

BUSINESS OF KILLING
by
Michael Wojciak

Michael Wojciak
XXXX XXXXX XXXXXXXXXXX XXXX., XXX #XXX
Los Angeles, CA XXXXX
Home Phone: (310) XXX-XXXX
Cell Phone: (310) XXX-XXXX
E-Mail Address: wojr@aol.com
WGA Registration No.: 881734

EXT. FRONT OF PET STORE - DAY

A lone pre-teen girl, REBECCA, stands in front of the large storefront window of a pet shop. She is holding a bag of groceries and is staring blankly at a black Labrador puppy.

EXT. BUS DEPOT - MOMENTS LATER

A bus pulls up to the front of the bus station. REBECCA, with her grocery bag still in hand, is walking in front of the large vehicle as it comes to a halt. A single passenger departs the bus, a sharply dressed man in his early sixties, PAUL. He appears as if he could hold some distinguished position, such as a lawyer, doctor, or CEO. The bus departs and Paul slowly walks away.

EXT. EMPTY LOT - DAY

A young man, BEN, dressed in a suit and overcoat composed of only the blackest of blacks, walks across an empty lot between two dilapidated buildings. Behind him, the recently departed bus rushes by. The area of the lot is filled with only rubble and outcroppings of wild grass and weeds. As he gets to the far side of the lot, ANDREW appears from one of the decrepit buildings. He is clad entirely in denim.

ANDREW

(annoyed)

You are late. I was starting to worry if I would have to do this myself.

BEN

It's my show and my timetable.

(beat)

Plus, never go in without me. You're not ready.

ANDREW

(defensive)

What if they left early? What would I do if --

BEN

(interrupting)

Fuck 'what if'. No time for hypotheticals.

(beat)

Now, you understand the plan?

ANDREW

Enough.

BEN

Good. Which one is our guy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDREW

I'm not sure who, some new guy. He's supposed to be wearing a red tie.

BEN

Is it who or whom?

(beat)

All right then, let's get this over with.

ANDREW

(as a mantra)

Red tie guy don't die. Red tie guy don't die. Red tie guy don't die.

The pair head off to the far building.

INT. POKER ROOM - DAY

Five CARD PLAYERS are sitting in a dimly light room; playing poker at a large, round table. The room has only one light situated directly over the table and is void of any other adornment. The air is full of cigar smoke. The clothes of each character are hidden from view to prevent distinguishing the 'Red Tie Guy' from the other four card players.

CARD PLAYER #1

Christ, who is dealing this shit?

CARD PLAYER #2

You dealt.

CARD PLAYER #1

Oh, yeah.

(beat)

Well, then, I'll see your five and raise ten.

Player #1 tosses additional chips into the pile.

CARD PLAYER #3

Right, you have so-called shit for a hand but you can still raise ten. You lying sack of putrescence.

CARD PLAYER #1

Geez, makes me wonder if that was an insult? Or a backhanded compliment?

(CONTINUED)

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CARD PLAYER #4

(eyeing his cards intently)
Putrescence is, technically, the condition of being putrescent, which in turn, means to be putrid, which we all know, insinuates something rotten and/or decayed. So, I would think a sack of that would definitely not be a good thing

CARD PLAYER #1

So, it was an insult?

CARD PLAYER #4

Well, you should have gotten that just by the context of his statement alone, not to mention the tone. To answer your question though, yep, definitely an insult.

CARD PLAYER #1

Is there ever a simple 'yes or no' answer with this guy?

CARD PLAYER #5

(aggravated)
Will you guys just shut up and finish this fucking hand?

CARD PLAYER #3

What is your hurry? Got a plane to catch?

CARD PLAYER #5

No, I just have a rectum full of putrescence or shit or whatever you guys feel like calling it and it wants to burst the fuck out.

CARD PLAYER #2

You got a bear touching cotton? No wonder you've been sweating like a pig. Making me fucking nervous watching you sweat like that.

CARD PLAYER #4

Why is it when someone is in some type of rush, people make that sorry 'plane to catch' comment? I mean, how often do you really have a plane to catch?

Taken by the complete randomness of the statement, the other four players just stare at him dumbfounded. As their individual reactions are shown, it is revealed that all five are wearing red ties.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARD PLAYER #4 (CONT'D)

And why, may I ask you, does every other
word out of your mouths have to be fuck?

Suddenly, the doors burst open. BEN and ANDREW rush into the room with guns drawn. The two hitmen register that all the poker players are wearing red neckties of some sort or another.

ALL SEVEN

(mumble)

Fuck.

Fade to black.

The sound of multiple gunshots echo.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Standing immobile in front of a dateless, urban apartment building, PAUL stares vacantly at the entrance. REBECCA passes him, groceries still in tow, and enters the building. He waits a few beats, then slowly follows her inside.

INT. LOBBY OF APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

PAUL examines the building directory and presses the buzzer for apartment #8. The name next to the button he presses reads the letters, C-H-E-T, followed by an oil smudge covering the rest of the resident's name.

INTERCOM

(woman's voice filtered)

Hello?

Paul goes to speak and hesitates. He lacks the confidence to act.

INTERCOM (CONT'D)

(woman's voice filtered)

Hellooo?

PAUL

It's Paul.

Silence. Paul's eyes become filled with doubt.

INTERCOM

(woman's voice filtered)

Come on up.

Loud buzzing noise sounds.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Behind the front glass door, PAUL opens and passes through the second door. A bearded man, THE WHISPERER, smokes a cigarette across the street from the apartment building. He intently watches the entrance of the residence. After a final pull of cigarette, he discards it on the sidewalk and promptly mashes it with the heel of his shoe. He, then, slowly walks away. His line of vision never leaving the apartment building.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - DUSK

ANDREW drives the car, as BEN is spread out across the back seat. Both are fondly smoking cigarettes.

ANDREW

How could you even think that?

BEN

You asked me to be honest.

ANDREW

I know I did, but.. Her?

BEN

I liked Kate Jackson the best.

ANDREW

Come on now, what about Farrah or even Cheryl Ladd? They had the whole package going on. Kate Jackson was a frigging beanpole.

BEN

Save the Generation X attempt at interesting conversation for beer commercials. It bores me.

Ben takes an exaggerated puff on his cigarette for effect.

BEN (CONT'D)

Besides, it was Jackson's voice that turned me on anyway.

Andrew just gives Ben a bewildered expression via the rear-view mirror.

BEN (CONT'D)

You have a girlfriend, Andy?

ANDREW

No, and I happen to prefer Andrew.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

Whatever. I just think you might want to start focusing on finding some girls who are halfway attainable. Besides, all those "angels" are probably in their late fifties.

ANDREW

True, but the older ladies have that lovely item called experience, my dear Benjamin.

BEN

They also have those dear items called stretch marks and I prefer Ben.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - DUSK

Rose's apartment is the quintessential apartment of an "Irish Catholic Grandmother". There is an antiquity to the style of the decoration. The mahogany-intensive furniture predates the second World War and has been kept in pristine condition. Every visible wall has at least one cross adorning it and a sizable statue of the Virgin Mary rests atop the mammoth, wood-encased television, the true centerpiece of the apartment. ROSE, a moderate-sized Caucasian female in her late fifties, is busy checking her appearance at a large mirror by the front door. There is a muted knock at that door, which Rose answers without even checking the peephole. She knows full well who it is. The door opens to reveal PAUL, trying to produce a welcoming smile, yet only arriving at an awkward one.

PAUL

Hi, Rose.

ROSE

Hello, Paul.

(beat)

I wasn't sure you would come.

PAUL

That makes two of us.

His weak joke manages to get a natural smile out of him and the two just stand and share a silent moment.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Can I come in?

Rose becomes a little flustered by the realization of her impoliteness and invites the gentleman in with a wave of her arm.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - DUSK

ANDREW and BEN remain in their same positions in Andrew's car. Ben is enjoying the last few drags of his cigarette, as Andrew is visibly trying to think of a way to jump-start the conversation. As a topic comes to mind, his eyes literally light up with excitement.

ANDREW

So much for the new guy, huh?

BEN

Who?

ANDREW

The red tie guy.

BEN

Oh, him.

(beat)

You know I always thought that this city's criminal element was a fashionably diverse crowd. It's not like we're a bunch of accountants or stockbrokers wearing all the same suits.

ANDREW

I don't know about that. How come all the triggermen I know, yourself included, seem to conform to the dark suit-slash-undertaker rules of attire?

BEN

Same tailor, I guess. Now that we have opened the door to fashion criticism though, what is the deal with the denim?

ANDREW

What do you mean?

BEN

The whole jeans-quote on quote-slash-denim ensemble.

Ben takes the last pull of his cigarette and tosses it out the window.

BEN (CONT'D)

If you chose to wear denim, my advice is, only one piece of clothing can actually be denim. If you wear jeans then you wear a normal top; be it cotton, wool, cashmere, whatever.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN(CONT'D)

Denim jacket means sticking with khakis for pants. Denim shirt, just avoid the denim shirt. It is wrong more often than it is right.

(beat)

Drop me off at Botticelli's. I'll break the news about red tie guy to George.

Andrew is busy checking his outfit out in the rearview, giving it a curious, almost disdainful look.

ANDREW

OK, you care if I don't come in?

BEN

With that outfit, they wouldn't let you in.

For the first time, Ben smiles.

EXT. SIDEWALK IN FRONT OF BOTTICELLI'S RESTAURANT - EVENING

In front of an upscale Italian eatery, Andrew's rusted P.O.S. pulls over to the curb, receiving disapproving looks from some CUSTOMERS lingering out front. BEN exits the car through the rear door facing the street. As he walks away, ANDREW rolls down his car window.

ANDREW

Stop by O's after you're done here.

Ben does not acknowledge him and enters the restaurant. As he pulls away from the curb, Andrew loudly peels out to the further scorn of the waiting customers.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The apartment is sparsely furnished, but has numerous little feminine touches: throw pillows, two vases with freshly cut flowers, the occasional knickknack. However, the most obvious accessories to the apartment are the books; stacks and stacks of books. The apartment would definitely be considered neat and orderly except for the dozens of books of various shapes and sizes sprawled across the living room and the connecting dining room. The least obvious aspect of the apartment is the utter lack of a television set.

The front door of the apartment opens and REBECCA walks in, still carrying the bag of groceries. The sound of running water, as in a shower, can be heard. The little girl heads for the part of the apartment housing the kitchen. She places the bag on the counter. Rebecca then heads towards a closed door and knocks on it.

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REBECCA
 (yelling)
 Mom, I'm back!

SARAH
 (filtered through door)
 Almost done, Bec. Don't forget to put the
 milk in the fridge.

Rebecca heads back to the kitchen, takes a carton of milk from the bag and puts it in the refrigerator. She then strolls over to the dining room and begins to read one of the books left open on the table. As she leans back in the seat, the spine of the book comes into view. It is a book by Freud. The sound of a door opening can be heard. A tall woman in a terry-cloth robe enters, SARAH, towel drying her hair. She stops and gives the girl a peck on the cheek, as she makes her way into the kitchen. Sarah begins to unpack the remaining items of the grocery bag.

SARAH (CONT'D)
 Macaroni and cheese? Again?

REBECCA
 Mom, I'm nine years old.

SARAH
 (with a knowing smile)
 And?

REBECCA
 Well, that means I have a very
 discriminating palate. Plus, I only know
 how to cook three things.

SARAH
 Good thing that I'm off tomorrow. This
 way, I can cook us a nice family supper
 with real food. Meat, vegetables, maybe
 that gravy you like.

REBECCA
 Good, can Ben come?

SARAH
 Maybe. But, I wouldn't mind some quality
 time alone with my daughter.

Sarah goes back to a room in the rear of the apartment, her bedroom. Rebecca gets up from her chair to go get another book off a nearby stack. It is a very large book, which turns out to be a dictionary.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Sarah comes back into the room, wearing jeans and a tight fitting turtleneck. She's carrying socks and a pair of black boots.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What word didn't you know, sweetie?

REBECCA

(spelling)

P-H-A-L-L-I-C.

Sarah sits down and starts to put on her socks and boots.

SARAH

Phallic? I think we should wait on that one until tomorrow and make it a mother-daughter conversation.

(beat)

All right, I'm running late as it is. You know the rules. Don't open the door for anybody. If there is an emergency, Rose is just one floor down. OK?

Rebecca nods a slight agreement as she remains focused on the dictionary.

REBECCA

Mom, how come references to male genital organs require a mother-daughter conversation?

Sarah is visibly taken back by the words uttered by her daughter. She quickly shrugs it off and leans over to kiss the top of Rebecca's head, then he heads for the front.

SARAH

Remember in bed by nine. You have school tomorrow.

REBECCA

Good night, Mom. I love you.

SARAH

Love you, too.

Sarah exits the apartment as Rebecca flips a few pages further in the dictionary.

REBECCA

(puzzled)

Putrescence?

The young girl shrugs and turns the page.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

ROSE locks the front door of her apartment, as PAUL makes his way cautiously into the residence.

ROSE

Do you want anything to eat or drink? I think I have some beer in the cooler.

PAUL

(serious)

I don't drink anymore.

ROSE

Well, that probably is for the best.

PAUL

What's the old proverb? "Twenty years a child, twenty years running wild."

ROSE

"Twenty years, a mature man and after that praying." My mother was the one who knew them all.

PAUL

She always did like to preach. I don't recall her ever discussing the sins of a nice glass of iced tea though.

ROSE

Is that your coy way of asking for an iced tea?

PAUL

I believe it is.

ROSE

(smiling)

Then, let me go see what I can stir up.

Rose gets up and heads to the kitchen. Paul, still not comfortable in his surroundings, begins to pace about examining the apartment.

A picture on top of the television catches his eye. He picks it up for closer examination. The actual photo remains unseen except by him.

Slowly, a look of bewilderment appears on his face.

INT. BOTTICELLI'S DINING ROOM

The restaurant is a brightly lit, gaudy Italian restaurant. The SERVERS are all women dressed in black dinner jackets and slacks. BEN makes his way through the restaurant, stopping and shaking hands with various CUSTOMERS seated along his route. Camera holds on Ben's POV, the only sound is his voice-over.

BEN (V.O.)

A child shouldn't be raised in a den of killers, it affects them. Botticelli's is the Star Wars Cantina for the local criminal element, so my Dad loved it. Spending hours down here, pretending to a big-shot, instead of just their accountant. Mom forcing me to go with him so he wouldn't cheat. Dad forcing me to keep his adultery a secret. I wouldn't have made it if wasn't for George. He took me under the wing and taught me the business. Laundering, gambling, sharking, plus running whores, numbers and anything else with street value. When I was old enough, I would bus tables on the weekends. That was when George inducted me into the graduate program, killing.

Ben ends up at a large table at the rear of the restaurant. The only person seated is GEORGE, a middle-aged Italian trying to read the racing form with glasses that are definitely not strong enough.

BEN (CONT'D)

Thought the wife banned the ponies.

George smiles at the sight of his young protege and tosses the paper aside.

GEORGE

I just read it for the articles. Food?
Drink?

BEN

Who's cooking?

GEORGE

(frowning)
Russo.

BEN

Just a beer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

Smart move.

(beat)

Lori, could you fetch my Irish Son here
something you can't see through?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Coming right up.

GEORGE

Rather have her going right down.

BEN

Classy.

(beat)

So, who was the new guy today?

GEORGE

Some guy on loan from Ed Riggo, Vinny
something.

BEN

Whose idea was it to wear a red tie?

GEORGE

His. Why? Something happen?

BEN

I busted down the door and there were
five guys, each in a red tie. I swear to
Christ.

GEORGE

So, you're trying to tell me that I owe
Eddie an extra man?

BEN

Basically.

GEORGE

I'm sure you played the cards you were
dealt or whatever the cliché response is.
I'll straighten things out. You might
have to go apologize to the proper
people, that whole respect issue.

BEN

(displeased)

I hear ya. Let me know details when then
come up.

GEORGE

Who was with you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN

Andy.

GEORGE

Are you sure you're not covering for his mistake?

BEN

No, that was my show, my responsibility. Andy is actually good on the job, got potential.

GEORGE

Can he cope with everthing?

BEN

Everything?

GEORGE

The guilt?

BEN

He's still in the Hollywood phase. Thinks he's in some mafia movie, using humor and Tarantino dialogue to deal with the nasty.

GEORGE

How are you dealing with it?

BEN

I'm fine with it, except if he starts up with the fast food references. Do you any of us that even have been a fast food joint, let alone discuss the finer aspects of the cuisine?

GEORGE

I meant dealing with the guilt.

BEN

I know.

George smiles.

GEORGE

Old Man Tamboni was in a fast food place once.

Ben smiles.

BEN

Old Man Tamboni and the orange lamp.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

LORI enters with the beer for Ben on her tray.

LORI

Talking about household items? Are you
two hard up for conversation material or
what?

She settles the glass in front of Ben. He nods his head in
thanks.

GEORGE

Lori, have I ever told you the story
about Old Man Tamboni and his magical
lamp?

LORI

I haven't heard that one yet, o' handsome
boss man of mine.

GEORGE

Grab a chair then, my vivacious employee.

Lori gracefully sits herself at the boys' table.

EXT. TAMBONI HOUSE - DAY

An antiquated Italian home with a very small front lawn.
Every inch of the lawn is filled with furniture: sofas,
chairs, a hutch, several end-tables, and, prominently placed
in front, a rich, dark maple dining table and matching
chairs.

GEORGE (V.O.)

One spring, the Tambonis decide to really
clean their house. Being the old world
people they are, this involves taking all
the furniture out to the front lawn.

EXT. BACK ALLEY - DAY

An extremely obese Italian male, BIG BRUCE, and a scrawny
crack addict, CRACKHEAD #1, are standing next to the same
maple dining table and chairs. They appear to be in the
process of haggling over the price of the furniture present
as Crackhead #1 attempts to demonstrate the quality of his
products as if he was a hostess on 'The Price Is Right'.

GEORGE (V.O.)

Well, someone passing by managed to steal
the dining set. A complete dining set,
mind you. Not the most mobile of items
situated on that front lawn.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Now, Mrs. Tamboni must have fed every hood and crook in this town off of that table and Big Bruce probably ate the most of anybody.

Big Bruce and Crackhead #1 seem to arrive at a price and Bruce hands him a couple of bills taken from his pocket.

BIG BRUCE

I'll give you a twenty if you can get me a matching lamp.

INT. BOTTICELLI'S DINING ROOM - EVENING

LORI is smiling at GEORGE'S version of the events, in a fashion that implies more than just a workplace relationship. BEN casually picks up on that subtle connotation.

BEN

Brucie knew exactly who the table belonged to.

GEORGE

Is it who or whom?

BEN

I don't know.

GEORGE

Anyway, the point is Bruce was setting this guy up.

EXT. TAMBONI HOUSE - DAY

The front lawn is now devoid of all furniture. An extremely large Cadillac pulls up in front of the house. BIG BRUCE exits the vehicle and goes up to the front door. He rings the bell.

GEORGE (V.O.)

Now, by this time, Old Man Tamboni was ninety and change. Big Bruce had to go over to his house, pick him up, and bring him down to this fast food place, the Barn of Burgers.

An extremely thin, elderly man, OLD MAN TAMBONI, comes out the front door. BIG BRUCE kindly aids him to the passenger side of the car.

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CONTINUED:

BEN (V.O.)

Actually, it was just the Burger Barn. They went there because Bruce had told the table-stealing crackhead to meet him there with the lamp, a lamp that was supposed to match the dining set.

After situating his passenger in the car, BRUCE makes his way to the driver side.

INT. BURGER BARN - DAY

Various CUSTOMERS are enjoying their expedient nourishment as OLD MAN TAMBONI and BIG BRUCE wait in the most garishly decorated fast food restaurant known to man. Everything is in primary colors: red, yellow, and blue. Adorning the walls are sad caricatures of farm animals, primarily the ones being served at the restaurant: cows, pigs, and chickens. Big Bruce, however, is not missing the opportunity to eat. He is carrying a tray piled with the various prerequisite fast food items as well as a giant cup of soda. CRACKHEAD #1 enters the restaurant holding a bright lime-green lamp. The boy is beaming with pride and elation.

GEORGE (V.O.)

So, they're waiting at the place. Bruce is stuffing his face as usual when in stumbles the junkie with a grin from ear to ear. In his hands is the ugliest lime-green lamp you ever saw.

INT. BOTTICELLI'S DINING ROOM - EVENING

LORI is staring in anticipation at GEORGE. She can not wait to see where this story is going next. BEN, however, has sudden become flabbergasted at how GEORGE is mutilating what he considers a great story.

BEN

ORANGE! I even reminded you before you told the story. The lamp was orange, not lime-green. You always kill me when you mess up the details.

GEORGE

The lamp was orange? Are you sure?

BEN

Yes, the lamp was goddamn orange. Trust me on this one.

GEORGE

Okay, the lamp was orange.

INT. BURGER BARN - DAY

CRACKHEAD #1 is staring curiously at what is now an orange lamp in his hands. He is aware of the color change. He looks up from the lamp to his two perspective customers, BIG BRUCE and OLD MAN TAMBONI. To his shock and surprise, Old Man Tamboni pulls an incredible large handgun from the inside of his jacket.

GEORGE (V.O.)

Anyway, the lamp didn't even come close to matching the dining set. Not that that really mattered when Tamboni pulled out his gun. Not a tiny little thing either, we're talking about a huge hand-cannon here.

Old Man Tamboni discharges one round from the gun, sending both himself and Crackhead #1 flying backwards in opposite directions. Big Bruce is completely taken back by Tamboni's actions and manages to knock his large soda into his lap.

BEN (V.O.)

He blows the guy away with one shot. Right to the head. Being an old guy like he is, the recoil sends him flying backwards, shattering his wrist and busting his hip. Bruce goes to get the old guy out of there, when two cops come stumbling in on their lunch break.

Big Bruce, with a rather sizable soda stain in his crotch, is trying to get the old man on his feet when two portly, middle-aged POLICE OFFICERS enter the establishment. All four, the Officers, Tamboni, and Bruce, share a look of bewilderment. They do not know how to proceed.

GEORGE (V.O.)

These cops have been around though, not exactly dirty, but none too clean either. They see Tamboni on the ground clutching his broken wrist and this dead black guy with a puddle for a head. So, they put two and two together rather quickly, especially for cops. One goes over and picks the gun off the ground. The other says loud enough for all the witnesses to hear -

POLICE OFFICER #1

The wound looks self-inflicted.

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CONTINUED:

He nods to the witnesses to make sure his point got across then indicates for Bruce and Tamboni to make their exit. As his partner heads over to examine the body, now off-camera.

POLICE OFFICER #2 (O.C.)
Hey, that's my lamp.

INT. BOTTICELLI'S DINING ROOM - EVENING

BEN, GEORGE, and LORI are still seated at George's table enjoying the remnants of a good, hearty laugh.

LORI
That was good. God, it feels good to laugh. My mother always said, "Laughter cleans the soul."

Ben takes a pause at the quote and his smile slowly fades away.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

PAUL is standing by the large television set, still examining the picture he found earlier. ROSE enters the living room holding two glasses; one containing iced tea, the other gin & tonic. She stops short when she notices what Paul is holding and produces a faint smile.

ROSE
Find anything of interest?

Paul replaces the picture to it's original location upon realizing Rose's return.

PAUL
(frowning)
I'm not sure.

Rose hands him the glass of iced tea as the two settle down on the couch. Paul's gaze remains fixated on the photo.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You know I never really knew my father. He died when I was very young.

ROSE
I know. I lived up the street from you. Remember?

PAUL
Yes, I remember. I'm getting older, but I still have my senses.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL (CONT'D)

The point that I was getting at was how my concept of my father was comprised mostly of neighborhood stories and a few pictures in my mother's scrapbook.

(beat)

The young guy in that picture on your T.V. could be the twin of the man I saw in her scrapbook.

ROSE

That would make sense.

PAUL

Why is that?

Paul's gaze shifts from the picture to a silent Rose.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Why is that, Rose?

ROSE

He bears a strong resemblance to his grandfather.

Rose's comment fails to cause any change on Paul's face. It is as if he had know the truth the whole time.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

REBECCA is spread across the living room couch. On an endtable behind her, a telephone, an orange lamp, and digital clock reading 8:59 sit. Rebecca is still reading, but now it is "The Sun Also Rises" By Ernest Hemingway. As the clock's readout advances to 9:00, the phone rings. Rebecca gingerly reaches behind her and grabs the phone. Her eyes never divert from the pages of the book.

REBECCA

McClane residence. Lucy McClane speaking.

SARAH (O.C.)

(filtered)

It's nine o'clock, Rebecca. Time for somebody to go to bed.

REBECCA

Ok, Mom. How's work?

SARAH (O.C.)

(filtered)

It's starting slow. Who's Lucy McClane?

REBECCA

She's a character from "Die Hard".

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH (O.C.)
 (filtered)
 Which book is that?

REBECCA
 It's a movie. Ben took me to go see it.

SARAH (O.C.)
 (filtered)
 Oh.
 (beat)
 I should get back to work. Go to sleep,
 okay baby?

REBECCA
 Mom, I'm having some trouble following
 "The Sun Also Rises".

SARAH (O.C.)
 (filtered)
 What don't you get?

REBECCA
 (smiling)
 What's wrong with Jake Barnes? Is it
 something phallic?

SARAH (O.C.)
 (filtered)
 UGH. Go to bed, you little bum. Mommy
 loves you.

REBECCA
 Love you too, Mom.

Rebecca gingerly hangs up the phone in the same manner as she picked it up. However, she makes no inclination that she will be heading off to bed.

INT. O'SHEENAN'S BAR - NIGHT

O'Sheenan's is your typical Irish pub. The wooden floor is definitely not the cleanest; many a drink has been spilt by drunken hand. The tables are all a little worn and many have simplistic carvings and permanent marker messages adorning them. On the far wall, an intricate network of shelves encompass the wall. Trophies, framed photographs, books, and various memorabilia fill the shelves to the point of clutter. In the center of it all is a homemade sign which reads, "IF YOU SO MUCH AS TOUCH ANYTHING ON THIS WALL WITHOUT THE OWNER'S PERMISSION, YOU OWE THE HOUSE A ROUND!" Underneath that sign, a piece of stained paper is tacked into position.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

This warning declares "AND IF YOU'RE STUPID ENOUGH TO BREAK ANYTHING, WELL, IT WAS NICE KNOWING YA'."

SARAH is behind the bar. She is wearing the tight turtleneck and jeans outfit from earlier and is hanging up the phone receiver. The bar is inhabited by approximately twenty VARIOUS CUSTOMERS; all enjoying the conversation, the music, and the alcohol. The door at the front entrance opens and in walks ANDREW. He still has on the jeans, but now, he's wearing a heavy wool, Irish sweater. He approaches Sarah and the bar.

ANDREW

Hey pretty lady, has Ben been in yet?

SARAH

Not yet. He said he might stop by. Beer?

ANDREW

Certainly.

Sarah makes her way over to the tap and begins to pour out a beer.

SARAH

Have you ever seen a movie called "Die Hard"?

ANDREW

One, two, and with a vengeance. Why?

Sarah finishes pouring out an obviously light beer and hands it to Andrew.

SARAH

With a what? Vengeance?

ANDREW

That's what they called the third one.

SARAH

So, it's safe to assume it was a violent movie, lots of blood and bullets.

Andrew is afraid of what he just stepped into.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

BEN is slowly walking in front of the ladies' apartment building. His face holds a look of melancholy. He casually glances up at the front of the building, but doesn't stop walking. Actually, he begins to speed up his pace.

INT. O'SHEENAN'S BAR - NIGHT

SARAH and ANDREW are in the same position, continuing the same conversation.

SARAH

Andy, you know how I hate that kind of thing, especially when Rebecca is exposed to it.

ANDREW

Yeah, I do. I'll talk to Ben about it.

(beat)

If you do me one favor.

SARAH

What do you need?

ANDREW

Well, can you stop calling me Andy?

SARAH

(smiling)

What would you like to be called? Of course, I'll refrain from offering any suggestions.

ANDREW

(serious)

No, it's just that I'm having a hard time, I don't know, earning respect, I guess, at work. Especially with Ben. So, I'm trying to get people to start calling me Andrew. I know it's a small thing, but every little bit helps.

SARAH

OK, Andrew, but if you want my advice, you may want to work on your dress.

ANDREW

(agitated)

Now what's wrong with this outfit?

SARAH

Nothing. It's fine for here at
(in a fake Irish accent)
this fine drinking establishment.
(accent ends)

You know I far from approve of what you two do, but it is still a business. You got to play the part.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDREW

Dress like an undertaker?

SARAH

Hmmh?

ANDREW

No, just thinking of something I said to Ben.

SARAH

You need to present your best self when you're working.

ANDREW

And?

SARAH

Maybe your best self wears a tie.

(beat)

Maybe even a suit.

(beat)

Maybe.

INT. PARRIZO'S ITALIAN CUISINE - NIGHT

Parrizo's resembles Botticelli's immensely except for three key distinctions: the lighting is noticeably darker, the servers are all male, and the tempo of all the inhabitants is less hurried. ANNA is seated with two robust Italian men, POPPA CHETTINI and THE GRUNTER, at a table for four. Anna, an Italian woman in her early fifties, has a voice resembling fingernails being drawn across a chalkboard. She is on the brink of hysteria, while the two men are hard at work on the meals before them. Both men seem unaffected by her crazed demeanor.

ANNA

Maybe.

(beat)

Maybe he could be unconscious in a ditch somewhere.

(beat)

Maybe he's lying on a gurney in some godforsaken hospital with a bottle lodged in his throat; unable to tell the doctors he's allergic to Penicillin.

POPPA

Maybe's he dead.

The Grunter grunts in agreement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANNA

(gasping)

Oh my god! I didn't even think of that.

Poppa smiles slightly since he achieved his desired effect.

POPPA

Relax, Anna, the kid's fine. I have him working for Eddie running numbers. Christ, he's being paid twice what the normal guys get.

(slightly letting his anger show)

So, relax your hole and let me enjoy the rest of my gnocchi in some semblance of peace.

The Grunter grunts in agreement again, as if that was his primary function at the table.

ANNA

(more composed)

Then, how come he isn't here yet?

POPPA

Anna, Vinny is a grown man. He's probably with some girl or some bottle or even both. He isn't in a ditch or a hospital. He definitely isn't in a morgue. So, go to the bathroom and fix yourself up. You look like shit.

He returns his focus to his food as The Grunter lets out another sound of agreement.

ANNA

You're probably right.

Anna rises from the table.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Excuse me for a moment.

Anna heads towards the rear of the restaurant. Poppa gestures to someone off-screen.

POPPA

Truth is Vinny's probably in some closet with some twelve-year-old boy, but I can't divulge that little tidbit.

THE MUTE enters, as The Grunter utters another grunt of acknowledgement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POPPA (CONT'D)

Go call Ed Riggo and find out where the hell Vinny is. Then, inform my nephew how unappreciative I am that my meal was disturbed by the ranting of a lunatic bitch he likes to call "Mommy".

The Mute quietly nods and exits.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

PAUL stands near the front door, ready to leave. ROSE is a few feet away. A slight tension seems to have formed between them.

PAUL

I'll come by tomorrow. In the morning.

ROSE

OK. I wish he had stopped by tonight like he normally does. I wonder where he could be.

(beat)

Are you upset about me not telling you?

PAUL

Knowing the kind of man I was, your choice was probably for the best. I just wish you hadn't waited this long and I rather would have you call me because you wanted to, not because you needed to.

ROSE

A person has to live with the choices he or she makes. Paul, you especially should know that.

Paul opens the door to leave.

PAUL

I know that, but does your son?

ROSE

Our son.

Paul nods once to acknowledge her statement. He closes the door behind him as he leaves.

INT. O'SHEENAN'S BAR - NIGHT

The bar is a little more crowded and the lights have dimmed. ANDREW is talking with two DRUNK GIRLS in the corner, one of them being extremely rotund.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH is busy handling matters behind the bar as BEN enters through the front door. He saunters up to the bar. He does not acknowledge Andrew's presence in the bar. His intent is solely focused on Sarah.

SARAH
(slyly smiling)
And what can I offer you there, stranger?

BEN
I would like a dark Irish beer from a
light Irish beauty right after she gives
me a wet Irish kiss.

SARAH
(with mock indignation)
Aren't we presumptuous?
(whispering)
Plus, I though you wanted things private.

Ben leans into her.

BEN
It's not the people in this bar that I'm
trying to protect you from.

Sarah and Ben kiss very tenderly.

INT. ED RIGGO'S CAR - NIGHT

The limo is being driven by EDDIE'S DRIVER. In the back seat, EDDIE RIGGO, an extremely small, extremely greasy Italian male, is busy making out with some big-haired BAR SLUT, wearing entirely too much vinyl. Their kisses are excessively sloppy and exaggerated in nature; the polar opposite of the tender kiss just witnessed between Sarah and Ben. A car phone rings. The Driver answers it.

DRIVER
Hello.
(pause)
And whom shall I say is calling?

The Driver places the phone against his chest and directs his attention to the occupants sitting behind him

DRIVER (CONT'D)
Hey, Boss, phone call.

EDDIE
(displeased)
Who is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DRIVER

George.

EDDIE

All right.

Eddie turns his attention to the Bar Slut.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Listen baby, Daddy needs to take this one call.

He slides over to the far side of the back seat and extracts a second car phone from the side door.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Yeah, it's Ed.

The Driver hangs up his phone in the front.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

No, George. No big deal. I was just messing around with
(looks at the girl)
a very attractive lady.

Eddie beams at his own flirting and blows a kiss to the Bar Slut.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

So, how did things go today?
(beat)
How not good?

The Bar Slut begins to undo his fly. She proceed to put her head in Eddie's lap.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

OK, I think I know how we can work this.
Will you be home later on?
(beat)
I'll give you a call with the details.

Eddie hangs up the phone and turns to the Driver.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Better make you way over to Parrizo's. I have to tell Poppa that his nephew is dead.

Eddie looks down at his lap, now off camera, then returns her attention to the Driver.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What did I say before? Give me thirty minutes? It only took twenty before she started chugging, knew she was easy.

He looks back down at the girl.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Just though she'd be better at it.

Eddie flashes his ugly smile.

INT. O'SHEENAN'S BAR - NIGHT

BEN is sitting at the bar enjoying his dark beer as SARAH is busy tending to the VARIOUS CUSTOMERS. Andrew is seen excusing himself from his conversation with the two DRUNK GIRLS. He slowly makes his way over to where Ben is sitting. He seems a little hesitant to approach Ben, but he does so anyway.

ANDREW

How did everything go with George?

Ben does not turn to face Andrew.

BEN

Fine, I just told him it was entirely your fault.

ANDREW

(astonished)

What?

Ben smiles slyly as Andrew believes his lie and reaches into his jacket for his pack of cigarettes.

BEN

If we were in Los Angeles, we wouldn't be allowed to smoke in a bar. Did you know that?

(beat)

Relax there, cool guy. I told him exactly what happened and promptly took full responsibility.

ANDREW

Which one was our guy? I didn't recognize any of the guys we hit, but given my level of interaction that isn't saying much.

Ben finally turns to face Andrew.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

Can we go a bit easier with the hit references? No need to advertise our activities now, is there? It was some guy on loan. I didn't even know him. You definitely wouldn't it.

Andrew looks slightly offended

BEN (CONT'D)

Don't worry. Given those creeps that probably is a compliment.

(beat)

I might have to go meet with his boss, Eddie Riggo. Do you know him?

ANDREW

Should I?

BEN

By now, you probably should. He's a greasy Italian prick runs the numbers racket for the West Side. Nothing to really worry about, but I wouldn't mind some back-up.

ANDREW

Tell me when.

Sarah returns to their end of the bar.

SARAH

Now, what are you two dangerous men discussing?

BEN

We're talking about how young Andrew, here, was smart to pay heed to my fashion advice.

SARAH

Your fashion advice?

BEN

(smiling)

Lady, you should have seen the outfit this guy was wearing before.

Ben finishes the last remnants of his beer.

BEN (CONT'D)

Listen, I'm going to go check on Becky and take a quick nap.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN(CONT'D)

Call me at your place when you're ready to close shop. Andrew, I'll call your sweet ass in the morning.

ANDREW

I'll make sure my sweet ass is there to answer. Night, pitcher.

BEN

Yeah, good night, catcher.

Ben exits out the front door.

SARAH

What were you wearing before?

Andrew just frowns.

EXT. PARRIZO'S ITALIAN CUISINE - NIGHT

Ed Riggo's car pulls up in front of the restaurant. ED RIGGO gets out of the back seat and goes up to THE DRIVER's window.

EDDIE

Christ, I wish I hadn't sent Pete to Vegas. We could have sent him here to break the news. I wouldn't care if Poppa slit his throat.

(beat)

OK, take her home, but I want you back her in a half-hour. If she lives more than ten minutes away, put her in a cab or something.

Eddie hands the driver some money from his pocket.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Stop and get her get something to drink. You know, water or some fruit punch. She mentioned having a bad taste in her mouth.

Eddie gives a weasel-like smile, half expecting a pat on his back for his exploits. The Driver nods to acknowledge comprehension and quickly drives away. Eddie turns around and makes his way to the front door of the restaurant.

INT. PARRIZO'S ITALIAN CUISINE - NIGHT

POPPA CHETTINI and THE GRUNTER are still seated at the same table. In the chair Anna had been seated in, a tall, thin Italian male, THE NODDER, sits. The surroundings are not altered except for a slight decrease in CUSTOMERS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POPPA

So, you're saying some black guy stole the package from you?

The Nodder vigorously nods in agreement.

POPPA (CONT'D)

Let me guess. He was this huge, muscular guy, black as night with a machete as long as my arm. Right?

The Nodder again rocks his head up and down with great energy.

POPPA (CONT'D)

Are you sure now?

More nodding.

POPPA (CONT'D)

(aggravated)

You are positive that it wasn't a scrawny, little black kid with big ears and two big front teeth who stole your delivery using some con only an utter moron would fall for?

The Nodder stops nodding and stares blankly at Poppa. EDDIE enters the restaurant.

POPPA (CONT'D)

That's what I thought.

Poppa notices Eddie's entrance.

POPPA (CONT'D)

Listen, just go away and let me talk to Eddie. I'll decide how to handle you later.

The Nodder gets up and exits. Poppa turns to talk to The Grunter as he simultaneously waves Eddie over to the table.

POPPA (CONT'D)

Can you believe that bastard robbed one of my men again? I only wish I didn't have to kill him. He could have come work for us.

The Grunter grunts his usual sound of agreement. Eddie sits down in the same seat The Nodder just occupied.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POPPA (CONT'D)

God, Eddie, I hope you have some good news for me. 'Cause today has just been one big shit sandwich and I've had my full.

EDDIE

(nervous)

Well, we made a whole lot of money today. Came out ahead almost across the board with just one major loss.

POPPA

Big deal. As long as we came out ahead, you get a gold star.

EDDIE

The loss was your nephew.

POPPA

(loud)

What?

(settles into a whisper)

Eddie, you run the fucking numbers. Nobody gets killed doing the numbers, even my idiot nephew.

EDDIE

He wasn't involved in that at the time.

POPPA

What some dad finally caught him molesting a kid?

EDDIE

No, he was working for George.

Poppa's face reads surprise that settles into understanding. Eddie pauses to catch that reaction.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

George needed someone unknown for a job. Things went bad, I guess.

POPPA

You guess?

Poppa chuckles slightly at himself. THE WHISPERER enters and takes a seat at the empty chair at the table.

POPPA (CONT'D)

Does George know it was my nephew?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

EDDIE

I didn't tell him. Thought I should see how you wanted to play it.

POPPA

Don't tell George anything, just set a meeting with the guy who pulled the trigger.

(beat)

For tomorrow.

Eddie gets up to leave.

EDDIE

Thanks for understanding, Poppa.

POPPA

Just get out of here.

Eddie walks away. Poppa turns his attention to his new visitor as a look of fatigue seems to creep to his face.

POPPA (CONT'D)

So, what bad news do you have?

The Whisperer leans over into Poppa. The Whisperer's mouth is moving, but no words can be deciphered or heard. Poppa's eyes widen.

POPPA (CONT'D)

Paul.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

All the lights are still on in the apartment. REBECCA is fast asleep on the couch with her copy of "The Sun Also Rises" resting on her chest. The digital clock on the endtable behind her reads 11:47. Quietly, BEN enters the apartment. He notices the young girl fast asleep and walks over to the couch. With a gentle hand, he nudges her back to the waking world.

BEN

Hey gorgeous, how about we get you to bed?

REBECCA

(dazed)

Dad?

BEN

No, it's only Ben.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gently picks her up and slowly carries her towards the rear of the apartment.

REBECCA
(still groggy)
I had a dream that you saved me.

BEN
What did I save you from, lady?

REBECCA
Everything.

Ben, with Rebecca in his arms, enters one of the rear bedrooms and momentarily can not be seen. After a brief moment, he reenters the main room of the apartment empty-handed. He makes his way over to the couch and sits down. Putting his feet up, he slowly closes his eyes.

The telephone rings causing Ben to awaken. The digital clock now reads 2:08. The sound of the ring causes Ben to awaken. He answers the phone.

BEN
Hello.
(beat)
OK, give me five minutes.

He hangs up the phone and proceeds to the door. Right before he reaches the door, his beeper goes off. He takes the beeper from his pocket and reads the number off its face. Ben makes his way back to the phone, picks up the receiver and dials a number.

BEN (CONT'D)
George, what's up?
(beat)
OK, where?
(beat)
I've got Andy to go with me.
(beat)
Hey George, thanks.

Ben hangs up the phone and makes his way to the door. He stops to glance back at the rear bedroom where Rebecca is sleeping, then continues on his way.

INT. PAUL'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The hotel room is seedy. The yellowed paint is visibly peeling from the walls. The sole light source is a loose light bulb dangling from the ceiling by a pathetic wire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The only pieces of furniture are a bed that looks like it's from a prison, a nightstand and a chair that seems to be a remnant of a dining set. PAUL enters the room and throws down a set of keys on the nightstand. In his hand, he is carrying a shopping bag. He slowly empties the contents of the bag onto the bed: a new shirt, tie, pair of socks, and pair of boxers.

Paul takes a seat on the chair and reaches into his coat and reaches into his coat to withdraw a gun from his holster. He just sits there and stares at the instrument in awe. It is as if he is reacquainting himself with an old friend.

EXT. O'SHEENAN'S BAR - NIGHT

The exterior to O'Sheenans is rather nondescript, as the outside of most drinking establishments are. SARAH and BEN are outside the front entrance of the bar. Sarah is busy trying to lock the front gate of the bar as Ben stands by as a protective figure. Sarah completes her task and they slowly walk away.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

SARAH and BEN slowly stroll down the sidewalk, in the middle of a conversation.

BEN

..fell asleep reading her book. I swear most nine-year-olds would think Ernest Hemingway was a President.

SARAH

She always loved to read. When I saw that desire to learn, I encouraged it. A lot.

BEN

I didn't mean that in a bad way. I love Rebecca and I'm amazed how well you've raised her. It's just that I wonder what is going to happen in five or ten years, especially when she gets rebellious.

SARAH

When did you take her to see "Die Hard"?

BEN

(guilty)
Oh.

SARAH

So, when you saw that movie at the University..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

..it was a Bruce Willis retrospective.
Sarah, in my defense, "Die Hard" needs to
be seen on the big screen. It's..

SARAH

(interrupting)

Violent, Ben. Isn't it bad enough that
her mother is in love with a..

(beat)

I have to show her how violence is wrong
and you take her to a film that glorifies
violence.

BEN

But..

SARAH

I don't have control over what you do
with my life, but my daughter is a
different story. I still have power over
her and that won't last much longer. In a
few years, she'll be so headstrong that
the only way to make her do anything is
to endorse the opposite.

BEN

Come on now.

SARAH

Ben, just promise me that you won't hide
things from me any more. Even a thing
like that. I know you were just..

BEN

(interrupting)

OK.

SARAH

Ben?

BEN

OK.

SARAH

Thanks.

(beat)

Are you going to spend the night?

BEN

No, I have an early meeting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

SARAH
Anything I should worry about?

BEN
No, I'll be fine.

SARAH
Remember what you promised, no hiding things.

BEN
I've been doing this job since I was eighteen. I'm good at it. I haven't gotten in trouble with the law and I haven't been killed.

SARAH
Obviously.

BEN
Plus, I have Andy to protect me.

SARAH
Hey, it's Andrew from now on.
(beat)
Is he any good?

They stop walking since they have reached Sarah's apartment building.

BEN
He stays cool during the job and is able to put it behind him afterwards.

SARAH
That's all it takes?

BEN
In a general sense, yeah. There's more details that involve hacksaws and wood-chippers, which I don't think you'd like to hear.

Ben leans in and gives Sarah a kiss good-night.

BEN (CONT'D)
Now, go to bed. It's late.

Sarah heads up the steps to the front door.

SARAH
Were you able to see your mother today?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BEN

No, I didn't get a chance to. I'll stop
by tomorrow.

(beat)

Good night, lady.

SARAH

Good night, Ben.

Ben walks away. Sarah stands in the doorway.

SARAH (CONT'D)

(whispering)

I love you.

Sarah enters the building.

EXT. PARRIZO'S ITALIAN CUISINE - DAY

In front of Parrizo's, Andrew's car parallel parks narrowly between two very large, black Lincoln Towne Cars. After the car stops, ANDREW and BEN exit the vehicle. Ben is wearing a slight variation of the dark suit ensemble, while Andrew is still in the Irish wool sweater from the previous night and a pair of khakis. They slowly saunter towards the entrance. A look of disgust appears on Ben's face.

ANDREW

Why do we always have to meet at these
pasta houses? If they offer me any
antipasto, I'm going to vomit.

BEN

(still disgusted)

You went home with the fat one?

ANDREW

(frowning)

Let's just get this over with.

They enter the restaurant through the front door.

INT. PARRIZO'S ITALIAN CUISINE - DAY

BEN and ANDREW enter through the front door. ED RIGGO immediately greets them.

EDDIE

(nervous)

Hey Ben, long time no see. How's things?

BEN

Hey Eddie. This is Andrew.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Eddie and Andrew nod acknowledgement to each other.

BEN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about yesterday. I hope you understand that I had no other option.

EDDIE

(nervous still)

Yeah, I know five ties. Who knew?

Ben notices Eddie's apparent nervousness and appears puzzled by it.

BEN

Eddie, is something up?

EDDIE

Well, the truth is you're not here to meet with me. You're here to talk to Poppa.

POPPA (O.S.)

Hey Eddie, what's keeping you guys?

BEN

(concerned)

Is there something I should be aware of?

EDDIE

No, no, everything's cool.

Eddie heads off towards the rear of the near-empty restaurant where Poppa's voice originated.

BEN

(whispering)

Keep your eyes open and your mouth shut.

ANDREW

(whispering)

Got it.

Ben and Andrew follow Eddie's path. They make their way slowly across the almost deserted restaurant. Two RESTAURANT WORKERS are busy setting up tables for tonight's business. The only sound is Ben's narration.

BEN (V.O.)

I've managed to avoid this type of situation my whole career. You see, in this criminal world I belong to, I am never noticed. I exist only as a thought, a shadow.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN(CONT'D)

I'm something everyone knows exists but nobody wants around. I prefer it that way. I'm not a mobster. I don't sell drugs to kids. I don't pimp somebody's daughter. I kill these kinds of people. That is why they pretend I don't exist, out of fear. If you see me, you dropped the ball. You brought me to you. Now I'm here, being brought into the light. A thought made real. A shadow made mortal. I have to now ask myself, did I drop the ball?

POPPA and THE GRUNTER are seated in the same position as the previous evening. THE MUTE is seated at a nearby table. His chair is turned to face Poppa's table. Ben and Andrew stop a few feet short of the table. Eddie has made his way to a seat at The Mute's table

POPPA

Gentlemen, please have a seat.

Ben and Andrew sit down at the two empty chairs at Poppa's table. Ben is seated closer to The Grunter, while Andrew is closer to the proximity of The Mute and Eddie.

POPPA (CONT'D)

You know it's funny, Ben. You've worked with us for years, but I think this is the first time we ever really met.

BEN

It does make you wonder. But then again, there was always the need to have some buffers between you and me.

ANDREW (V.O.)

This place should smell a lot worse than it does, because I just stepped in a world of shit. I should not be here. I am small potatoes compared to a crime boss. Poppa doesn't care if I live, die or whack off to reruns of "Wild Kingdom". So, why am I here?

BEN

So, why are we here?

ANDREW (V.O.)

Fuck, Ben. Why did you have to ask that? You know why we're here. But, why is he here? How is the guy we off connected to Poppa?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

POPPA
He was my nephew.

ANDREW (V.O.)
We are dead men.

BEN
How should we handle that?

POPPA
How do you think we should handle it?

ANDREW (V.O.)
Can you say "pissing match", boys and girls?

BEN
As long as the last part involves me walking out of here, I really don't care.

ANDREW (V.O.)
Hey, how about me walking out of here too?

POPPA
If I wanted you dead, you wouldn't have woken up this morning.

ANDREW (V.O.)
Thank god that didn't happen. Then, everyone would have known I slept with the fat bitch.

BEN
No offense, but why wouldn't you want me dead?

ANDREW (V.O.)
(shouting)
Are you insane?

POPPA
First off, my nephew was a schmuck. If there was one person to blame for all this, he's probably the one. Secondly, he should not have been there in the first place. For that, we can blame this greaseball over here.

Poppa indicates Eddie who drops his head in embarrassment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BEN

Now that we got the diplomatic reasons
out of the way, how about the truth?

ANDREW (V.O.)

(even louder)

Ben, shut the fuck up.

Poppa turns to The Grunter.

POPPA

George was right. This guy has balls.

The Grunter issues his normal response as Poppa returns his
gaze to Ben.

POPPA (CONT'D)

I have a job for you to do.

The Mute gets up from his seat to bring a manila envelope
over to Ben. Ben opens it up and examines the contents, which
remain hidden from view.

BEN

Is this all?

POPPA

No, I still haven't told the kid's mother
yet.

BEN

You want me to tell your sister I killed
her son?

POPPA

It's my sister-in-law, but no. What I
want is to turn on the news at six, see a
corpse being dragged from the river, and
be able to tell her that the floating
body was her son's killer.

ANDREW (V.O.)

Great, I'm dead. I'm a dead man.

BEN

Who gets to play the part of the body?

POPPA

Well, one con man has been duping my less
than resourceful deliverymen out of their
respective packages.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

POPPA(CONT'D)

What I need is for him to disappear in a highly visible manner. So you see, I can get two birds with one stone.

The Grunter grunts his approval.

BEN

OK, Poppa, you have a deal. Just promise me after all is said and done, we can return to the status quo.

POPPA

My nephew's death will no longer have any bearing.

Ben pauses to analyze the wording of that last statement.

BEN

Thanks, Poppa.

POPPA

No problem, Ben. I hope we can go another decade without having to meet.

BEN

I hope so, too.

ANDREW (V.O.)

Decade? How about never?

Ben and Andrew make their exit, Ben is carrying the manila envelope.

POPPA

Eddie, take Mr. Conversation there and follow them.

EDDIE

Following people really ain't my thing, boss.

Poppa just glares out at Eddie. There is no need to vocally express his disappointment.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Sorry, Poppa, I'm going.

Eddie and The Mute make their exit.

POPPA

That Ben is a solid fella.

(beat)

Kinda makes you wish that there was some way for him to survive this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

The Grunter utters his usual aside.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - DAY

ROSE is looking out her living room window. Tears are slowing making their way down her cheek. She does not utter a sound; not a whimper. Something is eating at her from the inside; slowly taking away all her happiness and joy.

There is a knock at the door. Rose makes her way over to the door; trying to compose herself. Without asking who it is, she opens the door to reveal PAUL. He is wearing the same overcoat and suit from the day before, but the shirt and tie are the ones from his shopping bag seen the previous evening. Paul immediately notices Rose's sadness, even as she tries to hide it.

PAUL

What's wrong? What happened?

ROSE

I haven't heard from him. I'm scared that he's gone.

PAUL

Do you want me to go looking for him?

ROSE

No, just hold me. Please.

Paul and Rose embrace.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - DAY

ANDREW is driving, BEN is riding shotgun. They are safely away from Parrizo's and able to speak freely. Ben appears to be deeply focused on his own thoughts, Andrew appears greatly agitated.

ANDREW

Ben, can I ask you something?

BEN

Yeah?

ANDREW

What the hell were you thinking?

BEN

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDREW

Back there, were you trying to get us killed?

BEN

Andy, listen. Sorry, Andrew. If Poppa wanted us dead, he wouldn't have been there. He would have been somewhere else with lots of witnesses.

ANDREW

Would George have sent guys to kill us?

BEN

No, they would have hired independents. George wouldn't have known until afterwards.

ANDREW

Then, why was everything about you? It was like I didn't exist.

BEN

You were there as my backup. No one goes to a meet alone. It just isn't smart. Poppa knew that. He didn't know that you were involved with his nephew's killing. I didn't see a point in putting you in jeopardy.

ANDREW

But if he wasn't going to kill us..

BEN

(interrupting)

He wasn't going to kill us then. I don't know how long that will last.

ANDREW

But the black grifter is taking the fall for the nephew's death.

Ben opens the manila envelope.

BEN

The nephew's death is not the issue any more. This hit is.

ANDREW

Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN

I think this is the one thing keeping us alive.

ANDREW

I don't see where you got that.

BEN

Didn't you pay attention back there? I have never met Poppa before. You know why? It is not smart business. Poppa Chettini is in the newspapers every day, more than the mayor is. He is constantly under surveillance by everybody: DEA, FBI, ATF, even the local PD. The second we left that restaurant our pictures went on file with them. If we get caught doing something naughty..

ANDREW

It gets linked back to Poppa.

BEN

So, say I'm this big-time crime boss who has people killed all the time and it never gets tied back to me. I'm in the clear because I have middlemen and patsies and all the lovely things that hinder the burden of proof. Why do I throw caution to the wind and set up not one, but two hits right under the noses of the collected law-enforcement community?

ANDREW

I don't know.

BEN

I don't know either, but if we want to live through this, we better find out.

Ben looks at his watch.

BEN (CONT'D)

We better concentrate on the con man for now, need to make sure he gets on the news tonight. We can waste time on the other one as we look for answers.

(beat)

Make sure we're not being followed, then make your way over to this guy's place.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

REBECCA is walking home from school. She is dressed in a catholic school girl uniform: plaid jumper, knee-highs, white blouse. A back-pack filled to capacity with books is strapped tightly on her back. Her arms are also filled with books. However, she does not appear to be burdened with the weight. She has a spring to her step. ANDREW'S P.O.S. passes her on the street.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

ANDREW and BEN are in the same position. Ben slightly smiles, he caught a glimpse of Rebecca happily making her way down the street.

ANDREW

I don't like this.

BEN

It really isn't a likable situation.

ANDREW

No, I mean killing black people.

BEN

What's the difference?

ANDREW

It is just viewed differently. You see, if a black guy kills another black guy, you know how that is seen by the African-American community? They compare it to a drunk falling off the wagon. Like, what a shame, you know he really didn't mean that. He must have slipped. They feel sorry for both the victim and the killer. It's a shame two young black men can't find another way to solve their problems.

BEN

You have way too much free time.

Andrew ignores that comment and continues on his tirade.

ANDREW

If some cracker comes down there and shortens the life of some precious black man, he's the Devil. We might as well be going over there wearing sheets, spouting Nazi propaganda, and burning a cross on their front lawn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

Do you honestly expect a warm reception? We kill people and get paid for it. It doesn't matter if they're white, black, red, yellow or plaid for all I care. You know why, because nobody gets a visit from us without good reason. This guy is a petty thief and con artist. Hell, I bet he robs little old ladies of their Social Security checks. I do not pity him. It is not my fault that in twenty minutes he will be dead. He brought me to him. OK? He brought me.

Ben seems as if he is also trying to convince himself as he notices the look of disbelief on Andrew's face.

BEN (CONT'D)

It's like a person who smokes all their life and is then actually surprised to hear that they have cancer. We don't kill innocent people, Andrew. We take out criminals.

ANDREW

I just wish he was white.

BEN

It shouldn't make a difference.

Andrew takes the contents of the envelope and examines them as he drives.

ANDREW

OK, the black guy is a bad guy, maybe he deserves what he gets. But can you tell me what horrible thing this guy did?

Andrew holds up a picture of Paul to show Ben.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Christ, he looks like could be my dad and not some kind of criminal.

Ben just shrugs. The picture of Paul holds no special meaning, only unanswered questions.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

SARAH, wearing headphones, is in the middle of the living room doing aerobics. She is glistening with sweat and looks very attractive. The doorknob on the front door turns slightly to signal someone trying to enter the apartment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The locking mechanism is slowly turned to the open position. The door is then opened hard only to be stopped by the safety chain, the result being a loud thud. Sarah reacts to the sound in a startled manner only to see her child's face, REBECCA, peering in through the narrow opening.

REBECCA

Mom, can you let me in?

SARAH

Sure, baby.

Sarah walks over to the door and lets Rebecca inside. She is alone.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Do you have any homework?

REBECCA

Nope.

SARAH

Good, then we can have a nice, quiet night with just us ladies?

Rebecca walks over to the window.

REBECCA

Who's watching the bar tonight? Andy?

SARAH

No, remember that new girl I hired last week. Well, she's been great and I thought I would let her have a chance running the place.

(beat)

Plus, when I let Andy run the bar, he drinks all our profits.

Rebecca is busy looking out the window and does not acknowledge Sarah's poor attempt at humor. Sarah notices her daughter's preoccupation.

SARAH (CONT'D)

What's wrong, baby?

Rebecca indicates something out the window.

REBECCA

That man.

(beat)

He was standing there yesterday.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Sarah peers out the window and sees THE WHISPERER standing on the sidewalk across the street; waiting.

INT. JACKSON'S HALLWAY - DAY

BEN and ANDREW are approaching a battered door at the end of dilapidated hallway. The hallway is littered with various debris and refuse.

ANDREW

How do you want to handle this?

BEN

Let's get inside before any action starts. I would like to avoid any neighborly involvement.

(beat)

Plus, I want to see if we can get any answers out of this guy.

They reach the door. Ben pulls out his gun and holds it behind his back, hidden from view. Ben nods to Andrew, who then knocks vigorously on the door. After a brief pause, a deep masculine voice responds, almost reminiscent of James Earl Jones.

JACKSON (O.S.)

What do you want?

ANDREW

We need some stereo equipment.

JACKSON (O.S.)

You crackers came all the way down here for some shit for your stereo. Don't you white people got stores for that?

ANDREW

Shaanadra told us to come. She said your prices were insane.

JACKSON (O.S.)

Hell, I know three Shaanadras, Crazy Eddie. I need more than that.

ANDREW

Shaanadra with the white boyfriend.

The door quickly opens up revealing a very short black man, WEATHERBEE JACKSON, wearing a dirty tank top and a pair of jeans four sizes too big. He weighs no more than a hundred and twenty pounds. His deep, bellowing voice is no longer apparent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACKSON
(angered)
Shaanadra got some honky boyfriend?

With the door now open, Ben puts his foot out to stop it from closing and, in one quick, smooth movement, raises his gun up, level to Jackson's head.

BEN
(smiling)
No, but you can be my darkie girlfriend.

Jackson's eyes go wide and he slowly raises his arms up into the air.

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Inside his apartment, JACKSON sits in the middle of the room tied to a chair. BEN is seated on a couch immediately to his right with the gun still aimed at Jackson's head. ANDREW is walking around inspecting the contents of the apartment. The apartment looks like some type of mini-warehouse stocked with cardboard boxes marked SONY, PANASONIC, MITSUBISHI, statues, auto supplies, athletic sneakers, a dining set, all the worldly possessions a thief like Jackson could swindle or con out of someone. The area in which Ben and Jackson are currently sitting seems to be his domestic area. There is a the couch Ben is sitting on, a bed in the corner, a big-screen television, and a fine Persian rug.

JACKSON
That was just mean bringing Shaanadra into this. I've been trying to get into that chocolate pie for months now. Just the thought of her with a white guy set me off.

Ben takes a silencer out of his coat and attaches it to the barrel of his gun.

ANDREW
To be honest with you, Jackson. I just picked a name with a lot of vowels in it. I don't even know a Shaanadra.

JACKSON
(mumbling)
Fuck me.

ANDREW
Is Jackson your first or last name?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACKSON

What? What do you guys want? I don't have time for this.

Ben shoots Jackson in the kneecap, causing him to howl out in pain.

BEN

(beyond cool)

The only reason that we haven't killed you yet is that you have answers we need. So, don't give me any tough guy crap. You are not a tough guy. I just want pure straight-forwardness from your sorry, punk ass.

Jackson starts crying like a baby.

BEN (CONT'D)

Stop crying and answer the man's question.

JACKSON

(still crying)

Just DON'T SHOOT me anymore, OK?

Ben raises his gun up.

BEN

Answer the man's question.

JACKSON

(whimpering)

Last.

ANDREW

What's your first name? Michael? Tito? Jermaine? Reggie? Or how about Jesse?

JACKSON

Weatherbee.

Andrew stops inspecting the room and focuses his attention on Jackson.

ANDREW

Weatherbee?

JACKSON

My dad was all into Archie and shit.

ANDREW

Archie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JACKSON

You know, Archie, Betty, Veronica and the whole Riverdale gang including Mr. Weatherbee, the school principal or shit like that.

Andrew and Ben exchange a look of bewilderment.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

I was the youngest of like ten, so by the time I came around the only characters left were Weatherbee and Sabrina the Witch.

ANDREW

At least your name isn't Sabrina.

JACKSON

Fuck that, at least I didn't get stuck with Jughead. What kind of redneck name is that?

BEN

It sounds like your dad deep down wanted to be white?

JACKSON

Fuck you. My dad was all black. He was..

Before Jackson can finish his statement, Ben shoots him in the knee again. Jackson yells out again.

BEN

Enough with our introductory chitchat.

Ben pulls out the manila envelope from his coat pocket. He opens the envelope and withdraws Paul's photograph, but hides the picture's content from Jackson.

JACKSON

Will you please stop shooting me?

BEN

Why does Poppa Chettini want you dead?

JACKSON

Huh?

Ben starts to raise his gun.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

No, wait, let me think. Chettini is the mob boss on the news. Right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Ben slowly lowers the gun.

BEN
Yeah, the one on TV.

JACKSON
I never met the guy before. Why would he
want to kill me?

Ben pinches the bridge of his nose in frustration.

BEN
Didn't I just ask you that?
(beat)
What scores have you been pulling lately?

JACKSON
Usual shit, nothing serious.

Ben shows him the picture of Paul.

BEN
Have you ever seen this man before?

JACKSON
(without even looking)
Man, all you crackers look alike..
(realizes the mistake he just
made)
Oh, I didn't mean..

Ben shoots him in the arm before he can finish his apology.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
FUCK.

BEN
Now, have you seen this man before?

JACKSON
No. I think I figured out what I did
wrong.

BEN
What did you do then?

JACKSON
I ripped off a couple of guys the past
week for like 10 large. I didn't think
they worked for anyone. They were so dumb
that I thought they were Feds or
something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

ANDREW

That it? Is that all you've done?

JACKSON

Yeah, that's it. Except for one thing.

BEN

What?

JACKSON

My dad didn't want us to be white. He just wanted to give us a better life.

BEN

You know that I have to kill you.

JACKSON

I laughed at him for being dumb, illiterate. Always thought I was so smart.

Jackson slowly drops his head until it touches his chin.

BEN

How far is the river?

ANDREW

Couple blocks.

BEN

We can carry him.

Ben shoots Jackson in the head.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - DAY

ROSE and PAUL are seated opposite each other in Rose's living room. Paul appears very somber as he nurses a cup of coffee.

PAUL

I don't even remember the first time that I knew what I was doing was wrong. I always managed to trick myself into believing that there was no real harm in committing the acts that I did; that I didn't kill those people, someone else will.

INT. JACKSON'S APARTMENT - DAY

A montage of actions under the continued voice-over of Paul's monologue. BEN and ANDREW are preparing JACKSON'S body to be moved wrapped in the Persian rug.

PAUL (V.O.)
 Never did I realize the consequences my
 action held.

Andrew is cleaning up some remnants of evidence.

PAUL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 When you end somebody's life, you steal
 their potential, of everything that they
 could possibly become.

Ben searches through Jackson's things and finds the 10,000 dollars that had brought Jackson to an early demise.

PAUL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 That was the part I couldn't live with.
 Even the really evil ones, the killers,
 the rapists, I wonder if they could have
 changed.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - DAY

ROSE and PAUL are seated in the same positions.

PAUL
 Could those kind of people be redeemed?
 (beat)
 I can't help but wonder if this situation
 is, in some way, my fault.

ROSE
 I don't understand.

PAUL
 This whole thing here, could it be a way
 for me to repent for my sins? Finding out
 that I have a son out there, yet wasn't
 deemed worthy of actually raising him.

ROSE
 (shocked)
 Paul.

PAUL
 Let me finish first. I, then, discover my
 son is also becoming like the person I
 despise most, myself.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL (CONT'D)

Or is it that now I'm worrying that I'll never get to actually meet him, because other men like myself might be out there right now looking to kill him?

ROSE

That last part wasn't based in fact, Paul. It was rather a mother's worried assumption.

(beat)

Can you do one thing for me?

PAUL

What?

ROSE

Stop turning everything back on yourself. Stop making the world's problems and faults your own. I wanted you here to talk to our son and I wanted our son to meet his real father. I needed him to see what he came from. It would offer him the explanations to questions he has never asked. Trite as that might sound. What I don't want though is for him to see an empty husk of his father. You are not Job here before the witness of God. You do not need to repent for every sin you ever committed. He needs you to offer your true self to him.

Paul finishes off the coffee he has been nursing and breathes a brief, quiet sigh.

PAUL

You hungry?

ROSE

(taken back)

A little, I can make some sandwiches if you want.

PAUL

I saw that the Golden Dragon is still open. Does Eddie still run it?

ROSE

His son does now, but I hear that the food is even better.

PAUL

I can go grab some take out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROSE

OK.

PAUL

You still only like spare ribs and wonton soup?

ROSE

(smiling)

Old habits die hard. I swear the only Irishman I know who prefers fried rice over meat and potatoes.

Paul makes his way towards the front door.

PAUL

Well, we all have our flaws.

Paul exits through the door.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

PAUL exits the apartment building and heads off to the right down the sidewalk. THE WHISPERER appears and begins to follow him.

EXT. GOLDEN DRAGON CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

BEN is exiting the restaurant with a square container of Chinese food in hand. He carefully examines his immediate surroundings as he makes his way towards Andrew's car. Ben enters the passenger side of the car.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - DAY

Once again, ANDREW is driving and BEN is riding shotgun. Ben seems to be concentrating on his Chinese food. The car has yet to move from the parking spot as Andrew looks for a opportunity to make their way into the traffic.

ANDREW

How about we skip my asking the stupid question and proceed right to your explanation of why we stopped for Chinese food with a dead body wrapped in a Persian rug in the trunk?

BEN

To be honest, I was hungry.

ANDREW

Yeah? And?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN
Just pull away from the curb.

ANDREW
I'm trying to. Just tell me why we really stopped?

BEN
I'm trying to show you.

Andrew finally finds a gap in the traffic and pulls away from the curb.

BEN (CONT'D)
Now, see the car pulling out right now?

Andrew eyes the rear-view mirror.

ANDREW
Yeah.

BEN
Can you tell who's in the car?

ANDREW
Looks like a little kid and his dad.

BEN
Right. Now, quick pull into that alley and..

EXT. STREET - DAY

Andrew's car quickly makes a right into a narrow alleyway.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

A large, black Lincoln Towne Car, the car which was following Ben & Andrew, quickly turns into the alleyway, but promptly stops short when it sees Andrew's car sitting only two car-lengths into the alley.

Andrew's car roars to life and backs up quickly, smashing into the front of the Towne Car. BEN hops out of the passenger side of the car, gun in hand. He rapidly shoots each tire on the Towne Car's passenger side.

He slowly approaches the car with his gun raised. The passenger window of the Lincoln rolls down and ED RIGGO pops his head out of the window, screaming obscenities.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

Fuck, what the fuck did you go and do that for? Look at the fucking car, will ya?

BEN

(almost smiling)

Sorry, Eddie. We thought you were the cops. Listen, I would love to stay and help you fix this mess, but we got things to do, you know, bodies to dump, people to kill. It's a busy day for us bad guys.

Ben returns to Andrew's car and enters. Andrew disengages his car from the crushed front end of the Lincoln and pulls away, continuing down the alley. Eddie is left hanging out the window of the newly immobile automobile, yelling for help.

EDDIE

Hey.

(louder)

HEY!

(even louder)

HEY!!!

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Andrew's car, with the rear bumper hanging on by some wire, pulls up in front of the apartment building. The Whisperer is nowhere to be seen. ANDREW and BEN exit the vehicle and proceed to the rear of the automobile. Andrew unlocks, then opens the trunk. They each remove a bag of groceries from the enclosure and make their way to the front of the building.

ANDREW

I don't think that was such a good idea.

BEN

What?

ANDREW

Keeping the food where we just had a body.

BEN

True, but the trunk was still cleaner than your back seat, especially after the big-boned girl from last night.

ANDREW

(mumbling)

Like she could have fit in the back seat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ben and Andrew enter the building.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING LOBBY - DAY

BEN and ANDREW are waiting to be buzzed in, grocery bags still in hand.

BEN

At least with Eddie off our tail, we have some time to sort things out.

ANDREW

Yeah, but did we need to fuck up my back end?

BEN

Hate to dispel any delusions you might have, but your car is a piece of shit. The rear bumper wasn't adding any element of class or anything.

The buzzer goes off, signaling that the door is now unlocked. Andrew opens the door.

ANDREW

Yeah, what kind of car do you drive?

Ben passes Andrew and enters the interior of the building. Andrew follows.

BEN

I can't drive.

ANDREW

(astonished)

You can't drive. What kind of killer can't drive?

Door closes behind Andrew.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

PAUL approaches the front of the apartment building on foot. He is carrying a bag full of Chinese food. He makes his way up the front steps and enters the building. THE WHISPERER enters the scene and assumes his now regular position on the street. He takes a cellular phone from his coat and is seen, naturally, whispering into it. After a brief conversation, he puts the phone back in his coat. Through the window in the front door, Paul is seen passing the second entrance of the building. For the first time, the address of the building, #1212, is prominently shown.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

REBECCA is sitting on a windowsill reading a book entitled "The Laws of Murphy". SARAH is working in the kitchen on some extravagant meal. There is a knock on the door. Instead of interrupting her child's reading, Sarah goes over to answer the door herself. She wipes her hands on her apron, then tries to fix her hair as she crosses the room. She opens the door to reveal BEN and ANDREW at her doorstep. Andrew's face holds a look of mock indignation.

ANDREW

I really do not believe you.

Ben ignores Andrew's comment and focuses on his pretty lady.

BEN

Hello, pretty lady. We come bearing gifts.

Sarah takes a grocery bag and gives Ben a kiss on the cheek.

SARAH

That's sweet, but I thought you had work all day.

Ben enters the apartment, leaving Andrew standing in the doorway in a state of faux distraught.

BEN

We had a break.

Ben makes his way over to where Rebecca is sitting. Sarah notices Andrew's reluctance to enter her apartment.

SARAH

What's wrong there, need an engraved invitation?

ANDREW

I just found out that I was totally wrong about my relationship with Ben.

BEN

(whispering to Rebecca)
He thought I was his gay lover.

Rebecca smiles at the joke, but remains focused on her book.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANDREW

I thought we were partners. You know, Butch and Sundance, Bonnie and Clyde, Tango and Cash. But, no, you know what I am to him.

SARAH

A chauffeur?

Andrew is now actually shocked at her response.

ANDREW

How? Has he told you that?

SARAH

No, Andy, he didn't.

Andrew finally enters and closes the door behind him. Sarah makes her way back into the kitchen to continue with her food preparation, yet continues to console Andrew.

SARAH (CONT'D)

Don't you see how all the people he cares for has some job, some role in his life. Let's see, George is his priest, his mom his cook, you the driver, and me, well, we'll leave that one a mystery.

ANDREW

That's all well and good, but why do I get stuck having to drive Miss Daisy?

SARAH

Would you prefer my position?

BEN

Because driver's licenses, vehicle registrations, credit cards, social security, they all leave a trail. There is no way to trace me down. I'm a figment of your imagination. It adds to the mystique, plus makes my job a whole lot easier.

SARAH

And your life emptier.

Ben turns to Rebecca in order to change the subject.

BEN

So, which book is it this hour?

Rebecca just raises her book to show the spine to Ben.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN (CONT'D)

I thought that Murphy only had one law.

REBECCA

Well, this author took some creative freedom and expounded some concepts from the original "If anything can go wrong, it will" axiom. To be honest, the book isn't very good.

BEN

What other concepts were there?

ANDREW

(mumbling)

Axiom?

REBECCA

Well, in this chapter, she goes off the beaten path and is discussing the use of coincidence in motion pictures.

BEN

How does that tie into Murphy's Law?

ANDREW

"Star Wars".

BEN

How?

ANDREW

Easy. What are the odds that in the whole galaxy far, far away you would be able to find your long-lost twin sister and believed-to-be-deceased-but-turned-Dark Lord of the Sith father and then, once united, topple a galactic empire? Huge coincidence, right? So, you're the Empire all set to rule the entire universe with an iron fist, but your plans are spoiled by the most dysfunctional family this side of the Kennedys, can you find a better example of Murphy's Law in effect? I could have gotten away with it, if it wasn't for those meddling Skywalkers.

REBECCA

But see that's not the really coincidence, that's the Force.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

SARAH
(directed at Ben)
You took her to see "Star Wars", too?

BEN
Come on, even you saw "Star Wars".

Sarah gives Ben a disapproving glare which he chooses to ignore for the moment.

BEN (CONT'D)
(directed at Andrew)
I just thought off something. They separated the twins to hide them from Vader and the Emperor, right? Don't you think they should have changed Luke's last name if they really want to hide him?

Ben's beeper suddenly goes off. He reaches into his pocket for the device.

ANDREW
You know, for someone who once referred to my Generation X conversational topics as trite and mindless, you do seem to enjoy participating in these little discussions.

Ben is looking at his beeper and not happy with what he sees.

BEN
Yeah, we should be focusing on more important items.

ANDREW
Who's beeping you?

Ben walks over to the phone by the couch.

BEN
I don't know.

Ben reaches the phone, removes the mouthpiece from the phone, and applies a metallic object from his pocket in its place. He then begins to dial the phone.

BEN (CONT'D)
You beeped me.
(beat)
OK, where?
(beat)
1212? Are you sure?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BEN(CONT'D)

(beat)

No, it's just that I grew up on that block.

(beat)

Fine, tell your sister-in-law to watch the news tonight

(beat)

Yeah, bye.

ANDREW

Poppa?

Ben nods and returns the telephone to its original condition. He makes his way back over to where Rebecca is sitting and examines the world outside the window.

BEN

The guy we want is in this building.

Andrew's eyes register a sizable amount of surprise. Ben gently taps Rebecca on the shoulder.

BEN (CONT'D)

(indicating outside)

Have you ever seen that man before?

REBECCA

Mom, that man is back again.

Sarah makes her way over to the window.

BEN

(directed at Sarah)

Why didn't you tell me about him before?

REBECCA

Because he left, Ben. It's a big building. I didn't really think he was waiting for us.

BEN

He isn't.

(turns to Rebecca)

How would you like to see my apartment?

REBECCA

(enthusiastic)

Definitely.

BEN

Then, go pack some clothes and some books.

Rebecca runs off towards the rear of the apartment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ANDREW

Are you sure you even have an apartment?

SARAH

Ben, what is wrong?

BEN

Yes, I have an apartment and in a little while, it will be a hundred times safer than here.

SARAH

Why?

BEN

Because, in order for Andrew and I to get the time we need, we have to do something to make this building a little unsafe. I need you to go pack some things too.

SARAH

But?

BEN

Sarah, these are the people that I want to protect you from.

Sarah goes off to the back to join Rebecca in the packing duties.

BEN (CONT'D)

This is getting worse every minute.

ANDREW

Do you know where he is in the building?

BEN

No, and that makes my plan a little risky.

ANDREW

Why?

BEN

I want you to go take out the guy on the street. We'll say the mark did it and escaped before we got here. Should buy us some time.

ANDREW

OK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

BEN

Yeah, but either the cops or Poppa are going to search the building. So, if the guy is still here, we'll have some trouble.

ANDREW

Running a risk. This can blow up in our faces.

BEN

Got news for you, it has already blown up in our face. We are now in damage control. I just hope this guy knows he is trouble. The sight of cops should send him running.

ANDREW

Lots of "should"s and "maybe"s.

BEN

Wait for Sarah and Becca to pack, then take them down out back. I'll get them there.

(beat)

After a few minutes, handle the boy out front. I'll meet you at O's tonight.

ANDREW

What I don't get to see the Bat-Cave?

Ben starts to head for the door.

BEN

Then, I would have to kill you.

ANDREW

Where are you going?

BEN

I need another driver.

Ben exits out the front door.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - DAY

ROSE is sitting at the dining table eating her Chinese dinner. There is another place setting; however, no one is there at the moment. There is a knock at the door. Rose goes over and answers it. Ben is at the door. Rose attacks him with a massive, loving embrace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROSE

God, Ben, I was starting to think the worse.

BEN

Mom, you need to relax and no taking the Lord's name in vain.

Rose ends her embrace and grabs his shoulders in her hands.

ROSE

Why didn't you even bother to call?

Ben takes her hands from his shoulders and holds them in his own.

BEN

Not now, OK? I need you to go pack some things. I want you to stay at my place for a few days.

ROSE

What? Are you crazy?

BEN

Mom, please..

Before Ben can finish his plea, PAUL enters from the kitchen with a plate of Chinese food. A visually surprised Ben quickly pulls a gun from underneath his jacket and aims it directly Paul.

BEN (CONT'D)

Who are you?

ROSE

(shocked)

Ben, stop.

BEN

No, Mom, stay out of this.

(directed at Paul)

Who are you?

PAUL

I have a gun. I'm not going to use it.

BEN

You so much as go for it and I'll kill you.

ROSE

Ben, what is WRONG with you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN

This man is not who you think he is. He's
a danger to everyone near him.

(again directed at Paul)

Now, who are you?

PAUL

I'm your father.

(beat)

Your real father.

INT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - DAY

ANDREW is standing at the window, watching the man on the street, a man he has to kill. SARAH comes out from the back room carrying a bag filled to capacity with clothes.

SARAH

Where's..

ANDREW

(interrupting)

He's setting things up. We're meeting him
out back.

SARAH

OK. We might need your help carrying
things.

ANDREW

Sure.

INT. ROSE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The trio of BEN, PAUL, and ROSE are still in the same positions, however, the level of tension has risen, but less reliant upon the presence of a gun.

BEN

Wrong, my father is dead.

ROSE

No, the man who raised you is dead. Your
real, your biological father is Paul.

BEN

So, it is safe to assume this guy is
Paul.

ROSE

Can you put the gun down now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ben is oblivious to her request. His full attention is now on Paul.

BEN
Where have you been all my life?

PAUL
I had to leave.

Ben takes a moment to comprehend the wording of that response.

BEN
Now, so do we.
(beat)
Mom, go pack some clothes.

ROSE
What about Paul?

BEN
Don't worry Daddy's coming with us? I
have to keep him alive.

Both Rose and Paul usher a slight look of bewilderment after that remark. Rose shrugs it off and goes to her bedroom.

BEN (CONT'D)
You can give me that gun now.
(beat)
Slowly.

Paul hands him the gun by the barrel.

PAUL
I just found out I had a son yesterday.

Ben lowers his gun to his side.

BEN
No offense, but we have bigger problems
than sperm ownership at the moment.

Paul responds only with a stare that hints at feelings of rage and resentment.

BEN (CONT'D)
(uncaring)
Why does Poppa Chettini want you dead?

PAUL
He's still alive? He must be over a
hundred by now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN

He's alive, but I doubt that he's much older than you are.

PAUL

How old do I look?

BEN

Don't make me say it.

Paul immediately picks up on the cue.

PAUL

Old enough to be your father.

(beat)

It could be his son, Chet Jr.

BEN

Chet Chettini?

PAUL

Yeah.

BEN

Chet Chettini Junior?

PAUL

I can't think of anything I might have done. I left on good terms.

BEN

(under his breath)

Who names their kid Chet Chettini? Twice?

Rose enters the room with a small bag in hand.

BEN (CONT'D)

OK, we can go. Paul, do you have a driver's license?

PAUL

Yes, but I haven't had a car in ten years.

BEN

Close enough.

Ben grabs a set of keys hanging on a key organizer on the wall and tosses them to Paul.

BEN (CONT'D)

Let's go someplace else and straighten things out there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ROSE
Is all this really necessary?

BEN
Believe me, Mom, this is for the best.

They all exit through the front door.

INT. STAIRWELL OF APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

ANDREW, SARAH, and REBECCA are descending the antiquated staircase. Sarah and Rebecca are both carrying bags of clothes, while Andrew is struggling with a laundry basket full of books.

ANDREW
You do realize this move is only temporary.

SARAH
Why?

ANDREW
Well, it seems your daughter packed the Library of Congress here.

REBECCA
He's just upset that none of the books have Winnie the Pooh as a main character.

ANDREW
I was always more fond of Piglet myself.

SARAH
I know. I've seen the girls you go with.
(beat)
Actually, you should meet the new bartender I hired. She's a cutie.

ANDREW
Yeah, what good will that do me if I throw my back out carrying all these books?
(beat)
Plus, I think we have more important things to worry about than my lackluster love life.

ROSE, PAUL and BEN enter the stairwell a level below them. Andrew does not recognize that Paul is their intended target.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Christ, he'll let anyone drive him, huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SARAH
(whispering)
That's his mother.
(directed to Ben)
Hey, how about some help up here before
Andrew loses all feeling in his arms?

Ben stops when he realizes Andrew and the ladies are still behind him. Rose and Paul slow their descent after noticing the others.

ANDREW
Damn, today is full of revelations.
First, I find out Ben actually lives
somewhere. Then, I hear someone actually
gave birth to him.

SARAH
Yeah, our boy is full of surprises.

Andrew recognizes who Paul is, as they reach them in the stairwell. Andrew's face shows an unpleasant expression to signify his realization.

ANDREW
(under his breath)
Let's hope none of those surprises gets
me killed.

Paul offers to help Rebecca with her bag of clothes.

REBECCA
Who are you?

Ben quickly steps in and takes the bag from Rebecca in an extremely over-protective manner.

BEN
He's trouble, hon. Now, let's get
everyone out the back way.

The party continue their hasty departure.

INT. PARRIZO'S ITALIAN CUISINE - DAY

POPPA and THE GRUNTER are sitting at their usual table, in the once-again-crowded restaurant, with a very large plate of linguini in front of them. The Grunter is attacking the food with great vigor, while Poppa barely seems to notice that it is there. His attention seems to be focused elsewhere.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POPPA

This "Paul business" worries me. If the truth got out about what really happened, there will be ramifications.

Poppa finally notices the linguini and begins to distribute some of it on his plate.

POPPA (CONT'D)

Why did he come back, especially after all this time? Besides my father, there was nothing for him here. He had no friends, no family, no ties.

Poppa signals to someone off camera. THE MUMBLER enters. Poppa starts barking orders to him through a mouthful of linguini.

POPPA (CONT'D)

I want you to find out everything about the apartments at 1212 Hanover St. Everything, landlord, tenants, who built it, even who plunges the damn toilets. OK?

The Mumbler mumbles some type of incoherent response.

POPPA (CONT'D)

Good, then get going.

The Mumbler exits. The pair continue to eat ferociously.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

The alleyway is cluttered with garbage cans and refuse. There is a door leading to the apartment building and a large garage door that seems to lead underground. The smaller door opens and BEN, PAUL, SARAH, REBECCA, ROSE, and ANDREW enter the littered area.

BEN

Let's get everyone down in the garage, pack up the car, and get the fuck out of here.

SARAH & ROSE

(simultaneously)

BEN!!!

BEN

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REBECCA

They don't want you dropping the f-bomb.
It makes you sound extremely rude and
ignorant.

BEN

How about I apologize for all my past and
future wrongs and move along with our
abrupt getaway?

(beat)

Good, then everyone into the garage.

ANDREW

Ben.

Everyone besides Ben and Andrew proceed down to the garage.

BEN

Give us a five-minute head start, handle
the lone gunman out front, and get out of
here as quick..

Andrew seems as if he is hiding something. Ben notices this
and stops what he was saying.

BEN (CONT'D)

Is there something wrong? If you want I
can handle the guy and..

ANDREW

(interrupting)

No, I just left my gun in the car.

Ben takes a gun from his coat and hands it to him.

BEN

Take this one. I got it off the old man.

Andrew takes the gun.

ANDREW

What no lip for making a mistake?

BEN

Just make sure that's the only one.

ANDREW

Sure. Met you at O's?

BEN

Yeah, don't drink too much. I might need
you tonight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANDREW

Sure thing.

Andrew enters the apartment building. Ben is left staring at the door slowly closing.

EXT. GAS STATION - DUSK

Eddie's car is having its tires replaced at a very common-looking gas station. THE MUTE is standing quietly watching the MECHANIC go about his business. EDDIE is off to the side talking loudly into a pay-phone.

EDDIE

Yeah, gave us the slip.

(beat)

The nigger is definitely history; saw him all rolled up in a Parisian rug.

(beat)

Persian? Where's Persia?

(beat)

Right. Not important. OK, give us five minutes to finish up with the car. You said '1212', right?

(beat)

Don't worry, Poppa, I'm all about this.

Eddie hangs up the phone, lights a cigarette and walks over to The Mute.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Poppa talked with our boys. He knows where they'll be, but they might not be there for long.

The Mechanic gives Eddie a look almost to say that he is going as fast as he can. Eddie takes this as a cue to commence berating the Mechanic.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You hear that, "They might not be there for long." You know what that means. It means make like Forrest Gump and put your mother fucking retard ass in motion. You are as slow as shot. How fucking hard is it to change a fucking tire?

Slowly mute out the sound of Eddie's verbal berating of the Mechanic.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN (V.O.)

Once I managed to take it all in, the irony of the situation made me cringe and I do mean the Alanis Morrissette definition of irony.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

ANDREW is seen through the front door window, leaning against the wall of mailboxes. He smokes the last drag of his cigarette, then discards it. He checks his watch, acknowledges the passing of the required span of time, and lights another cigarette. Andrew then proceeds out the door and heads down to the street. He slowly crosses the street in the direction of THE WHISPERER.

INT. PARRIZO'S ITALIAN CUISINE - DUSK

POPPA and THE GRUNTER are, once again, sitting at their table, having a coffee and an after-dinner aperitif respectively. Slowly approaching from behind their backs is THE MUMBLER. He is carrying a folder holding various papers and documents. When he arrives at the pair's table, he carefully places the folder next to Poppa and scurries away. Poppa opens the folder and glances at the top page. Suddenly, he is yelling orders at whoever can hear. He knocks over his coffee onto the folder as he gets up from his seat. The top page of the now-coffee-stained paper reads "TENANT LIST - 1212 HANOVER STREET."

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

ANDREW continues walking towards THE WHISPERER. When he is within five yards of his target, Andrew flicks his cigarette aside and withdraws the gun from behind his back. He quickly aims the pistol at the intended victim. Both characters react with facial expressions; Andrew with pure intent and purpose, The Whisperer with pure shock and astonishment. Andrew pulls the trigger and nothing happens. He pulls it again and again. Nothing happens, no bullets are discharged. Once again, the characters' facial reactions; now, Andrew shows surprise, while The Whisperer has a look of wicked glee. The Whisperer slowly reaches for the handgun inside his jacket.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - DUSK

The apartment is enveloped in darkness until a light is turned on in the far corner. Once lit, the room appears to be a very large, rather empty room with high ceilings; almost like a deserted warehouse. In the same far corner as the light, there seems to be a centralized living area with various pieces of furniture and appliances.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As the camera closes in on this section of the room, BEN, PAUL, ROSE, SARAH, and REBECCA appear out of the darkness, carrying the various items from the ladies' apartments. Ben points to varied points around the area as he mutely provides directions. He then proceeds to a large desk on the far edge of the habitable enclosure. From one of the desk drawers, he withdraws a cellular phone and commences making a call.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

ANDREW and THE WHISPERER are exactly as before. The Whisperer is reaching into his jacket for his gun, while Andrew is left defenseless with a gun that has failed after three tries to fire. In a last, desperate effort, Andrew hurls his gun at The Whisperer. The butt of the gun impacts directly on the bridge of The Whisperer's nose causing a huge spurt of blood to fly from his nostril. Andrew quickly follows up this action with a hard, right cross to The Whisperer's jaw, which sends him reeling.

INT. BOTTICELLI'S DINING ROOM - DUSK

GEORGE is sitting at his regular table telling a muted story to two YOUNG HOODS also seated at the table. He is vigorously using his hands as conversational aids. A WAITRESS, with a cordless telephone in hand, gracefully approaches the table and whispers something into George's ear. George promptly dismisses the two Young Hoods and takes the phone from the Waitress. He has a very brief conversation on the phone and then gets up from the table. He heads off to the front entrance; grabbing his overcoat on the way.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

THE WHISPERER is on his hands and knees trying to pick himself up as a thick stream of blood and saliva drips from his mouth and nose. ANDREW approaches him from behind, bends down and grabs the two dangling portions of The Whisperer's tie. With great force, Andrew pulls back on the two ends of cloth and begins to strangle The Whisperer. Instinctively, The Whisperer begins to fight for his life, flaying his arms, and causing more blood to spew from his face. Finally, The Whisperer dies. Andrew lets the body drop, walks over to pick up both guns, and heads off to his car.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

A black Lincoln Towne Car is parked in a remote section of a city park. GEORGE is behind the steering wheel smoking a cigarette, pretending to read the horse racing form. He notices something off-screen, causing him to exit the car. He closes the car door behind him, takes a last puff of his cigarette and throws it to the ground. BEN and PAUL enter. George immediately recognizes Paul.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

Better watch out, Benny-boy, hanging out with this guy will get you in trouble.

George extends his hand to Paul.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Hey, Paul. Long time.

Paul shakes George's hand.

PAUL

Long enough that I thought nobody would know who I was anymore.

GEORGE

I bet there's only a few who could remember.

BEN

And would any of these people want this guy dead? Actually to be particular, because we all know that's my nature, why would Poppa want him dead?

GEORGE

Why did you leave, Paul?

Paul stares at the ground and contemplate the correct wording of his answer.

PAUL

I just was sick. All the death and murder.

(beat)

Couldn't find any reasons to justify my actions.

GEORGE

So, you just up and left, didn't even tell anyone?

PAUL

I told Poppa, I mean the old Poppa.

GEORGE

You didn't kill him then?

PAUL

(shocked)

No. George, the man practically raised me. Why would I kill him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BEN

So, if I get this right, Poppa thinks Paul killed his Poppa.

GEORGE

No, if this was just about revenge, he wouldn't be going about this the way he has. There's more.

PAUL

Then, who killed Poppa?

BEN

Poppa. The father, being the original Poppa, tells the son, Poppa Part Deux, that his fave hitman found a conscience and left town. The son sees this as an opportunity to take control of the family business by killing the father and blaming the fleeing killer.

GEORGE

Then, the only person who could disprove that account is nowhere to be found, presumed gone forever.

BEN

Only my mother could have fucked this up so perfectly?

GEORGE

What's Rose got to do with this?

BEN

Oh, I forgot to formally introduce you two. George I'd like you to meet the seed from which I sprouted. Sprout, this is George.

GEORGE

What?

BEN

What he is trying to say is that we might be actual proof that killing people is a genetic disorder.

GEORGE

Being passed down father to son. I get it.

BEN

How do we fix this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GEORGE

I don't know. This is the type of secret that people get killed over.

BEN

Is there anyway we can use this knowledge to protect us from Poppa? Like threatening to break the news to the police or his family.

PAUL

He knows we wouldn't go to the police. Hell, I'm still a wanted man.

GEORGE

Yeah, and you can tell how much he cares about his family.

BEN

He's going to kill me over his pervert nephew though.

GEORGE

His nephew's not dead.

Ben is taken back in surprise.

BEN

WHAT??!!?

GEORGE

He will be and you will still be to blamed, but right now, he's on plane headed from Vegas. Eddie forgot which guy he sent where. Poppa doesn't know, Eddie is going have him taken care of as soon as gets back.

BEN

How do you know this?

GEORGE

What? You the only one that confesses his sins to me? Eddie told me the whole tale right before he asked me to set up the hit.

BEN

When is it set for?

GEORGE

His plane gets in three in the morning.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BEN
Who's got it?

GEORGE
I'm not sure yet, I was hoping you might
have some ideas how to handle it.

Ben smiles as an idea crosses his mind. He glances at his
wrist-watch to check the time.

BEN
I got that one.
(beat)
We should get going, Sprout and I have
another stop.

GEORGE
Fine. When I hear anything new, I'll beep
you.

Ben, Paul and George all nod their muted farewells. Ben and
Paul head off in the direction they entered from as George
makes his way back into his car. After a few steps, Ben snaps
his fingers as if he remembered something else and double-
times it back to George's car. Paul stops where he is and
does not follow Ben, he waits patiently. Ben knocks on the
driver side window. George rolls down the window.

BEN
Hey, I need a high-powered stick.
(beat)
With a decent scope.

GEORGE
Got it.
(beat)
Hey, real quick. I know they say he's
your father, but bringing him to Poppa
might save your bacon.

BEN
You think I haven't thought of that.

GEORGE
But this is someone else saying it. Now,
it may not sound so crazy.

Ben just nods politely and walks quickly over to Paul.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The front of Sarah and Rose's apartment building is flooded with police cruisers, illuminating the street with their red and blue light. The area where The Whisper's body was left is cordoned off with yellow ribbon labeling it a crime scene. Various UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS and FORENSIC SPECIALISTS are milling about trying to decipher the cause and nature of the crime. Up the street, a large CROWD OF PEOPLE stands outside wooden Police barricades. Among the on-lookers stand POPPA, THE MUTE and THE GRUNTER. They all visibly appear to be less than pleased.

POPPA

I'm really glad we managed to resolve this quietly.

EDDIE enters.

EDDIE

You were right. The broad was Ben's mother, but she's long gone. All the other fucks that live here are accounted for except one, Sarah O'Sheenan.

POPPA

Could be Bobby O'Sheenan's daughter.

(directed to The Mute)

Go over to O'Sheenan's Pub and keep an eye on the chick bartender. See where she goes.

EDDIE

What do you want me to do?

Poppa nods to The Grunter, who gives Eddie a solid punch to the stomach. Eddie falls down to the ground. The wind has been knocked out of him and he is wheezing heavily. A few of the on-lookers turn around to see what happened.

POPPA

(directed at The Crowd)

Asthma.

Poppa starts to pick Eddie up off the ground. After he gets him halfway off the ground, Eddie begins to vomit profusely. Poppa lets go and lets him fall back to the ground. Poppa and The Grunter stand over Eddie who is on his hands and knees puking his guts out as the crowd of on-lookers block him from the view of the police scouring the street. Poppa slowly leans over to Eddie's side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POPPA (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Not that I'm not enjoying this, Eddie, but there's fucking people watching. This is no way for anyone to see one of my guys; on the ground, puking his guts out over a little love-tap. So, come on. Suck it up and let's get on with this.

Eddie slowly composes himself and rises to his feet.

POPPA (CONT'D)

(directed to The Grunter)

Give me the keys.

The Grunter tosses a ring of keys to Poppa.

POPPA (CONT'D)

OK, wait until the boys in blue leave, then go door to door with Paul's picture. See what you can find out. Bring the little schmuck here and make sure he stops fucking up.

The Grunter issues his usual, guttural reply.

POPPA (CONT'D)

(directed to Eddie)

I really want you to screw up somehow. I want to see if we can literally knock the shit out of you next time.

(smiles)

All right, I have to go see a man about a horse.

Poppa slowly walks away from the crowd and the two waiting men. The screen fades to black but the sound of his patent leather shoes connecting with the ground can still be heard.

EXT. SIDEWALK APPROACHING O'SHEENAN'S - NIGHT

The sound of shoes sharply hitting the pavement continues. Two pairs of legs walking down the street appear. The legs belong to PAUL and BEN. They are in the middle of a conversation.

PAUL

How about witnesses, the non-snitch kind?

BEN

I only had on job involving a witness. George doesn't give me them anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL

How did you manage that feat?

BEN

The one I did involved this guy, Max. Everyone called him Mad Max and not because he looked like Mel Gibson. This guy fell out of the ugly tree and smacked every branch on the way down. Now, Max liked catholic school girls; a lot. I don't know, something to do with the plaid skirts and knee-highs. So, ol' Max ends up kidnapping one and raping her for three days straight before depositing her back on the front steps of St. Michael's. Girl goes straight to the cops, Max gets a warrant out for his arrest. Now, no one really likes Max, but they realized that they didn't really trust him to be quiet either. They decided it would be best that he did not go to jail. They put a hit out on the girl.

PAUL

I would have killed Max instead.

BEN

That's what I thought they would want. I still went up and asked George for the job, it was my first week really working for him. George reluctantly gave it to me.

Paul tries to hide a look of disappointment. He fails to succeed as they stop right in front of O'Sheenan's.

BEN (CONT'D)

Then, I went right to the house Max was hiding out in. We had a little talk about what he did. I guess he felt guilty about it, because they found him from a noose in the closet that next day. George never let me handle witnesses again, just snitches.

PAUL

What happened to the girl?

Ben opens the door to the bar and makes his way inside.

BEN

She owns this place.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Paul examines the sign hanging above the entrance. He slightly nods an acknowledgement and enters the bar.

INT. O'SHEENAN'S BAR - NIGHT

ANDREW is sitting at the bar, beer in hand, talking to LISA, the new bartender. She is a perky, little blonde wearing a tight pair of jeans, an even tighter blouse, and a wonderbra that is doing wonders. Lisa appears to be genuinely interested with whatever Andrew is discussing and seems to be attracted to the dutiful sidekick. The bar is moderately crowded.

ANDREW

I was always more into "Vegas", you know, the one with Robert Urich.

LISA

Pre-"Spenser: For Hire".
(smiling)

I was picturing you more as a "Charlie's Angels"-type of guy.

Andrew sheepishly takes a sip of his beer.

ANDREW

Yeah, back in day, they were the fantasy women. But, everyone has to grow up sooner or later.

BEN and PAUL enter, each taking a barstool next to Andrew.

BEN

Hey.

Andrew frowns. He wanted more time to flirt with Lisa.

ANDREW

Hey.

LISA

Can I get you guys anything to drink?

PAUL

No, thank you.

BEN

Can I get a scotch on the rocks?

LISA

Single malt?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN
Is there any other?

LISA
"Yes" would have sufficed.

She begins to walk away from the trio.

PAUL
Actually, I'll have one as well.

Lisa nods her reply and continues to the other end of the bar.

BEN
Did everything go well on your end?

ANDREW
Took care of the guy. The piece you gave me wasn't loaded, but I still took care of him.

BEN
(directed to Paul)
The gun you had wasn't loaded?

Paul reaches into his hip pocket, takes out six bullets, and places them on the bar.

PAUL
Haven't killed anyone in long time, really didn't plan on starting now.

BEN
Then, why did you even bother carrying the gun?

PAUL
That's between me and your mother.

ANDREW
What is your connection to his mother?

BEN
He's my father.

ANDREW
Hey, I met your father, he was an asshole.

BEN
Paul's my biological father.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Lisa returns with the two scotches as well as a new beer for Andrew.

BEN (CONT'D)

He's also the reason for this whole mess.

ANDREW

I thought the dead nephew was what started all this.

BEN

No, someone couldn't have a homecoming without a little drama. Plus, the nephew isn't even dead.

LISA

Don't you hate just walking into the middle of a conversation?

PAUL

(directed at Lisa)

I'm sorry I didn't catch your name?

LISA

It's Lisa.

PAUL

(truly sincere)

Lisa, I'm Paul. I don't mean to be rude, because I can tell that you and my young friend here,

(indicates Andrew)

might be able to swing some type of romantic entanglement. It's just that we could use about ten minutes of privacy here.

LISA

Are you guys cops?

PAUL

Nothing that disreputable. Don't worry the boy is in good hands.

LISA

OK.

Lisa proceeds to meander to the far end of the bar.

ANDREW

I can hit on the ladies just fine, Paul. I don't need you doing it for me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PAUL

Hit on, yes. Afford to feed, doubtful.

Andrew shoots an angry look at Ben for obviously divulging privileged information.

BEN

(sarcastically)

There should be no secrets between father and son.

ANDREW

Christ. One plump girl and I get a scarlet letter slapped on my ass.

BEN

I think we are straying off the mark here, boys. We need a next step.

PAUL

Grab the nephew.

BEN

My thought exactly.

ANDREW

Great, let's go then.

PAUL

No, you stay here, work on this lady.

Ben gives Paul a quick glare as his authority is threatened.

ANDREW

(directed at Ben)

Is that all right?

BEN

Yeah, why not? Just if you strike out, head over to my place, check on the ladies. It's over on Noah St., part of the old Baumbach Factory.

ANDREW

I can handle that. Of course, I'm not dropping the ball on this one.

BEN

Then loan me your car, Casanova.

ANDREW

You can't drive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BEN

Paul can.

Andrew takes his keys from his pocket and tosses them to Paul.

ANDREW

Here, take the keys and watch out for the boy here. He's reckless when I'm not backing him up.

BEN

I'm just glad I don't have to worry about getting shot in the back.

Paul takes some money from his pocket to pay for the drinks and waves Lisa back over. Paul's glass, as he puts down a twenty next to it, is still full to the top.

PAUL

Lisa, we're going now. Here, this should cover our round and few more beers for my friend.

(beat)

And, Lisa, can you do me a favor?

LISA

That depends on what it is?

PAUL

Don't let our friend here mess things up with you. He's a younger guy, so he may have a few rough edges that you'll need to smooth out.

BEN

(whispering to Andrew)

Damn. Now I know where I got my moves.

Ben grabs a menu from the bar and flips it over to show it's large blank side.

BEN (CONT'D)

Lisa, do you have a thick, dark marker by chance?

LISA

Yeah, right over here.

Lisa grabs a marker from the area by the cash register and hands it to Ben. He proceeds to write something on the blank side of the menu. He finishes and hands the pen back to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

BEN

Thanks.

PAUL

Then, that would be good night.

Ben and Paul exit the bar, Ben with his newly transformed menu in hand. Andrew is left alone with his flushed cheeks, restrained smile, and possible love interest.

EXT. OUTSIDE OTB (OFF-TRACK-BETTING) - NIGHT

A dark Lincoln Towne car pulls up in front of the OTB, which possesses an extremely common storefront. POPPA exits from the driver's side and makes his way inside the building, alone.

INT. OTB (OFF-TRACK-BETTING) - NIGHT

The room is filled with the VARIOUS OTB MISCREANTS that one would find at an off-track betting place, especially late at night. Many of them are unkempt and seem to care more about the prospect of winning wealth than they do about the prospect of a shower. The room has several television sets mounted to the ceiling with a large screen set embedded into the far wall. There are numerous high tables common to a bar atmosphere with matching high stools. GEORGE is sitting alone at one of these tables; concentrating diligently on the racing form spread out in front of him. A FAT WAITRESS waddles over to his table and deposits a drink in front of him. He barely notices. POPPA enters.

POPPA

Does your wife know you're cheating in her?

George slowly looks up.

GEORGE

I hope you don't think I would touch that fat bitch.

George indicates the Fat Waitress who just served him.

POPPA

No, I know how much you love your wife. You talk a good game about being with other women, but you would never do it.

(beat)

I'm talking about the gambling.

GEORGE

How did you know I was here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POPPA

I own "here". If you want, I can just take your money right now. Save you the hassle and get you home to your loving wife.

George doesn't issue a reply. He just sits there and stares at Poppa.

POPPA (CONT'D)

You're a smart guy, George. I'm sure you realize why I'm here. You know how this will end; with a winner and a loser. I know you'll help the kid out, I can forgive that. If you don't help me though, well, that would be something I could not forgive.

GEORGE

I assume this will involve the usual threats?

POPPA

I'll mail your wife back to you, George. In pieces.

(beat)

I'm an old man, George. I let the young guys come up with the new and inventive threats.

GEORGE

(unshaken by the threat)

So, how can I help you be the winner?

POPPA

Just information.

(beat)

What's the connection between Ben and our returning hero?

GEORGE

I don't know, something to do with the kid's mother. That's not important. The fact that they are working together, looking for a way out. That is important.

POPPA

Did you give them one?

GEORGE

Couldn't see any.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

POPPA

Killing me would be a start.

GEORGE

I wouldn't put it past Ben. I'd make sure those non-verbal bodyguards of yours stay pretty close.

POPPA

The day I can't walk these streets alone, I hang up my hat.

GEORGE

They know why you are after Paul.

POPPA

I still don't know why we didn't track him down years ago.

GEORGE

The guy just wanted to get out. Christ, we all do at some point.

POPPA

Do they know who really pulled the trigger?

GEORGE

No, and I would prefer it that way.

POPPA

George, I need to know where to find them.

GEORGE

The only option I can give you is Ben's apartment, but I doubt he would go there.

POPPA

Yeah, but maybe something there will prove useful.

GEORGE

The old man I don't care about, but Ben..
(beat)
Come on, he's a good guy.

POPPA

He knows.

GEORGE

Chet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

POPPA

(angered)

He knows, George. And don't fucking call me that.

GEORGE

Listen, I should get home to the wife.

POPPA

What are you going to do?

George gets up to leave.

GEORGE

I only gamble on the ponies. In real life, I play it safe. Don't worry. The apartment is in the old Baumbach factory.

POPPA

Thanks.

George just walks away without uttering a word.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - NIGHT

PAUL is driving. BEN rides shotgun, smoking a cigarette. They are traveling quickly on a highway. Other cars pass at infrequent intervals.

PAUL

You're mad that I told Andrew to stay.

BEN

No.

PAUL

It's just that I don't know how much time I'd get to spend with you, didn't think a third wheel would help any.

BEN

Listen, I appreciate you wanting to share what might be your final hours with me and such. Just don't expect to be all embracing of this paternal relationship crap. If you didn't notice, I was doing much better before you came along.

PAUL

You know I had no..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

(interrupting)

No idea. Well, I was perfectly happy having no fucking idea that the father I hated all my life wasn't my real father.

PAUL

Why did you hate him? Did he hit you?

BEN

I wish the bastard hit me, it would have given me cause to smack the little guinea around. No, he was always happy and shit around the house. Never had a mean bone in his body.

PAUL

So?

BEN

He thought with his dick.

(beat)

He cheated on my mother incessantly. Now, he was only ugly son of a bitch. So, the only way for him to get any, was to lavish these girls with expensive gifts. My mother and I paid the price. We lived a life of poverty to sustain his sexual drive. The worst part was Mom never complained once. She just let him get away with it.

PAUL

I never cheated on her.

BEN

No, you just left her.

Paul just sits there focused on the road, unable to provide suitable retort to Ben's statement.

EXT. O'SHEENAN'S BAR - NIGHT

ANDREW is waiting outside the drinking establishment, visibly half in the bag. After a moment or two, LISA makes her way out the front door. Lisa closes the front gate and locks it with a key. She then grabs Andrew by the arm and heads off into the night; anticipating a night of excitement common to new lovers. After the pair has disappeared from view, a dark sedan slowly inches its way towards their direction. As the car moves away, it becomes clear that THE MUTE is behind the wheel.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - NIGHT

PAUL is standing alone in a vast airport terminal. In his hands, he is holding a piece of paper, the menu from O'Sheenan's, with "V. CHETTINI" sprawled across it in big, block letters. The airport is sparsely crowded, given the hour of night. A large CROWD OF PEOPLE makes their way down a walkway which seems to lead to the arrival gates. From the crowd, a large Italian male, VINNY, notices the sign Paul is holding and makes his way over to his potential ride home.

VINNY

Yeah, I'm Vincent Chettini.

PAUL

(very courteously)

Well, then please come this way.

They proceed to walk towards the doors marked "PARKING".

INT. AIRPORT PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

The garage is sparsely holds a dozen cars ranging in economic diversity from a high-end Mercedes sedan down to Andrew's POS. Conveniently, the Mercedes is situated right next to Andrew's car. VINNY and PAUL make their way towards the two cars. No one else seems to be present. Vinny proceeds the passenger side of the Mercedes, while Paul goes over to the less expensive automobile.

PAUL

Here, it's this one over here.

VINNY

You expect me to ride in this piece of shit?

BEN appears suddenly from behind a nearby car, gun in hand. He aims the pistol directly at Vinny's head.

BEN

Yes, we do.

Ben calmly makes his way over to Paul and Vinny. There is an audible click as Ben pulls back the hammer of the gun.

BEN (CONT'D)

(directed at Paul)

Open up the trunk for our little child molester here.

VINNY

Do you know who I am?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ben brings the butt of the gun down on the back of Vinny's neck.

Fade to black.

INT. BEN'S APARTMENT - DAWN

REBECCA is asleep on the bed, while ROSE and SARAH sit on the couch talking. The beginning of a sunrise seems to be peeking through the windows. There is a pleasant feeling of peace and tranquility.

SARAH

So, after Paul left, you just married Ben's father? I mean, the man that raised him.

ROSE

My husband was the complete opposite of Paul, sober, non-threatening, not handsome in the least. I knew he had a wandering eye, but I thought I could overlook that. Especially compared to what I was used to.

SARAH

Does Ben remind you of Paul?

ROSE

In many ways, he reminds me of what Paul was. I worry about that part of my son, of what he is capable of. Ben, though, has a goodness to him that Paul all but destroyed with liquor and anger. Paul never had anyone love him until me, he never knew how to react to love. Ben knows what love is. He tries to make it part of his life. He just thinks his life won't accept it.

SARAH

He tries so hard to protect Rebecca and me from his world, that he never quite belongs to ours.

ROSE

All I know is that he loves you and your daughter very much. I hope that is enough.

SARAH

From what I've seen in life, it rarely is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Suddenly, the door to the apartment is burst open causing Rebecca to awaken in a startle. Sarah quickly stands up.

REBECCA
(yelling)
MOM!!!

EDDIE, THE GRUNTER, and THE MUMBLER walk through the now broken doorway. An extremely large smile appears on Eddie's face.

EDDIE
Well, look what we have here, boys.

A look of horror appears on Sarah's face.

INT. DINER - MORNING

A unremarkable diner is experiencing an early morning rush. In the middle of a good-sized breakfast, BEN and PAUL are sitting at a booth in front of a large picture window. Through the window, Andrew's POS sits in the parking lot. An ANOREXIC WAITRESS comes over and refills the men's coffee.

PAUL
I'm sorry to make you stop. I know you wanted to get back to the girls.

BEN
I understand. When you reach a certain age, you got to eat when you're hungry.

Ben manages to crack a half-smile.

BEN (CONT'D)
Don't want you passing out on me from exertion.

PAUL
I would argue with you, but you're probably right.

BEN
Besides, keeping the perv stuck in the trunk is the only pleasures I've allowed myself all day.

Ben's beeper goes off. He reaches down into his pocket, gets the beeper and examines the readout.

PAUL
Who is it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

(concerned)

I have no idea, but I got a bad feeling about this.

Ben gets up from the table and proceeds to the back of the diner, where presumably a phone is. Ben suddenly comes running from the back.

PAUL

What is it?

Ben grabs his jacket from the booth and nods his head towards the door.

BEN

Come on, we have to go.

PAUL

Who paged you?

BEN

I don't know, but the number they gave was for St. Thomas's Hospital. That's only four blocks from my place.

Paul throws some money on the table to cover the bill and the dynamic duo run out of the restaurant. Through the large picture window, they make their way to the car and speed off.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

In a quaint, homey kitchen, GEORGE, in his pajamas, is seated at the table reading the morning newspaper. GEORGE'S WIFE, clad in a head-wrap and some gaudy nightgown, comes strolling over with two large cups of coffee.

WIFE

Read me my horoscope. Let me know what my day will be like.

GEORGE

How's your horoscope going to determine what your day will be like? Does the month you are born in really predetermine every aspect of your day? No, it just tells you when your parents decided to have sex.

The pair exchange a coy smile. This is not the first time that they had this discussion. Before any retort can be issued on the side of astrology, the telephone rings and George's Wife makes her way over to answer it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WIFE

Hello.

(beat)

Yeah, Poppa, he's right here reading me my horoscope.

George stands up from the table and takes the phone.

GEORGE

Yeah.

(beat)

OK.

(beat)

I will.

(beat)

Yeah, bye.

George walks over and hangs up the phone.

WIFE

What happened?

George takes his Wife into his arms and puts his head deep into her shoulder. The uncontrollable sobbing begins.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - MORNING

Once again, PAUL is driving and BEN is riding shotgun. Ben is busy checking his gun.

PAUL

You do realize this is probably a trap?

BEN

I hope that's all it is.

EXT. ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL - MORNING

THE MUMBLER and THE MUTE are sitting in a parked car across the street from the hospital. Both are, surprisingly, just sitting in silence. Out of nowhere, BEN appears in front of the car, gun in hand. He quickly fires two shots, hitting each lackey squarely in the temple. Ben continues on foot towards the hospital.

INT. ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS - MORNING

BEN is talking with one of the NURSES at the extremely busy admissions desk. Several other INQUIRERS are vying for patient information and/or medical care for themselves.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NURSE

(directed at Ben)

Well, we did have a sixty-year-old
Caucasian Jane Doe suffering from severe
head trauma.

BEN

Where is she?

NURSE

ICU, fourth floor.

Before she can finish the word "floor", Ben is rushing off
towards the elevators.

INT. ST. THOMAS'S HOSPITAL ICU - MOMENTS LATER

BEN is standing ROSE, unconscious in her hospital bed. Rose
in on a respirator and has bandages wrapped around her skull,
left eye and both hands. A DOCTOR slowly approaches from
behind. A tear had appeared from Ben's eye, he quickly
disperses it with the back of his hand.

DOCTOR

Pardon me, son, may I help you?

BEN

This is my mother. What happened to her?

DOCTOR

Your mother received what seem to be two
or three severe blows to the head. She's
suffering from some severe internal
hemorrhaging and there is a fifty percent
chance she'll lose her left eye.

BEN

Did she say who did this to her?

DOCTOR

No, she just kept asking for a "Ben".

BEN

That's me.

(beat)

Will she survive?

DOCTOR

We've been trying to relieve the
hemorrhaging and the severity of her
cancer is not helping the situation. If
her brain activity does not start to
increase, none of that will matter much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

You do what you can, Doctor. I'll be back
in a couple hours.

Ben starts to walk away. The Doctor grabs his arm to stop
him.

DOCTOR

Wait, I have some papers that you need to
fill out.

BEN

Right now, I have to go or you'll have
three more patients in here.

The Doctor concedes the point and releases his hold on Ben.
Ben quickly walks away.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - MORNING

PAUL is staring in shock at his lap. BEN is sitting in the
passenger seat, contemplating.

PAUL

I want to see her.

BEN

Sarah and Rebecca are still out there.

PAUL

George or Andrew?

Ben turns to Paul and gives a good long stare. He issues a
slight nod of acceptance and accepting the truth he has
refused to believe.

BEN

George.

Paul starts the car and puts the transmission into drive.

INT. PARRIZO'S ITALIAN CUISINE - DAY

POPPA is sitting alone at his usual table, nursing a cup of
coffee. The restaurant is deserted except for him. His face
looks as if he has been awake all night. Poppa slowly sips
from his coffee cup, returns it to the table. He closes his
eyes hard for a second. He then stands up and walks away from
the table.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - DAY

There is a loud pounding at the front door, but the apartment seems deserted. After some more pounding, the front door is kicked in. BEN and PAUL enter the apartment, Ben with gun drawn. They begin to scour the apartment. Ben heads off to the rear. Paul enters the kitchen area and finds a note on the kitchen table. It reads **"G- Quick went to stores. Hope you feel better. Love, W-"**.

BEN (O.C.)

Paul, come here.

Paul makes his way to the back room, the master bedroom. In there, GEORGE has hung himself from the ceiling fan. A long, narrow suitcase rests on the bed. Ben is leaning against the wall, slightly distraught.

PAUL

Christ. Is he dead?

BEN

Stupid question.

PAUL

I'm sorry, Ben. I know how much he meant to you.

BEN

(angered)

How many people are going to have to die for you?

Ben grabs the suitcase off the bed and makes his way out of the house. Paul is left staring at hanging body, thinking about the answer to that question.

BEN (CONT'D)

Hurry up, I need you to drive the damn car.

Paul makes his way out of the bedroom as the phone rings.

INT. PARRIZO'S ITALIAN CUISINE - DAY

POPPA is standing at the rear of the restaurant, phone to his ear. THE GRUNTER comes into the large room, but gives his boss some space.

POPPA

George?

(beat)

Ben, this is Poppa.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POPPA(CONT'D)

(beat)

Simple exchange, Ben. Paul for the little girl.

(beat)

Way it has to be.

(beat)

No, the mother didn't make it. According to Riggo, she had a very loud problem with being attacked and had to be silenced.

(beat)

Three hours at The Litter Box.

(beat)

Good.

Poppa hangs up the phone and continues eating his meal.

INT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT - DAY

BEN is standing in George's kitchen holding the now-disconnected phone in one hand and the long, narrow suitcase in the other. His eyes are closed and the veins in his forehead are displaying themselves.

BEN

(whispering)

And the hits keep on coming.

PAUL

What?

BEN

Sarah's dead.

PAUL

The little girl?

Ben puts the case he is holding on top of the kitchen table and opens it; inside, the various components of a high-powered sniper rifle.

BEN

We're going to go get her back.

Ben's face seems to be made of ice as he stares coldly at Paul.

EXT. GEORGE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The brownstone exterior of George's building is nice & tranquil, yet nowhere near as upscale a location as a man of George's income should allow. Andrew's POS is situated near the front entrance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL is opening the trunk of the car, so that BEN can place the suitcase inside it. Paul opens the hatch and both are slightly astonished by what they see.

PAUL
He's dead.

BEN
Yeah, Andy's piece of shit exhaust system probably leaked into the trunk.

Ben throws the suitcase in the trunk on top of the corpse known as Vinny.

BEN (CONT'D)
Just means one more stop on the way there.

They close the trunk.

INT. ED RIGGO'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eddie's apartment seems to inhabited by a hamster rather than a human being. The floor is covered by an ankle-deep combination with trash, clothes, and the remnants of a sexual deviant. The sounds of a porno movie can be overheard coming from a nearby television set. Dead center in the room as a large, worn reclining chair. EDDIE enters from the far side of the room dressed in a leopard print robe and black socks. He is holding a family-sized dispenser of hand creme. He makes his way cautiously over to the cleaner. He doesn't want to step on anything which might be valuable.

BEN (O.C.)
There really is no need for me to see you beat off.

Eddie is shocked to have to the assassin in his home. His faces shows his obvious guilt and fear.

EDDIE
(stuttering)
W-W-What are you doing here?

BEN (O.C.)
Getting some revenge.

EDDIE
Come on, Ben. You know I had nothing to do with that.

BEN enters the frame, approaching Eddie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

With what, Eddie? Nothing to do with what?

Ben smacks the container of hand lotion out of Eddie's hands.

BEN (CONT'D)

What, Eddie? Didn't get your rocks off with my girl, so you have to come home and finish the job?

Ben picks up the little runt off of the recliner and hurls him across the room. He walks over to the quivering mass and picks him up by the back of the head. Ben reaches into jacket and pulls out his gun; grabbing it by the business end of the weapon. Ben begins beating Eddie across the mouth with the handle of his gun; knocking out teeth and causing blood to squirt from his mouth.

BEN (CONT'D)

You're lucky, Eddie. I need you alive for now.

Ben brings the gun down hard to Eddie's mouth again, knocking out even more teeth.

EXT. ED RIGGO'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

BEN brings out a bound and gagged EDDIE, still dressed in his bathrobe and socks, out of the rundown building. PAUL quickly exits the car and proceeds to open the trunk as he check the up and down the street for possible witnesses. Ben tosses the bloodied little rag doll known as Eddie into the trunk. Eddie tries to scream for help when he sees the corpse sharing the space with him, yet the duct tape covering his mouth prevents him from doing so.

BEN

Better hold your breath, Eddie. Don't want you dying on the way there like Vinny. Don't you know too much carbon monoxide can kill you?

Ben slams the trunk shut.

INT. THE LITTER BOX BACK OFFICE - DAY

ANDREW, also bound and gagged, is sitting in the middle of the dimly lit office. His right eye is all bruised and puffy. His white T-shirt is soaked with sweat and blood. Off to the right stand POPPA and THE GRUNTER. The rest of the office is shrouded in shadow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POPPA

Kid didn't give us a damn bit of
information?

The Grunter issues a negative-sounding grunt.

POPPA (CONT'D)

After we get Paul, dump him in the river.

The Grunter issues his normal grunt of agreement.

INT. ANDREW'S CAR - DAY

For the final time, BEN is riding shotgun while PAUL drives. Their background has become more rural in its surroundings than urban. They have left the confines of their city.

BEN

I shouldn't have gone off on you before.

PAUL

No, you were right, this is all my fault.
(beat)

I shouldn't have come back.

BEN

Did she tell you she had cancer?

PAUL

Rose?

Ben nods gently.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Yes, she did. She knew she was dying. She was going to tell you. I was supposed to come back first, help settle some things. Then, she was going to tell you.

Paul looks over to find his son deep in thought. Feeling Paul looking at him, Ben turns his head in the direction of the passenger window.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I should have...

BEN

(interrupting)
Don't say that. If you didn't come back, I'd still be a killer.

PAUL

What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BEN

If I live through this, I'm done. One less Irish hitman.

PAUL

It's a shrinking minority.

BEN

Well, they really do need a better benefits plan.

Ben and Paul share a brief chuckle to break up the tension.

PAUL

I'm glad that you're my son.

BEN

I'll try to make sure you don't have to kill any one in there.

PAUL

Thanks.

BEN

But if something happens to me, promise me that you'll take care of Rebecca.

PAUL

Don't think like that.

BEN

Promise me.

PAUL

I promise.

BEN

Drop me off over there. Wait ten minutes, then go in as planned. Stick to the story, Eddie should still be alive back there.

Paul stops the car, looks over at his son, and offers his hand.

PAUL

Good luck.

BEN

No one's going to come near you. I promise.

They shake hands and Ben exits the vehicle.

INT. THE LITTER BOX - DAY

The Litter Box is a very large partially converted airplane hangar. It has a large open area in the front that leads to two extremely large sliding doors. The doors stretch from the floor to the roof. In the back of the building, there is an enclosed office. An intricate maze of rafters, ladders and catwalks encompass the upper portion of the building. BEN is slowly working his way through that maze, sniper rifle in hand. Occasionally, he stops and looks at the ground beneath him. The lower section is littered with VARIOUS HENCHMEN among various larger crates.

BEN (V.O.)

The Litter Box is Poppa's attempt at opening a high-end strip club out by the airport. He is slowly converting the hangar into a palace of pussy or something like that. I say slowly because it currently serves as a warehouse for stolen goods and a perfect place for meetings like this one, clandestine in nature. Despite what you might think, secret spots like this one are a rarity, especially ones that allow people like me unlimited spots to fire a sniper rifle from.

EXT. THE LITTER BOX - DAY

Andrew's car slowly pulls up to the front of the warehouse. The two large panel doors mechanically slide open, revealing POPPA, THE GRUNTER, and VARIOUS HENCHMEN lying in wait for their prey. PAUL slowly gets out of the car with his arms up in the air. One of the Henchmen quickly pats Paul down in an effort to find any weapons. He indicates to Poppa that Paul is unarmed.

POPPA

Where's Ben?

PAUL

He'll be on his way. He stopped in at the hospital. You know, his mother isn't well.

POPPA

Don't shit me.

(directed at The Grunter)

Search the building for him.

PAUL

Where's the girl?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POPPA
Oh, right back there.

Two of the Henchmen move out of the way to reveal REBECCA tied up and gagged.

PAUL
Good. Well, I'm here. Let her go.

POPPA
That wasn't the deal.

PAUL
No, that was the deal, the old man for the girl. But if you want more, I can give you more.

POPPA
Like what?

PAUL
The reason why I came back.

POPPA
You came back to see your son. The little girl has a big mouth.

PAUL
Come on now, Chet. You know me. Would I ever come back just for a son I never knew?

POPPA
I don't know, would you?

PAUL
Well, you are the expert on healthy father and son relationships.
(beat)
No, I came back to do a hit. See your nephew, Eddie Riggo, and some of your lieutenants want you dead.

POPPA
Bullshit.

PAUL
Open the trunk.

Paul tosses Poppa the keys to the car.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You'll find your nephew and Ed Riggo.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Poppa indicates to one of the Henchmen to go check it out. He throws him the car keys. The Henchman proceeds to the rear of the car and opens the trunk.

HENCHMAN #1

He's not lying, boss. They're both back here.

Poppa makes his way to the back of the car, sees Eddie still squirming. Poppa rips off the duct tape gagging Eddie, this causes a huge mouthful of blood to engulf Poppa's face and suit. Suddenly, Henchman #1 is shot square in the face causing the back of his head to explode. Paul quickly reaches down into Vinny's jacket and withdraws a gun. He puts it up to Poppa's head, who is currently blinded by Eddie's blood.

PAUL

(shouting)

All we want is the girl, if you hand her over, no one gets hurt.

Thinking Paul was the one who shot their cohort, the Various Henchmen begin raining Andrew's car with bullets. Paul and Poppa duck down behind the car to avoid being shot. The now toothless Eddie gets his head up over the trunk opening and tries incoherently to explain himself. Poppa finally clears his vision of Eddie's blood. The first thing he sees is Eddie's disfigured face.

POPPA

What the fuck happened to you?

The Various Henchmen shooting at Paul suddenly begin dropping like flies as bullets come whizzing down from the rafters in an accurate fashion.

INT. THE LITTER BOX RAFTERS - DAY

POV of the scope of Ben's rifle as it makes it's way from target to target. After shooting four or five of the HENCHMEN, Ben's scope sees THE GRUNTER making his way to the back of the building, towards the office.

INT. THE LITTER BOX - DAY

PAUL with POPPA as a human shield has made his way to the main entrance of The Litter Box. The HENCHMEN are slowly inching backwards with their guns drawn; two or three are scanning parts of the rafters searching for the sniper. Poppa is no longer blinded and has become fully aware of the situation.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

POPPA

(shouting)

Don't shoot, you idiots. You're liable to hit me.

Paul sees BEN climbing down from the upper rafters to one of the lower catwalks.

PAUL

Let me get to the girl and my sidekick up there will stop with the bullets. OK?

(beat)

Good.

Paul begins walking slowly back to REBECCA with Poppa still in tow.

INT. THE LITTER BOX BACK OFFICE - DAY

ANDREW sits bound and gagged in the same spot as before, visibly aware of the ensuing gunfight happening outside the closed office door. His right eye has swollen to such an extent, that it is now closed shut. The door suddenly bursts open and THE GRUNTER appears gun in hand. He raises the gun up at Andrew's chest. Andrew closes his good eye, accepting his fate. A gun is fired. The Grunter has no face, he has been shot in the back of the head. He drops to the ground, revealing BEN, up on a catwalk, rifle in hand. Andrew sees his friend and winks a thank you with his good eye. Ben nods a reply and continues on his mission.

INT. THE LITTER BOX - DAY

PAUL and POPPA have made it all the way to REBECCA. All three are surrounded by the remaining VARIOUS HENCHMEN. Paul lets go of Poppa in order to untie Rebecca, but keeps his gun trained on him. After the little girl is untied, Paul picks her up into his arms. Poppa seizes the moment and jumps behind some nearby crates.

POPPA

Shoot him, now.

As each of Henchmen raises his gun at Paul, his face becomes a cloud of red mist courtesy of Ben. Paul begins a dash for the front entrance with Rebecca clinging tightly to his chest.

INT. THE LITTER BOX CATWALK - DAY

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

On a catwalk spanning the middle of the building, BEN is kneeling on the catwalk covering PAUL and REBECCA's escape below. At the far right side of the catwalk, a ladder descends the floor level

BEN
 (whispering to himself)
 Four.
 (beat)
 Five.
 (beat)
 Come on, old man. Run. You're almost there.

Off to the right, a LONE HENCHMAN makes his way up the ladder to the catwalk. Ben notices him out the corner of his eye, but remains focused on the duo's escape.

BEN (CONT'D)
 Come on, two more.

POV of the gun scope captures the last two HENCHMEN in Paul's path being shot.

The Lone Henchman has now reached the catwalk. Ben tosses the rifle over the side, reaches inside his coat for his pistol, and is shot three times in the chest by the Lone Henchman. Ben is spun around by the impact and lands face first on the catwalk with his face and right side hanging over the side.

The Lone Henchman's chest explodes as he is shot from behind. A slow pan down to ground level reveals the shooter as ANDREW with The Grunter's gun in hand.

INT. THE LITTER BOX - DAY

PAUL with REBECCA in his arms has almost reached the entrance. They are almost free.

POPPA (O.C.)
 (shouting)
 STOP!

Paul stops and slowly turns around to reveal POPPA standing all alone in a sea of deceased HENCHMEN directly under the catwalk and BEN's corpse. At his side, he is holding a gun.

PAUL
 You still don't know, do you?

POPPA
 What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PAUL
Why I came back?

A trickle of blood begins to make its way down Ben's dangling arm.

POPPA
Right now, I don't really care.

PAUL
I wanted to prove that I was better than all this.

Poppa laughs and slowly raises his gun.

POPPA
If it makes you feel better, you probably are.

A drop of blood from Ben's hand falls and catches Poppa right on the cheek. He instinctively raises his hand to wipe it. Seizing the opportunity, Paul quickly raises his gun and shoots Poppa twice.

PAUL
I am.

Paul drops the gun on the ground and slowly walks away with Rebecca in his arms.

EXT. FRONT OF PET STORE - DAY

A lone pre-teen girl, REBECCA, stands in front of the large storefront window of a pet shop, looking inside at the animals. In one hand, she is holding a suitcase. She stares blankly at a Labrador puppy. A STORE CLERK slowly picks up the poppy. ANDREW and LISA appear behind her. Andrew's face display the aftermath of his beating.

ANDREW
Hey, gorgeous.

REBECCA
(excited)
ANDREW!

Andrew and Rebecca hug.

ANDREW
Think I'd miss seeing my best girl off?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LISA

He isn't lying. If you were a few years older, he'd be after you and not me.

REBECCA

When you weren't at the funeral, I thought something bad happened.

ANDREW

Ben and Sarah were bad enough, I couldn't handle another one so soon.

PAUL exits the pet store with the puppy in one arm and carrying a pet traveling case in the other. He walks over to the trio.

PAUL

Hey, kids.

REBECCA

THE PUPPY!

PAUL

I figure I never had to care for anything before, maybe you should join the club too.

REBECCA

Thanks, Paul.

PAUL

Well, come on. We got a bus to catch. Andrew, Lisa, you know how to reach me.

ANDREW

We sure do and don't worry about the bar. We'll treat it like it was our own.

PAUL

Thanks, I think.

Paul and Rebecca cross the street over to the bus station; stopping once to wave back at their friends. They enter the station. Andrew and Lisa start to walk away.

ANDREW

So, did I ever tell you my Star Wars theories?

LISA

I'm sure you will.

INT. PRISON CELL - NIGHT

Two PRISON GUARDS are staring through prison bars. Their faces express looks of revulsion.

GUARD #1

That is one ugly mother. What happened to his mouth?

GUARD #2

I don't know, but he is going to be real popular around here.

Guard #1 nods his head in agreement.

FADE TO BLACK