

PRETTY BABY:
THE TRAGIC DEATH OF MARION PARKER

screenplay by

Don Stroud

based on the book
"Butterfly In The Rain" by
James L. Neibaur

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WGAW 2151911

1733 Rogue Isle Ct.
Carlsbad, CA 92008

don2@pobox.com
510.847.6527

NOTE: This script jumps around in time. Different time periods are indicated by changes in screen ratio:

"PRESENT - 1951": full color 1:2.35 cinematic widescreen

"INTERVIEW - 1951": black and white 4:3 Academy ratio

"PAST - 1927/1928": full color 1:1.85 widescreen

"FLASHBACK - 1927": desaturated 1:1.85 widescreen

PRESENT - 1951 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A light drizzle falls on a cool Los Angeles winter day.

MARJORIE PARKER, middle-aged, dressed in smart 50s clothes, keeps the rain at bay with an umbrella. A myriad of emotions play on her face, as she stares intently at...

MARJORIE'S POV

A well-kept Craftsman house across the street. It's nestled among older trees and grown-in hedges. A 1950 Chevrolet Bel Air sits in the driveway.

MATCH CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - MORNING

The same home, but twenty-four years earlier, on a sunny Southern California December day. The trees are smaller. The hedges are newly planted. A 1927 Chevrolet Capital AA is parked in the driveway.

Twelve year old MARION PARKER and her twin sister, the YOUNG MARJORIE PARKER, burst through the front door and hop down the steps. They wear crisp dresses and light coats. Marion has a bow in her hair.

Their mother, GERALDINE PARKER, calls out to them.

GERALDINE

Marion! You forgot your decoration
for the Christmas party!

She hands a small handmade Christmas ornament to Marion.

MARION

Whoops! Thank you, Mother!
(towards the front door)
Happy birthday, Father!

PERRY PARKER SR., bald and middle-aged, steps out onto the porch, his newspaper under his arm. He points to his cheek.

PERRY SR.

Can I get a birthday kiss from my baby girl?

MARION

That joke isn't funny anymore, Father. I'm only younger than Marjorie by a couple of minutes.

YOUNG MARJORIE

Still, that means I'm your "big sister". So you have to do what I say. Now kiss your father.

Marion scrunches her nose. Playfully sticks out her tongue at her older-by-minutes twin sister. She gives Perry Sr. his requested kiss.

PERRY SR.

The best present I ever received!

GERALDINE

We'll celebrate your father's birthday properly when you get back from school. Now, hurry! You're going to miss the bus!

YOUNG MARJORIE

Happy birthday daddy! Love you!

PERRY SR.

I love you too, Marjorie! Have a good day! Love you, Marion!

Marion doesn't reply out loud. She blows her father a big kiss. The girls hold hands as they head for the bus stop.

Geraldine takes in her husband's casual appearance.

GERALDINE

You'd better get dressed. You're going to be late, too.

PERRY SR.

I decided to take the day off. It is my birthday, after all.

He puts his arm around Geraldine as they go back inside.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - MORNING

Marion and Marjorie ride the school bus with their FRIENDS.

Frantic HONKING from outside catches their attention.

THE GIRLS' POV

A STRANGER drives a green Chrysler sedan alongside the bus. Glare on the windshield obscures his face.

The Stranger waves to them. He YELLS something they can't hear over the NOISE of the bus.

MARION

Squints to see through the glare.

MARION

Who is that?

YOUNG MARJORIE

I dunno. Who cares?

Marjorie returns to her friends. But Marion fixates on the Stranger's car until the traffic eventually separates them.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - MORNING

The Parker girls greet their friends as they head to class. They come to a point where they have to part. Marjorie backs down her hallway, the throng parting to let her through.

YOUNG MARJORIE

Have fun at your party!

MARION

You want me to sneak you a cookie?

YOUNG MARJORIE

A snowman! With lots of icing!

Marion blows her sister another one of her big "I love you" air kisses. The hallway fills with kids. They surround Marion...

...and then she's gone.

Smiling, Marjorie runs to her class, just as the bell RINGS.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Christmas decorations and pictures adorn the walls of the classroom. The TEACHER leads the class in SINGING a Christmas carol. Marion participates with gusto.

As the song ends, a YOUNG SECRETARY enters the room. She says something softly into the Teacher's ear.

TEACHER

Marion? Mrs. Holt needs to see you
in the office.

Marion shrugs at her classmates as she leaves the room.

PAST - 1927 - INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - MAIN OFFICE - MORNING

The Young Secretary ushers Marion into the office.

MARY HOLT, the distinguished head secretary for the school, is behind the counter. Standing with his back to the door is a short YOUNG MAN in a suit.

MARY HOLT

Ah! Here she is.

The Young Man turns around. It's the stranger who chased her bus. A fresh-faced young man of nineteen, holding his hat in his hand.

YOUNG MAN

(warm and comforting)
Hello Marion. You need to come with
me.

SMASH CUT TO:

CREDITS

A STYLISH MONTAGE OF PHOTOS OF 1920'S LOS ANGELES. Billy Murray's popular 1916 version of the song "Pretty Baby" plays on the soundtrack.

CREDITS END

CUT TO:

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

An image FLICKERS to life as a CAMERA is started.

The adult Marjorie Parker sits in a chair behind a silver microphone on a stand. Her brow is furrowed in deep thought.

She realizes she's being filmed. She waves her hands in dismay.

With a loud POP the sound cuts on.

MARJORIE

...not going to be on camera!
Ralph, please! Turn it off!

RALPH (O.S.)

I gotta make sure I've got the camera framed right, and that it's in focus. I haven't used this stuff in over a year!

RALPH LIPE, a burly 60-plus year old, steps INTO FRAME. He squats to adjust the microphone.

RALPH

Try not to bump it. This thing can pick up a fly farting.

He realizes she didn't react to his joke as he walks OUT OF FRAME.

RALPH (O.S.)

You okay, Marjorie?

MARJORIE

It's funny. I've been preparing for this for weeks. I felt like I was ready. But now that we're about to start... I don't know how I feel.

RALPH (O.S.)

You know, you can stop right now, before this train leaves the station. C'mon, kiddo. Go back to San Diego. You don't have to do this.

MARJORIE

But I do. You know I have to, Ralph. I owe it to the family. I owe it to Marion.

RALPH (O.S.)

I think Marion would understand if you walked away. She wouldn't want you reliving everything that happened. To suffer all over again.

MARJORIE

How do you know that? You'll never know what Marion would think. None of us will!

An uneasy quiet separates the two of them.

MARJORIE

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have snapped at you.

RALPH (O.S.)

You wanna put yourself through the emotional wringer, that's up to you. But you haven't even done one interview, and look what's it's doing to you. You wanna do the same thing to those old men? To your own brother? All over some book?

MARJORIE

Ralph, that book is going to be skewed. Slanted. Filled with lies. It's going to tarnish Marion's memory.

RALPH (O.S.)

Even if it's published -- and that's a big if -- no one's gonna pay attention to a book about something that happened over two decades ago. It's yesterday's news. No one even remembers it.

Marjorie does her best not to let tears fall from her eyes.

MARJORIE

I remember, Ralph. I remember. There's no way I could ever forget.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING - LATER

PERRY PARKER JR., a clean-cut military man in his late 40s, sits down in front of the camera, being careful not to move the chair.

PERRY JR.

Is this okay? Right here?
(to Marjorie)
You look good, sis.

MARJORIE

So do you. Very dapper.

PERRY JR.

Thanks. And how's Mom doing?

MARJORIE

She's okay. She has some good days.
But she's getting worse.

PERRY JR.

I need to stop by next weekend.
Bring the kids.

MARJORIE

She'd love that. It's been a while.

That comment irks Perry Jr. Thoughts roll behind his eyes.

PERRY JR.

...Am I the first?

MARJORIE

I thought you'd be the perfect
person to start with. You were
there for pretty much all of it.

PERRY JR.

(uncomfortably)

Do we have to do this?

MARJORIE

It won't take long, if that's what
you're worried about.

PERRY JR.

No, it's just... Never mind. Go
ahead.

Marjorie motions to Ralph. He turns on the camera and the
sound recorder.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

MARJORIE (O.S.)

My name is Marjorie Parker. Today's
date is Monday, December 3rd, 1951.
It is 10:22 in the morning.

(to Perry Jr.)

Could you state your name, please?
So we'll have it recorded.

PERRY JR.

My name is Perry Parker Jr. I am...
was the older brother of Marion
 Parker.

MARJORIE (O.S.)

Thank you. So, please, tell me what
 you remember from December 15th,
 1927.

PERRY JR.

(beat)

It was a Thursday. Dad's birthday,
 actually. He'd taken the day off.
 You and Marion left for school, I
 went to work. Nothing out of the
 ordinary. It wasn't until...
 until...

Perry Jr. chokes up. He tries to collect himself.

MARJORIE (O.S.)

I'm sorry. This is difficult.
 Believe me, I know. But we need to
 get our stories recorded before the
 book comes out.

PERRY JR.

Why do think I agreed to do this?
 To dredge everything up, after all
 these years?

MARJORIE (O.S.)

So, please, continue. Later in the
 day...

PERRY JR.

...We were all getting ready for
 supper...

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Perry Jr. brings in a load of firewood. Perry Sr. reads the
 paper. Marjorie helps Geraldine set the table.

Perry Sr. checks his watch. He picks up the phone.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

Marion didn't come home at the
 usual time, but Dad and Mom weren't
 really worried.

They assumed she stayed late to help her teacher clean up after the Christmas party. But it was going to be dark soon, so Dad decided to call the school and tell them he'd come get her.

PAST - 1927 - INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - MAIN OFFICE

Mary Holt is finishing up a stack of paperwork. The PHONE RINGS.

MARY HOLT

Hello, Mount Vernon Junior High School. Mrs. Holt speaking. How may I help you?

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

PERRY SR.

Hello, Mrs. Holt. This is Perry Parker.

MARY HOLT

(surprised)

Oh, Mr. Parker. How are you feeling?

PERRY SR.

(also surprised)

I feel fine, Mrs. Holt, thank you for asking. Er, is Marion still at school? She didn't arrive home with her sister. I was preparing to drive over and pick her up.

MARY HOLT

...Didn't she come home with the man who picked her up?

PERRY SR.

Man? What man?

A cold feeling runs through him. Geraldine pauses her work, hearing the quaver in her husband's voice. Young Marjorie leans against the door, feeling her father's agitation.

MARY HOLT

...Mr. Cooper. The nice young man you sent to collect Marion. After your accident, at the bank.

PERRY SR.
I was not in any accident. And I
did not send anyone to pick Marion
up from school!

A look of realization and horror comes over Holt's face.

PERRY SR.
Where is my daughter?!? What did
you do with my daughter!!!

Little Marjorie, tears in her eyes, clings to the door jamb,
as she watches her father YELL into the phone.

CUT TO:

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Perry Jr. acts out as he relives his father's words.

PERRY JR.
"What did you do with my daughter!"
He was shaking. Shaking like a...
like a leaf...
(beat)
How could that secretary have been
so stupid? To just let some
stranger take Marion?

He slumps forward in his chair.

MARJORIE (O.S.)
You want to take a break?

PERRY JR.
Yeah. I do.

Perry stands up and walks OUT OF FRAME. The CAMERA shuts off.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - 1951 - EXT. HOUSE - MORNING

Ralph grabs a new can of film from his truck.

He notices Marjorie leaning against the cab, wiping away
tears.

RALPH
You okay, kid?

MARJORIE

You were right. This is tougher than I thought it would be. The pain in Perry's voice...

RALPH

Hey, there's nothing wrong with being upset. I'd be worried if you wasn't. Look, gimme ten minutes to load the magazine. Get yourself together. Then I'll see you inside.

He puts a comforting hand on Marjorie's shoulder. She smiles weakly at him.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

The Parker family is gathered in the dining room. Sitting at the table, Marjorie watches her father comfort her CRYING mother as Perry Jr. paces in the back of the room.

PERRY JR. (V.O)

Mom and Dad were almost catatonic with worry. We'd read stories in the newspapers about kidnappings. That Leopold and Loeb case, it ended with the... death of a child. But somehow Dad kept himself together. He realized that he needed to call the police.

Perry Sr. picks up the phone as Geraldine watches with worry. But before he engages the operator, the doorbell RINGS. He opens the door to find a COURIER who hands Perry Sr. a telegram.

Marjorie and Perry Jr. watch as, with a trembling hand, Perry Sr. opens the telegram.

INSERT - TELEGRAM

"DO POSITIVELY NOTHING TILL YOU RECEIVE SPECIAL DELIVERY LETTER. MARION"

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

PERRY JR.

Dad didn't believe for one second that those were Marion's words.

But the shock of the demand made him obey. He and Mom just sat on the couch until another telegram arrived not long after.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - EVENING

The Parker family sits at the dining room table as Perry Sr. reads a second telegram.

PERRY SR.
 "Marion secure. Use good judgment. Interference with my plans dangerous." And it's signed "George Fox".

A moment of stunned silence as everyone registers the threat.

PERRY SR.
 (to Perry Jr.)
 Do you know who this "George Fox" is? Maybe someone at work?

PERRY JR.
 No! I have no idea who he is!

PERRY SR.
 (to Marjorie)
 Is this a teacher at your school?
 Do you have a classmate named Fox?

Marjorie weakly shakes her head. But then she remembers...

YOUNG MARJORIE
 The man!

GERALDINE
 Man? What man?

YOUNG MARJORIE
 When we were on the bus... there was a man driving a car alongside the bus. He was honking his horn and waving at us.

PERRY SR.
 Did you get a good look at him? The car?

YOUNG MARJORIE
 No, I... I didn't pay attention to
 him. I just thought he was being
 queer.

She can see the disappointment in her parents' faces.

YOUNG MARJORIE
 I should have paid more attention!
 I'm sorry! I'm sorry!

GERALDINE
 It's okay, baby, it's not your
 fault. Let's get you to bed.

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - BEDROOM - EVENING

As Geraldine tucks Marjorie into bed, the young girl BURSTS INTO TEARS. She throws herself into her mother's arms.

YOUNG MARJORIE
 It's my fault! It's my fault!

GERALDINE
 No, it is not.

YOUNG MARJORIE
 But... but that man! I should have
 tried to see his face! I should
 have known.....!

GERALDINE
 Hush, child. None of this is your
 fault. The man who took your
 sister, this is his cross to bear.
 And God will punish him.

They hold each other tight in the dark bedroom. Perry Jr. watches them from the hallway.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - MORNING

Geraldine has made breakfast, but no one is eating. No one is talking. Perry Sr. sits alone in the living room.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
 The kidnapper said not to call the
 police. But Dad couldn't help
 worrying about Marion. Was she
 being hurt?

Or, God forbid, was she being attacked? You could tell it was eating him up inside.

Perry Sr. sees the looks in his family's faces. They are dejected. Hopeless. He can't take it any more. He gives Geraldine's hand a comforting squeeze before picking up the telephone.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
In the end, Marion's safety won out. Dad called the police.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

DETECTIVE HOWARD McLEAN, a large man with a stern face and pronounced eyebrows, readies himself behind the microphone.

MARJORIE
Good morning, Detective. Thank you for sitting for this interview.

McLEAN
I'm just Howard McLean now. I was a detective in the LAPD back in '27 when... it happened. But I retired a few years ago.

(looking around)
I hope it wasn't inconvenient, meeting here at the station. The wife thought it would add to the atmosphere.

MARJORIE
Tell her she was right. It's perfect.

McLEAN
You ask me, she's seen too many movies.

(regarding Marjorie)
I have to say, I was surprised to hear from you, Miss Parker. What prompted all this?

MARJORIE
I'm doing research for a book about Marion, and what happened. We're trying to interview all the major parties that were involved.

McLEAN

Seems like a lot of fuss, and fancy movie equipment, for "research". You could just tape my voice. Or take notes, for that matter.

MARJORIE

This was all Ralph's idea.

RALPH

A few years back, I was hired to film a terminally ill guy here in L.A. who gave a deposition for a court case in Chicago he couldn't get to. The film won the case for the defendant. When Marjorie told me about her project, I figured this way, we'd have verification in case someone disputes any part of the story.

McLEAN

I see. Clever. Well, what happened, happened a long time ago now. I don't know what more I could add.

With a nod from Marjorie, Ralph starts his gear.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

MARJORIE (O.S.)

I'd just like to hear your perspective, Detect... Mister McLean. Once the LAPD received my father's call.

McLEAN

Let me think... At the time, Marion's disappearance wasn't the only kidnapping case that we were dealing with. In fact, there were five other cases already being investigated. But every kidnapping received our full attention. So as soon as the call came in, we sent officers to your family's house to investigate.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - MORNING

The Parkers sit at their dining table with two POLICEMEN, showing them the telegrams. The Policemen talk to a distraught Marjorie, as Geraldine holds her hand.

McLEAN (V.O.)

The officers spent several hours collecting as much information as they could.

The Policemen are finishing up. Perry Sr. shakes their hands.

RINNNNNG! The doorbell. Another COURIER hands Perry Sr. a special delivery letter. Hands trembling, he opens it.

PERRY SR.

(reading)

"P.M. Parker, use good judgment. You are the loser. Do this. Secure seventy-five \$20 gold certificates U.S. Currency 1500 dollars at once. Keep them on your person."

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT./EXT. VARIOUS - MONTAGE

Perry Sr. narrates underneath the Kidnapper's actions:

-- The Kidnapper sits at a desk in a small apartment as he writes the letter.

-- He walks into the post office and cheerily mails his letter special delivery to the Parkers.

-- He returns to his apartment. He takes off his coat and throws his hat on the table.

-- He opens the bedroom door, revealing a disheveled and upset - but otherwise unharmed - Marion Parker. He gives her a calm, slight smile.

PERRY SR. (V.O.)

(still reading)

"Go about your daily business as usual. Leave out police and detectives. Failure to comply with these requests means no one will ever see the girl again except the angels in heaven. 72 hours. You will receive further notice. But the terms remain the same."

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Perry Sr. reaches the last line of the letter.

PERRY SR.

"Fate".

Geraldine notices another piece of paper folded up inside the envelope. She GASPS when she realizes that it's written in a perfect schoolgirl hand.

GERALDINE

It's from Marion!

(reading)

"Dear Daddy and Mother, I wish I could come home."

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

A nervous Marion sits at a table, painstakingly writing. Her captor, the Young Man, looms behind her, dictating the words he wants her to put down.

GERALDINE (V.O.)

"I think I'll die if I have to be like this much longer. Won't someone tell me why this had to happen to me? Daddy please do what this man tells you or he'll kill me if you don't. Marion Parker"

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - EVENING

Perry Sr. weakly hands the letters over to the Policemen as Geraldine collapses into his arms.

Marjorie begins CRYING. Perry Jr. holds her tight, trying to keep back his own tears.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

PERRY JR.

Dad... He broke the kidnapper's rules by contacting the police. So at that point, there was no going back. But if word got out to the press that Marion had been taken, and that the authorities were now involved... the kidnapper might make good on his threat.

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - EVENING

The Parkers desperately plead and bargain with the Officers. A scared Marjorie listens from the kitchen.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

Dad and Mom convinced the LAPD to keep Marion's kidnapping out of the news, hoping that they could make a successful exchange. In the meantime, the LAPD agreed to throw their resources into trying to locate Marion and the kidnapper.

CUT TO:

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

MARJORIE (O.S.)

So how did you and your department begin your investigation?

McLEAN

The first thing we noticed was the odd amount of the ransom. \$1500 was a lot of money in 1927, but typical ransoms were in the dozens of thousands. That specific amount made us think that there might be an ulterior motive to the kidnapping, like revenge of some sort. Without any hard evidence, all we could do was speculate.

PAST - 1927 - INT. BANK - MORNING

Perry Sr. is handed a stack of money. He flips through it, counting silently.

PERRY JR.

Dad wanted to make sure he didn't mess up. So he immediately withdrew the money as detailed in the ransom letter.

Parker spreads the money out on his desk. He picks up a pencil and begins methodically writing down each bill's serial number.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
 But Dad's banker's instincts
 prodded him to take an extra step
 of precaution: he recorded the
 serial numbers of each \$20 bill.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. BANK - DAY

Perry Sr. goes through the motions at work.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

He says hello to everyone. Gets his desk and papers in order.
 Greets customers. Takes a lunch break.

END MONTAGE

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
 From there, he did his best to
 follow the kidnapper's demands to
 "go about his daily business". He
 hoped his behavior would impress
 the kidnapper, and he would release
 Marion unharmed.

Once Perry Sr. leaves the building, he ducks around the
 corner and tries to collect himself.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
 But Dad told me pretending
 everything was fine was the hardest
 thing he ever did.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - MAIN OFFICE -
 AFTERNOON

Mary Holt is doing paperwork, when the door to the office
 opens. She finishes her writing before she looks up.

McLEAN (V.O.)
 As your dad was going through his
 ordeal, my partner, Detective
 George Contreras, and I interviewed
 the only person who had seen the
 face of the kidnapper.

At the counter is the Young Man. The Kidnapper. An
 unassuming, non-threatening teenager.

Before Holt can utter a word, with an arresting mixture of concern and calm, he begins speaking. Mary Holt recalls his words.

MARY HOLT (V.O.)

He said, "Excuse me. My name is Mr. Cooper. I work with Mr. Perry Parker at the bank. Mr. Parker has been in an accident and is calling for his daughter. I need to see the Parker girl."

MARY HOLT

(confused)

We have two Parker girls at our school.

"Cooper" smiles warmly as he replies.

MARY HOLT (V.O.)

Without missing a beat, he said, "I want the younger one."

PAST - 1927 - INT. HOME - AFTERNOON

Mary Holt, sitting in a large cushioned chair, starts to CRY. She's wrapped in a shawl. She seems medicated. Her HUSBAND puts his hand on her shoulder to reassure her. McLean and DETECTIVE GEORGE CONTRERAS sit across from her.

CONTRERAS

Go ahead, Mrs. Holt.

MARY HOLT

Well... at first I was confused. There wasn't a "younger" Parker girl. They were twins. But because Marion had been born a few minutes later, they joked that she was "the younger sister".

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - MAIN OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The Young Man continues smiling pleasantly at Holt.

MARY HOLT

Do you mean Marion?

"Cooper" nods enthusiastically.

MARY HOLT (V.O.)
 He said, "Yes, yes ma'am, that is
 her name."

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. HOME - AFTERNOON [PAST]

Holt begins to break down.

MARY HOLT
 So I had Marion summoned from her
 class's Christmas party...

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Holt watches as Marion leaves hand-in-hand with "Cooper".
 They walk down the hallway, disappearing into the halo of
 sunshine streaming through the school's entrance.

PAST - 1927 - INT. HOME - AFTERNOON

Holt sags again. Her Husband cuts the policemen a stern look.

HUSBAND
 Are we done here, detectives? My
 wife needs to rest.

CONTRERAS
 I know this is difficult, Mrs.
 Holt. But we need you to give us a
 description of the man who took
 Marion. Any and all details you can
 remember.

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - MAIN OFFICE - MONTAGE

Hazy images of the Kidnapper from Holt's recollection.

MARY HOLT (V.O.)
 He was... a young man between
 twenty-five and thirty years old.
 Five feet eight inches in height.
 Somewhere around a hundred fifty
 pounds. Slender build. Clean
 shaven. Speaking very good English.
 Wearing a brownish-gray herringbone
 overcoat and a dark gray hat.

PAST - 1927 - INT. HOME - AFTERNOON

Holt's voice catches in her throat.

MARY HOLT

Usually I was very thorough when people came to the office requesting a student. But this young man... He was different. His demeanor was so reassuring, so relaxed, I never felt the need to question his story. He was attractive, he was confident, he was well-mannered. He completely disarmed me. And I... I...

She's rattled. About to fall apart. McLean smiles at her sympathetically.

McLEAN (V.O.)

This wealth of information gave us hope we'd be able to start tracking down the kidnapper.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - EVENING - LATER

The Parker family has retired to the living room. Not listening to the radio. Not reading. Just waiting.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

Despite following the kidnapper's instructions, Dad hadn't heard from him all day.

The phone RINGS. Perry Sr. nervously answers.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

Dad said he heard a calm male voice, not threatening in any way. The voice said, "Mr. Parker, do you have the money?"

PERRY SR.

Yes, I have. Is Marion all right?

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

The caller said "I'll call back in five minutes", and promptly hung up.

Perry Sr. reacts as the line goes dead. From the doorway, Marjorie and Perry Jr. watch their father.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

MARJORIE (O.S.)
What were you feeling, as we all waited?

PERRY JR.
It was painful. It was a full thirty minutes before he called back. I was trying not to think the worst, but I couldn't help it. And poor Dad... You could see he was about to burst from the stress.

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - EVENING - LATER

The phone RINGS. Perry Sr. grabs the phone anxiously.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
Dad told me the kidnapper said, "Listen to me carefully, Mr. Parker. Get in your car alone and drive north on Wilton to Tenth and turn to the right one short block to Gramercy and park on Gramercy just north of Tenth."

Perry Sr. SLAMS the phone down. Grabs the \$1500. Runs out the door. Marjorie watches in fear as the door closes behind him.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - EVENING

Perry Sr. carefully drives the route described by the Kidnapper, trying not to draw attention to himself.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
Dad wanted no interference from the police. He just wanted Marion back and didn't care what happened to the kidnapper afterwards.

Perry Sr. arrives at his destination. He parks and turns off the car. He checks his watch: it says 8:45 PM.

Perry Sr. impatiently waits for the kidnapper to arrive. He scans every car that passes by.

PAST - 1927 - EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - EVENING - LATER

One final look at his watch shows Perry Sr. that it's 11:45 PM. He realizes that the exchange is not going to happen. He starts the car and drives home.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

Dad was beyond upset. He thought he did everything right, but the kidnapper never showed. And now he had to tell us that Marion wasn't coming home.

PAST - 1927 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - EVENING

When Parker pulls up at his home, he sees a police car parked in the driveway. The Policemen talk to him. Perry Sr. explodes at the officers, YELLING and gesticulating. They try to apologize, but he waves them off. He SLAMS the front door closed.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

When Dad got home, he discovered that the police had been watching the house. And when he left... they followed him. Something must have alerted the kidnapper, because he knew well enough not to make his presence known. Dad was furious. I'd never seen him that angry.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

Regret is all over McLean's face.

MARJORIE

Would you say it's very possible that, if your men hadn't followed, then Marion would have been returned safe and sound?

McLEAN

(scowling)

It was unfortunate that my people botched the exchange, because this incident brought the kidnapping to the attention of the press. This was a major crime, involving a child who might be in danger. The newspapers were ready to report it.

And I couldn't keep it quiet any longer.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - EXT./INT. PARKER HOUSE - MORNING

Perry Sr. collects the morning newspaper from the front porch.

He drops into his chair in the living room. He unfolds the paper. There, splashed across the front page of The Los Angeles Times, is the news of Marion's kidnapping.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

PERRY JR.

It was front-page news nationwide. And now, despite Dad's efforts, the kidnapper would know that he went to the police. Dad had endangered Marion's safety. But Detective McLean continued to assure us that Marion would be returned safe.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT./EXT. LOS ANGELES - VARIOUS - MONTAGE

A FLURRY OF ACTIVITY: Policemen on the phones. Officers interviewing people. Detectives looking over the middle school for clues. McLean and Contreras conferring over a map, noting the route that the Kidnapper made Parker drive.

McLEAN (V.O.)

Marion's plight galvanized scores of our detectives, and they were dedicating their time to your sister's case. Based on the details of the kidnapping it was our belief that the kidnapper knew your father worked at the bank, and that he had a daughter.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Standing on their porch, the Parkers face a gaggle of REPORTERS gathered below them.

McLean and Contreras stand behind the Parkers, surveying the crowd. Marjorie and Perry Jr. watch through the living room curtains.

PERRY SR.

Marion is just a healthy, normal sort of child. She isn't the type of child that anyone would wish to harm. All we want is to get her back safely. I have an idea that when her abductor realizes the effort that is being made to find her, he will be frightened and release her.

The Newsmen hound an emotional Geraldine to say something.

GERALDINE

Marion will be terribly frightened, but she'll try not to show it. And in spite of her youth I feel that if she has any chance to get word to us she will do it, for she's resourceful and she thinks pretty sensibly.

Pressured by the Reporters for a quote, McLean steps forward.

McLEAN

We are confident that Marion will be returned unharmed and that the kidnapper will be caught.

PERRY SR.

I have to add: The money means nothing. All I want to know is that Marion is not harmed and to have her sent back to us. The waiting is terrible, and it seems as if time would never pass. Surely we will hear from the kidnapper before the day is over.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Perry Jr. pauses. He looks around the room, trying to stop himself from tearing up.

MARJORIE

And when the day was over...?

Perry Jr. gives her an "are you kidding me?" look.

MARJORIE

Go ahead. This is like you're telling someone who doesn't know the story. Pretend like I wasn't there.

Perry Jr. shakes his head as he looks at the floor.

PERRY JR.

Dad was right. When the day was over... we heard from the kidnapper.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - EVENING

Perry Sr. opens another special delivery letter.

PERRY SR.

(reading)

"P.M. Parker, when I asked you over the phone to give me your word of honor as a Christian not to try a trap or tip the police you didn't answer. Why? Because those two cars carefully followed you. I knew and you knew. What for?"

Perry Sr. begins to tremble with anger and self-recrimination.

GERALDINE

It's not your fault, Perry.

Perry Sr. squelches his emotions and continues reading.

PERRY SR.

"You'll never know how you disappointed your daughter. She was so eager to know that it would only be a short while before she would be free from my terrible torture and then you mess the whole damn affair."

A cloud comes over his face as he reads ahead. Geraldine looks to him for answers.

GERALDINE

What? What does it say?

PERRY SR.

(quavering)

"Today is the last day. If by 8 PM today, you have not received my call then hold a quiet funeral service without the body on Sunday. When I call I'll tell you where to go. And don't have your friends following. If you don't come in this good, clean, honest way... that's all! Fate... Fox."

He can't read anymore. He's spent. He drops into his chair. Geraldine takes the papers from him.

GERALDINE

Dear God, another note from Marion!

(reading)

"Daddy, please don't bring anyone with you today. I want to come home this morning. Be sure and come by yourself or you won't see me again. Marion."

A CRY from the other side of the room makes Geraldine realize Marjorie has been standing in the hallway listening. Before her mother can comfort her, Marjorie runs down the hall in tears. She SLAMS her door closed.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

McLean can see Marjorie is struggling.

McLEAN

Miss Parker? Do you need a moment?

MARJORIE

(clears her throat)

No. Sorry, I'm just trying to organize my notes.

(rustles papers)

So, the ransom letter arrived. And you were contacted?

McLEAN

Parker... Your father called me, frantic, and read the letter over the phone. He insisted that he do the exchange alone, without any police shadowing him. As you can imagine, I was reluctant to let him meet the kidnapper alone.

But I understood it was something that any father would want to do for his child. So, I gave your father my consent.

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - EVENING

The phone RINGS. Perry Sr. picks up.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
Dad heard the smooth voice of the kidnapper say, "You will leave immediately. Drive north on Wilton Place to Fifth Street. Turn right at the intersection, drive another three blocks east, and park at the corner of Manhattan Place."

Parker writes down his driving instructions.

PERRY SR.
How will I know you?

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
The kidnapper told him, "I will recognize your car."

Again, the line goes dead.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - EVENING

Perry Sr. parks at the specified location. He scans the area for any sign of the Kidnapper.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
Before he left, I heard Dad tell Mom that he wasn't concerned about walking into a potential trap. He wanted Marion back, and he didn't want another botched exchange to result in her death.

Perry Sr. waits in his car. The night is cold. There's very little activity on the street. He sits alone with his thoughts and his fears.

Headlights appear in his rear view mirror.

The car slows down next to Perry Sr.'s. He can see it's a newer Chrysler.

The Kidnapper leans out of the passenger side window. A bandana covers the lower half of his face, but Perry Sr. notices the coldness in the man's eyes.

Through the passenger window, the Kidnapper brandishes a sawed-off shotgun.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
He shoved a gun in Dad's face, and
said, "Did you bring the money?"

Perry Sr. shows the \$1500 to the Kidnapper. The Kidnapper thrusts his hand out of the window.

PERRY SR.
Wait! Where is my daughter?

The Kidnapper leans back, revealing Marion next to him, wrapped in a blanket. In the darkness of the car's interior, Perry Sr. can just barely see her face. But he can tell her eyes are open. She appears to be in a daze, looking straight ahead and not reacting at all.

Perry Sr. slowly holds out the money. Keeping the shotgun trained on Perry Sr., the Kidnapper takes the wad. Perry Sr. watches as the Kidnapper flips through the bills, counting them.

Satisfied, the Kidnapper leans back towards Perry Sr.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
The kidnapper said, "Wait here just
a minute."

The Kidnapper puts his car into gear and slowly drives forward. Perry Sr. watches his actions anxiously.

The car advances several yards before coming to a stop. The passenger door opens. The Kidnapper shoves a bundle out onto the curb. The car drives off quickly, disappearing into the night.

Perry Sr. hurriedly drives up to the dumped object. He throws the car into park and runs to the bundle. As he reaches it, he sees Marion's face peering out of the blanket.

Overcome with emotion and relief, he drops to his knees and snatches his daughter off the ground. He wraps his arms around her and sobs.

PERRY SR.
Marion! Oh Marion!

There's no response. As he handles his wrapped daughter, she seems small. Smaller than she should be.

PERRY SR.

Marion...?

He pulls back a corner and looks into her face. He CHOKES.

And SCREAMS.

Windows light up. A STORE OWNER steps out of his sundries story and into the street as Perry Sr.'s SHRIEKING pierces the cool Los Angeles night.

FADE TO BLACK

CUT TO:

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. SUNDRIES STORE - MORNING

Marjorie follows Ralph as he grabs a few things off the shelves.

MARJORIE

We're going to be late.

RALPH

Nah, we got plenty of time. I've already loaded the camera. I need ten minutes. Fifteen, tops.

He dumps his haul onto the counter in front of the clerk.

RALPH

And a pack of Lucky Strikes, too.

As the clerk plunks the cigarettes down, Marjorie recognizes him as the same STORE OWNER from the night of Marion's exchange, now several years older.

MARJORIE

Excuse me. You were around here in '27, right?

STORE OWNER

Since 1918. Took over the store from my father. Finally got to scrape "And Sons" off the door.

MARJORIE

So, you were here for the Parker kidnapping.

STORE OWNER
What was that?

MARJORIE
The Parker girl. The girl who was
taken from her school?

STORE OWNER
(thinking)
That sort of sounds familiar.

Marjorie is perturbed by his forgetfulness. She digs a folder
out of her satchel. Points out a newspaper clipping.

MARJORIE
You were interviewed in the
newspaper! The father and his
missing daughter? The exchange with
the kidnapper happened right down
the street. You mean you don't
remember any of that?

STORE OWNER
(shrugging)
I'm sorry. This is Los Angeles.
There's so many crimes every day. A
man can't remember them all.

MARJORIE
(furious)
Well isn't that good for you! I
guess not caring means you're able
to sleep like a baby at night!

STORE OWNER
Now see here young lady--

Ralph steps in between them.

RALPH
Sorry, chief. She's had a bad day.
(to Marjorie)
Go on. I'll be right there.

Not taking her eyes off the Store Owner, Marjorie storms out.

PRESENT - 1951 - EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - MORNING

Marjorie bursts through the door and stalks down the street.
She comes to a stop next to their truck.

Ralph strolls up, lighting up one of his new cigarettes.

MARJORIE

Can you believe he just forgot? How could he forget?

RALPH

He's old. And, unfortunately, he's right. It's like I said. Twenty-some-odd years later, how many murders do you think this city's seen? And not everyone's got a personal connection like you do. Now come on. You've got to get back into it with McLean.

He climbs into the truck. As Marjorie opens the door, she looks down the street...

MARJORIE'S POV

The curbside where Perry Sr. cradled his daughter in 1927.

MATCH CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - LATE EVENING

The same curbside. Perry Sr.'s car is still stopped in the middle of the street. But now there are police cars, OFFICERS, and BYSTANDERS gawking from the sidewalks.

McLEAN (V.O.)

I and my men were at the scene in minutes. We found your father sobbing in the arms of a bystander. Marion was... lying in the street.

McLean and Contreras solemnly watch as the covered body of Marion Parker is loaded into an ambulance.

Perry Sr. sits in the back of a police car, numbly staring off into space.

PAST - 1927 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - LATE EVENING

McLean and Contreras drive Perry Sr. home in their car.

As Perry Sr. slowly mounts the stairs, Geraldine comes out to meet him. He begins to CRY. With that, she knows. They fall into each other's arms, SOBBING. From inside the foyer, Perry Jr. and Marjorie tear up as they realize what's happened.

McLean watches impotently from the bottom of the stairs as Marjorie cries.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

McLean's jaw clenches.

McLEAN

As a veteran policeman, I was trained not to let emotions cloud my judgment. But when I saw your face that night... I was looking forward to finding the monster who killed Marion.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. MORGUE - LATE EVENING

Marion is wheeled through the morgue doors.

McLEAN (V.O.)

Marion was taken immediately to the morgue. And by 9 PM, Dr. Wagner, the county coroner, was conducting the autopsy.

The coroner, DR. A.F. WAGNER, flinches as he pulls back the sheet. Collecting himself, he begins to dictate his findings as an ASSISTANT takes photos.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

CLOSEUP SOFT-FOCUS SHOTS of the photos, mixed with CLOSEUP SHOTS OF WAGNER EXAMINING THE BODY.

WAGNER (V.O.)

The body consists of only the head, the trunk down to an inch below the navel, and the upper arms intact but the forearms removed at the elbows. There is a two-and-a-half inch cut made by a knife on the top of the left shoulder. The eyelids have been stitched open with heavy thread. Her lungs, heart, trachea, stomach, liver and kidneys are all intact. A towel has been stuffed into the abdominal cavity, as is part of a man's shirt.

END MONTAGE

Using tweezers, Wagner pulls a small object out of the fabric wrapped around Marion's body.

WAGNER'S POV

A small nut.

WAGNER (V.O.)
 And half of a hazelnut was lodged
 in the folds of the tarp wrapped
 around her torso.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

McLean notices Marjorie put her hand to her head.

McLEAN
 Miss Parker? Are you okay?

MARJORIE
 (weakly)
 I'll be fine. I just need a minute.

McLEAN
 I told you this was going to be
 hard to take. We can stop if you
 want.

MARJORIE
 No, no, I'm good. Really.
 (clearing her throat)
 According to the report, you got
 your first clue almost immediately.

McLEAN
 That's right. While Dr. Wagner was
 performing the autopsy, we got our
 first break. Based on your father's
 description of the kidnapper's car,
 we found his vehicle.

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKING LOT - LATE EVENING

A frazzled ATTENDANT watches as McLean's men go over the
 Kidnapper's car, a shiny Chrysler tucked into a corner of the
 lot.

McLEAN (V.O.)
 We set up a stakeout overnight,
 hoping the kidnapper would return
 for his vehicle. Unfortunately, he
 never showed.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT./EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY - MONTAGE

CLOSE ON newspaper headlines from all over the country, all describing the Marion Parker kidnapping: "SLAIN". "DISMEMBERED". "HACKED-UP BODY".

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

By Sunday morning, the story had developed a life of its own.

CUT TO:

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

PERRY JR.

In less than four days, we became the focus of a great deal of national attention. At the time, it was brutal. Especially on Mom. But, I have to admit, in the long run, the public's awareness was an asset.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - EXT. LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD - MORNING

An OLDER MAN is out for a Sunday morning stroll.

He comes across four packages, wrapped in newspaper, lying in disarray in the road. Curious, he peels back the paper around one...

...and recoils in horror at the sight of a small human hand.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. MORGUE - AFTERNOON

McLean and Contreras watch as Dr. Wagner steps back from Marion's body, her parts arranged on the slab.

McLEAN

What have you got, Doc?

WAGNER

Unfortunately, not a lot. There are no contusions or abrasions. I can't say whether she was killed before she was mutilated.

(choking up)

I can't understand how someone
could do this to a young girl...

Wagner excuses himself, leaving McLean and Contreras alone
with Marion's remains.

McLEAN
I've never seen the Doc like this.

CONTRERAS
Can you blame him?

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. BELLEVUE ARMS - MORNING

A squad of POLICE OFFICERS enters the hotel. They go door to
door, interviewing multiple TENANTS.

McLEAN (V.O.)
Based on evidence found on the
towel that had been used to stuff
Marion's torso, my team searched
the Bellevue Arms residential
hotel.

The door to apartment 307 opens. Two YOUNG OFFICERS step out
into the hallway. One is munching on a chocolate bar. They
say goodbye to the tenant.

The tenant steps into the doorway. It's the Kidnapper. All
smiles. He gives a friendly wave before closing the door.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

McLean TAPS THE DESK in frustration.

McLEAN
We brought in a lot of people, and
followed up on dozens of leads, but
in the end, we ran into nothing but
dead ends. So I had nothing but bad
news for the Parkers on the day
they buried Marion.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - MORNING

The Parker family leaves the house, dressed for a funeral. They are accosted by a swarm of Reporters being held back by Police.

The Reporters harangue Perry Sr. for a statement as the family makes their way to a waiting car. Marjorie shrinks as the CLAMORING MEN crowd around her. Perry Jr. has to hold people back to protect his little sister.

Once his family has bundled into the car, Perry Sr. addresses the crowd.

PERRY SR.

Gentlemen, I can't say much. This is the saddest time of my life. My heart is too full. I know you want some kind of statement but what can I say? My little girl is gone, gone from me forever. And when I think how...

The tears come flowing out of him. He jumps into the car. CLOSE ON the car door as it closes.

MATCH CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. POLICE STATION - GARAGE - MORNING

CLOSE ON the door of the kidnapper's abandoned Chrysler coupe.

A DETECTIVE removes a small piece of clear cellophane from the handle. Holding it up to the light, a smile breaks out across his face.

DETECTIVE'S POV

A clearly defined fingerprint.

PAST - 1927 - EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - MORNING

Police guard the cemetery gates, allowing the Parkers' car through but holding back the Reporters and onlookers.

PAST - 1927 - INT. POLICE STATION - CRIME LAB - MORNING

The Detective hands a high-contrast copy of the fingerprint he lifted from the Kidnapper's car to HOWARD BARLOW, a fingerprint expert.

PAST - 1927 - INT. LITTLE CHURCH OF FLOWERS - MORNING

A small urn containing Marion's ashes sits on a pedestal in front of the altar, surrounded by an ocean of flowers.

The Parker family, along with a small group of family and friends, fill the pews as REVEREND HERBERT BOOTH conducts the funeral service. Marjorie tries to be brave, but her tears flow freely.

PAST - 1927 - INT. POLICE STATION - CRIME LAB - MORNING

Barlow digs through dozens of fingerprint books, looking for a match.

PAST - 1927 - INT. PARKER HOUSE - LATE MORNING

The funeral is over. The Parker family is home. Police are stationed at the front door.

Geraldine serves McLean and Contreras coffee. Perry Sr. sits on the couch, with his arms around Marjorie and Perry Jr.

The phone RINGS. Perry Sr. reacts, but McLean gestures to Geraldine to get it.

GERALDINE
(cautiously)
Parker residence.
(beat)
Detective McLean... it's for you.

Expecting the Kidnapper, McLean takes the phone.

BARLOW'S VOICE
McLean!

McLEAN
Barlow?
(to the Parkers)
It's our fingerprint guy.
(to Barlow)
What is it?

BARLOW'S VOICE
We got him!

McLEAN
Come again?

PAST - 1927 - INT. POLICE STATION - CRIME LAB - LATE MORNING

Barlow can barely contain himself.

BARLOW
Goddammit, we got him!

A fingerprint book lies open on the desk. The copy of the print taken from the Chrysler lies next to an actual print on an arrest record. And they match.

A photo is attached to the arrest record. It's the Young Man. "Cooper". "George Fox". The Kidnapper.

BARLOW
His name is William Edward Hickman!

SMASH CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

BAM! Police BREAK DOWN THE DOOR of apartment 307. Swarm into the small suite. McLean and Contreras follow them in.

McLEAN (V.O.)
Thanks to Barlow's tireless work, the LAPD now had a name. And with Wagner's information, we were able to confirm that Hickman had indeed been at the Bellevue Arms.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Everything Hickman left behind: A sugar bowl on the table with a very visible fingerprint. A box of Gillette razor blades. Bloodstains on the floor around the tub. Articles about the kidnapping clipped from newspapers. And a partially burned first draft of one of the ransom letters.

McLEAN

Finds yet another clue in a waste basket: half of a hazelnut, like the one found with Marion's remains.

PAST - 1927 - INT. BELLEVUE ARMS - HALLWAYS - MORNING

McLean and Contreras show an older RESIDENT a photo of Hickman.

RESIDENT
Oh yes, I remember him. In 307. He seemed like a nice boy.

Taking care of his little sister
the way he was.

CONTRERAS
"Little sister"...?

McLean turns to the Young Officers who searched the Bellevue
before.

McLEAN
You had him! What the hell
happened?

YOUNG OFFICER #1
(sheepishly)
I don't know, Detective. He just...
didn't seem like the guy.

YOUNG OFFICER #2
He was funny. Real nice. Gave me a
candy bar...

McLEAN
(seething)
Get out of my sight. Both of you.
Before I do something we'll all
regret.

The Officers comply. Quickly.

Contreras and McLean share a disappointed look.

CONTRERAS
If the press gets wind of this...

McLEAN
Don't say it. Hickman's on the run.
We'll get him.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

MARJORIE
Why didn't your men do a more
thorough exploration of Hickman's
apartment?

McLEAN
They'd never been faced with a
situation like Marion's kidnapping.
They were rattled. Off their game.
And Hickman played them.

MARJORIE

But it's safe to say that, if your men hadn't botched their job, the police department might have been able to catch Hickman before he went on the run.

McLEAN

(bristling)

It's easy to sit there and judge the work and actions of young men who are under a tremendous amount of pressure. Spending every waking moment trying to bring some peace to a grieving family. You think that might rate a small bit of gratitude.

After a pregnant pause, during which McLean keeps his stern gaze on Marjorie, she changes the subject.

MARJORIE

Well, let's get back to the manhunt. Once you ran into this dead end with the hotel, what steps did you and the department take?

McLEAN

We had enough to where we felt it was time to let the press, and therefore the public, know who we were dealing with.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. POLICE STATION - AFTERNOON

McLean and Contreras hold a press conference. A horde of eager REPORTERS jockey for a prime position in front of the podium. Perry Jr. puts a comforting hand on Perry Sr.'s shoulder.

McLEAN

The alleged kidnapper, William Edward Hickman, had forged over a dozen checks since April of 1927, totaling nearly \$400. He had been employed as a messenger for the Los Angeles First National Bank.

REPORTER #1

That's the same bank where Perry Parker worked?

McLEAN

Yes, it's the same bank. Hickman was discharged from his position at the bank. It's being assumed that he might have harbored a grudge against Mr. Parker, even though Mr. Parker had nothing to do with any hiring or firing. And this anger became an obsession, so much so that Hickman may have desired revenge of some sort. Rather than go after Mr. Parker directly, he chose to harm one of his children.

Some of the Reporters pester Perry Sr. with questions. Perry Jr. helps his father to the podium, where he faces a sea of microphones and cameras.

REPORTER #2

Mr. Parker! Do you remember Hickman?

PERRY SR.

I remember how he asked for his position again after being granted probation, and his replies to questions. Based on the calm manner and voice I heard over the telephone, and the coolness and nerve displayed Saturday night when we met for the exchange, I am convinced that William Edward Hickman was at the other end of the telephone, and that he took the \$1500.

REPORTER #3

Why do you think he did it?

PERRY SR.

I cannot call to mind any words of madness or revenge that passed while I was talking to Hickman. But I do remember that his reactions to the forgery charges did seem to me to be unusual. He evinced no nervousness and showed very little concern over the seriousness of his actions. This impressed me very much at the time, but no thought of his planning to harm me or members of my family in return for his discharge entered my mind.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

MARJORIE (O.S.)

At that point, Mr. McLean, what was actually being done to capture Hickman?

McLEAN

(irritated)

If I didn't know better, your tone would suggest you think that me and Detective Contreras and the entire department weren't doing our jobs.

MARJORIE (O.S.)

I'm just asking as a private citizen, someone who wasn't inside the police station on a daily basis, and didn't necessarily see the effort being expended.

McLean regards Marjorie for a moment, before replying.

McLEAN

Thousands of officers and volunteers were on the job. Thousands. And the scope of the search wasn't just relegated to Los Angeles. We were investigating every possible lead, no matter where in the country it took us.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - EVENING

Dr. Wagner looks over a board where McLean and Contreras have pinned up all the evidence they have so far: Hickman's photo. A map of his travels. The fingerprints. Photos of Marion's body. Photos of Hickman's apartment. Everything they have on him.

McLEAN (V.O.)

But despite the evidence, despite all the leads, we were frustrated by Hickman's elusiveness.

McLean enters the room in a huff.

McLEAN

Doc! What brings you upstairs?

WAGNER

Just needed some air. You seem like you could use a break too.

McLean grabs a stack of papers off his desk.

McLEAN

You know Michael O'Neil? That kid who looks like Hickman? He was dragged into the station by an angry mob for a fifth time. Fifth time! He was good-natured about it, but I had to give him a personally endorsed card that says "I am not William Edward Hickman".

WAGNER

And that's the sum total of LA's Finest's efforts?

McLEAN

...That's not funny, Doc. You know we're killing ourselves out there.

McLean rifles through the stack of papers. He begins pinning more info and photos to the board, indicating Hickman's trail as he talks.

McLEAN

Sometime around December 5th, Hickman took some clothes to be dry cleaned. One piece was the overcoat that Mary Holt said he was wearing. Then a week or so later, Hickman traded the coat for gasoline at a service station here in Santa Monica. We have another eyewitness from the Bellevue Arms who swears he saw Hickman and another man carrying packages to a car, the night of the exchange. And on the same night, Hickman used one of the \$20 notes at a diner downtown.

He pins an evidence photo next to the picture of Marion's corpse taken in the morgue.

McLEAN

And finally, we found a discarded napkin in Hickman's apartment that was smeared with rouge. The same rouge used on Marion's cheeks to make her look like she was still alive.

He drops into a chair. Wagner stares at the morgue photo.

McLEAN

Why are you hanging around in the squad room, anyway?

WAGNER

I have more results from the autopsy.

McLEAN

...Well?

WAGNER

I found no traces of chloroform or ether in Marion's lungs. No numbing agents of any sort. So it's very possible that she was alive when she was dismembered. Perhaps... even awake.

A heavy silence falls over the room. That's the last thing McLean needs to hear.

WAGNER

I know the Parkers. They live just up the road from me. I've seen the two girls walking to the bus stop many times over the last few years. I'm looking forward to the day you find the monster who killed her.

McLean can see the emotion in the usually stoic medical examiner. He empathizes with Wagner.

McLEAN

Amen to that, Doc. We're doing everything we possibly can to find him. Trust me, I'm more frustrated with where we stand than you are.

He plops into a chair. Rubs his aching neck as he takes in all the evidence on the board.

McLEAN

The thing about Hickman's behavior that isn't making any sense to me is, on the one hand, he seemed really good at offering an outward appearance of confidence, kindness, and a relaxed, comfortable manner.

WAGNER

It was enough to cause that stuffy school marm Mary Holt to lower her guard and allow Hickman to take Marion from the school.

McLEAN

Exactly. But then, the other part of Hickman's personality was sinister. From petty crimes to evil thoughts, Hickman obviously had ideas about kidnapping, surgical tools, and so on. But he had none of the concentration or skill to carry out such an act effectively.

WAGNER

How do you mean? He walked out with Marion. And no one stopped him!

McLEAN

Yeah, but the guy watched both girls leave the house for school two days in a row... yet Holt says he had no idea the two girls were sisters! That right there convinces me he wasn't thinking this through. Or maybe he's just the luckiest dummy in the world.

Wagner gently runs his fingers along Marion's photo.

WAGNER

I wonder what happened from the time he picked up Marion from school, and when he secured the ransom from Parker?

McLean rises from his chair. The blank stare of Hickman's mugshot mocks him.

McLEAN

I have a feeling you're going to be sorry you asked that question.

They both stare at Hickman's photo. Wagner finally has to break the spell.

WAGNER

I haven't seen your partner today.

McLean pulls down a map of the United States. He points as he talks.

McLEAN

Contreras flew to New Mexico and Arizona to distribute Hickman's info to all the metropolitan police departments.

WAGNER

Arizona...?

McLEAN

After we impounded his car, Hickman stole a car, a green Hudson, from some guy named Peck. ID'ed him from the check forging mugshot. So Hickman's been mobile since the 20th.

(back to the map)

Here in Oklahoma, someone may have ID'd Hickman at a cafe in Tulsa. This pin represents a checkpoint set up on the California-Mexico border, based on a tip. Police are keeping an eye on Hickman's old home in Kansas. They're even staking out his childhood birthplace in Arkansas.

He steps back and takes in the map.

McLEAN

If Hickman is anywhere in the western half of the country, someone will find him.

INSERT - THE MAP

The CAMERA slowly ZOOMS IN ON Oregon.

McLEAN (V.O.)

And thank God, this time, I was right.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - EXT. OREGON HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

A sunny winter day outside the small town of Echo, OR. Sitting in a patrol car hidden behind brush on the side of the road, TOM GURDANE, a veteran lawman with a strong, weathered face, and highway patrolman BUCK LIEUALLEN keep their gaze focused on the road. They scan every car that drives past.

McLEAN (V.O.)

After Hickman was spotted in Seattle a few days later, a couple of lawmen up in Oregon, Tom Gurdane and Buck Lieuallen, had a hunch that if Hickman fled south, the bad weather up there would force him to stick to the highway.

Suddenly Gurdane perks up. A green Hudson drives past. Lieuallen FIRES UP THE SIREN. Pulls out onto the highway. Races after the Hudson.

PAST - 1927 - EXT. OREGON HIGHWAY - LATER

The green Hudson has been pulled over. Gurdane approaches the driver side. Lieuallen, leaning against the hood of their police car, watches the scene intently.

Gurdane knocks on the window. He steps back, allowing the Driver to push the heavy door open. As the Driver swings his legs out, a PISTOL drops from his lap onto the ground.

Gurdane whips out his gun. With Gurdane covering the Driver, Lieuallen begins searching the car. Sliding into the passenger seat, he pops open the glove compartment. His breath catches in his throat.

McLEAN (V.O.)

And to their astonishment, their hunch paid off.

Lieuallen holds up his find: \$1000 worth of \$20 gold certificates. Gurdane's face lights up. He points his gun right at the Driver.

The Driver takes off his sunglasses. It's Hickman.

McLEAN (V.O.)

They had captured the most wanted man in America.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Perry Jr. LAUGHS through his tears.

PERRY JR.

"Good" news? It was great news! Fantastic news! It was such a relief. You remember?

MARJORIE

Oh, I remember. I remember Mother sobbing in Father's arms.

PERRY JR.

The house had been surrounded by armed guards for days. Mom's nerves were almost shot. She deserved to cry. I almost cried myself! For the first time since Marion was taken, we could all take a breath.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Perry Sr. addresses the reporters on his front lawn.

PERRY SR.

This thing is too terrible to talk about adequate punishment for the man. This strain has been terrible on all of us. I am reassured and honestly hope there has been no mistake.

He walks back into the house, unaware that Marjorie has been watching from the living room window.

FADE TO BLACK:

UNDER BLACK:

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

(reading)

"After stealing a car in Kansas City, Hickman headed for California."

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. BELLEVUE ARMS - LOBBY - AFTERNOON

The MANAGER watches as Hickman signs the register. Through the door behind him, the Chrysler can be seen at the curb.

INSERT

Hickman signing the register as "DONALD EVANS".

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
 "After he made his way to Los Angeles, he checked into the Bellevue Arms hotel under an assumed name--"

MARJORIE (V.O.)
 What are you doing?

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Perry Jr. looks up from the yellowed newspaper he's reading.

PERRY JR.
 ...What do you mean?

MARJORIE
 What is that you're reading from?

PERRY JR.
 It's the newspaper. The one that printed Hickman's first confession.

MARJORIE
 You sound like you're just reciting it. I'm wanting your recollections. Your experience.

PERRY JR.
 I wasn't with him when he did it! This is how I found out the details. It's how everyone found out.

MARJORIE
 I get it. But you sound like you're in a school play. Can you, I don't know, try to make it sound like your own story?

PERRY JR.
 Okay, I'll try. Let's see... After Hickman made his way to L.A...

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Hickman throws his suitcase onto the bed. He begins removing clothing. He pulls out a revolver. Checks the barrel. SNAPS it shut.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
...he checked into the Bellevue
Arms hotel, just before
Thanksgiving.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Hickman cruises down the highway towards San Diego. He sees two young hitchhikers, ANDREW CRAMER and JUNE DUNNING. He pulls over. They jump in.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
On Thanksgiving Day, Hickman made a trip down to San Diego. Along the way, he picked up a couple of hitchhikers, Andrew Cramer and June Dunning.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Hickman, Cramer, and Dunning sit in a booth. Cramer opens his coat, showing a PISTOL. Hickman does the same. They both smile knowingly at each other.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
As Hickman got to know Cramer, they began discussing how easy it would be to make some money by committing a few small robberies.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT./EXT. PHARMACY - EVENING

Wearing masks, Hickman and Cramer rob the PHARMACIST. They make him lay down on the ground.

The two men run out to Hickman's sedan, where Dunning waits behind the wheel. They jump in. She ROARS away from the curb.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The three crooks sit at the table, dividing their take.

Hickman takes his share into the bedroom. He pulls a box off the shelf in the closet. Adds his latest take to the money already in the box.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

Hickman knew a life of crime meant eventually getting caught. His goal was to make \$1000. That would be enough to go back to Kansas City, get a job, and enroll in -- get this -- seminary school.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - AFTERNOON

Hickman and Cramer drive through town.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

One day Cramer asked Hickman if he'd ever considered kidnapping. He made the point that, if you pull it off, it's a good way to get a lot of money fast. Hickman told Cramer he wouldn't mind doing it, if they could come up with someone to kidnap.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. BANK - AFTERNOON

Marion bounces through the door.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

And then he remembered Marion.

Marion hugs Perry Sr. She greets the other employees, and spends time chatting with them.

Hickman sits in the corner. His usual charming countenance is shadowed with jealousy as he watches Perry Sr. and Marion.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

Hickman was there in the bank several days. He noticed Marion would come see Dad, and he would take her to lunch. Hickman thought Marion moved around the bank like she was a, quote, "big man".

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - MORNING

Marion and Marjorie leave the house, heading for the bus stop. Hickman watches them from the safety of his car.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

They found our address in the phone book. So that Thursday morning, Hickman parked by the house early and watched you and Marion leave for school. Somehow, he didn't realize you two were sisters.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - MORNING

Hickman weaves through traffic to catch up to the school bus.

Hickman HONKS HIS HORN a few times. He sees Marion and Marjorie looking down at him. He waves furiously, but they decline to wave back.

Eventually the traffic separates him from the bus. He watches his victim drive away from him.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Perry Jr. pauses his reading.

PERRY JR.

He tried to get your attention. Do you remember that?

MARJORIE

(shakily)

Every day.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL - MAIN OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Marion is brought into the school office, where she sees Hickman posing as "Cooper". He takes her by the hand.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

Hickman decided he was going to get "the girl" that day. So he went to your school, and...

Hickman walks out of the building with Marion Parker.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - AFTERNOON

As Hickman drives away, Marion begins asking him questions.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

It says here, Marion started asking questions about what had happened to Dad. And Hickman answered all her questions.

Marion doesn't appear to be worried that she's in any danger, but she does seem concerned about her father's well-being.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

They had a conversation about movies and other interests. He told her his favorite actress was Esther Ralston. She told him how much she enjoyed Harold Lloyd and Clara Bow.

Hickman stares straight ahead as he divulges his true purpose to Marion. Her brow furrows, more from confusion than fear. But she doesn't worry or scream.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

Hickman really seemed to like Marion. He couldn't look her in the face when he told her she was kidnapped. When he told her nothing had happened to Dad, he says she didn't worry or scream or anything. She took it calm as could be.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. TELEGRAM OFFICE - AFTERNOON

As Marion patiently waits in the car, Hickman sends his telegrams to the Parker house.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

They drove around all afternoon. Hickman made stops to send us those telegrams.

CUT TO:

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Perry Jr. WHACKS the paper with the back of his hand.

PERRY JR.

This confession makes it sound like Marion was having the time of her life! But she had to have been scared. And she didn't even know what was coming...

(getting emotional)

Sorry.

(back to the paper)

Apparently, Marion had an all-around great day. But then, it looks like factors entered the picture that were out of Hickman's control.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. CRAMER'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Hickman watches as Cramer takes Marion's hand, and leads her into the apartment. Marion looks up at Hickman pleadingly as the door closes in his face.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

After they were done for the day, Hickman took Marion to Cramer's apartment. He took custody of Marion while Hickman went to make calls and send more telegrams.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Cramer leers from the kitchen area as Hickman coaches Marion on what to write in her letter to the family.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

Hickman didn't see Marion again until Friday night. He had her write a letter to Dad that made it sound as if she were being treated poorly.

When Marion is done, Cramer pulls her towards the door. But she resists.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
 Marion didn't seem to like Cramer,
 and she begged to stay with
 Hickman. But he was intimidated by
 Cramer, so he didn't make any
 trouble.

Cramer departs with Marion, leaving Hickman alone in his
 sparse apartment.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - LATE EVENING

A KNOCK at the door. Hickman answers. Cramer pushes his way
 in, carrying a large suitcase. He's disheveled and sweating.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
 Then Saturday evening, Cramer
 showed up... carrying a suitcase.

Cramer dumps the case on the bed. He pops it open...

...revealing Marion's butchered torso. Hickman recoils in
 horror. Cramer sits on the bed, next to the open suitcase,
 trying to keep his cool and make his case to his partner.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)
 Cramer said the girl was crying too
 much, and he decided to stop her
 permanently. He also said the
 police were becoming more and more
 suspicious, so killing Marion would
 destroy any evidence.

Hickman begins to cry.

CUT TO:

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Perry has reached the end of the article.

PERRY JR.
 (reading)
 "Sitting on the edge of the bunk in
 his cell, with tears in his eyes,
 Hickman added, 'I am terribly sorry
 she was killed, because I sure
 liked her.'"

He clears his throat as he gingerly folds the paper.

PERRY JR.

He wrote this confession while he was in jail in Oregon waiting for the Los Angeles police to come get him. They printed it right away.

MARJORIE (O.S.)

(softly)

You kept that paper. All these years.

PERRY JR.

I remember Dad reading it to me. And how badly I wanted to wring Hickman's neck.

He regards the paper. Then hands it to Marjorie.

PERRY JR.

Here. Add this to your files, or whatever. I don't want it anymore.

Marjorie takes the paper as it passes OUT OF FRAME.

CUT TO:

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

McLean takes the same newspaper as Marjorie hands it INTO FRAME.

McLEAN

Ah, yes. I used to have a stack of these. I gave them up for the paper drives, during the War.

MARJORIE (O.S.)

It's a very specific confession. How did it strike you?

McLEAN

It was one of the more detailed confessions I'd ever witnessed. And Hickman was very emotional throughout. But there was more to it, things the public weren't initially aware of, that made it clear to me he wasn't telling the truth.

MARJORIE (O.S.)

What things?

McLEAN

Well, to start with... Contreras had gone up ahead of me to serve the warrant. He said that when he told Hickman he had been named the murderer of Marion Parker... Hickman laughed out loud.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

MARJORIE

He... he laughed?

McLEAN

Then he got all serious. And he asked Contreras, "Do they execute by hanging in California?"

MARJORIE

Incredible.

McLEAN

And, in front of a guard, he said -- out loud, mind you -- he said, "I wonder if I could pretend I was crazy."

(off Marjorie's look)

Must have been hard for you to hear all that.

MARJORIE

What do you mean?

McLEAN

No offense, Miss Parker. It's just... This is what could be charitably called a lurid story. I'm not used to discussing things like this with... well, a young woman, such as yourself.

MARJORIE

Thank you for your concern. But I've read all the reports several times. So my reaction, such as it is, is not as bad now as it was initially.

McLEAN

I meant, when the news first hit the papers. When it was fresh.

MARJORIE

Oh, I get you. I can tell you we were glad he was caught. We all thought it was over.

McLEAN

"Over"? Not even close. It was about to get worse. A lot worse.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. LOS ANGELES JAIL - MORNING

McLean and Contreras are escorted by GUARDS to a jail cell. They RATTLE the bars. The occupant emerges from his cot. It's Andrew Cramer.

McLEAN (V.O.)

We actually found an "Andrew Cramer" who knew Hickman. But he'd been in jail since the previous August. He couldn't have been an accomplice in any fashion.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

McLEAN

Contreras said that when he told Hickman his alibi didn't check out, he was visibly nervous. So when I arrived in Oregon around 5 PM on Christmas Eve, along with several guards, Hickman decided to take matters into his own hands.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. PENDLETON, OREGON JAIL - EVENING

A GUARD wakes Hickman in his cell. He sees McLean and Contreras waiting for him.

As Hickman is led out of the cell, he suddenly goes into hysterics. He jerks and flails.

McLEAN (V.O.)

Hickman tried his best to throw a crazy fit, but all he did was delay the inevitable.

Hickman is restrained and dumped back in his cell. McLean just shakes his head at his prisoner.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

McLEAN

During the evening, Hickman even made two clumsy attempts to kill himself. But by the morning, we were ready to take him to Los Angeles.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - EXT. OREGON COUNTRYSIDE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - EVENING

The Union Pacific Cascade Limited steams through the rugged Northwest countryside.

PAST - 1927 - INT. TRAIN CAR - EVENING

Hickman sits across from McLean and Contreras. They pelt their prisoner with questions.

McLEAN (V.O.)

After switching trains in order to throw off the press and the angry crowds, we had a long ride ahead of us. Contreras and I proceeded to bombard Hickman with questions.

Hickman finally cracks. He collapses into a quivering heap.

McLEAN (V.O.)

We eventually broke him down. He admitted to committing the kidnapping and murder solo. And he agreed to give us a full statement to that effect.

McLean gestures to his guards. They put a pad and a pencil in front of Hickman.

McLEAN (V.O.)

I made it very clear to him, the judge was going to want to know everything. So he needed to make sure he told his story clearly. And to include every detail he could.

Hickman looks at his captors. Doubt flashes across his face, but he puts pencil to paper, and begins writing.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

McLean pulls a document out of a folder.

McLEAN

I had the boys pull his original statement. Straight from Hickman's own hand.

MARJORIE (O.S.)

His second confession, so to speak. Would you read it for me? For the record, I mean?

McLean puts a pair of spectacles on the end of his nose.

McLEAN

Let's see...

(reading)

"My name is William Edward Hickman. I was born February 1, 1908 at West Hartford, Arkansas. I desire to make the following statement relative to the kidnapping of Marion Parker on Los Angeles, Thursday, December 15, 1927."

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - EXT. CALIFORNIA HIGHWAY - MORNING

Hickman, in his stolen Chrysler, drives across the border into California.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"During the past six months the idea of kidnapping a young person and holding it for ransom came to me as a means of securing money for seminary school."

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. FIRST NATIONAL BANK - AFTERNOON

Perry Sr. gets his hat and leaves for lunch with Marion. The entire time, they're watched intently by Hickman.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"I then thought of Mr. P.M. Parker, an employee of the First National Bank of L.A., where I had secured employment as a page, because I had seen a young girl with him one day at the bank. Since I thought the girl with Mr. Parker was his own child, I decided to start with my plans."

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - MORNING

Sitting in his car, Hickman watches Marion and Marjorie leave for school.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"On Thursday Dec. 15, 7:30 AM, I parked near the residence in my car. About eight o'clock I saw two girls leave the Parker home and followed them to the Mount Vernon Junior High School."

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

McLean notices Marjorie's reaction.

McLEAN

You don't look so well.

MARJORIE

It's just that... That was... the last day... before she...

McLEAN

Do you want to stop?

MARJORIE

No, I want to get through this. Could I make one request, though? Would you mind skipping ahead? All these details are the same. I want to focus on where his confession began to change.

(rustles papers)

Can you jump to... to where he gets Marion to his apartment that first night?

McLean nods in agreement. He flips ahead, muttering.

McLEAN

Let's see... takes Marion from the school... sends telegrams... Okay, here we are.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Hickman and Marion enter the apartment. She sits on the couch. Marion looks both exhausted and worried. She's on the verge of tears. Hickman brings her a blanket. She kicks off her shoes, covers herself, and drifts off to sleep.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"When we were inside, I could see that Marion was a little worried and sleepy. She chose to sleep on the couch and only took off her shoes."

Hickman watches her from the bedroom, a dim reading light placed near Marion.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"I slept in the bed and retired shortly after Marion. I stayed awake for some time to see that the girl would not attempt to leave the apartment."

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Marion sits at the small table, CRYING. Hickman tries to feed her, but she refuses to eat.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"Next morning Marion was sobbing and didn't say much. I got up and prepared breakfast but she said she wasn't hungry."

Hickman hands Marion some paper and a pencil. She begins writing.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"After a while I told her she could write a letter to her father and that I would also. She stopped sobbing and wrote a note and didn't cry any more that day."

Hickman ties Marion to a chair. When he's done he checks her over tenderly. He leaves and closes the door behind him. Marion sits alone in the tiny apartment, trapped.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"About 9:30 AM I left the apartment for about thirty minutes to mail our letters. I tied Marion to a chair while I was gone, but used cloth bandages and she was not cut or bruised in any way. I did not blindfold or gag her and she promised to keep quiet."

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. DRUG STORE - EVENING

Hickman DIALS the phone. Through the store's door, Marion can be seen in the car, looking worried. Hickman begins talking to someone on the other end.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"Marion didn't want to stay in the apartment all day so I promised to take her driving again. About eight o'clock I called Marion's father and talked to him. He said he had the money and wanted me to bring his girl back to him."

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - EVENING

Perry Sr. frantically runs down the front porch stairs. He jumps into his car. GRINDING gears, he hastily pulls out of the driveway, then heads off into the night.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"I called Parker again at about 8:30 and told him to get in his car alone and gave him directions to the exchange location."

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - EVENING

Hickman sits in the car with Marion, parked on a dark street. They see Parker drive by. Marion's heart leaps when she sees her father, so close now.

Hickman also gets excited. He's about to strike the mother lode! He reaches for the keys... But then two cars appear, following behind Parker.

Hickman gets angry. He starts the car and slowly backs down the street. Marion's expression falls.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"Marion and I both saw Mr. Parker drive by. But there were two other cars following his and I feared that some detectives were planning to trap me, so Marion and I drove directly back to my apartment."

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Hickman sits with a tearful Marion at the table. They are both writing letters. Hickman is indicating to the young girl what she should put in her note.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"Saturday morning, I told Marion to write her father that he must not try to trap me or something might happen to her. I told Marion all along that I would have to make things look worse to her father than they were so that he would be eager to settle right away."

Hickman takes Marion's letter and places it with his. He folds them both up and puts them into an envelope.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"Marion knew that I wrote her father that I would kill her if he didn't pay me, but she knew that I didn't mean it and was not worried about it."

Hickman leads Marion to the chair in the bedroom. He ties her up again, taking his time and checking the restraints. This time, despite her protests, he places a blindfold over her eyes. He pushes the chair into a nook, so she faces the wall.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"I told Marion I would go downtown and mail the special delivery letter. I said I would return in less than half an hour and then we would get in the car and meet her father somewhere that morning."

Hickman slips on his coat and hat. He has the doorknob in his hand.

From under the blindfold, a tear runs down Marion's cheek.

MARION

(softly)

Please hurry and come back.

Hickman freezes.

A look of abject panic comes over his face. He steps back into the bedroom. He glares at the small girl tied up in the corner, her back to him.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"At this moment my intention to murder completely gripped me."

Hickman grabs a rolling pin off the small kitchen counter. He raises it above Marion's head, but hesitates. He thinks for a moment. Then he replaces the rolling pin and picks up a dish towel.

Hickman wraps the towel around Marjorie's neck. She briefly relaxes.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"I gently placed the towel about her neck and explained this might rest her head."

After a pause, he suddenly tightens the towel.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"But before she had a time to doubt or even say anything I suddenly pulled the towel about her throat and applied all my strength to the move."

Marion flails about in the chair, but Hickman has her overpowered. He stares off into space as the girl struggles against her restraints, desperately trying to get free.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"She made no audible noise except for the struggle and heaving of her body during the period of strangulation, which continued for about two minutes."

Marion goes limp. Hickman drops to the floor.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"The tragedy was so sudden and unexpected that I'm sure she never actually suffered through the whole affair."

A blank look on his face, Hickman unties her and lays her on the floor. He removes her shoes, her stockings, her dress.

He places his empty suitcase next to her. He breaks a couple of his wooden golf clubs into pieces that approximate the length and width of the case. He measures Marion's body with his impromptu rulers.

Hickman carries Marion into the bathroom. Places her lifeless body in the tub.

He returns to the bedroom. From one of the dresser drawers he retrieves a LARGE POCKET KNIFE.

Hickman slowly closes the bathroom door.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

McLean pauses. Now it's his turn to collect himself.

McLEAN

If it's okay with you, I'd rather not go through this part again.

(flipping pages)

He... ahem, dismembers Marion's body. Mails letters. Calls Parker.

And now, we're at the night of the exchange.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - EVENING

Hickman drives through neighborhoods, scrutinizing all the parked cars for police. The suitcase RATTLES on the floorboards next to him.

McLEAN (V.O.)

Where was I... Okay: "Sometime around 7:30 PM I called Mr. Parker and told him to come to Manhattan Place and park just north of 5th Street. I drove around in that neighborhood to see that no police cars were coming."

Hickman stops the car. He pulls Marion's body from the suitcase. Places it against the seat next to him. He continues driving.

Hickman arrives at the exchange location. He sees a worried Perry Parker Sr. behind the wheel of his parked car.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"About eight o'clock I saw Mr. Parker's car where I had told him."

Hickman wraps a white handkerchief around his face. He drives up beside Parker's car.

Hickman shows his shotgun to Parker. Parker wants to know if Hickman has his daughter. Hickman takes the torso and leans it into a sliver of light coming from the streetlamp.

McLEAN (V.O.)

"He asked for his daughter and I raised up the head of the child so that he could see its face."

Hickman thrusts the shotgun out the window, then holds out his hand. Parker puts the money into Hickman's hand. He quickly draws back into the car. Rolls the car forward several yards.

Coming to a stop, he takes the wrapped-up torso by the neck and props it on the fender. He then pushes it off onto the sidewalk. The CAR ROARS AWAY.

Hickman celebrates his victory. He's done it. In his stolen sedan, Hickman drives off into the December night.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. TRAIN CAR - AFTERNOON

McLean and the other passengers watch Hickman. He's putting a lot of work into his statement.

McLEAN (V.O.)

Hickman seemed to relish writing his account. He wrote, rewrote, added things, and carefully worded his account so that it appeared insightful and intelligent.

Hickman finishes. He signs it. Hands it over to the assembled lawmen. McLean and Contreras share a look.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

McLEAN

As you can imagine... the rest of the train ride was very subdued. The only solace we could take was that we'd finally done our job.

MARJORIE

"Done your job"? Don't you mean you'd cleaned up your mistakes?

McLEAN

...I'm not sure what you mean.

MARJORIE

Your job was to ensure that Marion was returned to her family. To us. Alive.

McLEAN

(defensive)

Miss Parker--

MARJORIE

The night of the first exchange, Hickman balked because police officers -- officers under your command, mind you -- jumped the gun and followed along to the exchange point.

Isn't it true that, had they not intervened, Marion would have gone home that night?

McLEAN

There's no way to--

MARJORIE

And then once Hickman was identified, two more of your "dedicated police force" were in Hickman's apartment, standing not three feet from him, and barely took the time to investigate his place. The place where the murder occurred!

McLEAN

You're trying to make it seem--

MARJORIE

And in the end, no one in the vaunted Los Angeles police department was involved in Hickman's capture at all! It took two lawmen from the wilds of Oregon to get inside Hickman's diseased mind and bring him to justice!

McLean seethes. But before he can light into her, Marjorie hits him one last time.

MARJORIE

All the pain our family endured due to the loss of Marion, all of our suffering, can be laid squarely at your feet.

McLEAN

We did everything we could to find that monster! You can sit there and evaluate our efforts after the fact, but I swear to you that every man on the force was putting their all into finding your sister!

MARJORIE

So you feel no guilt about her death? A death that could have been prevented?

McLEAN

I don't feel any guilt. But that doesn't mean I don't feel.

A very uneasy silence hangs between them.

RALPH
I... think we oughtta go. Mr. McLean, you know of a decent diner around here? We could use some coffee.

McLEAN
(tersely)
Around the corner.

RALPH
Thanks.
(to Marjorie)
C'mon, sweetheart. We're done here.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. POLICE STATION - MORNING

Marjorie's chair SCRAPES across the floor. McLean makes a point of not looking at her as she stalks INTO FRAME, passes him, and continues OUT OF FRAME, her footsteps ECHOING in the bare room.

McLean turns to Ralph OFF CAMERA.

McLEAN
What's the problem with your friend?

RALPH (O.S.)
Buddy, you're the detective. You have to ask?

The camera FLICKERS to a stop.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. DINER - MORNING

Sitting at the counter, Ralph wolfs down his breakfast. Marjorie has a cup of coffee in front of her, but she's not drinking. She's staring off into space.

RALPH
I tried to tell you, some of these guys were going to react badly.

MARJORIE
I know.

RALPH
Diving back into the details of the
crime... No one needs to hear all
that.

Marjorie doesn't reply. She's too upset. Ralph SLURPS down
the last of his coffee.

RALPH
Excuse me. Gotta go see a man about
a horse.

He pushes his way through the crowd as he heads for the
bathroom.

Marjorie sits lost in her thoughts. She doesn't hear the bell
over the door DING as it opens. She doesn't sense the
presence at her side.

McLEAN (O.S.)
Mind if I sit?

McLean's voice in her ear snaps her back. Marjorie gives him
a polite smile. He straddles the stool. Offers her a
cigarette. She declines.

McLEAN
So... How'd I do? You get what you
wanted?

MARJORIE
You're doing fine. Having your
voice as part of the story, it's
important.

McLEAN
(lighting up)
If I may say so... you were out of
line earlier.

MARJORIE
If you say so.

McLEAN
I've been interviewed many times
over the years. That is the first
time I've been the brunt of such
a... shall we say, biased view of
the quality of my work. And the
work of my peers.

MARJORIE

I'm not going to apologize for what I see as a gross dereliction of your duties in this case.

McLEAN

It's a free country. You can think whatever you want. But there's something else going on here. Call it a detective's hunch. This whole enterprise you've embarked on, of writing this book about that horrific event... it's getting to you.

Marjorie ignores his analysis. She motions to the WAITRESS for more coffee. McLean shakes his head when the Waitress tries to give him a cup.

McLEAN

I am aware that this may come across as a bit rude. But, I did warn you.

MARJORIE

You and everyone else.

McLEAN

It's one thing to read a musty police report. It's quite another thing to hear it out loud.

Marjorie takes a sip of her fresh coffee.

McLEAN

Listen, be honest with me. Driving all over the country, making people relive that terrible time... What book is worth all this headache?

MARJORIE

I've been made aware that there's another book being written. An... involved party is interested in publicizing Marion's case. And my concern is that the story is going to be skewed.

McLEAN

"Skewed?"

MARJORIE

It's my understanding that the goal is to press the point that Hickman wasn't an evil monster. Instead, he was a misunderstood victim of his childhood. And that's simply not the case. Someone needs to tell the truth.

McLEAN

(suddenly remembering)
...Richard Cantillon.

MARJORIE

So he's called you?

McLEAN

Weeks ago. He must have reached out to you, too.

MARJORIE

He had the gall to expect me to go along with his claims. It was all I could do to keep from reaching through the wire and slapping him. What did he ask of you?

McLEAN

The same. He told me he'd been kicking around the idea of writing a book about Hickman and the trial for years. He wanted me to back up his viewpoint. I told him no, I didn't feel like being involved.

MARJORIE

Then why did you agree to sit down for my interview?

McLEAN

Well... I guess, since I'm retired, it's okay for me to say that I'm on your side, where it comes to Hickman.

MARJORIE

That's good to hear.

McLEAN

Who all have you contacted?

MARJORIE

My brother. I've spoken to him already.

McLEAN
Not your mother?

MARJORIE
Mother isn't... able to contribute.

McLEAN
I'm sorry to hear that. I truly am.
Anyone else?

MARJORIE
Dr. Wagner, but he didn't want to
relieve the experience. Mary Holt's
husband flat-out refused. And...
Jerome Walsh.

McLEAN
(whistling)
Walsh?!? You really think Hickman's
lawyer is going to give you the
time of day?

MARJORIE
Believe it or not, he said yes. I'm
seeing him in Kansas later this
week.

McLEAN
You know Cantillon's called him
already. He was probably first on
the list. They were partners in
Hickman's defense. And that means
Walsh has more than likely told
Cantillon all about you.

MARJORIE
I'm sure he has.

McLEAN
Well, when Cantillon finds out
you're working on your own book,
and you're talking to his old
partner in Hickman's defense...
he's going to come for you.

Marjorie takes a deep breath.

MARJORIE
Are you suggesting I give up, Mr.
McLean? Be demure, and let the men
do their thing?

McLEAN

Not at all. I'm advising you to not
back down. To stick to your guns.
Don't let him intimidate you.

Ralph returns from the bathroom. He sees McLean. He sees the emotional Marjorie.

RALPH

...Everything okay?

MARJORIE

Yes. It's all okay.

McLean rises. Throws down some money.

McLEAN

Have a safe trip, Miss Parker. And
remember: you're in the right.

The bell over the door DINGS as he leaves.

Ralph returns to his seat. He notices the money.

RALPH

What just happened?

Marjorie puts down her coffee. She's smiling.

MARJORIE

He told me what I needed to hear.
Now, come on. I've got things to
arrange before we leave.

Ralph thinks about this for a moment... then proceeds to
shovel the rest of his now-free breakfast into his mouth.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Marjorie helps her mother Geraldine -- now an old, infirm
woman -- into the room. Unsteady on her feet, Geraldine leans
heavily on her daughter.

Marjorie eases Geraldine into an ornate bed. She tucks the
elderly woman in, adjusting her pillows.

MARJORIE

How's that, Mother? You need
another blanket?

GERALDINE
No, thank you, I'm warm now.

MARJORIE
I'm going to be leaving now. So, remember, Mrs. Barbour from next door will be checking in on you the next couple of days.

GERALDINE
(panicked)
What? Where will you be?

MARJORIE
I told you, Mother. I've got to go out of town for a few days. For work.

GERALDINE
(distracted)
No! Please, you have to stay...!

MARJORIE
Mother, it'll be fine! I promise you.

Geraldine claws at her daughter.

GERALDINE
But... but what if... what if someone takes you away from me again!

MARJORIE
Mother...

GERALDINE
Please, Marion! Don't leave me again! I can't lose you! Not again!

Marjorie stifles a sob. Her mother's confusion is like a knife in her heart, but Marjorie doesn't show it.

MARJORIE
How about this? When I get there, I'll ring you. First thing.

GERALDINE
You... you promise?

MARJORIE
Promise.

This calms Geraldine down. Suddenly a car horn HONKS.

MARJORIE

That's Ralph. I have to go. I love you. And don't give Mrs. Barbour any trouble! Or I'll hear about it!

Marjorie kisses her mother's forehead.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. TRAIN - AFTERNOON

Marjorie watches the Midwestern plains whip by her window. Ralph plops into a seat across from her. He hands her a sandwich.

RALPH

Can you believe it? Fifty cents for a ham-n-cheese!

(looking out)

That's a whole lotta nothing.

MARJORIE

I think it's pretty. Peaceful.

RALPH

I grew up in San Francisco. Once a summer we'd go visit my uncle on his peach orchard, in Mountain View. That was about as much "fruited plains" as I got.

MARJORIE

I lived in Los Angeles until I was in my thirties. Father grew up in the city, too. He always talked about moving someplace quiet, a small town with a main street lined with shops. But... well, you know.

Ralph knows. He crosses himself.

MARJORIE

I really appreciate your help. I feel so bad that I've tied you up in all this.

RALPH

Hey, I volunteered! I've had my own lawsuit issues. I wish I'd had some people on film, when they lied their asses off in court.

MARJORIE

Well, thank you, anyway. I owe you.

RALPH

You know, your dad, God bless him, he was the only one who thought a stumblebum ex-Navy guy like me would ever amount to anything. If he hadn't sat down and helped me with my finances, I never could've saved up enough to start my studio. I feel like I owe him. And since he's no longer with us... well, how could I not help the daughter I never had?

Ralph takes another mouthful. Wheels turn in his head.

RALPH

But, to be honest, Margie, I think my movie days are behind me.

MARJORIE

Ralph! Don't say that!

RALPH

It's okay, sweetheart. I'm a realist. I made a little money for a while, but the big studios have pretty much squeezed guys like me out. And since Martha passed, God rest her soul... I just don't have it in me to keep it up. Time to cut my losses and run. I help you with this book thing, then I sell it all -- every camera, every lens -- and sail off into the sunset.

He looks out the window, this time with a smile.

RALPH

Now that I think about it... that dream of your dad's sounds nice, actually. I think I'll move out here myself. You can come visit any time you want.

He winks. That puts a smile on her face.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

Hickman's lawyer from Kansas City, JEROME WALSH, takes a seat behind the microphone. Now an older man, he steadies himself with a cane.

MARJORIE

Thank you, Mr. Walsh, for agreeing to speak with me.

WALSH

I haven't agreed to anything, young lady.

MARJORIE

(thrown)

I'm sorry, when we talked to arrange this interview, you were happy to--

WALSH

That was before I heard from Richard.

MARJORIE

So Mr. Cantillon is responsible for your change of mind?

WALSH

He made me aware of the true intention of this little charade you're staging.

RALPH

Hey, look here--

MARJORIE

It's okay, Ralph.

(to Walsh)

I resent the accusation. Surely someone in your field knows the danger in making uninformed conclusions.

This takes a little wind out of Walsh's sails.

WALSH

You're only here to drag my name through the mud. To dredge up a case from two decades ago that, quite frankly, no one cares about anymore, and make me the villain of your story.

MARJORIE

(tersely)

I can assure you, there are some people who still care.

Walsh realizes his mistake in minimizing the brutal death of Marjorie's sister. But before he can apologize, she continues.

MARJORIE

I've spoken to my brother, and gotten his emotional, though admittedly biased, comments. I've spent time with Howard McLean, the police detective who led the investigation, and received what I considered to be a balanced and factual account of the crime and the pursuit. And now, Mr. Walsh, I've come to the one person who can fulfill the final part of this story. Someone who can provide insight into Hickman's actions and motivations.

She waits for this to soak in, before delivering her closing arguments.

MARJORIE

Mr. Walsh, we've come a long way, at considerable effort and expense, to let you tell your side of the story. If I had any desire to impugn your work as Hickman's lawyer, or your reputation in general, I would have no problem writing something suitable for publication in the gossip rags. That's not my goal, I promise you. My goal is to explore this tragedy from every angle.

A quiet moment passes. A wry smile comes to Walsh's face.

WALSH

You make a very strong argument. Are you sure you're not a lawyer yourself?

MARJORIE

No sir. I never had the stomach for it. So... shall we get on with it?

Walsh STAMPS HIS CANE on the ground.

WALSH

Yes. Let's see if you're as good as your word.

Marjorie nods at Ralph. He STARTS THE CAMERA.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

MARJORIE (O.S.)

So at the time of Hickman's trial, you were a lawyer in Kansas City, correct?

WALSH

That is correct. Once Edward was apprehended, Eva Hickman, Edward's mother, retained my services to represent him in Los Angeles. I had to quickly make arrangements. Thankfully, because I wouldn't arrive in Los Angeles for a few days, Edward's hearing was postponed. But that didn't stop him from speaking to the press.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. L.A. COUNTY JAIL - AFTERNOON

ARMED GUARDS watch intently as REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS jockey for position a few feet from where Hickman sits in shackles. It's evident from the look in his eyes that he's eating up the attention.

WALSH (V.O.)

Despite my advice, Edward was planning on pleading guilty. He said he was ready for the consequences. He even offered to speak to Perry Parker directly. To tell him every detail.

PAST - 1927 - INT. L.A. COUNTY JAIL - AFTERNOON

Hickman is led through the wings back to his cell. Shackled at the wrists and ankles, he makes a great deal of NOISE as he shuffles through the corridor. He realizes the other INMATES are staring him down threateningly as he walks past.

WALSH (V.O.)

But Edward's positive attitude faded when he realized that everything had changed. He no longer had his movies, or books, or records. He was a prisoner of the city of Los Angeles, and he would likely be hanged for his crimes.

When they arrive at his cell, Hickman is unnerved by what he finds...

INSERT - JAIL CELL

His headshot from the newspaper, hung with a noose.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. L.A. COUNTY JAIL - VARIOUS - MONTAGE

Over two days, multiple PSYCHIATRISTS question Hickman.

WALSH (V.O.)

The LAPD subjected Edward to a battery of psychological tests delivered by several doctors. Based on the severity of his crimes, most laypeople would believe that he was insane. However, to the specialists who examined Edward, he lucidly explained his crime and appeared to realize its effect and the ultimate punishment he would face. The doctors came away with the belief that Edward was indeed sane.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

MARJORIE (O.S.)

So when did you arrive in Los Angeles?

WALSH

January 2nd. I immediately went to the jail to meet with Edward, in order to prepare for his arraignment. We didn't have a lot of time, because we were scheduled to be in court on January 3rd, the very next day.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

Walsh stands with Hickman as the charges are read by JUDGE HARDY. For the first time since his arrest, Hickman appears nervous. Walsh waves a handful of papers.

WALSH (V.O.)

After denying both my request for a delay in entering Edward's plea, and a five-week extension of our defense preparation, Judge Hardy accepted his plea of not guilty by reason of insanity. And with that, the trial was set to begin on January 28th, 1928.

As Judge Hardy BANGS HIS GAVEL to end this session, Perry Jr. watches Hickman intently from the back row. His eyes dart between Walsh and the man who murdered his little sister.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

WALSH

The trial was only three weeks away, which did not leave us much time to prepare a strong defense. Luckily, I was not working alone. I had hired a local defense lawyer to the team.

MARJORIE

Richard Cantillon.

WALSH

Yes. Richard Cantillon.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - INT. L.A. COUNTY JAIL - HICKMAN'S CELL - AFTERNOON

RICHARD CANTILLON, a large well-dressed middle-aged man, sits with Walsh in Hickman's cell. They go over various documents and statements.

WALSH (V.O.)

Over the next ten days we researched every aspect of the case, including the findings of the various doctors that had examined Hickman.

And we also spent an extensive amount of time interviewing Edward about the crime, hoping to uncover details not printed in his confession.

Overwhelmed by all the evidence before him, Hickman is nervous. Walsh tries to comfort him.

CANTILLON

Is there anything, Edward, anything at all that you can add to the story?

WALSH

Remember, the court is going to want to hear the absolute truth. If you withhold, or worse, if you lie... it's not going to benefit your case.

CANTILLON

Please, Edward. Tell us what happened.

Hickman takes a deep breath.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Hickman watches from the sofa as Marion dances around the apartment to a song on the phonograph.

WALSH (V.O.)

According to Edward, Marion enjoyed being kidnapped. At least, at first. She thought they were on an adventure of sorts.

Marion returns to Hickman's record collection. She pulls out a copy of the song "Pretty Baby" and puts it on the phonograph. The song fills the room as Marion gets a chocolate bar out of the cabinet. She munches on the candy as she sings along with the record.

WALSH (V.O.)

Edward had a decent record collection. Apparently Marion loved the song "Pretty Baby", the Billy Murray version, and played it often.

He bought a bunch of candy bars and let her have whatever she wanted. In truth, he liked her. He enjoyed having her around.

Hickman sips a beer as he watches Marion. His attention is more creepy than it is admiring.

WALSH (V.O.)

But he couldn't stop thinking about his eventual goal: taking those fifteen hundred dollars, and getting into seminary school. The girl was a means to an end. Luckily, she wasn't a bother. The promise Edward made that she'd be home by Friday night seemed to keep her from worrying.

Marion turns to Hickman, smiling. He just nods.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - EVENING

Hickman and Marion sit in his car in the shadows.

Marion's face lights up when she sees her father drive by. And Hickman's face lights up too: he's almost gotten his prize.

But then the cars filled with police pass them. The smile fades from Hickman's face. He starts the car. Drives off in the opposite direction.

Marion doesn't understand. She looks back, to where her father was headed. Tears fill her eyes, as the truth of her situation begins to dawn on her.

WALSH (V.O.)

But Friday night, when the police showed up, apparently Marion realized their adventure wasn't a lark anymore. She was supposed to be going home with her father, but Edward couldn't make the exchange without getting arrested. And she didn't understand that.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Her freedom no longer guaranteed, Marion is now incredibly upset. She CRIES. She SCREAMS. She throws herself onto the bed. Hickman does his best to distract her with candy and his phonograph, but she's not having any of it.

WALSH (V.O.)

As Edward told it, all day Saturday, Marion was a handful. She was angry. She wasn't fun anymore. She demanded he take her home and drop her off and drive away. Edward tried telling her he'd be arrested, but she wasn't having it.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - EVENING - LATER

Marion is curled up on the couch, asleep at last. Hickman sits on his bed, his head in his hands, his nerves shot.

WALSH (V.O.)

The only reason she finally fell asleep was because she was exhausted. Edward recalled thinking that she wasn't interesting anymore. She was scaring him.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

Walsh fidgets uneasily in his chair.

WALSH

Both Richard and I realized that this retelling of his story didn't match the sequence of events he detailed in either of his previous confessions. It was drastically different. But Edward didn't listen to our concerns. He was too deep into reliving his crime.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - LATE EVENING

The room is dark. Hickman steps into the apartment. Closes the door behind him.

WALSH (V.O.)

Edward had to go mail another letter to the Parkers, but with Marion in the state she was in, he couldn't trust to leave her alone.

Hickman flicks on the light.

Marion is bound and gagged to a chair in the middle of the room. This is not the passive girl from the previous confessions. She SCREAMS behind her gag. THRASHES about. Her eyes are bloodshot. Wide with fear.

WALSH (V.O.)

Edward told us that when he saw the fear in her eyes, he actually felt some immediate remorse. Believe it or not, he even briefly considered returning her to her home as she insisted.

Hickman makes a move to undo her gag to ease her discomfort. But him reaching for Marion panics her, and causes her to increase her efforts to get free.

He looms over his helpless captive, his mind and soul wracked with indecision and frustration and fear.

WALSH (V.O.)

But he was afraid she would start screaming the second he let her out of the car, and he'd be caught by the police keeping an eye on your family's house.

Almost on the verge of tears himself, Hickman drops to his knees in front of Marion. He clasps his hands. Bows his head. Closes his eyes. And he begins to mouth a prayer.

WALSH (V.O.)

So... he prayed. He prayed to God for guidance.

Hickman is deep in prayer. Suddenly a dazzling light illuminates his face. He opens his eyes.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

Walsh fumbles with his cane, unwilling to continue.

MARJORIE

Mr. Walsh? And then what happened?

WALSH
 (reluctantly)
 According to Edward, his prayers
 were answered... by Providence.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - LATE EVENING

HICKMAN'S POV

Standing behind Marion in a blinding aura of heavenly light is PROVIDENCE, a God-like man with flowing robes, long gray hair, and a thick gray beard.

HICKMAN

Takes in the personification of God with tears in his eyes. He watches in awe as Providence points to Marion's neck.

PROVIDENCE
 (booming voice)
 Strangle her! STRANGLE HER!

Hickman rises. He gently unties the dish towel wrapped around Marion's mouth. This act calms her down. She looks up to Hickman with thanks in her red-rimmed eyes.

WALSH (V.O.)
 Edward said he could see in her eyes that she believed he was about to free her. That she would be dropped off at home and he'd leave her family alone forever. That it was almost over.

Hickman tightens his grip on the towel, twisting it around his fists. There is a look of rapturous joy on his face.

WALSH (V.O.)
 Unfortunately, she was right.

Hickman lowers the dish towel around Marion's throat and pulls both ends with all his strength. The handkerchief he stuffed in her mouth pops out. Still bound to the chair, she GURGLES and STRUGGLES.

Marion goes limp. Hickman drops the towel on the floor.

Hickman sits on the couch opposite Marion. Providence is no longer in the room. Coming down from his hallucination, Hickman takes in the lifeless body of his captive.

Marion's tousled head lolls to the side. Her lips are turning blue. One shoe has slipped off.

Outside the window, the sun begins to rise.

Hickman drags Marion's body into the bathroom.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATE EVENING

BEGIN MONTAGE

Hickman clothes Marion's remains in her dress. He empties a bag of cosmetics onto the bed. With her torso propped up against the headboard, he applies makeup to her face with a napkin to make it look as if she's alive. He takes needles and thread and sews her eyelids, making sure not to make them too widely open. He does her hair into a ponytail. He ties a pretty bow in her hair.

WALSH (V.O.)

Edward had the foresight to figure that your father would ask to see Marion before handing over the money. But it would be dark when they met. So his goal was to give the appearance that she was still alive.

END MONTAGE

Hickman turns off the light and steps back to admire his work. In the low light coming from outside, the young girl's remains looks presentable.

PAST - 1928 - INT. L.A. COUNTY JAIL - HICKMAN'S CELL - AFTERNOON

Handkerchief to his mouth, Cantillon bolts from the cell. He pushes past Walsh, who tries to keep his composure.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

Reacting to Marjorie, Walsh hands her a glass of water.

WALSH

I apologize, Miss Parker. I assumed you, of all people, were familiar with the details of the case.

MARJORIE

Oh, I am. It's just, confronting them again, especially the actual murder... It's a shock, at times.

WALSH

(to Ralph)

Should we take a break?

RALPH

That's probably a good idea. How 'bout it, Margie?

MARJORIE

(collecting herself)

No. Let's continue. How did you react to Hickman's new confession?

WALSH

As best I could, to be honest.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - INT. L.A. COUNTY JAIL - HICKMAN'S CELL -
AFTERNOON

Even after divulging such a grim story, Hickman shows no remorse. Walsh takes a breath and collects himself.

WALSH

I assume the exchange occurred later that day. Do you have anything to change about, or add to, the events of that evening, Edward?

Hickman looks at Walsh with a sick grin.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. HICKMAN'S APARTMENT - MORNING

The CAMERA PANS across the messy living space. The ransom money is on the kitchen table. Broken golf clubs are strewn about the room. "Pretty Baby" is playing on the phonograph. Hickman is in the bathroom shaving.

BAM BAM BAM! Someone at the door.

Without losing his cool, Hickman wipes off his face. Making as little noise as possible, he scoops up the ransom money and stuffs it behind the wall-mounted ironing board.

He FLUSHES the toilet, then answers the door, finding the two YOUNG OFFICERS waiting for him.

WALSH (V.O.)

Edward told us that the police came to investigate "Donald Evans'" apartment.

The Young Officers step inside the apartment. They glance about, noticing the broken golf clubs on the floor. They cast their eyes around the space, peeking into the rooms but not spending enough time to examine them closely. Hickman gives one of the policemen a chocolate bar as a distraction.

WALSH (V.O.)

He played the innocent, told them a few self-deprecating jokes, winning them over enough to distract them from doing their jobs.

The Young Officers leave the apartment, one of them happily munching his chocolate bar.

Hickman gives them a big smile as he closes the door behind them.

Hickman retrieves the ransom money from its hiding place. He holds it reverently.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

MARJORIE (O.S.)

Did Hickman never see the irony in perpetrating crimes like this, in order to pay for religious schooling?

WALSH

No, he didn't. Edward believed that whatever it took to get him into seminary school, it was God's divine will.

Walsh leans back with a sigh.

WALSH

So now, when the public would hear this new information, that the police had the killer in their grasp but failed to do their jobs, the tide of public opinion was going to turn ugly.

MARJORIE (O.S.)

Those officers were completely oblivious to the evidence right before their eyes! How was it that no one was at least dragged before an inquiry board?

WALSH

You'll find that the police are very protective of their own.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - INT./EXT. L.A. COUNTY JAIL

Hickman prepares for his first day in court.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

McLean and Contreras watch as Hickman puts on a cheap suit. Handcuffs and manacles are clamped on him. Armed police officers lead Hickman through the empty county jail hallways.

Hickman emerges from the building to find a frenzied mob of protesters and supporters. McLean, Contreras, and a squad of officers hold back the crowd as Hickman is shoved into a police wagon.

END MONTAGE

Hickman sits alone, in chains, looking through bars as the wagon pulls away.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

Everyone rises as JUDGE J.J. TRABUCCO enters. Walsh steals a glance at prosecution lead District Attorney ASA KEYES, who quietly confers with his associates.

Judge Trabucco takes his place at the bench. Everyone sits.

WALSH (V.O.)

Cantillon and I did our best to delay the proceedings, to give us more time. The only thing we were successful in doing was having Judge Hardy dismissed on the basis of prejudice.

To start the second day of the trial, we and the prosecution's lead, District Attorney Asa Keyes, all agreed on designating Judge J.J. Trabucco, a thirty year veteran on the bench, as the new judge.

The CLERK OF THE COURT stands.

CLERK OF THE COURT
 Indictment Number 32453 filed
 December 22, 1927, The People of
 the State of California, Plaintiff,
 versus William Edward Hickman,
 Defendant. The said William Edward
 Hickman, on or about the 17th day
 of December, 1927, did willfully,
 unlawfully, feloniously, and with
 malice aforethought, kill and
 murder one of the statute in such
 cases made and provided against the
 peace and dignity of the People Of
 The State Of California.

As the Clerk reads the indictment, the CAMERA PLAYS OVER the courtroom. The JURY, the crowd of onlookers, the guards, the psychiatrists, Perry Jr., McLean, Contreras... eventually landing on Hickman and his defense team.

CLERK OF THE COURT
 The defendant, Hickman, pleads not
 guilty by reason of insanity to
 that charge, and is now before you
 for trial.

Walsh looks at his defendant. Gone is the swagger from the previous night. Hickman fidgets. He is visibly nervous.

PAST - 1928 - INT. COURTROOM - MORNING - LATER

Witnesses take the stand.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

Appearing as if she's aged ten years in the last five weeks, Mary Holt points out Hickman with tears in her eyes.

Looking at a map of the exchange location, Contreras almost loses control of his emotions.

Dr. Wagner has to excuse himself when he's shown one of his autopsy photos.

WALSH (V.O.)

The issue was not whether Edward had killed Marion. That had been established by the insanity plea. The burden was on Richard and I to show conclusively, beyond a reasonable doubt, that Edward did not know right from wrong at the time he killed Marion Parker. If we failed in that task, then Edward would lose his life.

END MONTAGE

Hickman doesn't pay attention to any of the witnesses. He's focused on the PSYCHIATRISTS in the gallery behind him as they scribble copious notes.

WALSH (V.O.)

At least, with the weekend between us and the next day of the trial, we had time to focus on our strategy for Monday's round of testimony: to show that Edward was the product of a long line of family insanity.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

WILLIAM HICKMAN, a stern, weathered Midwestern man in his late 40s, takes the witness stand.

CANTILLON

Will you state your name for the court?

THOMAS HICKMAN

William Thomas Hickman.

CANTILLON

And what is your relationship to the defendant?

THOMAS HICKMAN

He's my son.

CANTILLON

What was your reaction when you heard the news of Edward's crime?

THOMAS HICKMAN

I figgered it was the insanity on his mother's side o' the family.

CANTILLON

There was a history of insanity in Mrs. Hickman's family?

THOMAS HICKMAN

Yessir. Edward's grandmother, Rebecca, she was of a very melancholy nature. And Edward's mother, Eva, she began just like her mother. She always had a horror of givin' birth to children. When Eva was pregnant with Edward, she became so unglued that she threatened to murder our unborn child, by takin' a knife and rippin' herself open.

The entire room goes quiet. The looks on the jurists' faces tell Walsh that Mr. Hickman's testimony has gone a long way towards bolstering their defense.

Judge Trabucco's GAVEL BANGING signals a recess.

As Thomas Hickman is leaving the court, he tries to get the attention of his son. But Edward stares straight ahead, never acknowledging his father's presence.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - INT. COURTROOM - AFTERNOON

All heads turn as EVA HICKMAN, the frail, thin mother of the infamous murderer of Marion Parker, enters the courtroom, escorted by a COURT OFFICER.

WALSH (V.O.)

We had several concerns about Hickman's mother, Eva. After Thomas testified to her fragile emotional state, Richard and I wondered if she would be helpful to our case. We worked hard to impress on her the importance of her testimony to save Edward from the gallows. When the trial resumed, we hoped for the best.

As Eva Hickman reaches her son, she unexpectedly puts a hand on his shoulder. Hickman looks up.

For a moment something intangible, some inexplicable energy that exists only between mother and child, passes between them.

Many onlookers react to this odd, yet touching moment. Hickman suddenly realizes that the entire room is staring at him. He drops his head again.

Eva Hickman takes the witness stand. Doing his best to be gentle and reassuring, Cantillon asks her questions.

CANTILLON

Did Edward ever give you reason to believe he was violent?

EVA HICKMAN

No, but...

CANTILLON

Please, Mrs. Hickman. Go ahead.

EVA HICKMAN

It was after he lost the national high school debate contest, he changed. He prepared for most of a year, and he was sure he was going to win. But he didn't. After that, he wasn't the same person. He was moody. He ignored his school work. He stopped talking to his friends. I tried to make him happy, but nothing I did worked.

CANTILLON

And what happened next?

EVA HICKMAN

Edward completely gave up on school and became a hooligan. He... he lied to me. Told me he went to California to be a movie star. But all he did was rob people. Stole cars. Forged checks. After being caught, he came back home to Kansas. But his mood was even worse. He seemed to blame the world for his problems. And then... then he was gone again. I had no idea where he was... until I saw the headlines.

CANTILLON

Mrs. Hickman, do you believe that your son was not in his right mind when he kidnapped and murdered Marion Parker?

EVA HICKMAN

Edward suffered from the same curse that was on my mother. And on me. His melancholy poisoned him. Turned him from a happy boy into a violent thief. I lost my son to the nature I passed on to him.

CANTILLON

Thank you, Mrs. Hickman. No further questions, your honor.

Cantillon helps Eva Hickman out of the witness stand. The Court Officer leads her out of the room. Eva walks slowly. A lifetime of pain she's spent years suppressing is now etched on her face.

WALSH (V.O.)

Everyone in that room could see that Edward's mother was suffering. But I could see in the juror's eyes, they couldn't forget how much more painfully the mother of Marion Parker was suffering over the same crime.

All eyes are on Eva Hickman... except her son's. Hickman is still looking down.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

Another day of depositions. Hickman sits impassively, as both prosecutors and defenders grill the people on the stand.

But his demeanor changes when DR. SKOOG, a psychiatrist, is called to the stand.

CANTILLON

Dr. Skoog, in your professional opinion, what is the mental state of the defendant?

Skoog opens a folder. Walsh can feel Hickman tense up.

DR. SKOOG

Allow me to read, from my own notes, an interview I conducted with Hickman.

(reading notes)

"I asked him, 'Do you consider yourself a Christian?' His response: 'No, sir.'"

FLASHBACK - 1927 - INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - AFTERNOON

Skoog's interview with Hickman. In a powerfully triumphant mood, Hickman paces. Gesticulates. Raises his hands to the heavens. As he pontificates, Skoog patiently listens.

WALSH (V.O.)

According to Skoog's testimony, Hickman believed that a power greater than God, a power he called "Providence", had been given to him in order to make him a great man and to accomplish great things. He didn't care if people thought he was crazy, because Providence had shown him his future.

PAST - 1928 - INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

Skoog reads this last line to the court:

DR. SKOOG

"Hickman said, 'If the Power directs me to do it, I do it. I know it will lead to a great end.'" It is my conclusion that Hickman's visions of Providence stem from a grandiose delusion that is common in paranoid schizophrenics.

The entire room is silent. Hickman trembles with rage.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - INT. L.A. COUNTY JAIL - HICKMAN'S CELL

Standing outside the cell, Walsh and Cantillon try to console their client. Hickman beats at his temples in despair.

WALSH (V.O.)

Edward was livid. He didn't realize that the doctors examining him would be able to introduce their sessions as testimony. He believed they were talking as friends. He was furious that something so private and sacred as his connection to Providence had been exposed for the entire country to see. He was worried he would be considered crazy.

Hickman finally drops to his knees, hanging weakly from the cell door.

WALSH (V.O.)

We impressed upon him once again that this was our entire strategy, to make the jury believe he was insane. That decision was what would keep him from the gallows.

Hickman slowly pulls himself up off the floor. Smiling through his tears, he clasps their hands.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

MARJORIE

I have to ask you, Mr. Walsh... after all this time spent with Hickman, did you really think he was crazy?

Walsh shifts uncomfortably in his chair.

WALSH

My opinion of his mental state wasn't the issue. As the trial unfolded inside the courthouse, Cantillon and I were very aware of how the trial was proceeding in the court of public opinion. The public didn't give a damn about any insanity. To the average American, Edward was a cold-blooded child killer who deserved to be hanged.

Walsh sets his jaw.

WALSH

And juries are culled from the public.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - INT. COURTROOM - MORNING

The room fills with people before the trial commences. The jury files in. Judge Trabucco enters and takes the bench. Walsh and Cantillon sit with Hickman.

WALSH (V.O.)

As the final day of the trial arrived, Richard and I knew what we were up against. The public was thirsting for Hickman's blood. We were up next. But the last words were in the hands of the prosecution. We had our work cut out for us.

Cantillon takes a stance before the jury.

CANTILLON

As trial jurors, it is your duty to accept and apply the law as given to you by the trial judge. The question as to whether William Edward Hickman is sane or insane is not one of medical science or legal definition. It is a question to be answered by your common sense. An impartial consideration of the evidence will satisfy you that it is far more probable the boy is insane.

Cantillon gestures. He looks each juror directly in the eyes. He carries himself straight and tall, to impress upon each person in attendance the importance of his words.

Hickman doesn't watch. He stares at the floor. Walsh, on the other hand, is intently focused on his partner's performance.

WALSH (V.O.)

Luckily, Richard put together what I considered an excellent argument in favor of our client. He had broken down the defense presented during trial, discussing again Hickman's history and his choices.

Cantillon reaches the end of his speech.

CANTILLON

Under the enlightened influence of civilization, a refined law decrees the non-responsibility of one suffering from insanity. Regardless of public excitement and vindictiveness, this is the law of our land. These all are the bizarre acts of a diseased mind. They have caused horror and loathing, but it is this boy's mental condition upon which your verdict must be grounded, not on your emotional reaction to his irrational behavior.

With that, Cantillon concludes his statement. He takes his seat next to Hickman. Walsh gives Cantillon a silent approval of his presentation. Hickman remains passive.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

WALSH

Richard had made it difficult for the subsequent final word from the prosecution to argue against his points. But Hickman murdered and dismembered an innocent little girl. That was still the reason anyone was in that courtroom, including the jury assigned to decide the killer's fate.

PAST - 1928 - INT. COURTROOM - LATE MORNING

Cantillon's and Walsh's sense of victory wanes as D.A. Asa Keyes rises.

WALSH (V.O.)

And now, the jury had to hear from District Attorney Asa Keyes.

Keyes makes his way to the jury box with a thoughtful look.

KEYES

William Edward Hickman started his insanity dodge in Oregon, in jail.

He knew the only way to attempt to dodge the gallows was by insanity, and he was smart enough to try to fool the jury.

Keyes holds the attention of not only the jury, but the gallery, the press... even Hickman looks up as Keyes presses home his points. Walsh takes in Keyes' summation with trepidation.

WALSH (V.O.)

Asa Keyes was a clever man who possessed a sardonic wit that he injected to add color and verve. It was always effective, especially when dealing with the prejudices of a jury against a child killer like Edward.

Keyes is in the home stretch now.

KEYES

Edward Hickman is not an all-American boy. He is an American criminal who, with the aid of your verdict, the State of California will purge from its borders.

He takes a moment to let his words sink in, before hitting the jury with his final words.

KEYES

I'm going to submit this matter to you with the hope that it does not go out to the world that the state of California is not able to adequately cope with a criminal, because a criminal the man is. He is not insane.

In the gallery, Perry Jr. clenches his fists as Keyes finishes his summation.

Several rows behind him, Detective McLean takes in the mood of the room as D.A. Keyes returns to his seat. From where he sits, McLean notes Hickman's body posture. He tries to read the jury's minds through their expressions.

WALSH (V.O.)

After more than a month of headlines in newspapers throughout the country, keeping the public informed of every step of the kidnapping, ransom, murder, pursuit of Edward, and eventual capture, the trial completed in only fifteen days. It was now time for the jury to decide his fate.

Hickman sits alone in the crowded courtroom. A multitude of expressions flash across his face.

WALSH (V.O.)

The jury was not to decide Hickman guilty or innocent of killing Marion Parker. Hickman had confessed to the murder. But was he guilty or not guilty by reason of insanity?

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

Walsh laughs ironically.

WALSH

Fifteen days in the courtroom. And it only took them forty-three minutes to decide Edward was sane.

SMASH CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - INT. COURTROOM - AFTERNOON

BAM! Trabucco's gavel comes down. The trial is over.

The gallery erupts into APPLAUSE. Reporters dash out the door, clutching reams of notes. Keyes and his team shake hands and clap each other on the shoulders.

Walsh and Cantillon try to console Hickman. But he's not paying attention to them. Hickman is dejected, but calm. Almost relieved.

WALSH (V.O.)

Despite all our best efforts, William Edward Hickman was sentenced to be executed by hanging on October 19, 1928.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

Walsh looks dejected as his story comes to an end. A quiet moment passes before Marjorie speaks.

MARJORIE

You seem disappointed.

WALSH

Well, of course. Call it hubris, but... I don't like to lose. I was hired to prove Edward incapable of committing murder. I was unsuccessful.

MARJORIE

And you don't feel any guilt about that?

WALSH

Guilt? Why would I feel any guilt?

MARJORIE

I can hear it in your voice, Mr. Walsh. It's there, implied between the lines in your defense. You never felt he was truly insane. Deep down you knew he was in complete control when he killed Marion. And yet you did everything you could to convince a jury to spare his miserable life.

WALSH

You said -- no, you promised me -- that you were interested in getting the truth, young lady.

MARJORIE

Oh, I got the truth. I got exactly what I was expecting. I've been sitting here for well over an hour, listening to you go on and on about how you did everything you could to assuage Edward's fears about his fate. But not once did you express any concern for what my family went through. Or what Marion felt when your client choked the life out of her!

WALSH

And there we are. I believe it's time to put an end to this. I'd like you to leave my office now.

MARJORIE

Don't worry. We got what we needed. Come on, Ralph. We're done here.

WALSH

Miss Parker, you really have no right to sit in judgment of me. Or of Richard. Losing Edward's case has haunted Richard. He truly believed that only an insane person could have done what Edward did.

MARJORIE

But you can't sit there in all good conscience and tell me you don't think Hickman was sane.

Walsh doesn't take her bait. But something flickers across his face, something subtle.

MARJORIE

Fine.

Marjorie's chair SCRAPES. She takes a few steps past him, then stops.

MARJORIE

Keep telling yourself that you were just doing your job. That seems to be all you need to live a guilt-free life.

WALSH

I daresay I don't seem to be the one who is concerned about their guilt.

Marjorie blanches. Walsh's words struck a nerve. She runs out of the room.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LAW OFFICE - EVENING

Walsh finally realizes Ralph is staring at him.

WALSH

I said, we're done.

RALPH (O.S.)
You bet we are.

Ralph CLICKS off the camera.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - EXT. SAN QUENTIN PRISON - ESTABLISHING SHOT -
EVENING

A light Bay Area fog covers the grounds and the buildings.

PAST - INT. SAN QUENTIN PRISON - EVENING

The prison's death house. Music plays faintly in the background. A young guard, CHARLES ALSTON, patrols along a row of barred doors, until he arrives at Hickman's cell.

Hickman sits on the bed, staring at the floor, his hands clasped. The music comes from a phonograph in the corner of his cell.

Alston continues on his patrol. In the background, the record changes to the song "Pretty Baby".

HICKMAN (O.S.)
Hey!

Alston stops. He returns to Hickman's cell.

ALSTON
Whaddya you want?

Hickman is standing by the phonograph. The light from the hallway throws shadows from the cell bars across his face.

HICKMAN
I wanna talk to somebody.

A tense moment of silence elapses between the two men.

ALSTON
Tell me somethin'. Why'd you kill
that girl?

Hickman almost laughs as his answer comes to him.

HICKMAN

Because I got tired of finding her in the room where I kept her while I was trying to get the ransom money. It got so the sight of her face drove me into a frenzy.

ALSTON

(disgusted)

That's all? That's your reason?

Hickman just shrugs.

ALSTON

Why didn't you just drop her off in front of her house and leave the state?

HICKMAN

It's funny you should say that. Marion said the same thing. I almost did it... but I thought she would scream and alert the police guards at the Parker home before I could make a clean getaway.

Alston feels like he's getting Hickman to open up.

ALSTON

Then why didn't you take her out on a side street or into the country and leave her?

Hickman looks down and shakes his head. He thinks for a moment. Then he looks up at Alston.

HICKMAN

That's where I used bad judgment.

He walks slowly towards the cell door.

HICKMAN

I used bad judgment all the way through. I could have robbed a bank, got ten times more than the fifteen hundred, and would have suffered far less serious consequences when captured.

Alston takes a step back as Hickman continues, his cadence elevating as he returns to his favorite topic: his own superiority.

HICKMAN

I guess it was the most terrible
crime in the history of the world.
If ever a mortal deserved to be
hanged, I do.

He reaches the door, his hands loose in his pockets.

HICKMAN

I wasn't crazy when I killed the
Parker girl. I would have killed my
best friend to get what I wanted.

Alston is done with this sick man. He's about to leave. But
Hickman isn't finished with his captive audience. Hickman's
disarming grin reappears. He stares right into Alston's eyes.

HICKMAN

(quietly)
I got a kick out of dissecting
Marion's corpse.

Hickman finally gets the reaction he's looking for. Alston
seethes with rage. His hand tightens on his nightstick.

The "Pretty Baby" record comes to an end.

And Hickman bursts into LAUGHTER. Loud, maniacal, mocking
LAUGHTER. Accompanied by the incessant SCRATCHING and
CRACKLING of the phonograph needle.

Alston can't get away fast enough. He SLAMS the heavy metal
door to the death house behind him.

CLOSE ON Hickman's face, as his LAUGHTER ECHOES through the
building.

MATCH CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - INT. SAN QUENTIN PRISON - EXECUTION CHAMBER -
MORNING

CLOSE ON Hickman's face. But he's no longer laughing. He's
nervous.

On the far side of the room, WARDEN JAMES HOLOHAN, FATHER
WILLIAM FLEMING, DR. RALPH BLECKER, and a gaggle of REPORTERS
await Hickman's final fate.

A large noose is looped around Hickman's neck. Then
tightened. At that moment, Hickman begins to faint.

Warden Holohan gives a signal. The EXECUTIONER springs the trap door.

Hickman drops to his death. But he doesn't die right away. He struggles as the rope vibrates and gyrates. Eventually he stops moving.

Dr. Blecker puts a stethoscope to Hickman's chest. He listens for a moment. Then he nods to Warden Holohan.

PAST - 1928 - INT. SAN QUENTIN PRISON - MORNING

Guard Alston stands under a public address system speaker in a prison hallway, smoking a cigarette.

The speaker CRACKLES to life.

WARDEN HOLOHAN'S VOICE
Attention: William Edward Hickman
was declared dead at 10:25 A.M.

Alston soaks in this information. He's pleased. He grinds his cigarette under his heel and returns to his patrol.

INTERVIEW - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Perry Jr. is upset. The interview has been hard on him.

PERRY JR.
And that was it. Hickman was dead.
Dad tried to move on, but he was
never the same. I'm sure the stress
contributed to his early death. He
never admitted it, but I could
tell... he was eaten up with guilt.

He sits back in his chair, exhausted.

PERRY JR.
Are we done? Is that enough?

MARJORIE (O.S.)
Yes, I think we got what we needed.

RALPH (O.S.)
Okay. I'll get the equipment out of
the way.

Ralph cuts off the camera.

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Ralph begins breaking down his equipment.

Perry Jr. slumps in his chair.

PERRY JR.

God, I wish I'd never agreed to do this. I really thought I'd put all of it behind me.

(to Marjorie)

What are you getting out of all this?

MARJORIE

I told you. Cantillon wants to publish--

PERRY JR.

Come on, Marjorie. Be realistic. So he puts out a book. No one remembers what happened to Marion. You said that guy in the store didn't remember, and he was there! No one cares!

MARJORIE

(defensive)

Fine. I'm sorry I wasted your time.

PERRY JR.

No, I want to know. Did you think you'd turn up some new piece of evidence? Or, what, catch someone in a lie? So you can prove they didn't do their job?

The look on Marjorie's face tells him he's hit a nerve.

PERRY JR.

Marjorie, they caught him. They executed him. He didn't get away with it. He paid the ultimate price.

MARJORIE

It's not that. It's just... it never should have happened at all!

PERRY JR.

What? You mean, someone could have predicted Hickman was going to kidnap Marion?

MARJORIE
You're being an ass, Perry!

PERRY JR.
You started this. Tell me! What do you think could have been done?

MARJORIE
I don't know! Something!

PERRY JR.
Marjorie, we were helpless to prevent this.

MARJORIE
Don't say that!

PERRY JR.
Hickman was a monster, Marjorie. No one could have saved Marion. McLean couldn't. Dad couldn't. No one could!

MARJORIE
That's not true! Somebody could have done something!

PERRY JR.
Who? Wait, do you mean me? Are you blaming me for not doing enough?

Marjorie stares at her brother with wide tear-filled eyes. Perry Jr. waits for her to answer. But then he finally comprehends what she's not saying.

PERRY JR.
Oh my God... Marjorie... Marion's death was not your fault!

Those words coming out of his mouth break the dam.

MARJORIE
If... If I hadn't been born first...!

PERRY JR.
Oh Sis...!

MARJORIE
If I'd paid attention... on the bus...! Or maybe I could have tricked him! Or gotten free! Or called the police! Or... Or...

Perry Jr. kneels in front of her. Takes her hands.

MARJORIE

It should have been me! Not her!
Me!

PERRY JR.

(softly)

Marjorie! Marjorie. Have you been feeling like this, all these years? You can't think like that. You can't! No, Marion didn't deserve to die. I would have done anything to save her from what happened. Any of us would given our lives for hers. But it wasn't up to us.

CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - EXT. GRAVEYARD - MORNING

A heavy rain falls on the statue of an angel that overlooks a field of unmarked graves.

A prison van comes to stop at the edge of the field. Four WORKERS pull a plain pine coffin stenciled with "W.E. HICKMAN" from the rear of the van. They begin a slow slog across the wet ground towards an open grave.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

Hickman was a frightened, angry, confused, egocentric, petty thief and cold blooded killer.

A solemn PRIEST says a few words as the Workers lower the coffin into the grave.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

He was hiding in the shadows, planning and plotting.

The Workers shovel dirt onto the coffin.

PERRY JR. (V.O.)

And we were helpless. None of us, not me, not Dad, not you, not even God Himself, could have stopped that monster from taking Marion from us.

The Workers and the Priest walk away from the fresh grave of William Edward Hickman.

The rain continues to fall on the silent statue.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - 1951 - INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Tears well up in Perry Jr.'s eyes.

PERRY JR.

I forgave myself for not being there for Marion years ago. You have to forgive yourself too.

MARJORIE

But... but she's gone! Because of me, we lost her!

PERRY JR.

Marjorie... we never lost her. To me, and Mom, and especially Dad, she was always with us. Because we still had you.

His words touch her. Marjorie throws her arms around her brother. They hold each other close.

CUT TO:

PRESENT - 1951 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Marjorie still stands in the rain, across the street from her old house.

The trees are bigger. The hedges are fuller. A different car is parked in the driveway. But it's familiar. She looks deep into the house, searching for answers that don't come.

CANTILLON (O.S.)

An Italian family lives there now.

Marjorie tilts her umbrella, coming face to face with an older Richard Cantillon.

CANTILLON

Hello, Miss Parker.

MARJORIE

Mr. Cantillon. How on earth did you know I was here?

CANTILLON

I've been trying to get hold of you for several days now. I finally got your compatriot -- Ralph, right? -- on the phone. He told me you had come here. Have you found what you were looking for?

MARJORIE

I found enough to make sure that people will never believe Hickman was some poor misunderstood boy who should be pitied.

Cantillon begins leisurely circling her. She watches him warily.

CANTILLON

I became a lawyer because I believed that law is crucial to the functioning of our society. But it's not perfect. There are times when the peers chosen to judge a man, quite frankly, get it wrong. As they did in Edward's case. Just to be straight, I'm not looking to overturn their decision. It was done legally and within the constraints of our state laws.

He stops moving. Joins her in gazing at the Parkers' old house.

CANTILLON

But I'm also a human being. Edward was a human being, as well. And in all the time I spent with him, I didn't see a cold, calculating monster. I saw a young man whose mind had failed him. A young man whose grasp on reality had been damaged to the point of madness. I initially defended Edward because I was hired to do so. But in working with him I came to understand a simple truth: his crimes were not those of a sane man.

MARJORIE

There were people who sat in the gallery and saw the coldness in Hickman's eyes! They saw how Hickman basked in the attention he was getting!

Hickman knew exactly what he was doing! For God's sake, he mailed letters and went shopping while he was cutting my sister into pieces!

She get in Cantillon's face. Pokes him the chest to make her point.

MARJORIE

Every single person who was involved in the case believes that Hickman was sane!

CANTILLON

And... what? You think you can put everyone on camera? Get their "testimony", as it is? And then write your own biased screed about Edward?

MARJORIE

That's exactly what I think! Marion has thankfully been forgotten by the public. The last thing I want is for her to be dragged back into the spotlight, especially by someone trying to exonerate the monster who killed her! And I'll do whatever I can to stop you from doing that!

CANTILLON

But that's not your call to make. If I want to write a book, if I want to express my own well-informed opinion, I'm allowed to do that very thing. It's a free country. The last time I checked.

He looms over Marjorie.

CANTILLON

Are you going to put aside this foolish crusade you're on?

For a long moment they stare each other down. Marjorie tries to keep herself from being emotional.

Cantillon finally breaks the ice.

CANTILLON

Well, I guess I have your answer. Good luck getting the word out.

He begins to walk away.

MARJORIE

Wait!

Cantillon returns to where she stands.

MARJORIE

...I'll stop.

CANTILLON

Wonderful. You've come to your senses.

MARJORIE

But I have one condition.

CANTILLON

(laughing)

Marjorie! You're hardly in a position to bargain.

MARJORIE

My mother. She's in her seventies. Her health is failing. Her mind is failing. If she hears that Marion has been dragged into the public eye again... It will crush her.

All her bluster fades as her love for her mother takes over.

MARJORIE

You talk so proudly about respecting Hickman's humanity. Then respect my mother's, too. Respect the few happy memories she still has of our family. Of Marion. Promise me you won't publish your book, you won't give an interview, you won't even talk to the shoeshine boy about Marion, until my mother has passed. You do that... and I'll stop.

Cantillon is impressed with her boldness. After a few moments, he nods.

CANTILLON

I can accept that.

He holds out his hand. Marjorie takes it. They shake.

CANTILLON

You're a tough negotiator. Are you sure you never studied law?

MARJORIE

Never had the stomach for it.

CANTILLON

You should look into it. You're a natural. I'm glad we were able to meet, Marjorie.

Cantillon tips his hat to her. He climbs into his big black car parked up the road.

Marjorie watches him drive off. She turns back to her old family house.

MARION'S POV

The porch of her old home...

MATCH CUT TO:

PAST - 1928 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Standing on the porch, an emotionally exhausted Perry Parker Sr. faces the press gathered below.

Perry Jr., behind his father, has his arms around his mother Geraldine and his little sister Marjorie. Marjorie looks spent, as if she's completely cried out.

Perry Sr. has a hard time maintaining his composure.

YOUNG PERRY JR.

(softly)

Go ahead, Dad. Do this, one last time... and it's over.

That gives Perry Sr. a little jolt of confidence. He straightens his spine.

PERRY SR.

I am glad that the trial is over and that the jury realized it was my little girl, not Hickman, who was the victim in this case. Now, my family and I want to get on with our lives. Thank you.

Perry and his family return inside, ignoring the reporters' demands for more quotes and photos.

As the family enters the house, young Marjorie stops. She looks back over her shoulder, across the street.

And she smiles.

PRESENT - 1951 - EXT. PARKER HOUSE - MORNING

Marjorie cries. But they're different tears now. Tears of someone who's had a huge burden lifted off of their soul.

She leaves. Walks away from the house. From the past. From the guilt.