SUNDOWN

Ursula is supine on her couch, bereft, the coffee table in front of her taken up mainly by used Kleenexes and a morbidly obese Maltese cat, dozing. "Stumble and Fall" by Clan of Xymox PLAYS on vinyl. The kitchen is behind the couch; it's an open floor plan. A beat. O.S., Regan KNOCKS.

REGAN (O.S.)

Ursula, it's me.

URSULA

Just a sec.

She pushes herself off the couch, moseys to the door, and opens it. Regan appears holding up a six-pack of beer.

REGAN

Headin' to the old T. stop to vent over Lenny.

URSULA

You read my mind. Lemme just see if Yvonne can watch the mouser.

REGAN

You do that.

Ursula exits. Regan leaves the door slightly ajar, puts the beer on another table, and goes to ruffle the cat. On the kitchen counter, the phone starts RINGING. Regan goes to pick it up, then stops, and does another hand wave.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Neville.

She opens the fridge, searches, and takes another six-pack.

EXT. DISCONTINUED M.B.T.A. LIGHT RAIL STATION — NIGHT

Regan, Tierney and Brooke sit on the roof of the platform shelter, legs dangling off the edge, sipping from bottles. Regan and Brooke are getting tipsy. Tierney sticks with soda. On the sign with the town's name, "FAILURE" has been spray-painted over "PHALIA" in neon-cobalt. Long beat.

TIERNEY

First the Challenger, now this.

REGAN

I was inna bathroom durin' that. Held in my piss for the takeoff. Feel like I missed out, is that weird?

TIERNEY

I won't judge.

REGAN

You better not. ... Least I didn't miss Halley's comet.

Regan drains the bottle, and hurls it overhand toward a distant target. It lands far O.S. with a SOFT SHATTER.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Three points.

No sooner, she tears a can from the six-pack, opens it, and turns the bottom up. A beat. Tierney broods.

TIERNEY

Been thinkin' a lot about what you told me, behind the I.G.

REGAN

There any reason we gotta remember that night anymore? Now that—hell, what do you think, Brooke? What d'ya say we eighty-six 'eighty-six?

BROOKE

Way ahead o' ya, Frog.

TIERNEY

Just this once.

REGAN

Shoot.

TIERNEY

I never meant to insult your bodily sovereignty. Shit, I oughta know. It's just—the nightmare is all the people inna world, gonna die alone 'cause no one gave 'em a chance.

REGAN

I don't wish that on you or no one. Can't hook up everyone, though.

TIERNEY

True. ... I guess I could say part o' me was lookin' out for you. Not that Judd's dangerous or anythin', just—y'know what I mean, right?

Regan ponders this. Brooke aims her bottle and throws. It SMASHES O.S. on the platform. Not even close.

BROOKE

Where the fuck did my arm go?

She takes another beer. A beat.

REGAN

Westphalia. Fittin' name for this town, for anyplace by Boston, really. I waxed rhapsodic to you and everyone we know about that peace treaty too many times, and you didn't learn the lesson. Round here, everyone runs their own affairs. You keep your nose in your shit, don't put it nowheres else. Usually, it's just a simple matter o' knowin' what good fences make. I keep goin' back to 'seventy-nine when Fergus pistol-whipped the Brahmin, Eubanks was his name, and McSore-ass had him walk the gauntlet. Even if the shit really gets fucked—most times, you just gotta let 'em figure it out on their own.

TIERNEY

"Most times."

REGAN

Yeah. Most times.

A beat. Regan lifts her bottle for a toast.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

To the four hundred relay medley.

TIERNEY AND BROOKE

Sláinte.

They touch drinks, and take swigs. A hitch. Ursula walks up beneath them, on the platform.

URSULA

I got Colette. Party's still on.

REGAN

Saved by the bell. Again.

In one smooth movement, Regan slides herself off the roof.

EXT. STREET — OUTSIDE THE IVORS HOUSE — MINUTES LATER

Both curbs are lined with cars. O.S., from the house, LOUD CHATTER and Fela Kuti's "Zombie" can be heard. The Lotus finds the one available space, directly across.

THROUGH THE WINDOW — Colette appears, back in her beehive, placing a fondue bowl on the table, surrounded by groups of socializing guests, almost all Black. She looks up, spies the Lotus, waits a hitch, then goes toward the front door.

Regan and company file out of the Lotus, look both ways, and swagger across the street. Colette comes out the front door and down the steps to meet them on the sidewalk.

TIERNEY

Mrs. Ivors.

COLETTE

(shakes each hand)

Tierney Gasaway. Brooke, Ursula. It's been a while.

TIERNEY

Sorry it had to be today. Glad you're still holdin' the party, though.

COLETTE

Least I could do. ... Regan, you and I gotta talk. You three head on in.

The three, suspecting nothing, go up the steps and inside. Colette doesn't make Regan wait long.

COLETTE (CONT'D.)

So the drug den is yours.

A beat. Regan doesn't register this right away.

REGAN

What drug den?

COLETTE

Don't waste my time. Vanessa took me there last night—those Commandments? I know your hand, Regan.

Regan's delayed reaction comes—yet she keeps playing it cool, almost as if she's in denial, or bluffing.

COLETTE (CONT'D.)

And I take it I don't need to tell you how the Board of Appeals went—

REGAN

Vanessa told you—?

COLETTE

That's how you admit it? Do you even understand how you've made me feel? Last night was the most embarrassing night of my life! You know what I put into that project, and all that time, you had your drug den there—!

REGAN

It's not a fuckin' drug den—

COLETTE

Then what the hell is it?

REGAN

It's ... a safe place for addicts.

COLETTE

No, the safe place is in a shelter or with their families, not there! And you're giving 'em the needles, too—

REGAN

You do not seriously think everyone can just go cold turkey—

COLETTE

You think you're making it better, you're encouraging it—!

That does it. Now, Regan snaps. Now, she's furious.

REGAN

Fuck you, I am makin' it better! I'm makin' it so they don't end up like Warren! What have you done for 'em?! Throw 'em out into the fuckin' cold?! Force 'em to go cold turkey?! Let's shoot you up, see if you can do it!

That was the wrong answer, and she knows it. She turns the other cheek. Colette is further taken aback. Brief pause.

COLETTE

Goddamn—you know what—you're not welcome in my house. Not tonight, not for a damn long time. You can sit in your car and wait for your friends, I couldn't care less—

REGAN

(glares at her)
Do not tell me you told Judd.
(A hitch.)

COLETTE

He has some words for you himself.

Regan scoffs under her breath. She's incredulous. Colette leaves her with it; he goes back up the steps, puts her hand on the doorknob, stops, and turns back to Regan.

COLETTE (CONT'D.)

What happened to Warren was tragic. Tierney, too. And I ain't gonna tell the cops—I got a career to salvage. But what you're doing with McSorley is reckless, and my family is not gonna get involved with it. Not when there's a black mother mourning on Juneteenth with the whole nation watching 'cause her son took a hit that no one forced him to take.

Colette reënters the house, leaving the door ajar, and on cue, Judd takes her place, and closes the door behind him. His shock is still mostly there. He goes down the steps and meets Regan. Brief pause. Judd has some rough triage to do, but Regan still thinks she can save them:

REGAN

Any way you can see this as somethin' between me and Colette?

JUDD

No.

Regan grits her lips. She tries a different tack:

REGAN

You really think your mother's gonna solve this, she's puttin' a fuckin' Band-Aid on gangrene—

JUDD

So you knew that Zoning Board op was going down last night? That whole time? While we were—?

He can't say it. He averts his eyes.

REGAN

Fuck was I s'posed to do?! I know everyone inna Gallery, Judd. I know all their names and stories. Come to see 'em as my charges. And you're really gonna stand there and blame me for tryin' to save 'em from Colette tossin' their asses onna street like shit from a bedpan!

JUDD
 (looks back at her)
 And what good is it doing them?

REGAN
 What good—I'm tryin' to save 'em
 from somethin' worse'n an O.D.!

JUDD
Trying? You're not even sure you can
 save these people?

REGAN
 Course I am! And I'm not the only one
 doin' it. Harvard, M.I.T., they're
 runnin' pilot programs all over—

JUDD
 So you're using druggies as lab rats.
 Hoo-fucking-rah.

REGAN
 They're not lab rats! They know all
 about this! They trust me!

JUDD
 Trust? You wanna—no, do not fucking
 —you gotta be like some glass-jaw
 journeyman, thinks he can go fifteen
 rounds with Sugar Ray when he's got
 no business in that ring, talking to
 me about trust! So what if they trust
 you?! How can I when you make me
 choose between you and my mom?!

Pause. Regan's mug contorts. Only now does she fully fathom
 the gravity of what's happening.

REGAN
 You havta choose? Two years, you're
 thinkin' of endin' us? Over this?

JUDD
 Jury's out on that.
 (Regan wheezes.)
 But lemme be clear: your fat ass is
 in the doghouse.

He goes back up the stairs. Regan gives chase, but half-stumbles on the curb and catches herself on the balustrade.

REGAN

You think you havta choose, that means you still love me, dammit! You think you can improve on me? I'm the best cunt there is in this shithole! You oughta be grateful!

Judd is at the door, grinning in spite of himself. A beat.

JUDD

You think you can just do whatever you want. Then, you do. And the funny thing is that's why I fell for you in the first place.

A hitch. Then, he exits. Regan is too appalled to protest, and remains clutching the balustrade for a beat. Then, her arms slacken, and she pries herself away.

INT. THE IVORS HOUSE – LIVING ROOM

Judd drops himself on the couch, drained. The party and music go on around him. He can't join in. Colette sits next to him and gives him a half nelson. He relents. Long beat.

EXT. THE STREET

Regan meanders, in a fog, into the middle of the road, her feet on the double yellow line. She stands there for a pause-length, gawking at the sky, before collapsing like a ragdoll and releasing an unholy SCREECH into the tarmac. She has to bite her fists to staunch it. As the tears well up, the headlights of a parked car come on behind her. It pulls into the lane, crawls up to her, and stops. It's a pastel-orange Pontiac. The driver gets out, saunters up, sits on the hood, and watches Regan, waiting. It's Vanessa.

INT. THE PONTIAC – MOVING – MINUTES LATER

Vanessa drives with Regan in shotgun. Regan drinks from a paper bag. Long beat.

REGAN

This better be good.

EXT. RUTH GORDON AMPHITHEATER — QUINCY, MASS.

McSorley stands on the stage, alone, streetlights shining on him from between treetops around the arena. A beat.

Behind the trees between arena and road, the Pontiac pulls up and parks; its lights go off. Vanessa and Regan get out and head through the trees and down the steps to the stage. Regan drinks more and holds up a slouchy gait. They meet McSorley onstage. He and Vanessa glare at Regan. His aura and presence tell Regan everything. Another shock.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

You wanted her to know?!

MCSORLEY

She deserved to know.

REGAN

"Deserved"—do you realize what—I may've just lost my boyfriend! Man o' my dreams! Two fuckin' years—!

MCSORLEY

Didja really love him if you double-crossed him like that?

(A beat.)

REGAN

Me and Judd are none o' your fuckin' business—

MCSORLEY

I have a very good argument to that—

REGAN

The blacks are not your bailiwick! And what the fuck ever happened to keepin' work and home separate—?

MCSORLEY

No, what you did was dishonest. And you was just gonna keep bein' with him and keep bein' dishonest? No—you wanna do this line o' work, you need standards. I gave you a choice, Judd or the Gallery, you don't get both—

REGAN

What the fuck're you talkin' about,
you gave me a choice—?

MCSORLEY

I never told you Flood's my guy?

(Regan's eyes bug.)

I'm the reason he has that job. I had
him show you those photos, I told him
to make you rethink it. I gave you a
fair chance—I got nothin' against
the Gallery, Croake, all I wanted was
for you to swallow your stubborn-cunt
pride for once in your life and move
it someplace else. But you can't and
you won't, and I was not okay with
you goin' behind Colette's back, it
was completely fuckin' inappropriate,
I'm embarrassed to be involved—

REGAN

If Warren was here to see this, he
woul'da creased your ass.

MCSORLEY

If.

Brief pause. Regan's rage calcifies.

REGAN

What exactly d'you mean by that?

MCSORLEY

What d'you think I mean?

(A hitch.)

REGAN

You did this 'cause you could? 'Cause
Warren's inna clay?

MCSORLEY

Warren was an old man, Croake—

REGAN

Don't you dare put that retard guano
on me! It wasn't his time—!

MCSORLEY

He woulda died soon enough! Didja think you could lean on him forever, get special treatment, special favors no cost, shag whichever mandingo you wanted to shag 'cause no one sneezed at you with him around? No, you pay for the Gallery with Judd—and I did you and him a blessing. You cannot have this life with him. You two got hitched, woulda been a goddamn powder keg, you both woulda been blown.

Regan's head sags as if she's about to cry—only, after a beat, she starts laughing. It builds up, and persists. McSorley and Vanessa exchange a look. Regan picks her head up, wearing an ironic, bitter smile of disappointment.

REGAN

You was never comfortable with me shaggin' color, were ya?

MCSORLEY

This has nothin' to do with that—

REGAN

Oh, cut the bullshit, like you never wanted me yourself!

MCSORLEY

Excuse you?

REGAN

Did I stutter? Just admit it. Long as I've had tits out to here, ass out to there, every guy in Boston's wanted me, why not you? You're no fag.

MCSORLEY

Don't be ridiculous, I'm three times your age—

REGAN

C'mon, don't be such a fuckin' prig. Guys are all the same, can't help it, boys down there don't know what age of consent means—

MCSORLEY

I have my limits—!

And right there, McSorley realizes his error. Regan gasps, a shit-eating grin lurching on. Vanessa just gawks.

REGAN

You totally just gave yourself away!

MCSORLEY

I misspoke—

REGAN

No, you didn't! You have to "limit" yourself! ... Y'know what, fuck it. Have your way with me.

Regan outstretches her arms and waits for a beat. McSorley has no clue how to react.

MCSORLEY

What're you talkin' about?

REGAN

You wanna fuck me, go ahead. In fact, I want it. No more lies.
(A hitch.)

MCSORLEY

You're not serious.

REGAN

I'm dead serious. Take me to the car and nail me to the backseat. Ness can be lookout.

MCSORLEY

Why would I ever—?

REGAN

(still angry-smiling)
Why—I'll tell you why, 'cause deep down, you could never stand the thought o' me takin' blacksnake, and that made you want me yourself, same with every other prick in this town! And maybe I pity your sorry-ass, so get it up and show me whatcha got!

MCSORLEY

You gotta be three and a half sheets
to the wind.

REGAN

And what does that make you? Irving
McSorley, boss o' Westphalia, cocaine
kingpin, gettin' poor bastards hooked
on shit all your life, and you brag
about bein' sober? Fuckin' high-horse
hypocrite! How long—forty years?!
And two days?! Fuckin' preposterous!
And for what? How much longer you got
left, old man? What's it worth to
you?! Do you really, seriously still
give a fuck?! Enough talk, get over
here and drink, it'll help ya last.

She holds out the paper bag, and waits for another beat.
Now, McSorley is pissed.

MCSORLEY

You're gonna want me to forget you
just told me that—

REGAN

And you call me the liar! Knock it
the fuck off! Get your ass over here,
get shit-faced, and gimme!

MCSORLEY

You oughta be ashamed—

REGAN

Drop the act already—!

MCSORLEY

Fuck you!

REGAN

Yeah, that's it! Fuck! Me!

On "me!", Regan thrusts the bottle into McSorley's face,
pouring bourbon all over him. He closes his eyes and backs
away, SHOUTING, and spitting out booze. As he stumbles, she
grabs his lapels and drags him across the stage.

REGAN (CONT'D.)
Carpe noctem, motherfucker!

She shoves him onto a bench, mounts him, kisses him smack on the lips, throws aside the paper bag (without breaking the bottle), presses down on his chest, and straddles him.

MCSORLEY
How dare you!

REGAN
(slapping him)
Shut up, you've wanted this for ages!

MCSORLEY
Get off me!

REGAN
C'mon! Get it up! Feel my tit!

She takes his hand and pins it to her breast. He struggles to tear it away and push her off. This is insanity.

REGAN (CONT'D.)
Feel how tender it is?!

MCSORLEY
Get the fuck off me! Biiiiitch!

REGAN
Remember when I grew these?! I could get used to this, feels good to have a sugar daddy once in a while—!

Vanessa RACKS THE SLIDE OF HER BERETTA and grazes Regan's temple with it. She freezes, and looks at the gun, bemused, a delirious grin seared onto her face.

VANESSA
Off.

Brief beat. Regan lets go of him, and rolls off him, onto the bench, lying there sprawled. McSorley gets up, wipes the bourbon off his face, and glares daggers at her, his breath heaving. Vanessa lets down her Beretta.

REGAN
Party pooper.

Brief beat. McSorley moves into her face, his voice toxic:

MCSORLEY

No more free lunches. I've been real fuckin' generous to you, but even if Warren was still here, no way I'd let your fat ass ride his coattails so long. ... Better you grow up. Quick.

He storms off, proceeding up the stairs toward the Pontiac. Vanessa takes his place, brandishes from her pocket a card with a phone number, and flicks it at her.

VANESSA

Call me if you need a sponsor.

She joins McSorley. Neither looks back as Regan shouts:

REGAN

Shame you can't get it up. Wanna know how big Judd's dick is? Eight inches, and he knows how to use 'em! Tastes like lemonade! Makes me come so hard, the property value plummeted, the neighbors couldn't stand the noise!

They go up the steps, their faces vehement. Regan rises and trundles after them to the foot of the stairs.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Picture it: his big black dick up my cunt! Real life! We did it last night on my couch! Standards my ass! You're a mobster, fuck're you talkin' to me about standards? You did what you did 'cause you're a jealous racist who's been chompin' at the bit to split us up from the get go, and I sincerely hope that the vivid image of me and him havin' the best sex ever haunts you to your grave!

As she finishes, they cross the trees, still ignoring her; McSorley enters the Pontiac, and Vanessa rounds it and enters. Pause. Regan gathers herself, her rebuttal fading into a deep sigh, her eyes locked on the Pontiac in fury.

INT. THE PONTIAC

Vanessa turns on the ignition; the headlights go on. For a moment, they just sit there, irked as hell. Brief pause.

VANESSA

I want it onna record: I took your orders against my judgment.

(A hitch.)

We know how dangerous an enemy Warren made. The enemy Regan makes, I never wanted to find out, and now that I have an idea of—

Regan crosses in front of the dashboard, the paper bag back in her hand, and kicks at the left headlight, repeatedly. On the sixth kick, it SHATTERS and goes out. She looks at them grinning, drinks, gives them the arm-finger gesture, and trudges away. Vanessa sinks deeper into her seat.

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

Well there you have it.

MCSORLEY

That's the booze, not her. Trust me. She'll sleep it off, I'll have her mea culpa by the weekend, she'll find a new guy, I'll tell her what I got planned for her, this'll blow over.

(A hitch.)

This was necessary. She needs to learn responsibility—if she's in this life, she's all in. You agree with me about the powder keg, right? And I never entirely agreed with what Warren always said about power.

VANESSA

And what you got planned for her, you still sure that's a good idea?

MCSORLEY

Who else d'you know who's feared and loved like her? With brains, too. No man better for the job.

A beat. He fishes something from his pocket and cradles it in his hand: the ruby coin. Vanessa looks at him.

VANESSA

You okay?

MCSORLEY

I'm fine. Didn't swallow a drop.

(Brief beat.)

I'm sorry. This is fuckin' ludicrous. She's not thinkin' straight. All she had to do was move the damn Gallery, she coulda kept Judd inna bargain. Do I want to keep it there? With all this heat? No, I don't, fuck am I thinkin', so lemme tell ya, she wants to disrespect me like that after all I did goin' outta my way for her, she is movin' the Gallery, I don't care. One way or the other, I'm gettin' her off that block. That's the end of it.

Vanessa stares at him, hard but not without concern, for another beat, then joins him in gazing at the dashboard. Regan is a pinpoint in the distance, but still visible.

VANESSA

We can't leave her like that.

MCSORLEY

No way she's comin' with us. ... Find a payphone, call the Ivorses, get her friends. Tell 'em she's headin' for the Bay. She's gotta be.

Vanessa shifts the gear, and pulls into the road.

EXT. QUINCY SHORE DRIVE — SEVERAL MINUTES LATER

Regan drags her feet on the sidewalk, a thin thread of cars on her left, the inky Bay on the right.

REGAN

I'm gonna fuckin' murder him. Kiss o' death, old hat, now it's the shag o' death. I made a generous offer, he's gonna wish he took it. And I'm a good fuck, too. Fuck am I so miserable about, Judd's pig shit without me, he'll be back beggin' for it no time.

INT. THE LOTUS — MOVING

Tierney drives, Brooke's in shotgun, and Ursula's in back. Brooke has sobered up. She and Ursula peer through their right-side windows, looking onto the Bay, hawkish.

URSULA

What were Ness's words exactly? How the fuck could they know where she was goin'? And why the hell couldn't they take her home?

BROOKE

How're you gonna explain to her that you hotwired her car?

TIERNEY

Both of you shut up!

EXT. BEACH — QUINCY BAY

Regan stumbles across the sand, flat-footed but tenacious, toward a low tideline, the bourbon sloshing in her bottle.

REGAN

(drunk-warbling)

The night that Irv McSorley died,
I'll never quite forget.
Westphalia got mortal drunk, the town
got fuckin' wet.
The only thing I did that night that
struck me as quite queer:
I chipped the ice off from his corpse
and put it in my beer.

On the drive, fast white head- and red taillights punctuate the darkness. As Regan grunt-repeats the melody, behind her, distant, the lights of the Lotus pull up and park. A beat. Three doors open and SLAM; three silhouettes, black on gray, race toward her; and three voices shout and echo her name. She ignores them, plodding onward. This goes on for what almost feels like an eternity.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Assholes ... can't you ... just gimme a
minute ... I'm goin' to the shore ... I
wanna ... talk about ... throwin' up ...

She reaches the shoreline. Long beat. Then, suddenly, she drops to her knees and VOMITS, expelling all the booze she drank in several great putrid waves. This doesn't take as long. Her friends reach her as she coughs up the dregs.

BROOKE

Ah Jesus—

URSULA

Regan, what the fuck—

TIERNEY

(blocking Ursula)

Back up! Give her some space—!

URSULA

No, she can't be holdin' that!

Ursula shoves Tierney aside, goes to Regan, snatches the paper bag from her, and upturns it, spilling the rest of the bourbon into sand and bay, and tosses it behind her. A beat. All four regain their breath and bearings.

URSULA (CONT'D.)

Where the fuck did you go?! What happened between you and Colette?!

BROOKE

She didn't find out about—?
(She stops herself.)

URSULA

About what?

Regan is still on her hands and knees. Her eyes on the sand, she catches sight of something.

REGAN'S P.O.V. — Beneath layers of sand, puke and ebbing water, the unimpeachable form of a used syringe sticks out, needle akimbo. A nasty biohazard.

TIERNEY (O.S.)

Not the Gallery?

BROOKE (O.S.)

Oh goddamn it.

Regan's face tilts upward, and her gaze with it, toward and through the Bay, ossifying, seething with a new wrath.

URSULA

Colette wouldn't tell us nothin' but
I could tell she was pissed, Frog.
And Judd was not himself.

BROOKE

How much does she know?

URSULA

Why were you M.I.A. like that? Where
did Ness take you? Does she have
anythin' to do with all this?
(A hitch.)

REGAN

I want Tierney. Alone.

URSULA

Hell no! All of us, at once—!

TIERNEY

Ursula, go easy—go watch the car!
I'll fill you in. Brooke, go with.

BROOKE

I just hope she doesn't know I'm
involved.

Ursula, her face smart with frustration, goes back up the sand toward the Lotus. Brooke follows close behind. A beat. Regan wipes her mouth and pushes herself up, with Tierney stepping in and giving some support. Expelling the bourbon appears to have helped sober her. They lock eyes.

TIERNEY

All ears.

REGAN

You love me, Tierney?

TIERNEY

Yeah.

REGAN

You'd do anythin' for me?

TIERNEY

Just about.

Regan looks out at the Bay. What she's about to do, there's no turning back from. A beat. She looks back at Tierney.

REGAN

Don't ever ask why. I want you to put somethin' onna wire. A tipoff. Lenny got the coke in Canton. He got it from McSorley. Don't name him, but you can name Neville. I want it all over the F.M.—tomorrow. Can do?

(Brief beat.)

TIERNEY

Yeah, I could do that.

For emphasis, Regan crouches down, tears the syringe out of the sand, and comes straight back up.

REGAN

I want chaos.

She marches back up the beach. Tierney broods for a hitch, then follows her. Everything about Regan's look and walk is primed to exert the vibe that she is not to be fucked with.

INT. REGAN'S HOUSE — LIVING ROOM — DAY

Regan is supine on the couch, staring at the ceiling, still in the prior night's clothes and mood. She's clearly just woken from a tough slumber. Brief pause. She uses all her effort to push herself upright, reach for the phone on the lampstand adjacent, dial a number, and put it to her ear.

REGAN

(into the phone)

Keira, it's Regan, I'm bangin' in sick. ... Yeah. ... You, too, sis.

She hangs up, and returns her hand to her lap. A beat.

HOURS LATER

It looks like she hasn't moved an inch. O.S., a RADIO:

REPORTER #2 (O.S.)

(on the radio; female;
no accent)

—on the scene of a possible suicide. Neville Concannon, a known mid-level associate of the Westphalia mob, has been found dead in his apartment in Canton earlier this morning of a self-inflicted gunshot wound. He was twenty-eight. An unconfirmed report says police are investigating whether Concannon played a role in the death of college basketball player Len Bias yesterday. B.P.D. did not respond—

LATE AFTERNOON

Same scene. The radio is off. The lighting from outside has dimmed. O.S., outside, semi-distant, the din of a simmering urban RIOT: SIRENS blaring, crowds CHANTING, a GUNSHOT, a SCREAM. Regan actually seems rather happy. Long beat. The phone RINGS, for three tones, before Regan picks it up.

REGAN

(into the phone)
Regan Croake.

VANESSA (O.S.)

(on the other end)
Regan, it's Ness. We need you at the I.G., eight sharp. Mandatory for all lieutenants. Irv's closin' up early.

REGAN

I'm not comin'.

VANESSA (O.S.)

You got soused last night, you're hung over, hackin' around your house all day, that's on you—

REGAN

Not even. I just don't give a fuck.

VANESSA (O.S.)

Regan, have you heard about Neville? The shit's hit the fan all over town, I've never seen anythin' like it—

REGAN

I know 'bout Neville. Good riddance.
Nothin' to discuss. Don't expect me.

VANESSA (O.S.)

You oughta know Irv is bein' awfully
forgiving on account you tried to—
(Regan hangs up.)

INT. THE IRISH GOODBYE — BARROOM

Vanessa talks into the phone at the far end of the bar:

VANESSA

—rape him inna park last night—
Regan? Regan? Arrogant cunt.

She hangs up. "Winning" by The Sound plays on the SPEAKERS. The room pulses with toughs in black leather, keeping the watch. Otherwise, the patrons are few. One of them, at the bar's other end, Pilsner in hand, is Gillian Tarp. He sits and broods. A beat. McSorley enters from the spiral stairs, espies Tarp, walks casually through the half door, past Vanessa, and down the bar to him, and rests on his elbows. Each silently acknowledges the other's presence. Vanessa beckons a BOUNCER, who goes to her, and leans in.

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

Regan's crib, quarter to, I want her
here kicking and screaming. She's at
Warren's old place.

The bouncer nods, and steps away. A beat.

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE THE GALLERY — NIGHT

TARP'S P.O.V. — No one is in sight. All cars are parked and vacant. The main entrance to the Gallery is deserted.

Tarp stands ramrod on his porch, Bic in one hand, Pilsner in the other, only now, it has a wet cloth sticking out from the neck. O.S., SIRENS color the air. He looks left and right, waits a beat, then ambles slowly down the steps from the porch, across the sidewalk, into the street. Crossing the double yellow line, heading for the Gallery, he flicks his lighter—but fails to get a flame. He halts.

He tries again. No good. Again. He's getting irritated now. Again. Again. A—BAM! Two GUNSHOTS go off at once. He drops the lighter—but not the Molotov cocktail—and shudders.

Two gloved hands point two Czech-75s in the air from behind the Lotus. Regan, in sweat-clothes, manifests, walks into the road, eye-fucking him, and aims both guns at him.

REGAN

It goes onna tarmac. Slow.

He obeys, squatting, placing the Molotov cocktail upright at his feet, then straightening himself, hands raised.

REGAN

Nothin' smart, nothin' stupid. Get your wallet, just as slow, and toss it over. Underhand.

TARP

What for?

REGAN

I'm gettin' your name, retard.

TARP

It's Tarp. Gillian Tarp.

REGAN

I'll trust the I.D. Fork it over.

Regan holsters her left-hand Czech in her waistband loop and holds out the hand. Brief pause. Tarp obeys, taking the wallet from his pocket, and tossing it. Regan catches it, pinches it between her fingers and the other Czech (while keeping it aimed at him), yanks out his I.D., and looks.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Gillian Tarp indeed.

(A hitch.)

Don't mind if I take an imbecile tax.

She replaces the I.D., tugs out a thin band of folded bills—and sees the familiar mold stains on them. She checks the other side, then shoots Tarp a deadly mug.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Paid to do this, huh?

TARP

Hell gives you that idea?

Regan's had enough. She pockets the wallet and contents, charges to Tarp with gun aimed, and picks up the M.C.

REGAN

You're comin' with me, fuck-ass.

She pushes down on the back of his neck with the same hand, and drags him toward the Gallery, nudging him and herself between two cars, keeping the gun on his scalp.

TARP

Fuck is this?

REGAN

Shut up!

Brooke approaches from down the sidewalk. Perfect timing.

BROOKE

What fresh hell—you're goin' Kitty Genovese on this guy?!

REGAN

Only 'cause you're late.

BROOKE

(indicates the M.C.)

Is that what I think it is?

REGAN

Never mind that. Take the Czech from my 'band, and keep watch out here.

BROOKE

Are you sure that's a good idea?

REGAN

Call me when you get a better one.

Brooke takes the Czech, reluctantly. Regan forces Tarp up the steps; Brooke follows, looking around, anxious. Regan hoists open the door with her gun hand and hauls Tarp inside, and Brooke turns her head around right in time for the door to swing shut smack in her face.

INT. THE I.G. — MCSORLEY'S OFFICE

McSorley sits at his desk, the trauma of the day etched on his face. Vanessa, Ursula, the bouncer, and a gaggle of LIEUTENANTS in various urban garbs surround him.

LT. #1

He was braggin' about it to everyone in earshot all o' that night. Man at his finest. Word musta got out.

MCSORLEY

This is horseshit. The whole time he was inna area, he was at Reebok H.Q. Where else would he've gone? Coulda had his lunch there easily. And if he had left, wouldn't he've had his retinue with him or somethin'? His parents? Doesn't add up.

LT. #1

He swore it was him.

LT. #2

Coulda been a doppelgänger. That's all I can think of.

LT. #3

Comin' southbound off the Pike with Maryland plates?

VANESSA

It's ... plausible. That's the word I been lookin' for.

A hitch. Something in McSorley smarts at that.

MCSORLEY

"Plausible." "Maryland plates"—are we so sure he drove here? And back?!

VANESSA

I'm not claimin' to know anymore'n anyone in this room does, but that he died and how he died and that Neville had to Hemingway himself after—seems a bit like one coincidence too many.

URSULA

I consider myself an authority. I ain't inclined to take his word, and whether this was some doppelgänger or just some crap of his own—frankly, I don't even care—the point is: guy was a fuckin' retard. Honestly can't say I miss him that much.

MCSORLEY

So can't I. I got two o' my best guys dead over this shit, I can only mourn so many. People aren't thinkin' with their brains tonight.

(Brief beat.)

Where the hell is Croake?

BOUNCER

I swung by her house. No one there.

URSULA

I rung up the clinic and the Gallery. No one's seen her all day.

A beat. McSorley wipes sweat from his forehead.

MCSORLEY

I love her to death, but sometimes, I wanna smack her.

URSULA

I know the feelin'.
(A hitch.)

MCSORLEY

Alright. ... How to quash a rumor?

EXT. ONE BLOCK FROM THE I.G.'S BACK ALLEY – MINUTES LATER

The road is dotted with parked cars, but absent of people. The Lotus slides in, pulls to the curb, and parks.

INT. THE LOTUS

Regan shuts off the ignition (and thus the lights), and stares dead-eyed through the dashboard. The radio is ON.

REGAN'S P.O.V. — Same scene: cars without people.

REPORTER #3 (O.S.)

(on the radio; male; no
accent)

—Councillor Ossie Rafferty says that
B.P.D. will enforce a ten P.M. curfew
in the District tonight—

She turns the dial to Roy Buchanan's "The Messiah Will Come Again", leans back, listens, and broods. Brief pause. Then, she opens her glove compartment, and takes out a balaclava.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE I.G. — SECONDS LATER

Regan, with the balaclava on, jogs around the corner and into the street, careful to avoid the streetlights' glare. On the sidewalk across, she peers up at the only lighted window (and only other sign of life) on the block: the oriel. The backs of McSorley and a few others are visible.

INT. MCSORLEY'S OFFICE

McSorley checks a wall clock: half past nine. A beat.

MCSORLEY

We better crease this. I don't think there's much else we can do right now besides lay low and let the pigs sort this out. I've talked with our guy inna P.D., he'll keep us posted, they don't know what to make of it either. I'm confident they'll exonerate us, but it's gonna take time, so if you got somewheres outta town you can go, pack what you can, go there and stay there till this settles. Otherwise, respect the curfew. Also, as a matter of prudence, I'm puttin' the kibosh on all C. business for the summer. Everything at Nahant gets dumped.

This gets a reaction: a few groans, at least one whistle. It takes a long beat-length for it to die down.

LT. #3

Panama's gonna be pissed.

MCSORLEY

Panama's already pissed, they been whinin' onna phone to me all day askin' what's goin' on, as if I know. ... Anyone got anythin' else? Anythin' pithy and clever to send us off?

(Long beat. Silence.)

Anyone sees Croake, tell her to bring her fat ass to me stat. Everyone but Nihill is dismissed.

The exiting commotion begins. Vanessa remains seated, and broods, her brow twice as furrowed as McSorley's. A beat.

INT. THE LOTUS

Regan gets back in, shuts the door, and lifts the balaclava over her eyes (not taking it completely off).

REGAN'S P.O.V. — Outside, for a long beat, nothing happens. Then, on the horizon, people from the meeting start filing out of the alley, drifting to cars in groups, and getting in. Ursula is briefly conspicuous in the throng.

Regan perks up. She's had a bad epiphany.

REGAN

Oh shit.

Rapidly, she turns on the ignition, shifts the gear into reverse, turns her head to face the back window, BACKS UP to the intersection, turns rightward into a street of houses, and PARKS. She takes a deep breath, and watches as several cars whiz by and vanish. This takes a while.

Something's off. She sniffs the air and grimaces. It's a revolting scent. She turns her eyes toward shotgun, where Tarp's Molotov cocktail is buckled in snug. She grabs it, brings it to her nose, and smells the rim.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Bleach? Fuckin' sadist. Shoulda taken a weed-whacker to his balls.

She returns the cocktail behind the seatbelt, and waits several seconds. No other cars pass. She DRIVES, realizes she's still in reverse, curses, shifts the gear, goes up and right to where she was, and PARKS.

There's one car left, across and further up: the Pontiac.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Goddamn it, Ness.

A beat. She shuts off the car, brings the balaclava back down over her face, exits the car, and jogs forward.

MONTAGE:

1. **EXT. BACK ALLEY** — Regan enters and goes to the backdoor. She tests it. Unlocked. She takes the Czech from under her sweatshirt, racks the slide, goes in ...
2. **INT. BARROOM** — ... and zips right through the door to the
3. **SPIRAL STAIRCASE** — And looks up, and tiptoes up, fast.

HALL — SECOND STORY

The door opens a crack, then fully, as Regan sticks her torso in and points the Czech at the door to the office. Nothing. She peers behind the door, where all there is is another door. Leaving her door ajar, slowly, she closes in on the office door, gun poised, on silent footfalls.

MCSORLEY'S OFFICE

McSorley drapes a blanket over the Bösendorfer like a tarp. Vanessa hasn't moved. Brief beat.

MCSORLEY

We'll head to the red osier house, spend the week. You can swing by your place, pack some essentials. Should be enough for me down there—

VANESSA

Why didn'tcha whack Neville out when you had the chance?!

McSorley gives her a chiding, almost paternal look.

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

Cliché but true. Coulda spared us from this after he shot the H.I.V. poz guy inna van. Or how 'bout the New Year's in Attleboro where he took Rafferty's daughter to Rhode Island.

(MORE)

VANESSA

(CONT'D.)

(imitating Neville)

"It was ten blocks down the road!"
Still a felony, fuck-tard. And all
the shit he put Ursula through.

HALL

Regan is at the office door, gun aimed inches away, her
breathing controlled. She's hesitating.

VANESSA (O.S.)

Between this and Regan, I'm startin'
to wonder if you're losin' your grip.

MCSORLEY (O.S.)

I am not losin' my grip. I made an
honest-to-God mistake, put him down a
rung when I shoulda kicked him off.

OFFICE

McSorley stands closer to Vanessa.

VANESSA

Your hindsight ain't even that good.
Retard like that, in my book, you put
outta his misery. You heard Ursula,
she coulda done it herself.

MCSORLEY

Well, he did it himself—

VANESSA

Too late to save Lenny—

MCSORLEY

Have you listened to a single word
I've said all night?! Neville did not
sell coke to Lenny! He couldn't have,
there's no way! ... We lost the second
Championship and you're lookin' for
someone to blame, just like whoever
killed Kirk and Ava.

VANESSA

Wanna bet?

MCSORLEY

I'd bet on my nuts. Like the Romans.
Y'know that's where we get the word
"testimony" from.

VANESSA

Yeah. Hold that. I gotta take a piss.

She rises and goes to the door, leaving McSorley to fume.

HALL

She enters and darts straight through a nearby door. The door to the stairs is closed. Regan is gone.

INT. THE LOTUS

Through the dashboard, Regan sprints into view, down the road, to the driver's door. She jumps in, tears off the balaclava, inhales, and rams her face into the steering wheel, making the HONK drown out her SHRILL CRY:

REGAN

Cuuuuuuuuunt!

She drops her head back into the seat, and exhales her anxiety. Brief pause. Slowly regaining herself, she does a triple take, and sets her eyes on the Molotov cocktail.

INT. THE OFFICE – SECONDS LATER

Vanessa reenters; McSorley is at his desk, again cradling and scrutinizing the ruby coin. A beat.

MCSORLEY

Guy once told me the slippery slope
is a fallacy. ... Not when you're an
alcoholic, it ain't. Or a skeezer,
for that matter. I guess.

INT. THE I.G. – FRONT DINING AREA

Upturned chairs on tables. The only lighting comes from a few streetlamps through the plate glass window and, on the bar, a small shrine for Bias: a framed photo, and three whiskey shots aflame. The silhouette of Regan, balaclava back on, appears in the window, peers in, and goes O.S.

Then, faintly, a KEY TURNS in a lock. Regan slips inside, holding the M.C. She soft-foots to the shrine, and gazes at it, for a long beat. She glances at the ceiling, then back at the photo. She kisses her index and middle fingertips, puts them on Bias' lips, puts the M.C. up to a shot glass, and lets the cloth wick catch fire. Holding it aloft, she backs up to the door and exits; the KEY TURNS again. In the window, her silhouette slinks deep into the darkness. Brief pause. Then, a fist-sized chunk of concrete comes hurtling overhand at the window—and it SHATTERS. The rock knocks a chair off its table, bringing both to the paneled floor with twin thuds. The M.C. follows right behind, tracing a higher arc—and CRASHES IN THE AUDIENCE'S VIEW.

OFFICE

McSorley and Vanessa are puzzled, slow to react. McSorley looks out the oriel's left window, through which Regan's figure dashes around the corner and out of sight.

MCSORLEY (CONT'D.)

Do not tell me—

Vanessa sprints out of the room.

EXT. BACK ALLEY

Regan soars in, crouches into position behind the dumpster, takes out the Czech, and re-racks the slide.

INT. BARROOM

Viscous white smoke wafts in from the front. O.S., the fire is already RUMBLING. The smoke detector starts GOING OFF. Vanessa enters, instantly moves her hand to her nose and mouth, retches, and flees back upstairs.

MONTAGE:

1. **OFFICE** — Smoke creeps through the floorboards. McSorley's nose detects the bleach. His body quivers.
2. **HALL** — Vanessa races to the office.
3. **EXT. BACK ALLEY** — Regan takes out a pocket mirror.
4. **INT. HALL** — McSorley and Vanessa bolt from the office, clutching towels to their faces.

MCSORLEY (CONT'D.)

It's Tarp! Fucker double-crossed me!

STORAGE CLOSET

They enter and go past several cluttered shelves and file cabinets to a window. Vanessa pries it up, kicks out the screen, and sticks out her left leg.

MCSORLEY (CONT'D.)

Hold it!

He seizes her arm. She stops and glares at him, impatient.

MCSORLEY (CONT'D.)

We sure he's not flushin' us out?!

A hitch. She takes her Beretta from the back of her pants and racks the slide with her towel hand, moving it straight back to her face. He lets go. She moves out the window.

EXT. BACK ALLEY

She goes to the railing, flicks the towel over it, and scopes the alley, gun poised, first looking down beneath her, then out toward the street.

VANESSA'S P.O.V. — She can't see Regan behind the dumpster.

REGAN'S P.O.V. — IN THE MIRROR — But Regan can see her.

A beat. Vanessa returns to the window.

VANESSA

Coast clear.

McSorley hoists his right foot onto the sill; Vanessa pulls it out with care. He growls, his joints stiffened with age. She wraps her shooting arm around his waist ...

REGAN'S P.O.V. — IN THE MIRROR — ... and pulls his top half, with all expected difficulty, out and across the sill.

He drags out his left leg mostly by himself, scoots off the sill onto the landing, and takes a brief beat to recover, massaging his knees. The towel slips from his hand.

MCSORLEY

You first. Check around the corner.

Somehow, that was within Regan's earshot.

REGAN
Shit. Shit. Shit.

She crawls away from the dumpster.

Vanessa, with feline agility, scampers down the ladder and reaches the ground in a second. Smoke thick as ointment seeps past the backdoor; O.S., the fire ROARS. She charges down the alley, and points the Beretta behind the dumpster.

ROAD

Regan ducks behind the concrete steps to a building a few meters away. She's still using the pocket mirror. Vanessa steps into the road, looking and aiming in all directions, fruitlessly. She returns into the

ALLEY

and back under the fire escape.

VANESSA
Almost home. Get your ass down here.

McSorley looks down the ladder. This won't be easy, but the window is already starting to glow and crackle. He gets in front of the ladder, grips the railing perpendicularly, backs up his right foot onto the first rung, his left foot onto the second, etc., slow but steady. His hands glide down toward the edge of the landing as he descends.

Regan returns to the dumpster, and repositions the mirror.

REGAN'S P.O.V. — IN THE MIRROR — McSorley's shadow, framed by white smoke, moves one hand onto the rungs, then the other, and continues at his pace, for a pause-length.

VANESSA (O.S.)
Lookin' spry, Irv.

Eyes poignant but fused on the mirror, Regan stills her body and breathing, and moves her finger to the Czech's trigger. The moment of action is imminent.

Vanessa looks into the alley, eyes turned inward. She has her own thoughts to mull. A beat.

MCSORLEY

Little help here?

She turns. His feet are on the last rung, a body-length from the ground. She goes to him, holsters her Beretta, reaches up and grips his soles, facing him.

VANESSA

I gotcha.

He moves down a rung, drops one foot, then the other. Vanessa turns out stronger than she looks; she holds his weight firm, and maneuvers her hands to his ankles. His hands descend the rungs with ease, at the same even pace.

REGAN'S P.O.V. — IN THE MIRROR — He's halfway ... Vanessa's hands go up to his thighs ... then his waist ... closer ...

He lets go of the last rung, glides down Vanessa's palms, and hits the ground feet-first with some wind—but he's okay. Vanessa lets go as he catches his breath.

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

You ain't lost your grip, Irv.

Now or never. Regan jumps out from her hiding spot—

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

You got none left.

—and before he can react, Vanessa whips out her Beretta and SHOTS MCSORLEY BETWEEN THE EYES.

Regan, standing, sees it, and recoils from the shock—

McSorley slumps against the dumpster, dropping on his ass—

Regan's eyes lose all focus. Her mouth gapes, and her hands fly to her scalp. She is mortified. Long pause.

Vanessa drops her arm, turns three quarters, and instantly spots the casing on the ground. She bends down, swipes it up, takes two steps forward—and sees her. A hitch.

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

What the—

The Mexican standoff lasts merely a beat. Regan beats her to the punch and SMASHES HER LEFT KNEE. The force torques Vanessa's leg back, throwing her off-balance just as she's lifting her gun, and sending her to the asphalt SHRIEKING in pain. Regan wastes no more time; she flees into the

ROAD

and keeps running—toward the Lotus—with terrible speed.

ALLEY

Vanessa crawls away from McSorley's seated corpse, on her left knee, as fast as she can, her gun trained on the road, her other hand clasping the casing, her face sweating.

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

Taaaaarp! You bastaaaard!

INT. THE LOTUS

Regan gets in, thrusts the Czech and the mirror toward shotgun, slams the door, and turns on the car.

REGAN

—fuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuckfuck—

She bangs a SHARP U-TURN into the other lane and goes what must be well over the speed limit. She lifts the balaclava over her eyes, tears of rage forming in them. She goes past a red light. She just keeps going, arrow-straight, at high constant speed for a long pause-length. Her tears drop on the steering wheel, and she SCREAMS in pure rage.

INT. THE I.G. - FRONT DINING AREA

Tableau: a bright inferno. Every surface is ablaze. Slabs of wood rain and splinter. Shelves behind the bar buckle and collapse. Bottles of alcohol CRASH, shooting columns of gold high into the ceiling. Safe behind a pane of glass reflecting the ugly scene, Len Bias rests on one knee and a basketball, and stares—with a challenge—at the audience.

INT. THE GALLERY - BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER

Regan bursts in. Tarp sits on a grimy canopied bed, face bruised, hands zip-tied to a bedpost behind him. Eugene watches him blankly. Long beat.

REGAN

All quiet?
 (Eugene nods.)
 Got a kit?

Eugene flings one over. Regan catches it, tears out the needle, throws aside the kit, uncaps the needle, pulls the plunger back, and shakes it, filling it with air.

TARP

Fuck are you doin'?

REGAN

You pity this cunt-fucker, Eugene?

EUGENE

No way.

REGAN

Know anyone here who would?

EUGENE

Doubt it.

REGAN

Grab the duffel.

Eugene exits. Regan goes to Tarp, grabs his collar, and pins him against the bedpost. He squirms—in vain.

TARP

What the fuck?! Sonofabitch!

REGAN

Who said I was a mother?

And with that, Regan RAMS THE NEEDLE RIGHT INTO HIS HEART.

INT. MCSORLEY'S HOUSE — LIVING ROOM — DAY

A closed walnut coffin stands in the center. Regan, in a McSorleyesque outfit of dark tweed and serge, broods at it, catatonic. Mourners in shades of black dot the room, somber without shedding tears. A sin-eater—a chubby, disheveled man—sits at coffin's head, eats a slice of soda bread, and drinks from a pint of brandy. Long beat. Just as her head droops, the bouncer goes to her, and her eyes switch up.

BOUNCER

Vanessa needs you. Upstairs.

HALL — SECOND STORY

The bouncer comes up the stairwell, Regan following. At the top, the bouncer steps aside, and Regan halts, alarmed.

REGAN'S P.O.V. — Many from the prior night's meeting, all in black and off-black, form a gauntlet down the hall to an open door, through which Vanessa sits at a desk, waiting. Everyone stares at her, unblinking, masklike. Long beat.

Longish pause. Regan fills with an existential dread. She's fucked. She glances behind her, then looks ahead, sighs, and slowly drags herself to the door. Dead woman walking. She holds back sadness and fear—very well, actually. The eyes of the gauntlet remain on her throughout.

OFFICE

Regan walks in. More people from the meeting surround her, Brooke and Ursula among them. Vanessa seems drugged. Two crutches lean against the desk next to her. A beat.

REGAN

How's the knee?

VANESSA

Wanna look?

A hitch. Vanessa indicates a chair across; Regan moves into it. Vanessa takes a paper from the desk and hands it over.

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

His will. You get everything.

(Regan reads it.)

Ya understand what that means, right?

Regan looks up. She gets it. Of all the week's shocks, this is by far the biggest. Reversals of fate don't get wider.

REGAN

I can't—

VANESSA

You don't have a choice—

REGAN

Ness, noooo!

She rises with such force, her legs knock down the chair. She turns to the door, frantic, as if trying to flee her body, and drops to her knees. The tears well up. She knows Vanessa is right. Cowardice is not an option. A hitch.

VANESSA

C'mon, what're you gonna do, leave a power vacuum?! Disrespect his last wish?! Boss with a cunt, doesn't that mean somethin' to you?! Take the job!

REGAN

He woulda changed it—

VANESSA

He told me different. Right after, right at the amphitheater. "Feared and loved." "With brains." "No man better for the job." His words. You.

Regan turns to gaze at her. The tenor of her regret shifts from selfish to selfless. She'd never have guessed McSorley had this in him. Long beat.

Vanessa gets up on one foot (her knee in a cast), balances on the crutches, moves aside, and offers Regan her seat.

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

Take the job, Frog.

Brief pause. Regan gets her composure, pushes herself up, and goes around the desk. Vanessa slaps her on the back as she sits down and places the will in front of her. Someone moves the tipped chair out of the way. Vanessa takes its place, in front of Regan, and takes out a needle.

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

Needles out, boys.

On cue, everyone takes out his or her own needle. Vanessa sticks the point of hers into her palm—

VANESSA (CONT'D.)

To the new boss.

—and slaps a jot of blood onto the will. Regan wipes the moisture from her face. The reality is sinking in.

Vanessa goes to a table next to the desk, on which are shot glasses stacked in a tall pyramid on a towel and a bottle of Guinness. Deft on the crutches, she opens the bottle and starts pouring evenly over the pyramid, filling the top glass, letting the foam spill into the four glasses beneath it, etc., making a fountain of stout. Brooke comes to the desk, and pricks herself. She looks quite happy for Regan, perhaps aiming to reassure her with her grin.

BROOKE

To the new boss.

She slaps the will, goes to take the zenithal shot glass, and moves out of the way. Ursula's next. She's also in a good mood. Behind her, the guys in the room and from the hall are coalescing into a queue. Ursula pricks herself,—

URSULA

To the new boss.

—slaps the will, takes a full shot glass, and files away. Regan is calmer now. Much calmer.

MONTAGE:

A repeating, accelerating litany: Faces walk to the desk. Hands prick other hands. Mouths say "To the new boss" in varying volumes. The will gets more bloodstained. Hands grab full shot glasses. Foam soaks the towel, spills from table to floor. And through it all, Regan steels herself with all she's got for what will be, for better or worse, the greatest transition of her life.

Vanessa looks at Regan, and raises her shot glass. A beat.

VANESSA

To the new boss. Sláinte.

EVERYONE

Sláinte!

The whole crowd turns their bottoms up. Brief beat. Regan takes in the sight, then forces a smile.

INT. CRYPT — CATHOLIC CHURCH — NEXT DAY

A small, quaint sort of chapel. A handful of mahogany pews with navy blue velvet cushions face a humble altar with a podium, a votive candle rack aflame, and a crucifix on the wall. O.S., an ORGAN. Regan and Vanessa sit in the back.

REGAN

When the pigs find your blood, which they will, what're ya gonna tell 'em?

VANESSA

Just what happened. Tarp ambushed him, turned on me. If his gun hadn't jammed, I'd be dead. He ran before I could pull mine, but I was in shock anyway. Once I pulled, he was inna road and he pulled his second faster. And I reached the Pontiac before the fire truck came. E.R. from there.

(Brief beat.)

Tarp's gonna feel triple my pain—

REGAN

Tarp is a paperweight.

VANESSA

What do you mean?

REGAN

Lives across from the Gallery, right? Once you told me, I had it taken care of. You don't gotta worry 'bout him.

Their eyes meet. Vanessa realizes. She's a tad impressed.

VANESSA

You—well, I figure you havta get your hand inna cookie jar eventually.

REGAN

No question.

VANESSA

Reckon now's as good a time as any to tell ya: I regret tellin' Colette. I knew that was a bad idea. I'll never get in your crook like that again.

REGAN
I can take that.

Vanessa sighs in relief. That's a load off. A beat.

VANESSA
We should head up.

They rise. Vanessa moves the crutches under her armpits. Regan surveys the room with a wry contempt.

REGAN
I'm tempted to desecrate this place.

Regan waits a hitch, then seizes Vanessa under the jaw and KISSES her right on the lips. It's open-mouthed and quick. Vanessa is surprised, pleasantly. She can't control her giggle—nor her blush. Regan shares her newfound joy. She pats her on the shoulder, semi-softly.

REGAN (CONT'D.)
C'mon, I'll help you up the stairs.

Vanessa rotates herself, and they move toward the aisle.

EXT. CEMETERY — A FEW HOURS LATER

Regan sits on a granite tombstone, a mobile phone to her ear. Mourners file down an asphalt path behind her. Flood clambers downhill from the path toward her.

REGAN
No, no, I appreciate it. I know this is unusual. ... Weird timing, too. ... Thank you, Mister Bulger, that means a lot comin' from you. ... Alright. ... You, too, sir. ... Take care.

She hangs up and puts down the phone. A hitch. Flood makes his approach, moving in beside her.

FLOOD
Gettin' in bed with that guy?

REGAN
Ewww.

FLOOD

(chuckles)

Guess I'm workin' for you now. ... I wanna start on good terms—I shoulda been clearer 'bout those photos—

REGAN

Eh, tell you what, Flood, you don't judge me, I won't judge you.

FLOOD

Sounds like a deal. ... Our conflict of interest is gonna make things tricky goin' forward. I'll help where I can.

REGAN

Got anythin' on Kirk? Ava?

FLOOD

Whoever did 'em did 'em sloppy. We'll catch those guys.

REGAN

McSorley?

FLOOD

Not so hot. Coulda been any Celtics fan. I.G. looks as bad as Chernobyl. Whole block had to evacuate.

A beat. Regan rises, stretching her limbs.

REGAN

And Neville?

FLOOD

Suicide, no doubt. Plus which, Judd phoned me to kill the Len Bias crap.

(Regan scoffs.)

Yeah, I figured he told you. ... I got colleagues in D.C., say he got the coke from his friend down there.

REGAN

Can you get that to the press?

FLOOD

Soon as I can.

REGAN

Do that. ... We're gettin' outta coke, anyway. My decision. Tierney told me the Times burned Noriega last week. I gotta trust my foresight, that whole gig's gonna fold pretty quick.

FLOOD

Can you believe they brought that thug to speak at Harvard last year?

REGAN

Kind of. ... Right now, my money's on opiates. Waitlist at the clinic is four hundred souls deep. I know the business, middlemen to the hilt, easy to lean on. Not to mention, we'd be doin' the community a service.

FLOOD

Just don't do what Sharon did.

REGAN

Course not.

A beat. Flood checks his wristwatch, and rises.

FLOOD

Gotta run. He got family?

REGAN

Niece came down from Bangor, first time I've met her. That's about it.

FLOOD

Give her my respects.

REGAN

Will do.

FLOOD

Mainly came to say I got your back.

REGAN

Hey, gettin' a cop, any mob can do. But gettin' an I.A.D. cop—can't overstate the value o' that.

FLOOD

We're gettin' along after all.
(offers his hand)
See you round, bitch.

REGAN

(shakes his hand)
Till then, jackass.

They part hands, and he goes back toward the path, crossing and sharing a brief greeting with Tierney on the way. Regan notices her. They embrace, and part.

TIERNEY

I take it congrats are in order.

REGAN

How ya gonna frame it?

TIERNEY

I'll say you're takin' over the I.G.
What's left of it.

REGAN

Good answer. It'll get rebuilt.

TIERNEY

Put in a word for Goiterfetish.

REGAN

I'd appreciate that.
(A beat.)

TIERNEY

All due respect, I gotta draw a line,
one line. No more favors where people
get killed. Too much to ask?

REGAN

(considers for a beat)
Not at all. Won't happen again.

TIERNEY

Glad to hear it.

Long beat. They gaze out at the graves in silence.

INT. THE MAUDLIN MAVERICK – EVENING

A retro-'fifties ice cream parlor with a candy cane color scheme. DOMINIQUE EREAU sits in a booth, waiting. She's seventeen, tall, wiry, curly-haired, with a Prussian blue cardigan. "She Sells Sanctuary" by The Cult PLAYS on the INTERCOM. Regan comes over with two cups of mint chocolate chip, with spoons, one of which she hands to Dominique.

REGAN

Here ya go.

DOMINIQUE

(slight Haitian accent)

Thank you.

They dig in, and keep digging in as they talk.

REGAN

So you guys kicked out Baby Doc.

DOMINIQUE

Yeah. My parents were relieved. His father was even worse. My mother's mastiff, his name was Terry, he got put down 'cause Papa Doc had a dream that a black dog would overthrow him. That's why she fled.

REGAN

Jesus. That's just insane.

DOMINIQUE

I follow the Philippines, too. Did you know Ninoy lived in Newton?

REGAN

I think I heard that.

DOMINIQUE

I know which house.

REGAN

Can you imagine, you're livin' here inna U.S., free at last, not a care inna world, and then what, you fly back to Manila and get slugged at the airport? Unbelievable.

DOMINIQUE

But now his wife Corazón's president.

REGAN

God bless her.

DOMINIQUE

It was a perfect revolution. No blood spilt. That's how we women are gonna run the world. Exciting, huh?

REGAN

Tell that to Thatcher.

Dominique titters knowingly, and shakes her head. A beat.

DOMINIQUE

Red Sox beat the Yanks this week.

REGAN

I'm not big on sports. Sacrilege in this town, I know.

DOMINIQUE

If you're Caribbean, you have to know your baseball. Roger Clemens is my guy. He's gonna win the Cy Young.

REGAN

Think we're gonna break the Curse this year?

DOMINIQUE

I do. It'll be us versus the Mets, you'll see. They're the brawlers. And they got that guy named Strawberry.

REGAN

Him I know.

DOMINIQUE

It's gonna be good. ... And we need something to root for after Bias.

REGAN

That we do.

DOMINIQUE

You'll rebuild the I.G., right?

They finish their ice cream roughly at the same time. Long beat. Regan broods. The whole occasion is rather awkward.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Think you could humor me?

INT. GYM — SWIMMING POOL — AN HOUR LATER

Olympic-size, flanked by bleachers. Dominique sits idly on a bench at one end. A beat. Regan emerges in cap, goggles, and a gray one-piece swimsuit, carrying a stopwatch. She heads to Dominique. They're the only ones there.

REGAN

Twenty-six seventy-eight, right?

DOMINIQUE

As of now.

REGAN

Time me, will ya?

Dominique takes the stopwatch. Regan struts down the fifty meters of the pool. This of course takes a little while.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

My sobriquet was Frog, and not just 'cause o' Croake! Wouldn't let 'em use Guvnor! They give you one?

DOMINIQUE

I'm Pine Marten! I'm your predator!

REGAN

Yeah, we'll see 'bout that!

She goes to the nearest board, mounts it, and gets into position: hands on the edge, left foot below the shoulder, right foot taut behind her. Not a hair out of line.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Count me off three two one go!

DOMINIQUE

Okay, three—two—one—go!

Right on "go", Regan dismounts, leaping, just like a frog, a massive length forward, already gaining a huge edge. Her dive is flawless, with hardly an extra drop splashed, and her freestyle is a breathtaking sight: arms like scalpels, legs graceful, torso lithe, and all with whiplash speed, in a line so straight she only needs half the lane width. It's a precise, prodigious performance, with nothing lost to age. After well under half a minute, she smacks the end, WHOOPS, jumps out dripping wet, yanks her goggles down to her neck, goes to Dominique, tears the stopwatch from her, looks at it, rips off her cap, and lets out a BATTLE CRY of victory. She shoves her time in Dominique's face.

REGAN

Try doin' that with my tits!

A hitch. She sticks her tongue out, amphibiously, into her face, making a low-pitched vibration from all the way back in her throat. Dominique winces. This is freaking her out.

Regan calms down, sits next to her on the bench, and gazes out on the pool like a conquest. Long beat.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

Ya see, Pine Marten, I'm just like Shelley Winters, in The Poseidon Adventure: "In the water,—"

O.S., a door SLAMS. Regan jumps up and turns. The bench is vacant. Dominique has fled. She is alone. Pause.

REGAN (CONT'D.)

"—I'm a skinny girl."

(A beat.)

And then she has a heart attack. And dies. In Gene Hackman's arms.

(A beat.)

Whatever.

A hitch. She double-checks the stopwatch, and walks away.

LOCKER ROOM — MINUTES LATER

IN A MIRROR — Regan, freshly showered and dried, sits on a bench in front of an open locker in her skivvies. On the INTERCOM: "Love Like Blood" by Killing Joke. She's alone. She puts on her jeans. Then, her shirt. Taking her time.

She reaches into the locker and grabs her sapphire pendant. She goes to the mirror, double-checks her hair, puts on the pendant, and admires the look. A curious chalky white line, not unlike cocaine, bisects the image of her face. Long beat. Unthinkingly, her biceps arc up to her breasts, and squeeze the pendant between them. She drops her arms, and her face shows her recalling the gesture.

MONTAGE:

1. Her bittersweet face, staring.
2. REGAN'S P.O.V. — The same image, reversed, bisected.
3. A closer view of the same face.
4. REGAN'S P.O.V. — That image now, reversed, bisected.
5. Just her eyes, pale gray, lucent.
6. REGAN'S P.O.V. — The same eyes, reversed, bisected.

IN THE MIRROR — She keeps staring for a few seconds. Then, she breathes, successfully beating back the tears. Poignant but stoic. Her eyes slide upward and read graffiti scrawled in black permanent marker along the top of the mirror, and doubled by it, in a hand eerily similar to that found at the T. stop. An aching, wistful smile creeps onto her face.

REGAN

To each her own.

(A hitch.)

Wicked fuckin' A.

A beat. Killing Joke gives way to "All The Things She Gave Me" by The Waterboys. (N.B.: This will play through the END CREDITS.) Regan returns to the bench. From the locker, she pulls out her socks—puts them on—does the same with her sneakers—and the tweed jacket, too. She pulls out a blue knapsack, swings it over her shoulder, and slams the locker shut. As the music SWELLS, she goes to the mirror, whips aside a strand of hair, gives herself one last smile and a two-fingered pistol gesture, and struts O.S., leaving to the empty locker room the graffiti image of four words:

CUIUS REGIO, EIUS RELIGIO.

BLACKOUT

Haverford, P.A.—White Plains, N.Y.
January 2015—August 2019

Endnotes

Cover: The provided title design—blue, all lowercase, with a banner font and spaced text—is the envisioned scheme for the opening and closing credits, and all marketing.

p. 1 (“...a PUNK SONG plays...”): This screenwriter does have the melodies for this song in mind and is willing to compose and provide the sheet music on request. The song is firmly in the hardcore tradition, albeit with a coherence closer to punk. To learn more, see the documentary *All Ages: The Boston Hardcore Story* (Drew Stone, dir., Gallery East, 2012).

p. 2 (“DISC JOCKEY: That zombie horror classic...”): Writing as a native New Yorker, I have modeled the dialogue, in terms of grammar and general atmosphere, mainly on the novels of George V. Higgins, with a dash of Robert Cormier (a native of mid-state Leominster). As in Higgins, “onna” is an elision of “on the,” and “inna” of “in the;” and “than” when following an adjective in a metaphor is abbreviated as “n” and elided to the adjective.

Where ellipses appear in the dialogue, they should be read as slightly briefer than hitches.

p. 3 (“INT. BEDROOM”): The film should have as few takes as possible. I am proud to count myself as a fan of the long take and the master shot, which I think will underscore the story’s slow-burn intensity. My models here are Akerman, Angelopoulos, Jarmusch, and Tarr. I see this first scene as a static master shot, turned 90° to the left to give the illusion of Regan and Judd standing. (They can and probably should maneuver their waists below the screen once they begin the sex. The detail about their thighs is there for clarity, and to mislead readers and viewers into thinking that Judd is the alpha here.) The second take, of them after coitus, should be turned right side-up.

Where I do not note my vision for the cinematography, *de rigueur* crosscutting will do—preferably from a downward, sidelong angle, or over the shoulder, whichever works best. The film overall (as the script takes pains to indicate) should have a dark, cold color scheme of blues, teals, greens, grays and *eigengrau*, with a few precious splashes of red. It should have an ‘80s look, akin to that captured by an Arriflex camera, with a wide ratio and deep focus, as little exegetic lighting and dubbing as possible (preferably none), no dissolves, and no hint of anything digitized.

(“REGAN CROAKE”): Actors who I could envision in the principal/antiheroine rôle, obvious logistical issues aside, include Mia Goth, Kara Hayward (an Andover native), Madison Lintz, Florence Pugh, Haley Lu Richardson, and Honor Swinton Byrne. (Yes, I’ve written her as a curvy redhead, but that’s a rare type and I do not mean to demand as much.) I have written the rôle to be uniquely challenging and require serious experience. The casting of Regan would be, by far, *the* most critical filmmaking decision, as that actor would no doubt be the heart, soul and fate of the film. On Regan’s shoulders, this film either succeeds or fails. There is no in-between.

(“Aspergerian”): This screenwriter has been diagnosed with the syndrome and writes from experience. The term did not become household until the ‘90s, but it is a crucial aspect of Regan’s character and I have risen to the challenge of conveying it indirectly, as I hope the reader will see.

(“De Profundis”): Being a fan of ‘80s music, I have added diegetic soundtrack choices to emphasize the story’s ideal mood and tone. Composers I have in mind for a potential exegetic score include PVRIS (natives of Lynn) and Tash Sultana. First-time listeners of Dead Can Dance should not take long to figure out the general appeal of this song as an opener.

(“JUDD IVORS”): I would burden no one with cherry-picking the industry for all the known Len Bias doppelgängers. The likes of RJ Cyler and Malcolm David Kelley would work fine.

p. 5 (“INT. METHADONE CLINIC”): This could be deftly shot in one master shot, weaving forward through the reception window, into the office, swerving to catch the scanner, and back.

p. 6 (“...a small plastic bag...”): If Wikipedia is to be believed, the first syringe exchanges sprung up *in Boston in 1986*. How convenient for this narrative.

p. 7 (“NURSE: You can hear that low?”): Sensitive hearing is a trademark of Asperger’s.

p. 9 (“EXT. THE IVORS HOUSE”): This could be one master shot, static. So could the bit in the office, only that would require a pan, onto the desk, to set up a close-up on the letter.

(“COLETTE”): Actors considerable for this rôle include Michael Hyatt and C.C.H. Pounder.

(“...under an overcast sky...”): The weather archives tell us that most of this week in Boston was overcast. All exterior scenes should be shot with this taken into account.

p. 11 (“COLETTE: ... Clean needles.”): While syringe exchanges (and safe injection sites) have been proven as effective methods of harm reduction for drug addicts, they were of course deeply controversial during their inception, with ample resistance from the Black community.

p. 12 (“INT. BARROOM”): One master shot. Pulling back as Vanessa walks forward to meet Regan, then going with Regan to the bar, and static for the rest of. Note that Regan should generally be relegated leftward on the screen—i.e., in the *west*—to mark her as quintessentially Westphalian in her nature—hermetic, sovereign, Bostonian—perhaps even to a fault. Moreover, the produced film should put the motif of the syringe at the forefront, mainly through images and sounds of linearity (in all possible directions), vacuity, modality, alienation, and solipsism. (As the story’s theme of Westphalian sovereignty entails a high degree of ethnic homogeneity, there is no way that this narrative could ever have been set in my native über-cosmopolitan New York.)

(“A turquoise ’84 Lotus Excel...”): Regan’s choice of car (and gun) was the result of careful research on my part, and is meant to match her vibe: boxy, yet elegant on her own terms.

(“VANESSA NIHILL”): Actors considerable include Lou de Laâge and Caren Pistorius.

(“VANESSA: ... Every cent you chip in...”): The nuance here is that Clodagh Forbes isn’t likely to see a dime of this money. Cassidy’s father, on the other hand, might. And there are better odds than none that many of the donors, Regan included, are aware of this.

(“Second Skin”): The Chameleons should have been big. The A-sides of *Script of the Bridge* and *Strange Times* (granted, a September ’86 release) have some of the strongest cuts that post-punk ever produced. Limiting myself to one track was painful. But let’s face it, this song is their best.

p. 13 (“...three peers of hers...”): In addition to the actors listed for Regan (taking into account that only one actor can be cast as her), actors I have in mind for the rôles of Brooke and Ursula, interchangeably, include Ellie Bamber, Jessica Barden, Hermione Corfield, Amy Forsyth, and Molly Kunz. Tierney’s unique racial profile hinders a fantasy casting; the closest I can come up with offhand are Manal Issa (who is Lebanese) and Annet Mahendru (who is Indian-Russian).

p. 14 (“REGAN: I woulda castrated...”)/p. 16 (“REGAN: ...at the discotheque...”): Two exhibits of evidence for Regan’s Aspergerian social ungainliness. Keep an eye out for more.

p. 14 (“BROOKE: I like Molly Bloom better.”): Let’s just go ahead and say that Regan and company diligently read *Ulysses* for their advanced high school English class, granted that their overall educational experience was a catastrophe. More on that forthcoming.

p. 18 (“BROOKE: Car can’t get repoed...”): This is fact. Google it.

(“‘Lenehan Avenue’ and ‘Plusquellic Road”): Fictional, as is the suburb of Westphalia. Whether this general suburb is technically a neighborhood of Boston proper or a town or village on its outskirts, I have left nebulous and do not really care about. In my mind, it is west enough to have an apt name, south enough to be linguistically linkable to Southie, and apart of Boston enough to have its own City Councillor, police precinct, and ersatz MBTA stop, and to have been entangled in the busing riots of the mid-’70s, as will become clear. Many other elements of this community’s culture (such as its cars, fashions and music choices), insofar as they are distinct from the rest of Boston circa 1986, are simply the product of my imagination.

p. 19 (“EUGENE”): Actors considerable include Sean Gullette (a native), Nate Lang (a New Bedford native), and Steve Howey. Though a tertiary rôle, the monologues are demanding.

p. 21 (“EUGENE: If he hadn’t been a nigger...”): Boston’s language standards were (and are) nowhere near ours in America today. I have chosen not to overdo it, but I *have* wondered about my own generosity. Note Regan’s hesitation to use the word on p. 61.

p. 22 (“INT. BAIL BONDS OFFICE”): Given an entrance perpendicular to the desk and the window leading to the fire escape, this could easily be one static master shot.

p. 24 (“WOMEN’S 50 FREE”): The best I could find on Massachusetts high school swimming records, for comparison, was that in 2006, Eliza Butts of Weston swam the fifty-meter freestyle in 23.49 seconds. Whether Boston schools had developed aquatics programs and swimming teams by the mid-/late ’70s, I have not been able to ascertain, so this is largely my invention. For a scathing, against-the-grain primary account of the city’s school desegregation crisis—namely, of Regan’s teenage years—one could do much worse than Ione Malloy’s *Southie Won’t Go* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1986), which does go into some detail on the attempted integration of the sports teams, with a focus on football. The operative word is *attempted*.

Also, Regan delivers three aislings in the script. See if you can point them out.

p. 25 (“In the Gold Dust Rush”): Cocteau Twins is another group with a slew of tracks—mainly those from the criminally underrated *Head over Heels* and *Victorialand*—which could work in this film as diegetic *and* exegetic music. This was also not an easy choice, nor should it have been.

(“REGAN: ...with that fuckin’ padlock...”): As Malloy tells it, a certain degree of racially charged violence became commonplace at Boston schools, and while many students did manage to achieve a decent education despite it, Regan and her friends were clearly not among them.

p. 29 (“IRVING MCSORLEY”): This rôle is written for a name of relative indie stature who could drop by for a few days to play the antagonist. Simon Russell Beale, Bud Cort, Brian Dennehy, Alan Ford, and Tom Waits could work wonders with it—as could Colm Feore, a native who happens to be the spitting image of Whitey Bulger. (What did they need Johnny Depp for?)

p. 32 (“REGAN: ...T.D.P.s...”): *Torsades de pointes*. Methadone clinics usually require new patients to take electrocardiograms; a QT interval over 450 milliseconds in men is abnormal, can lead to TdP, and can be expected to result in a turndown. (Boylston Street refers to old money.)

- p. 37 (“REGAN: ...race wire...”):** For reporting horseraces. A good mob gig until the ‘50s.
- p. 38 (“REGAN: ...the scuba divin’ high...”):** Regan here refers to nitrogen narcosis.
- p. 40 (“Death in June”):** Could you ask for a band name more fitting for the story? There’s also a song by Minutemen, “June 16th”, but I couldn’t find a place for it here.
- p. 43 (“Night Train”):** A cruelly dismissed song from an equally great, otherwise canonical album and career. The two-minute instrumental intro and the guitar solo are grooves to kill for.
- (“...tussle with an ADDICT...”):** While some may call into question the verisimilitude of a person of color successfully invoking her civil rights to fend off a frisking by a policeman in the U.S. (then as now), the risk that Regan is taking with the lives of her patients should serve to underscore her impetuous character. Further, that Flood, as an Internal Affairs cop, is the addict’s *deus ex machina* here should be tempered by the later revelations about his moral dubiousness.
- p. 44 (“JARLATH FLOOD”):** Actors in mind include Harris Dickinson and Chandler Riggs.
- p. 46 (“NEVILLE: ...you’re at Reebok—!”):** That is indeed where he was that day, putting ink on a \$2 million endorsement deal. He flew back to the D.C. area that evening.
- p. 47 (“FLOOD: You’re hung over. REGAN: ... Hardcore is dead.”):** Teetotalism was a key tenet of the hardcore movement. *All Ages* goes into much reflection on this.
- p. 49 (“FLOOD: Sexually harassed.”):** The term *sexual harassment* premiered in the ‘70s but mainly kept to academia and feminist circles (such as those Regan might be apart of) until Anita Hill brought it into the limelight, hence Flood’s sensitivity to the accusation.
- p. 52 (“REGAN: ...I was inna loony bin...”):** Misdiagnosed Aspergerian cases are a dime a dozen. ADHD, bipolar, borderline, manic depression, schizophrenia—you name it.
- p. 55 (“INT. AMPHITHEATER”):** Most of the scenes in this crosscut sequence can be shot in single, static master shots. The exceptions are the stairwell and outside after (three takes, clearly), the buildup to the striptease, and Colette searching through the Gallery.
- p. 60 (“...the right half of her face framed in the light.”):** There is a reference (and reverence) here to Bergman’s *Persona*, my all-time second-favorite film. The details should convey that Judd’s face be shot similarly half-shrouded in darkness.
- (“REGAN: ... They bussed the blacks to us...”):** Many details herein—including the interference of the mob and even community staples such as the local NAACP chapter—can be verified by Malloy. The gutsiness (or rashness) of Regan being in an interracial relationship in this environment—or even with Judd in the script’s present—is near impossible to overstate.
- p. 66 (“EUGENE: Citric acid.”):** Often used to melt heroin when a heat source isn’t at hand.
- p. 67 (“Virus Meadow”):** This album has never been released in the U.S., but I don’t care. Let’s just say that Regan has an off-screen British friend with damn good taste in music.

p. 69 (“The Dwelling Place”): This two-minute instrumental, far more than filler, could easily continue as exegetic music into the following, final beat between Colette and Vanessa.

p. 74 (“REPORTER: ...we have an update...”): Dave Statter of WDVM-TV, Channel 9 in Washington, D.C. was the first to report the cause of Bias’ death, at about 5pm that day, after confirmation from multiple reliable sources. His online account of the tragic day is a must-read. (“The death of Len Bias: when the truth came too quickly.” *STATter911* 18 June 2016.)

p. 76 (“INT. URSULA’S STUDIO APARTMENT”): Similarly to O’Trehy’s whacking, provided a conveniently located entrance, this can be a very effective static master shot.

p. 77 (“ANSWERING MACHINE”): The computerized voice might be an anachronism (my research could not ascertain), but it is difficult to think of a more convenient way to convey what Regan is doing here while preserving the integrity of the master shot. Note that the first patent for a digital answering machine (sans cassettes) was filed in 1983.

p. 78 (“INT. ... LIGHT RAIL STATION”): One static master shot, given the right angle to catch Ursula’s brief appearance on the platform below.

p. 86 (“EXT. RUTH GORDON AMPHITHEATER”): Confession: *Harold and Maude* is my all-time favorite film. Once I found out about this location, resistance was futile. Having Bud Cort play McSorley would only swell the irony of the May-December sexual assault.

p. 87 (“MCSORLEY: ... I’m the reason he has that job.”): I’ll be the first to admit: then as now, the Aspergerian employment rate is poor, and Aspergerian cops are not generally a thing. Having McSorley’s assistance should go some way to explaining Flood’s luck in this regard.

p. 89 (“REGAN: ... Lenny got the coke in Canton.”): In real life, Bias got the cocaine from his friend Brian Tribble, who likely purchased in the D.C. area. (Fern Shen, “Bias Case Enhanced Tribble’s Drug Career.” *Washington Post* 25 November 1990.) Further, Regan’s exploitation of Bias foreshadows how the government used his example to pass mandatory minimum sentences.

p. 93 (“INT. THE PONTIAC”): Most if not all of the car scenes could be static master shots. This one, for instance, could handily be centered from the backseat, facing the dashboard head-on, provided that McSorley takes out the ruby coin with his left hand, from his left pocket.

p. 94 (“VANESSA: You okay?”): The nuance is that Vanessa refers less to the alcohol than to the sexual assault, which she is keen enough to recognize for what it is and stop the way she does. The stare that she maintains thereafter for several seconds is thus fraught with meaning.

p. 95 (“EXT. BEACH – QUINCY BAY”): This should be a long pan, up until the insert of the littered syringe, facing Regan rather than tracking her from the side to avoid comparisons to Cuarón’s *Roma*, even if that is a strong precedent. Further, it should appear mainly in the hues that the human eye registers in darkness. (Note my earlier reference to *eigengrau*.)

p. 96 (“...a used syringe...”): Foreshadowing events to happen in New York the next year.

p. 100 (“...only now, it has a wet cloth...”): Arson attacks on crack houses were not uncommon in major American cities around this time, and there were cases in which the juries shared the arsonists’ antidrug sentiments and nullified the charges—hence Tarp’s brazenness.

p. 101 (“...sees the familiar mold stains on them.”): The camera should remain static through this moment, let it speak for itself, and not emphasize the reveal in any extraneous way.

p. 109 (“...a small shrine for Bias...”): Brownie points if you can name the classic French film *and* the classic Polish film (made a year apart) to which the images of this vigil pay homage. And for the record, I have known many a Jewish family to leave a menorah flaming unattended.

p. 113 (“Regan’s eyes lose all focus. Her mouth gapes, and her hands fly to her scalp.”): This is the one beat in the narrative that merits slow motion.

p. 115 (“...Regan RAMS THE NEEDLE...”): This is called an air embolism. An injection into either of the venae cavae will only result in death. The only produced film that I know of to kill off a character this way is *Vertical Limit*—granted, it’s a turkey.

(“A sin-eater...”): A centuries-old Irish tradition, revived by yours truly for his amusement.

p. 116 (“OFFICE”): Scenes that would particularly benefit from an incidental, exegetic score include Colette at the Gallery, Regan’s assault of McSorley and her meltdown at the Bay, her climactic attack on the Irish Goodbye and killing of Tarp, and this. I have been impelled to fantasize, for the sake of producing a mood, that the I.G. arson be set to a riff of Kate Bush’s “Jig of Life,” and that this scene feature a superimposition of bagpipes playing the main riffs from Don Henley’s “Boys of Summer” (as this coincides with the solstice) and A Flock of Seagulls’ “Wishing”—but if such ideas turn out to be better imagined than executed, then so be it.

p. 122 (“REGAN: ...the Times burned Noriega last week.”): Seymour Hersh, “Panama Strongman Said to Trade In Drugs, Arms and Illicit Money.” *New York Times* 12 June 1986.

(“REGAN: ... Right now, my money’s on opiates.”): The foreshadowing is deliberate. Regan’s future and tenure as mob boss will be bleak, demoralizing, and damningly tragic.

p. 124 (“INT. THE MAUDLIN MAVERICK”): While I would not demand that most of the film’s two-, three- or four-hand dialogues be captured in master shots, this scene should be one (as should, probably, the previous scene in the crypt).

(“DOMINIQUE: ...Ninoy lived in Newton?”): He resided at 175 Commonwealth Avenue with his family from 1980 until shortly before his assassination in 1983.

p. 126 (“INT. GYM – SWIMMING POOL”): One master shot, panning right, then left.

p. 127 (“—I’m a skinny girl.”): Each sentence in this line should be accompanied by an axial cut back, ending with a distant shot of the full pool—to hammer home the extent of Regan’s alienation, by herself and others—before returning to a close-up of her for the final “Whatever.”

p. 128 (“MONTAGE”): Another Bergmanesque move. The speed needs to be near-breakneck.

(“All the Things She Gave Me”): Picking the closing track took more time than I care to admit—as did picking the representative Waterboys track. Many selections from *A Pagan Place* and *This is the Sea* would be just as solid. I have cited this song, ultimately, for its thematically apt lyrics. That said, the climactic saxophone duet arguably matches the best of Clarence Clemons, and it would be a beautiful sendoff for the audience.

(**“BLACKOUT”**): If this results in a successful film, an ideal audience will exit the theater and go to their next meals and gatherings discussing and debating, *inter alia*, the following:

- There is a wide mix of genres on display here: neo-noir (with Regan arguably being a femme fatale), Joycean/Beckettian modernism, ‘80s period piece, and postfeminist parable. How does the narrative use them? What connections does it draw between them?
- What is to be done when divergent Westphalian sovereignties, mediums of thought, and ethical codes collide? How does one go about reconciling them?
- The narrative invokes several examples of Westphalian sovereignty, ranging from the geopolitical to the personal. How do they compare to and play off each other? How does Regan’s Asperger’s syndrome epitomize and exacerbate them? When and how may modes of social communication cross the line into disrespect and prejudice?
- What are the ethics of interventionism? Had McSorley not been motivated by racism, would he have been in the right to inform Colette of Regan’s betrayal?
- What happens to the truth when a hypocrite speaks and uses it?
- The story has numerous instances of projection and displacement. How do they function therein? How do these interfere with the tangibility of the characters’ identities?
- What is the rôle of the individual in society and history? How does one go about negotiating being affected by history with being an active agent in it? How does the passive-aggressiveness that this dilemma often causes in the story impinge on the characters?
- What do we gain and lose by rendering the body as a political agent, particularly in terms of race, drug use, sex, faith, and gentrification? Does Regan truly love Judd, or does she merely use him as a means to rebel against the racism and sexism of her environment? As viewers, what is our moral responsibility in inquiring this, on Regan’s terms and otherwise?