

HAPPILY NEVER AFTER ©

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. BLOOMFIELD - DAY

Snow covers the ground of the small village. The winter sun hides behind clouds. A gray, eerie gloom.

EXT. STEVENS HOUSE - DAY

A neglected dwelling. Cracked roof. Missing shutters. Chipped and peeling paint.

Dark, except for a light that radiates from a small, dirty window of the cellar.

INT. STEVENS HOUSE/CELLAR - DAY

Messy and cluttered. A naked light bulb hangs from the dingy ceiling.

MICKEY STEVENS, 19, sits at an old-fashioned sharpening wheel. Indistinguishable features.

Mickey pumps the pedal that turns the grinding wheel.

He puts the blade of a woodcutter's ax to it, in a methodical manner.

Metal on stone WHINES. Sparks fly from the ax blade, as the wheel sharpens it.

INT. MICKEY'S CAR - NIGHT

Mickey in the driver's seat. Seen from behind or in shadow.

DONNA WAGNER, 19, a pretty blond, sits next to him.

She wears a heavy winter coat. Its bulk cannot hide her obvious outstanding figure.

She gives Mickey a blank, vacant stare.

MICKEY

I don't get it, Donna.

DONNA

Too dumb to figure it out?

She raises an eyebrow. No response from Mickey.

DONNA

Mickey, it really was laughs going with you. But, I gotta be practical.

MICKEY

You don't want to get married?

DONNA

Of course, silly. Just, not to you. I'm gonna marry Gilbert Perkins.

MICKEY

His folks got lots of money. Your mom likes that, right? That's the problem. Your mom.

Donna sighs, impatient. Tears fill Mickey's eyes.

DONNA

The wedding's in six weeks... Don't suppose you want an invite?

MICKEY

Give me back my ring.

Donna smiles with a coquettish look.

The blonde holds out her hand. Admires an expensive diamond ring. Jiggles it to catch the evening light, and it glitters. She pouts.

DONNA

Mickey, wasn't this a present?

MICKEY

An engagement ring.

DONNA

Well, it's really too small for my finger. Couldn't get it off if I wanted... Don't worry. You'll get it in a few days.

Donna giggles. Smiles and rolls her eyes to him.

DONNA

Have to go now.

MICKEY

Donna, don't do this to me.

She frowns. Shakes her head and scoffs.

DONNA

Go home. Loser.

Donna exits the car. Mickey gazes after her.

INT. STEVENS HOUSE/CELLAR - DAY

Sunset gives the room a rosy tint.

Mickey inspects his work. Satisfied, he heads upstairs with the ax.

EXT. BLOOMFIELD - NIGHT

Rural, houses far apart. Icy winds blow deep snow drifts around them.

EXT. WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

An old, gray, two-story house. A half moon.

A garage/work shed near the back door. Three cars park in the driveway.

INT. WAGNER HOUSE/LIVING ROOM AND DINING AREA - NIGHT

A large open room. Dining area with long table and chairs adjoins a living room with couch, stuffed chairs, television, stereo, and fireplace.

A swinging door leads to the kitchen. Heavy drapes drawn at each window.

Donna, her mother LOUISE WAGNER, 40, BILLY WAGNER, 12, GILBERT PERKINS a handsome man of 22, and NOLAN PERKINS and ALICE PERKINS, 40s, eat and relax at the dining table.

All seem to enjoy their meal and have fun, except Billy.

A modest blaze in the fireplace warms the room.

Mrs. Wagner rings a glass bell.

The kitchen door swings open. The maid MARTHA, 50, enters.

She carries dessert plates. Places them in front of Mrs. Wagner and collects the dinner plates.

NOLAN PERKINS
Excellent dinner, Mrs. Wagner.

MRS. WAGNER
Thank you, Nolan.

MARTHA
Hmmp.

Mrs. Wagner ignores Martha's utterance.

Martha gathers the rest of the dishes.

MRS. WAGNER
Martha, you may bring it in now.

Martha makes her way into the kitchen.

MRS. WAGNER
A surprise for Gil and Donna.

A beat later, Martha comes out with a three-layer cake. Billy's face lights up.

Martha sets down the cake. Icing spells out "Congratulations Gilbert and Donna."

MRS. PERKINS
Mmmm, looks delicious. Homemade?

MARTHA & MRS. WAGNER
Yes.

Mrs. Wagner frowns at Martha.

MRS. WAGNER
Martha. Go in the kitchen. If we need you, we'll call.

MARTHA
Hmmpf.

Martha gives an indignant look and goes into the kitchen. Mrs. Wagner forces a smile.

She grabs a knife and cuts the cake into individual pieces.

MRS. WAGNER
You have to put up with lots when you get a housekeeper. All so... independent.

MRS. PERKINS
So true, Louise. Nolan and I have gone through half a dozen maids the past couple of years.

BILLY
Gimme a big piece, Mommy.

DONNA
Sure. The little piggy has to get the biggest piece.

BILLY
Oh, piss on you.

MRS. WAGNER
Billy. That's no way to talk to your sister.

DONNA
Give the little creep the whole cake, Mom. Then he'll shut up.

Mrs. Wagner issues a nervous laugh.

She cuts off a huge hunk of cake and gives it to Billy. The youngster dives into it.

GILBERT
Keep your hands away from his plate, Dad. Ya might lose 'em.

He and Donna laugh.

MRS. WAGNER

I can't tell you how pleased I was when Donna and your Gil started dating. Imagine that awful Mickey Stevens for a son-in-law.

DONNA

Icky Mickey.

She giggles.

GILBERT

So, how's come you still wear his engagement ring?

MRS. WAGNER

Well, that was never official.

DONNA

Give me a ring twice as big, and I'll take it off.

GILBERT

I suppose you'll want it on a silver platter?

DONNA

Gold would be better.

They all laugh.

EXT. WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

Mickey's old car pulls into the driveway and parks. Douses its headlights.

Mickey exits.

He wears a black raincoat. A ski mask over his face.

He walks up the driveway. The ax blade dangles beneath his coat. He carries a gasoline can in his other hand.

INT. WAGNER HOUSE/LIVING ROOM AND DINING AREA - NIGHT

The Wagners and Perkins eat dessert.

Billy holds up his empty plate.

His mother refills it with another huge piece of cake.

EXT. WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

Mickey reaches the back door. Sets down the gas can and ax.

INT. WAGNER HOUSE/LIVING ROOM AND DINING AREA - NIGHT

Martha collects the dessert plates and pours coffee.

Billy already half-way through his second portion.

MRS. PERKINS

Donna, I understand you made a record with the church choir.

MRS. WAGNER

Such a marvelous voice. Billy, get your sister's record and put it on for Mrs. Perkins.

Billy makes a face. Ignores his mother's request.

MRS. WAGNER

Billy? We're waiting.

The reluctant youngster gets up and goes to the stereo.

He rummages through a stack of compact disks, picks out one, and inserts it into a cd player.

MRS. WAGNER

Make sure the volume is up, Billy.

Billy scowls at her. Presses a button, which sets the cd into motion.

He returns to the table and his unfinished cake.

A church ORGAN and female CHOIR begin the strains of Schubert's "Ave Maria."

DONNA'S VOICE (V.O.)

(sings)

"Ave Maria... grazia plena..."

The recording continues. Both mothers listen with interest.

Gilbert smirks at Donna, who tries to look humble.

Billy and Nolan Perkins yawn with equal boredom.

INT. WAGNER HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Martha washes the dinner dishes in the sink and hums the catchy melody.

Mickey appears behind her.

A rolled-up dish towel wraps round her throat. Her head jerks back.

The wiry woman struggles. Mickey tightens his grip.

The "Ave Maria" reaches its crescendo.

Martha hangs limp.

Mickey loosens his hold. The strangled woman's head drops into the soap suds.

He lowers her body to the floor.

Mickey tosses the towel aside. Removes a key from the back door keyhole.

Opens the door and exits the house.

EXT. WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

Mickey shuts the back door behind him. Uses the key to lock it from the outside.

He tosses the key into the snow.

The "AVE MARIA" prompts Mickey to whistle the melody.

He dumps the contents of the gas can onto the steps of the wood house.

INT. WAGNER HOUSE/LIVING ROOM AND DINING AREA - NIGHT

Donna's solo ends. All but Billy applaud.

MRS. PERKINS
What a talented daughter.

Billy gives the "Bronx Cheer" to Donna.

She kicks him from underneath the table.

BILLY
Ow! Bitch!

MRS. WAGNER
Billy!

The RECORDING restarts itself. Nolan has a look of chagrin.

MRS. WAGNER
Billy, you put it on "repeat".
That will play and play till you
change it.

BILLY
Okay, okay.

Billy goes to the stereo.

MRS. PERKINS
Actually, Louise... I'd love to hear
it again.

MRS. WAGNER
Never mind, Billy.

BILLY

But, Mommy --

MRS. WAGNER

Get back here. Shall I tell Martha
to throw what's left of that cake
in the garbage?

He obeys his mother. Returns to the dinner table and sits.

The "Ave Maria" replays.

EXT. WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

Mickey encircles the entire house with gasoline, except for
the front door.

He lights a match. Tosses it against the house.

Flames engulf the structure.

INT. WAGNER HOUSE/LIVING ROOM AND DINING AREA - NIGHT

Mrs. Wagner shudders. Wraps her arms around her shoulders.

MRS. WAGNER

Billy, be a good boy. Put more
wood on the fire. Getting cold in
here.

A stern look from his mother convinces Billy not to protest.

He takes two large logs from a metal bin and throws them
onto the fireplace grating.

EXT. WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

Mickey whistles along with the "Ave Maria."

The flames grow, and he picks up the ax.

Fire licks at the drape-covered windows.

INT. WAGNER HOUSE/LIVING ROOM AND DINING AREA - NIGHT

Smoke filters into the room. Mrs. Perkins coughs.

MRS. WAGNER

Billy, you didn't open the damper.
It's still closed.

BILLY

No, it isn't.

MRS. WAGNER

Don't argue.

NOLAN

I'll take care of it, Louise.

He strides to the fireplace and checks the damper.

NOLAN

Huh. Damper's open, alright.

GILBERT

Maybe you put a green log on?

MRS. WAGNER

Well, something's making it smoky in here.

MRS. PERKINS

It's coming from the walls. Ahh!

Her eyes bug out. She panics and screams.

BILLY

Fire! Fire!

Donna opens one of the drapes.

A wall of fire covers the window and reaches above it.

MRS. WAGNER

My God!

NOLAN

Don't panic. Let's just get out.

Mrs. Wagner leads them to the front door.

MRS. WAGNER

Donna, get Martha.

Donna runs past the dining area.

She pushes open the kitchen door and sees the collapsed form of Martha sprawled on the kitchen floor.

Donna howls in terror.

She retreats backward into the dining room.

Mrs. Wagner flings opens the front door.

WHOOSH!

The long handle of an ax ripples through the air. The blade pierces Mrs. Wagner's chest.

The woman erupts with a hideous scream. Blood sprays from the wound.

The others cry out in horror.

They scramble back to the dining area.

Mickey deals another blow with the ax. The impact causes the blade to lodge in Mrs. Wagner's ribs.

He plants a foot on the body of the woman and withdraws the ax blade.

Mrs. Wagner's limp body tumbles across the front door threshold, almost cut in half.

Mickey stands motionless in the doorway. Ax poised.

BILLY

Mommy!

NOLAN

Out the back!

Donna and Billy freeze, and the three Perkins make their way to the kitchen.

INT. WAGNER HOUSE/KITCHEN - NIGHT

The trio goes through the swinging door, into the kitchen.

They pass Martha's prone body and reach the back door.

Locked.

Nolan puts his shoulder against the sturdy door and attempts to break it down. It doesn't budge.

He sees a knife collection that hangs on the wall. Grabs a meat cleaver.

Nolan goes back through the swinging door.

Mrs. Perkins trails behind her husband.

Gilbert remains. Tries to open the door, without success.

He follows his parents back to the dining area.

INT. WAGNER HOUSE/LIVING ROOM AND DINING AREA - NIGHT

Donna's recording of "Ave Maria" continues to play.

Billy looks for a way out.

Donna remains in a terror-filled trance.

Mickey holds his position in the doorway to the front and brandishes his weapon.

Nolan swings the cleaver at the masked madman.

Mickey avoids the blow and cuts off Nolan's hand with one swipe of the ax.

The injured man drops to the floor. Crawls away.

Mrs. Perkins screams and faints.

Gilbert drags his bloody father to a window.

GILBERT

I'll get us out, Dad.

Gilbert seizes a wooden chair.

He dashes to a dining room window, raises the chair, and prepares to smash the glass.

NOLAN

No, son. Don't!

The youngster crashes the chair through the window.

A torrent of flames rushes through the gaping hole.

A river of fire flows across the room.

It engulfs Gilbert and his wounded father in flames. The two struggle for a moment, then are still.

Fire spreads through the house.

Billy attempts to drag his terrified sister up the stairs with him.

BILLY

C'mon, sis!

She resists, petrified.

He abandons his effort. Dashes up the stairs without her.

The fire creeps toward Donna. She crawls away and inches toward the front door.

Mickey stands and observes the carnage and horror.

INT. WAGNER HOUSE/TOP FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

The blaze shoots up the steps and pursues Billy.

He stumbles and falls.

Billy's pants catch fire. He shrieks in horror when his hair ignites.

Flames envelop Billy's head.

He crashes through a window at the end of the hallway.

EXT. WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

Billy's burning body flies out the upstairs window. Lands face-first in the snow. The fire is smothered.

His blackened and seared body lies motionless.

The bulk of the house bathes in the inferno.

INT. WAGNER HOUSE/LIVING ROOM AND DINING AREA - NIGHT

Flames creep up the stereo. The recording of Donna's "Ave Maria" still plays.

Donna gets to her feet.

She runs toward the only escape available. The front door.

Mickey steps to one side and leaves the doorway clear.
Donna dashes through the front door.

EXT. WAGNER HOUSE - NIGHT

Donna exits the house.

Mickey plants the ax blade into the back of her skull.

Donna staggers down the front steps. Blood spills onto the white snow. The ax remains wedged in her head.

She falls backward. The blade dislodges.

Donna's body sprawls at the foot of the steps.

MICKEY

(sarcastic)

Oh... She tripped.

Mickey descends the steps. Looks down at the dead girl.

The ax lies in the snow next to her.

After a beat, Mickey picks up the ax.

He brings it down with a fast swing.

The blade chops off three fingers of Donna's left hand at the knuckles. Her engagement ring from Mickey remains on one of the severed digits.

The masked Mickey slides the ring off her bloody finger.

He admires it a moment. Stuffs it in his pocket.

MICKEY

Now... That wasn't so hard, was it?

EXT. CANANDAIGUA - DAY - ESTABLISHING

Houses and cottages line each shore of a lake. A golf course runs next to a development of condominiums.

SUPER: "Nine Years Later"

A wooded park borders the condos. A sign identifies "Kershaw Park". Commercial structures follow.

The lake road leads onto Main Street. Shops line each side. Many stores are empty, with "For Lease" signs.

Railroad tracks bisect Main Street. An old, stately police station is next to the tracks.

Across from the police station, the courthouse stands out as the tallest building in town. A three-story, pillared structure with a copper-colored dome. Atop the dome, an octagonal tower cupola, featuring a balcony and railing.

A gold-plated, 12-foot statue of Lady Justice glistens on top of the cupola roof. It holds the scales of justice and sword of punishment.

Mid-winter. CITIZENS wear heavy coats, ski masks, and caps to fight off the bitter cold.

Two young women wear warm-up suits and jog down Main Street toward the courthouse.

NANCY HARPER, 19, beautiful blonde with a stunning figure, resembles Donna Wagner.

CHERYL CALDWELL 20, a brunette with an athletic build, jogs beside Nancy. A gap between her front teeth softens her rugged image.

The women pass the police station and make their way along the Main Street shops.

A police car cruises behind them.

INT. POLICE CAR/EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

JASPER, a dark-haired man, 30, drives. DARRELL, late-20s, a pock-faced redhead, occupies the passenger side.

The two officers gape wide-eyed at the bouncing bodies of Nancy and Cheryl.

DARRELL

Nice buns, eh Jasper? Get even with them. I wanna check out their ba-boom-bas.

The car increases its speed and pulls even with the girls.

The girls try to ignore the attention they get.

Nancy glances sideways. Smiles at the men for a moment.

Darrell rolls down the passenger window and leans out.

DARRELL
Hope they're joggin' summertime.
Can't wait to see that stuff bounce
in a bikini. Ruff.

Darrell barks and howls at the girls.

NANCY
Deputy Darrell needs a rabies shot.

CHERYL
Creeps. Hey, Nancy. Know how to
save a drowning cop?

NANCY
No.

CHERYL
Good... Race you to Pastore's.

The two sprint away from the police vehicle.

Nancy leads Cheryl in the race.

They turn into an alley.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Cheryl accelerates. Passes a tiring Nancy with ease.

The athletic brunette slows down and allows Nancy to catch
up to her.

CHERYL
C'mon, slowpoke.

The two are dead even. They enter a side street.

EXT. SIDE STREET - DAY

ARTHUR RUSSELL, 28, handsome, tall, and muscular, walks
toward the side street, from the other direction. He has
dark hair and intense eyes.

Arthur, Nancy, and Cheryl all collide.

The young man sprawls into the street. A car barely misses
him and SKIDS away.

Nancy runs to Arthur's side, Cheryl follows.

NANCY
They almost hit you. You okay?

CHERYL
You oughta watch where you're
goin'.

NANCY
Can you get up?

CHERYL
He's alright.

Arthur gets to his feet.

ARTHUR
Sorry. I think I'm lost. I was on
my way to a grocery store.

NANCY
Pastore's? We're headed there.

The two exchange smiles.

Cheryl shows no interest in Arthur and frowns.

NANCY
I'm Nancy. That's Cheryl.

ARTHUR
Hi. Arthur Russell... Well,
ladies? Shall we walk together?
Or would you rather race?

Nancy laughs. They start off. Cheryl follows behind.
Makes a face to mock Arthur's joke.

EXT. PASTORE'S MARKET - DAY

Medium size supermarket. A handful of cars park in the
large lot.

Arthur, Nancy, and Cheryl approach.

INT. PASTORE'S MARKET - DAY

Four checkout stands, none in operation. Three CUSTOMERS
stroll with carts.

A meat department and small butcher shop in the rear.
Several WORKERS visible through a glass window in the
butcher shop.

YELLS and SHRIEKS from the butcher shop.

INT. PASTORE'S MARKET/BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

Knives of all sizes hang from wall racks. A bandsaw mounted
on a bench table. Beef carcasses hang from meat hooks. A
layer of sawdust on the floor.

SANDRA, 16, a thin blonde girl, backs in a corner and holds
a broom. A middle-aged ROGER is in front of her.

Roger prods the bottom of a refrigeration unit with a mop.

EDWARD MACNAMARA, 28, stands next to Roger. Edward has dark hair and rugged features. Tall and muscular frame.

Both men wear butcher aprons. Edward kicks the cooling unit, and Roger pokes the opposite end.

VICTOR PASTORE, a bulky man of 60, instructs Sandra and the men. He has a heavy Italian accent.

PASTORE

Sandra. Sandra. Stand close to door. No let it out. Eddie, kick again. Ancor. Roger, sweep.

A mouse appears from under the cooling unit.

Sandra squeals. The mouse scampers across the room.

PASTORE

Get him! Presto!

Roger tries to crush the rodent with the mop.

Edward uses his feet and attempts to trap it.

PASTORE

Block door, Sandra.

Sandra inches close to the door. Shoos the mouse away with her broom and shrieks.

The blade of a meat cleaver comes down. Slices the mouse in two pieces.

Blood spurts out from the tiny rodent. Both pieces lie motionless.

Edward is at the other end of the cleaver.

ROGER

Bullseye.

SANDRA

Oooo, gross.

Pastore stares at the mess. Looks toward Edward.

PASTORE

Bravo, bravo, Eduardo... Okay, the excitement, she's over. All back to work.

He goes to the door. Motions for Sandra to proceed him.

The youngster can't move. Gazes at the bloody remains of the mouse.

The Italian puts his arm around her, in a father-like gesture and leads her out of the room.

Roger sweeps away the dead mouse.

ROGER
Helluva shot, Ed.

Edward watches Roger drop the carcass into a waste can.

EDWARD
"E avanti a lui, tremava tutta
Roma."

ROGER
Huh?

EDWARD
Puccini's Tosca. About Scarpia.
"Before him, all Rome trembled."

ROGER
Yeah. Right.

Roger waves him off and returns to butcher duties. Grabs a huge chunk of meat and slices it into smaller pieces with the band saw.

Edward gazes out the window that overlooks the meat department and front of the store.

INT. PASTORE'S MARKET - DAY

Nancy and Cheryl grab a shopping cart.

Arthur waits for Pastore and Sandra to come toward.

Sandra scurries to the cash register at a checkout stand, Pastore to an adjacent one.

Arthur strolls over to him.

ARTHUR
Mr. Pastore?

PASTORE
That's me.

ARTHUR
Arthur Russell. I talked to you on
the phone --

PASTORE
Si, si. Job as cashier. You know,
this store, she's mine for eighteen
year. How many days off I had in
eighteen year?

Arthur prepares to answer. Pastore continues.

PASTORE

Not one. Never. My kids, they gone... Married, college. Wife, she help out weekends. But, she get tired. She say, "Vittorio, why you no hire extra someone, so we both can take day off sometime?" She right... You work store before?

ARTHUR

Department store. Cashier.

PASTORE

Ever work machine like this?

Arthur glides his hand over the cash register keys.

ARTHUR

Not exactly. It's kind of old-fashioned, isn't it?

PASTORE

(annoyed)

Hmmph.

ARTHUR

But, I'm real good with machines, though. I can usually figure out most of them.

PASTORE

Certo... But this machine, she's not most of 'em, she's this one.

A male CUSTOMER reaches Sandra's counter and places his purchases on the conveyer belt.

A lady SHOPPER gets in line behind him.

ARTHUR

Ma'am? I'll take you here.

He motions the customer to his checkout stand. Pastore watches with interest.

The shopper unloads her items.

Arthur slides them through, and scans them. For some items, he checks the price and punches out the cost on the cash register keys.

The skeptical Pastore's eyes bug out. He looks side-to-side, like a sports fan who watches a tennis match. Arthur's dexterity impresses him.

The shopper pays Arthur and gets change.

Arthur bags the groceries. The customer leaves.

PASTORE

How your fingers move so fast?

Arthur moves his fingers up and down.

ARTHUR

Used to play clarinet.

Nancy and Cheryl stop their cart, and Edward approaches.

CHERYL

Here's Romeo.

NANCY

Hi, Eddie.

Edward remains silent, a grim look on his face.

NANCY

Still pissed about last night?

EDWARD

What you think? Catchin' you and
Kenny Burdette in the bedroom?

CHERYL

She didn't do nothing wrong.

EDWARD

You were makin' out.

NANCY

He kissed me. But, I didn't kiss
him back.

EDWARD

If I take a girl to a party, I
don't expect to see her kiss some
punk. And, I'm sick of being with
people who think nothin' happened
before the year twenty-ten.

NANCY

Yeah, you like that music from the
year one-thousand. Music for old
people.

CHERYL

He can't help it. He's old.

EDWARD

Shut up, Cheryl... Nancy, if you
want to cheat on me, don't do it
with some immature jerk.

NANCY

Maybe I shouldn't be with somebody
as... mature as you.

EDWARD

Maybe you should try to act a little mature.

NANCY

I'm beginning to think maybe Aunt Kathy's right. Maybe you are too old for me.

EDWARD

Your aunt's a pain in the ass.

Nancy sighs.

NANCY

Eddie. We argue all the time. Suppose we cool it awhile?

EDWARD

Sure. Call me in a year.

CHERYL

Good.

Edward storms off, angry. He turns and points at Cheryl.

EDWARD

You're a fuckin' troublemaker.

He turns and walks away.

Pastore stands at the end of the aisle. Edward approaches.

CHERYL

And, you're a dork.

PASTORE

O mio Eduardo. Tu sei infelice?
Why so unhappy, my friend?

Edward ignores Pastore and moves off.

The Italian shakes his head and sighs.

Nancy goes to Arthur's station and takes out her items.

Cheryl grimaces and brings her purchases to Sandra.

ARTHUR

Something wrong?

Nancy shakes her head no. Cheryl leans over to her.

CHERYL

Want to run tomorrow?

NANCY

Sure. Take my mind off things.

CHERYL

Be at the track by ten.

Cheryl leaves the store. Arthur grins at Nancy.

NANCY

Well... don't work too hard.

ARTHUR

See you around.

NANCY

Yeah. Sure.

Pastore looks into the butcher shop.

Edward wears an angry expression. He frowns and hacks at a piece of meat.

PASTORE

Hey, hey. Ferma. Stop.

Edward stops. Comes out of the room.

PASTORE

What you do? Easy. Calmatevi.

EDWARD

Sorry. Just in a lousy mood.

PASTORE

Amore, eh? Girlfriend trouble?

EDWARD

Yeah.

Pastore laughs. Puts his arm around Edward and comforts the younger man.

EXT. EVANS FIELD - DAY

A sunny morning. A old-fashioned cinder high school track encircles a football field.

Nancy and Cheryl run laps.

Nancy pants, out-of-breath. The robust Cheryl jogs without much effort.

Arthur appears between the bleachers. Waves to the girls. Nancy waves back.

They finish their lap and go to him.

Cheryl continues to jog in place. Nancy gasps for air, exhausted and beat.

ARTHUR

You okay, Nancy?

CHERYL

She's fine. C'mon, one more lap.

NANCY

No... No more... I feel like shit.

ARTHUR

Maybe a movie'd make you feel better?

Cheryl stops jogging. Nancy looks at Arthur.

NANCY

What?

ARTHUR

A movie. Wanna see a movie?

NANCY

You asking me out?

ARTHUR

Yeah.

They exchange smiles. Nancy feels her matted down hair.

NANCY

I'm a mess.

ARTHUR

I don't think so. You look great. I like athletic women.

NANCY

Cheryl, I think this one's for you.

CHERYL

I'll pass.

ARTHUR

Well?

NANCY

Well... Okay, you got a date.

CHERYL

See you.

Cheryl scowls and jogs away. Arthur stares at her.

ARTHUR

I don't think your friend likes me too much.

NANCY

Don't mind Cheryl. She's just protective.

ARTHUR

About our date. There's only one problem. No car. You mind... walking?

Nancy chuckles.

NANCY

I've got a car, Arthur. Tell you what. You buy the tickets and popcorn. I'll drive.

ARTHUR

Deal.

EXT. HARPER - NIGHT

A ranch-style house on a residential street. An old compact car pulls into the driveway.

Nancy and Arthur get out and walk to the front door.

NANCY

I could have dropped you at your place first. It's freezing.

ARTHUR

It's okay. I like to walk.

Nancy searches for her house keys. Smiles at him.

NANCY

I had a real good time.

VOICE OF KATHY (O.S.)

That you, Nancy?

Nancy sighs. Forces a smile.

NANCY

Busted. Come meet my aunt.

She unlocks the door. Arthur hesitates a moment. He follows Nancy inside the house.

INT. HARPER HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy leads Arthur inside.

KATHY HARPER, 40, attractive, with auburn hair, wears a terrycloth robe.

NANCY

Aunt Kathy, this is my friend, Arthur Russell.

KATHY

How do you do?... You look kind of old to date my niece.

ARTHUR

Uh, well, I'm twenty eight.

An uncomfortable silence passes.

ARTHUR

Well, it's getting late. I should be leaving. Goodnight.

Arthur leaves. A beat. The two women hear a door close.

KATHY

Nancy. You've got this knack of going out with men who're too old for you.

NANCY

Here we go again.

KATHY

He's nine years older.

NANCY

Just as old as Eddie.

KATHY

Exactly my point. Nine years is a lot, when you're only nineteen.

NANCY

I'm old enough to pick who I go out with.

KATHY

Young lady. As long as you live here, you'll listen to what I have to say.

NANCY

I'll listen. But, I'll do whatever the hell I want.

Nancy pouts and storms out of the room.

INT. PASTORE'S MARKET - DAY

Sandra, Arthur, and Pastore man the check stands.

Edward works in the rear of the market. He puts packages of meat on display.

A young STOCKBOY, 15, refills items. Finishes his task. He saunters to the magazine rack and leafs through a magazine.

A handful of SHOPPERS cruise the aisles. A middle-aged WOMAN pushes her cart up to Edward.

EDWARD

Hi. How are you today?

WOMAN

You really want to know? The last roast I got here, it was no good.

EDWARD

Sorry about that.

WOMAN

Sorry? Listen, my son and his wife are coming for dinner tonight. And, if the meat's tough, my damn daughter-in-law's gonna have one more reason to criticize me.

EDWARD

I'll find something to keep peace in the family.

He digs around in the packaged meats. Hands her a roast.

EDWARD

This should impress her.

WOMAN

I don't think anything could... So, how did you like the show Saturday night?

EDWARD

What show?

WOMAN

At the movies. Wasn't that you and Nancy there Saturday? I'm sure it was Nancy. Just assumed it was you with her.

EDWARD

Well, it wasn't.

WOMAN

Oh... I know. It was that young man working up front.

EDWARD

Him?

Edward clenches his teeth. The Woman notices his anger and creeps away.

At the check stands, Pastore addresses Arthur.

PASTORE

Go take break now.

Arthur locks the cash register.

Edward watches Arthur enter the stockroom. He follows.

INT. PASTORE'S MARKET/STOCKROOM - DAY

Crates of food and merchandise. A bottled water dispenser.

Arthur gets a drink.

Edward goes up to him.

EDWARD

I hear you took Nancy out.

ARTHUR

That's right.

EDWARD

You need to stay away from her.

ARTHUR

Hey. You got nothin' to say about it, bud.

INT. PASTORE'S MARKET - DAY

Pastore takes a break from his checkout stand. Spots the Stockboy, who still reads the magazine.

PASTORE

Hey, you think is library? You finish work? I find you more work.

The round Italian grabs the youngster by the collar. Drags him down the aisle.

Edward and Arthur argue in the stockroom.

INT. PASTORE'S MARKET/STOCKROOM - DAY

ARTHUR

Don't tell me what to do.

EDWARD

Oh, no?

Edward crowds Arthur, nose-to-nose.

ARTHUR

Outa my face, asshole.

Arthur shoves Edward. He pushes him back.

The two begin to fight. Roll around on the stockroom floor.

They get to their feet, square off, and throw punches. None of them land.

The door bursts open. Pastore and the Stockboy.

Pastore goes to Edward and Arthur.

PASTORE

Hey, hey. Boys. Ferma. Stop it,
you hear?

He tries to separate them. Is hit by a stray punch.

The bulky man barrels into Arthur and knocks him down. The
Stockboy backs away and cringes.

Arthur gets up. Pastore slaps him hard across the face.

Edward moves toward Arthur. Pastore blocks his path.

EDWARD

Out of the way.

Pastore slaps Edward's face.

PASTORE

You like to fight, eh? I show you
fight.

He slaps the young man till his mouth bleeds.

Pastore grabs Arthur with one hand, Edward with the other.
Cuffs them both.

PASTORE

Nobody fight in my place.
Hoodlums.

EDWARD

You'll be sorry, old man.

PASTORE

You be the sorry one.

ARTHUR

Nobody messes with me.

PASTORE

Both you... out. If I lose my
temper, I fire you both. Fire
everybody. Get out. You finished
for day.

The two young men glower at Pastore, then move off.

The Stockboy stares at Pastore, mouth agape.

PASTORE

Eh? What you stare at?

The boy shrugs his shoulders. Smiles, nervous.

EXT. PASTORE'S MARKET - NIGHT

The store is closed. A sole car in the parking lot. A few
lights inside the market.

INT. PASTORE'S MARKET - NIGHT

Pastore sits at a small desk in the front. Goes over some figures in a ledger.

The back door OPENS and CLOSES.

Pastore stops his calculations.

PASTORE

Che cosa?

He abandons his bookkeeping. Rises, creeps down an aisle, and glances from side to side.

He sneaks up to the stockroom door. Yanks it open. Exhales a deep breath. Silence.

After a beat, he hunches over and ventures inside.

INT. PASTORE'S MARKET/STOCKROOM - NIGHT

Pastore's shadowy figure moves through the unlit room.

He collides with a stack of wooden crates.

PASTORE

Maledizione!

He rubs his leg.

Reaches a light switch and flips it on. Sees no one. Satisfied, he re-enters the market.

INT. PASTORE'S MARKET - NIGHT

Pastore leaves the stockroom, and FOOTSTEPS come from the darkened butcher shop.

He stops. Stares.

PASTORE

Who's there?... Okay, wise guy.

He grabs a broom and enters the butcher shop.

INT. PASTORE'S MARKET/BUTCHER SHOP - NIGHT

Pastore comes in and switches on the light.

Behind the door, a SKI MASK MAN in a dark jacket waits. He holds a meat cleaver.

Pastore passes, and the intruder comes up behind him. Swings the cleaver.

Pastore turns. Sees him. Deflects the cleaver strike with the broom.

The Ski Mask Man drops the cleaver.

Pastore rams a metal cart into the attacker and sends him flying across the room.

Pastore takes a knife from a holder and moves toward the Ski Mask Man.

PASTORE
I kill you to death!

He slashes at the fallen man, who grabs Pastore's arm. The two grapple for the knife.

The Pastore is thrown against the wall. His head hits, which knocks him out.

The intruder grunts and drags the unconscious Pastore to the bench table.

He lifts Pastore onto the table. Switches on the band saw.

The Ski Mask Man pushes Pastore toward the blade.

Sharp vibrating teeth CUT into his leg. The semi-conscious man cries out.

INT. PASTORE'S MARKET - NIGHT

The Ski Mask Man removes several cans of motor oil from a nearby shelf.

Busts them open and pours the liquid on the floor. He whistles "Ave Maria."

He throws a lit match onto the spilled oil. It ignites.

The man continues to whistle and goes into the stockroom.

The blaze grows.

EXT. PASTORE'S MARKET - NIGHT

Three automobiles, a police car, and fire truck are in the parking lot.

A dozen BYSTANDERS gawk.

A few billows of smoke come from the market, but the blaze is extinguished.

Two FIREMEN come out of the market and drag a fire hose. Policemen Jasper and Darrell look on.

FIREMAN #1
It's out. Sprinklers did most of
the work.

DARRELL
How's Pastore?

The fireman shakes his head.

FIREMAN #2
When's that ambulance going to get
here?

A black-and-white police car SQUEALS into the lot. It spins and skids. Zooms toward the parked patrol car.

Policemen and firemen grimace. The vehicle SMASHES into the rear of the patrol car.

POLICE CHIEF LONNIE WIGGINS exits the car. A muscular black man of 45, with the start of a pot belly.

Wiggins puffs on a cigarette and examines the damage to the two cars. Shrugs his shoulders. Moves toward the market.

An ambulance stops at the storefront.

Two ATTENDANTS jump out, open the rear doors, and remove a stretcher from the back.

They carry the stretcher and rush into the market. Wiggins watches them.

WIGGINS
What's up, Jasper? Better be
important, to drag me out of bed.
Who's in there?

JASPER
The owner. Pastore.

WIGGINS
Dead?

Jasper shrugs.

JUAN ORTEGA, 50s, a tall, plump Puerto Rican, emerges out of the crowd of onlookers. Juan display several missing teeth. Wears a pair of overalls with grape stains on them.

JUAN
Hey, lawman? Wiggins. Que paso?

WIGGINS
Get the hell out, Juan. I'm busy.

JUAN
Oh, big important cocksuck.

Wiggins shoves Juan aside.

The attendants and a third FIREMAN come out of the market.

They carry the bloody Pastore on the stretcher. The semi-conscious man moans.

The stretcher loads into the rear of the ambulance. Wiggins hurries to it.

One attendant grabs several towels and runs back into the grocery store.

WIGGINS

Who did it, Pastore?

PASTORE

Man... in mask... for ski.

Pastore grabs Wiggins by the collar.

PASTORE

Ave Maria... Ave Maria!

Wiggins knits his brow, puzzled. Pulls away.

WIGGINS

Ave Maria? Does he think I'm a priest? What the hell's that supposed to mean?

The attendant returns from the market. Carries Pastore's severed leg, wrapped in the towels.

Darrell pivots away in repugnance. Onlookers react in horror. Some scream, others gag.

The attendant lifts the separated limb into the back of the ambulance, beside Pastore.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The chief's car with the dented front parks alongside the police station.

INT. POLICE STATION/HALLWAY - DAY

At the end of the hallway, door labeled: "Dr. Geoffrey Ludlow - Coroner, Ontario County."

Up further, another door identifies the office of: "Lonnie Wiggins - Chief of Police, Ontario County."

INT. POLICE STATION/WIGGINS' OFFICE - DAY

Wiggins props his feet onto a desk. MAYOR HARRY ERICKSON, 55, faces him.

DOCTOR GEOFFREY LUDLOW, a bespectacled man, 60, stands next to Erickson. Ludlow, short and a little chubby, speaks with a softened British accent.

ERICKSON

Doctor Ludlow, would you mind getting to the point?

LUDLOW

Alright, Mayor. I'll sum it up for you. The victim --

WIGGINS

Pastore.

LUDLOW

Pastore. Lost a great deal of blood. Went into shock and died. Judging from the head injury, he may have been semi-conscious when his leg was --

WIGGINS

Hacked off.

Ludlow glares at Wiggins. The black man lights a cigarette.

LUDLOW

Severed.

ERICKSON

What does that matter? Seems simple enough. A thief entered the store, didn't expect to find Pastore there, attacked him and --

WIGGINS

And forgot about robbing the place? So, instead, he sets it on fire and leaves the guy to bleed to death?

LUDLOW

Mayor. Pastore also suffered a serious head wound. In his condition, he was no threat. We're dealing with a maniac, not a simple thief or burglar.

WIGGINS

Real news flash. Don't need a coroner's report to tell me that.

Wiggins sips from a coffee mug.

LUDLOW

I thought you gave up coffee?

WIGGINS

I suppose you think I should drink tea instead?

ERICKSON

Chief Wiggins. I don't care if it was a robber, a lunatic, or a damn girl scout. I don't need to remind you, your appointed office is up for election in the spring.

WIGGINS

Erickson. I got a calendar right here on my desk. Even learned how to tell time.

Ludlow stifles a laugh.

ERICKSON

Spare the sarcasm, Chief. The only reason you're here is the last police chief died in a plane crash.

WIGGINS

Yeah. And, of course, if I understand correctly, when you offered me the job over the phone, you didn't know I was black?

Erickson delivers a nervous sputter.

ERICKSON

Don't try to play the race card here, Wiggins.

LUDLOW

Yeah, you're a lousy card player.

Wiggins screws up his face and rolls his eyes.

ERICKSON

Look, you're here as interim chief. If you have any aspirations of a full term, I suggest you get going on this case.

Erickson storms out. Wiggins turns down the corners of his mouth and scoffs.

LUDLOW

He forgot one thing.

WIGGINS

Yeah?

LUDLOW

You're a shitty driver.

Wiggins sneers at Ludlow, who grins.

WIGGINS

You asshole...

LUDLOW
Whatever possessed you to move
here, Lonnie?

WIGGINS
Hey, you're the foreigner.

LUDLOW
But, I don't have to worry about
being re-elected.

Wiggins sighs.

WIGGINS
Maybe I actually was possessed?
You know, I was a Chicago deputy
for eleven years. Just wanted a
little quiet. Better place for my
son to grow up in. Wife's from a
small town. This job was sight
unseen. So, I grabbed it, like a
dumb shit.

Wiggins takes a big drag from his cigarette. Hacks and
coughs. Ludlow shakes his head in disgust.

Ludlow grabs the cigarette out of Wiggins' hand. Puts it
out in a plastic ashtray.

WIGGINS
Hey, Ludlow!

LUDLOW
Speaking of dumb shit... You need
to cut down on these damn
cigarettes.

The doctor goes to the office door.

WIGGINS
I thought all you English called
'em fags?

LUDLOW
Oh no. You can get into trouble,
asking for a fag in this country.

WIGGINS
Limey bastard!

Ludlow offers a loud guffaw.

The chief throws the ashtray at Ludlow, who shuts the door
behind him. The ashtray bounces off the door.

Wiggins forces a smile. Picks up the phone.

WIGGINS

Darrell... Check the prisons, mental hospitals and stuff for a hundred miles. See if anybody escaped. Or, maybe they let someone go with a history of violent behavior... Yeah, that is a lot of work. And, you know what? I don't give a shit!

He slams down the receiver.

EXT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT HOUSE - DAY

A large red-brick apartment house. Nancy's car is parked in front of it.

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - DAY

A studio apartment. Convertible sofa/bed. A bookshelf with a cd player and cds.

Nancy sprawls on the sofa/bed. Arthur stands at the window.

NANCY

Hey, when are you gonna move into the twenty-first century? Who still has cds anymore?

ARTHUR

Be glad I don't have vinyl.

Nancy gives him a half-grin.

NANCY

Mrs. Pastore says she's going to re-open the store in about three weeks. She'll need help then.

ARTHUR

I need a job now. I can't wait three weeks for the market to open up again.

NANCY

I don't want to think about it anymore... How about some music?

Arthur loads a cd into the player. A raucous rock and roll song PLAYS.

Arthur joins Nancy and sits beside her. They kiss.

EXT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT HOUSE - NIGHT

Nancy and Arthur come out of the apartment house. They hold hands. Enter Nancy's car.

A dark FIGURE lurks in the shadows and observes them.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

A bleak morning. MOURNERS stand around a coffin. They wear hats, caps, scarves, and ski masks to brave the bitter wind and chill of winter.

All main characters attend. Chief Wiggins and Dr. Ludlow stand off to one side.

The ceremony concludes. People withdraw.

Nancy leaves Arthur and approaches Wiggins.

NANCY

Chief Wiggins. Can I talk to you?

WIGGINS

Of course. Anything wrong?

NANCY

It may sound silly. But, I think someone's been following me. It started a couple of days ago.

WIGGINS

Hmm. Know who it is?

She shakes her head no.

WIGGINS

Did they say anything? Do anything?

NANCY

No. I'm not really sure if he's following me, but --

WIGGINS

My advice? Forget it. If it keeps up, go to him. Confront him. Then, if he doesn't stop, see me... Probably just an admirer.

NANCY

Okay. Thanks.

She forces a smile and walks back to Arthur, Cheryl, and Kathy Harper.

Wiggins and Ludlow watch her a moment.

LUDLOW

Beautiful girl.

WIGGINS

Face and body like that. And, she wonders why somebody follows her.

A few feet away, Edward catches Nancy's eye. Waves to her.

She smiles and returns the waves.

Arthur notices this. Leads her away. Nancy glances backward at Edward.

EXT. HARPER HOUSE - DAY

New-fallen snow. Nancy's car in the driveway.

INT. HARPER HOUSE/NANCY'S ROOM - DAY

Cheryl lounges on an unmade bed and reads a magazine.

Nancy rummages through clothes in her closet.

NANCY

It's time I got rid of some of this junk.

CHERYL

You? Throw away clothes? Impossible.

They giggle.

CHERYL

You and Art are seeing a lot of each other. Aren't you getting tired of him yet?

ARTHUR

He doesn't like to be called Art. Makes him feel like a painting.

CHERYL

Yeah, yeah. Answer the question.

Nancy suppresses a smile. Sifts through the closet.

NANCY

Eddie called me last night.

CHERYL

Oh shit. How is dorkface?

NANCY

We talked. He wants to get together again.

CHERYL

Hmmph.

NANCY

Arthur's nice. But, not too exciting. I mean, the sex is great. But --

CHERYL

Oh, I'm gonna barf.

NANCY
Anyway... Eddie makes me laugh.

CHERYL
I think it's his face.

NANCY
You and Aunt Kathy put down all my
boyfriends... Hey, look what I
found here.

She slides a red evening gown out of the closet.

CHERYL
I've never seen you wear that.

NANCY
Too chicken. It's real low-cut.
Can't wear a bra with it.

Nancy slips out of her dress. Removes her bra and reveals
her well-endowed chest.

Cheryl reverts to silence. She stares at Nancy's body.

Nancy pulls on the evening gown and adjusts it.

She admires herself in a mirror on the closet door.
Chuckles, turns, and models the gown for Cheryl.

Cheryl doesn't respond.

Nancy's boobs nearly pop out of the gown.

Cheryl gazes stone-faced. Nancy notices her reaction.
Frowns and pouts.

NANCY
That bad? Okay, back you go.

Nancy removes the evening gown. Hangs it in the closet.
She sighs.

Nancy poses, topless and in panties. Looks for her bra.

Cheryl puts down the magazine and climbs off the bed.

She picks up the garment from the floor and moves to Nancy,
who holds out her hand.

Cheryl drops the bra. Puts her hand on one of Nancy's
luscious breasts. Caresses it.

This stuns Nancy. She freezes.

Cheryl moves her other hand onto Nancy's other breast.

NANCY
Cheryl...?

CHERYL

I love your body.

Cheryl's mouth covers one of Nancy's breasts. She kisses it. Slides her tongue over the nipple.

Nancy stands stiff and uneasy.

Cheryl's erotic probing continues.

NANCY

Please... stop.

Cheryl ignores Nancy.

CHERYL

You know you love it.

She shifts her attention to Nancy's mouth. Kisses her on the lips.

Nancy responds and returns the kiss for a moment.

She breaks away. Covers her breasts with her hands.

NANCY

Cheryl! What's wrong with you?

Cheryl lowers her eyes, with a sad, plaintive look.

NANCY

What are you, a dike?

CHERYL

Nancy, I've been falling in love with you since I was sixteen. I thought maybe --

NANCY

Well, you thought wrong. I like you, but not that way. This is crazy. I never knew --

Nancy emits a nervous laugh.

Cheryl knits her eyebrows in anger.

CHERYL

Sure. Laugh. Funny, ain't it?

NANCY

I can't help it, Cheryl --

Cheryl grabs her jacket and hat. Heads out of the room.

NANCY

No, don't go. Cheryl.

Cheryl exits. Nancy dresses as quick as she can.

EXT. HARPER STREET - DAY - TRAVELING

Cheryl bursts through the front door of the Harper home.

The Ski Mask Man in dark clothes lurks at the window below Nancy's bedroom.

Cheryl moves down the sidewalk, and he follows her.

Cheryl and the Ski Mask Man continue down the street. The young woman is unaware of his presence.

The man quickens his pace. Narrows the gap between them.

He's five feet away. Cheryl begins to cry.

He reaches to grab her, but Cheryl breaks into a trot.

The Ski Mask Man jogs behind the young woman.

Cheryl's sobs intensify. Along with her anger and frustration.

The Ski Mask Man catches up to her.

The oblivious girl increases her speed. Her pursuer accelerates.

They each quicken their pace. After a beat, both run at top speed.

After several moments, the man cannot maintain the torrid pace. He drops back. Stops.

The Ski Mask Man pants, coughs, and wheezes, out-of-breath.

Cheryl, unaware of the entire chase, continues onward.

EXT. CALDWELL HOUSE - DAY

Old-fashioned two-story white house with a front porch.

Cheryl dashes through the unlocked front door.

INT. CALDWELL HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

A staircase connects to the upper floor.

Cheryl enters. Removes her jacket. Wipes tears away with her shirtsleeve.

CHERYL

Dad? You home?

No answer. Cheryl sighs, then heads upstairs.

INT. CALDWELL HOUSE/CHERYL'S BEDROOM - DAY

It resembles a adolescent boy's bedroom. Team pennants on the walls. Pictures of beautiful female tennis players, along with female basketball players, and a large poster of Ellen DeGeneres.

Sports equipment strewn about the room includes a hockey stick and baseball bat.

Cheryl rests in a lotus position on her bed. Leafs through a lesbian porn magazine.

The front door OPENS.

INT. CALDWELL HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Ski Mask Man creeps into the house.

He stops and checks out the empty living room.

CHERYL (O.S.)

Dad?

The man looks toward the upstairs. A beat.

CHERYL (O.S.)

Come up, will ya?

The intruder glances around. Snatches an iron poker by a fireplace. Starts up the stairs.

CHERYL (O.S.)

How was work?

INT. CALDWELL HOUSE/CHERYL'S ROOM - DAY

Cheryl remains on the bed. Closes the magazine and stuffs it underneath the mattress.

Slow and deliberate FOOTSTEPS ascend the stairs. Cheryl frowns and snorts.

CHERYL

Jesus, you're movin' so slow. I gotta talk to you about something important. Please, hurry up.

The Ski Mask Man rushes in and wields the iron poker.

Cheryl's eyes widen. He swings the weapon at her.

She rolls off the bed. The poker slashes the bedsheets.

Cheryl grabs a hockey stick.

The girl slapshots the assailant in the ribs. He doubles over in pain.

INT. CALDWELL HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Cheryl's dead body dangles from the stairway balcony. The phone cord encircles her neck and wraps around the railing.

The room flares up, ablaze.

EXT. CALDWELL HOUSE - NIGHT

Flames shoot out from windows. An ambulance and an emergency vehicle park across the street.

Cheryl lies on a stretcher. PARAMEDICS beside the vehicles work to revive her.

FIREMEN battle the blaze. BYSTANDERS look on.

Wiggins, Darrell, Jasper, two other POLICEMEN, and Juan observe the scene.

A NEIGHBOR WOMAN comes up to Wiggins.

NEIGHBOR WOMAN
Chief, I heard something funny
before I noticed the fire.
Whistling.

WIGGINS
Whistling?

NEIGHBOR WOMAN
Sort of a Christmas song. But,
more like church music.

Wiggins thinks a moment. Hums the melody to "Ave Maria."

NEIGHBOR WOMAN
Yeah, that's it.

JUAN
Ave Maria.

Juan nods to Wiggins and offers a mock salute.

The firefight continues.

A shadowy FIGURE in the back of the crowd observes.

EXT. NEWSPAPER BUILDING - DAY

A sign identifies: "Canandaigua Daily Messenger."

INT. NEWSPAPER MORGUE - DAY

A long table and chairs. Shelves with bound volumes of back newspapers.

Juan Ortega sifts through a volume.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER HEADLINE

The headline reads: "Murder And Arson In Bloomfield."

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A news van for "Channel 6 Action News" parks in front. Alongside it, a station wagon from "WRTV News".

Two film CREWS assemble at the foot of the steps. Four REPORTERS hold clipboards and microphones.

They all gather around Darrell, who attempts to talk to everyone at once, but is drowned out by their shouts.

The police chief's car turns into the side parking area.

The badly-crumpled front end of the vehicle CRUNCHES into the wall of the building. This adds more damage to the police car.

Wiggins hurries out of the car. Walks to the mob with a swift purpose.

REPORTER #1

Chief. Are you close to an arrest?
Were both murders committed by this
pyro-killer?

DARRELL

Is that what you news guys are
calling him?

REPORTER #2

Any mutilation or sexual assault?
How many people are working on
this? Any suspects?

WIGGINS

Darrell? Come here.

DARRELL

Chief, they asked about a press
conference. I said --

WIGGINS

Listen careful, Deputy. I want
these people cleared away.

The reporters mumble their disapproval.

WIGGINS

Any reporters within a hundred feet
of this building, I want you to
arrest them.

DARRELL
On what charge, Chief?

WIGGINS
Obstruction of justice. And,
loitering.

Wiggins enters the building. Reporters and crews jeer and boo at the chief.

He peeks back out the front door, waves, and smiles at them.

INT. POLICE STATION/HALLWAY - DAY

A handful of PEOPLE sit on chairs and wooden benches outside the chief's office. Edward is among them.

Arthur leads Nancy into the hallway. She sobs.

When she sees Edward, Nancy runs to him. Cries on his shoulder. He comforts her.

EDWARD
I'm sorry, Nancy... And, when
you're ready, I'd like to see you
again.

Nancy squeezes his hand and nods. Returns to Arthur's side.

The chief's door opens, and Darrell motions to Edward.

DARRELL
Edward MacNamara. Inside.

Edward approaches the door. Juan Ortega cuts in front of him and tries to force his way through the doorway.

JUAN
I got business. Clear way. Lemme
see lawman boss.

Juan attempts to barge in front of Edward and Darrell.

DARRELL
Get outa here, Juan.

JUAN
See lawman Wiggins. Lemme pass.
Stupid cocksuck. I got clues.

DARRELL
Sure, sure. Sleep it off.

WIGGINS (O.S.)
What's goin' on, Darrell?

DARRELL
It's crazy Juan. El wino.

JUAN

Boss lawman. I got clues.

WIGGINS (O.S.)

Let him in.

DARRELL

What?

WIGGINS (O.S.)

You heard me, Deputy.

Darrell shakes his head in disbelief. Sighs and motions Juan inside.

Juan glowers at Darrell and enters.

INT. POLICE STATION/WIGGINS' OFFICE - DAY

Wiggins at his desk. Ludlow stands by the window.

Juan comes in. Wiggins motions him to sit, and he does.

JUAN

Who him?

WIGGINS

Him Doctor Ludlow, county coroner.
Doc, this... person is Juan Ortega.
Works at the winery... Okay, Juan.
You say you got a clue?

Juan pulls a wad of xeroxed news clippings from his pocket. Throws them on Wiggins' desk.

Wiggins looks at the articles.

WIGGINS

What's this shit?

He raises an eyebrow and hands Ludlow a clipping.

LUDLOW

(reads)

"A neighbor reported hearing
someone whistle the melody to 'Ave
Maria', as the fire burned."

JUAN

Ave Maria. Si?

WIGGINS

Hmm... Doc, look here.

Ludlow takes another clipping from Wiggins.

JUAN

Juan smart. No dumb shit.

WIGGINS

This happened nine years ago, in Bloomfield. Twenty miles away. Did you handle that?

LUDLOW

I was in London nine years ago.

DARRELL

There was somethin' funny about that... Can't remember.

WIGGINS

Whatcha think, Doc?

LUDLOW

You're suggesting this madman has come back?

WIGGINS

Maybe. What about a copycat?

LUDLOW

After nine years?

WIGGINS

Says here the prime suspect was a guy named Mickey Stevens.

DARRELL

Now I got it. Before the cops could arrest him, he set his own house on fire. And disappeared.

WIGGINS

Good, Darrell. Now, disappear into the basement. Go grab me the case file.

Darrell scowls at Wiggins and leaves.

Ludlow ponders an article.

LUDLOW

I hope you have a better photo of Stevens in the file. This one's bloody awful.

WIGGINS

Stevens would be twenty-eight now.

LUDLOW

And?

WIGGINS

And, I've got two men in the hall who are twenty-eight and fit the description. Edward MacNamara and Arthur Russell.

Juan fidgets in his chair.

WIGGINS

Ok, Juan, you can go. Thanks for the clue... But, keep it under your hat.

Juan wrinkles his brow, puzzled. He reaches for his head and an imaginary hat on top of it.

WIGGINS

Don't tell nobody.

Juan acknowledges Wiggins. Bows to the two and leaves.

INT. POLICE STATION/HALLWAY - DAY

Juan exits the office. Edward stands in front of him. Arthur, just behind, accompanies Nancy on the bench.

JUAN

No worry, lawman boss! Look for more clues. Juan find killer!

He catches himself. Gazes at Edward and Arthur with a nervous look.

They glare back at him, annoyed by his stares.

The Puerto Rican heads down the hallway, looks back at them, and almost bumps into an Officer.

INT. POLICE STATION/WIGGINS' OFFICE - DAY

Wiggins and Ludlow review papers from a file folder. Darrell stands in front of them. Shifts his feet, impatient.

LUDLOW

No fingerprints of Stevens, eh?

WIGGINS

Nope... Darrell. Check on Russell and MacNamara. Any priors. Fax the F.B.I. Call the Justice Department and arrange to get in touch with the RCMPs in Canada. Russell says he's from Toronto.

DARRELL

We can't fingerprint anybody unless they're charged with something, or they're a prime suspect. That's what Judge Cribb always told us.

WIGGINS

I know. Just check their names.

Darrell leaves.

LUDLOW

It's the same horrible photo in Stevens' file.

WIGGINS

From his high school yearbook. That's all there was. We'll just have to deal with it.

LUDLOW

What about medical records? Dental? And, there must be people around who knew him. Friends. Relatives.

WIGGINS

Oh? I'll try to get it done for you fast as possible, Sherlock.

Ludlow chuckles. Wiggins forces a smile.

INT. POLICE STATION/WIGGINS' OFFICE - DAY - LATER

Wiggins and Ludlow face Edward.

WIGGINS

Okay, MacNamara. You and Cheryl Caldwell didn't get along. Plus, your alibi stinks.

EDWARD

"A te dinanzi senza difesa io sto."
`I stand defenseless.' Act Three.
"Vespri Siciliani."

WIGGINS

Enough of that opera shit. You're in deep trouble, son.

EDWARD

I was home watching tv.

WIGGINS

Any calls? Did you see anyone?

EDWARD

Nope. That's my story, Chief. You don't like it, arrest me.

He struts out of the office.

INT. POLICE STATION/WIGGINS' OFFICE - DAY - LATER

Arthur takes Edward's place.

ARTHUR

This gonna take much longer?

WIGGINS

We're trying to verify your whereabouts yesterday afternoon, besides you just watching TV.

LUDLOW

Appears a lot of people watch the telly in this town.

WIGGINS

So, what shows did you watch?

ARTHUR

I don't remember. Cartoons.

WIGGINS

"Spongebob Squarepants", I suppose? Glad you were improving your mind.

ARTHUR

Chief, my only crime is I'm a Canadian workin' without permit. So, unless you plan to ship me across the border?

WIGGINS

Shut up and get out.

Arthur stalks out of the room. Ludlow turns to Wiggins.

LUDLOW

Well, that was helpful.

EXT. WINERY - NIGHT

A sign on the building identifies: "Canandaigua Wine Industries."

INT. WINERY/PRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Several 20-foot-high wooden tanks line the room. Metal catwalks on the second floor connect tank tops. Hoses run from tank to tank.

Juan and a fellow WINERY WORKER walk along the catwalks and carry wrenches over their shoulders.

WINERY WORKER

Almost quittin' time. Better check the hose on number eight.

JUAN

Yeah, yeah. Son of lazy bitch. Juan go. Juan go all time. Cocksuck.

The Winery Worker laughs.

He heads through an opening in a partition that separates the pressing room from another area.

Juan checks a hose at the top of a tank. It suffers from a small leak. He makes a face.

JUAN

Fuck my shit.

He goes to the partition wall, which stores pieces of pipe and hoses.

Juan grunts, grabs a length of hose, and heads back toward the tank top.

The Ski Mask Man comes from the other room. Follows Juan from behind.

Juan hears footsteps. Turns around.

A piece of pipe strikes him in the jaw.

Juan cries out. Staggeres. Falls down by the open cover of a grape tank.

WINERY WORKER (O.S.)

That you, Juan?

Juan wipes his bloody face with his shirt sleeve and attempts to get to his feet.

JUAN

Cock suck!

His feet slip on grape peels near the opening. Falls and hits his head on the metal railing around the tank top.

Juan groans, and the assailant grabs him by the feet. Raises him off the floor.

The Ski Mask Man positions Juan over the tank opening, upside-down.

He lowers him down into the grapes which fill the tank up to the top.

Juan's head submerges into the mixture. The man releases his hold.

The Puerto Rican slides into the tank and disappears.

The Ski Mask Man takes a plastic bag from his pocket and removes a large rag from it.

Takes a lighter from his pocket. Whistles "Ave Maria."

WINERY WORKER (O.S.)

Hey, Juan. Time to punch out.

The man in black drops the rag and puts the lighter back in his pocket.

He scrambles down the metal stairs to the ground floor of the pressing room.

The Winery Worker comes into view. Goes to the rag and picks it up. Smells it.

His eyes narrow, and a puzzled look comes to his face. He gazes around.

WINERY WORKER

The son of a bitch already left.

EXT. WINERY - DAY

The beginning of a new day.

INT. WINERY/PRESSING ROOM - DAY

A WORK CREW engages in various activities. A conveyor belt comes from an open hatch near the bottom of a grape tank.

It leads to a large metal hopper.

INT. WINERY/GRAPE TANK - DAY

A wooden ladder extends from the bottom of the tank through the open top cover.

Grape peels cover Two WORKERS in rubber suits up to their chests in grape peels.

The men shovel grapes onto the conveyor belt that transport them out to the hopper.

INT. WINERY/PRESSING ROOM - DAY

The metal hopper GRINDS the grapes into juice.

WORKER IN TANK (O.S.)

Jesus! Shut it off! Christ!

WORKER BY HOPPER

What the hell's wrong?

WORKER IN TANK (O.S.)

Turn it off, Goddamn it! Get this belt out of here!

The Worker by the hopper shuts off the hopper.

Two others pull out the conveyor belt. The three go to the open hatch.

The bloated and grape-stained face of Juan Ortega appears through the hatch.

The trio jumps away in horror.

The workers in the tank push the dead body out the opening. It slides onto the floor in a grotesque, twisted position.

INT. POLICE STATION/WIGGINS' OFFICE - DAY

Wiggins slumps over his desk, asleep.

The door opens, and Ludlow enters. Goes to the chief and shakes him.

LUDLOW

Wake up, Lonnie, old man.

Wiggins opens his eyes and squints.

LUDLOW

Care for lunch?

WIGGINS

I was up all night... My wife's gonna kill me... You say something about lunch?

LUDLOW

Come. You may lose your appetite.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Ludlow and Wiggins wander down the sidewalk. The bizarre menagerie stuns the police chief.

Sidewalk VENDORS in temporary booths and tents sell burglar alarms and related security devices.

Police whistles. T-shirts with "I Survived The Pyro-Killer - So Far" in bold letters.

Tents peddle hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, hot chocolate, and coffee. Some vacant stores now open.

Guard dogs and other protective devices are for sale.

A makeshift booth advertises personal bodyguard service. Another encourages sign ups for "Citizens Watch Group."

A sporting goods store hangs a sign outside which proclaims: "All guns, knives, clubs, bats, and Mace - 50% Off."

Dozens of TOWNSPEOPLE in winter clothes patronize the stores and shops. The hectic atmosphere of a carnival.

WIGGINS

What the fuck's goin' on?

LUDLOW

Oh. So, you didn't know the circus was in town?

They continue their trek.

One booth hawks keychains which convert to weapons like brass knuckles and metal claws.

Ludlow goes to another booth. It displays ski masks that read: "I'm Not The Pyro-Killer, I'm Just Cold."

A pretty BLONDE woman walks by the keychain booth.

VENDOR #1
Hey, lady, lady! Come here! No
charge to take a look!

BLONDE
Well --

VENDOR #1
You married, lady?

BLONDE
Ah... no.

VENDOR #1
Live alone? Then, a pretty lady
like you, all by yourself, you need
protection. Look here.

The vendor holds a brass knuckle keychain in front of her.

BLONDE
Gee.

He slips it onto the woman's fingers. Folds her hand to makes a fist.

VENDOR #1
Feel the power?

The Blonde takes off the brass knuckles.

BLONDE
I don't think so.

Another VENDOR grabs the Blonde and pulls her to his booth.

VENDOR #2
Forget about that. You're no Tyson
Fury. If this killer attacks you,
you're gonna need help. That's why
you need an official police
whistle.

He BLOWS a whistle in the woman's ear. Two more VENDORS approach her.

VENDOR #3
Mace. That's the answer.

VENDOR #4

Don't listen to them. They're only after your money. For a nominal fee of twenty dollars, you can join the Citizens Watch Group. Support your community.

VENDOR #2

You're full of shit, buddy. This woman has to have a police whistle.

VENDOR #3

She wants Mace. Free classes.

VENDOR #4

Just sign up here.

The Blonde shrieks and breaks away from them. Sprints across Main Street.

A SHOPKEEPER peeks out the doorway of the sporting goods store and spots Wiggins.

STOREKEEPER

Chief. Come on in.

Wiggins and Ludlow follow the shopkeeper into the store.

INT. SPORTING GOODS STORE - DAY

The Shopkeeper takes Wiggins aside.

Ludlow looks around the store.

Half of the shop deals with self-defense items. Books on karate and judo. Firearms. Sirens and alarms. Mace. Nightsticks, bats, and clubs. And knives.

Arthur works as a salesclerk in the knife section.

SHOPKEEPER

Chief... We all want you to catch the killer. And, we know you will. But, when you do, can you keep it quiet for a few days? Just till business slacks off.

Wiggins growls. He barges past the Shopkeeper and strides out of the store, Ludlow behind him.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Wiggins marches back up the crowded sidewalk, back toward the police station. Ludlow trails behind.

The car from Channel Six parks alongside the street. A NEWS REPORTER faces a television camera.

NEWS REPORTER

The reign of terror continues. Street vendors sell all forms and methods of protection against the pyro-killer, who has claimed three lives in two weeks. Citizens have taken to Main Street. Huddled together, hoping there is safety in numbers. Braving bitter cold. To seek out some solace or remedy.

The reporter sees Wiggins approach and goes to him.

NEWS REPORTER

Here's Police Chief Lonnie Wiggins. Chief Wiggins. Any developments in the case?

This comment annoys Wiggins. He frowns at the reporter.

WIGGINS

Motherfucker. Cocksucker. Shit. Put that on your damn news.

Wiggins and Ludlow move past.

The reporter freezes for a moment, then resumes his robotic, on-air demeanor.

NEWS REPORTER

Chief Wiggins is unavailable for comment.

Wiggins and Ludlow make their way through the crowd. Mayor Erickson goes to the chief.

ERICKSON

Chief. What do you intend to do about this?

WIGGINS

You mean this damn... event?

ERICKSON

Can't you stop them?

WIGGINS

If they got the right permits to sell the stuff, not much I can do.

ERICKSON

And, the media's here. That's awful.

WIGGINS

Haven't you heard? It's good for business!... Look, you won't give us extra funds to hire more men.

ERICKSON

What about the Seneca County
police?

WIGGINS

No other county wants to help. Get
me some money, or I call Albany.

ERICKSON

Alright. I'm sure I can get the
city council to requisition a few
thousand. But, get some results,
for Christ's sake.

Wiggins scowls at Erickson. Looks back at Ludlow, who
examines the brass knuckle keychains.

WIGGINS

Come here, Doctor Watson.

Ludlow follows Wiggins.

A SHORT MAN passes them. He wears a souvenir ski mask.
Wiggins grabs him.

WIGGINS

Sick bastard.

Wiggins removes the ski mask. It reveals the face of a very
ugly man.

WIGGINS

On second thought.

He returns the ski mask to the short man, who wrinkles his
nose at Wiggins.

INT. POLICE STATION/SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Darrell, Jasper, and two other POLICEMEN gather around a
blackboard, divided into chalked squares.

Wiggins stops and stares at the board. He looks to Darrell
for an answer.

WIGGINS

What the hell's this?

DARRELL

Started a pool, Chief. Next
pyro-killer victim. By sex, age,
and location. Five bucks a square.
Want in?

WIGGINS

No. Want you out.

The bulky black man pushes Darrell against the blackboard.
Grasps the deputy by the collar.

WIGGINS

This isn't Monday Night Football!
It's murder. I'm bustin' your ass
to patrolman. Soon as this shit
blows over, I'll decide if I need
you at all.

Two WORKMEN barge into the room. They transport canvas cots
under each arm.

WORKMAN

Where you want 'em, Chief?

WIGGINS

Lounge. Last room on the left.
Set them all up... Jasper, you're
acting deputy now.

JASPER

What's that mean?

WIGGINS

Means you do what I tell you...
Listen up, everyone!... As of this
moment, there's a nine P.M. curfew
within the city limits.

The policemen murmur their surprise. Wiggins silences them.

WIGGINS

Any citizen out after nine will be
taken in. Questioned. And fined a
hundred bucks.

POLICEMAN #1

Merchants aren't gonna like that.

WIGGINS

Tough shit. And, everybody's on
special shift, till we catch the
bastard, twelve hours on, twelve
off, staggered.

JASPER

That's what the cots are for?

WIGGINS

Uh huh. Jasper, get ahold of the
night guys and part-timers. This
applies to them too... We'll have
to grab a couple of clerks to run
the building. Rest of us. On
vehicle patrol. One man per car.

POLICEMAN #2

We only got two cars. Plus yours.
When it's not in the shop.

Wiggins glares at the man. A beat.

WIGGINS

Use your own cars. Department will pay mileage. Don't have a radio, we'll grab you one. Another thing, Jasper. Get the radio and tv to announce the curfew.

Wiggins and Jasper leave.

Darrell scoffs at Wiggins and kicks the floor.

DARRELL

(under his breath)

Black bastard.

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

A dozen CUSTOMERS sit on stools around a dingy bar.

JASPER (V.O)

(uses horn speaker)

It's now eight-thirty! Curfew takes affect in half an hour!

CUSTOMER

Well, Chris. Looks like you gotta stay open all night.

The others chuckle.

INT. HARPER HOUSE/NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moonlight illuminates Nancy, in bed asleep.

The phone rings. Nancy jerks upward. Cries out in fright.

She realizes where she is. Sighs. Picks up the phone.

NANCY

Hello?... Anyone there?

Someone WHISTLES "Ave Maria" through the earpiece. Fear on Nancy's face. She hangs up.

INT. WIGGINS KITCHEN - DAY

A decent-size kitchen. Modern appliances. A large dining table on one end with three chairs.

Wiggins takes a seat at the breakfast table. His wife, GEORGIA, 35, an attractive black woman, rattles a plate of scrambled eggs and sausage in front of him.

Wiggins wears his police uniform, minus the cap. He picks at his food.

GEORGIA
(sarcastic)
Nice to have you home for
breakfast, for once.

WIGGINS
I'm not in the mood, Georgia.

He glances around.

WIGGINS
Seen my cap?

GEORGIA
Hell if I know. What about your
spare?

WIGGINS
They don't give you a spare. This
ain't Chicago.

Georgia brings her breakfast plate to the table and sits
opposite Wiggins.

GEORGIA
Same damn winter as Chicago. At
least there, I had friends.

WIGGINS
So, that's my fault? You said you
wanted to move to a small town...
We've only been here four months.
You'll make friends eventually.

GEORGIA
The only black family is a couple
in their nineties. People look at
me like I'm from another planet.

WIGGINS
That's what I love about you,
always look at the bright side.

GEORGIA
Sorry I'm not a goddamn optimist,
like your old girl friends.

WIGGINS
Oh, Jeez, here we go again.

GEORGIA
Yeah, you really were never in love
with me. I've always just been
your lifeboat.

WIGGINS
Yeah, a fifteen year lifeboat.

He chuckles and smiles at her. Takes Georgia's hand, but she pulls it away from him and scowls.

BENNIE WIGGINS, 13, a tall, gangly black youth, shuffles into the kitchen. He wears a Chicago Blackhawks hockey jersey and Wiggins' police cap.

BENNIE

Whoa, trouble in paradise?

Wiggins and Georgia remain silent. Wiggins glances up and notices Bennie with his cap.

WIGGINS

There's my damn cap.

He snatches it off Bennie's head.

BENNIE

Hey, watch the hair!

Bennie smooths out his rumpled hair.

WIGGINS

So, how about you, playa? You makin' any friends?

BENNIE

Bless up, fadar.

Wiggins threatens to cuff the back of Bennie's head.

WIGGINS

Stop with the ghetto talk and answer me.

BENNIE

Yeah, I got some friends... But, I'm still the first one they pick for basketball in gym class.

WIGGINS

They'll keep it up until they get a load of that lousy jump shot. Doesn't wearing all that hockey junk give them a clue?

GEORGIA

Maybe they think it's a gang shirt?

Bennie scoffs. Wiggins finishes his breakfast and rises from the table.

BENNIE

Next year, I'll be on the high school hockey team. They'll figure it out.

WIGGINS

Sure, Bennie.

GEORGIA

You gonna be home for dinner?

WIGGINS

Who knows? I got to catch this damn psycho. Or, we ain't gonna make it to Christmas.

INT. POLICE STATION/WIGGINS' OFFICE - DAY

Chief Wiggins behind his desk. Jasper peers in.

JASPERS

Bad news, Chief. No criminal records on Russell or MacNamara.

WIGGINS

Shit.

Ludlow appears in the doorway with the Stockboy.

LUDLOW

Chief. The lad was in the hallway. He has something to tell you.

Wiggins motions for them to come in. Jasper leaves.

WIGGINS

You worked at Pastore's. So, whatcha got to tell me?

STOCKBOY

Well... A couple a days before Mr. Pastore died, he got in a fight... I mean, he broke up a fight. At the market.

WIGGINS

Who was fighting?

STOCKBOY

Eddie MacNamara. And the new guy. Arthur... It was about a girl.

WIGGINS

Uh huh. What happened when Pastore broke it up?

STOCKBOY

He slapped them both around. They didn't like it.

WIGGINS

I'll bet... Think hard. Did either of the guys threaten Pastore?

STOCKBOY

Well... Yeah. Both of 'em, sorta.

WIGGINS

Why'd you wait so long to tell me?

STOCKBOY

I tried to tell your deputy. He said not to bother him.

WIGGINS

Our friend Darrell... Well, thanks for coming. You're a big help.

The Stockboy whirls and makes a quick exit.

The phone RINGS. Wiggins answers.

WIGGINS

Wiggins... What's that?!... Good. Set it up for this afternoon.

He slams down the phone. Exhales a heavy breath.

WIGGINS

Jasper, grab two search warrants. One each. For Russell and MacNamara's places. Get Judge Parrish to sign 'em. Go!

EXT. HARPER HOUSE - DAY

Nancy and Edward hold hands on her front steps.

EDWARD

I'm glad you gave me another chance.

They kiss. Kathy Harper watches through a window. Nancy backs off and sighs.

NANCY

I'm confused. I want to be honest, Eddie. I've got feelings for you. But, for Arthur too.

EDWARD

Him?

Arthur enters and comes up to the two.

ARTHUR

What's going on, Nancy?

EDWARD

Get lost... Nancy. You need to decide who you want.

NANCY

I never promised any of you not to see other people.

EDWARD

I think you should promise.

ARTHUR

Ok, you can go now, MacNamara.

EDWARD

You're the one who's going.

ARTHUR

You're gonna make me?

Kathy Harper hurries out of the house. Stands in the doorway and glares at the men.

KATHY

Stop it!... I don't happen to like either of you. Your actions do nothing to change my opinion. You both better leave.

Two police vehicles approach. A patrol car stops in front of the house.

Wiggins' car pulls in behind. It jumps the curb, and just misses Arthur.

Jasper gets out of the first car. Wiggins and Ludlow come out of the chief's car.

ARTHUR

Shit! You almost hit me.

WIGGINS

Jackpot. Russell. MacNamara. Come with me.

EDWARD

You arresting me?

ARTHUR

What charge?

WIGGINS

I'll think of one.

Nancy and Kathy Harper watch. Wiggins and Jasper handcuff Arthur and Edward and escort them to their cars.

KATHY

Good riddance!

INT. POLICE STATION/BOOKING ROOM - DAY

Arthur and Edward stand next to each other, Wiggins and Jasper behind them. An OFFICER writes in a ledger.

ARTHUR

This is stupid. I didn't kill anybody.

EDWARD

I want a lawyer.

WIGGINS

You'll get what's comin' to you. First, we book you. Get fingerprints. Search your places. Later today, you'll meet some old friends of yours.

JASPER

This mean curfew's off?

WIGGINS

I'll tell you when.

The officer finishes booking the two young men.

WIGGINS

Grab prints on these two. Lock 'em up. Send sets to the F.B.I. And, the R.C.M.P.

INT. EDWARD'S APARTMENT - DAY

Spartan. Bed. Small couch. Adjoining kitchen. A modern sound system, connected with a laptop. Small TV set.

Wiggins and Jasper go through Edward's belongings.

Darrell powers on the laptop and scans through the musical selections. His eyes widen.

DARRELL

This MacNamara a foreigner? His music shit ain't in English.

Wiggins takes a look.

WIGGINS

Opera. Guy's some kinda psycho.

DARRELL

Like my old coach said, "It ain't a spitball till the ump sees the spit."

WIGGINS

What the fuck's that?

DARRELL

Well... You gotta have proof.

WIGGINS

That's why we're here, Mr. Rocket Scientist. Keep looking. Or you'll be spittin' on the damn unemployment line.

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - DAY

Wiggins, Darrell, and Jasper search Arthur's place. Clothes strewn on the floor. Bureau drawers stacked on a chair.

WIGGINS

Not a fuckin' thing.

JASPER

Do we go back to MacNamara's?

WIGGINS

Nothing there either.

He kicks a chair in anger.

INT. POLICE STATION/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Three rows of chairs in the rear, an open area in front.

Wiggins accompanies MISS THOMPSON, 60, MR. PANCRATZ, 28, CYNTHIA PERKINS, 25, and the Winery Worker.

WIGGINS

Grab the lights. Bring 'em in.

Jasper turns off the lights. One second later, he flicks on a floodlight, which illuminates the open area in front of the group.

Arthur, Edward, two OFFICERS in civilian clothes, and a DARK-HAIRED MAN of about 30, file into the room. Darrell is the rear escort.

The men are lead into the lit portion of the room and stand in a line.

WIGGINS

Look 'em over real careful. You guys. Let's see a slow turn.

The five men obey.

Wiggins turns to Miss Thompson.

WIGGINS

Well? What you think?

THOMPSON

I had Mickey Stevens for two years
in high school. I'd know him
anywhere. Second from the right.

Thompson indicates Arthur.

WIGGINS

Mr. Pankratz?

PANKRATZ

You're wrong, Miss Thompson. I
went through school with him. He's
the one on the end.

He singles out Edward.

CYNTHIA PERKINS

You're both wrong!... Chief, he
killed my parents, my brother and
destroyed my family. I never
forgot his face. The man in the
center. That's him.

WIGGINS

Darrell. Masks.

Darrell passes out ski masks to the men. They pull them
over their heads.

Wiggins leans over to the Winery Worker from the winery.

WIGGINS

You caught a glimpse of him at the
winery. What about it?

WINERY WORKER

Uh... Nope. Can't tell. It was
just for a second. He was too far
away. Sorry.

WIGGINS

Damn... Okay, take 'em away.

CYNTHIA PERKINS

Wait a minute. Aren't you going to
charge that man? He's a killer.

WIGGINS

Miss Perkins. You picked out a
police officer.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A CROWD gathers around the station, including the news
reporters and camera crew.

Arthur and Edward trample down the steps and ignore the
throng of news people.

Wiggins and Ludlow open the station door and watch them.

Edward flashes a smile at Wiggins, who grimaces.

EDWARD

"Tutti assolve il mio perdono."
 `All are pardoned.' Verdi's
 "Masked Ball". Act Three.

Arthur looks back. Glares at Wiggins. Bumps into Edward.

EDWARD

Back off, asshole. I don't want
 you stuffin' a knife in my back.

ARTHUR

Ha. You're the one.

Edward moves off.

Arthur stares at him a moment, then goes in another
 direction. Jasper and Darrell join Wiggins and the doctor.

WIGGINS

Keep an eye on their places.
 Harper house too... If I had the
 manpower, I'd stake out those two
 shitheads full-time.

DARRELL

F.B.I. came up empty on their
 fingerprints. You think you're
 gonna do better than them?

Wiggins scowls at Darrell. Lights up a cigarette.

Ludlow stares at Wiggins and waggles his head with
 disapproval. Wiggins returns the gaze.

WIGGINS

Okay... Mom!

Wiggins tosses the cigarette away. Ludlow offers Wiggins a
 fake blessing, like a priest, then grins.

LUDLOW

Yes, my son.

INT. HARPER HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nancy on the couch. Reads a book titled "Psychology of the
 Deviant Mind".

An KNOCK at the door.

She opens it. Edward stands in the doorway and smiles.

Nancy jolts backward in surprise.

EDWARD
You weren't at the police station.

NANCY
I had to study for a test.

She backs away from Edward.

EDWARD
Hey. You don't think I had
anything to do with those killings?
Do you?

NANCY
I... guess not.

EDWARD
You guess?

NANCY
You can't stay, Eddie. My aunt. I
promised her I wouldn't let you in.

EDWARD
Is she here?

Nancy shakes her head no.

EDWARD
Then, what's the problem?

NANCY
Please. You'll get me in trouble.

Edward has a glum look on his face.

EXT. HARPER HOUSE - DAY

Edward walks down the front steps. Kathy Harper comes in.

KATHY
What the hell are you doing here?
I want you out of my house.

EDWARD
I was already --

KATHY
Stay away. Or I'll call the cops.

EDWARD
Asshole.

KATHY
Get out.

Edward blusters away.

Kathy Harper enters the house. Arthur ducks behind a car and observes the scene from a distance.

INT. HARPER HOUSE/NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy clad in a flimsy nightgown, drifts into sleep, under the bedcovers.

The window raises.

Arthur steps through it and into the room.

Nancy awakens with a start. Raises the covers to her neck.

NANCY

Arthur! What are you -- ?

ARTHUR

Shh. Be quiet. You want your aunt to hear?

NANCY

You scared the hell out of me. If Aunt Kathy finds you, she'll call the police. She doesn't want you or Eddie around.

ARTHUR

Are you... afraid of me?... Nancy, I wouldn't let anyone hurt you.

He kisses her.

Nancy responds to his kisses and caresses. They make love.

EXT. HARPER HOUSE - NIGHT

The dark shadowy Figure stands beside Nancy's bedroom window. Attempts to peek through the parted drapes.

INT. HARPER HOUSE/NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy and Arthur lock in passionate embrace.

The hallway door opens. Reveals Kathy Harper. Her mouth agape in shock.

KATHY

Nancy!

The couple stops. Nancy attempts to hide her nudity underneath the sheets.

Kathy Harper grabs a wooden clothes hanger from the closet.

KATHY

You filthy maggot.

She smacks Arthur with the hanger.

ARTHUR

Ow! Ouch! Cut it out!

KATHY

Get your on clothes and get out.

ARTHUR

I'm tryin', you crazy lady.

Arthur puts on his clothes in a hurry.

He dashes through the bedroom doorway. Dodges another blow from Kathy Harper.

Nancy peeks out from the covers.

INT. POLICE STATION/WIGGINS' OFFICE - DAY

Wiggins removes the plastic covering from a package of "Stopsmoke". He connects a brown filter to a plastic cigarette holder.

Ludlow steps into the office.

LUDLOW

What do you have there?

WIGGINS

Well, you've been botherin' the shit out of me. I can't afford to waste any more cigarettes... Drugstore says it really works.

LUDLOW

There's no easy way. The best method is simply to stop. Cold.

WIGGINS

No thanks. I'll do it gradual.

Wiggins inserts a cigarette and lights it. Takes a puff.

WIGGINS

Doesn't draw good.

LUDLOW

It's not supposed to.

Wiggins sucks harder on the holder. Gets impatient. Throws the contraption in a waste basket.

WIGGINS

I'll get a fucking hernia from that.

Ludlow chuckles. Wiggins doesn't see the humor.

LUDLOW

I'll change the subject... You still think this Mickey Stevens is the one?

WIGGINS

Maybe. But, if he's Russell or MacNamara, why doesn't one kill the other?

LUDLOW

Each one's the other's alibi. Plus, you're not dealing with a rational person. Maybe only certain things trigger his mania. Perhaps, subconsciously, the rival is not perceived as a threat.

WIGGINS

So, what about the ski mask?

LUDLOW

What about it?

WIGGINS

Is there more to it than just a disguise?

LUDLOW

You've been to a costume party before, like at Halloween?

WIGGINS

Yeah.

LUDLOW

Feel different? As though the costume made you another person? Rid you of your inhibitions?

WIGGINS

You're saying he's normal until he puts on the mask?

LUDLOW

Possibly. He puts it on, he's someone else. A killer. No morals or conscience... Some who wear costumes of authority go through similar personality changes.

Ludlow looks at Wiggins and raises an eyebrow. A grin comes over the Englishman's face. Wiggins remains unamused.

WIGGINS

(sarcastic)

Ha, ha.

INT. HARPER HOUSE/NANCY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nancy uses the bed as a chair and talks into her cell phone.

NANCY

No, I can't. I have a test at the college tonight... No, you can't come over here at all... My aunt is pissed... That's an awful thing to say... See you tomorrow.

She hangs up and pounds a fist onto the bed.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Afternoon shadows. A fierce wind bends small trees and bushes. Litter flies into the air. Overhead power lines sway back and forth.

INT. POLICE STATION/WIGGINS' OFFICE - DAY

Wiggins punches in a telephone number.

There are SHOUTS from another room. He throws down the phone. Runs out of the office.

INT. POLICE STATION/HALLWAY - DAY

The SHOUTS continue. Wiggins dashes down the corridor.

A door at the other end opens. Three disheveled OFFICERS in various states of undress move into the hallway.

INT. POLICE STATION/BOOKING ROOM - DAY

An ELDERLY LADY holds a TALL MAN in a ski-mask at gunpoint.

Darrell's service revolver points at the woman.

Wiggins and the others enter the room and freeze.

DARRELL

I'm tellin' ya, lady, drop it.

ELDERLY LADY

Not till you put this here killer behind bars.

DARRELL

I'll shoot you, if I have to.

WIGGINS

Darrell, put down the gun.

Darrell lowers his pistol.

TALL MAN

Please, don't shoot me!

WIGGINS

Why don't you put the gun away,
ma'am? We've already had a couple
of accidental shootings.

The woman ignores him.

Wiggins screws up his face, Impatient, he advances to her
and snatches the gun.

WIGGINS

You think he's the killer?

ELDERLY LADY

He's wearin' one of them masks,
ain't he?

TALL MAN

I just asked if she needed help
getting across the street. And,
the crazy bitch pulls out a gun.

WIGGINS

Take off the mask.

He does. Reveals a man of eighty. Wiggins sighs and forces
a smile.

WIGGINS

We'll handle it from here. You go
on home, ma'am.

ELDERLY LADY

Ain't you gonna cuff him?

WIGGINS

I'll take my chances.

She scoffs, gives Wiggins a scornful look, then leaves.

INSERT - STEAM RADIATOR

An old-fashioned cast iron pipe radiator.

A man's HANDS remove a black ski mask from the back of the
radiator. Only the back of his head visible.

He puts the mask on. And whistles the "Ave Maria" melody.

BACK TO SCENE

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Sunset approaches.

INT. POLICE STATION/SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Jasper reads a telex. Wiggins steps in.

JASPER

Just got this telex. No match on
Russell's or MacNamara's prints.

WIGGINS

Great... Grab some sleep. I'm
goin' home for a couple hours,
whether my wife cares or not.

JASPER

Careful you don't blow away.
There's power lines already down.

EXT. HARPER HOUSE - DAY

The sun dips down. Nancy's car absent from the driveway.
The vicious wind continues.

INT. HARPER HOUSE/KATHY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Empty. An open door to an adjoining bathroom.

Kathy Harper strolls out of the bathroom in a robe.

She plops on the bed. Goes through some of her clothes in a
bureau drawer.

The closet door behind her opens an inch.

INT. HARPER HOUSE/KATHY'S CLOSET - DAY

The Ski Mask Man hides among hanging clothes. He twists a
broken wire hanger into the shape of a horseshoe.

INT. HARPER HOUSE/KATHY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kathy Harper sets aside a blouse and slip. Gets up from the
bed and goes to the closet.

She slides the door open. The telephone RINGS.

The woman goes to the phone on a nightstand and answers.

KATHY

Hello?... Hi, Doris... Getting
dressed to go to dinner... No,
she's at the college... Call you
when I get back, okay?... Bye.

She hangs up. Heads for the closet. Stops. And slips into
the bathroom.

The closet door slides open. The Ski Mask Man steps out.

INT. HARPER HOUSE/KATHY'S BATHROOM - DAY

Kathy Harper squats on the toilet seat and relieves herself.

The killer appears in the doorway.

The stunned woman hesitates. Then, she gets up.

The attacker loops the bent hanger over her neck. He chokes her, and she struggles.

She frees herself and tries to run away.

KATHY
(screams)
Help! Help me!

The Ski Mask Man yanks the woman by her long hair. Jerks her backwards. Brings her head down to the toilet.

Her head bangs on the seat. With his other hand, the killer SMASHES the toilet lid onto her skull.

She cries out.

Again and again, the masked man raises the lid and slams it down. The woman's head CRUNCHES between the seat and lid.

Blood spurts out.

The impact causes the plastic seat to crack and break.

The man stops. Lets the bloody pulp which used to be Kathy Harper's head sink into the toilet bowl.

The Ski Mask Man strides off and whistles "Ave Maria."

EXT. STREET - DAY

Wiggins' dented auto cruises down a residential street.

INT. HARPER HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Ski Mask Man flicks a lighter. Ignites a sofa skirt.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Twilight. A flicker of light from a distant house.

INT. WIGGINS' CAR - NIGHT

Wiggins strains his eyes to see.

He grabs the radio mike.

WIGGINS
Jasper? You still there?

JASPER (O.S.)
Chief?

WIGGINS
There's a fire. Six-hundred block
of Gibson.

EXT. HARPER HOUSE - NIGHT

The chief's vehicle reaches the burning house. The Ski Mask Man bursts through the front door.

Wiggins hits the brakes. His car SCREECHES to a halt, then spins around.

Headlights throw light in the killer's face. He freezes for an instant. Bolts across the street.

Wiggins backs up the car. Smashes into a fire hydrant.

The Ski Mask Man sprints down the sidewalk.

Wiggins' auto jumps the curb and pursues the killer.

INT. WIGGINS' CAR - NIGHT

WIGGINS

Jasper, it's the killer! Blue jacket, dark pants... ski mask! I'm in pursuit, east on Gibson. Turning onto Catherine.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

The car SQUEALS onto a narrow street. Trees, telephone poles, and parked vehicles border it.

The Ski Mask Man flees from Wiggins.

The chief's car bounces from one side of the street to the other. BUFFETS against trees. Signs. Cars.

INTERCUT CAR/STREETS

WIGGINS

Approaching Gorham. Get back-up out here.

The street ends at a T-intersection. The Ski Mask Man runs toward the courthouse, across from the intersecting street.

WIGGINS

Now I've got you, asshole!

The building's lights spill onto the lawn. PEOPLE in business dress exit the structure.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

The killer runs across the courthouse lawn. Up the stone steps and into the building.

Wiggins' car speeds across the lawn. CRASHES into the steps and stops.

INT. COURTHOUSE/ROTUNDA - NIGHT

The Ski Mask Man weaves around puzzled SPECTATORS.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

Wiggins jumps out of his vehicle. Races through the building entrance.

INT. COURTHOUSE/ROTUNDA - NIGHT

The killer races up the staircase.

Wiggins enters. Draws his pistol.

He pursues the man up the stairs and shoves people out of his path.

WIGGINS

Out of the way! Get out!

INT. COURTHOUSE/STAIRWAY - NIGHT

The Ski Mask Man reaches the second floor entryway.

He continues up the stairs and disappears.

Seconds later, Wiggins appears. He huffs and puffs, out-of-breath.

WIGGINS

Son of a bitch.

He stops at the landing. Looks around. Grunts, then resumes his dash upstairs.

EXT. POLICE STATION/COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

Jasper, Darrell, and other Officers bolt out of the police station. They attempt to cross the street against traffic.

INT. COURTHOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Ski Mask Man reaches the top of the stairs. A narrow hallway with doors to offices.

He glances around. Sees a small door between the stairway and elevator.

He runs to the door and opens it. A winding staircase is inside. He climbs it.

INT. COURTHOUSE/CUPOLA - NIGHT

The top of the winding stairs. The killer scrambles inside the eight-sided cupola.

The Ski Mask Man pushes up a small window. Dives through it and squeezes inside.

INT. COURTHOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Chief Wiggins arrives at the head of the steps.

A BUSINESSMAN slides out of a nearby office and checks out what is happening. The open door reveals a desk, chairs, and a heavy winter coat on a coat rack.

The Businessman goes to the tired Wiggins.

BUSINESSMAN

What's going on?

WIGGINS

Killer's loose! Get the hell out!

Wiggins pushes the Businessman aside, and the man runs down the stairs.

Wiggins spies the small door ajar. The chief ascends the narrow stairway, gun still in his hand.

EXT. POLICE STATION/COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

A police patrol car zooms past the officers. Crosses Main Street and jumps over the grass median.

A siren BLARES, and a fire engine barrels up the street.

The two vehicles narrowly miss.

The patrol car continues through the intersection and heads for the rear of the courthouse.

Darrell, Jasper, and other officers manage to get across Main Street. They push past spectators and approach the front entrance steps of the courthouse.

JASPER

Police! Let us through!

DARRELL

Where is he?

OFFICER #1

Inside somewhere.

JASPER

Is the back covered?

OFFICER #2

The black-and-white turned onto Court Street.

JASPER

(to Officer #2)

Help him.

(to Officer #1)

Go inside. Get everybody out.

Other policemen cross Main Street toward the courthouse.

The two officers split up.

One enters the front of the courthouse. The other heads toward the back.

EXT. CUPOLA/STATUE - NIGHT

Roof floodlights illuminate the 12-foot statue and its base. Wiggins peers through the open window of the cupola.

The chief climbs onto a circular balcony with a railing around it. The large statue stands above it. A work ladder extends from the statue base to the balcony.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

An ONLOOKER gazes up. Spots the sheriff on the balcony. Due to the angle of the floodlights, Wiggins is in shadow.

ONLOOKER

Somebody's up by the statue!

The crowd sees Wiggins' form on the balcony and gasps.

JASPER

It's the Chief.

Doctor Ludlow appears in the middle of the crowd.

People continue to file out of the courthouse.

ONLOOKER

Look out!

EXT. CUPOLA/STATUE - NIGHT

Wiggins gazes up. Sees the Ski Mask Man, who hides behind the Lady Justice statue.

He fires a shot and misses. The man ducks behind the large sculpture.

Wiggins starts up the work ladder.

Wiggins reaches the statue base, and the Ski Mask Man ambushes him, around the other side of Lady Justice.

He grabs Wiggins' gun hand.

Spectators below scream.

The two men struggle for the weapon.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

Everyone stares at the shadows of the two men, who wrestle around the statue.

Jasper turns to an officer.

JASPER
Get a light on them!

EXT. CUPOLA/STATUE - NIGHT

The Ski Mask Man smashes Wiggins' back against the sword that hangs from the hand of Lady Justice.

This stuns the black man and forces him to drop his pistol. It falls onto the courthouse roof.

The groggy Wiggins staggers.

The killer forces the chief's head against the sword of the gold-plated statue and chokes him.

WIGGINS
Help me!... Help!

EXT. COURTHOUSE/REAR - NIGHT

The police car parks behind the courthouse. Officer #2 joins the DRIVER. They both stand by the car and observe the struggle.

EXT. CUPOLA/STATUE - NIGHT

The Ski Mask Man continues to strangle Wiggins.

WIGGINS
(gasps)
Shoot him!

EXT. COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

The crowd on ground level shouts and cries out.

POLICEMAN
Jasper, do we fire?

WIGGINS
(gags)
Shoot... shoot...

BANG!

A pistol shot rings out.

One of the shadowy figures at the statue falls.

He bounces off the copper-colored dome underneath the cupola. Spectators scream.

The body tumbles onto the roof and rolls.

The man drops off the edge of the roof. Plummets another thirty feet. Onlookers yell in horror.

The crowd scatters.

The body crashes onto the front steps of the courthouse.
Blood splatters everywhere.

From the body of Chief Wiggins.

Darrell stands frozen and stares at the dead chief. Smoke curls from the barrel of his drawn gun.

DARRELL

Oh, shit.

Ludlow breaks from the stunned spectators. Darrell's gun remains pointed in the air.

Ludlow kneels beside Wiggins and examines him.

A moment later, he turns to Darrell.

LUDLOW

You shot him through the heart.

Jasper guides Darrell's gun hand down to his side.

EXT. COURTHOUSE/REAR - NIGHT

The Ski Mask Man climbs down to the balcony.

He re-enters the open window and retreats back inside the building's cupola.

Officer #2 leaves the driver of the patrol car and sprints to the rear door.

He scales a tall fire escape ladder that leads up to the courthouse roof.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

Jasper and three officers dash into the courthouse.

Darrell remains outside, motionless. He exchanges gazes with another policeman.

DARRELL

... not my fault...

Ludlow hangs his head and clutches Wiggins' lifeless hand. The spectators express both shock and horror.

A few curious onlookers follow the police inside.

INT. COURTHOUSE/HALLWAY - NIGHT

The Ski Mask Man descends to the top floor and looks around the hallway. An empty corridor.

The killer starts for the stairs, then stops.

He notices the open door of the Businessman's office.
Enters the room and rips the winter coat off the coat rack.
Puts the coat over his jacket.

With his back exposed, he peels off the ski mask and stuffs it in the coat pocket.

He presses the elevator button. The door slides open, and the killer steps into the elevator.

Jasper and the other policemen get to the top of the stairs.

JASPER

(to various police officers)

You. Get back down the stairs, in case he's still there. You, get up to that balcony. You come with me.

The officers separate.

One runs back down the stairs. Jasper and Officer #1 dash down the hallway and check offices.

Another POLICEMAN climbs the winding staircase to the cupola, two steps at a time.

INT. COURTHOUSE/ROTUNDA - NIGHT

Officer #1 attempts to control the crowd from milling about the large room.

OFFICER #1

For your own safety, please.
Everyone leave the building.

In the middle of the confusion, the elevator door opens.

The killer in the stolen coat slips, unnoticed, into the rotunda. Blends in with spectators and moves with deliberate steps toward the front entrance.

EXT. CUPOLA/STATUE - NIGHT

Officer #2 scales the outside fire escape and reaches the balcony that surrounds the cupola.

INT. COURTHOUSE/CUPOLA - NIGHT

The Policeman from Jasper's group scrambles inside the cupola. He crawls through the open window.

Officer #2 comes around the other side.

Both men draw their guns and almost shoot each other.

POLICEMAN AND OFFICER #2

(simultaneous)

Jesus Christ!

They sigh and holster weapons.

EXT. KERSHAW PARK - DAY

A open gate leads into the wooded, lakeside park.

A small dump truck drives through and hauls a brush chipper behind it.

The side of the truck reads: "Yale Tree Surgeons". The vehicle stops in the parking area.

An overweight TREE TRIMMER climbs out of the truck. He removes an extension ladder and chainsaw from the vehicle.

He leans the ladder against an oak tree. Climbs it.

The Tree Trimmer uses the CHAINSAW to prune dead branches from the wind-damaged oak.

EXT. ROSELAND - DAY

The condominium development features several completed units. One structure half-finished.

A dock leads to the lake. Nancy's car parks beside it.

A heavy blanket bundles Nancy. She huddles on a wooden bench. Bewildered. Grief-stricken. Eyes moist and red from crying. In shock.

Arthur wears a heavy coat. He approaches her.

ARTHUR

Nancy?

She cringes. Shivers like a frightened, wounded animal.

Arthur takes her in his arms and comforts her. She cries.

NANCY

How did... you... find me?

ARTHUR

Your favorite spot, remember? It used to be an amusement park, right?

She nods yes.

ARTHUR

C'mon, let's go.

NANCY

No, no. I want to stay.

ARTHUR

Okay, okay. But, you'll freeze.
I'll see if I can get into that
building. I'll be right back.

Arthur goes off. Moves around to the side of the condo unit under construction.

A few beats later, ADULT BILLY WAGNER, 21, appears at the other side of the building, in a winter coat. A long scarf wraps around his face and reveals only his eyes. He wears a black cap.

Nancy remains on the bench, unaware.

Adult Billy advances and reaches the young woman.

Nancy sees him and cries out.

ADULT BILLY

Don't scream. I want to show you
something. It's important.

Nancy gets up. Backs away in fright.

NANCY

Help! Arthur!

Nancy claws at Adult Billy's face. Causes the scarf to drop to the ground. It reveals his face. Hideous burn scars cover mutilated tissue.

Nancy runs away from the grotesque man.

He takes off after her.

ADULT BILLY

Wait!

The frightened girl stumbles and falls. He grabs her and pulls her up. Nancy screams.

Arthur comes in and brandishes a long hunting knife.

He goes behind Adult Billy and spins him around.

When he turns round, Arthur stabs him in the chest. The disfigured man drops to the ground.

Newspaper clippings fall out of his pockets.

Arthur comforts the hysterical Nancy. She calms down.

He puts the bloody knife into a scabbard underneath his coat. Goes to the lifeless attacker.

Nancy follows with reluctance.

She picks up the newspaper clippings. Arthur searches Adult Billy's coat. Pulls out a photograph of Donna Wagner.

NANCY

These are about the murders...
What's that?

Arthur stares at the photo and the dead body.

ARTHUR

It's Billy Wagner... Donna's little brother... The one who got away.

NANCY

What are you talking about?

ARTHUR

I never thought they'd let him out of that nuthouse.

Arthur looks at the photo once more.

ARTHUR

Donna.

NANCY

Arthur?

Arthur ignores Nancy. Takes hold of Adult Billy's body and drags him toward the dock.

NANCY

What are you doing?

ARTHUR

I'll hide him under the dock...
Nobody'll find him... Not for days.

NANCY

What? Arthur, we've got to call the cops.

She takes out a cell phone. Arthur bats it away with a vicious backhand.

ARTHUR

No, no... we mustn't.

Nancy backs away, afraid.

He stops. Turns to Nancy.

ARTHUR

Nancy... Come here.

Nancy backs away, shaking her head no.

ARTHUR

I said, come here.

NANCY
No... I better leave.

ARTHUR
I won't let you leave me.

A maniacal smile crosses Arthur's face. He ignores Billy's body and goes toward Nancy.

Nancy's face fills with fright. She runs away and skirts the lake shore.

Arthur pulls a black ski mask from his coat pocket. Stares at it with a hypnotic gaze. Pulls it over his head.

ARTHUR
Here, Nancy. I got something for you.

He reaches into his pants pocket. Produces a diamond ring.

ARTHUR
I gave it to Donna once. But, I had to take it back.

He blurts out an insane laugh. Gazes at the ring.

ARTHUR
Well, I guess maybe it's too late for you, too.

He tosses the ring onto the ground. Draws the bloody knife from his scabbard.

ARTHUR
Don't worry. I got something else for you.

Arthur starts after Nancy.

EXT. KERSHAW PARK - DAY

The Tree Trimmer, down from the ladder, feeds tree branches and limbs into the hopper of the brush chipper.

The machine WHIRS and grinds up the wood. Spits debris and wood chips out a chute, into the back of the dump truck.

He shoves a huge branch into the chipper. The blades jam and slow down.

The motor WHINES and rattles, runs labored, and stalls. It nearly shuts off.

TREE TRIMMER
C'mon, goddamn it. Don't quit on me again.

The Tree Trimmer kicks the hopper, and the machine returns to normal.

EXT. LAKESHORE DRIVE - DAY

An old sedan lumbers down the lake road.

INT. SEDAN - DAY

Edward, behind the wheel, glances left and right.

EXT. ROSELAND - DAY

The sedan enters the condominium complex. Parks beside Nancy's car.

Edward gets out. Looks inside Nancy's vehicle.

Nancy's SCREAMS pierce the air. Edward looks up.

POV - EDWARD

He spots Nancy, atop the seven foot fence that separates the Roseland complex from Kershaw Park.

She tries to get to the other side.

Arthur grabs hold of her foot.

EDWARD

Nancy!

Arthur turns and looks toward Edward. The distraction enables Nancy to get loose from his grip.

She drops down to the other side of the fence, lands awkward on one foot, and injures her ankle.

BACK TO SCENE

Edward dashes back to his car. STARTS the engine.

EXT. KERSHAW PARK - DAY

Nancy limps through the park. The Tree Trimmer continues to feed branches to the brush chipper. He hears Nancy scream and turns.

Nancy runs toward him, and Arthur chases her.

TREE TRIMMER

What the -- ?

Nancy, out-of-breath, collapses into the arms of the portly Tree Trimmer.

NANCY

Help me.

Arthur reaches the pair. The Tree Trimmer steps in front of Nancy and confronts the young man.

TREE TRIMMER

Okay, hold it, buddy.

Arthur slashes at the man and slices him in the throat with his knife.

The Tree Trimmer falls and clutches his neck.

Nancy retreats. Arthur follows her.

The sedan sideswipes the entrance gate.

Edward jumps out and races toward Arthur and Nancy.

Arthur tackles Nancy. They stumble to the ground.

Arthur plants the hunting knife deep in Nancy's back. She screams in agony.

EDWARD

No!

He leaps onto Arthur. The two grapple with each other on the ground.

Nancy gets to her knees. Tries to reach the knife in her back and pull it out. Blood gushes from the wound.

Edward grabs onto Arthur's ski mask. Turns it around and renders Arthur sightless.

He pummels him with punches.

Arthur rolls away. Rips off the mask and throws it aside. Edward realizes who it is.

EDWARD

You!

Arthur kicks Edward in the stomach.

Edward doubles over in pain. Arthur knees him on the chin and knocks him down.

Arthur smashes Edward's head against the ground. The young man threatens to pass out.

Arthur spots the chainsaw the Tree Trimmer used.

Nancy crawls on her stomach, the knife still in her back.

She inches toward the chainsaw. Arthur beats her to it.

The Tree Trimmer lies dead.

The maniac STARTS the chainsaw. Smiles at the groggy Edward. Arthur advances on him.

ARTHUR

The name's Mickey.

Nancy throws her body in Arthur's path. Arthur stumbles forward and drops the chainsaw.

Edward, still on the ground, thrusts his legs at Arthur and strikes him in the chest.

The blow catapults Arthur into the air.

He bangs against the back of the truck. Staggered, loses his balance. Takes an awkward tumble and falls into the hopper of the still-running brush chipper..

The machine sucks Arthur's feet and legs into the chipper.

He issues a hideous shriek. Attempts to claw his way out of the hopper.

The WHIRRING blades of the chipper chew up the lower half of his body.

Parts of Arthur's feet, shoes, legs, and clothes are shot into the back of the dump truck. Blood splatters and sprays in all directions.

Arthur continues to scream in excruciating agony.

He slides down the hopper. The rotating metal blades chop up and disintegrate half of his body.

The machine jams and dies down. Shuts off.

Arthur is dead.

His body is gone from the waist down.

Edward regains his faculties. Stumbles onto his feet. Looks at the brush chipper.

EDWARD

Oh, shit...

The bloody, grisly sight repulses him. He turns away, sees Nancy on the ground, and hurries to her.

A police car SQUEALS through the gate.

Edward kneels beside Nancy. Takes her in his arms.

EDWARD

Nancy...

She gazes up at him, unable to speak.

Darrell scrambles out of the police car.

Edward pulls out the knife from Nancy's back. She gasps her last breath and dies.

Edward lowers her to the ground. Darrell draws his revolver.

DARRELL
Freeze, asshole!

Edward still holds Arthur's knife and looks up at Darrell.

DARRELL
Drop it!

EDWARD
Huh? Hey, wait a second! I --

DARRELL
Drop it, or you're dead! Now!

Edward obeys. Lets the knife fall to the ground.

DARRELL
Put your hands up. Get over there.

Edward raises his arms. Sidesteps to one side.

Darrell kicks the knife away. Turns Edward around. Handcuffs him.

A car with a C-B antenna on it tears into the park and SCREECHES to a stop.

A uniformed COP gets out. Looks around.

COP
Holy crap.

DARRELL
Check those people.

Darrell continues to train his gun on Edward.

The Cop goes to the bodies of Nancy, the Tree Trimmer, and what is left of Arthur.

When he sees Arthur's corpse, the Cop gags and vomits.

EDWARD
I'm not the killer, he is!

DARRELL
Sure, sure. He's a piece of hamburger. You're alive. So, he's the killer, right?

Another automobile enters the park. Doctor Ludlow gets out. Surveys the carnage.

The Cop recovers his composure.

LUDLOW

My God.

COP

They're... all dead.

EDWARD

I didn't do it. It was Arthur Russell!

DARRELL

(to the Cop)

Stay here with the doc. And call the mortuary.

Darrell grabs hold of Edward.

DARRELL

Let's go.

Darrell shoves him to the patrol car. Edward looks at Ludlow and pleads with his eyes.

EDWARD

Help me... Please?

Ludlow glowers at Edward.

LUDLOW

"La commedia e finita"... That's from "Pagliacci," final scene.

Edward stares back at Ludlow. Darrell escorts him into the back of the police car and locks him inside.

Darrell turns to Ludlow.

DARRELL

What's that mean?

LUDLOW

Loose translation? Means that, for Mr. MacNamara, the masquerade is over.

Darrell returns to his patrol car. Climbs in, starts it, and drives out of the park.

Ludlow and the Cop survey the gruesome scene.

FADE OUT.

THE END