

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

a screenplay by Brad Ingelsby

INDIAN PAINTBRUSH

EMJAG Productions
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OVER BLACK:

The following story is inspired by actual events.

FADE IN on ENDLESS CORN FIELDS sitting under a Fall night sky. A sharp-edged wind howls. The stalks bend.

Kankakee, Illinois 1991

OFF-SCREEN, we hear a CLICK, followed by STATIC and finally the faint WHIR of CASSETTE WHEELS turning.

MAN'S VOICE
Mother, it's me... I've been
kidnapped and I've been buried
alive.

COURT STREET, the primary vein of town. Taverns, delis, a Circle K gas station. Vacant at this late hour.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
I won't be released until a payment
of one million dollars cash is
made.

THE YESTERYEAR, an elegant riverfront restaurant. Closed, dark for the night.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
You will be called again at 10 AM
with instructions on where to drop
the money. Please stay by the
phone.

THE KANKAKEE RIVER. Black water winds through dense woodland.

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Once the money has been collected
you will be told my location.

WE'RE DRIFTING THROUGH A FOREST of spindly, naked Hardwoods. Faintly a POUNDING is heard. THOOMP... THOOMP... THOOMP...

MAN'S VOICE (CONT'D)
If you attempt to contact the
police you will never see me alive
again.

MOVING CLOSER to the noise... the POUNDING LOUDER, more URGENT... TILT DOWN... the ground is TREMBLING... the BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! of someone hitting wood... PUNCHING it... desperate to get out and -

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK, MOVING DOWN A RURAL ROAD - LATE AT NIGHT

TIGHT ON A MICROCASSETTE RECORDER as - CLICK - the cassette wheels stop. A perfectly manicured fingernail presses the REWIND button. As the wheels spin back, WE PAN UP to NANCY RISH, 27, blonde, indecently beautiful...

...and nervous now. Hands shaking as she brings a Virginia Slim to her lips and stares blankly out the passenger window.

NANCY
 You were supposed to have the
 blindfold on. That was the plan.
 (beat)
 He saw my face.

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)
 You don't know that. It was dark -

NANCY
 (certain of it)
 He saw my fucking face.

PUSH IN ON NANCY... as she pulls her knees to her chest... a
 dark reality settling in... TIGHT ON NANCY'S FACE as we -

SMASH TO:

INT. BANQUET ROOM, KANKAKEE MARRIOTT - MORNING

TIGHT ON NANCY. The most beautiful NINE YEAR-OLD GIRL we've ever seen. Brilliant cerulean eyes under her almost white-hot golden hair. She struts around the stage with the other JUNIOR PAGEANT CONTESTANTS, owning every step. A homespun banner reads: *JUNIOR MISS DAIRY PRINCESS*.

1974

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

NANCY
 My name is Nancy Elaine Rish from Kankakee, Illinois. My ambition is to be a model, or an actress on *All My Children*. My favorite hobbies are dancing...

IN THE AUDIENCE

is CONNIE RISH, 30, Nancy's single, doting 'pageant' mother. Connie's more girl than woman and that's intentional as she's petrified of aging. She mouths the words as Nancy speaks.

NANCY (O.C.)
 ...singing, getting my nails done,
 laughing with friends and...

NANCY

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

NANCY
 ...Hot fudge sundaes.

As Nancy moves along, her eyes lock in on a HEAVYSET JUDGE like a wanton single girl capturing her target across a bar. Judge meets her stare. By the time Nancy makes her turn, he's become deeply hypnotized.

ON THE STAGE, AMID THE AUDIENCE'S APPLAUSE -

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

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

CONNIE (V.O.)
I always knew you were special.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

GLIDE ACROSS THE WALLS OF THE BEDROOM, covered with pageant sashes, ribbons, and first place trophies...

CONNIE (O.C.)
When you were just five years old
this man came up to me at the mall.

...Atop the dresser are mawkish SEARS PORTRAIT STUDIO PHOTOS of Nancy and Connie over the years...

CONNIE (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Came right up to me and asked if
you might be interested in doing
some modeling. I said, no, uh-uh,
there's training still to be done.

...Shelves are crammed with HUNDREDS of unopened, untouched Barbie doll boxes..

CONNIE (O.C.) (CONT'D)
(chuckles, embarrassed)
Truth is, you probably could've
been a star right then. I think a
part of me just wanted you all for
myself.

WIDER - Nancy and Connie sit on Nancy's bed. Connie combs Nancy's hair while Nancy watches an episode of *Paper Moon*, transfixed by Addie (Jodie Foster) and her get-rich schemes.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
When I was a girl, my Mom would
talk about Shirley Temple. How the
same word came to everyone's mind
when they saw her. Sparkle. Some
people just have it. You have it,
Nancy. You sparkle.

(O.C.) A CAR DOOR SHUTS. Nancy glances outside her window and notices a MOVING VAN in the driveway next door.

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

Nancy combs a tanned, anorexic Barbie doll's hair. A rubber ball rolls before her. She searches for its source. A face peers over the top of the neighboring fence. JIMMY KEENE, 10, the new neighbor: long-haired and red-blooded.

Jimmy VAULTS the fence, and heads over, stopping within inches of Nancy. He bends down and picks up the ball.

NANCY
 (sniffs the air)
 What's that smell? Are you wearing
 perfume?

JIMMY
 No, it's my dad's Aqua Velva. I'm
 Jimmy. Who are you?

NANCY
 That's for you to find out.

She stands and walks back toward the house.

JIMMY
 ...Wunna be my girlfriend?

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

NANCY
 You're not my type.

JIMMY
 Oh yeah? Well what's your type?

NANCY
 Rich and famous.

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

NANCY (CONT'D)
 I can show you around town tomorrow
 if you want.
 (patronizing)
 If it's okay with your parents.

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

ON BIKE WHEELS TURNING — DAY

NANCY and JIMMY cruise down the tree-lined town streets.
 Nancy surges ahead of Jimmy. Jimmy pedals hard to keep up.

A SERIES OF SHOTS AS THE PAIR STOPS OUTSIDE NANCY'S HAUNTS:

THE 'CUTTING EDGE' HAIR SALON

NANCY
 That's where I get my hair done.

'SOPHISTICATE' DRESS SHOP

NANCY (CONT'D)
 That's where they make my pageant
 gowns.

A NEIGHBORHOOD POOL CROWDED WITH YOUNGSTERS

NANCY (CONT'D)
 That's where I go to tan.

THE PRETTIEST HOUSE IN TOWN (STEPHEN SMALL'S HOUSE)

Behind wrought iron gates, a long driveway winds to a stunning asymmetrical QUEEN ANNE VICTORIAN MANSION.

NANCY (CONT'D)
 And that's where the Small Family
 lives.
 (wistful)
 Nothing small about Mr. Small.

JIMMY
 Who's that?

NANCY
 Look at the house.

Nancy climbs off her bike and puts her face between the bars of the gate, studying the home. Just then - HONK! A MERCEDEZ-BENZ SEDAN arrives at the gate and tries to ride through.

In the backseat, STEPHEN SMALL, mid 30s, a severe man in a tailored suit sits beside his fuddy-duddy mother, ELAINE, 55. The DRIVER pantomimes for Nancy to move. Stephen's taken notice now and lowers his window.

SMALL
 Would you move out of the way.

Nancy stares at him a moment. Not moving. Small's incensed -

SMALL (CONT'D)
 I said -

JIMMY
 Come on, Nancy, let's go.

Nancy moves her bike *mere inches*, just enough for the sedan to ride past. Off Nancy, fixated on the Small home -

EXT. KANKAKEE RIVER - DAY - WE'RE UNDERWATER AS

Nancy and Jimmy STREAK THROUGH. Jimmy SURFACES and looks around for Nancy. She SHOOTS UP behind him, TAGS him!

NANCY
 Gotcha!

She's gone again. Underwater. Jimmy DIVES DOWN after her.

EXT. WOODS - AFTERNOON

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

LATER - SERIES OF SHOTS

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

He slides down an ESCARPMENT... BOUNDS across a thin ROCK STREAM... PUSHES through clouds of FOREST SHRUBS... the forest more dense out this far, the trees misshapen. For a moment he almost looks nervous.

Finally, he pauses at the trunk of an ANCIENT ELM, a giant elder statesman towering over the young upstart birch, pine and firs. Then -

NANCY (O.C.)
Scared?

Nancy's head emerges from the ground like a periscope only to disappear again.

Jimmy nears, looks down into THE NEOLITHIC FISSURE in which she stands: a deep groove in the forest floor. He descends a WOODEN LADDER propped against a wall of moss-covered mudstone. He looks around, entranced by the hidden cleft.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Everyone's got a place no one else knows about it. This one's mine.

JIMMY
Yeah, right. I know about it now.

NANCY
No you don't... You're lost.

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

NANCY (CONT'D)
Looks like you've already got a girlfriend.

NANCY (CONT'D)
(beat, smiles)
That's right, Ci-Ci.

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

INT. SEARS SPRING/SUMMER CATALOG PHOTO SHOOT - CHICAGO - 1981

NANCY, a 16 year old stunner now, poses in an electric yellow string bikini against a tropical backdrop. She's been at this modeling game a while now. It's old-hat to her now.

Off to the side of the set, CONNIE shows Nancy's portfolio (all catalog tearouts) to a MAKE-UP GIRL.

CONNIE
That's from Eaton's Spring Catalog.
Nancy got the cover.

BEHIND THE CAMERA, glad-handing the AD EXECS, is JOEL LESTER, 30, a visiting, smarmy freelance model scout.

JOEL LESTER
 - yeah yeah I still have my place
 in New York, but I gotta keep my
 antennae up, yunno? The next Cheryl
 Tiegs might be walking through
 daddy's cornfield right now.

He laughs, then turns and spots Nancy under the lights.

JOEL LESTER (CONT'D)
 (to an ASSISTANT)
 Who's that?

ASSISTANT
 Oh, that's Nancy. Nancy Rish.

Joel tilts his shades down, intrigued, soaking her in.

EXT. RISH HOME - FRONT LAWN - SPRING EVENING - 1981

Nancy is dressed in a prom mini. Connie stands behind her, hands covering Nancy's eyes.

NANCY
 Mom, what's going on?

CONNIE
 Keep 'em closed, keep 'em closed!

A FLEETWOOD LIMOUSINE rolls into the drive. JIMMY KEENE steps out in a gaudy white Men's Warehouse tuxedo. He's 17 now, his long hair and natural build exude a brutish sexuality.

Connie pulls her hands away.

NANCY
 Oh my gosh, Jimmy.

Jimmy hands Nancy flowers. The couple pose as CONNIE and MRS. KEENE, 30, snap photos. NEIGHBORHOOD BOYS gape from afar.

NANCY & JIMMY, THE 'IT' COUPLE, DANCE AT THE JUNIOR PROM

Eyes on eyes. Eddie Money's 'Baby Hold On' plays. She leans close, whispers in his ear -

NANCY
 Can you hear it, Jimmy? They're
 playing our song.

JIMMY
 (listens, smiles)
 You're perfect tonight, Nanc. I
 don't ever wanna lose you.

NANCY
 You're never gonna lose me.

Nancy holds him tighter.

INT. RISH HOME - NANCY BOUNDS DOWN THE STAIRWELL
dressed for a night out. Connie's on her heels -

CONNIE
You've been spending a lot of time
with this Joel fella lately, Nancy.

NANCY
He gave my portfolio to some New
York agents he knows.

CONNIE
New York? But, Nancy, I manage your
career.

NANCY
You used to manage my career.

Connie's surprised and hurt. At the door, Nancy slips on her acid-washed denim jacket, and leaves.

EXT. RISH HOME - CONTINUOUS

Nancy runs to Joel's Beemer when -

JIMMY (O.C.)
Nancy?

She stops in her tracks and turns to Jimmy, staring at her from his driveway. He stands beside a HARLEY SX-125 MOTORCYCLE, returning home from a day of donkeywork.

A long beat as she measures her options, trapped between two lives and, as she sees it, two very different futures.

JOEL LESTER
Come on, babe, let's hit it.

Finally, Nancy climbs into the BMW convertible. Jimmy watches as she DARTS OFF down the street.

NANCY'S HAIR IS A DANCING FIRE

as she and Joel fly down Interstate 94. The City of the Big Shoulders dazzles on the horizon. They shout over the wind -

JOEL LESTER
I GOT THE CALL TODAY, BABE!

NANCY
WHAT!?

JOEL LESTER
NEW YORK! THEY WANNA MEET YOU!

Nancy SCREAMS excitedly and raises her arms in the air.

INT. RISH HOME, NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATE)

TWO PACKED SUITCASES are open on the bed. Nancy reviews the outfits inside for what feels like the thousandth time.

DINK-DINK at her window. Nancy looks outside. Jimmy stands in the driveway. With an annoyed SIGH, she lifts the window.

JIMMY
How about one last swim?

NANCY
Are you crazy? You know I leave for New York in the morning. Besides, that water's not good for my hair.

JIMMY
I'm not asking you to stay, Ci-Ci, I just wanted to say goodbye.

EXT. KANKAKEE RIVER - NIGHT

Quiescent. Peaceful. In the distance, Nancy and Jimmy DASH toward a cliff's edge and LEAP across the full moon.

RIVER

Nancy surfaces from the jump. Looks around for Jimmy. He's nowhere. The water slowly becomes placid again. Then -

Jimmy BURSTS out of the water and DUNKS Nancy! He LAUGHS. She SPLASHES him playfully then watches as he backstrokes away.

NANCY
What're you gonna do here without me?

JIMMY
I'll figure something out.

NANCY
Joel thinks I could go from New York right to Paris. That's where the Spring collections are... Maybe you could save up and visit me.

JIMMY
I might not be around that long.
(off her look)
You're not the only one with plans to get outta this place, yunno?

A moment. She hadn't thought of that until just now. *This place without Jimmy.* It bothers her. She shakes it off.

NANCY
If I wasn't such a dreamer do you think we would've ended up together, Jimmy?
(off his laugh)
I'm serious.

JIMMY

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

NANCY

What's there to get?

JIMMY

Who you are. What you want. I
understand, yunno.

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

NANCY

Sometimes I think you're the only
person in the whole world who does.

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

Jimmy slips underwater only to emerge seconds later on the
riverbank. He climbs out of the water and reclines on a
boulder, hands behind his head. Nancy's indignant.

JIMMY

End of the rainbow up here, Ci-Ci.
Better hurry or you're gonna miss
the sun coming up.

She takes a moment, then swims toward him. Climbs onto the
boulder, lays beside him and rests her head on his chest...

EXT. RURAL ROAD — NEARLY DAWN

VRM! — Nancy's arms are wrapped around Jimmy's waist. They
TEAR down the deserted road at 80 mph. Knowing she has to
leave, she holds him tighter, savoring this final moment.

EXT. PENN STATION — NEW YORK CITY — MORNING

Nancy steps off a bus. DRIVER hands over her luggage.

She takes a moment to absorb her new surroundings. Dapper men
and glamorous women. The marquee outside MADISON SQUARE
GARDEN announces *The Rolling Stones*. On a billboard, Lauren
Hutton poses for Revlon. Nancy smiles, *home at last*.

EXT. LINCOLN CENTER — WIDE — DAY

Nancy wheels her luggage across the plaza.

CLOSER ANGLE, NANCY PAUSES

outside an IMPRESSIVE HIGH-RISE and takes in its thirty-plus
stories. A DOORMAN holds the door open. Nancy glides inside.

INT. 30 LINCOLN PLAZA - 12TH FLOOR APARTMENT - DAY

Nancy enters the tastefully appointed three bedroom. A note hangs from a bedroom door knob: **Welcome to New York, Nancy. The Ford Modeling Agency.**

She sets her luggage down and strolls around the living area admiring the panoramic city view. Her fingers graze the designer gowns scattered carelessly about like rags. On the coffee table are proofs from a Ralph Lauren modeling shoot. Nancy lifts one. A pretty BRUNETTE stands on the bow of a yacht, gazing out over endless azure water.

On Nancy, filled with possibility: This could be her life!

INT. FORD MODELING AGENCY - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

GAYLE, 50, is at the tail end of an exhausting day of auditions. Two MALE AGENTS sit at her side. An INTERN mills.

GAYLE

Okay, are we done, James?

INTERN

Uhh...one more. Nancy Rish.

Intern hands Gayle Nancy's composite cards. Strictly catalog.

GAYLE

Who's the scout?

AGENT 1

Joel Lester.

GAYLE

Oh God. Did he sleep with her?

AGENT 2

What do you think?

GAYLE

(cringes)

Well, she's 5'10. Bring her in.

Intern exits and returns a moment later with Nancy who struts in wearing a belted shirt dress with shoulder pads. She hands Gayle her portfolio. Intern rolls his eyes behind her back.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Hi, Nancy. Have a seat.

Nancy sits across from them. Smiling, eager to impress.

GAYLE (CONT'D)

Where are you from, sweetheart?

NANCY

Well, I was born in Kankakee, but I spend so much time in Chicago now that it's home.

Agent 1 scribbles something onto a memo pad and slides it to Agent 2 who chokes a laugh. Nancy catches it.

GAYLE
Stand up for me, Nancy.

Nancy does just that and awkwardly poses.

GAYLE (CONT'D)
You don't need to hide behind all
that make-up.

AGENT 1
The look they like these days is au
naturel.

NANCY
...o... what?

GAYLE
Clean and simple. Showing who you
really are.

Nancy seems confused by this. The suggestion a crime against
her very nature. A queer, uneasy feeling burgeons in her.
She's out of her depth and knows it. Finally...

GAYLE (CONT'D)
Thanks for coming in, Nancy.

NANCY
Wait... That's it?

Gayle nods. A confused beat then Nancy takes her portfolio
and exits, closing the door behind her.

HALLWAY

ON NANCY, walking away, not unaware of the muffled mirth
coming from inside the room.

INT. 30 LINCOLN PLAZA - APARTMENT - EVENING

Nancy returns to find her roommates, three slinky models
- CHLOE, OLIVIA and JENNIFER, 19 - hanging out in the living
area, drinking red wine. All three impossibly thin couture
models. The girls notice Nancy.

NANCY
Hi, I'm Nancy.

CHLOE
(re: Nancy's outfit)
How'd the audition for *Dallas* go?

The girls LAUGH. Olivia nudges Chloe: *Play nice.*

OLIVIA
Why don't you sit down and have a
glass of wine with us, Nancy.

JENNIFER
Or don't.

More LAUGHS. Mortified, Nancy hurries into the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nancy locks the door and sits on the toilet, afraid to go back out. She drops her head in her hands and begins to CRY.

(O.C.) The PHONE RINGS.

OLIVIA (O.C.)
Nancy, it's for you. It's Karen
from Ford.

Nancy brightens, RUNS out of the bathroom, and excitedly takes the phone from Olivia.

NANCY
Hello!... This is Nancy.. Uh-huh...
Uh-huh... But I don't understand...
What are you saying to me?... What
does that mean?... Home?

Jennifer and Chloe stifle laughs.

NANCY (CONT'D)
But I... I just got here...

INT. OLDSMOBILE VISTA WAGON, MOVING - KANKAKEE - AFTERNOON

ON NANCY, depressed, staring out her window at the passing storefronts. None taller than two stories.

CONNIE
Don't be sad, Nanc. No one lasts
more than a few weeks in New York
anyway... How about I make your
favorite dinner? We can stop at the
grocery store and -

NANCY
I'm wanna go over and see Jimmy.

CONNIE
Oh, sweetheart, you didn't hear?

Nancy turns to Connie.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
He left for California to live with
his cousin. Just took off one night
last week. His mother's a wreck.

Nancy's stunned, trying to process the news as storefronts give way to cornfields as far as the eye can see.

FADE OUT.

INT. GILMORE'S DINER, KANKAKEE - NIGHT - 1991

Nancy moves across the diner floor, balancing plates of food on her arms. She's 26 now, tall and thin, blonde hair pulled back to showcase those drop-dead eyes. Still beautiful but ten years marooned here in Kankakee have revealed cracks in the armor. She arrives at a booth and dispenses the dinners.

NANCY
 The Rocket Burger here, two Turkey Clubs, and the Lumberjack Omelet.

Nancy strolls off, then pauses upon seeing a TRIO OF COPS drop two \$5 bills as a tip before leaving.

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

GENE, 50s, the Milquetoast owner, approaches.

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

NANCY
 Ah, I'm all caught up anyway.

GENE
 That's my girl.

EXT. GILMORE'S DINER - GRAVEL LOT - DAWN

Nancy exits, smoking a cigarette as she counts her meager tips. She scoffs at the total: *another shitty night.*

INT. RISH HOME, NANCY'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

It's crowded with color-coordinated garment racks; dresses, skirts, blouses, jeans. Nancy sleeps under a satin duvet, sleep mask over her eyes. The alarm clock reads: 1:45 PM.

INT. BOURBONNAIS MALL, JCPENNEY'S - AFTERNOON

Nancy reviews the racks of clothing as she strolls through the aisles. Unimpressed, seen-it-all, she approaches the check-out counter where a crabby SALES CLERK, 50, is going over the day's receipts.

NANCY
 Go find Kit and tell her Nancy's here.

SALES CLERK
 Find her yourself.

Just then, KIT, 26, a short, spunky friend of Nancy's, walks out of the stock room with a stack of blouses in her arms.

NANCY
 Hey-hey, Kit-Kat.

KIT
 (looks up, beams)
 Oh hey, Nanc!

INT. MALL FOOD COURT – ON NANCY AND KIT – AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON KIT'S TOTE BAG as she pulls out a folder. It's a veritable encyclopedia of Kankakee's charmed circle: tear-outs from the 'Society' page, articles on corporate mergers, Country Club newsletters.

KIT
Too bad about Peter.

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

KIT
I heard...
(off Nancy's glare)
Well, yunno, just... about his wife
and all. Going to your house and...
(shrinking)
She's crazy... As shit.

Nancy focuses back on the newspaper. STEPHEN SMALL, 50s now, is pictured at a fundraiser beside his mother, ELAINE. Nancy scribbles the word 'DICKHEAD' over his face.

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

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

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

Nancy stares at the photo, already planning her outfit.

NANCY
Like shootin' fish. I owe ya, Kit.
(glances at her watch)
Still have time to get some color.

EXT. KANKAKEE RIVER – LATE AFTERNOON

Nancy, wearing a white bikini and wayfarers, soaks in the sun, reclining on the rocks she once shared with Jimmy Keene.

ACROSS THE RIVER

There's a COOKOUT going on. A BOOMBOX plays *R.E.M's 'Stand'* as a group of local friends mingle, drink and eat BBQ.

CLOSE ON DANNY EDWARDS

30, handsome, tall, small-town. Right now he's upside-down, doing a keg stand as a crowd SHOUTS around him - twenty, twenty-one, twenty-two. Danny COUGHS, SPITS out foam -

DANNY
Done - I'M DONE - !

They stand him up. Disoriented, he high-fives the group including NICK SANTO, 31, a working stiff with thinning hair.

NICK
Impressive, Dan-o!

DANNY
Whoa, that's a rush, man.

Nick hands Danny a fresh beer. They look around, staking out the crop of single females.

NICK
I'm vibing that brunette.

DANNY
(sees the BRUNETTE)
Oh yeah. She's cute.

NICK
She wearing a ring?

DANNY
Not that I can see.

NICK
Alright. No ring she's up for a fling, right?

Danny LAUGHS. Nick gulps down his beer, pounds fists with Danny and starts toward the Brunette. Three steps later a GUY cruises in and kisses her. Nick spins back.

NICK (CONT'D)
Okay, u-turns allowed.

He returns to Danny, cracks open another beer. Danny looks around, admiring the scenery.

DANNY
Boy, it's pretty here. There aren't many places like this in Bedford.

NICK
There's not much of anything in Bedford. I'll borrow my dad's boat one weekend. Give ya a real tour.

Danny's eyes land on Nancy across the river. He nudges Nick.

NICK (CONT'D)
Holy Shit... Who is she?

DANNY
I'd like to know.

NICK
So go over and find out.

DANNY
(coyly)
Nah...

NICK
Come on, don't be a pussy. What's the worst that can happen?

DANNY
Uh, she tells me I'm a loser and to get lost.

NICK
Exactly. And you're right back here drinking a beer with me.

Danny dithers, then, caught up in the moment, takes his shirt and races into the river.

NICK (CONT'D)
Attaboy!

MOMENTS LATER

Danny climbs out of the water onto the rocks near Nancy. He paces, looking back at her, unsure how to make his approach.

DANNY
(finally)
Hey there...

Nancy lowers her shades enough to take Danny in. Unimpressed, she decides to just ignore him.

DANNY (CONT'D)
I'm Danny. Looks like you're, uh...
(reads her monogrammed
beach bag)
Nancy. Anyway, I was just hanging out with some friends over there and wondered if you, uh, wanted to, yunno, join us for a Lite Beer or a wine cooler... if you're not busy, or... It's free.

He laughs. She doesn't.

NANCY
You're blocking my sun.

DANNY
(steps back)
Oh. Right. Sorry about that.

An uncomfortable silence. Danny, getting the point now -

DANNY (CONT'D)
Well, I should probably get back.
It was good to meetcha, Nancy.

He heads back in the water, tail between his legs.

BACK AT THE COOKOUT

Danny towels off. Nick approaches.

NICK
So... how'd it go?

Danny, staring at Nancy, makes a crash-and-burn sound effect.

INT. RISH HOME, FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

CONNIE, late 40s now, sits on the couch making paper mache birds. The years since we last saw her haven't been kind. She traded beauty for convenience and got shortchanged.

CONNIE
Nancy, honey, are you almost ready?

INT. NANCY'S BATHROOM, UPSTAIRS - SAME

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

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

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

NANCY (CONT'D)
Ready!

INT. CONNIE'S CHEVY NOVA, MOVING - NIGHT

ON NANCY'S REFLECTION in the vanity mirror. She lengthens her eyelashes, reviews her make-up, pushes up her breasts.

Connie drives, cigarette dangling from her lips.

NANCY
How do I look?

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

CONNIE
Most beautiful girl in the world.

Nancy makes a lip fart. The car idles outside a large and stately clubhouse: *Kankakee Country Club*. Nancy opens the door and steps out.

CONNIE (CONT'D)
(holding out Nancy's
jacket)
Hey! What about your coat, goofy?

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

CONNIE
Just like your Father.

The mirth runs away from Nancy's face.

NANCY
Don't ever say that to me again.

BOOM! - she SLAMS the car door shut.

INT. KANKAKEE COUNTRY CLUB, MAIN BAR - NIGHT

Nancy's on a stool, eyes locked in on BRETT FABER across the bar, sinking his fifth Glenlivet beside a GOLF BUDDY.

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)
Kankakee's very own Stephen Small
made national headlines today as...

Her eyes drift up to the TV where the late news plays. Above the anchor's shoulder, a photo of STEPHEN SMALL.

NEWS ANCHOR
...Mid America's Chairman announced a long-speculated deal to acquire Regal International. The merger, estimated to be nearly \$90 million dollars, sees Mid America taking control over 11 Chicago-based radio stations and 2 cable television stations from the privately owned radio broadcaster.

A LAUGH snaps Nancy from her reverie. Golf Buddy says goodbye to Brett and leaves. Nancy stubs out her cigarette, checks her look in a compact mirror, and strolls over next to Brett.

NANCY
You got a light?

BRETT FABER
What happened to yours?

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

She stabs a Virginia Slim between her lips. He lights it.

BRETT FABER
You here alone?

NANCY
Mmm hmm.

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

NANCY
I never was any good at math...

He smiles and she does, too, and -

EXT. KANKAKEE COUNTRY CLUB - PARKING LOT - NANCY & BRETT
 spill out of the entrance, hand-in-hand, drunk and laughing.
 Nancy leans back against a sedan.

NANCY
 Should we plan our first date?

He moves in to kiss her. She gives him her cheek. Horny as
 fuck, he sloppily kisses her neck. She rolls her eyes.

NANCY (CONT'D)
 How about Charlie Trotter's? Make a
 reservation for Friday night.

Just then, HEADLIGHTS wash over them.

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

Brett looks. His WIFE's inside a Chevy station wagon. TWO
 KIDS in the backseat. Pulled from bed. His excitement melts.

WIFE
 Get in the car, Brett.

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

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

WIFE
 I know who you are.

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

NANCY
 Mom...?

INT. MALL FOOD COURT - AFTERNOON

Nancy and Kit. A cloud of cigarette smoke. Nancy's reading
 the *Society* section of the *Daily Journal*.

KIT
 (very excited)
 Well... how'd it go with Brett!?

NANCY
 You know that little birdy of yours
 from the club, Kit?

KIT
 (ready to burst)
 Yeah...

NANCY
 It can go fuck itself...

KIT
 (unnerved, regroups)
 Anyway, I was thinking of posting
 up at the Hilton bar tonight.

KIT (CONT'D)
There's a legal malpractice conference in town.

NANCY
Been there, done that. What else?

KIT
It's that or Boomer Fleming's party.

NANCY
You mean Poser Fleming?

KIT
(continuing)
He's hosting it for Jimmy Keene.

Nancy looks up, floored.

NANCY
Jimmy...? But Jimmy's -

KIT
Back in town. Well, Chicago. It's gotta be, what -

NANCY
(lost in her own thoughts)
Ten years.

KIT
I wonder what the California sun's done for that body.

Off Nancy, wondering the very same thing...

INT. RISH HOME, LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

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

EXT. BOOMER FLEMING'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A large estate home in a new community. LOUD MUSIC emanates.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

CROWDED AND LOUD in here. Nancy wades through the mob in a skintight dress, scanning the guests for Jimmy. She spots KIT across the room and quickly hides her face.

MAN'S VOICE (O.C.)
Nanc!

Looking up, she sees BOOMER FLEMING, 28, waving her over. He's the owner of this house, a local coke dealer, and, from the leather fringe jacket and big hair, an avid Bon Jovi fan.

NANCY
Hey, Boom.

BOOMER
Come on, you don't wanna hang out
with these losers.

He takes her hand. They leave the crowd, walk down a hallway.

NANCY
What time's Jimmy coming?

BOOMER
Late probably.

NANCY
But you're sure he's coming?

BOOMER
Yeah yeah, he'll be here. Just
gimme one second, huh.

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

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

BOOMER (CONT'D)
Let's go.

Boomer and Nancy continue along, DOWN the stairs and into -

BOOMER'S BASEMENT

a huge, open space: a boy's wet dream. We do a 180-DEGREE PAN AROUND THE BASEMENT...

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

...MTV on the big-screen TV. Roxette's 'Dangerous' video...

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

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

ARRIVE AT NANCY as she sits on the couch. Someone hands her a mirror with lines of cocaine on it. She snorts a quick bump and passes it along.

VERY CLOSE ON NANCY NOW. Settling in, thinking about Jimmy...

BOOMER'S BASEMENT, SOME HOURS LATER NOW

ON THE BIG-SCREEN TV. MTV: *The Cure* now. The lights are very dim and Nancy's fallen asleep on the couch. She comes to slowly, looks around. The clock reads: **3:13 AM.**

FOYER

Nancy emerges from the basement. It's quiet. Everyone gone.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

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

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

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

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

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

NANCY
Jimmy.

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

BUSINESS ASSOCIATE
Let's ride, Jimmy.

JIMMY
Gimme five minutes.

BUSINESS ASSOCIATE
Come on, man, we gotta roll -

JIMMY
Five minutes.

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

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

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

NANCY
(finally)
You just...left.

JIMMY

I always told you I had my own
plans. Kinda surprised to see
you're still hanging around.

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

NANCY

Did you ever think about me?

JIMMY

(beat)

No matter what, it wouldn't have
been the way you dreamed it.

NANCY

I hate it here, Jimmy. I hate it.

JIMMY

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

NANCY

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

JIMMY

Yeah... yeah you probably would.

NANCY

Well then...?

NANCY (CONT'D)

Come on, Nanc. Who do you think
you're talking to? I'm not one of
your easy marks around this place,
I know how you're built. Besides, I
got too much going on right now.

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

NANCY (CONT'D)

(a bit desperate)

Don't leave me here again.

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

JIMMY

Alright. Two minutes. Be outside.

NANCY

(blooms)

Yeah? Jimmy yeah? Huh?

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

JIMMY

Better fix your hair back, Ci-Ci.
So you can get under the helmet.

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

NANCY
 (singing, dancing)
*Hold on tight/You know she's a
 little bit dangerous/*

She takes a deep breath. Releases it. She's about to exit when — VRM! a familiar motorcycle growl stops her cold.

NANCY (CONT'D)
 Oh fuck!

EXT. BOOMER FLEMING'S HOUSE — MOMENTS LATER

Nancy RUSHES outside. All that remains of Jimmy are the taillights of his motorcycle as he and his crew speed off.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM — AFTERNOON

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

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

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

KNOCK-KNOCK. Connie peeks her head in, dressed in her Dollar Store work uniform.

CONNIE
 Madeja something.

She hands Nancy a homemade 'Sand Candle.' It's ghastly.

NANCY
 Thanks, mom...

CONNIE
 See you later, beautiful.

Connie shuts the door.

INT. CONNIE'S BEDROOM — MOMENTS LATER

Connie's 'craft desk' sits in the corner, a poster of Tom Selleck stares down from the wall. Nancy enters the room, bends down and reaches under the bed.

MOMENTS LATER

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

Nancy leafs through, until...something hidden between pages. An OLD PHOTO.

3-YEAR OLD NANCY in her FATHER'S arms, a smiling 19-YEAR OLD CONNIE at his side. His startling eyes, just like Nancy's, gaze off-camera, as if searching for something else not present in the picture.

She runs her finger over the photo...

INT. CONNIE'S BATHROOM — MOMENTS LATER

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

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

INT. GILMORE'S DINER — NIGHT SHIFT

Nancy's replacing salt-and-pepper shakers in the booths when something catches her eye. IT'S DANNY. Waiting for a table.

NANCY
Oh God...

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

NANCY (CONT'D)
Everything tasting okay?

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

...STEPHEN SMALL WALKS IN, shakes Danny's hand. Nancy's confused as she watches the two men sit at a booth. She strategically moves near their section and begins to refill ketchup bottles as she tilts an ear to their conversation:

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

DANNY
...That's right. I was...

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

SMALL
...I could use someone like you to handle things. Especially with all the new changes taking place. Come by tomorrow, I'll show you around.

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

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

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

Nancy SNATCHES the plate away and vanishes into the kitchen.

LATER

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

NANCY
 Give her a few extra bucks.

DANNY
 (looks up)
 Oh hey, hi. Hi, Nancy.

NANCY
 I wanted to apologize for the other day at the river. I wasn't feeling very well.

DANNY
 You don't have to apologize -

NANCY
 So anyway... Yes.

DANNY
 What's that?

NANCY
 I never answered you. I'd love to have a drink sometime...

DANNY
 Danny.

NANCY
 Danny, right.

DANNY
 You sure? I mean -
 (she nods)
 Well okay, uhh, when did -

NANCY
 Saturday. 7. Make a reservation at Vittorio's on Eldridge.

DANNY
 Yeah. Yeah sure. Saturday.

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

NANCY (O.C.)
 Here you go.

STARTLED, Danny jumps. Nancy hands him a napkin with her phone number written on it. Now she's really gone.

INT. MAZDA 929, PARKED — AFTERNOON

From across the river, Nancy spies *The Yesteryear Restaurant* with a pair of binoculars. Inside, Small gives Danny a tour.

INT. FIRST IMPRESSIONS SALON — SATURDAY AFTERNOON

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

NANCY
I want it exactly like this. The way it sits on her shoulders.

MINUTES LATER — Nancy's CHAIR is spun around to the mirror. Her hair looks exactly like Kim Basinger's.

NANCY (CONT'D)
I don't know... something about it just looks... different... Why are my bangs sweeping across my eyes here, while hers do it here?

STYLIST
(annoyed)
Because you have a different head.

SECONDS LATER — an enraged Nancy hurriedly gathers her purse and jacket from the sitting area where CUSTOMERS wait.

NANCY
(barks at ELDERLY WOMAN)
Don't trust her! She's a cheat!

Elderly Woman shrinks, on the verge of a heart attack.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Buncha fucking amateurs!

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM, VANITY — EARLY EVENING

ON NANCY'S FACE. Eyes intense, like she's getting psyched up for a sports match. PULLING BACK, we reveal she's staring at herself in the vanity mirror.

Outside, A CAR DOOR SHUTS. Nancy doesn't blink.

INT. RISH HOME, FAMILY ROOM — EVENING

Connie's on the couch in her weekend sweats, crocheting an afghan. An episode of *Who's The Boss?* plays on the TV.

DING-DONG. Connie answers the door. Danny holds a bouquet of roses. He's dressed in Dockers and a button-down.

CONNIE
You must be Danny.

DANNY
That's right. Danny Edwards.

CONNIE
I'm Connie. Come in, come in.

DANNY
(stepping inside)
Beautiful home you got here.

CONNIE
Probably a little smaller than what
you're used to, but it suits us.

Danny's eyes sweep across the walls adorned with Connie's craft projects; pom pom animals, bottle cap frames, et al.

DANNY
Wow, someone's an artist.

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

DANNY
(dead serious)
Is that right?

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

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

CONNIE
Sit down if you want, Danny.

DANNY
Oh no. I'm fine standing.

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

CLICK-CLACK-CLICK. Danny turns to find Nancy coming down the stairs in a knockout black cocktail dress.

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

EXT. RISH HOME - MOMENTS LATER

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

Danny jogs ahead and opens her door.

INT. VITTORIO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

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

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

DANNY
(thinks, vacillates)
Yunno, I'm riding a diet. Just the uh, small caesar salad for me.

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

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

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

NANCY
Business reasons?

DANNY
Mostly, yeah.

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

DANNY (CONT'D)
I come from a pretty big family.
Mom, Dad and four older sisters.

He slips out his wallet and shows Nancy a picture of the family inside a Church. Countrified MOM and DAD, his four horse-faced SISTERS and their loutish HUSBANDS.

DANNY (CONT'D)
That's at my sister Peg's wedding last summer. I'm the baby of the bunch. The happy accident my folks like to say.

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

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

DANNY
Do what?

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

DANNY
(tucking the wallet away)
Oh, I thought you wanted -

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

DANNY
... okay. I'm sorry, it's just
that, well...

NANCY
What is it?

DANNY
Nothing.

NANCY
Say it.

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

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

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

He has unwittingly asked the wrong question.

NANCY
What did I just say, Danny? Does
that part of my story include you?

DANNY
No, I guess it doesn't.

NANCY
Right... Now, what type of business
do you have with Mr. Small?

DANNY
Oh, well that's -

NANCY
You can't say, can you? It's radio.
No, no, no: TV. It's TV, isn't it?

DANNY
No. Me? TV? No, no -

NANCY
Bigger?

DANNY
Bigger than what?

The waiter arrives with the Chianti and pours Nancy a taste. Trying to impress, she makes a show of swirling it, sniffing the bouquet, sipping the wine. Finally, she nods.

NANCY
Do you travel a lot, Danny?

DANNY
Just to visit clients mostly.

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

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

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

DANNY
Here I am.

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

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

DANNY
Well I hope so.

NANCY
Me, too, Danny...

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

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

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

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

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

NANCY
(caring)
What is it?

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

NANCY

You can go now... If you're not embarrassed to have me with you.

DANNY

Embarrassed? Are you kidding? I just didn't want to put you out.

NANCY

You're not putting me out. I don't want to go home yet anyway.

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

PICK-UP TRUCK, MINUTES LATER

Danny inspects addresses as he crawls down the road, turns into a drive, stopping in front of the wrought iron gates of The Prettiest House in Town: The Small Family Home.

Nancy shoots forward sharply. Danny rolls down the window and presses the intercom.

DANNY

Hi there, it's Danny Edwards.

Nancy waits anxiously. THE GATES OPEN: a portal to another world. The mansion comes into view. She GASPES, grabs Danny's thigh and SQUEEZES IT TIGHT. Danny smiles, kinda likes it.

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, FOYER - NIGHT

AN AUGUST, CATERED AFFAIR for the privileged, entitled folks of Kankakee. A STRING TRIO plays.

SMALL and his mother, ELAINE, 70, finish a conversation with an ATTRACTIVE BRUNETTE, 50.

ATTRACTIVE BRUNETTE

- Nice to see you, Elaine. Very nice to meet you, Stephen.

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

ELAINE SMALL

What did you think?

SMALL

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

ELAINE SMALL

You hardly know anyone. That's why I waste money on these things...so you'll meet someone. I didn't like her. Elaine? The presumption on her part. How about Mrs. Small? Oh look, there's William's friend.

Elaine signals an ELEGANT RED-HEAD. But Small's focused on something else: the MALE SERVER, 21, passing out champagne flutes behind the woman.

ELAINE SMALL (CONT'D)
She's pretty, isn't she?

Male Server meets Small's gaze, smiles back suggestively.

SMALL
Very.

ELAINE SMALL
Stephen? Stephen, that man's here.

Small snaps from his reverie, spots Danny by the front door.

ELAINE SMALL (CONT'D)
Hurry up and get him in the
kitchen.

NANCY AND DANNY

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

DANNY
I'll just be a couple'a minutes.

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

Alone, Nancy wades through the crowd, soaking in the moneyed gentry. She slips up the grand staircase, eager to explore every nook and cranny of the manor.

INT. MRS. SMALL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A large room filled with antique furniture and silk drapes. Nancy floats about, touching every appointment.

She opens a jewelry box atop the dresser. Slips a bracelet over her wrist and checks her look in the mirror.

LARGE WALK-IN CLOSET

Nancy switches on the light. Floor-to-ceiling shelves house hundreds of mint JUMEAU BISQUE DOLLS. Gorgeous, expensive versions of Nancy's childhood Barbies.

Entranced, Nancy lifts a blonde doll from a shelf and studies its pure alabaster face. As she replaces it, she notices a small switch on the wall behind where the doll was. She presses the button.

A HUMMING SOUND startles her. She steps back as two shelves suddenly part to reveal a VAULT DOOR. Intrigued, Nancy punches numbers into the KEYPAD. She turns the spindle wheel. Nothing's working. Then -

CHATTER is heard nearby. She thinks better of it and hits the button a second time. Off Nancy watching the shelves hide the vault door, wondering...

INT. GRAND STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER - ON NANCY

as she steps down and joins the party, searching for Danny. A TAP on her shoulder. Nancy turns. SMALL hands her a pile of dirty napkins and soiled toothpicks.

SMALL
Well don't just stand there.

Before Nancy can explain that she's not the help -

SMALL (CONT'D)
What's your name?

She perks up, thinking maybe he's interested in her.

NANCY
Nancy. Nancy Rish.

SMALL
The next time you come into my home
dressed like a call girl will be
your last. Do you understand me,
Nancy Rish?

She just looks at him, mortified. The rejection is palpable.

SMALL (CONT'D)
Now take that trash into the
kitchen.

Nancy PUSHES her way through the crowd, bumping those in her way as she moves into -

THE KITCHEN

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

NANCY
Danny...?

Nancy approaches, YANKS Danny out of the oven. He looks up.

DANNY
Oh, hey, Nanc. Almost through here.

NANCY
What the hell are you doing?

DANNY
Just replacing the bake element.
Thing's totally fried.

The realization comes to her slowly, like bread rising.

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

NANCY SMOKES a cigarette, head against the window. She won't even look at Danny.

NANCY

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

DANNY

What else would it be?

NANCY

I saw you in the diner talking with Mr. Small. Oh yeah you're real big.

(parrots him)

I had my own business in Bedford and I'd be happy to stop by the house, Mr. Small. Yeah, big fucking deal you turned out to be.

Nancy indignantly FLICKS her cigarette out the window.

DANNY

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

NANCY

How perfect. The *Odd* part.

DANNY

Business wasn't bad, I just felt like I was spinning my wheels a bit, yunno... My sisters are all older. Friends are married. Nick, he's an old buddy of mine...

Nancy's getting bored, rolls her eyes.

DANNY (CONT'D)

He offered to introduce me to some people in town to help me get my business started. That's how I met Mr. Small. He needed someone to help out around the house and at that restaurant he's got. I was glad to have the work. That's all there is to it. No lying or pretending to be something I'm not. I'm just, yunno, me. Danny.

NANCY

(under her breath)

That's the problem.

He SIGHS, unable to hide his disappointment.

EXT. RISH HOME - NIGHT

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

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

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

- The digital clock reads **7:15 AM** and, strangely, Nancy's wide awake, sitting up in bed, arms crossed, thinking.
- Nancy PACES around the room. The gears are turning.
- Nancy slides out a small filing cabinet from under her bed. Inside accordion files are labeled by name. Tabs include; *Peter Snyder, Esq...* *Ben Faber (Married Fuckhead)...* *Jimmy Keene*. Each file contains a history of the relationship: photos, articles, likes/dislikes, outfits worn...
- Nancy stands in the center of the room. Surrounding her on the carpet, photos from the files have been dumped and spread into a circle. The men's faces stare up at her. Each photo is given a cursory assessment and promptly KICKED OUT OF THE CIRCLE upon not living up to Nancy's standards. SOOSH-SOOSH-SOOSH-SOOSH. Over-and-over. Face after face sent out like windblown leaves. Nancy's working up a sweat.
- Finally, ONLY ONE PICTURE REMAINS. It's a photo of herself and Jimmy. 9 years old. Swimming in the Kankakee River.

Her head falls into her hands. Helplessness overwhelms her. She can't see a way out of this...

...Then, a FLAPPING SOUND. Nancy peeks over her fingers and notices a *Vogue* sitting on the floor, open to a cologne ad. A male model stares back at her.

Her face wrinkles curiously. She picks up the magazine. The model almost looks like... Danny. Better-dressed and more handsome, but maybe Danny...

PUSH IN ON NANCY... a smile pulling at the corners of her lips... an idea flickering to life.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT - DEN - LATE MORNING

A modest place. Moving boxes litter the floor. Danny and Nick are watching a college football game. ON THE SCREEN: a PLAYER returns a kick-off and breaks free.

DANNY & NICK
- Go go - GO GO GO! TOUCHDOWN!

They cheer, high-five. The PHONE RINGS. Danny answers -

DANNY
Odds and Ends, this is Danny...

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

DANNY
(sits up)
Nancy...?

Nick, who's heard about the date, looks at him: *really?*

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

DANNY

What...?

NANCY (O.C.)

About *ussss*, Danny! Our future together.

DANNY

Uh, well... I guess so, Nancy.

NANCY (O.C.)

Gimme your address. I'm coming over.

DANNY

I'm at Castle Point. Apartment 317.

CLICK. Confused, Danny looks at the phone, then hangs it up.

NICK

What was that about?

DANNY

She's coming over.

INT. DANNY'S CLOSET - LATER THAT MORNING

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

NANCY

(sotto, disgusted)

Jesus...

(back to Danny)

Get dressed. We're going out.

DANNY

Out where? What's this about, Nancy?

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE, DRESSING ROOM HALLWAY - MORNING

NANCY TAPS HER FOOT IMPATIENTLY, waiting on Danny.

DANNY (O.C.)

I'm not sure this is really me.

NANCY

Let me be the judge of that.

Danny steps out wearing a Searsucker blazer and white pants.

NANCY (CONT'D)

You're right. It's not you. Get back in there and try the next one.

INT. DANNY'S APARTMENT, HALLWAY - MORNING

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

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

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

Danny comes out of the bathroom in a black t-shirt and blue jeans. His hair's slicked back with gel.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Tuck the shirt in.
(he does)
I need to see it with the jacket.

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

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

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

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

DANNY
It might be a customer.
(picks up the phone)
Odds and Ends, Danny speaking... Oh
hi, Mrs. McGarvey... The garbage
disposal, huh? Okay, what kinda
sound is it making?

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

DANNY (CONT'D)
Actually I'm a little busy today,
can I come over first thing in the
morning?... Okay, see you then...

He hangs the phone up.

NANCY
Go do it again. Shoulders back.
Hand in your right pocket.

He does exactly as she says. Walks toward her again. If you didn't know any better you'd think it was Jimmy Keene.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Anyone ever tell you you look like
Richard Gere?

DANNY
(flattered)
No, no - Do you really think so?

NANCY
Oh yeah.

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

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

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

INT. TGIF FRIDAY'S RESTAURANT — FOLLOWING NIGHT

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

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

NANCY
Who are you, Danny?

DANNY
You know who I am —

NANCY
I mean what do you want out of
life? What are your dreams?

DANNY
Well, I'd like to own my own
hardware store. Ever since I was
nine years old —

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

DANNY
Oh sure. At least fifty.

NANCY
How'd you keep track of them all?

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

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

DANNY
If there was an emergency, sure.

NANCY
Come here, Danny. Sit next to me.

He motions to stand —

NANCY (CONT'D)
Wipe your face first.

He opens a wet-nap, cleans his face and then sits beside her. Nancy reaches into her purse under the tabletop, stealthily pulls out a small vial of cocaine.

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

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

NANCY (CONT'D)
Okay your turn.

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

NANCY (CONT'D)
Does it feel good?

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

NANCY (CONT'D)
How much money do you make doing
your little handyman thing, Danny?

DANNY
Well I usually charge about \$7.50
an hour. Except for family. Family
and friends get a discount -

NANCY
What if I told you about a job
where you could make a hundred
times that in one night? Would you
be interested?

DANNY
Oh yeah...

NANCY
I can help you reach your dream,
Danny. Is that what you want?

He looks over at her. She's irresistible. He nods. Nancy's hand moves up his leg to his crotch. Danny goes wide-eyed.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Do you like this song?

DANNY
Sure, Nancy.

NANCY
Then it's ours.

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

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

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

MOVE WITH NANCY AND DANNY as they enter the crowded club. Nancy takes stock of the place. The cool cats and dealers pack into semi-circular booths on the periphery. That's where she notices BOOMER, GARY and CLARENCE.

Nancy and Danny arrive at the bar.

NANCY
Order me a martini. Get yourself a scotch.

DANNY
Scotch?

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

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

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

BOOMER
Nancy!

NANCY
Oh, hey.

BOOMER
Who are you here with?

NANCY
No one. Just my boyfriend.

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

BOOMER
Who is he?

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

BOOMER
Well, what's he doing here?

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

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

BOOMER
Bring him by the table.

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

AT THE BAR - MOMENTS LATER

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

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

He sips his scotch: the strength stuns him. She presses her body up against Danny, caresses his chest.

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

DANNY
Geez, I don't know, Nancy. I'm not that funny, yunno... Well, I did have this crazy dog.

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

BOOMER'S BOOTH

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

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

CLARENCE
Never seen him before.

BOOMER
That's Danny Edwards.

CLARENCE
Who the hell is Danny Edwards?

BOOMER
He's a mover in Cleveland. Big mover.

GARY
So what the fuck's he doing here?

BOOMER
He's with Nancy.

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

GARY
Gotta have something pretty major going for him if that fuckin' tease is letting him sniff her ass.

Off Boomer, thinking about his business.

AT THE BAR

Nancy's giggling and watching Boomer's booth. Boomer stands, WAVES her over. Nancy smiles privately, grabs her purse and pulls Danny by the hand -

NANCY
Remember what I said?

DANNY
Wait. Are these the guys? Now!?

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

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

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

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

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

Hand shakes and hellos all around.

BOOMER
Siddown, siddown.

Nancy and Danny slide into the booth.

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

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

DANNY
(re: Nancy)
Can you blame me?

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

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

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

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

DANNY
Gotta do something, don't I?

Boomer, Clarence and Gary exchange looks. Finally -

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

DANNY
(to Nancy)
Are we around tomorrow?

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

NANCY
What time tomorrow?

INT. BOOMER'S ESTATE HOME - THE NEXT NIGHT

BOOMER, NANCY and DANNY walk across the foyer -

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

DANNY
You're really gonna ask me that?

BOOMER
Right. Gotcha.

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

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

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

Boomer snorts a line. It's good. Really good.

BOOMER (CONT'D)
Fuck me...

He passes the straw to Danny. WHOOSH! It makes his nose itch and he looks agitated, like he might sneeze.

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

BOOMER
This?

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

BOOMER (CONT'D)

(laughs)

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

DANNY

A reason not to be?

CLARENCE

Waving your money around. You wunna spend big, spend it someplace else.

GARY

Like Cleveland.

DANNY

(innocently)

Oh yeah?

A tense beat. Gary glowers at Danny.

BOOMER

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

DANNY

Our man? Who's our man?

BOOMER

Cecil. He's cool.

Clarence approaches and hands Danny a HALF-KILO OF COKE. Danny sits very still, then looks at Nancy. She smiles.

EXT./INT. 'THE BLUE ROOM' NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

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

CECIL

Cleveland Danny?

DANNY

Who are you?

CECIL

Cecil man! He's cool, Sam!

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

CECIL (CONT'D)

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

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

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

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

AVIATOR GLASSES
(coolly to Danny)
... eightball

Danny thinks to himself. That doesn't work. His eyes shift to Nancy who, with her cigarette hand, nonchalantly raises three fingers. Reaching inside his jacket, Danny produces three bindles and meets Aviator's hand under the bartop. When Danny opens his palm there's \$250 cash in it and Aviator's gone.

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

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

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

A SERIES OF TIME CUTS

Danny stands beside an ECLECTIC MIX OF CLUBGOERS, watching Nancy for signals. She touches her earrings. Scratches her chin. Rubs her nose. Holds up fingers; *one, two, three, four*. She coughs. Finally –

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

INSIDE THE RISH HOME, FAMILY ROOM

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

DANNY'S IN A SALON CHAIR

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

DANNY'S THE VERY PICTURE OF PATRICK SWAYZE

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

WE'RE ON A NIGHTCLUB DANCE FLOOR WITH NANCY AND DANNY

She's taking him for a ride. Pressing up against him, then retreating.

Circling, teasing, tempting: on the whole giving him the biggest hard-on of his life as he watches her miniskirt inch further and further up her tanned, glistening legs and —

WE'RE IN BOOMER'S BASEMENT

Boomer bangs away on a game of *Asteroids*. Turns to find Danny walking down the stairwell —

BOOMER
Back already?

QUICK DETAIL SHOTS OF THE DEALING PROCESS —

CLARENCE AND GARY cut PRODUCT with INOSITOL in a metal bowl —
FUNNEL IT into LARGE ZIPLOC FREEZER BAGS, seal them —
NANCY POURS IT onto WAX PAPER atop Danny's kitchen table and—
DANNY measures PRODUCT on an electronic scale and —

WE'RE UNDER THE BARTOP, ON THE DANCE FLOOR, BEHIND A BANQUET, as BINDLES IN FAST CUTS are dealt by Danny. His technique improving with each exchange.

NANCY WRAPS A RUBBER-BAND AROUND A STACK OF CASH
places it into a shoebox and slides it under her bed.

MARRIOTT HOTEL, DANNY AND CECIL IN AN ELEVATOR
DING! the doors open and they walk down a hallway —

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

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

CECIL
Monkey shit?

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

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

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

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

arrives in front of a nightclub on a new HARLEY LOW RIDER. He and Nancy climb off and are escorted inside by SECURITY.

PAN TO - NICK, waiting in the back of the line to be let in. His face wrinkles: *Is that Danny? No, no it couldn't be...*

INSIDE BOOMER'S OFFICE

as Boomer opens the door revealing Danny. Back for more.

BOOMER
Fuck, Edwards! You are working it!

NANCY FILLS ANOTHER SHOEBOX WITH CASH AND SLIDES IT

under her bed where DOZENS are stacked like firewood.

NANCY'S ON THE DANCE FLOOR OF A NIGHTCLUB

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

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

NANCY CLOSES A 'SPORTS FITNESS' MAGAZINE

it's the last in her stack. Looking to her right, a new stack of magazines. *Luxury and Style*. A smile curls and SHE -

GLIDES INTO A LORD & TAYLOR STORE

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

NANCY
You two. Follow me.

LATER - Sales Associate rings up a pile of designer items. The total flashes on the register: **\$5,595**. Blasé, Nancy opens an envelope of cash and begins handing over \$100's and -

CLOSE ON A REAL ESTATE CONTRACT

as Danny signs his name on the bottom line. Behind Danny, Nancy's been staring at a COLOSSAL ESTATE HOME. She turns to THE AGENT now as though awakening from a dream.

NANCY AND DANNY EMERGE FROM HER BEDROOM

arms brimming with garments. They're moving her out. Connie follows. She's upset.

NANCY

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

DANNY

You can stay with us, Connie.

NANCY

Shutup, Danny.

CONNIE

But I hate the quiet, Nancy.

NANCY

Buy a bird.

A bird?! Connie starts to SOB.

CONNIE

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

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

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

HOUSEWARMING PARTY INSIDE NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME

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

Kit strokes a set of balloon curtains.

NANCY

Those are imported. From Asia.

KIT

Wowwww. Does Danny have a brother?

MOVING WITH BOOMER, CLARENCE, GARY & THEIR ENTOURAGE

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

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

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

OUTSIDE A NIGHTCLUB

As Nancy and Danny leave for the night and approach Danny's Harley. His hand snatches a piece of paper stuck to the seat of the bike. It reads: ***Get rid of this bike idiot and slow the fuck down!*** He looks nervous and hands it to Nancy who crumbles the paper and drops it to the ground.

DANNY SITS ON THE EDGE OF A BED

Wearing only his boxer shorts. He's looking himself over in the mirror across the room. He straightens his shoulders. Fixes his hair. Smells his armpits. He feels good. Ready.

NANCY APPLIES AN AGE-DEFYING LOTION

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

HALLWAY

Danny exits his room and MOVES to the master bedroom. He takes a moment to steel his nerve, then KNOCKS on the door.

DANNY
Hey, Nanc. Mind if I uh, come in?

NANCY (O.C.)
What for?

DANNY
Just to, yunno, say g'night and -

The door opens. Nancy leans out and kisses his cheek.

NANCY
G'night.

That quickly she's gone. CLICK. Door locked again. Danny stands there a moment, deflating. Finally:

DANNY
Yeah. You, too.

He starts back to his bedroom.

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

ON A JET BOAT

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

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NANCY'S OFFICE, ESTATE HOME - ON A GLOSSY INVITATION

with a professional photo of Nancy in a one-shoulder ruffle dress posing against a MERCEDES CONVERTIBLE.

It reads: *Help Us Celebrate Nancy's 27th Birthday at The Four Seasons Hotel.*
Hosted by: Danny Edwards. An envelope nearby is addressed to *Jimmy Keene.*

Nancy holds a felt tip pen in hand, contemplating a personal message. Finally, she writes: *Drop by if you're around.* She slides the invite into the envelope, seals it carefully.

EXT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL - CHICAGO - NIGHT

Luxury cars arrive out front. Valets scurry.

A GROUP OF VOICES SING '*Happy Birthday To You*' -

INT. FOUR SEASONS RESTAURANT - PRIVATE ROOM - CONNIE CARRIES

A BIRTHDAY CAKE topped with 27 candles out to Nancy as the table SINGS. Danny sits beside her. The singing ends.

CONNIE

Okay, make a wish, Nanc.

Nancy looks around at her guests. CECIL, KIT and OTHERS. No Jimmy. She takes in a deep breath and blows out the candles.

INT. FOUR SEASONS HOTEL - LOBBY - LATER

Nancy, Danny, Connie and Cecil exit the restaurant. Danny's bombed and Cecil has to help him walk.

DANNY

That was a great friggin' party!
 Woo-hoo!

NANCY

Sshh! Be quiet, Danny.

DANNY

Sorry, Nanc.

CONNIE

It was though, sweetie. Everything
 was just absolutely beautiful.

Nancy smiles, but feels like something was missing. They arrive at the elevator bank. Connie and Cecil help Danny on. Just as Nancy's about to enter -

VOICE (O.C.)
 Ms. Rish...

Nancy turns to the FRONT DESK CLERK.

CLERK

There's a phone call for you.

NANCY

(to Connie)
 I'll be right up.

CONNIE
Okay, sweetheart.

The elevator doors close. Nancy crosses to the front desk and accepts the phone.

NANCY
Hello?

JIMMY (O.C.)
Happy Birthday, Ci-Ci.

NANCY
Jimmy, I can't talk right now. I have to get back to the party.

JIMMY (O.C.)
The party's over. Open your present.

Clerk hands Nancy a wrapped gift. She opens it revealing a BATHING SUIT.

JIMMY (O.C.) (CONT'D)
How about a swim for old times' sake?

She looks around, sees JIMMY at a pay phone across the lobby.

INT. HOTEL INDOOR POOL - UNDERWATER - NIGHT

WHOOSH - NANCY STREAKS THROUGH THE WATER in her new suit. She surfaces now and watches as, at the opposite end, Jimmy charily walks down the pool stairs in his bathing shorts. They're the only two people in the pool.

NANCY
You never used to be a chicken.

Jimmy glares at her, then DIVES IN.

NANCY (CONT'D)
I bought a ticket once, yunno? To come see you. I got your cousin's address from your mom and drove to the train station.

JIMMY
What happened?

NANCY
I decided I didn't want to get in your way.

A moment.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Why'd you come back?

JIMMY
Things were getting too big.
(meaning her)
Sometimes the smart play is knowing when to cut back.

She smiles mischievously: *fat chance.*

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Tell me about Danny.

NANCY
Oh, Jimmy. I feel like the luckiest girl in the whole world. I mean, just a few weeks ago I was begging you to take me away and now... He's smart, handsome, ambitious. I'm as happy as I've ever been. Ever... What about you? Is there someone?

JIMMY
I was always too busy.

NANCY
And now?

He doesn't answer. She looks at him. He at her.

NANCY (CONT'D)
(childishly)
Do you think I can make it across in a single breath?

JIMMY
I know better than to tell you you can't do something.

She smiles, takes a deep breath and GOES UNDERWATER, swimming hard for the other end. Halfway across, she gets desperate for air, but refuses to stop. Finally, her fingertips graze the wall and she shoots up, GULPS AIR as -

Jimmy presses up against her. They're close enough to kiss. A long, anxious moment. He moves in. Nancy turns away.

NANCY
Jimmy, I can't. I'm with Danny now.

She ducks beneath his arms and walks up the pool steps. She throws a towel around her shoulders, looks back at Jimmy and then goes. He watches her moving away, dripping wet.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy, unable to hide her wide smile, enters. She notices Danny passed-out in the bathtub and moves that way.

NANCY
Come on, Danny, let's go to bed.

He stirs, clammers to his feet. She helps him into bed and takes his shoes off.

DANNY
Did you have fun tonight?

NANCY
...It was perfect.

DANNY
(muttering drunkenly)
I love you, Nanc. I really... I
love you...

She looks at him lovingly a moment, contemplates the thought, then turns off the light.

INT. CLUB EQUINOX NIGHTCLUB, KANKAKEE - LADIES ROOM - NIGHT
TWO TEASED-HAIR BLONDES snort coke by the sinks.

BLONDE #1
Oh fuck! It's all goddamn baking
soda again!

BLONDE #2
Go see Cleveland Danny. Cuts it
real fair. He's the best around.

They check their look and then exit. Nancy emerges from a stall. She heard their conversation and she's thinking.

CLUB EQUINOX - LATER

Nancy and Cecil speak privately in a corner. In the b.g., Danny charms a crowded booth of customers.

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

NANCY
Only if they know it's been cut.

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

NANCY AND DANNY'S KITCHEN

Danny cuts cocaine with Inositol. Cecil sits next to him, keeping the math. Across the kitchen table, Nancy flips through a *Vanity Fair*, overseeing the process.

NANCY
Where are we now?

CECIL
We're down to 35%.

LATER - Cecil SNORTS a line, smiles at Nancy -

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

Nancy glances down at the magazine: a PORSCHE ADVERTISEMENT OF A WHITE 911 TURBO.

THE WHITE PORSCHE 911 TURBO, MOVING

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

BACK AT THE KITCHEN TABLE

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

CECIL
That's down to 20%.

Nancy watches as Danny SNORTS a bump.

NANCY
Well...?

DANNY
It's still good.

NANCY SIPS A GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE

At a roped off nightclub booth. An ANGRY MALE CUSTOMER suddenly approaches and fires a gram bag of coke at Danny!

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

Danny, stoned out of his mind, just stares back dumbly.

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

Before he gets another word out — CECIL STANDS AND PUNCHES CUSTOMER ACROSS THE FACE! A WILD FIGHT BREAKS OUT!

Danny doesn't move. Nancy glances across the dance floor. BOOMER, CLARENCE and GARY sit in a booth, watching her.

BACK TO THE KITCHEN TABLE

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

CECIL
10%.

NANCY
Take it lower.

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

There's a JET SKI in the murky, leaf-ridden pool. The jacuzzi is a boiling pot of water. Danny's arms are on the pavers. He fell asleep in here. Last night.

Nancy approaches, kneels, shuts off the bubbles and tilts his shades up. The sun frightens him like a loud noise.

NANCY
We're outta milk.

INT. GROCERY STORE, CHECK-OUT LINE - DAY

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

INT. PHONE BOOTH - AFTERNOON

Danny does a quick bump of coke, then dials a number -

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

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

Danny ducks, tries to hold the door shut. Clarence RIPS it open and PUMMELS him. Danny collapses like a fold-up chair.

INT. BOOMER'S OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

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

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

Danny's head smarts and he winces.

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

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

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

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

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

DANNY
And done. Over and done.

Nancy stands, paces, thinks.

NANCY

You know what. Fuck them. They're scared of us, Danny. We've gotten bigger than them and now they wanna bully us out of town. Well we won't go away so easily will we?

DANNY

(very willing to go away)
Uhh, yunno what, Nanc -

DANNY (CONT'D)

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

DANNY (CONT'D)

How are we gonna do that?

NANCY

(stops pacing)
...We'll go right over them.

UNDER NANCY'S BED - A SINGLE SHOEBOX SLIDES TOWARDS US

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

INT. PORSCHE TURBO 911, MOVING - CHICAGO - DAY

Danny drives, tilting his head to see out the cobwebbed windshield. Nancy's quiet, focused, wearing her game face.

INT. THE DRAKE HOTEL, ROOM 312 - AFTERNOON

Nancy applies her make-up in front of the mirror. Her cocktail dress is uncommonly understated. Danny sits on the bed, shucking pistachios, watching football.

DANNY

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

NANCY

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

She grabs her purse and exits the room.

INT. THE DRAKE HOTEL, LOUNGE - AFTERNOON

Elegance personified. Nancy sits at a table for two, waiting. Glancing around at the BUSINESSMEN and their DAINTY WIVES, she feels like an uninvited guest, vulnerable and uneasy.

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

JIMMY
Let's get outta here.

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

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

NANCY
I want you to teach me how to ride
one of these days.

JIMMY
You'll have to get a jacket first.

She smiles, squeezes him tighter as the bike slips into the alley of an ART DECO MANSION.

INT. JIMMY KEENE'S MANSION, BATHROOM - AFTERNOON

Nancy washes her hands under the British nickle faucet. She lets her eyes wander across Jimmy's meticulously laid out Italian toiletries. The only anomaly in the scene a supermarket container of AQUA VELVA. Nancy lifts it to her nose and inhales deeply.

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

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

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

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

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

NANCY
Just enough to get us started
again... Danny made the mistake of
getting too big. But I guess you
already know that.

JIMMY
A version of it.

NANCY
He's bringing in some friends from
Cleveland to help him run things.
That's where he made his name.

JIMMY
Don't bullshit me, Nancy. I know
Cleveland. Its names. And I've
never heard of any Danny Edwards.

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

NANCY

It's a one-time thing, Jimmy. If you don't want to be a part of it I'll find someone else.

JIMMY

I don't want any part of it.

But as Jimmy expected, Nancy doesn't leave. She looks at him as if to say: *are you really going to make me beg?*

A study door opens. A BUSINESS ASSOCIATE peers out.

BUSINESS ASSOCIATE

Jimmy, it's California. You want them to call back?

Jimmy shakes his head 'no'.

JIMMY

It was good to see you, Nanc. There's a cab waiting for you outside.

He starts toward the study -

NANCY

Jimmy...
(he stops, turns back, a long beat)
Please...?

Jimmy almost smiles. He moves to a desk, writes a phone number on a piece of paper and offers it to Nancy.

JIMMY

If shit goes South with your boyfriend -

NANCY

That won't happen -

JIMMY

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

She tucks the paper away in her clutch.

NANCY

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

He steps close to her...

JIMMY

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

Jimmy goes, disappears inside the study.

INT. TAXI, MOVING - LATE AFTERNOON

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

INT. THE DRAKE HOTEL, ROOM 312 - TIGHT ON THE PIECE OF PAPER

JIMMY HANDED NANCY. **GERRY TIFFANY #312-215-7789.** Nancy dials the number, hands the phone to Danny.

DANNY

Hi there, is this Gerry?

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

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

GERRY TIFFANY, 50, sits in a patio chair across from Nancy and Danny. He looks like the manager of a discount electronics store. He's staring at Nancy's crossed legs. She's allowing it, but clearly getting bored of the dolt.

GERRY TIFFANY

(hasn't looked at Danny)

I like you, Danny.

DANNY

Yeah, Mr. Tiffany?

GERRY TIFFANY

Mmm hmm. I like you a lot.

INT. GERRY TIFFANY'S OFFICE - QUICK DETAIL SHOTS

DANNY HANDS GERRY an envelope of cash and -

CLOSE ON A SAFE as Gerry spins the dial, turns the handle, removes a KILO OF COCAINE and -

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

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

INT. PORSCHE 911 TURBO, MOVING - A FEW NIGHTS LATER

Danny drives. Sitting beside him, Cecil's excited -

CECIL

Boomer gon' be sorry he never
listened to me! Northside gon' make
us rich, Danny! I can feel it, boy!

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

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK -

INT. GHETTO HOUSE, NORTHSIDE - NIGHT

Cecil pushes the iron door open slowly, looks around.

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

CECIL
Hi there. Alonso in?

Blank stares. Finally, the Enormous Woman BANGS on the wall behind her. Moments later, a tall, broad-shouldered black man, ALONSO, 40, opens a bedroom door.

ALONSO
Come on back.

INT. BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Danny and Cecil sit on a ratty sofa. Cecil small-talks Alonso while Danny's looks around. Bed sheets cover the windows. Drug paraphernalia on the night stand. A STRUNG-OUT JUNKIE on the bed smokes a crack pipe, his eyes in some other orbit.

CECIL
- Danny. Danny. Danny-man!

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

CECIL
The shit, man! *The shit.*

Danny reaches into his jacket, hands Cecil an eight-ball. The Junkie stares at him with those big stoned eyes. Off Danny, sweating, uneasy, struggling to focus -

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

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

DANNY
Nancy? Nancy, we need to talk.

NANCY (O.C.)
Can it wait til the morning?

DANNY
No it cannot wait til the goddamn morning! Jesus Christ!

He MARCHES UP THE STAIRS, tries Nancy's bedroom door. Locked. He BANGS on it. HARD! Still nothing. Growing frustrated -

DANNY (CONT'D)
Nancy, open this door! Nancy!

He SHAKES the knob. Finally, an annoyed Nancy opens the door wearing a silk chemise.

NANCY
What's the matter?

Danny brushes past her into -

THE MASTER BEDROOM

and sits on the bed.

DANNY
I'm never going back there - this
freakin' guy - his freakin' eyes
were all buggin' out at me and...

He catches his breath, runs a hand through his hair.

NANCY
You're just tired, that's all.

DANNY
No, Nancy, that's not all!
(beat, this is hard)
I... I lied to you before... about
everything...

NANCY
What are you talking about?

DANNY
I didn't come to Kankakee to expand
Odds And Ends. I came here because
I didn't have anywhere else to go.
Remember when I told you I wanted
to run my own hardware store?

(she nods)
Well I did. Back in Bedford. My
parents owned a shop there. They
retired last year so I could manage
the place. Business was good for a
while, but... I started loaning out
equipment. To friends. People in
the community I trusted. I told 'em
they could pay me back when they
got on their feet, yunno? Well they
never did and I never did. Pretty
soon I couldn't pay the bank loan.
The store closed six months ago. My
parents lost everything. Thirty
years of work just... gone...

She sits down beside him. Not sure what to do right away.
Sympathy's not her forte. Finally, she rubs his back.

DANNY (CONT'D)
I haven't been able to look my
family in the eye since. Heck, I've
barely been able to look myself in
the eye. And my dad, he won't even
talk to me anymore... So when you
said you would help me, I thought
maybe, I don't know, I could
somehow...get it all back. It was
stupid... the whole thing... I love
you, Nanc, but I don't think I can
do this anymore.

Nancy evaluates him silently. The game has suddenly changed and requires a new strategy.

NANCY
I'll be right back.

Nancy goes.

INT. BATHROOM — CONTINUOUS

Nancy opens the medicine cabinet and takes down the AQUA VELVA BOTTLE we saw inside Jimmy's bathroom. She pours some into her hands, then opens the door.

NANCY
Danny...

Danny looks up. Nancy seductively peels off the straps of her chemise. It drops to the floor. She stands naked before him.

NANCY (CONT'D)
What're you waiting for?

Bowled over by everything, Danny ravishes her. Nancy rubs her hands all over him and breathes in the scent as Danny lifts her onto the sink and pushes himself between her legs...

INT. ANOTHER GHETTO HOUSE, KITCHEN, NORTHSIDE — NIGHT

CLOSE ON DANNY. Tired, stoned, sweating, but back at it. He and Cecil watch as TWO BLACK MEN, 30s, sample some coke. Fidgety, Danny stands abruptly.

FIRST BLACK MAN
The fuck are you goin'?

DANNY
I gotta piss.

INT. BATHROOM — MOMENTS LATER

Danny's pissing when a COMMOTION SWELLS OUTSIDE —

MEN'S VOICES (O.C.)
POLICE! GET YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR!

Danny STARTLES, quickly buttons his pants. Some piss stains through. He moves to the door, opens it. CECIL'S in the hallway, face down, PLAINCLOTHES NARCOTICS SQUAD MEMBERS (led by the Two Black Men sampling the coke) handcuff him.

THE COPS SEE DANNY! He RACES to the window, tries to WIGGLE OUT. His pants slide down his ass. THE NARCs rush in and WRESTLE HIM DOWN. Off his face pressed against the floor.

INT. NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME, MASTER BEDROOM — NIGHT

THE PHONE RINGS. Nancy, asleep, tries to ignore it and finally can't. She reaches over and lifts the phone —

NANCY
 Hello?...Who is this?...Who?...Oh.
 What do you want, Danny?
 (long beat)
 You got what?

INT. FIRST TRUST BANK – THE NEXT MORNING

Nancy waits as a TELLER pecks away at her computer.

TELLER
 I'm sorry, miss. It seems a freeze
 has been placed on that account.

NANCY
 Well un-freeze it.

Teller laughs. Nancy's not amused.

EXT. NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME, MASTER BEDROOM – AFTERNOON

Nancy takes the shoeboxes out from under her bed. One-after-another. All empty. She's getting angry.

LATER

Nancy looks down at her ADDRESS BOOK. It's opened to JIMMY KEENE. His phone numbers and addresses over the years have been precisely maintained. She takes a moment to steel herself, then dials his number. It RINGS and then –

YOUNG WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)
 Hello?
 (Nancy FREEZES)
 Hello?

JIMMY (O.C.)
 (in the background)
 Who is it, babe?

Nancy hangs up the phone...

INT. MALL FOOD COURT – AFTERNOON

Nancy wears a scowl as she sits across from Kit who is deeply intimidated by Nancy's dark mood.

KIT
 – I'm sorry, Nanc. I heard about
 Danny, but I didn't realize all
 that money was, yunno...gone.

Nancy whirls her finger: *get on with it, Kit.* Kit slips out a KANKAKEE C.C. NEWSLETTER and points to a photo of a FAT, UGLY BALD MAN she's labeled: **Nancy! Nancy!**

KIT (CONT'D)
 Left his third wife last week.

Nancy glowers at Kit: *are you fucking serious?*

KIT (CONT'D)
 Right. Not your type... You mind if
 I give him a shot then?

NANCY
 Fire away.

Glancing across the concourse, Nancy sees SMALL and a MALE COMPANION, 30s, talking, laughing, flirting, designer shopping bags hang from Companion's arm.

INT. ESTATE HOME, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy sits on the vanity bench applying make-up. The PHONE RINGS in the background. The ANSWERING MACHINE picks up -

NANCY'S VOICE
 You've reached Nancy and Danny.
 Leave a message after the beep.

DANNY (O.C.)
 Hi, Nancy. It's me again. Danny.
 Look, I know you're mad at me, but
 I just, uh, well I want you to know
 that I'll do anything, anything, to
 make things right between us...

It's as if Nancy doesn't even hear him.

INT. 'THE BLUE ROOM' NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

ON NANCY DANCING TO THE MUSIC as she scopes BOOMER, CLARENCE and GARY nearby, hanging with a PACK OF HOT YOUNG GIRLS who eye her suspiciously. A 21 YEAR OLD BLONDE approaches.

21 YEAR OLD
 I thought all the washed-up bitches
 went to Lola's.

21 Year Old goes. Off Nancy, alone, watching the girls point and laugh at her.

INT. CIRCLE K, MAGAZINE SECTION - MORNING

Nancy frantically grabs fashion magazine after magazine from the rack. Headlines include: Bring Out the Girl In You. How to Feel Ten Years Younger. The New Fountain of Youth.

INT. MALIBU SUN SALON, WAITING AREA - AFTERNOON

Nancy's TAPPING her nails anxiously. Tear-out portraits of 'youthful women' fanned out on the table before her.

STYLIST
 Nancy, honey, be patient.

Nancy SIGHS, flips through one her glamour magazines aimlessly, until...an article captures her interest. She leans forward...

CLOSE ON THE ARTICLE. PHRASES STAND OUT: *\$1 million Ransom Paid. Young Socialite Buried, Kept Alive for 80 Hours. Family Paid Kidnappers.* AND PICTURES: High Society. A plywood box. A traumatized Young Girl returned to her Parents.

Nancy unwinding all of it. Her brain in overdrive. She looks around, then quietly TEARS the pages out of the magazine...

INT. ESTATE HOME, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

A FINGER presses the blinking ANSWERING MACHINE button. Nancy sits on the bed, listening.

ANSWERING MACHINE
You have 78 New Messages.

DANNY'S VOICE
Nancy, it's Danny -
(she PRESSES delete)
Hey there Nanc uh, it's Danny -
(delete again)
It's me. Just uh, in jail here -
(delete again)
Hi, Nancy. It's me again. Danny...

This is the one. She let's it play.

DANNY'S VOICE (CONT'D)
Look, I know you're mad at me, but
I just, uh, well I want you to know
that I'll do anything, anything, to
make things right between us.

PUSH IN ON NANCY... wheels turning...

DANNY'S VOICE (CONT'D)
I got to talking with the State's
Attorney about my situation. He
offered to help me if I gave him
some information about Mr. Tiffany.
And uh, well I guess it was helpful
cause they reduced my charge. Three
more weeks and I'm a free bird.
It'd be real good to see if you're
around and...wanna, yunno, get back
together again...

VERY CLOSE ON NANCY, a smile forming...

EXT. NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME - MORNING - 3 WEEKS LATER

A TATTERED FORECLOSURE NOTICE quivers in the bushes.

Nancy exits the home just in time to watch her Porsche being towed away by a REPO MAN. She looks in the driveway. All that remains are the Harley and Danny's old pick-up truck.

EXT. ILLINOIS STATE PRISON - AFTERNOON

Nancy sits on the open tailgate of the truck. The prison gates open and Danny steps out.

For a moment, the sun too bright, he doesn't notice Nancy. He looks around dumbly, like walking back in might be his best option.

NANCY
Yoo hoo!

DANNY
(squints to see her)
Nancy? Is that you!?

NANCY
Hurry up!

INT. NANCY & DANNY'S ESTATE HOME - ON DANNY MOVING
from empty room to empty room. All the furniture is gone.

DANNY
- They took it all?

NANCY (O.C.)
Everything. You didn't think things
would just go back to the way they
were, didja?

DANNY
(yes)
I guess not...

He joins Nancy in the KITCHEN now. Devoid of chairs, he sits on the island.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Where're we gonna live?

NANCY
My mom said we could move-in with
her until we get on our feet.

She offers him the 'Jobs' section of the local newspaper and points to an ad she's circled.

NANCY (CONT'D)
They're looking for a Sales Clerk
at *Schuler's Hardware* in town.

Danny looks at the ad, his depressing reality sinking in.

INT. RISH HOME, FRONT DOOR - AFTERNOON

Connie's bursting with excitement as she holds the door open for Nancy and Danny carrying their belongings in.

CONNIE
- Oh I'm so happy, Nancy! Hi,
Danny! So handsome!

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy sits up in bed wearing revealing negligee and reading a *Cosmo*. Danny enters and is about to climb in beside her when Nancy holds him off.

NANCY
I don't think I'm ready to go back
to all that yet.

DANNY
Oh... sure...

She indicates an inflatable mattress box in the corner.

INT. SCHULER'S HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT

Danny, clad in a red *Schuler's* vest and nametag, stands on a step-ladder, just about finished building a five-foot 'Sale' pyramid of light bulbs. A MANAGER approaches.

MANAGER
The heck're you doing there, Danny?
Bulb's are over in Aisle 7, not 8.

Dog-tired, Danny begins taking the bulbs down one-by-one.

INT. RISH HOME, FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Danny slumps on the couch while Connie 'scrapbooks' photos from her salad days of modeling.

CONNIE
This was my '62 spread in *Eaton's*.
The year of the sweater dress.

IN THE KITCHEN, Nancy files her nails, keeping close watch on Danny and his burgeoning ennui.

INT. SCHULER'S HARDWARE STORE - AFTERNOON

Danny affixes price labels to cans of paint.

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.C.)
Cleveland Danny...?

Danny turns. We recognize the TWO TEASED-HAIR BLONDES from when Nancy overheard them chatting in the club bathroom. They're dressed for a hot night out, keg bucket in hand.

DANNY
Oh hey - Kelly right? And McKenzie?

BLONDE #1
Do you, like...work here...?

DANNY
Oh no, I mean - me? No way -

BLONDE #2
Tell me about the Never-Kink Hoses.

DANNY
The never-what who?

He follows their eyes to a button on his vest: *Ask Me About Our Never-Kink Hoses!*

DANNY (CONT'D)
What's that all about -

By the time he looks up, the girls are off. Out of the store, into a CORVETTE waiting by the entrance where they promptly let the SLICK MALE DRIVER in on their discovery. He lowers his shades, peers inside, incredulous -

DRIVER
(big laugh)
No-Fucking-Way! Cleveland D!?
That's just sad.

A REV of the engine and the CORVETTE ROARS off.

INT. RISH HOME, KITCHEN - NIGHT

ON AN UNTOUCHED DINNER PLATE: meatloaf, corn, Ore-Ida fries. Danny lethargically pokes at it with a fork.

CONNIE
Not feeling so hot, sweetie? Or
just don't like Momma's meatloaf?

DANNY
I'm gonna head up for the night.

He discards his plate in the sink and heads upstairs. Connie turns to Nancy. Nancy shakes her head sullenly.

NANCY
While he was in jail, the men made
him do certain...things.

CONNIE
(knows those things)
Oh dear.

NANCY
Mmm hmm.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Danny's on the blow-up mattress, staring up at the ceiling.

DANNY
Nancy...?

NANCY
Go to sleep.

DANNY
...I keep thinking about the way
things used to be.

A twinkle comes to Nancy's face. Danny's got a captive audience now as she rolls over and looks down at him.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 I don't know, just... walking into
 those clubs with you on my arm...

FLICK - Nancy turns on the lamp and, from a nearby stack of magazines, finds the magazine she was reading in the salon and opens it at the bookmark.

NANCY
 Here. I want you to look at
 something, Danny. It's important.

She offers him the magazine. He starts to read the article.

DANNY
 (confused)
 What... what the heck is this...?

NANCY
 They kept her alive underground for
 80 hours... How big is Mr. Small?

DANNY
 Whaddaya mean how big?

NANCY
 His height.

DANNY
 I don't know. Medium. Why?

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, MOMENTS LATER

Danny BURSTS out of Nancy's bedroom, turbid and shaking his head. Nancy follows -

DANNY
 - Oh no. No, no, no, no.

NANCY
 What're you no-ing about?

Connie emerges from the bathroom, hair up in curlers, an As-Seen-On-TV 'Abdomenizer' VIBRATING loudly around her waist.

Danny RUSHES down the stairs and out the front door.

CONNIE
 What's going on with Danny?

NANCY
 Nightmares.

CONNIE
 Of those men?

Nancy nods, heads downstairs.

EXT. RISH HOME, SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Danny's WALKING in circles, rattled and trying to disabuse his mind. Nancy stands with her arms firmly crossed.

DANNY
It's crazy, Nancy.

NANCY
No it isn't. You said you'd do
anything. I saved the message. Do
you want me to play it back for
you, Danny?

DANNY
What I meant, Nancy, was I'd do
anything within reason.

NANCY
Ohhh now you're choosing. Is that
it? You'll do anything as long as
anything is what you want... I
can't believe I threw it all away.

DANNY
Threw what away, Nanc? I'm still
here. We're still together -

NANCY
Not us! My modeling career, Danny!
They were waiting for me in New
York, yunno! They asked me to come
back! But I stayed faithful to our
love. I believed your stupid
messages telling me how much you
love me, how you'll do anything for
me.

Takes but a moment for her to produce the requisite tears.

NANCY (CONT'D)
I gave up everything to be with
you.

She shakes her head in disgust, stalks back inside the home.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

In preparation for Danny's inevitable return, Nancy removes a BORA-BORA RESORT BROCHURE from the night stand and sets it open on her lap.

A KNOCK at the door. Danny peeks his head in coyly.

DANNY
Can I come back in?

NANCY
No.

He walks in anyway and takes a seat on the bed beside her.
Slowly his eyes follow hers down to -

The slick advert. It opens to the image of a glamorous young couple reclining in chaises on an impossibly white beach. In the woman's hand, a SUNRISE COCKTAIL garnished with every color of the rainbow. In bold across the top Nancy's written

NANCY + DANNY FOREVER!!

Without realizing it, Danny's eyes drift over to the *Esquire*. A slight nudge from Nancy and he picks it up. Her arms find their way around his shoulders a bit, like a hangman's noose. She turns the pages and finds the article.

NANCY (CONT'D)
I miss it, too. Being on your arm.
They all looked up to us. Everyone
wanted to be like Nancy and Danny.

DANNY
I just don't want to hurt anyone.

NANCY
Hurt? Jesus, Danny, what kind of
girl do you think I am? No one gets
hurt. And we get back to where we
were. You can finally open your
hardware store. See?

She shows him a newspaper cutout: A LARGE 'FOR RENT' SPACE in a strip mall.

NANCY (CONT'D)
I could even work the register.
(Danny brightens at that)
We could invite your family to
town. Show them how we've turned
things around together. Take them
to Church, then to a fancy dinner.
That's what you want, isn't it?

DANNY
But I...don't even...know how -

NANCY
Ssshhh... I'll explain it all...

Their eyes lock. She kisses him deeply, passionately, then peels back the covers.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Why don't you sleep up here with me
tonight?

He stands and climbs into bed beside her. She drops the magazine onto the floor and embraces him.

INT. SCHULER'S HARDWARE, LUNCH BREAK - AFTERNOON

Using a photo from the magazine article as his guide, Danny sketches a coffin-like box in a composition book.

NANCY (V.O.)
You'll build the box, Handyman.
Exactly like in the article.

OUTSIDE SCHULER'S, DANNY LOADS PLYWOOD IN HIS CARGO BED

EXT. RISH HOME, DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Danny LUGS the plywood sheets towards the garage.

NANCY (V.O.)
I'll make the call to Mr. Small.

Looking up, he SEES Connie in a smock, painting a watercolor-by-number of a Unicorn under a waterfall. He freezes and hustles the wood around the side of the home.

NANCY SMOKES AT 'THE YESTERYEAR RESTAURANT' BAR - NIGHT

Eyes focused on SMALL at a booth with a FEMALE COMPANION and ELAINE. Clearly this is an arranged date.

NANCY (V.O.)
This is Claire from the Sheriff's Department. There's been a break-in at The Yesteryear Restaurant. We need to come down right away.

THE RISH HOME GARAGE DOOR RISES TO REVEAL NANCY - NIGHT

She looks around, expecting something that isn't here.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Danny sits on the air bed, hangdog. Nancy paces, seething.

NANCY
Why don't I see any progress?

DANNY
It's your Mom! She's always doing her crafts in the garage!

INT. CONNIE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Nancy CRIES crocodile tears. Connie's beside her, consoling.

NANCY
- it's just that, with you always here, me and Danny don't have any, yunno, private time.

CONNIE
Oh, honey. Why don't I ask Drew if I can pick up some night shifts.

NANCY
And the garage, too.

CONNIE
But that's my 'craft shack', Nanc. I host the gals on Thursdays.

NANCY
Then move it inside. Danny needs the space. He wants to try and bring in some extra money for us building birdhouses.

NANCY STROLLS THE SIDEWALK OUTSIDE SMALL'S HOUSE — AFTERNOON
discreetly SNAPPING photos with a POLAROID INSTANT CAMERA.

NANCY (V.O.)
When he steps into the garage,
you'll be there waiting for him.

INT. RISH HOME, FAMILY ROOM — NIGHT (LATE)

Nancy watches *Falcon Crest* from the couch. Connie breezes past on her way out to work. The instant the DOOR CLOSES, Nancy reaches for a WALKIE-TALKIE.

NANCY
She's gone.

Seconds later, DANNY BOUNDS DOWN THE STAIRS and WE'RE —

INSIDE THE GARAGE, A GOGGLE-CLAD DANNY
GUIDES A JIGSAW through a sheet of plywood and WE'RE —

BACK INSIDE NANCY'S BEDROOM

THE DIGITAL ALARM CLOCK BLARES. Nancy lifts her sleep mask, a drowsy eye views the clock: **6:00 AM**. She grabs the walkie —

NANCY
Her shift's over.

INSIDE THE GARAGE, DANNY SHUTS OFF HIS JIGSAW
lifts his goggles and picks up his walkie —

DANNY
Copy that, Nanc. Made some solid
progress here tonight —

NANCY (O.C.)
Shut. It. Down.

DANNY
Copy. Shuttin' 'er down.

DANNY PUTS HIS TOOLS AWAY — THROWS A TARPAULIN OVER THE BOX —
LUGS THE BOX INTO A CORNER BEHIND THE HARLEY, OUT OF SIGHT.

NANCY'S BEDROOM, GLIDE ACROSS HER WALL-OF-FAME CORKBOARD
Now adorned with A COLLAGE OF POLAROID PHOTOS: various angles
of SMALL'S HOUSE, *THE YESTERYEAR*, SMALL'S MERCEDES, et al...

Stepping up to the board, Nancy pins on an advertisement of
LETHAL WEAPON. PUSH IN ON MEL GIBSON'S HANDGUN —

NANCY (V.O.)
You'll need a gun, Danny.

DANNY DRIVES HIS PICK-UP THROUGH THE NORTHSIDE

DANNY (V.O.)
A gun!? Jesus, what for?

NANCY (V.O.)
Intimidation.

INT. GHETTO HOUSE (ALONSO'S HOUSE), NORTHSIDE - NIGHT

Alonso digs through a box in the closet. Stands now and offers Danny a 9MM PISTOL. Danny nods, clueless -

DANNY
Got a nice weight to it.

GARAGE, DANNY ASSEMBLES THE CUT WOOD, HAMMERS DOWN NAILS and we're beginning to see that a box is taking shape -

NANCY (V.O.)
Tell him to take Route 102 out to Heiland Road.

NANCY'S MAZDA 929, MOVING - A RURAL AREA OUTSIDE KANKAKEE

ROUTE 102. Passing corn fields, silos, barns. A street sign appears: **WEICHERT NORTH ROAD**. She pulls to the shoulder and looks down the secluded dirt road flanked by heavy woods.

NANCY (V.O.)
That's where I'll meet you.

Across the street, Nancy NOTICES an ELDERLY FARMER in a corn field, teasing the silks, gauging them for the harvest.

INSIDE SCHULER'S HARDWARE STORE, QUICK DETAIL SHOTS OF DANNY Lifting items: EXHAUST HOSES - LIGHTBULBS - A 12-VOLT MOTOR - WIRE MESHING - A MINIATURE FAN - A DIGITAL TIMER SWITCH.

INT. RISH HOME, UPSTAIRS BATHROOM - NIGHT

Cloaked in a BLACK MOCK TURTLENECK, SWEATPANTS, GLOVES, and MOTORCYCLE HELMET with tinted visor, Danny stands before the mirror, rehearsing lines.

DANNY
Listen to me and no one gets hurt.
Listen to me, palzone, and nobody -

NANCY
Straighten your shoulders.

Nancy sits on the lip of the bath, painting her toenails.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Add a fuck or fucker. I'll shove this gun up your asshole, fucker.

DANNY
(irritated)
Will you just let me do it my way,
please.

NANCY
(tired, shoos him away)
Fine. Go practice somewhere else.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY, MOMENTS LATER

Danny exits the bathroom, MUMBLING to himself under the bulky helmet as he WALKS DOWN THE STAIRS —

DANNY
...maybe I don't wanna shove it..up
your asshole...

...INTO THE KITCHEN...where he opens the refrigerator. Takes out the milk and chocolate syrup. As he mixes the two —

DANNY (CONT'D)
...How would you feel if someone
asked you to shove it in your ass?

He lifts his visor to have a taste when...HIS EYES VIEW THE FAMILY ROOM: CONNIE and her 'CRAFT CLUB' GALS. Fifteen or so SEPTUAGENARIANS staring right at him. Wide-eyed, disturbed.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Oh hey... Hi there...

ON CONNIE, deeply concerned.

EXT. KANKAKEE COUNTRY CLUB/INT. NANCY'S MAZDA 929 — DAY

Nancy's parked outside the COUNTRY CLUB. She watches as ELAINE SMALL exits with a CLIQUE OF AFFLUENT WOMEN.

NANCY (V.O.)
We'll record his voice and use it
to make the ransom calls.

Elaine looks confused, as if she can't remember where she parked. A FRIEND nears, directs Elaine to her Cadillac.

NANCY (V.O.)
We'll tell her to drive the money
to Eagle Park.

NANCY DRIFTS THROUGH A FOREST, LATE AFTERNOON

Alone, looking around as if searching for a guidepost...

NANCY (V.O.)
That's where she'll make the drop.

...And there, up ahead, is the familiar ANCIENT ELM, the secret hideaway she once shared with Jimmy. She smiles, remembering, then moves that way.

IN THE GARAGE, DANNY HOOKS A MINI FAN UP TO THE 12-VOLT MOTOR along with a LIGHT BULB which glows.

NANCY (V.O.)
By the time the cops are returning
Mr. Small to his home, safe and
sound...

He tests the fan. It spins.

NANCY (V.O.)
...We'll be on a plane flying over
Anguilla, looking down on the *Cap
Juluca Resort*.

INT. LEATHER STORE - DAY

Nancy browses the selection of leather motorcycle jackets.

NANCY (V.O.)
One day we'll pass him somewhere.
Who knows, maybe we'll be living in
Chicago or even New York by then.

EXT. RISH HOME, FRONT STEPS - NIGHT

Nancy smokes a cigarette. VOICES RISE next door. She retreats into the shadows and watches as Jimmy and a PRETTY BRUNETTE exit the home, thanking MRS. KEENE for dinner.

NANCY (V.O.)
Our eyes will meet and he won't
know a single thing. It'll be
like... nothing ever happened.

The happy couple climbs onto JIMMY'S HARLEY. Nancy watches as they ZIP OFF down the street.

INT. RISH HOME, GARAGE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Nancy looks over the top of her magazine and watches Danny as connects a DIGITAL TIMER SWITCH to a 12-VOLT MOTOR. He's tired, fading. Sensing this, Nancy lowers the *Elle*.

NANCY
What's that?

DANNY
This? Timer switch. Tells the motor
when to run and when to shut off.

NANCY
(indulging him)
Wow. It seems so complicated.

DANNY
Nah, I used to install a ton'a
these. People programming their AC,
the exterior lights while they're
away.
(ready to brag now)

DANNY (CONT'D)
 I guess it could be a little
 tricky. You hafta wire the timer
 into the motor here like this...

Nancy watches as he CONNECTS the COLORED WIRES of the TIMER SWITCH into the motor. Opens up the FACE revealing a DISPLAY and a series of buttons: **Day, Time, +, -**.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 ...Then program in how often you
 want the fan to run.

NANCY
 Why not just run it the whole time?

DANNY
 Motor could burn out, battery could
 die. But the timer here, couple'a
 these guys...

Opening his hand, he reveals two tiny, disk-like batteries.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 ...and it's good for about a month.

NANCY
 And you can set that for *any* time?

DANNY
 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

NANCY
 How about...Wednesday.

He punches the buttons: **Day, Time, +, -**. Shows Nancy.

NANCY (CONT'D)
 Friday? Say...11 AM?

Danny punches again, quicker now, showing-off: **Day, Time, +, -**. Holds up the display.

DANNY
 Recognize that date?
 (she doesn't)
 It's my birthday, goofy.

NANCY
 (still staring at the
 timer switch)
 Oh, right.
 (looks up at Danny)
 We'll celebrate in Anguilla.

RISH HOME, THE GARAGE DOOR RISES ON NANCY AND DANNY - NIGHT

THEY LOAD THE WOODEN BOX INTO THE CARGO BED
 of the pick-up truck and cover it with blankets.

EXT. WEICHERT NORTH ROAD - NIGHT

Danny's truck turns down the remote dirt road.

EXT. SECLUDED PATCH OF WOODS (BURIAL SITE) - SERIES OF SHOTS
- Guided by NANCY'S FLASHLIGHT, Danny LUGS the 8ft long box.
- Danny shakes a CAN OF SPRAY PAINT, marks an 'X' on a tree.
- FROM A DISTANCE, a FLOOD LIGHT has been hung from a limb
and it shines down on a shirtless DANNY DIGGING A DEEP HOLE.
- A CLOSER ANGLE: Nancy stands outside the light, hidden in
the darkness, watching Danny labor as she smokes.

NANCY
We'll do it tomorrow.

Danny pauses. Looks at her. It's sooner than he thought.

NANCY (CONT'D)
What's the point of waiting?

After a moment, Danny begins digging again.

INT. RISH HOME, GARAGE - MORNING?? NIGHT??

Danny's obsessively reviewing the wooden box one final time.
Fan, time switch, 12V motor, light bulb, the intake and
exhaust hoses which will bring air from above ground.

CONNIE (O.C.)
Danny?

Danny peers above the box. Connie stands in the doorway in
her Dollar Store uniform. She's just gotten back from work.
HE'S TOTALLY BUSTED. She walks toward him now -

CONNIE (CONT'D)
What's...what's going on out here?

DANNY
Well um uh, this is a, uhh -

NANCY (O.C.)
Mom.

Startled, Connie turns to see Nancy standing behind her.

CONNIE
Oh. Hi, Nanc. I heard banging.

NANCY
It's a surprise. Danny's making a
lemonade stand for the twins two
doors down.

Connie could cry: he's coming around! She hugs Danny.

CONNIE
 Oh I knew the fog would lift!
 (feels the fan's wind)
 Look at that! There's even a fan to
 keep them cool, Nancy!

She kisses his forehead, smiles proudly then heads inside.

Nancy looks at Danny: his face a tableau of fear and relief.

NANCY
 Sorry. The alarm didn't go off.
 Come to bed. Try to sleep a little.

INT. NANCY'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Lying in bed beside Nancy, unable to sleep, Danny stares at the corkboard, a veritable BLUEPRINT OF THEIR PLAN. The windows are open and the Fall breeze flutters the photos.

As a precaution against his ambivalence, Nancy has placed the RESORT PHOTO and the PHOTO OF HIS FAMILY taken at his sister's wedding in the center of it all.

She wraps her arms around him and pulls him close.

(O.C.) A CAR DOOR SLAMS -

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy pulls the window curtain back, watches Connie's Ford reverse out of the drive. Turns back to Danny sitting on the bed, uncomfortable as a child who needs to use the bathroom.

NANCY
 Get dressed.

PHILLIPS 66 PHONE BOOTH, PEMBROOKE - NIGHT (LATE)

Nancy steps inside, deposits a quarter, punches the keys.

NANCY
 Mr. Small?... Sorry to wake you so
 late, this is Officer Claire
 Schneider from the Sheriff's
 Department... I know it's late,
 sir, but there's been a break-in at
 The Yesteryear Restaurant.

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Small's in bed, half-asleep, phone to his ear.

SMALL
 Is there any damage?... Why can't
 you tell me anything? I'm the
 owner... Oh for chrissakes!

He hangs up the phone, looks at the clock: **2:31 AM.**

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, GARAGE - 2:45 AM

DARKNESS. Then...A RECTANGLE OF LIGHT as Small opens the house door, depresses the garage door switch.

THE DOOR RISES. Light floods the space revealing...DANNY IN THE ALL-BLACK ENSEMBLE. Crouched like a frightened alien who crash-landed nearby and made its way here for shelter.

Small steps down, nears the Mercedes. Danny SPRINGS to his feet. An absurd image reminiscent of an ill-conceived mascot for a fledgling sports team.

DANNY
Gettindaker falzone gettindaker -

Under the helmet, his voice is insensible underwater talk. Small STARTLES, SEES the 9MM in Danny's hand.

SMALL
What - what is this - who are - ?

DANNY
GETTINDAKER! NOW! NOW!

Danny pulls open the driver's door and PUSHES Small inside. He slides into the backseat.

INT. SMALL'S MERCEDES - CONTINUOUS

SMALL
What do you want? Why are -

DANNY
Dake Route IOU tout ta Thailand.

SMALL
I can't hear you.

DANNY
Dake I-O-U tout to Thailand!

Small's face wrinkles. Danny flips the visor up.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Goddangit! Take Route 102 out to
Heiland Road! Wouldja listen!?

SMALL
...What's all the way out there?

Danny TRAINS the gun on Small, flips the visor down.

DANNY
Just whoa.

Small starts the car. EASY LISTENING JAZZ is on the radio.

EXT. ROUTE 102 - WIDE - 3:00 AM

The headlights of the Mercedes appear in the distance like owl eyes, approaching.

DANNY (O.C.)
Slow down... Turn here.

The Mercedes pivots down Weichert Road.

INT. SMALL'S MERCEDES, MOVING DOWN WEICHERT ROAD — CONTINUOUS

THE EASY JAZZ belies the tempest inside Small's head as the car progresses a rocky jaunt, the road beset by dense woods.

DANNY
Pull over. Turn the car off and hand me the keys.

Small does just that. Danny takes the keys, hands Small a set of handcuffs.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Put those on.

Small fumbles, finally gets the cuffs on. In the rearview, he WATCHES Danny tie a BANDANA. His eyes size up the environs: these woods, this road, the dark figure in the backseat.

SMALL
What are you going to do to me?

Reaching over the seat, Danny attempts to pulls the bandana over Small's eyes. Small WRITHES. AN AWKWARD STRUGGLE ENSUES and in the struggle SMALL GLIMPSES DISTANT HEADLIGHTS CRESTING A RISE. This is his chance.

His hand LIFTS THE DOOR LOCK and —

EXT. MERCEDES/WEICHERT NORTH ROAD — SAME

— SMALL BURSTS OUT! TAKES OFF TOWARD THE HEADLIGHTS.

DANNY CHASES, TRIPS on his own feet and FALLS FLAT ON HIS FACE, CRACKING HIS VISOR. He gets up dizzily, keeps running, clutching a pulled hamstring.

SMALL'S HEADING RIGHT AT THE HEADLIGHTS. FLAILING HIS ARMS!

SMALL
HEY! STOP! STOP!

The pick-up truck SCREECHES to a halt an inch from Small. He moves to the passenger door. Tries the door. Locked.

SMALL (CONT'D)
Open up! I've been kidnapped!

He looks up at the driver... IT'S NANCY. She's shocked, frightened, wide-eyed. This Was Not The Plan.

SMALL (CONT'D)
(SHAKING the handle)
Lemme in! Lemme in GODDAMNIT!

Then... Small's eyes narrow. He knows: she's in on it.

NANCY FLOORS THE TRUCK! It TAKES OFF, THROWING SMALL FROM THE VEHICLE! HE LANDS HARD ON THE GROUND!

As the pick-up FLIES PAST, Danny glimpses Nancy inside. White like she's seen a ghost. The truck disappears. Danny pivots to Small. Prostrated. Out-of-breath. Gash above his eye.

EXT. SECLUDED PATCH OF WOODS (BURIAL SITE) - NIGHT

Danny has the 9MM against Small's back as he leads him through the woods. The 'X' MARKED TREE comes into view. Danny stops, lifts off Small's blindfold and hands him a sheet of paper on which a script has been written.

DANNY
Read it when I say.

SMALL
(out of breath, reading)
Mother, it's me -

DANNY
Wait wait wait - I didn't say.

Danny removes a MICROCASSETTE RECORDER from his sweatshirt pouch. Presses 'record' and then cues Small.

SMALL
Mother, it's me... I've been kidnapped and I've been buried alive. I won't be released until a payment of one million dollars cash is made.

Small looks at Danny who motions for him to continue.

SMALL (CONT'D)
You will be called again at 10 AM with instructions on where to drop the money. Please stay by the phone. Once the money has been collected you will be told my location. If you attempt to contact the police you will never see me alive again.

Finished reading, Small hands the script back to Danny who leads him for a few yards until they reach the edge of the hole. A small slope leads down to where the open wooden BOX awaits. Seeing it, Small PANICS, BECOMES HYSTERICAL -

SMALL (CONT'D)
No. NO! NO! PLEASE! PLEASE NO!

The men STRUGGLE against one another. It all stops when -

VOICE (O.C.)
Gimme the gun.

IT'S NANCY. She steps out of the darkness, takes the gun from Danny and PUTS IT TO SMALL'S TEMPLE.

NANCY
Get down there before I put a hole
in your head.

Something in her eyes tell Small to believe her. Shaking, he lays down inside the box.

Danny SHUTS THE LID and LOCKS THE HATCHES. Looking up, Nancy peers over the rim of the grave, her ire focused directly on him. She STALKS OFF.

Danny OPENS the compartment at the top of the box. He sets the TIMER SWITCH. The MOTOR begins to HUM and –

INSIDE THE WOODEN BOX

IT'S SO FUCKING DARK IN HERE. SMALL STARTS TO HYPERVENTILATE.

Then the FAN BEGINS TO TURN. Small GULPS THE AIR like water in a dessert. The LIGHT GLOWS. He notices something at his feet. He strains to reach down and picks up a brown bag. Dumps it out: a bottle of water, apples, Hershey bars.

TOOSH. TOOSH. TOOSH. THE DIRT COMING FROM ABOVE.

SMALL BANGS HIS KNUCKLES AGAINST THE LID. BANG! BANG! BANG!

DANNY

the hole is filled now, Danny checks the INTAKE/EXHAUST HOSES protruding from the ground, bringing air. They're clear.

INT. SMALL'S MERCEDES, MOVING/EXT. FIELD – ROUTE 102 **–4:25 AM**

Danny drives. In the rearview, he WATCHES the headlights of the PICK-UP trailing. There's not another car on the road.

He guides the sedan off the road and into a FIELD OF TALL GRASS. Drives a distance, then cuts the engine. Steps from the car, LAUNCHES THE KEYS and RUNS BACK THROUGH THE FIELD...

INT. DANNY'S PICK-UP TRUCK, MOVING – **4:45 AM**

TIGHT ON NANCY in the passenger seat, staring blankly out the window. (NOTE: this is the exact shot we saw in the beginning of the film.)

NANCY
You were supposed to have the
blindfold on. That was the plan.
(beat)
He saw my face.

DANNY
You don't know that. It was dark –

NANCY
(certain of it)
He saw my fucking face.

INT. RISH HOME, FRONT DOOR - 5:15 AM

Nancy enters and RUSHES up the stairs. Moments later, Danny steps inside and hears Nancy's door SHUT upstairs.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Nancy lies in bed, facing the wall. Inconsolable. Danny sits down beside her.

DANNY
I'm gonna fix this, Nancy. I know I
messed up, but I'm gonna fix it...
I love you...

She won't look at him.

INT. DANNY'S PICK-UP TRUCK, MOVING - 5:40 AM

NEWSRADIO STATION to NEWSRADIO STATION. Danny switches the dial, paranoid that maybe his name will be mentioned.

EXT. SUNOCO GAS STATION PHONE BOOTH (PEMBROOKE) - 5:45 AM

CLOSE ON THE VOICE RECORDER. The cassette spools turn backward until...CLICK.

Danny deposits a quarter, dials a number. He rubs his eyes, trying to fight off sleep.

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, ELAINE'S MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

Elaine sleeps like the dead, her mouth wide open, SNORING.

The PHONE RINGS...and RINGS...and RINGS...

INSIDE THE PHONE BOOTH

Danny's antsy, rocking back and forth, then -

ELAINE SMALL (O.C.)
Hello -

He presses 'play' on the recorder, puts it to the phone -

VOICE RECORDER
(Small's voice)
Mother, it's me... I've been
kidnapped -

ANSWERING MACHINE
(Elaine's voice)
- You have reached The Small
Residence -

DANNY
Shit!

He hangs up. Rewinds the recorder. Deposits another quarter.

ELAINE'S BEDROOM

THE PHONE RINGS. Elaine rolls over, her snoring adopts a different PITCH and she falls back asleep.

INSIDE THE PHONE BOOTH

ANSWERING MACHINE (O.C.)
You have reached The Small -

DANNY
 Goddamnit!

He reaches into his pocket. No more change.

INT. SUNOCO CONVENIENCE STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Danny hobbles in wearing the motorcycle helmet and approaches the counter.

DANNY
 Got change for a buck?

TEENAGE CLERK stares at the badly-cracked visor.

TEENAGE CLERK
 Your visor's totally fucked, man.

INSIDE THE PHONE BOOTH, DANNY INSERTS THE QUARTER

ELAINE'S BEDROOM

The RINGING manages to stir Elaine this time.

ELAINE SMALL
 Stephen? Stephen answer that.

No response. Grudgingly she reaches over and lifts the phone.

ELAINE SMALL (CONT'D)
 Hello?

INSIDE THE PHONE BOOTH

Danny presses 'play' -

VOICE RECORDER
 (Small's voice)
Mother, it's me...

ELAINE'S BEDROOM

ELAINE SMALL
 Stephen? What's going on? You sound funny -

VOICE RECORDER (O.C.)
*I've been kidnapped and I've been
buried alive...*

ELAINE SMALL
What? Who is... who's there?

PUSH IN ON ELAINE, listening intently to the recording.

ELAINE SMALL (CONT'D)
Oh my...oh no...wha...what...

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, MINUTES LATER - THESE SHOTS QUICKLY -

Elaine walks into Small's bedroom. Empty.

Elaine walks through the foyer. Empty.

Elaine looks in Stephen's office. Empty.

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

CLOSE ON A PHONE PAD. Elaine's hand presses 9 - 1 -

A tremor of fear courses through her. Deep, paralyzing fear. She looks around. Windows. Doors. Stairs. Someone's watching. She feels it. Her chest tightens. Knees shake. Can't breathe. She collapses into a chair. And hangs up the phone.

WALK-IN CLOSET

Elaine lifts the same BLONDE JUMEAU DOLL we saw Nancy lift before. She presses the button and the shelves separate to reveal the VAULT DOOR. She punches a code into the keypad. CLICK. Turns the spindle wheel handle and WE'RE -

INSIDE THE VAULT

It's about the size of a walk-in closet and is filled with ANTIQUES and FAMILY HEIRLOOMS.

In the corner is a DEPOSITORY SAFE. Stacks of bills inside. But as Elaine removes a stack, we see that these are no ordinary currency notes. Instead, they're GOLD CERTIFICATES. She begins to stuff them in a duffle bag.

BACK IN THE KITCHEN

Elaine sits by the phone, waiting for instructions.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - 6:30 AM

Miraculously, Nancy's managed to fall asleep.

DANNY ENTERS THE ROOM, takes off his the black ensemble, leaves it in a pile along with the motorcycle helmet and the 9MM under that. He sets the alarm clock for **9:00 AM**.

Kisses Nancy's forehead, sits on the air mattress with his back against the wall. He'll rest for a bit. That's all. Just an hour. He fights his eyes, but they move...towards...sleep...

EXT. SECLUDED PATCH OF WOODS (BURIAL SITE) - EARLY MORNING

WE'RE MOVING OVER THE GROUND like a spreading fog...

...DOWN THROUGH THE GROUND INTO SMALL'S WOODEN BOX...

...SMALL POUNDS HIS FISTS AGAINST THE LID! BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! His knuckles are bloody, the skin raw and peeling...

SMALL
HELP ME! HELP I'M IN HERE! HELP!

ZZZ! ZZZ! A SPARK inside the wire meshing! THE FAN STOPS TURNING! A stream of smoke emanates. THE LIGHT GOES OUT!

WHOOSH! WHOOSH! THE EXHAUST HOSES ARE RIPPED AWAY!

SMALL STARTS TO GASP FOR AIR that isn't there. He begins to hyperventilate and -

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

THE ALARM SOUNDS on the digital clock: a rock station SHOUTS *Baltimore's 'Tarzan Boy'* as -

DANNY'S EYES SHOOT OPEN. He exhales his nightmare. SEES his clothes in a pile. BUT THE HELMET'S GONE! SO IS THE GUN! And Nancy's not in bed. His eyes dart to the clock: **11:00 AM!** He SPRINGS to his feet like his ass is on fire and -

INT. RISH HOME - MOMENTS LATER

DANNY RUSHES DOWN THE STEPS. Connie's in the family room dressed in a leotard. Bouncing on a mini-trampoline, HOOTING like an owl to a workout video.

DANNY
Connie. CONNIE! CONNIE!

She looks up, removes the headphones.

DANNY (CONT'D)
Where's Nancy?

CONNIE
She went out for a walk -

Just then, NANCY OPENS THE FRONT DOOR. She brushes past Danny and continues up the stairs. He FOLLOWS, frantic -

DANNY
Where were you!?

NANCY
I needed some air.

DANNY
I can't find the gun. Someone stole
the gun, Nancy. Nancy —

NANCY
Sshh you idiot!

DANNY
(quieter)
Someone stole the gun.

They enter —

NANCY'S BEDROOM

'Tarzan Boy' still BLARING from the digital clock.

NANCY
I did. I threw it in the river.

DANNY
What'd you do that for?

NANCY
Because you would've screwed it up.
Just like you screwed up everything
else.

She opens her closet and pulls out her suitcase. Danny
notices the corkboard has been cleared of their blueprint.

DANNY
Where are you going?

NANCY
I haven't decided yet. I've always
wanted to see Belize.

DANNY
What about You-Know-Who?

NANCY
You figure it out.

She RUMMAGES drawers. TOSSES garments into her suitcase. The
MUSIC is irritating Danny. He YANKS the power plug out.

DANNY
Wait for me... I can get the money.
(off Nancy's laugh)
I'll get it, Nancy...I'll get it
and we'll go together. Trust me...

She considers him carefully a long moment. Then —

NANCY
Hurry.

INT. PHONE BOOTH, PHILLIPS 66 (PEMBROOKE) — 12:00 PM

Danny slides in wearing a baseball cap and a fake mustache.
It's very thick and makes him look oddly Mexican. He deposits
a quarter, dials, ducks his head —

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

Elaine's sitting in the same chair. She answers the phone.

INTERCUT DANNY AND ELAINE

ELAINE SMALL
Is this Eddie?

DANNY
Who? No, this isn't Eddie -

ELAINE SMALL
Are you sure?

DANNY
Yes I'm sure!

ELAINE SMALL
Who are you then? And where's my
son?

Danny cups a hand to distort his voice. Sounds like a giant.

DANNY
Drop the money at Eagle Municipal
Park at the Concessions Stand -

ELAINE SMALL
Where's. My. Son.

DANNY
Eagle Municipal Park by the -

ELAINE SMALL
Is that where Stephen is?

Thrown, Danny decides to drop the deep voice.

DANNY
No, no!
(patiently)
This is the call where I tell you
where to drop the money.

ELAINE SMALL
Stephen said, *Mother, you'll
receive a call telling you -*

DANNY
I know what he said, I told him
what to say, maam, and, and I know
that I'm late because the alarm
clock didn't, uhhh... Look, were
you able to get the money?

ELAINE SMALL
You know God damn well I got the
money!

DANNY
No I don't, I didn't know that, but
if you do that's great. The uh drop-
off is Eagle Municipal Park.

DANNY (CONT'D)
 There's a dumpster behind the
 Concessions Stand there -

ELAINE SMALL
 That's it. I'm calling the police.

DANNY
No! No, you don't wanna, uhhh...
 (tries to think of some
 threatening, fails)
 You do not wanna do that, maam.

ELAINE SMALL
 Do you really think you're going to
 just get away with this?

DANNY
 (beat, considers this)
 You got one hour.

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

Elaine depresses the hook switch, then releases it. Her HANDS ARE SHAKING. She's ready to faint. She dials 911.

INT. KANKAKEE COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - 12:15 PM

MOVE WITH A DEPUTY SHERIFF as he briskly crosses the floor of the station. KNOCKS on the Chief's door and peeks in.

CHIEF WITTEN, 60, tall, thin, bespectacled, sits behind his desk. He lifts his eyes from some paperwork.

DEPUTY
 Call came in from Elaine Small.

SHERIFF WITTEN
Small Small?

DEPUTY
 Says her son's been kidnapped.
 They've already made a couple of
 ransom calls.

INT. FBI REGIONAL OFFICE, SPRINGFIELD, IL - 12:30 PM

Seated at neighboring desks are FBI AGENTS MARK TILLER and TERRENCE DEACON, 30s, hale and hearty. They eat take-out Chinese. Tiller mulls the Sports page.

AGENT TILLER
 - Purdue's getting ten. At home.

AGENT DEACON
 I'd bet the house and car on
 Michigan. Purdue's dogshit.

AGENT TILLER
 Ten points at home dogshit?

The PHONE RINGS. Tiller tucks it under his ear.

AGENT TILLER (CONT'D)
Tiller.

THE TA-TA-TA-TA OF HELICOPTER BLADES AS -

AN ASTAR HELICOPTER FLIES OVER CHICAGO - 1:00 PM

Tiller and Deacon inside the cabin.

INT. DANNY'S PICK-UP TRUCK, MOVING (WEICHERT ROAD) - SAME
Danny turns down the dirt road and is about to pull to the shoulder when he SEES a FARM TRACTOR IN THE DISTANCE, coming down a hill towards him...

He panics, quickly U-turns and FLIES BACK ONTO ROUTE 102.

EXT. GRASSLAND, OUTSIDE KANKAKEE - 1:45 PM

STRONG WIND FLATTENS THE GRASS as the Astra descends. Tiller and Deacon deplane and are greeted by Chief Witten.

AGENT TILLER
(over the helicopter)
AGENT TILLER! THIS IS AGENT DEACON!

INT. CHIEF'S CRUISER, MOVING - 2:00 PM

Tiller and Deacon are briefed by Witten -

AGENT TILLER
- How many calls total then?

CHIEF WITTEN
She seemed foggy on that. First call came in around 6 AM.

AGENT DEACON
And she waits until noon to call you? Seems strange.

CHIEF WITTEN
They told her she was being watched. When we knocked on the door she fainted.

The Cruiser rides past the iron gates of the Small home and the Queen Anne mansion comes into view.

AGENT DEACON
...Get a load of this place.

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - 2:30 PM

HIGH COMMAND for the KANKAKEE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS UNIT. DETECTIVES and DEPUTIES mill about, searching for clues of forced entry while TECHIES prep the phone for a tap.

At the center of the hullabaloo, Elaine sits exhausted and ashen-faced, the day's events have left her weak, shaken and disordered. There's a NURSE on hand checking her vitals.

WITTEN, TILLER & DEACON enter. Witten signals Elaine. Tiller and Deacon approach, slide chairs close.

AGENT TILLER
Maam, I'm FBI Agent Tiller and this is Agent Deacon.

ELAINE SMALL
I, I haven't done anything wrong -

AGENT TILLER
I'm sure you haven't. We'd just like to ask you a few questions. About the ransom call: you were told the money was to be left at Eagle Municipal Park, correct?

ELAINE SMALL
Well, there were two calls.

AGENT DEACON
(off his notes)
...Right. The first from your son and the second from the kidnapper.
(Elaine nods)
And you told Chief Witten you were able to get the money together.

ELAINE SMALL
Yes.

AGENT TILLER
(incredulous)
A million dollars cash?

ELAINE SMALL
Yes.

AGENT TILLER
At what time approximately did you have the money?

ELAINE SMALL
About... 7AM, I guess...

AGENT DEACON
Mrs. Small, the banks don't open until 9.

ELAINE SMALL
I didn't visit a bank. I keep a safe in my bedroom closet...

Tiller looks at Witten who promptly moves to investigate.

AGENT TILLER
Where's the money now?

ELAINE SMALL
With Eddie. I put it inside a bag and left it in the woods.

AGENT DEACON
Who's Eddie, maam?

ELAINE SMALL
The man who makes the music. He gets the money.

Tiller and Deacon exchange a look.

AGENT TILLER
Your instructions were to drop the money at Eagle Municipal Park. What was the exact location there?

ELAINE SMALL
No, no, no, Stephen called me -

AGENT DEACON
We know that, but we're more concerned with the ransom call -

ELAINE SMALL
I did exactly what I was told! But then I got lost getting back to the car, and the phone call was late -

AGENT TILLER
You were lost at the park?

ELAINE SMALL
Yes! No! I was in the woods. Newton Road. I, I tried to remember where I was when I left, I couldn't...

She loses her train of thought and is overcome by exhaustion. She struggles to breathe. The Nurse swoops in.

NURSE
I think that's enough for now.

Just then, Witten returns. Tiller and Deacon stand, the men confer out of Elaine's earshot.

CHIEF WITTEN
You won't believe this.

SSSKKKK - Witten flips through a stack of GOLD CERTIFICATES. Dates fly by on the bills - all from 1933.

CHIEF WITTEN (CONT'D)
Gold Certificates. Must be a few hundred grand in there.

AGENT DEACON
Someone passes those around - it'll start ringing some bells.

AGENT TILLER
Yeah, if they don't wash it first.
(to Witten)
Tell me about Newton Road.

CHIEF WITTEN
It backs up to the river. Mostly woods over that way.

AGENT DEACON

How far?

CHIEF WITTEL

From here? Nine or ten miles.

AGENT DEACON

And Eagle Municipal Park?

CHIEF WITTEL

Other direction. Bout four miles
from here.

AGENT TILLER

Ransom call comes in at noon. She
gathers the money, drives ten miles
to Newton Road and makes the
exchange. She then drives ten miles
back and magically she's here to
answer the door when Deputies
arrive at 12:10?

CHIEF WITTEL

Think she's on the level?

They watch Elaine. The Nurse feeds her yogurt. It spills out
the sides of her mouth: she's somewhere else entirely.

AGENT TILLER

I think she's an old woman who's
been through a heulluva'n ordeal.
For now let's stick with a firewall
around Eagle Park and pray our guy
shows up soon.

EXT. EAGLE MUNICIPAL PARK - 2:30 PM - DETAIL SHOTS

UNMARKED CARS patrol. PLAINCLOTHES OFFICERS prowl the gently
landscaped trails that wind through the man-made WOODS.

PARK PICNIC AREA

YOUNG CHILDREN run and play around the picnic tables near the
CONCESSIONS STAND. Balloons announce a boy's birthday party.

THE DOOR OF A NEARBY PORT-A-POTTY

It opens slightly to reveal Danny. He watches the UNMARKED
CRUISERS making periodic passes. In his hand, A COMPACT
MIRROR which he now angles to gain a VIEW OF THE DUMPSTER.

THE PARTY MOTHERS

are alerted to Danny by the glints of light coming off the
mirror. His behavior quickly becomes suspect. He seems to be
watching the young boys. Getting himself increasingly worked
up. And what's he doing with his hand? Moving back and forth.

DANNY

waits for a Cruiser to pass, then leaves the Port-A-Potty and CROSSES to the concessions stand dumpster where he begins to rummage through the gross, wet trash. Finding nothing.

VOICE (O.C.)
Hi.

Danny turns. A YOUNG BOY, 4, watches him curiously.

DANNY
Oh hey. Hey, bud.
(kneels)
You the birthday boy?

PARTY MOTHER (O.C.)
Billy!

A PARTY MOTHER approaches hastily.

PARTY MOTHER (CONT'D)
Get away from that man, Billy!

She arrives. Pulls her son close, guards him. To Danny —

PARTY MOTHER (CONT'D)
What're you doing here?

DANNY
Me? I'm uh, just, yunno...

He sees the fear in her eyes. Knows what she must be thinking. A Cruiser passes. Danny SPRINTS off.

INT. RISH HOME, DEN - 3:00 PM - ON NANCY

sitting on the couch, coolly flipping through channels. The PHONE RINGS. She stands and answers it.

NANCY
Hello?

DANNY (O.C.)
She didn't leave the money! Nancy,
she didn't leave it where I said to
leave it - now I gotta tell her
somewhere else to drop the cash -

Nancy hangs up the phone. Connie ENTERS from the garage.

CONNIE
Who was that, sweetheart?

NANCY
Danny... He's acting very strange.

CONNIE
Tell me about it.

INT. PHONE BOOTH, CIRCLE K (PEMBROOKE) - SAME

Danny hangs up the phone. Inserts a quarter. Dials -

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - OVER THE PHONE RINGING

UTTER SILENCE as A TECHIE SLIDES ON HEAD PHONES and -

THE PHONE-TAPPING DEVICE CLICKS, CASSETTE WHEELS TURN and -

AGENT TILLER LIFTS THE PHONE, HANDS IT TO ELAINE and -

ELAINE SMALL

Hello?

DANNY (O.C.)

You lied to me, maam - Maam you
lied and said you had the money!

PULLING BACK SLOWLY REVEALING - Detectives, Deputies. Tiller.
Deacon. Witten. So many. All as still as statues.

ELAINE SMALL

I gave you the money.

DANNY (O.C.)

See! You're lying again! T'heck are
you doing that for!?

Elaine turns to Tiller. He signals her to keep him on.

ELAINE SMALL

Don't get angry.

DANNY (O.C.)

Yeah, well...too late....

ELAINE SMALL

I'll get you the money.

DANNY (O.C.)

You said that last time!

ELAINE SMALL

Where should I drop it off?

DANNY (O.C.)

...I don't know anymore. I gotta
call you back. Stay by the phone.

CLICK. The line goes dead.

Tiller turns to a TECHIE who removes his headphones.

TECHIE

Got it. Call came from a pay phone
in Pembroke.

AGENT TILLER

Set up check points triangulating
every possible entry road - main
arteries, side streets, service
roads, all of it.

EXT. KANKAKEE, SHOTS OF THE POLICE FORCE - AS NIGHT FALLS
UNMARKED CRUISERS leave the station and SPREAD OUT over the county like liquid.

CHECKPOINTS ARE SET-UP AT I-57, ROUTE 102, Highway 52.

CRUISERS PULL INTO LOTS ACROSS FROM GAS STATIONS - FAST FOOD RESTAURANTS - MOVIE THEATERS - MALLS - EAGLE MUNICIPAL PARK.

EVERY PAY PHONE IN TOWN IS BEING WATCHED.

INT. BENNIGAN'S RESTAURANT, BAR - 5:30 PM

LOCAL NEWS plays on the TV. Glum and hopeless, Danny picks at a plate of buffalo wings, wipes his face with a napkin.

BARTENDER
Refill there, pal?

Danny nods. As the Bartender refills his Pepsi, he notices Danny's mustache is lopsided. Decides to ignore it.

NEWS ANCHOR
In the news at his hour: police are searching for an apparent prowler at Eagle Municipal Park tonight.

The sickened PARTY MOTHER is interviewed beside her son.

PARTY MOTHER
He was inside a Port-A-Potty...
doing something strange in there.
And then he tried talking to Billy.
Did he touch you, Billy?

Eager to please, Billy nods.

BARTENDER
Fuckin' pederast.

Danny MOANS agreement, but he's not paying attention.

REPORTER
Authorities tonight are looking for a Hispanic male, '6'0', -

A PHOTO FLASHES on the screen. A crude sketch but CLEARLY DANNY with the thick mustache and baseball cap.

BARTENDER whip-turns to Danny. Danny looks up at the TV. His eyes go wide. He LEAPS from the stool, RUSHES out the door -

INT. DANNY'S PICK-UP, MOVING - NIGHT - SERIES OF SHOTS

AS IT ROLLS THROUGH KANKAKEE'S MAIN STREETS, Danny's head on a swivel as he eyes the STRIP MALLS, BURGER JOINTS, CONVENIENCE STORES, desperately looking for a drop spot.

He glimpses himself in the REARVIEW, TEARS OFF the mustache and FIRES it out the window.

LATER

The truck is stopped idling behind a zebra arm with flashing lights, the surface road perpendicular to the rigid frame of a massive iron RAILROAD TRESTLE.

NEWSRADIO ANCHOR
Police tonight are asking for your
help to identify -

Danny shuts it off. A TRAIN HORN SOUNDS and a commuter train screams past obliterating the view.

He looks away from it, and there, below the struts of the overpass, down a slope overgrown with untrampled wild grass is an almost completely obscured dark creek bed.

That's his spot.

EXT. KANKAKEE STREETS - DANNY WALKS

towards a pay phone outside *McDonald's*. An UMMARKED CRUISER enters the lot, and circles. Danny u-turns -

A GROCERY STORE - MINUTES LATER

Danny nears the pay phone when the automatic doors open and TWO DEPUTIES step out. He veers in the other direction -

PAY PHONE AFTER PAY PHONE - FACE AFTER FACE (TIME-CUTS)

DANNY'S MIND betraying him now. The faces lurking near the phones suddenly become spies, luring Danny into their trap. Each setback increases his anxiety, his paranoia that he's being watched, followed: EVERYONE KNOWS.

Finally, overwhelmed, out-of-breath he ducks DOWN A DARK ALLEY. Back against the brick wall, sinking to his knees. The sound of HIGH HEELS is heard, approaching.

The CLICK and CLACK become the TICKING OF A CLOCK inside Danny's head - TICK-TOCK-TICK-TOCK - louder and LOUDER AND -

EXT. WEICHERT ROAD, ADJACENT WOODS (BURIAL SITE) - 7:00 PM

DANNY RACES THROUGH THE TREES frantically. Pointing a flashlight at every tree trunk...

NANCY (V.O.)
Some people don't mind simple
lives. The sound of loneliness
makes them happy.

He can't find the 'X' marked tree.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy and Connie sit on Nancy's bed. Connie's combing her hair just like she did when Nancy was a child.

NANCY

I never wanted that life. I always felt that I was meant for something special. That somehow a mistake had been made... and someone else was out there living the life I should have had while I was stuck here.

(beat)

You were so beautiful once, Mom.

CONNIE

Sometimes I wonder if things had been different... if I hadn't met your father so young... but he gave me you, Nancy.

NANCY

What if you could do it all over again? See the world. Be the person you were always meant to be. To have people ask who you are as you walked down the street.

CONNIE

Oh I don't think that way, Nanc. Sometimes those dreams are just out of reach... but that's okay...

A moment. Worry suffuses Nancy's face. She seems sad, almost regretful. She turns and faces Connie.

NANCY

Mom...if I have to leave again, I want you know I'll never forget where things started.

CONNIE

Leave? Where, Nancy?

Nancy sees Connie's concern. Doesn't want her to worry.

NANCY

What was that story about Shirley Temple you used to tell me?

CONNIE

(comforted by the familiar)

How the same word came to everyone's mind when they saw her. Sparkle. Just like my little girl.

Nancy smiles.

EXT. PAY PHONE AT A TASTEE-FREEZE - NIGHT

Danny, out of breath, lifts the phone, dials a number -

INT. SMALL'S HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME

Tiller and Deacon pore over a map of Kankakee County. The PHONE RINGS. Same procedure as before. Everyone quiet and still as Tiller hands Elaine the phone.

INTERCUT DANNY and ELAINE.

ELAINE SMALL
...Eddie? Is that you?

DANNY
(frantic)
Listen to me! Listen to me I want
you to call the police! Call the
police and get them out to Weichert
Road right now!

ELAINE SMALL
Is that where Stephen is?

DANNY
Yes-Yes-Yes!

Witten quietly nods to a few Deputies who leave immediately.

DANNY (CONT'D)
There's a tree out there in the
woods. I marked it with an 'X' but
with all the crap going on and
lying and now it's night and I
forgot where the hell I put him!

ELAINE SMALL
An 'X' on a tree? That's my son?

DANNY
Yeah.... And maam?
(beat, just breathing)
I'm real sorry about all this.

ACROSS THE STREET, IN AN UNMARKED CRUISER

A DETECTIVE watches Danny leave the pay phone, SNAPPING
PICTURES of him as he goes. He lifts the two-way radio now -

DETECTIVE
Suspect is a Hispanic Male. 30s.
Vehicle is a white early-model Ford
F-Series. Ohio plates. XBR-284.

CHIEF WITTEN (O.C.)
Copy that. Don't take him just yet.

Danny drives off in the pick-up. Detective follows...

INT. RISH HOME - NIGHT

Danny enters and DASHES UP the stairs -

DANNY
Nancy!? NANCY!?

OPENS NANCY'S BEDROOM DOOR. The HAIRDRYER'S RUNNING as Connie
stands over Nancy, teasing her newly-colored hair. Platinum
blonde. Connie shuts it off, turns to Danny. He's a mess.

CONNIE
Danny? Is everything alright?

DANNY
Can you give us a minute, Connie?

Connie's afraid to leave Nancy alone with Danny in this state. But Nancy nods: it's okay. Connie leaves.

Danny shuts the door behind her. Nancy turns to him, smiles.

NANCY
Do you like the new look?

DANNY
We gotta go. We gotta go now.

Danny finds a duffle bag and begins to stuff clothes in.

NANCY
Did you get the money?

DANNY
They know, Nancy! They got my face painted all over the news! Luckily I had the mustache.

NANCY
I have to tell my Mom, I —

DANNY
Nancy!

NANCY
She's my mom.

DANNY
...Okay...but hurry up.

Nancy leaves. Danny continues stuffing his clothes into the bag. He opens the closet, notices NANCY'S SUITCASE. Pulls it out...it's light. Unzips it. IT'S EMPTY. His face creases.

Moves to the bureau, slides out the drawers. The clothes she tossed onto the bed are BACK IN PLACE, folded and arranged.

And the CORKBOARD. Once blank, it's now AN INNOCENT COLLAGE of fashion models and actresses.

Before he can think — CRACK! WINDOWS SHATTER!

Danny OPENS THE DOOR to find — A SWAT TEAM BARRELING UP THE STAIRWELL! COMING RIGHT AT HIM!

SWAT LEADER
GET ON THE FUCKING GROUND NOW! NOW!

He's TACKLED. FACE PRESSED TO THE FLOOR, scrunched by a boot heel. He watches as they invade Connie's bedroom.

DANNY
LEAVE HER ALONE! SHE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS! NANCY! NANCYYYY!

INT. WEICHERT ROAD, ADJACENT WOODS (BURIAL SITE) - NIGHT

HANDCUFFED, DANNY LEADS A PACK OF CIU MEMBERS through the trees (TILLER, DEACON, WITTEN among them). Police dogs sniff at tufts of weeds.

Then...Danny SEES the 'X' tree. A huge look of relief on his face as he moves towards it, kneels down, his hands feeling for the exhaust hoses - the holes are there - but BOTH HOSES ARE MISSING.

AGENT TILLER
Is this it, Edwards? Edwards?

Danny nods, confused. He's YANKED back by Detectives and watches at a distance as DEPUTIES GO TO WORK WITH SHOVELS.

Moments later - DOOMP! They've reached the box. THE LATCHES ARE UNDONE. THE LID OPENED...

...SMALL'S BODY IS LIFTED OUT, passed up and laid on the ground. His face is pale, eyes frozen in some electric fright. But...he's not coughing or writhing or moaning.

Small is dead.

Danny's face goes blank. He falls to his knees.

PARAMEDICS RUSH to SMALL'S BODY. High-tech equipment is pulled out and hastily put to work.

Off Danny listening to the WHEW-WHEW-WHEW of futile CPR compressions and ventilations...

INT. BOURBONNAIS POLICE STATION, INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Agent Deacon sits across from Nancy. Tear tracks mark her face. She's smoking and the ashtray's brimming.

AGENT DEACON
- did you go anywhere else?

NANCY
I did some shopping at the mall in
the afternoon.

AGENT DEACON
And you can verify all this?

NANCY
I have receipts. The stores might
have video cameras, right?

AGENT DEACON
We'll find out. So you didn't
notice Danny leave the bedroom?

NANCY
We don't sleep together. Things
between Danny and I weren't the
same after jail. He was scaring me.
I made him sleep on the floor.

NANCY (CONT'D)
 When I woke up in the morning he
 was there. Agent, you don't think I
 had anything to do with this, do
 you?

He looks at her a long, anxious moment...then smiles.

AGENT DEACON
 We just have to ask the questions.
 Sit tight a minute.

Deacon exits and -

INT. HALL OUTSIDE THE INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS
 joins Tiller watching through the TWO-WAY MIRROR.

AGENT DEACON
 Whaddaya think?

AGENT TILLER
 You heard the mom. The guy was a
 time bomb waiting to go off.

Tiller studies Nancy intently.

AGENT TILLER (CONT'D)
 One last thing...

INTERROGATION ROOM

Nancy lights another cigarette. She's anxious, tense. Could
she really have gotten off?

AGENT TILLER (O.C.)
 ...How's a guy like him ever land a
 girl like her?

AGENT DEACON (O.C.)
 (laughs)
That's the million dollar question.

INT. KANKAKEE COUNTY JAIL, COUNSEL ROOM - CLOSE ON

FBI PICTURES OF DANNY. At the phone booth. The rough sketch
 of the box. Small dead. Danny's pick-up, motorcycle, etc...

Danny stares blankly at the photos as RON WINSTON, 50, the
 appointed public defender, editorializes the images. But all
 Danny hears is the SOUND of the PHOTOS being flipped. Then,
 as though coming up from underwater -

RON WINSTON
 - They're going to ask for the
 death penalty if you don't enter a
 guilty plea, Danny. Danny?

DANNY
 (soft, nearly inaudible)
 I never...meant for him to die...

RON WINSTON

Danny, those hoses were ripped from the ground.

DANNY

But I... I checked the hoses...

RON WINSTON

When you didn't get the money you rode back out to Weichert Road on your motorcycle.

DANNY

No, no I never took the Harley out there.

RON WINSTON

They matched the dirt on your tires to the dirt at the burial site.

DANNY

But that's impossible -

RON WINSTON

They have a witness. A farmer out that way saw your motorcycle the morning Small was kidnapped. You didn't want to leave any chance Small might identify you. But the guilt was too great finally, wasn't it? That's when you made the final call to Elaine Small.

DANNY

He must've pulled them out somehow... by mistake, or...

RON WINSTON

You're telling me Small pulled the hoses and cut the battery that was keeping him alive? Please, Danny, take the deal. God knows you've caused enough harm.

A moment, then -

RON WINSTON (CONT'D)

Elaine Small had a heart attack last night. She was found dead on her kitchen floor.

Danny's face falls and he starts to hyperventilate.

DANNY

That's terrible... terrible. Oh no, it's all my fault.

RON WINSTON

Police say she was particularly agitated about the money. That they hadn't recovered it, and that no one would believe her that the guy that did all this was named, Eddie.

A beat. Then Danny suddenly looks up. This name, though he can't place it, is somehow familiar - Elaine having greeted him with this moniker the last time she answered the phone.

DANNY
...Eddie? But there was never any
money.

RON WINSTON
Well on that account the FBI agrees
with you.

DANNY
(to himself, racking his
brain)
Who's Eddie?
(beat)
Have you heard from Nancy? She
doing alright?

RON WINSTON
Left a couple of messages for her,
but nothing yet. How about you?

DANNY
No. She's not real good about
checking the machine.

A BUZZER sounds. Time's up.

RON WINSTON
Danny, take the deal. It's the
right thing to do.

Demoralized, Danny nods 'okay'.

INT. MAZDA 929, MOVING - DAY - NANCY AND CONNIE

As Connie turns down their street, the two notice the front lawn blanketed with NEWS CREWS and NETWORK TRUCKS.

EXT. RISH HOME - FRONT YARD - CONTINUOUS

Nancy and Connie step from the car and are promptly swarmed by CAMERAMEN and REPORTERS who shove microphones at Nancy. A particularly aggressive young reporter, AMBER CASSIDY, 26, pushes her way through the crowd to Nancy -

AMBER CASSIDY
Nancy, I want to hear your side of
the story!

Nancy, seeing some of herself in the opportunistic upstart, takes her business card as they slip into the home.

INT. RISH HOME - DEN - NIGHT

Nancy and Connie share a bowl of popcorn as they watch the LOCAL NEWS. FOOTAGE of the crime scene, REPORTERS hounding Nancy as she hides behind dark shades. The segment ends.

NANCY
See if I'm on Channel 3.

Connie switches the channel with the remote. Yep, more coverage of Nancy. A KNOCK at the back door. Nancy stands and moves through the kitchen. She opens the door on JIMMY.

INT. KITCHEN, LATER

Nancy and Jimmy sit at the table, drinking coffee.

NANCY
How could I have been so stupid,
Jimmy?

JIMMY
Don't beat yourself up, Nancy.
There was no way you could have
known.

(O.C.) The PHONE RINGS. We hear Connie answer in the den.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
...I was waiting for you. That time
you got on the train. My mom told
me you stopped by and asked for my
address. I told all my friends you
were on your way... And you never
showed.

NANCY
Oh Jimmy...

She reaches over and takes his hand in hers.

NANCY (CONT'D)
When all this craziness blows over,
let's go away. Just me and you.
Make up for all that lost time.

Jimmy looks into her eyes, smiles. Then -

Connie peeks in, breaking the moment.

CONNIE
(excited)
Nancy, a producer from *Good Morning America* is on the phone for you.

NANCY
(to Jimmy)
I should take that.

Jimmy nods, stands. Nancy walks him to the back door.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Thanks for coming over...

They share a long hug. Jimmy goes, then -

NANCY (CONT'D)
Jimmy...
(he turns back)
Do me a favor.

NANCY (CONT'D)

If anyone asks, don't say anything about last weekend.

(off look)

When you took me out on your bike. Taught me how to ride. It's just that... Danny's been through so much already. I'd hate for him to think you and I had something while the two of us were still together.

JIMMY

I won't say anything.

She watches as he walks off.

INT. DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS BUS, MOVING - AFTERNOON

Danny stares out the window as the transfer bus barrels down a county two-lane.

EXT. STATEVILLE PRISON - AFTERNOON

The bus arrives at the gates of the correctional facility in Crest Hill. A site of 64 acres surrounded by a 33-foot concrete perimeter with 10 wall towers.

INT. STATEVILLE, PROCESSING ROOM - SERIES OF SHOTS

Danny is strip-searched, deloused, dressed in prison blues, and his head completely shaved.

INT. STATEVILLE, TV ROOM - NIGHT

Nothing glamorous. A concrete room with steel folding chairs. A 20-inch TV is bolted into an iron frame.

LOCAL NEWS ANCHOR

We begin tonight with an exclusive interview with the people closest to the notorious Danny Edwards. A murderer who police say is one of the most cold-blooded killers in the history of the state.

Danny, sits off by himself, wholly uncomfortable. Prisoners size him up.

Then, ON THE TV, AMBER CASSIDY, the reporter whose business card Nancy accepted, appears in the DEN of the RISH HOME where she's interviewing Nancy and Connie. Connie's doing most of the talking as Nancy plays the part of the scorned, disbelieving victim. She's dressed like she's going to a funeral, eyes hidden behind dark shades, staring off-camera.

AMBER CASSIDY

Connie, you mentioned that there were warning signs.

CONNIE

That's right. While Danny was in jail, the men there forced him to do certain things. 'Dirty' things. He was never right after that.

This gets a very vocal and amused reaction from the other prisoners in the room. Danny knows this isn't true and wonders why Connie is lying.

AMBER CASSIDY

And you saw him building the box?

CONNIE

He told us he was making a lemonade stand for the kids down the street.

PUSH IN ON THE TV SCREEN...

AMBER CASSIDY

But it wasn't for the kids, was it?

...GETTING CLOSER...

CONNIE

No...no it wasn't...

...CLOSER STILL AND WE'RE -

INSIDE THE RISH HOME

...PUSHING IN ON NANCY. We see what she's been looking at. It's a mirror across the room. She gradually adjusts her broach, over and over until the edges of her lips curl into the slightest hint of a smile.

PUSH IN ON DANNY as he begins to get the picture.

DANNY

(to himself)

Why are you... smiling...?

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - MORNING OF KIDNAPPING - 7:30 AM

CLOSE ON NANCY. Asleep. Then...HER EYES OPEN. Not tired or weary. Eyes that are very awake, alert.

She rolls over to view Danny who's fallen asleep on the air mattress. Quietly slides out of bed now, shuts the ALARM OFF, picks up the motorcycle helmet, the 9MM -

EXT. ROUTE 102 - MORNING OF KIDNAPPING - 8:00 AM

Wearing a leather jacket, Nancy flies down the road on Danny's Harley, blonde hair peeking out under the helmet as she works the levers and clutches with the acumen of one who's been riding for years.

She WHIZZES past THE CORN FIELD. The ELDERLY FARMER, struck by the sudden engine noise, steps out of the maze and watches as the bike makes its turn down Weichert Road.

EXT. SECLUDED PATCH OF WOODS (BURIAL SITE) - SERIES OF SHOTS

MOVING ACROSS THE GROUND LIKE A SPREADING FOG (the same POV as before)...EXCEPT...it's no fog at all. It's NANCY'S POV - as she approaches the 'X' marked tree and -

Nancy DIGS and DIGS and finally HITS the wooden box -

Nancy lifts the lid of the box. Small stares up at her. The sun burns his eyes and he squints -

Nancy pointing the 9MM at Small, holds the VOICE RECORDER as he reads from a script she's written -

SMALL
 - It's 9:30 AM, Mom. You have exactly **one hour** to drop the money. If you're not home by 10:30 you'll never find me alive. Take Newton Road...

INT. ELAINE'S CADILLAC, MOVING - 9:45 AM

Elaine drives down rural Newton Road, the RED DUFFLE BAG at her side. The road dead-ends abruptly. She's staring at the hardwoods in a large and dense forest.

SMALL (V.O.)
 ...until it dead-ends. At the edge of the forest, you'll find a bag, inside that bag will be your instructions.

EXT. EDGE OF THE WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Elaine steps through high grass. There waiting is a BLUE DUFFLE BAG. She unzips it. A NOTECARD sits inside with DIRECTIONS carefully written out.

MOMENTS LATER - Elaine transfers STACK AFTER STACK OF GOLD CERTIFICATES from her duffle bag into the blue one.

SMALL (V.O.)
 Transfer the money into the bag, and follow the instructions to the letter.

WE'RE IN THE DARK, THEN - A LIGHT GLOWS

ON THE DIGITAL TIMER SWITCH. The display lights up suddenly: **10:00 AM.** Just above it: 'ON' begins to blink.

FOLLOW the colored wires to a 12V BATTERY and their connection to a small BOOM BOX with an already depressed 'PLAY' button. It's RED LIGHT GLOWS, and suddenly Eddie Money's 'Baby Hold On' blares from its speakers.

EXT. WOODS - MINUTES LATER - A SERIES OF SHOTS OF ELAINE

lugging the heavy duffle bag through PARTS OF THE FOREST, trying desperately to follow the directions in hand. The song's VOLUME INCREASING as Elaine trudges onward.

*SMALL (V.O.)
When you hear Eddie Money's
voice...*

She TIPTOES down an ESCARPMENT. Slips and rides her ass the rest of the way down... TRUDGES across a thin STREAM. Her shoes SIPPING with water...the WIND is picking up...

*SMALL (V.O.)
... you will have exactly three
minutes and thirty-one seconds to
quickly follow it...*

She maladroitly CLIMBS under an enormous fallen HARDWOOD...

She pushes through THICKETS OF FOREST SHRUBS that scrape her arms and chins and neck and debris gets in her mouth.

*SMALL (V.O.)
...until you see a single giant Elm
tree.*

She looks around frantically for the tree, and finally sees it, a FAMILIAR ANCIENT ELM.

*SMALL (V.O.)
Stop there. Do not continue towards
the music. Place this note back
into the bag and throw it as far as
you can in the direction of Eddie's
voice. This must be done before the
song ends.*

She stumbles quickly over to its trunk. Unzips the bag, inserts the directions, turns her head this way and that trying to get an exact bead on the music, and then hoists up the bag and swings it back-and-forth before letting it fly.

As it arches towards us, it's descent seems impossibly and improbably long - down, down, down, just as the song ends.

EXT. EDGE OF THE WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

*Elaine emerges. Can't find her direction. This certainly wasn't the way she came in. She starts walking East. No, no that's not it. West now? Doesn't seem right. She freezes. Checks her watch: **10:15 AM**. No time: she heads East.*

*SMALL (V.O.)
When the money's been collected you
will receive a call telling you
where I can be found. Remember, you
must be back home by 10:30am!*

INT. ELAINE'S CADILLAC - MORNING

Elaine enters. Flustered. Scared. Sweating. Turns the car on. The clock reads: 10:25 AM.

ELAINE SMALL
DAMMNIT! GODDAMNIT!

She throws the Caddy into gear and TEARS OFF.

EXT. BURIAL SITE - EARLIER (8:30 AM)

Small stands reading the last of Nancy's script into the micro-cassette recorder she holds before him.

SMALL
Mother, please don't be late.

Nancy hits the stop button and motions Small back into the box with Danny's gun.

She CLOSES THE LID ON THE BOX, LOCKS THE HATCHES, THEN -

OPENS the breathing compartment, PULLS the wires from the 12-VOLT MOTOR, and RIPS THE EXHAUST HOSES FROM THE GROUND -

INT. THE WOODEN BOX - SAME

ZZZ! ZZZ! A SPARK inside the wire meshing. THE FAN STOPS TURNING. A stream of smoke emanates. THE LIGHT GOES OUT.

THE EXHAUST HOSES ARE RIPPED OUT. SMALL STARTS TO GASP FOR AIR that isn't there. He begins to HYPERVENTILATE and -

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - ON NANCY

as she SEES DANNY ENTER THE ROOM IN THE VANITY MIRROR. She conjures a smile, turns to him in that platinum blonde hair.

NANCY
Do you like the new look?

Off that 1,000 watt smile WE'RE BACK -

ON DANNY BEING ESCORTED DOWN F-BLOCK

As he passes other cells, INMATES HECKLE the 'new fish.'

DANNY
(to himself)
Smiling? ...why are you smiling?

AND IT HITS DANNY ALL AT ONCE. HE KNOWS. It's a yoke he cannot bear. His legs fail him. He collapses to the ground.

TWO GUARDS lift him by his arms and carry him along the concrete concourse, his limp legs dragging behind him. And then, in a final futile plea, he SCREAMS OUT -

DANNY (CONT'D)
YOU DID THIS! YOU DID THIS! TO MEEEE!

His cell bars slide open. GUARDS TOSS HIM INSIDE. THE SOUND OF THE BARS SLAMMING SHUT IS DROWNED OUT BY -

TURNING MAGAZINE PAGES - WHOOSH-WHOOSH-WHOOSH -

INT. GILMORE'S DINER, NIGHT SHIFT - SEVERAL WEEKS LATER

Nancy's back in uniform, dully flipping through a *Glamour* behind the counter. The place is empty less a few truckers and vampires. She looks up at the clock: **5:00 AM.**

MINUTES LATER - Nancy grabs her coat from the rack. Gene's counting totals at the register.

NANCY
G'night, Gene.

GENE
See ya tomorrow, Nanc.

NEWTON ROAD - PREDAWN

Nancy's Mazda approaches the dead-end, pulls to the dirt shoulder where the engine is cut.

Everything is still, eerily quiet. She steps from the car, and sets out into the woods.

EXT. DEEP FISSURE IN THE FOREST FLOOR - DAWN

Inside the hole looking up at early light reflected through the forest canopy. FOOTSTEPS and Nancy's face peers down at us.

She climbs down the old wood ladder.

Coolly notices the blue duffle bag. Rolls it over, unzips it.

There's the money. STACKS AND STACKS OF GOLD CERTIFICATES.

She smiles casually, as though there was never any doubt.

She reaches down and yanks the timer from the boombox and manually presses play: *Eddie Money's 'Baby Hold On.'*

She does a little dance over to the mudstone wall. Fingers grazing the primordial stone. As though hearing a voice, she stops. Brushes away some dust and moss until she finds the ancient etching -- ***Jimmy Loves Ci-Ci.***

EDDIE MONEY'S VOICE BEGINS TO ECHO AS IF FROM A GREAT DISTANCE

INT. STATEVILLE, ISOLATION - NIGHT

Danny, wearing a straight-Jacket, sits on the floor of a padded cell rocking back and forth, back and forth. His lips move to Money's lyrics but he makes not a sound.

THE RHYTHMIC CLAP OF gentle WAVES caressing THE SHORE OF -

AN IMPOSSIBLY BEAUTIFUL BLINDING WHITE BEACH

Nancy, clad in a black bikini hiding beneath a white kaftan, reclines on a tasteful beige colored chaise. Wayfarers in place, and a wide-brimmed straw hat to top it all off.

She's reading a *USA TODAY*, a feature tilted, **The Man She Thought She Knew**. There's a photo of Nancy staring out over the Kankakee River, reflective. And another of Nancy and Danny, the happy couple at Nancy's 27th birthday party. She looks at Danny. In his prime here. Hair slicked back. Stylish suit. Winning smile. Her eyes slowly drift over to -

JIMMY KEENE

shirtless, lying atop the chaise beside hers. He's asleep, SNORING lightly, head tilted unflatteringly to one side and sunglasses askew.

Nancy studies him a long moment before her eyes move back to Danny. And then back to Jimmy once more. A doubt registers on her face. Then, Jimmy stirs -

JIMMY
What's the matter, Nanc?

He sits up, fixes his shades and runs a hand through his coiffed hair. Nancy smiles, exhales: *that's better*.

NANCY
Nothing, I was just... thinking.

A SERVER clad in all-white arrives with a cocktail which he hands to Nancy. She nods a 'thank you' and Jimmy offers the man a tip.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Will you go and get me the suntan lotion from the beach hut, Jimmy?

JIMMY
Sure, Ci-Ci.

Jimmy stands and heads up the beach.

Watching him go, Nancy looks disturbed, as if something is troubling her, some deep moral dilemma that must be puzzled through alone.

Nancy sets the newspaper on the sand and reaches into her beach bag. She removes the BORA BORA ADVERTISEMENT she was coveting earlier in the story.

It's now clear Nancy is lying on the exact same beach, wearing the exact bathing suit as the model in the picture, same hat, and same drink - right down to the glassware.

Looking at the picture, her eyes narrow.

Her arm begins to move ever so slightly to match the position of the hand that's holding the colorful libation in the picture.

She reaches over to adjust the ORANGE MARASCHINO GARNISH until it's precisely as it is in the resort's advert, of a kind with everything else.

Then and only then, does her hand lower the fanciful ad, tucking it back into her bag.

She returns to her exalted pose on the chaise. Her ample chest rising and slowly exhaling, and then finally

She smiles. Not a pageant smile, but an expression that is the most genuine and authentic to ever grace her face.

The moment seminal for her - at last a perfect mirror.

WE PUSH IN ON THE NEWSPAPER...on the picture of Nancy and Danny together...

As wave upon wave breaks on the shore, the ink begins to bleed. The features of Nancy and Danny slowly melt away until they vanish altogether.

A final wave crashes angrily onto the beach and the newspaper is carried out to sea...

— *The End* —