

Nemesis
by
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Notes on Script:

A professional writer might format or rewrite this story in less than 133 pages but, being aware of that, I used an extensive description of the settings whose names are completely fictitious and if they happen to be existing, it is a coincidence. The names of the characters are, too. What more is, this is my first attempt at entering the complex world of cinematography using a language that is being a foreign tongue I think I have learned enough of to actually try and tell this story. Thank you.

FADE IN:

A confusing image. Greenish unclear. White speckles and a network of vein-like rugose lines. A blurring sight suggesting a magnified surface cell structure. PULL BACK.

The main and secondary veins of a tree leaf cuticle. A water speck trickles down the surface, melts at the midrib, ends in a droplet that hangs for a while at the apex then...

TRACK WITH its way down at it vanishes amidst the bulges and vortexes of a stream below. PAN UP from the bank scree.

EXT. CYPRESS FOREST- MORNING-ESTABLISHING

A cloudless, gleaming blue skyscape. A dell. The cypress-covered hill glitter in the early morning hours. A peculiarly typical image of nature in a sunny winter day. The scope changes into a holm. A soggy, lone tire-trodden roadway cuts longitudinally. From the dell top, we see a wooden shack at the right bank of the stream. At the end of the low-pitched roof ridgeline, the chimney cap is throwing out a slowly updrifting white smoke.

EXT. MOTORWAY- AERIAL- MORNING

Cabs, criss-cross, speed bullet-like. TRACK. We notice a lone car, a FORD parked to the right curb. Someone is busy at the trunk. He finishes, brings down the door, moves to the driver seat and climbs in behind the wheel. Ahead He drives.

INT. CABIN- MORNING

The firebrick hearth resounds. Continuous cracklings. The fire is tailing off the cherry-red tips. TRACK ACROSS THE DECORUM AND THE OVERALL MAKEUP. Wide-stretched shutters, lightly-curtained windows and the on-but-sound-off TV set broadcasting a western blockbuster. Above it, the perfect photograph of a girl. WE COME TO REST on a small table.

CLOSE-TABLE TOP

A can beer. Right beneath, a scroll of paper and a permanent ink uncapped pen. OUT OF FOCUS at the other side, a hand encases the table edge... slowly moves into FOCUS.

The hand clasps the beer between thumb and pinkie whilst the index and the middle finger clutch a half-smoked cigarette. It lifts the beer up. A beat. A sigh. A gulping. The beer is set down. WIDEN:

DEAN FRAZER, early thirties, slim, unshaven, wearing a white jersey and a navy blue shirt. His eyes up-looking, transfixed on a spot. The cob-webbed ceiling. The decorum and the world his neurons conceptualize throw him into a dilemma. He moves his index finger up, down, sideways in perfect mathematical geometric graphics. Frazer sighs. A possible donnybrook. He reaches out again for the beer.

EXT. MOTORWAY- SUNRISE

Through the steamed up rear windshield we catch a glimpse of the Ford driver. By and by bumping on the seat. PUSH IN SO THAT WE ARE IN.

INT. CAR-

The waves of some rock 'n Roll music chirp out from the radio channel. The driver slows down, shifts the car into a lower gear. He hits the blinker and veers right taking another way less wide, an off turn.

MICHAEL LANCASTER, early thirties, freshly shaven and extravagantly young, dressed in casual day off wear. Roll neck pull and blue jeans.

EXT. GREENLAND- TREAMLINE DISTRICT-

Stacking up work goers, fairly thronging the sidewalk. A downtown bus pulls up next to a bus stop panel. A young woman steps out hurriedly. KRISTY DWIGHT, ravishing, brunette bombshell in her late twenties. She takes a quick gander at her watch and her face registers a tailspin. She looks ahead of her. The jammed cars are making a long-stretching tailback.

DWIGHT
(To herself)
Oh, my God, Kristy. Barely any
choice.

She jumps forward, nearly bumps into a passerby.

DWIGHT
I beg your pardon, sir.

*

She goes ahead, fast-pacing.

EXT. CYPRESS FOREST- CABIN YARD- DAY

Lancaster's Ford pulls up in the soggy court. Lancaster unlocks softly and alights and pushes the door shut. He crosses the yard, strides up the stoop. At the doorstep, he raises his hand to knock on. He holds it and glances sideways.

HIS POV: the front metallic structure of an all road vehicle. A 4x4 Jeep motorcar.

Lancaster nods to himself satisfied and knocks. Frazer opens.

LANCASTER
You didn't keep your early hours.
What's on this time?

FRAZER
Catching up with things quite
beyond my ken.

They get inside...

INT. CABIN- CONTINUOUS

...Frazer moves to a corner of the room, carrying his beer.
He stops by the fridge.

FRAZER
A poison?

*

LANCASTER
Yeah, I'd love a beer...

He eyes the paperwork and looks up...

LANCASTER
...what are you scribbling?

*

Frazer does not answer. He opens his tiny fridge and scoops
out two beers. On coming back, he pitches the one he has just
emptied into the trash bin at a corner of the room. The can
settles right in. Frazer sits down heavily and smiles.

FRAZER
A bunch of old follies.

LANCASTER
If I understand, it takes time ...and
that means you are gonna.... stay
here.

FRAZER
Yeah.

LANCASTER
But why? You said you'd be ready.

FRAZER
All right. I lied.

LANCASTER
Here...I get two days off...but I like
them these days only when you could
come out of this goddamn flea bag.
(Beat) and hell... Yesterday... could
have frozen the hind leg off a
donkey.

Frazer hands him the beer, opens the cap of his own and
drinks. He clears his throat.

FRAZER
Day's forecast? Good. Today would
still be nicer for the old Duffy.

Lancaster drinks, looks back, slightly off.

LANCASTER

Your rhetorical tinge never dies.

FRAZER

Incorrect. Never worked as yet.

LANCASTER

Okay...okay...I'd put up with it. Well?

Frazer's Adam apple bobbles up and down as he drinks. He clears his throat, prepares to answer...

INT. NEWSDAY TABLOID OFFICE- DAY

It is a hustling business. Stacks of paper, books, magazines, dictionaries and other furniture cram up the lines-up desktops. Employees are busy, typing, exchanging topics, items... ECT. On a printer, a read-out comes into view. An article try-on. The life of an article...

INT. MANAGERIAL OFFICE- SAME

The Manager is in such a state, seething with impatience. He throws the documents he is holding on the desk. He moves to the door exiting into...

INT. OFFICES- CONTINUOUS

...the offices and moves straight to where the printer is. He checks the try-on. No use. We hear running footsteps in the hallway and... Dwight stumbles in heavily. She doubles up for some moments. Punctuality isn't her exact forte. The manager does not see her, still absorbed in checking... he looks up, blowing up fuses ...

MANAGER

(Explosive)

Where the hell is she?

Dwight straightens from behind a desktop, apprehensive now... still gasping for air...

DWIGHT

Sorry, boss.

The manager sees her...

MANAGER

It's becoming... a cliché. Your specialty is 'be late'. What'd you insinuate this time... tremors in your manor?

DWIGHT

It's Anais... boss. She... she didn't feel well this morning and I... I had to...

The manager chuckles...

MANAGER

No longer insinuation. That's a tremor.

DWIGHT

I assure you...

MANAGER

(Cuts her off)

I suggest you tell this... new poppycock to any screwball you'd meet out of here.

DWIGHT

I'm not...

MANAGER

I can't do without you. That's truly your chance if you ain't out of work.

DWIGHT

I'm grateful.

MANAGER

Don't be. You waiting for? The report.

Dwight digs in her bag...

DWIGHT

All right, boss it's just... too encumbering... here...

She hands him the report.

MANAGER

You are the one encumbering.

He moves away. Off Dwight's puzzled look...

INT. PAYPHONE POLL- DAY

Lancaster dials the numbers. We hear the ringing. Someone at the end of the line takes the call. A female voice answers.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Yes?

LANCASTER

Suzan. It's Mike. I'm a bit late.
Sorry for that. I'll pick Kenny up
and drop in for a munch.

SUZAN (OS)

Okay, I'll be waiting.

Lancaster hangs up and exits. He fast-walks toward his nearby-parked Ford where Frazer is waiting. He climbs in behind the wheel.

INT. FORD-CONTINUOUS

Lancaster starts up and lets in first gear. He drops a look at Frazer.

LANCASTER

I have to pick Kenny up. It's a
minor detour. Then, we'd better
tear off a bit.

FRAZER

Good idea, Mike. How's Suzan? Her
writings?

Lancaster speeds up and lets in higher gear..

LANCASTER

She's just okay. I never had a look
at her scribble. I'll be sure to
make it up to her... one day.

FRAZER

Just let her do it her way... finish
it.

LANCASTER

Inspiration, perspiration,
infusion... The one and ninety
percent stuff.

FRAZER

Much time to work it out.

They enter the town. Lancaster looks at Frazer. Frazer is staring out at the mob. Deeply thoughtful. He says no other comment.

LANCASTER

What's clicking?

FRAZER

(Startles)
It happens I daydream.

LANCASTER

Breaking news maybe will awake you.

He reaches for the tape recorder and attempts to turn on the button. Frazer reaches it.

FRAZER

Please, Mike. How do you expect a journey to end? The way it started.

LANCASTER

Music maybe... they tell me it's...

FRAZER

Just the usual boring shit in a radio channel. Government meetings, bloody editorials about a preventive war-wage, endless protocols, fluctuations in the stock exchange (beat) nothing of concern in fact. Is this your ...therapy?

Lancaster stops the car at a red light. Frazer lights up a cigarette.

LANCASTER

Okay Dean...that's what you think.

FRAZER

Can't be otherwise. Things have reached the Achilles ' heel, haven't they?

LANCASTER

What? What is this?

On Frazer, beat.

FRAZER

Achilles. Strong. Much like a corrida bull. Except his heel gave him hell because of his mother.

LANCASTER

His mother?

A shrill bullhorn siren behind them. Lancaster sees the light is green. The other driver horns again. Lancaster shrills at the sound.

LANCASTER

What's gotten into this...?

*

He proceeds.

FRAZER

Achilles' mother dipped him into the Styx from his heel.

LANCASTER

(Sighs)

Well shit. I feel mythologized. I can't make it out. Incidentally... how's your writing coming along?

FRAZER

More than a bungled hackwork. I'll see to doing it up.

Lancaster looks at him for a long while then smiles to himself.

FRAZER

I can't take myself off my ivory tower. I look at things from another regard. The perfect lateral thinking.

*

LANCASTER

Yes, a prob strikes in just when you need reference. And most time... you have a two-deal. Hey, Damn calculus, Sherlock.

FRAZER

How's that?

LANCASTER

being a kid... nothing of interest than bug a teacher.

FRAZER

So what?

LANCASTER

... heavy... disgusting... curriculum. There was snake in the grass. I paid for it. Tough luck...

FRAZER

(cuts off)

Someone always pays for somebody's deeds. Good Calculus, Sherlock.

They share a smile. EXIT OUT of the car as it integrates the flowing highway traffic.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD—MOMENTS LATER

Lancaster pulls up and steps out. He crosses the yard. Frazer exits more slowly. KENNY, Lancaster's 8 year-old son has his back toward us. He is talking to a girl, round his age.

LANCASTER (O.S.)

Kenny?

KENNY
(Spins)
Oh, daddy.

LANCASTER
How are you, sonny?

He eyes the young girl.

KENNY
I'm fine, dad. Dad, this is Anais.

LANCASTER
Fine name, Anais.

ANAIS
Thank you, Mr. Lancaster.

A series of rapid footsteps and breaths catch their attention. They turn. Dwight is in a mad hurry. Punctuality isn't her Johnny-on-the-spot. Frazer sees her join the group and lights up a cigarette.

ANAIS
Mom! *

DWIGHT
(panting)
Oh, sorry, honey.

LANCASTER
You have a disposition at choosing fine names, Ma'am.

Lancaster extends his hand. Dwight looks up, shakes hands awkwardly.

LANCASTER
Michael Lancaster. *

DWIGHT
Kristy Dwight.

FRAZER-

He leans against the front passenger door, watching the other's performance with growing impatience. Eyes half-closed against the acrid fume, we catch a first glimpse of his deep, inner thoughts.

In the f.g now, the group chat in a friendly atmosphere, laughing.

LANCASTER
The four freedoms are well in here.

Frazer takes a long draw, unlocks the door and turns round, then as he is about to get in...

HIS POV-

In the offing, two men seem to be looking directly at him. Long pause. Their car pulls out of a long row of parked vehicles and melts in the traffic.

Frazer has not finished his draw. He pitches the butt, crushes it...

INT. CAR-

...sits in heavily and BANGS the door shut.

EXT. SCHOOL YARD-

Lancaster and the other spectators hear the loud slam. They turn round.

DWIGHT
Who's this guy?

LANCASTER
An off-the bat friend of mine.
Well... You seem in hurry... if we
could drive you.

She is still fixing the Ford.

DWIGHT
No, thanks. Goodbye.

ANAIS
See you tomorrow, Kenny.

Dwight walks away, hand in hand with her daughter.

EXT. LANCASTER'S HOUSE- DOORWAY- DAY

SUZAN opens. Pretty, blonde housewife. Inside get Kenny and Lancaster. Frazer brings up the rear.

INT. MORNING ROOM-

Frazer kisses Suzan lightly on the cheek.

FRAZER
You're ravishing, Suzan.

SUZAN
(Smiles)
Thanks, Dean.

She closes the door and turns round. Lancaster disappears into the kitchen. Kenny gets in too.

FRAZER
By the way, Suzan... you got any
mails for me?

SUZAN

Oh, yes... Sharon isn't taking long
in writing you back.

FRAZER

Perfect. Glad she does. I'm lucky
most of all my secrets are in safe
hands.

Suzan smiles indulgently and exits toward the drawing room.
Lancaster appears on the kitchen doorway. Eagerly, munching,
snapping at his sandwich.

LANCASTER

Will you dish up some scoff? Take a
load off your feet, man.

FRAZER

You know I always did, Mike. I
always did. Thanks for all.

INT. DRAWING ROOM-

Suzan pulls the silverware drawer of the sideboard. She
scoops out a sealed letter, reads it briefly and nods to
herself.

INT. MORNING ROOM-

A rosewood box on a sideboard attracts Frazer's attention. He
fingers the fine wood. Lancaster comes toward him, still
cobbling down his sandwich.

FRAZER

Very nice.

*

Lancaster opens the lid. Inside is a taken-down R-700 SNIPER
GUN. Frazer is impressed.

FRAZER

Wow... shooter's most valuable
gadget.

*

LANCASTER

My father's.

FRAZER

sharpshooter?

LANCASTER

Paratrooper. World War II veteran
who's had much of war making in
Omaha. Of the shellshocks, he never
liked to see a gun again. Fifty
years later, he bought this one.
Like a D-day token... remembrance.

Frazer fingers the weapon admiringly.

FRAZER

A good.. one. A good.. remembrance.
Tactical rifle. Crisp-trigger,
stainless steel tubular receiver.
Rotating bolt locking with two lugs
built on the recesses of the
receiver walls.

Lancaster stops munching. He is impressed.

LANCASTER

How do you know from..?

Frazer pauses, thinks of an answer.

FRAZER

I've seen this model. Always
interesting. It cries out to be
used one day.

Suzan enters in. they both turn round.

SUZAN

Here you are, Dean.

She hands him the letter. Frazer opens it. We can read the
name on the return address: Sharon Marcklin. It takes Frazer
seconds to read it. He lowers his hand and looks up, eyes
closed in perplexity or indecision.

FRAZER

Oh, my God.

Suzan and Lancaster trade a look.

LANCASTER

What's happened?

Frazer smiles at them.

FRAZER

It's short notice. She invites me
and.. This is..

LANCASTER

The prelude. I'll tell you how to
pop it.

Suzan smiles at him and looks back to Frazer.

SUZAN

Won't you take her up on her
invitation?

Frazer walks away few feet, turns round again.

FRAZER

I can't possibly tell... don't know... it's too early to be really exciting. Besides you and Mike are the only link that ties me to existence. (Beat) I never want to sell all these years down the river.

Lancaster takes Suzan in his arms. They both understand.

EXT. CABIN-YARD- NIGHT

We hear voices inside a car. Beat. The driver opens the door. Simultaneously the front passenger's door pushes slowly, hesitantly open. The passenger is trying abnormally to alight. We can't see whoever they are. The driver rushes to the other side and we recognize Lancaster, helping out a roaring drunk and disorderly Frazer.

LANCASTER

You are all right, Dean. Just let me take you in.

FRAZER

(Edges in his words)

I know I'm not, Mike. I assure you I do. I failed to account for tonight's tank-up and still couldn't erase the drifts of... Loose memorials.

LANCASTER

When no one's likely to change anything one should trash them.

FRAZER

Fate, destiny, coincidence, chance, accident...but what? Get me a difference. Quite a cocktail to believe in.

LANCASTER

Better do.

FRAZER

Better don't. Fate's dumped feeling. It is. Yes, a dumped feeling.

LANCASTER

You sound to have much to care for. I just try to straighten them out.

FRAZER

Mike... It's all lies. I'm inside of a great, intricate maze. The story of how I ended up...

Frazer stops sharp...Lancaster notices the abrupt stop...

LANCASTER

What story?

Frazer takes one step toward the cabin. He does not answer. Lancaster notices. Frazer trudges his way along to the way and wobbles to the stairs. He strides up, staggers and collapses. Lancaster runs for him, pulls him up. Frazer is too heavy. He tries to rise. It's a total rout in his mind.

FRAZER

Good night, Mike. I feel better.

LANCASTER

What story, Dean? What story?

FRAZER

Good night, Mike.

LANCASTER

No, I'll help you in. what story...
Tell me?

FRAZER

It's nothing. Believe me it's not a slip. You have to go. Suzan's waiting. I don't want her worry, because of me. She's already been very kind.

Lancaster's eyes wet with recognition. Frazer would never tell him. He is unsatisfied. He backs away, slowly, brokenhearted, until he reaches his Ford and climbs in.

INT. FORD- CONTINUOUS

Lancaster switches the headlights on. In the yard, Frazer, at last, finds his repairs and gets into his cabin. Lancaster starts up, U-turns and off he drives.

INT. CABIN- BED- SAME

Frazer lies headlong in his nightmarish universe. Beat. He shuffles, shakes himself up to his writing table, snatches a pen and sets on inking the paper, awkwardly. The lines stream rapidly as Frazer scribbles down the notes.

We can read: CASEY SHYMAN AND JAMES BECKS WERE INFINITELY NICE GUYS, COLD BLOODED, READY FOR LIFE...: Frazer pauses then...:NO TRIBUTE ON EARTH COULD EVER BRING THEM BACK TO LIFE AGAIN. Frazer puts the pen down, holds his head in both hands.

LONG PAUSE then..

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SOME SITE- NIGHT

Shouting, running, uniform-clad people and we realize we are in the inner ward of a military barrack. A room is in a fierce blaze. Scrambles partially. From a safe distance, half-sitting, half-lying is a much younger Frazer, clearly beaten out. A gash on his left malar is bleeding. In the flame light, the expression on his face indicates that whatever is happening has a marked effect on his whole being. A VO echoes: I COULD HAVE SAVED THEM..

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CABIN-DAYBREAK

Frazer springs up, sighs. He upstands and moves to the other room.

INT. OTHER ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Frazer is standing up, impassible for a while. He sees the girl's photograph, takes it and peers at it closely.

FRAZER

You were right, popsy.

*

He sets it down, sees what to do next. He runs the tips of his fingers across his ragged beard and gets it. Time to change. He pulls the table's drawer, removes a shaving kit. He removes a mirror, sees it closely. Beat. He dips the shaving soap in water and prepares the razor. He lathers his face, seizes the razor...beat..

CUT TO:

The fast-flowing strips of an aircraft landing track centerline, revealing a POV from beneath a liner's flight deck.

EXT. RAINFORD AIRPORT RUNWAY- MORNING

The turbo fan engines buzz in a retrojection of hot gases. The liner takes off, scuds higher up, pulling for its skyway.

INT. CABIN- MORNING

Frazer finishes his shaving, sets down the razor. WE OPERATE a ninety-degree turn to the left so Frazer side-faces FOCUS. We notice the finely-chopped sideburns. CLOSE IN toward him. Frazer is holding the mirror obliquely, watching himself more closely, scrutinizing a tiny blemish on the side of his cheek. Low profile.

CLOSE-MIRROR

Frazer contemplates a visible scar on the cheekbone protuberance.

Frazer blinks away, sighs. We catch a first disclosure of his deep feelings.

EXT. GREENLAND-DOUBLE PAYPHONE POLL-MORNING

A young woman is inside one of the polls, making a call. A car skids to a stop on the pavement, nearly rolling over the edge. A blond, long-haired athletic guy climbs out and hurries to the second cabin. In his hand a cell phone, though. But...

GUY
Goddamn battery.

He enters the second booth. The driver on the car does not take his concern off the gorgeous woman in the other booth.

INT. SECOND BOOTH-

The blond guy dials, smiles at the woman. Dwight is in the other poll. She ducks away, hangs up and exits.

INT. DRUGSTORE-DAY

Frazer pushes his basket, heads for the fruit and veggies section. He plucks chocolates tablets on passing, puts them in the basket. He stops, remembers a detail. He reverses to move back. The basket rods come straight in collision with someone's ankle. He was just behind him. The man growls.

FRAZER
Oh! Beg your pardon, sir. I didn't see you... sorry.

The man straightens . No sign of inhospitality for once.

MAN
All right... it's nothing serious.

His cell phone rings...

MAN
Excuse me, please.

FRAZER
Sure...

The man moves away and glues the cell phone to his ear. Frazer follows the performance.

MAN
Oh, it's you... popsy. It's just... You know (beat)... okay I'll be there I'll be there... don't worry. Love you.

*

He puts off the phone and vanishes amidst the food-filled lines. Frazer smiles to himself. An idea strikes at him.

EXT. GREENLAND-WALKWAY-DAY

Frazer's Jeep draws next to the pavement. Frazer steps out, unzips his coat, takes it off and tosses it to the back of the 4x4. He makes it in his black rollneck pullover. He crosses the pavement toward..

INT. MOBILE-PHONE-CONTINUOUS

Frazer studies the sets of phones lined on the display. The vendor is awaiting the choice.

FRAZER

May I see this one please?

Frazer points his index. The seller slides the glass open and removes the apparatus. Frazer eyes the cell phone with interest.

VENDOR

You're making a great choice, sir.

FRAZER

Technical specification talk.

VENDOR

Great outfits. Built-in speakerphone, multitasking, predictive text input, e-mail protocols, integrated camera and 3-D graphics engine.

FRAZER

(Impressed)

It must fit.

EXT. GREENLAND AIRPORT- -DAY

A jetliner, slowly, obliquely comes down toward the touchdown of the runway. The undercarriage wheels screech in a cloud of tire smoke as the buzzer lands. The front wheels touch down. The liner cruises toward the terminal.

INT. AIRPORT-CHECKUP POINT- DAY

A corpulent, six feet man gathers his papers and pockets them. He lifts his suitcases and heads for the exit. BEN MYRTLEBACK is around Frazer's age. Handsome and tactful.

EXT. SHORT PARKING LOT- DAY

The blond guy, the same we have seen in the payphone polls, is waiting inside his car.

Driver door stretched, one leg in the ground, the other on the footboard. He is sipping coffee in a tumbler.

INT. PHONE SHOP- MIDDAY

Frazer reaches for his pocket and takes out his wallet.

FRAZER

Wow...that's a king's ransom.
Couldn't you take it down?

*

VENDOR

I'm afraid not, sir.

Frazer unslings a pack of banknotes.

EXT. GREENLAND WALKWAY- SAME

Lancaster cruises slowly by the phone shop, oblivious to the presence of Frazer's Jeep.

EXT.M-WAY TO AIRPORT- EARLY AFTERNOON

Frazer drives as fast as he could. He feels it's just getting too late. He glances at the digital watch on the dashboard. A slight tremor. The ping of a bullet-like speeding car flows the opposite way.

INT. AIRPORT- RESERVATION- EARLY AFTERNOON

Frazer hands in his ID card to the female clerk.

CLERK

What time, please?

FRAZER

Three.

The clerk scrawls the details on. She hands Frazer the ID card back and the envelope.

CLERK

Here you are, sir. Everything is
inside. Have a good day, sir.

FRAZER

Thank you.

Frazer pockets his papers and heads slowly out.

INT. JEEP-OFFTURN-NIGHT

High-beam lights engaged. Frazer is speeding up along the road. Forward-looking, right-hand driving. His elbow resting leisurely on the armrest. His left thumb an index pat his mouth as he takes a long draw on his coffin nail. He slides down the window, grinds the butt out on the ashtray. Something is cocking in his brain...

All of a sudden, his eyebrows arch over his half-closed eyes. An extreme curiosity.

POV-

In the offing, an indescribable object stretches across the side of the road.

Frazer shifts the car into lower gear as the object closes in. it is nearer...the realization blow-strikes at Frazer. He locks the brake pedal, ramming the car into a sharp standstill.

Beat. Frazer opens the door and steps out. The object is...a crippled human mass lying face down. Frazer lets go of the door and advances looking unsurely round him. He reaches the prostrate body of an unconscious woman. He kneels down, returns her to face him. CLOSE on him. A distant remembrance shines in his eyes. He just looks up questioningly.

INT. LANCASTER'S HOUSE- MOMENTS LATER

The phone blares out a ring. We hear a voice approaching.

LANCASTER (O.S.)
I'll be right back.

Lancaster picks up the handset.

LANCASTER
Michael Lancaster speaking. *

FRAZER
Hi, Mike. It's Dean. I think I'll
sure trouble you... you gotta get
over here... this minute.

LANCASTER
Why? What's wrong?

FRAZER
Something you need to see. I don't
understand. Burn road.

LANCASTER
All right.

Lancaster hangs up.

EXT. CABIN DOORSTEP- DEEP NIGHT

Frazer is staring out into the darkness. He clutches his snout, puffs out long helical spirals of smoke. Snout still between his lips, he enters the cabin.

INT. WINDOW PANEL- CONTINUOUS

Frazer wipes off the steam with the palm of his hand. We hear a rusting and a moan. Frazer turns round and comes toward the half-conscious... Dwight. She looks at him dizzily.

FRAZER

Have no fear. My name's Dean. Dean Frazer. Are you okay?

DWIGHT

(Faintly)

Yes, thank you excuse me but...

She bites her lips in an effort not to scream. Frazer does not miss it.

FRAZER

You all right? What's happened?

DWIGHT

(pain-racked)

Excuse me... I'll get up.

Frazer holds her back...

FRAZER

Please...you are too weak to do anything. Please don't mention it anymore.

DWIGHT

(Confident now)

Sure. Thank you... you're very kind.

FRAZER

Please lie back, will you? Trust me everything will be alright, okay?

DWIGHT

Anais...

FRAZER

She's with Kenny. She's all right. Michael put her up seeing you were late.

DWIGHT

You arranged everything.

FRAZER

Things dolled themselves up. Please.

Dwight lies back, obedient. Frazer covers her with the bedsheets. He looks at her pitifully and exits.

EXT. CABIN DOORSTEP- CONTINUOUS

Frazer's hand is still on the handle. He takes a glance at his Breitling. Beat. He looks up toward the roadway.

FRAZER

What's taking him so long?

*

He lets go of the handle and takes two strides down the stoop.

EXT. OFFTURN- DEEP NIGHT- DISTANT LIGHTNING

In the shades, we spot someone looking at the front tire of his car, trying to spot a puncture. The rim is almost close to the ground. Lancaster is checking the inflation not without...

LANCASTER

Goddammit! No way back, none ahead.
The devil, the shit down the deep
blue sea...

He straightens, sees the horizon is illuminating uninterruptedly with approaching lightning. He grinds his molars, kicks the car in despair and starts off, already sweating from the checkup performance.

EXT. CABIN YARD- NIGHT- THUNDERCLAPS

Frazer gets desperate. He spins and takes few steps cabinward, reaches the stairs when he and we hear slow-running footsteps. Lancaster comes for him. Frazer checks his watch.

FRAZER

(Mocking)

Triathlon world record. You made it
all the way up here and you are
breathing. Where's your car?

LANCASTER

(Gasping for air)

My car? Once the front tires get
punctured it's no better than a
black rolling coffin. What's up?

They go up the stairs...

FRAZER

I take your point. Someone here was
in that black rolling coffin.

LANCASTER

What do you mean?

FRAZER

Come inside.

Lancaster is confused. Frazer opens the door and they get inside.

INT. CABIN- CONTINUED

Frazer closes the door and advances toward Dwight's sickbed. He stops. Abrupt. He seems to have heard a noise outside between two thunderclaps. Lancaster is already trying to bring Dwight round. Frazer spins, fast-walks back, throws the door open and out he goes.

EXT. CABIN DOORSTEP- POV

The horizon skyline is completely obscured. The lightning and thunderclaps are pitching up in intensity.

INT. CABIN-CONTINUOUS

Frazer comes back and shuts the door hesitantly, suspiciously. At the inner doorstep, he pauses, eyes down, concentrating on...

FRAZER
(To himself)
I'm in the process of getting old.
Still bad tidings.

*

He shakes his head in dismay, shakes it off, moves to the window and leans against the frame. He side-glances toward Lancaster. Dwight is not yet round.

FRAZER
Fresh bad tidings, Mike. Freshly
bad.

*

Lancaster looks up. Frazer is peering out through an uncurtained angle on the window frame.

FRAZER
You know this woman, don't you?

*

He lets go of the curtain, spins to face Lancaster.

LANCASTER
Yes, but I must say...

FRAZER
(Cuts him off)
I found her in an odd position
indeed. Knocked down. Face bruised,
hands fucked up. None of us is in a
position to guess whatever's
happened. Heaven's luck she's still
alive. I didn't know what to do.
Hospital yeah, I know. I don't like
protocols.

LANCASTER

I know... here ...my little chap is in
the same class with her daughter.
tonight she's...

FRAZER

I don't know.

LANCASTER

There's a hitman. What's with him?

FRAZER

Not a bat all my way up here. Fast
makeaway.

Lancaster leans over Dwight. In low tone he calls to her but
she is in a lethargic universe.

LANCASTER

Kristy, Kristy...
(to Frazer)
but what's she doing around at this
time of night anyway?

FRAZER

(High pitched)
How the hell should I know?

Dwight opens her eyes not without a rack of contained pain.
Frazer steps up, comes for them.

LANCASTER

Mrs. Dwight. It's Lancaster. What's
happened?

DWIGHT

A close call. I lured them.

Lancaster trades a look with Frazer.

FRAZER

Lured who? They were two?

DWIGHT

Oh, my back.....

She turns over. Every muscle is hurting. Beat. Lancaster zips
her dress down almost to the waist and folds the lapels
apart.

LANCASTER

Oh, my God!

COMBINED POV-

A mass of countless reddish weals from drub- socks and kicks
cover the back of the unfortunate Dwight.

Frazer is horrified. One more thought.

FRAZER

Holy keepsake that one. We take her hospital.

LANCASTER

We don't have much in the way of choice.

FRAZER

Okay, cover her up. My coat's on the hanger.

He strides to the exit. Lancaster helps Dwight straighten.

INT. JEEP- CONTINUOUS

Frazer stumbles in and starts the engine. Lancaster and a barely standing Dwight join him. They drop off.

EXT. M-WAY- NIGHT-DRIZZLE

A portion of the sidewalk and the track. In the distance, the grapes of light star-shine in the drizzly mist. At break neck velocity, the Jeep drives past us sending small particles of water in a bending arch that refracts the town lights ahead.

INT. JEEP-

Windshield wipers at full speed, Frazer is burning rubber along the road.

LANCASTER

Do you remember any other detail?

DWIGHT

They said they'd kill me. The last thing I remember... I think I heard a car whine coming our way...

LANCASTER

Do you recall these guys?

DWIGHT

No, never seen them.

Frazer glances at her in the rear view mirror.

FRAZER

Why didn't you ring the police?

DWIGHT

I didn't know they were on to me. I was just making a call.

FRAZER
(Desperate)
Variable protocols.

Lancaster searches briefly his inside coat pocket and comes out with his car. He hands it to Dwight.

LANCASTER
Call me if anytime you remember something. I'll try to get a line on them.

He repositions himself on the passenger seat.

EXT. GREENLAND MEMORIAL HOSPITAL- YARD- RAIN

The Jeep's tires screech as it skids to a stop. Lancaster flings himself out and runs toward the lobby. Frazer and Dwight remain inside the Jeep. They watch Lancaster as he yells to the paramedics.

LANCASTER
Please bring out a blanket. *

The paramedics rush out with a gurney.

EXT. LANCASTER'S HOUSE- RAIN- MOMENTS LATER

Lancaster takes one step forward but comes back.

INT. JEEP- FRAZER

Proceeds to drop off, sees Lancaster come back and slows down. Lancaster sticks his head inside.

LANCASTER
What can I do for her? *

FRAZER
The cop minds the copping business.

LANCASTER
You're damn incorrigible. Good night.

Lancaster crosses the yard. Frazer smiles, lets down the handbrake and drives off.

EXT. A DISTANCE AHEAD- SAME

The Jeep rolls slowly by another parked car. Two guys are inside lying in wait.

EXT. CYPRESS FOREST- BRIDGE PASSAGEWAY- DAY

Everything is quite. TRACK ALONG the passageway. The Jeep is in the middle of it. WE ENTER IN. no one inside.

EXIT OUT through the opened driver door and find...Frazer, on the bridge, whiffing his usual snout, alone...studying his figure on the clear waters below.

TIGHT EDDY-

A section of the stream where we can see Frazer's clear glare on the limpid waters. Another figure enters the frame, pats on Frazer's shoulder but Frazer is imperturbable. TILT UP to discover another Landscape.

EXT. ARMY QUARTERS- OUTPOST- DAY

Frazer, clad in military uniform, is sitting on a rock close by a creek, studying his glare in the water. Next to him another military. Frazer looks up.

FRAZER

Hi, James.

James Becks, green-eyed, lively athletic, freshly young military bends down by Frazer.

BECKS

What's up, Dean?

Frazer shows distaste.

FRAZER

No leave, James. Where's Casey?

BECKS

Lieutenant's called him in his office. He's making progress.

FRAZER

So do you, James.

BECKS

I want you show me how you always zero it on the target in free-fire tests.

FRAZER

With pleasure, my friend.

He drops silent. Becks notices the empty stare...

BECKS

Anything else's cocking, Dean?

DEAN

I'm just thinking of Lindsay. She does not even know I'm here. I lied. I told her about a trip. If I'm lucky, she'll just bawl me out.

BECKS

She loves you Dean. Just tell her
plain what you feel.

FRAZER

I dread the way she'd take it.

He produces a snout and lights it up. He sees his glare in
the water. As he draws the cigarette from his mouth...

Stream water eddying distorting Frazer's image. PAN UP.

EXT. CYPRESS FOREST- BRIDGE PASSAGEWAY- DAY

Frazer bolts himself up, throws off the butt and grinds it.

EXT. GMH-DAY

Out of the lobby come Dwight and Frazer.

FRAZER

Do you feel any better?

*

DWIGHT

Yes, thank you. I'll just drop to
my workplace and ask for a sick
leave.

FRAZER

Don't worry. Just rest yourself
easy.

She stops.

DWIGHT

What did I do Mr. Frazer? Why do
they want to get me?

*

FRAZER

Call me Dean. Sorry but I have no
idea. It's a chance I found you
near where I actually live. If I
were you I wouldn't where they can
see me again. The place's one large
Acradia for lunatics.

DWIGHT

I'll page you about it.

FRAZER

Right. What about a drive-in?

DWIGHT

(hesitates)
Thanks, I'd love to.

They walk toward the Jeep.

INT. DELI- DAY

On a remote spot, Frazer and Dwight sit face to face round ice coffee, scones, juice...Frazer takes a sip at his coffee for once without his cigarette. He sets the cup down. Dwight is silent, watching him.

DWIGHT
Afraid of cancers?

*

FRAZER
It's just for nature's sake and the people who breathe around me. Besides this coffee's enough to make my hair stand on end.

DWIGHT
(smiles)
Damn coffee. Tell me about yourself. Surely, a woman's desire is to know more about her savior.

FRAZER
(Smiles)
Savior, you say? I'd prefer you'd call it my duty. A point of honor.

DWIGHT
A risk's not a duty.

FRAZER
My life...(beat)...is one.

DWIGHT
Don't you care about Your loved ones?

FRAZER
I doubt they recall me.

He takes another sip, glances round him then back to Dwight. Beat. Dwight lifts her juice glass. Her elocution is difficult now.

*

DWIGHT
True. It's pretty hard for the people I encounter everyday.

She takes a sip. Frazer is aware of the change down.

FRAZER
Where's the father of your lovable daughter?

DWIGHT
Paris. On a business trip. He's there for a week.

FRAZER

Did he know about...?

DWIGHT

No, I don't want him endure anything. Passion's a trap.

She sets her glass down, looks away then back to Frazer, right in the eyes.

DWIGHT

Before I married him...I was engaged with Bill. A man just like him. He was a Hydra. I hardly remember a day without feeling his blows.

*

FRAZER

(Beat)

And you stayed with him?

DWIGHT

Yes. I was just like you because it was something I didn't understand just then. I loved him.

Frazer stares at her in perplexity, speechless.

DWIGHT

I divorced when he obliged me to... (Beat)... sleep with a friend of his and watched us make love.

*

Frazer shakes his head in dismay, produces a cigarette and lights it up.

DWIGHT

(Beat)

All sensations melt in love.

Frazer sighs, looks down at his wrist. His watch.

FRAZER

I would call that love. (Beat) But it ain't glorious all the time, right? It happens a woman feels love for the wrong man. So did Lindsay.

DWIGHT

Who's Lindsay?

Frazer reaches inside his pocket and takes out his wallet. He unfolds it and hands it to Dwight who catches it and peers at the display window.

INSERT-DISPLAY WINDOW

An ID photograph. The same girl we see on top of the TV set in the cabin.

Frazer drops silent, look over to the curb where a woman is waiting for a bus. As she turns round, she looks like she is Lindsay...for a moment but...Frazer looks back to Kristy.

FRAZER

God's gift for me. I was just about to pop the question...I thought it better to tell her first about my project. I told her...I'd join the army...make cash.

Frazer drops silent. Dwight sees the emotion. She takes Frazer's shaking hand. Frazer remembers a performance as he looks at their mingled hands...

DWIGHT

Don't say anymore if that...stirs...

FRAZER

That was the last straw. She took a French leave. I never really had time to talk her back. I searched for her everywhere. No sign of her. I got in contact with a Penpal club hoping she'd write me... I meet Sharon...I dubbed the epistolary channel more romantic. (Beat) ...Exactly how I feel love for someone I've never seen, I don't know...

DWIGHT

Telepathy...you believe in it?

FRAZER

No.

DWIGHT

And something I feel...Sharon who you think.

FRAZER

That's why I'm to meet her. The day after tomorrow. I believe she forgave me.

DWIGHT

((smiling beat)

That's telepathy...Dean, you are a man who can't feel love because of A flush of hormones.

She hands him his wallet.

FRAZER

I dream of taking her back and the very thought of it is music to my ears.

He sighs and stands up. Dwight stands too. Frazer helps her pull her coat on and they start their walk toward the exit. Dwight catches Frazer's hand. Frazer turns round, stunned.

DWIGHT

Thank you, Dean.

Frazer looks at her for a moment. He runs his fingertips on her delicate cheeks. Her eyes are of tear-sheened blue.

FRAZER

Kristy, you're ravishing unlike any woman I've seen but your heart beats for another man. He's your real savior. (Looks at watch) sorry, I've to go right now. Take care of yourself. Bye.

They head out.

EXT. OUTER DOORSTEP- CONTINUOUS

Dwight remains there watching Frazer walk away. She hurries along the opposite way.

INT. POLICE STATION-PROFILING ROOM- NOON

Two cops and Mrs. Dwight are in. One cop has an A4 sheet of paper, a folder on his knees and a pencil ready. The other cop sits himself opposite to Dwight.

COP 2

Let's start Mrs.Dwight. Be as accurate as possible. We are gonna feed this identikit into the computer's database, Okay?

DWIGHT

Yes, sir.

COP 2

Right. You said they were two. One of them had a mask.

DWIGHT

Yes, but I can give you a rough physical profile.

COP 2

Yes, but stick to the face.

DWIGHT

A big guy...approximately six feet
one and two hundred pounds.

COP 2

Face.

DWIGHT

He's the instigator of the
coup...from his marching orders I
induced..

Cop 2 smiles and prepares to ask the next question... Dwight
notices..

DWIGHT

I wouldn't like to mismatch but
high holy... He takes after someone I
think I know.

*

COP 2

Who?

DWIGHT

Can't remember for sure.

Cop 2 sighs...not what he expected..

COP 2

Okay, Mrs. Dwight. What about the
other guy?

DWIGHT

Broad-headed, long straight blond
hair, three day stubble and blue
eyes.

We see cop 1 draw lines and circles now.

DWIGHT

He must be the same weight and
height as his accomplice.

*

Cop 1 has a rough figure on. He starts to hash over the
portrait. Cop 2 looks at him then back to Dwight.

COP 2

Did you notice anything unusual
before you were kidnapped?

DWIGHT

Not that I seem to remember. I just
felt the blows and that's' all. I
woke up in someone's cabin.

Cop 2 clears his throat.

COP 2
Please introduce him.

DWIGHT
Is it really necessary to divulge
his name?

COP 2
Mrs. Dwight. That's how it works.
The person who saved you maybe saw
them when they made away. That's
what maybe saved your life, too.

DWIGHT
You mean he might be in danger?

COP 2
I'm afraid yes.

Dwight is embarrassed now. She looks away.

COP 2
Mrs. Dwight I understand your
concern. We'll just ask him few
additional questions so that we
fine the description. Help us get
them before they attempt to his
life.

*

DWIGHT
Dean. Dean Frazer.

Cop 2 scribbles the name..

COP 2
You know the guy?

DWIGHT
No, he just nursed me.

Cop 2 nods satisfied. Cop 1 finishes his hashing, looks at it
from a distance and hands it to Cop 2. Cop 2 grabs it, shows
it to Dwight.

COP 2
This is more or less your
kidnapper. We'll fit this identikit
into the Archive files to get a
match.

He stands up. So does Dwight. Cop 2 extends his hand in a
shake.

Dwight catches it.

COP 2
Mrs. Dwight, thank you for coming.
Goodbye.

*

He sees Dwight out from the room.

INT. OFFTURN- JEEP-SUNSET-CLOUDY

Frazer looks at the rear view mirror. It reflects an unusual passenger. A bear toy. Frazer's attention is focusing more on the speeding, tailgating car behind him. He has seen this one before. He looks ahead to negotiate a sharp right-hand bend. In this fleeting moment, we see through the rear view mirror, the distance close...close faster and..

...the Jeep slams hard. Frazer tries to regain control.

FRAZER
What the hell...?

He almost completely loses control of the vehicle. It fish-tails, goes to and fro across the road. Frazer glances in the rear view mirror. The front passenger is loading a rifle. Frazer grinds his molars. He realizes he has no chance if he brakes. He grinds the accelerator pedal, the engine revs up and the Jeep flies forward.

INT. OTHER CAR-

The other driver has been over this ground. He chuckles, replicates the move.

EXT.OFFTURN-

The well-known blond-haired figure detaches from the other car's passenger window. Rifle-armed. He adjusts and takes aim. The car bumps as he fires. The bullet whizzes, zings through the Jeep's sideview.

INT. JEEP

Frazer sees the mirror is gone. He accelerates, widens the breach...

INT. OTHER CAR

The Jeep is taking a good lead. The shooter leans in.

SHOOTER
What was that?

DRIVER
Rolled on a fucking pothole.

The shooter leans out again, adjusts his rifle.

SHOOTER
Speed up! Fast! Go! Go!

DRIVER
This is a 5000 rpm engine not a bullet train. It's already...

SHOOTER

I don't care about this crap. Speed
the hell up!

The driver revs the engine rpm 4400, 4500...the shooter sees the next bend. Sharp. Real sharp. He adjusts again. He fires. The hit thirls the right front tire.

INT. JEEP-

A violent tremor vibrates the jeep. Frazer narrowly misses a road sign panel, drives through the trees that line up the road, right into the edge..

EXT. OFFTURN- SLOPE

Blank shot from down the slope. From above the scope, the mass of the Jeep's steel comes down, springs up out of frame and comes down again with a loud break-up sound.

INT. JEEP

The motion inside is uncontrollable. The Jeep carries straight down. Frazer sees something. A huge dried-out trunk and the Jeep is rolling directly toward it. Frazer flings the driving wheel to the right. Nothing. To the left. Nothing. The steering is gone. The landing shock cleaved the driving column shaft. CLOSE ON FRAZER'S EYES as he sees the trunk close at such speed..

EXT. DOWN THE SLOPE-

The Jeep collides head-on with the dried-out bole. A deafening kinetic bang.

EXT. UP THE SLOPE-

The thugs' car comes top a stop next to the spot where the Jeep has flown down.

INT. JEEP-

Of the tremendous shock, Frazer leans back, his head, cocking and bruised. Blood trickles.

EXT. SLOPE-

The thugs awkwardly descend the ravine, both of them packing iron, ready in their hands. Just as they reach the crash site...BOOM...a mushroomed, billowing orange fireball streaks up to the sky, illuminating the near darkness. The thugs shield their eyes then look back at the blaze.

COMBINED POV-

A humanoid shape is burning amidst the tangled guts of the Jeep.

The thugs start walking up.

SHOOTER
For once, no loose ends.

*

REVERSE ANGLE- BURNING JEEP

The shape is still amidst the flames. PUSH IN CLOSER...CLOSER then...

EXT. GREENLAND-DOWNTOWN- NIGHT

The back hood of a motorcar. The side light flashes. The passenger door pushes open. Myrtleback strides out, enters into...

INT. KEN'S BAR- CONTINUOUS

...and heads for the bar. We are behind someone who has his back toward us. Beer and a pack of cigarettes before him. Amidst the busy drinkers, Myrtleback comes forward, heading for the bar...more. Our drinker lifts his drink. Myrtleback pats on his shoulder.

MYRTLEBACK
In vino veritas?

The drinker turns to his right. For a moment he is unbelievable. He sets down his drink and stands up.

DRINKER
Ben? Gosh...what...? I just can't believe it.

They shake hands.

MYRTLEBACK
How're you Alf? (Looks at the kit, beer, cigarettes) what's up with you? You look like the whole universe is bearing down on you.

They sit down.

TUCKER
And to fun this universe... the one thing you need's a money spinner. Just what do you propose for mess-ups that are as clear as mud?

MYRTLEBACK
Something strong. (To bartender) Double JB, please.

The bartender sets down the Brandy.

BARTENDER
Ice, sir?

MYRTLEBACK

No thanks.

He lifts his glass, gulps one half.

MYRTLEBACK

No one would stand bearing in mind
a paradox with no premise at all.
Look, Alf. Throughout my life, I'll
never my sensory dream world. It is
my personal satisfaction. Don't
care if it doesn't exist. Do the
same if you need an answer to this
besotting world. Everything
illusory, complex. It's hard to
understand all these visual
renderings. Existence is just a
marginalia with expedient dos and
don'ts.

*

He gulps down the other half of the JB, knocks twice on the
bar.

MYRTLEBACK

Yes, this is an antinomy.
Marginalia and we haven't answered.
Our problem...humans are the problem.
They bear the brunt of
indiscipline, ignorance, hate... we
commit ourselves to combat them and
takes lifetime. Where's the ideal?

*

Myrtleback has grown tense. The bartender sets down the JB.

BARTENDER

Ice, sir?

MYRTLEBACK

(Fused)
No ice, I said!

BARTENDER

Sorry, sir.

Myrtleback nods. The bartender goes away.

MYRTLEBACK

You see?

TUCKER

All along your nice speech I was
working on a satisfying answer.
Let's get out, shall we?

MYRTLEBACK

No. I've called my sales manager.
He's meeting me here.

Tucker grinds his jaws together in pain. He holds his belly with both hands. Myrtleback notices as he finishes his drink..

MYRTLEBACK

What's up?

*

TUCKER

The call of nature.

He hurries across to the water closets.

INT. LANCASTER'S HOUSE- NIGHT

Lancaster resumes a call. Ringing. No one takes it.

LANCASTER

Where are you Dean? You never sleep at this hour.

He hangs up and hits redial. Ringing. No answer.

EXT. KEN'S BAR- NIGHT

The plastic-framed one-way glass door pushes open. Myrtleback and Tucker exit out into the street. Tucker moves to his car. Myrtleback follows him. He seems like off. Thoughtful. He flicks a glance at his car, parked behind Tucker's.

TUCKER

We're trying to reconstruct a chinese fire drill. A providential savior. Shack-living recluse...someone to whom life's a mope... Just like you...

MYRTLEBACK

Dean? Dean Frazer?

TUCKER

Yes...anyway, you know I am not supposed to drop names in here. No name, no pack drill.

MYRTLEBACK

You sure it's Frazer?

TUCKER

Sure as hell's hot.

Myrtleback is thoughtful, listening, waiting for a sequel. He pulls the door handle, one leg in, he starts the engine.

TUCKER

Why, you know him?

*

Myrtleback shakes his head.

MYRTLEBACK

Just a nodding acquaintance but I'd
love to see him again.

Tucker closes the door and slides down the window.

TUCKER

Call me back, will you?

Myrtleback nods but his thoughts are away now. Tucker drives off. Alone on the pavement, Myrtleback fixes his Black car. Beat...he enters the bar.

EXT. CRASH SITE- DEEP NIGHT- DENSELY CLOUDY

The fire-blackened car is unrecognizable. The explosion blasted the guts out of it. PUSH IN CLOSER AND CLOSER then UP the opposite slope. Rain droplets begin to ricochet on treeleaves. WE REST on a dark lumped mass, lying shapeless on the ground. Is it a human body?

A rustling. The lump stirs up and edges itself into a sitting position. Trembling hands detach and run across the face. A zip down. Firelighter ignition. CLOSE. It's Frazer. Dazzled, looking instinctively round him.

He brings up his left wrist to read the time. His watch reads 7:13 pm. He looks at his demolished Jeep, pauses, and regrets. He jerks up. The moment is to make a move on. He switches off the firelighter and bolts up. He looks down again at the rusted steel of his car. A sense of inadequacy reads through his battered face.

FRAZER

Sorry, Anais.

He ventures up the sludgy slope, squelching.

INT. MYRTLEBACK'S OFFICE- LATE NIGHT

The sales manager hands Myrtleback a stationery. Myrtleback slips on a pair of reading glasses and peers into the document. His eyes only look up from the sheet.

MYRTLEBACK

Conditions? What conditions?

SALES MANAGER

Purchasers haven't yet agreed to
all terms of sale, remember. All
the terms.

MYRTLEBACK

But it's already in the contract.

SALES MANAGER

We daren't lose them whatever they decide. It's the most important group.

MYRTLEBACK

No reason for the delay?

SALES MANAGER

No explicit one. Buckers officials just said it's in their most urgent market policy to review the terms.

MYRTLEBACK

Bullshit. Bullshit all of it.

SALES MANAGER

And... more chip scantlings.

Myrtleback sets the document down.

MYRTLEBACK

In other words...(beat) all deliveries called off and no outline to cover the induced loss.

SALES MANAGER

As a first step...

On Myrtleback, wry-face, beat of disgust...

SALES MANAGER

We've scheduled a meeting with the direct representatives in Buckers. We've fixed a four-day deadline to get ahead in the deal.

*

MYRTLEBACK

Okay. See what to do. Ball's in your court.

SALES MANAGER

The second...we have forced the worked into a go-slow...

A Beat of impatience reads on Myrtleback.

SALES MANAGER

Beyond deadline, if purchasers quit...they'll pay for the resulted costs.

*

Myrtleback nods in agreement. His forehead starts to sweat as he fixes hard the stationery on his desktop.

INT. LANCASTER'S HOUSE- NIGHT

Lancaster lifts up his rosewood box and shuffles to the exit.

INT. MYRTLEBACK'S SANCTUM- NIGHT

Myrtleback is standing by the window frame, fixing a lightening line. He produces a pack of cigarettes, takes one out and puts it to his lips. He turns round.

MYRTLEBACK

You know I sent him out. I believe he's quite in the league of setting answers to questions. He can do it before you can say J Robinson, Dick.

We find the athletic blond-haired man of the car chase. His voice is whispery when he speaks.

DICK

With all due respect sir... I fear it will go off beam. that's another game. I just helped Bill.

MYRTLEBACK

Both chums, eh?

He lights up his cigarette.

MYRTLEBACK

Don't be silly. I planned for the change too. (Beat) well...it's time to give him a hand again. Pack yourself up and be ready in ten minutes. I will instruct you more.

*

Dick exits. Myrtleback sits down. He follows the spiraling smoke drifting up from the snout, eyes closed, anticipation...

INT. CABIN- DEEP NIGHT-RAIN

Frazer dials Lancaster's number on his cell phone, enters. No signal. He resumes. No signal. Frazer sighs and pockets the cell phone at the same time he stares at the shadowy roadway. He shifts his concern to his feet. All his attention polarizes onto rain droplets as they hit the wooden floor. A CRACKLING. This can't be the same sound...

He slightly turns to his left, freezes stock-still. Rock-steady 6.35mm WALTHER PPK trains right at him. The trigger is partly invisible. The gloved index almost fires. Frazer recoils back, staggers. A shot goes off.

VOICE (OS)

Not time yet, eh? I believe saviors are never afraid.

The thug is standing in utter shade. The hand holding the gun is pointing skyward.

He sneaks the planks under his measured steps and advances into light revealing the tightly-set jaws and unsmiling face of BILL CROSSOVER. He smiles at last. He has other plans.

CROSSOVER

I'd like to point out the game rules, Dean.

Frazer's blind fury isn't disclosing at the masterly sustained action. He straightens and takes hold on the balusters.

FRAZER

How do you know my name? Who are you? And what do you want?

CROSSOVER

I worked them out myself. You have been shaped to live outside of normal living standards. Human that is. Even so, I'm afraid "out of" isn't applicable to you when it comes to throwing spanners in other people's works. This is the end of it. You dragged yourself into the ultimate mess.

FRAZER

My teacher always skipped greek syllogisms when I was trying to get logics into answering my way of life. You hinted another missing link.

CROSSOVER

Another, eh? The first?

FRAZER

How to break my teacher stand-in's neck.

Crossover chuckles. He jerks the PPK indicating the rear of the cabin. The deep forest.

EXT. CYPRESS FOREST- NIGHT-RAIN

Frazer is advancing slowly, a gun protruding his back. He trips intermittently in the mud. Crossover is behind him. They reach a tree trunk. Crossover looks up at the limb.

CROSSOVER

Okay, stop. Ground zero here. Your trial. Doesn't rain inside courts, does it?

Frazer stops and turns round. Crossover dangles a cord in his left hand.

CROSSOVER

Closing time, buddy. You have the right to a short shrift. Say your prayers or make a fond farewell to the piece of tail you sleeked after the bad she's had.

Frazer absorbs the comments. He understands now but it's too late.

FRAZER

(Calmly)

None.

CROSSOVER

Good. You are a stubborn, retarded, head-scratching Rhodesian man, buddy. The era ainn't for those guys but you're the last of them. That's why nothing gets across your mind.

He throws the cord toward Frazer who catches it.

CROSSOVER

Toss it up.

CUT TO:

A MOVING POV. In the deep shadows, we are slowly moving toward the direction of the sound which louds up with each step. We are about to sidestep a tree bole when we catch a visual of Crossover and Frazer. The former (AD LIB) giving instructions. The latter attaching, unhurriedly his roped cord. Almost the final tie. We shade behind the tree bole.

EXT. CYPRESS FOREST- LOW ANGLE

The scene is well under a shower of rain, pouring down in sweeps. Few feet separate the tandem and the silhouette that is now taking something from a carrying case. TILT DOWN. We can't see who is the silhouette. Kneels down, fixing the handguard of a SNIPER RIFLE: H+K MSG. The silencer screws to the threaded muzzle. The silhouette brings up the weapon, adjusts the knob on the mounted-on infrared scope on the rail. The index poises on the trigger..

TREE TRUNK- CROSSOVER+ FRAZER

Crossover watches Frazer almost put the final knot to the limb. In the eerie silence...A SPLITTING CRACK. Crossover perceives the breaking and shifts his concern away from Frazer. Frazer grabs the full meaning of the cut. More than an ace up his sleeve. A powerful swing hits Crossover's armed hand sending the gat flying away. Crossover comes around, rushes for the gun.

Frazer pulls the cord down and casts it toward his adversary. The knot settles on Crossover's neck. Crossover struggles to unfasten it but Frazer drags him along, head-butts him hard. His blow to the chest sends Crossover to the ground.

Frazer jumps on top of him, punches him directly, point blank to the face. Crossover is almost unconscious. Frazer seizes him by the lapels and lifts him up.

FRAZER

I'm just kind of stretching the point of your reasoning. You must admit with me...foreseeing isn't your pay-off business, you scum.

He knocks Crossover down, crawls off and picks up the gun. Too late. Crossover is on his feet again. He plucks the gun away. It settles on the ground again. They both rush and grab it simultaneously. They straighten slowly. Crossover has the gun but Frazer clutches the hand and forces it downward.

CROSSOVER

(Grinning)

Since when it became your business to save people? Come...tell me. What's happened in Dalesworth, eh?

A beat.

FRAZER

You tomfool can't get the message.

Frazer finally snatches off the gun...simultaneously a shot blasts to the ground. Frazer is stunned to see Crossover's strain on his arm release. What more is...no move of resistance. Crossover is shaking uncontrollably.

CLOSE CROSSOVER'S NECK-

Thick trickles of blood run down through the perforated neck. Crossover is like slain.

Crossover crashes to the ground. Frazer looks at the pistol then away. Chinese puzzle.

TREE TRUNK- SILHOUETTE

The rifle lowers. The silhouette unscrews the silencer, raises up the gun again to eye level. Beat. Somewhere, the buzz of a truck...a liner passing by.

TREE TRUNK- FRAZER

Frazer is trying to figure out what happened. A burst of CONTINUOUS GUNSHOTS awaken him from his state of trepidation. He runs for cover, ducks behind the tree trunk. Other slugs scorch the bark and riddle the bole.

TREE TRUNK- SILHOUETTE

Vanishes stealthily amidst the trees.

INT. LINER TRUCK-SAME

The driver has his head turned toward the shootout site. He grabs a cell phone.

EXT. CABIN YARD-NIGHT- RAIN

Front passenger door wide open, someone is busy tucking an object under a car seat. He straightens, snaps the door shut. He runs to the cabin switching off his torch on his way.

INT. CABIN-CONTINUOUS

Pitch dark inside. Not a splinter of light. The flashing torch light beam spider-webs through the window glass. Heavy steps. Silence again. A narrow ray filtrates through the keyhole. A click and the door squeaks softly open.

EXT. POLICE STATION YARD- NIGHT- RAIN

Two squad cars drop off.

EXT. SHOOTOUT SITE- NIGHT-RAIN

Frazer is still shading behind his wood shield. He is soaked to the bone. He is scrutinizing with his hearing sense, scanning for signs of advance, oblivious to the departure of the invisible sniper...Frazer waves off with his hand. Nothing. Out of his safe house, he risks an eye from the trunk outcropping. Same.

FRAZER

Hey, Pyrrhus! If you really wanna shoot me...I'll make it snappy for you.

*

He sidesteps completely, hell bent on discerning more or finishing things off. He glances at Crossover. No doubt. He is dead. Frazer raises his hands above his head, his right still holding the PPK.

FRAZER

Go...shoot! Zero it on the target!

*

Nothing. Frazer's face squeezes in anger...

FRAZER

Shoot me, motherfucker! What are you waiting for?

*

Again no response. Frazer brings down his weapon and fires ahead. Steady shots. No recoil. But nothing again. Frazer realizes he is alone around.

He comes hesitatingly toward Crossover's recumbent form and kneels down. This is just the prelude. He unzips Crossover's coat and searches the inside pockets, comes out with a checkbook clutch. Frazer flaps it and takes out a business card. MICROTECH inc. On the top left angle. A photograph, stats and the detailed curriculum on the right. Frazer pockets the card and straightens. He returns to his shield, sets down the PPK...

EXT. CYPRESS FOREST- NIGHT

The shot is blank excepting the tree boles towering like fairy black phantoms. Rain is still sweep-drenching.

CLOSE- TRUNK OUTCROPPING

Bare. Breaths. Beat. A face fugitively protrudes from behind.

Frazer is inhaling, exhaling in a rhythmical cadence, spraying away fine sprinkles of rainwater descending down his face. He runs to another trunk, heavy, waterlogged, almost breathless. His eyes screen the whole area round the rear of...his cabin. The nyctalopic report is quiet, eerie.

INT. CABIN- SAME

Darkness but the firelight. Infinitely silent opening. The door pushes open. Frazer strides in. from his moves, he seems weary more than ever. He shuts the door, switches the lights on, he is about to turn round...

VOICE (O.S.)

Dean!

Frazer stops sharp. He turns round, cautiously expecting a gun... he shuts his eyes and opens them instantly. Lancaster is sitting at the inner end by the hearth, his torch set on the mantelpiece.

FRAZER

My God, Mike! You scared the living daylight out of me. How'd you get in?

He takes off his waterlogged shirt and takes a dry one from the hanger.

LANCASTER

I sort of forced the lock. Where have you been? I just recalled your stance so I stayed.

FRAZER

Yes...(slips on shirt and coat)
someone recalled it too. That's why I was out.

Lancaster racks the fire and upstands.

LANCASTER

Please, Dean. Stamp out your nasty allegories and gloss it over your story...

FRAZER

Listen, Mike. There isn't an off chance that we'd explain what's going on here. See by yourself and try to get any link-up. On my way back, a woman gets the nougat smacked out of her. Later, I was driven into a ravine... (Beat)...

LANCASTER

(Confused)
When was that?

FRAZER

To cap it all, as if I was tranced, I followed someone who broke into the place. We had a run-in. out of nowhere comes a bullet that guns him down. Devil's jubilee?

LANCASTER

That's quite an argument. Does it have anything to do with what's happened yesterday?

FRAZER

How should I know? Wait...(beat)... He knows the woman and there is a card I found on him.

He searches briefly his pocket, comes toward Lancaster and hands him the card. Lancaster grabs it and glances at it. Frazer moves to the fridge.

LANCASTER

Bill Crossover...I don't know this name.

Frazer walks toward the exit...

FRAZER

Come...I'll show you. This story's starting to give me hot chills and so long as cops don't...

He opens the door and...

EXT. OUTER DOORSTEP- CONTINUOUS

...a powerful torchlight beam x-rays him on the face. Not expecting this again. A man in police uniform is standing there.

COP
Mr. Dean Frazer?

Frazer, off, nods yes.

COP
Would you be so kind as to follow
me to the police station, please.
We've few questions to ask you.

*

Frazer stands there, completely off-balance. In the b.g, Lancaster approaches behind Frazer. He shows his badge and pockets it with nothing else than the stirring motion he cannot understand.

EXT. YARD- SECONDS LATER

Frazer hears the clicketing of the scuffles. The officer invites him to get into the van. He does. The officer embarks and they set off. Lancaster props himself against the hood of the Ford. His hand claps on, profoundly thinking. He embarks. PUSH IN CLOSER toward the front passenger underseat and catch a partial view of the rosewood box and its R-700. HOLD ON then...

EXT. SHOOTOUT SITE- VERY LATE NIGHT

Police strobелights illuminate the place. Two detectives break off toward where is Crossover's inert body. They reach it. One of the cops leans over the death bag, zips it down. Shock registers. He zips it up again.

DETECTIVE
Shit! What a horror!

He and his mate move away. An officer comes for them.

OFFICER
Prints matched...Dean Frazer.

DETECTIVE
Okay, I want him in the station,
now.

OFFICER
They're en route.

The detective nods and moves to a squad car.

INT. POLICE STATION-CAPTAIN'S OFFICE-

A couple of investigators, Lancaster, SCOTT STINGRAY are gathered in the captain's office. Someone's back is toward us, busy pouring coffee. He turns round. It's Tucker. A Captain.

TUCKER

I trust everything's on the map.
Okay. Get down to the nitty gritty.

INVESTIGATOR 1

Weapon. US-modified German made HK
marksman rifle. An MSG 90 A1. 7.62
Nato caliber.

TUCKER

Great stuff. What else?

INVESTIGATOR 1

Particularly high muzzle velocity
even with fitted silencer.

TUCKER

And the PPK?

INVESTIGATOR 2

A genuine trick to throw us off the
scent. Prints were all washed off
in the storm except on two spots.
The tip of the trigger and the
checkbook's top stitching.

Lancaster stands up, pours himself some coffee.

LANCASTER

What about the bullets? Do they
match?

INVESTIGATOR 1

A direct hit. The bullet that
killed Bill Crossover cut both
carotid arteries. We could find no
trace of it.

LANCASTER

Yes, but is the bullet the same
caliber as the Walther's?

Investigator 1 panics, pauses for a long time.

INVESTIGATOR 1

We can't be sure but...

LANCASTER

(Cuts off)
But what?

INVESTIGATOR 1

Accused was trained. He was an army
sniper.

Beat. Lancaster connives, shakes his head in disbelief. He is
contemptuous.

LANCASTER

Frazer a sniper?

INVESTIGATOR 2

Yes he was. I'll get the military record and the crime sheet faxed soon from Dalesworth.

LANCASTER

Soon, eh? Dalesworth you say. Frazer was a fly catcher. I'll tell you about the evidence... the criterion of your conviction. Frazer is the nearest living guy and that's a perfect cover up for your failure.

Tucker sighs, grows impatient. He pats his fingers on the mahogany armchair then pushes himself back.

INVESTIGATOR

We've carried an in-depth investigation including multi-angle shooting and I... Don't personally know why we should fail...

TUCKER

(Cuts off)

Personally, eh?

Everyone turns to him. He pours himself more coffee. No one speaks.

TUCKER

...the department is full of professionals and trainees in ass-chasing and skirt-sniffing...(takes a sip)...get you out of here...now. I never want to hear about this...chilling, fucking load of crap. Do you understand me?

*

He moves to the door, throws it fiercely open and invites all of the occupants out.

TUCKER

Get me a real report.

*

LANCASTER

(Edges his words...satisfied)
Sir, give me authorization to handle this case?

TUCKER

Twenty four hours beginning tomorrow morning. Now...

He gestures with his index out...

INT. POLICE STATION HALL- CONTINUOUS

The two investigators, Lancaster, Stingray come out. The door bangs shut.

INT. POLICE STATION- INTERROGATION ROOM- MORNING

Three officers are in. Two of whom are the detectives we saw out at the shootout site. The other officer is already in full task recording the interrogation pre-details. Detective 1 sits himself opposite Frazer, in his hand a pack. He unravels it, sets it on the bare table. Detective 2 is standing, silent, drilling Frazer with compassionless penetrating looks. Frazer is emotionless too. Fixing a distant souvenir. Cut off except his hand moving up, down for puffs.

DETECTIVE 1

Dean Frazer. Okay. Put on your thinking cap. Try to cast your mind as far back as possible. Every detail counts and is recorded. Whatever you say might be used against you. As you know you have the right to an attorney.

Frazer grins, not shocked at all.

FRAZER

(Confident)

I've nothing to add or anything to retrieve. This is rustic truth. The shots were very likely simultaneous. Beyond that, I can't recall any special detail except that the sniper discharged his burst to throw you...me ...into havoc.

DETECTIVE 2

Havoc is in your mind. If I follow your previous assertion, you were at close grips with the victim. Thus, you were in the same line of fire. How'd you explain you alone made away.

FRAZER

(After a long beat)

I don't know.

DETECTIVE 1

Dusty answer.

FRAZER

I said I don't know and this implies I'm not gonna pay tribute to someone who was trying to kill me and dress it up as a suicide.

Detective 2 comes closer.

DETECTIVE 2

It looks like you dress it up as to seem it's an uneven fight. You were tooled up, weren't you?

FRAZER

No, he's brought along his own. I never owned a gun.

DETECTIVE 1

We aren't yet to scratching the bottom of the barrel...(picks up stationeries)... We have the medico legal report. It's extremely curious two people twirling in a struggle, placed closer, like these papers...one of them is practically slain by the hit. Conversely, the other has no scratch to declare. Mr. Frazer your prints are all over the place, the dead's body and the gun. One bullet was enough to put the guy down and that's so legal a testimony to charge you with first degree murder.

Frazer does not even wink. He just senses that his pledge is well down the drain.

DETECTIVE 2

And something about the crime sheet would reinforce it.

This time, Frazer is full concern for just a fleeting second. He puffs, and puffs...

EXT. POLICE STATION YARD- DAY

Lancaster is trying to fix one of his car's windshield wipers. He has a monkey wrench and a screwdriver on the hood. He places the wiper on the rail, checks its elasticity...something attracts his attention...

HIS POV THROUGH WINDSHIELDS-

Stingray on the exit conferring with one of mates who can't be seen. He jumps down the stairs and moves away toward the security checkpoint.

Lancaster looks up from the windshield...

LANCASTER

Hey, Scott!

Stingray is full stride toward the gateway. He does not hear.

LANCASTER
Scott! Over here!

Stingray sees him this time and joins him.

STINGRAY
What are you doing?

LANCASTER
Going to do, more like.

STINGRAY
I'm not going anywhere if that's
what you mean.

LANCASTER
Please, Scott.

STINGRAY
(Sighs)
Well, what's up? I do have a load
of... I'm wrong every time I get out...

LANCASTER
No one would stick to Frazer's
version of facts. I need to get
there...I wouldn't team up with any
one else, Scott. You heard the
Captain. Twenty four hours.

He lets go of the monkey wrench and seizes the screwdriver.
He screws on the wiper to the rail.

STINGRAY
It's a damned imbroglio. Just fancy
a game where you play a grand
master and you...abso-fuckingly-
lutely have no idea about the
rules.

Lancaster wipes off his hands and gathers his material.

LANCASTER
The master took us all in this
time. He'll soon get lost in his
megalomania. We'll get him.

Stingray moves to the passenger side.

STINGRAY
Tell me, you've been to the place?

LANCASTER
(Beat)
Yes.

Stingray eyes him closely. They climb in.

INT. LANCASTER'S FORD- MOMENTS LATER

Lancaster drives, silent, exactly toward the shootout site. He knows perfectly the shortcut.

INT. PAYPHONE POLL- DAY

Dwight makes a call, receiver glued to her ear.

DWIGHT
Max, it's me, Kristy.

She listens.

DWIGHT
Yes, I have the outline now but the details are not on. Can you help me? Boss says he must top the line with some recent...blockbuster.

*

She opens her hand bag, searches in briefly and takes out her diary. She listens.

DWIGHT
Max? ... You can now.

*

She listens carefully and scribbles down a tip on her diary.

DWIGHT
Thanks so much, Max. I'll call you back some time later. Bye for now.

*

She hangs up slowly, her eyes never leaving the diary. She is perplexed.

EXT. POLICE STATION CHECKPOINT- DAY

A large car enters frame and pulls up at the front gate of the security checkpoint. The guard cop approaches the driver. The latter slides down the window glass. He stretches his hand out with an ID document. The Guard cop gestures to his colleague. The barrier lifts up. The large car cruises into the yard, coming into the parking lot.

INT. FRAZER'S DETENTION ROOM- DAY

Frazer's head cocks on the barred door. He spins, heads the opposite side, marches back, to and fro...everything is cocking. He comes to the wall and his empty stare transfixes on a spot.

TIGHT SPOT-

A small graffiti cored out on the wall. Next to it, a set of two mingled circles. Ultimately intricate. The graffiti reads: OUT OF HERE THE WORLD STINKS.

Frazer remains there, smiling to himself.

FRAZER
Huh...abridged storyline...I wish I
have time...

A deep voice from behind him cuts his thoughts off.

VOICE (O.S.)
Dean Frazer!

Dean unhurriedly turns round and finds Myrtleback, waiting, smiling, indulgent. Frazer narrows his eyes. Distant recognition.

FRAZER
(Unbelieving)
Ben? ...what? ... What are you doing
here?

MYRTLEBACK
The same question occurred to me.
This place isn't yours.

Frazer comes closer. His left hand clutches a bar. His right extends in a handshake.

FRAZER
Labs ain't for guinea-pigs too. But
tell me...how'd you know about my
new...discomfiture?

Myrtleback looks away for a while then back to Frazer's eyes.

MYRTLEBACK
(Flash grin)
Oh you know... it's just the papers.
I read of what happened. reporters
graduating in news amplification.

They fall silent.

MYRTLEBACK
Where have you been all these
years, my friend?

FRAZER
Very kind of you to inquire. I was
in a world of my own.

MYRTLEBACK
I know your world. A world of
absolute imperfection where all you
see is optically illusive.

FRAZER
It's good not to give up. You
do...Ben...still believe everything's
vagarious.

MYRTLEBACK

Everything, Dean. I never trust the appearances.

FRAZER

Inception to a perpetual antilogy. Appearances make the blueprint of protocols.

He smiles. Myrtleback smiles too. They are on the halvers.

EXT. SHOOTOUT SITE- DAY

Lancaster and Stingray stride up to the altar. Lancaster takes out a black sealed envelope and tears off the flap. Stingray glances around.

STINGRAY

Are you sure you know what you are doing?

LANCASTER

Quite. Dammit.

He unfolds the sheets.

STINGRAY

What's that?

LANCASTER

A copy of the investigation report.

Stingray points his index to the other sheet, crammed with arrows, bends and other geometric figures.

STINGRAY

And that?

LANCASTER

Oh...that. Huh...a possible reconstruction of the scenario...

STINGRAY

Aerodynamic rendering...

LANCASTER

Ballistic. I worked it out all night.

Lancaster backs several feet away, sees the body's emplacement, moves to the place and tries to reproduce the fighting position. He shakes his head. Stingray is surveying the area.

LANACSTER

Yes...they were exactly here...fighting. Hey Scott! Come here, will you?

Stingray steps toward him.

LANCASTER
Stand there. Right there. Yes.
Close in. Take this..

He removes his automatic from its holster. Stingray takes it.

STINGRAY
I guess the sniper isn't here this
time.

Lancaster looks up..

LANCASTER
I wish it was night and raining..

Stingray is stunned. Lancaster strains Stingray's wrist,
forcing the armed hand down.

STINGRAY
And what else?What about the
sniper?

Lancaster eyes his figures on the sheet.

LANCASTER
(Looking round)
He mustn't have been in a spitting
distance.

Lancaster spins round, studying, eyeing his sheets.

LANCASTER *
Simultaneous shooting. He must have
been..

He puts his index forward indicating a wrong place..

LANCASTER *
...some place there.

Beat. He sees it's impossible..

LANCASTER *
If it were the case, they'd have
been both killed.

Winks in despair.

STINGRAY
It's tangled, you know. We need
backup around so let's get the hell
out of here.

LANCASTER
Maybe the gun place..

He moves to the tree trunk, checks his notes. Stingray follows him.

STINGRAY
I understand why you stick up for
Frazer.

LANCASTER
(Looks up)
Fine...

He slowly bows and directs his sight closely to the base of the tree.

STINGRAY
He's your friend.

LANCASTER
Friend or no friend...I think he's
put on the wrong. Someone who's
just about to take the rap.

His eyes millimetrically trace up the bole.

STINGRAY
So do I.

LANCASTER
(Looks up)
What we fail to understand is the
gun... Why was it here?

His gaze goes back to the trunk. He stops all of a sudden...

HIS POV-

Partly invisible are the slams of three slug rips.

Lancaster brings up the sheets and fingers the trunk.
Stingray's gaze is away.

LANCASTER
Scott!

*

Stingray looks back...comes closer...

LANCASTER (CONT'D
(Triumphant)
Look! That's it! That's the stuff!
We should drive them out. Got a
knife?

*

STINGRAY
Nail scissors.

LANCASTER
That'll do.

Lancaster folds out the blade and attempts to drive out the slug from inside the heartwood.

CLOSE-RIPS

The blade sinks in completely. Same for the two others.

Lancaster is unbelieving.

LANCASTER

One angle. How close must have he been?

*

STINGRAY

At least we know from where he fired. Why don't we replay it? I can do it accurately.

Lancaster is puzzled as he looks up. The muzzle of his automatic greets him. Beat. A long one. Stingray grins. Beat. He starts toward the reverse position.

INT. FRAZER'S DETENTION ROOM- NOON

Frazer walks away from the door. Myrtleback is still with him but there is something that has changed.

FRAZER

As far as this appeals to me... the judgment's but a pathetic play... a comedy...

He turns round and stills there. Myrtleback looks at him, pissed off...

FRAZER

You can't try anyone because you can't predict. You try to judge... you try to find the truth...

*

MYRTLEBACK

Judicial, philosophical enigma has always been your...

FRAZER

I don't think philosophy has anything to do with what we are to disclose. I do believe in one thing about science.

Myrtleback awaits the answer, still off. Frazer advances toward him. He leans against the door, nailing Myrtleback with a defiant glare as if he were the scientist...

MYRTLEBACK

Ain't we descendants of apes?

FRAZER

Yeah, we are. Except part of these good apes didn't morph yet...that include the one who's behind this.

The answer stuns Myrtleback. He lowers his gaze.

EXT. SHOOTOUT SITE- NOON

Lancaster is now away from the bole, close by another. He yells to Stingray who can't be seen.

LANCASTER

Shoot!

Some distance away, the ping of a bullet , the subsequent detonation and the flop of the slug as it sticks into heartwood.

STINGRAY (O.S.)

Is it Okay?

Beat. Silence for a time..

LANCASTER (O.S.)

Bull's eye. Okay.

Stingray draws nearer. Lancaster shows him the fresh bullet impact. He kneels and drives in the scissors blade in. half of it sticks out.

LANCASTER

Not the same caliber.

*

He turns toward the testimony tree, measures it up with his eyes...

LANCASTER

A pity..

*

He starts to drop off. Stingray follows close...their eyes never leaving the scene...

INT. POLICE STATION HALLWAY TO EXIT- NOON

Myrtleback and Dick fast-walk along the hallway. A young cop escorts them. He sees them out. On the doorstep, Myrtleback turns round toward the cop.

MYRTLEBACK

Thank you.

The young cop looks at him, smiles.

EXT. POLICE STATION- PARKING LOT- NOON

Myrtleback and Dick now exit out of the police station lobby, march directly to their large car.

Dick hits central locking and the doors unlock. They reach the car. Before he gets in, Myrtleback stays motionless, eyes fixed on the ground thinking of a remote point.

MYRTLEBACK

Guy's mad. What drives him mad?

DICK

Anyone's bound to when his ass's
thrown into that rat hole.

Myrtleback stares at him hard... he embarks. So does Dick.

INT. CAR- CONTINUOUS

MYRTLEBACK

I'm sure he conceals something.
I'm acquainted with his little
ways. You'll find it out. We can
help him.

DICK

That will be a pleasure.

MYRTLEBACK

Drive on.

EXT. PARKING LOT-

Dick backs off from the row of vehicles, heads for the gateway.

INT. LANCASTER'S HOUSE- KITCHEN - NOON

Suzan has a knife and veggies before her. She starts to slab them when Lancaster comes in.

LANCASTER

Hi, hon.

He stops behind her, kisses her lightly on the cheek, moves to the fridge and scoops out a beer. He stands right there, leaning against the fridge.

SUZAN

How's Dean? It's pretty hard for
him.

LANCASTER

Worse. Getting points cleared up
will take time. A long time.
We made progress but it's still
turmoil. It's the sun to cool down.

He empties the beer and sets it on the top of the fridge. He scoops out another beer and foots on toward the exit. Suzan strides into his way. Lancaster is puzzled...

SUZAN

He's the family's sidekick. Save him! Come a week from now, it will be too late.

LANCASTER

I'm aware Suzan. I'm doing my best. It's nowhere near a second hand turn. (Beat)... This afternoon, he'll be transferred to a maximum security prison to await his verdict next week.

SUZAN

You mean he's nailed without even...

LANCASTER

Yes...(beat) ... okay! I'm out of here.

He empties the beer, sets it on the oven this time. He heads out. Suzan eyes the two beers, shakes her head and resumes her hacking. Lancaster reappears at the frame.

LANCASTER

You said he's nailed...thank you Suzan.

*

Suzan prepares to say something but holds it right there. Lancaster is no longer at the door.

CUT TO:

The fast-flowing sidelinks then the guide bar of a chain saw, slicing across a tree trunk. Wood dust flutters.

EXT. SHOOTOUT SITE- EARLY AFTERNOON

Lancaster, Stingray et al from the police department troop up behind the cutter, watching the performance.

INT. POLICE STATION- MOMENTS LATER

Lancaster comes in, heads, wordless toward his office.

EXT. STATION YARD- EARLY AFTERNOON

Two cops, one is the one who smiled to Myrtleback earlier that morning, exit out into open air. Frazer is shackled, walking staggeringly toward a police van. Near the van is a horde of nailers. Among them, Lancaster and Stingray, anxiously watching the coming convoy.

The convoy reaches the van. Lancaster comes for Frazer, weary and defeated...he takes his hand out of his jeans, looks at Frazer with extreme compassion.

His left hand lifts Frazer's upper arm while his right shakes Frazer's scuffled hand with such a force... Frazer growls in pain as if something sharp stuck into his palm. He looks at Lancaster questioningly. Lancaster imperceptibly nods.

LANCASTER

I'm sorry, Dean. Friends we are.
Friends we'll meet again. Goodbye.

*

Stingray looks away. The show is pathetic. Frazer entwines with Lancaster.

FRAZER

You did everything you could.
Please don't worry. I'll be all
right. Take care of your family.

COP

Come on. let's go.

Frazer's eyes break off Lancaster's and gaze at the back of the van. He mounts the steps and sits himself on the stool. The cops close and padlock the doors.

INT. GMH-AUTOPSY ROOM- AFETERNOON

Crossover's inert body on a gurney. The forensics perform the biopsy procedure.

INT. POLICE STATION- RECEPTION- AFTERNOON

The receptionist closes his opened files before him and moves to the fax machine. He removes a sheet. Stingray passes the reception, heads for his office. The reception cop studies the fax sheet.

RECEPTION COP

Lieutenant Stingray?

Stingray stops short and comes back for the reception.

RECEPTION COP

Biopsy report.

*

He hands the lieutenant the fax sheet. Stingray catches it and peers into it. He sees just where to go.

INT. LANCASTER'S OFFICE- AFETRNOON

Digital alphanumeric keyboard and a pair of hands expertly punching the keys. Lancaster is facing the monitor. The display of the page reflects feebly in his glasses. Unequalled concentration.

TIGHT-SCREEN

An active Internet search page. Of the results we can Read the search phrase: ARMY WEAPONS AND RELATED ARTICLES. The cursor pops into an article reading: MILITARY KILLED IN STYX.

Lancaster clicks, out of curiosity. Not his query. Stingray strides in, holding a thick file. Lancaster half-spins to face him.

STINGRAY

Mike...guess. I've gotten sacredly precise results. Wanna have a look?

He hands him the file.

LANCASTER

You are asking? Thanks Scott. I just couldn't do without you.

His eyes run the lines of the stationeries. From his oscillating eye, we see the screen's interface change. Lancaster spins to face the monitor.

TIGHT- SCREEN

The headline of the Newsday electronic edition reads: MILITARY KILLED IN STYX. Next to it...the byline: Kristy Dwight.

Lancaster reads the lede.

LANCASTER

A gigantic explosion blew a fuel reservoir...

*

We switch to the screen...

LANCASTER (O.S.)

...in a military barrack near Dalesworth. Two military are killed and a third badly injured...

*

Lancaster hits escape key.

LANCASTER

Four years back...I just couldn't find a damn recent link. It's all very well for other craps to be homed on the web.

*

STINGRAY

The file...look closely... you'll be sure to grind it out. Our boss is diehard Cartesian but...you aren't less so.

LANCASTER

Thank me when it's all over.

STINGRAY

This case will drive us inside a
snake pit... and round the bend..

LANCASTER

...But to a close query.

They smile at each other and exit.

INT. CAPTAIN'S OFFICE-

Tucker comfortably leans back in his mahogany seat, hands
joined as if in prayer. Opposite to him, Lancaster and
Stingray. Lancaster opens his folder and removes out a
detailed report.

LANCASTER

Captain. I was saying the
accusation is senseless. The
elements gathered in this
indictment are insufficient to
charge somebody with being guilty
or not guilty.

*

TUCKER

Maybe. Maybe not. This case's
slightly blown out of proportion.
Your conclusions?

LANCASTER

Bullets do not match. It's
established with accuracy. Rifle's
7.62. The bullet that killed
Crossover isn't the PPK's 6.35.

TUCKER

Accused never owned a gun?

LANCASTER

Yes.

Tucker stands up and moves to the window and stills there.

TUCKER

Where's it going to end?

LANCASTER

Well. Body's examined again.
Grooves on the neck caused by an
important pressure on the collar.
The shirt is moused inside and it
proves the set-to hypothesis. If
the victim were dead already,
there'd be no mark whatsoever.

TUCKER

And the accused?

LANCASTER

The victim's prints were all over
him.

Tucker rounds behind Lancaster, eyes fixed on the document,
moping.

TUCKER

Frazer could do it himself.

LANCASTER

I take your point but what about
this?

Lancaster introduces Crossover's business card and hands it
to the captain.

TUCKER

(Reads)
Microtech. Inc. (beat) ...wait... I
know this company.

LANCASTER

A subsidiary owned by Ben
Myrtleback.

The captain lifts his eyes from the card. A striking
remembrance.

STINGRAY

The guy was here, few hours ago.

LANCASTER

(Unbelieving)
What?

TUCKER

He told me a couple days ago
Frazer's just a nodding
acquaintance of his.

Lancaster looks at Stingray then back to Tucker..

LANCASTER

We must interrogate him if he could
tell us of the victim's incentives.

TUCKER

(Stricken by a
remembrance)
Incentives!

He is in a muse. Off Lancaster's concern...

INT. LANCASTER'S OFFICE- MOMENTS LATER

Lancaster leafs through a pile of documents. Stingray storms in, radiant, holding other files. Lancaster does not notice the abrupt storm-in.

STINGRAY

Hey, Mike?

Lancaster is off, absorbed into the minutia.

STINGRAY

Please hearken onto me, Mike.

*

Lancaster springs up..

LANCASTER

Sorry, Scott, sorry. What's it?

STINGRAY

Read! (Hands over reports) Frazer's military record. There gotta be something into the mess.

Lancaster reads. Long beat. He looks up.

LANCASTER

Again accused of murdering two of his mates. Was tried, evicted along with...Ben Myrtleback.

STINGRAY

Roughly four years ago.

Lancaster narrows his eyes..

LANACSTER

Four years ...Dalesworth ...military ...Dean was always good with innuendos.

STINGRAY

I confess I'm already off.

LANCASTER

Frazer told me about these years. Not much to extend the details. It's gotta be here. All's here. I wonder why he didn't tell me what happened.

STINGRAY

He knew he'd get you into danger. You are his only family. It has nothing to do with the saving of this woman.

LANCASTER

Like a chain reaction. The event triggered other parades. It's all there.

He springs up and pulls on his coat.

STINGRAY

What do we do now?

LANCASTER

They've run into a critical fiasco in the initial investigation. Even the rudimentary. Okay..

He flicks a glance at his watch. It reads 15:30.

LANCASTER

...I'll see the guy first. You mind the woman tomorrow morning. Try to get more details.

*

STINGRAY

Okay, buddy.

They exit.

EXT. GREENLAND- BUILDING PLAZA- LATE AFTERNOON

Lancaster's Ford pulls up. The building's plaza is large, vast. Above the building lobby, the nameplate reads: Microtech. Inc. Lancaster exits out of here, admires the towering Babylonian building's beauty. He breaks off for the lobby.

INT. BUILDING- 10TH STOREY- WAITING HALL- LATE AFTERNOON

Lancaster eyes the ads, posters, spots clinging on the wall. A woman, Myrtleback's secretary, comes from behind him.

SECRETARY

Mr. Lancaster?

Lancaster spins to face her.

SECRETARY

Mr. Myrtleback is ready to see you in his office.

*

They walk along the hall.

INT. MANAGERIAL OFFICE- SAME

Myrtleback takes a long draw on his cigarette, assumes a nearly sarcastic posture on his armchair. Lancaster does not fail to notice it.

MYRTLEBACK

Mr. Lancaster. Could I be of any help?

Lancaster takes out a fax photograph and hands it to Myrtleback who catches it with no hurry at all. Myrtleback considers it from a distance...a don't-know attitude.

LANCASTER

Name's Bill Crossover. If the name does not appeal to you, we also found this.

He shows Crossover's business card.

MYRTLEBACK

Yes, I do remember now. He's my ex-employee. He was pensioned off few months ago.

LANCASTER

(Confused)

What about this card?

MYRTLEBACK

He had his reasons to keep it.

MYRTLEBACK

What kind of reasons? *

Myrtleback stands up and pulls one drawer behind him. He searches briefly the load of files and picks one up. He sits down again, sets the document before Lancaster. The latter picks it up.

MYRTLEBACK

I was quite in the dark about what he was up to before he was fired. *

Lancaster gazes up from the document.

LANCASTER

Does it have anything to do with Frazer's custody?

Myrtleback registers the comment.

MYRTLEBACK

Not that anyone seems to know.

LANCASTER

Yes but I'm afraid this is what I'm here for. I wanted to ask you how he knew about Dean Frazer.

Myrtleback is desperate now.

MYRTLEBACK

Mr. Lancaster...I've no time to mind anybody's motives and acquaintanceship.

LANCASTER

Any detail that you could recall.

MYRTLEBACK

I think I told you I have no time to adjust the facts to when and where they occurred.

Lancaster pulls into deeper details.

LANCASTER

And what's your business with Dean Frazer?

Myrtleback registers the meaning of the insidious question.

MYRTLEBACK

Nothing special.

LANCASTER

(Persistent)

Really? You can't pay a visit to someone in the jankers because you saw his picture in the morning paper.

MYRTLEBACK

Mr. Lancaster. No one is in a position to make you think the opposite. Yet, I'm trying to save you precious time if you choose to carry out deeper investigation on something plain settled.

LANCASTER

I'm grateful. Settled. No. you dichotomize it as you please but the investigation's getting more and more complex.

Myrtleback sighs and grinds out the butt on the ashtray.

MYRTLEBACK

Well, Frazer and I enrolled and left the army together.

LANCASTER

(Lights up)

Interesting but why?

MYRTLEBACK

We had other plans. Dean still has petty shares in my firm, Silicons.

LANCASTER

One more question Mr. Myrtleback. Here. Two persons who both jettisoned the army option because they chose to move forward in business (Beat)... isn't it extremely curious that one of them, you Mr. Myrtleback end up in charge of this Babylonian temple while the other, Frazer, is just a minor, forgotten shareholder?

MYRTLEBACK

Why forgotten?

LANCASTER

The course of events is unethical.

MYRTLEBACK

I admit it is...

LANCASTER

(Cuts him off)

Only a major misunderstanding or more seriously an issue could have foiled the plans even before thinking to leave the army. Do you see what I mean?

Myrtleback falls silent and lights up another cigarette.

LANCASTER

You haven't seen each other for yonks. That's a complex equation Mr. Myrtleback.

*

Myrtleback snuffs unsurely.

LANCASTER

I just...

*

MYRTLEBACK

(Cuts him off)

If I understand, every problem cries out for a solution. That's the basic rule. Dean told me he'd just get shares to raincheck on what we planned for. I don't wish to go further in depicting his psychological motives. He never explained the reason of the reversal.

LANCASTER

Is it the accusation? You didn't leave the army Mr. Myrtleback. You were evicted.

MYRTLEBACK

I tried to help him. He wouldn't let me. Even this morning he seemed skeptic when I proposed to lend in a hand.

LANCASTER

What kind of help?

MYRTLEBACK

Cash.

LANCASTER

It's no use.

MYRTLEBACK

All right, I tried.

The dialogue dries up. Lancaster rises slowly. He extends his hand in a shake. From his askance view he sounds suspicious, not satisfied.

LANCASTER

Thank you Mr. Myrtleback.

Lancaster heads for the exit and opens the door. Dick's impassive, cold countenance greets him. They hold a look. Dick moves aside. Lancaster exits not without flicking a glance back toward Myrtleback.

EXT. RIDGEWAY- AERIAL- DUSK

A police van winding along the road like a vanishing pinball. Some distance ahead, we see steep edges, Hurlock Cliffs.

INT. VAN-REAR

Frazer is in an odd position. Legs wide-stretched, fingers crossed, head lowered as though praying. All his being swaying, responding to the vibrations from outside. He looks up. All the world's problems to think over. He looks down at his hands. He uncrosses them. He is nesting a small tack box, stares again to the forestscape.

INT. VAN- FRONT

The two cops are silent. Driver cop's acquaintance is "drive". The other cop eases himself forward, straightens his aching back for some moments then repositions himself. He flicks a glance at the sideview mirror. Sighs.

DRIVER COP

Anything going wrong?

COP 2

No...but what do you think he's doing?

DRIVER COP

You think he's plotting to make it
away on his toes?

COP 2

Not likely, eh? fished out like a
cod hooked up from its sack of
nuts.

They laugh.

INT. VAN-REAR

Frazer holds the long-shafted pin between thumb and index. He rolls it unconsciously. More a toy than a gadget. He is lost in thinking...his fingers press together and the tack sticks into flesh...Frazer startles...removes the pin. He wobbles up to the steel grate with the aim of disposing of his tacks...he stops abruptly...looks at his finger...

FRAZER

Black...rolling...coffin. Rhetoric's
working.

He empties half of the pin box into the thenar of his hand.

INT. VAN- FRONT- POV THROUGH WINDSHIELD

Ahead at a closing distance, a side road barrier overlooks some hazardous area down below. The cliffs. Cop 2 stoops out. The rocky, steep and cheer cliff descends for a hundred feet. Cop 2 look away, eyes closed.

COP 2

Wow...the stuff of dizziness.

DRIVER COP

Are you afraid?

COP 2

Not really. I used to. When I was a
young chap, I always stuck to mom's
apron strings when I dreamed about
cliffs.

DRIVER COP

Except your ol's not of this world.
The apron string is here.

Driver cop gestures to the gear lever. Cop 2 opens slowly his eyes.

INT. VAN-REAR

Frazer attempts to see a good angle for scattering out his pins through the grate. His shackled hand clings to the steel. The roadside barrier scrolls before his eyes. He spatters out the tacks.

They hit the barrier and skim back to the road. Frazer waits, holding tightly. Nothing. He spatters out the other half.

EXT. RIDGEWAY- DUSK

The handful of tacks land on the tarmac. Some of them point up. They stick up into the van's rear tires, get deeper with each roll.

INT. VAN-REAR

Frazer sits down back on the seat. Disheartened. Suddenly, A SHRILL EXPLOSION. The van immediately breaks into a series of uninterrupted bumps. The vibrations throw Frazer head over heels.

INT. VAN-FRONT

Driver cop tries madly to regain control. The van slams into the barrier, nearly flying off the edge. This injects much horror into Cop 2 who screams.

COP 2

What the heck's happened?

DRIVER COP

A tire...imploded. (Sees ahead) oh
shit! Aaah!

Ahead is a sharp left U-bend. Driver cop locks hard the brakes.

EXT. RIDGEWAY- ANGLE ON VAN

The van's tires and rim scream in a horrible screech of rubber and steel. The bus topples, lands on the road with a force that cleaves the hinges on the rear doors. The van carries on skidding on its side straight toward the barrier, splits it open...

The front side of the van shoves over the vacuum, hundreds of feet up the deep abyss of rock.

INT. VAN REAR-

Frazer is all disoriented. He is atop the doors. Painfully, he pushes the steel door open and...

EXT. RIDGEWAY-

...tumbles out. He stands up, sees the horror, climbs atop the van.

INT. VAN- FRONT

Frazer blows in the window glass on the driver side. Driver cop is too dazzled to extirpate himself out.

Cop 2 is out of it. Unconscious. Frazer straightens in his hand and pulls driver cop for all he is worth...

EXT/INT. RIDGEWAY-VAN

Frazer and driver cop make it out of the wreck.

EXT.RIDGEWAY

Frazer takes him away and rushes for the other cop.

INT. VAN-

Cop 2 comes around. Tries to rise. This tilts the balance to the edge and the van skids dangerously. He hears stepping...when he catches sight of Frazer, he reaches for his gun. The jerk cracks the door open into the horror out. Cop 2 nearly sails off but clings in time to the gear lever. The van skids more. Frazer straightens in his cuffed hands.

FRAZER

(Howling)

Come on. Gimme your hand! Come!
It's gonna crash down. Now!

COP 2

Fuck off!

FRAZER

Come on! You can make it
motherfucker!

The van tilts down. Cop 2 struggles up. Frazer catches his hand, pulls up for all he's worth. Cop 2 makes it to the driver seat and exits through the broken window.

EXT. RIDGEWAY-

Cop 2 falls atop Frazer. The van sails off and crashes down below the edge. An immense fireball from down, leaps up to the sky. Frazer tries to rise. He hears the safety unlocking on the cop's automatic, feels the gun to his chest.

COP 2

What were you thinking? Make it
away easily?

He struggles up still lining Frazer with his gun.

DRIVER COP

Hey! You can't shoot him! What the
hell are you doing?

COP 2

But how do you suggest we get back
to Greenland?

DRIVER COP
You've the WT.

COP 2
And the prisoner? What can we do
about this fuck-up?

DRIVER COP
The prisoner who saved our lives
and we were escorting him to lose
his. How does it feel?

Guard cop says nothing. He understands, lowers his gun.
Frazer straightens.

DRIVER COP
Yeah, he could have run away.
Instead he came for us, got us out...

FRAZER
I don't think this saga's gonna
have a mere conclusion.

COP 2
You mean?

Frazer looks down at the torr...

FRAZER
You can kill me before I do it. I'm
done with dirty tricks...

He stoops over the rock height...

FRAZER
...or let go of me to discover the
genesis of this Herculean saga. If
I fail I'll turn myself in. you
have my word. If I have to pay for
someone's deed I'm not... top of the
hit list.

The two cops looks at each other, speechless. Frazer waits
for a reaction. There is none. The cops are slow to react.

FRAZER
Okay, I'll be part of the wreck.

He whirls and crosses the barrier with a view of throwing
himself off. The breeze refreshes him of how just life is
good but not anymore. Not in a cell.

Cop 2 lines him with the automatic.

COP 2
No, come away from the edge. Come
away right now!

*

*

*

FRAZER

Shoot me if you like. You're doing your job. Tell your superiors he tried to make away.

Off the cop's puzzled attitudes...

INT. MYRTLEBACK'S SANCTUM- MOMENTS LATER

An assistant ramps in. From his insistent look we understand there is a matter of urgency...news to tell.

MYRTLEBACK

What's this? A goddamn barn? What's happening?

ASSISTANT

Frazer. Went down a cliff forty miles off Greenland. It's believed the crash was fatal to him. To him only.

MYRTLEBACK

(Eyes wide)
How can that be?

ASSISTANT

Hurlock Cliffs.

MYRTLEBACK

Do you mean he's really part of the crash?

ASSISATNT

Yes, he is.

Myrtleback makes a wry face. One of his illusive performances. He sighs, pushes his armchair back and stands up. Palm of his hands on the desk edge, he flexes down.

MYRTLEBACK

I was expecting this end. The poor devil always walked on tight ropes. This one's gotten him. Anyway, the news is of no importance now we can't be of any help.

He produces a cigarette and lights it up.

EXT. HURLOCK CLIFFS- RIDGEWAY- LATE EVENING

Cop 2 unlocks Frazer's manacles, locks them again and pitches them down to the still burning wrack below them.

FRAZER

How does it happen you give me a chance?

COP 2

And how does it feel to know that someone gives you life just as you saved his?

FRAZER

I'm a prisoner.

COP 2

No longer. Free to go. You need something?

FRAZER

I wanna get the machinator.

COP 2

Good luck.

FRAZER

I need this, too. Thanks.

He looks at both cops in satisfaction. He breaks off, running toward the direction they were bound to. The two cops follow him with an uncomprehending gaze. Driver cop eyes his colleague, intrigued.

DRIVER COP

Where's he going? He's lost the north?

COP 2

I've no idea.

They spin and break back for Greenland.

DRIVER COP

What are you gonna tell them?

COP 2

Tell who?

DRIVER COP

You know whom I'm talking about.

COP 2

Oh! I'll just tell them the plain truth.

DRIVER COP

This will put it a nice jailbreak. They'll give him chase more than ever.

COP 2

Not this truth. The van. He went down with the van. You understand? Think of Goebbels.

Driver cop waits for the rest...

COP 2

A lie for long enough becomes the truth.

*

The discussion trails away.

INT. CAFÉ- MOMENTS LATER

Stingray sets down his coffee cup, takes out his billfold and hands a banknote to the tender. His eyes work up to the TV screen.

CLOSE-SCREEN

Breaking news. Frazer's photograph appears on.

STINGRAY

(To tender)

Put that on please.

The tender turns on the sound control. The newscaster's voice becomes audible.

NEWSCASTER

That's bad news for the investigators in charge of this case. It's believed the crash was fatal to the prisoner. Escape? Mutiny? No one knows anything about it.

Stingray's eyes go wide.

INT. LANCASTER'S HOUSE- LATE EVENING

(INTERCUTS)

The phone rings. Lancaster takes the call.

LANCASTER

Yes, who's it?

STINGRAY

Scott, here. Turn on your TV. Channel six.

LANCASTER

What's on now?

STINGRAY

Just turn it on.

LANCASTER

Okay. Hold on.

Lancaster switches the TV to channel six.

Through the on-screen's breaking news, we see a view of the crash site. Police squadrons line up the edge. A chopper hovers over the edge. A TV reporter steps into the frame.

REPORTER

Breaking news from Hurlock Cliffs. Three hours ago, a police van transferring a prisoner to a state court, inexplicably rolled off track and sailed down the steep rock you see here behind me. No one is available to comment further.

Lancaster's countenance turns grim.

REPORTER

There's much talk about the accident that caused the death of the prisoner though escorting team is all right.

*

Lancaster fixes hard the newscaster and puts the receiver to his ear.

LANCASTER

Scott!

STINGRAY

Yes. I'm sorry for the bad news. I can't see how Frazer would've made it in such a blaze.

LANCASTER

That can't be. He can't die this way... How did the cops make it?

STINGRAY

Jumped off in the nick of time.

Chagrin strains Lancaster at the neck. Suzan comes from behind him, sees the news and understands. She lowers her head in dismay.

LANCASTER

(Eyes wet)
That's ridiculous.

STINGRAY

I'm sorry, Mike.

Lancaster replaces the handset, pulls on his jacket and heads out.

EXT. RIDGEWAY- HURLOCK CLIFFS- NIGHT

Lancaster approaches the steep rocky height and peers down. The mass of twisted steel being craned up. Lancaster comes for an investigator and shows his police badge.

LANCASTER

What happened?

The investigator does not answer. He just dangles the pair of empty, locked chains. Lancaster fixes them nightmarishly. CUTBACKS to Frazer as he entwined with Lancaster the morning it all started. Lancaster ducks away, unbelievable. In the b.g, we notice Driver Cop busy talking into a cell phone.

INT. MYRTLEBACK'S OFFICE- NIGHT

Myrtleback glues his cell phone to his ear.

MYRTLEBACK

Yes, thank you. Can you tell me where he could be now?

VOICE (O.S.)

Sorry, he told us he's after a machinator.

Myrtleback registers the meaning.

MYRTLEBACK

Come on. I'm his friend. If I can do anything before it's too late. Where's he?

VOICE (O.S.)

I'm in the dark about his destination. He carried on right ahead. He didn't get here nor the way back to Greenland.

MYRTLEBACK

Thanks for the tip.

He switches to standby mode. Deeply thrown into thinking now. He lifts the receiver from the phone set and dials the numbers.

MYRTLEBACK

Dick! I want you here this minute. A little business to settle.

*

DICK (O.S.)

Wait sir, I'm attending..

MYRTLEBACK

(Raged)

Get here at once. Understand? At once. I don't give your attending puke's crap.

He slams down the receiver on the set.

EXT. WOODS- NIGHT

Frazer is threading his way amidst the deepening shadows. He stops and looks back. He sees clearly the hustle at the wreckage place. He is making a straight line for Greenland from down the ridgeway.

EXT. RIDGEWAY-LANCASTER'S CAR-

Lancaster lowers his head into the palm of his hands. Shock, despair. Stingray comes for him, sees the emotion and ducks away.

EXT. WOODS-

Frazer is still reeving through the woods. He reaches a creek, stops for a pause. He flexes down to drink from the waterway. He straightens, looks once more back over his shoulder, perambulates over the creek and resumes his way.

EXT.LANCASTER'S HOUSE YARD- NIGHT

Lancaster trudges toward the gate, unsurely and tripping. He is drunk. The car's headlights are still on. He enters his house.

INT. HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

He falls heavily on a sofa. Suzan sees his concern, his injected eyes and comes for him as quietly as she could. She takes him in her arms. Lancaster shakes his head in dismay.

LANCASTER

What do I have to do now? Pray? If only...

He sighs.

SUZAN

I know, dear. I know. You did everything you could.

LANCASTER

(Roaring)

You do Suzan? I didn't. I'm responsible.

SUZAN

I thought you had an idea.

Lancaster buries his head in her arms.

LANCASTER

(Crying)

Yes, to kill him. I killed him. Poor wretched bastard. That's what I owed him.

Suzan strains him in her arms. Lancaster is weeping uncontrollably.

EXT. CYPRESS FOREST- NIGHT

Long lens on a couple of thugs, gathered in the yard. Black suits, 4x4 motorcar. They are anxiously surveying the area.

EXT. FRAZER'S CABIN- YARD

The two thugs are facing the front entrance of the cabin. Inside are other thugs busy ransacking. We hear continuous breakings.

INT. CABIN-

A total mess. Dick and another thug, Noah, have already broken everything that holds a shred of interest for them. With great care, they go through what is left. From their frenzy, a concealed gadget is interesting them.

NOAH

Nothing to write home about.

DICK

Yeah, you're right.

He sees the fridge, seizes it from its bottom. Seconds later it flies out of the door, crashing outside. Dick inspects the newly-created vacuum.

POV-

AN APERTURE. A recess.

Dick pushes his hand inside and removes Frazer's cell phone. He studies it closely.

NOAH

A cell phone? The bastard ain't a fool to leave anything compromising in a phone's memory.

DICK

Maybe he is this time. It's hard to believe things might be more useful when you expect them to be less so. Remember we are after a slut boss thinks she has gotten more assets than necessary for her.

He punches the digits as they get out of the cabin. On the doorstep, without looking up, points with his thumbs, indicating the cabin. One guarding thug opens the door of the car and takes out a can. A petrol can. Dick nods. He shows the cell phone's display to Noah. Noah peers. Beat.

NOAH

We got them. Both.

Dick smiles indulgently.

EXT. CYPRESS FOREST- TREE TRUNK- NIGHT

Blank shot. Tree trunks and the foliage-cast deepening shades. CLOSE IN. we hear hoarse breathings. An eye fugitively protrudes off the wood cover. The countenance is indescribable.

REVERSE ANGLE-

The attitude of Frazer is much like a fugitive. He is fixing the ahead-of-him break-in. the cabin is in a stygian inferno now.

EXT. CABIN YARD-

The thugs get into the motorcar. The immense club of fire reflects on the front windshield as the 4x4 drops off.

EXT. CYPRESS FOREST-

Frazer moves out of his cover and starts running, making a beeline for his cabin.

EXT. CABIN REAR- BACK ENTRANCE

The cabin's roof is detaching like falling comets. Frazer's teeth occlude in contained anger. He strolls up. One more remembrance reduced to ruins.

INT. BURNING CABIN-

Inside, hell. The back door blasts inward. The flames blaze in contact with the massive air inflow. Frazer strides in, sidestepping, avoiding the falling laths. He grabs Lancaster's torch and reaches the cell phone's niche. Pause. He expected this. He puts his hand inside, rives the plank back. He removes a ream of paper as half of the roof caves in.

EXT. CABIN YARD-

Frazer looks once more to the wrack and makes a wry face. His gaze goes down to his pack. Still in this position, he spins and walks away.

EXT. GREENLAND-HECKFORD DISTRICT- DEEP NIGHT

Frazer sees the lane is free. He crosses the street toward a payphone poll opposite his pavement.

INT. PAYPHONE-CONTINUOUS

Frazer lights up his torch and riffles through the phone record diary. His index runs the matrix of numbers, hits GMH. Frazer lifts the handset and dials the numbers. He does not see a squad car come from behind him.

(INTERCUTS)

A female receptionist answers the call.

RECEPTIONIST
GMH reception, can I help you?

FRAZER
Yes please. I'm looking for my brother. Bill Crossover. I believe he's transferred there for a post-mortem exam.

RECEPTIONIST
Wait a minute sir. (Beat) that's right. I'm sorry, sir.

FRAZER
It's all right, I knew. Could I have the name of the company where he'd been working?

RECEPTIONIST
Sorry, sir. I'm not authorized to disclose it unless for investigational purposes.

FRAZER
Please, listen. I'm a cop. Off-duty. Three years stuck hundred of miles from here. I couldn't do anything for my dead brother now. Help me, please.

RECEPTIONIST
(After a beat)
Hold on... it's Microtech. Inc.

FRAZER
The owner?

Long beat.

FRAZER
Hello? Hello? Shit!

*

RECEPTIONIST
We've been cut off. The owner's ... Ben Myrtleback. Who shall I say called?

Dean registers deeply the details. He is thinking of a lie now.

FRAZER
Mark. Mark crossover.

The squad car reaches the payphone level. The two cops inside are staring at us as they roll slowly by.

Frazer becomes aware when the rotating cherry reflects on the glass casing. He looks over his shoulder, gets a shock.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)
Anything else, sir?

Frazer switches off his torch, resumes his call. Perfect diversion.

FRAZER
(Hysterical)
Yes, yes I ...I was wondering whether
we could meet tonight.

Without fully turning round, he sees the cops are still outside. They've stopped the car.

RECEPTIONIST
Beg your pardon?

FRAZER
I want us meet tonight. Scent your
smell, feel your voice...

His eyes roll back to the outside.

INT.POLICE SQUAD- SAME

The two cops stare out at Frazer unable to realize the reason of the gesticulations.

FRAZER (O.S.)
I love you.

*

The two patrolling cops share a look.

PATROLLING COP 1
Strange lover.

He lets in first gear.

INT. PAYPHONE- INTERCUTTING

Frazer sees the police squad drive away and sighs in relief.

RECEPTIONIST
Hey, Mark. Where are you? Give me
an address. I'm leaving in ten
minutes.

Frazer is still in emotion. He does not hear.

RECEPTIONIST
Mark. Do you hear me?

Frazer becomes aware again.

FRAZER

Yes... well... meet me in Heckford
District.

He hangs up instantly.

INT. CAB- NIGHT

The cab driver sees his customer in the rear view mirror.
Frazer is out of it. Such close calls.

DRIVER

Press reported a horrible accident
during the past few hours.

FRAZER

Beg your pardon?

DRIVER

Police van crash. I've seen the
dead guy's face. Looks perfectly
innocent and takes much after you.

FRAZER

Excuse me?

DRIVER

Sorry for the offense but these
idiots of cops have very likely
killed him and run a rig on
everyone.

FRAZER

No offense taken. I'm sorry. I'm
just back to this town.

DRIVER

I wish you saw these damn nailers
laughing, smiling as though nothing
of this horror's happened.

PUSH IN TOWARD FRAZER. The last words strike him as we see
QUICK CUTBACKS to the barracks sequences. Frazer awakens.

FRAZER

Okay, sir. Thank you. It's my stop.
Here... keep the change.

He steps out quickly.

INT. CYBERCAFE- NIGHT

Frazer types on a search phrase and hits Enter. On the screen
the search results display. Frazer scrolls down to Microtech
and clicks on the hypertext. Nothing of interest. Frazer hits
previous, scrolls down more, comes across Buckers Ltd. and
clicks on. Homepage display. Frazer reads briefly and looks
up in astonishment.

INT. PAYPHONE- NIGHT

Frazer is holding the handset with one hand while his other, gesticulates indicating impatience.

FRAZER

It is. Pig-poke deal. No cosignatory consent.

*

A male voice on the other end of the line.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

He's no right to. There could be a specific reason?

FRAZER

Cost-push inflation meaning a sharp curtail of contracted advantages. This world's bucks.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

And you are proposing?

FRAZER

A meeting. Mundane meeting. I propose a momentary retrieval of the holder's funds straight from tomorrow morning. Until company's personnel can figure of this hatched deal, we should debate our issue. It's clearly in the agreement terms.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

All right, buddy. I'll tell the others right away. Thanks Dean. Goodbye.

Frazer hangs up and exits. He sees where to go.

EXT. BUCKLER STREET- VERY DEEP NIGHT

The building lies opposite to another identical construction. TILT DOWN. Frazer is standing at a corner just under a lighted up lodging, two stories up. A berry tree seems to reach exactly the level of the apartment whose windows are closed and curtains drawn down. Frazer risks an eye toward the opposite lobby.

A car is parked near the lobby. The chasing car of the other day. Someone is inside puffing. Noah climbs out and enters into the building. He glances back. Nothing much going on.

Frazer looks up. Equally two stories up, shutters half-closed, another figure is peering directly out. Straight into the opposite building's lighted nest.

Frazer wonders for a while then make his mind up. He bends down and picks few ragstones and pockets them. He strides toward the berry tree and stops sharp at the sight of the water-sludgy bole. It is slippery, offering no possible starting block. Frazer sighs.

EXT. OTHER BUILDING'S LOBBY-

Noah, still puffing, frames himself at the doorway. He side-looks both ways, grinds the butt and flings himself back to the car.

EXT. BERRY TREE-

Frazer crosses his legs and arms round the trunk and CATERPILLARS up. He creeps up until he reaches the limb. He seizes the branch, sighs in relief. He climbs up and reaches the topmost reliable fork that stretches toward the lighted window.

INT. THUG'S CAR- CLOSE REAR VIEW MIRROR

A flash of radial, luminous needles approaching, filling the scope. Noah looks at it. He distinguishes the rotating beacon of a police car , slips himself down.

EXT. UP THE TREE-

Frazer pats his pockets when he hears an engine whine and the police squad skids to a stop right below him.

FRAZER

Hell!

STREET-

A police officer steps out and hurries to the tree. The driver remains inside.

DRIVER

Shake a leg, Jim.

OTHER COP

Oh take it easy. Fucking diuretics are pretty shitty.

Jim moves behind the tree. He undoes his trouser fly and starts to empty his bladder.

ANGLE FRAZER-

Eyes sticking downward, no move. He is watching the performance. Jim zips up and runs back to the car. They depart.

INT. OPPOSITE BUILDING- THUG'S ROOM- SAME

The thug is no other than Dick. He sees the police van drop off completely and sits back on his chair overlooking the opposite story.

EXT. UP THE BERRY TREE- SAME

Frazer grips with one hand to the fork. He attempts a throw to the shutter with his other. He slips, balances himself.

INT. DWIGHT'S BEDROOM- SAME

Dwight is lying on the brass bed, in her underclothes. She is leafing through a magazine. A ping of something that hits the window shutter. Dwight eyes the window, concerned. She is unsure of the sound. A passing moment of stillness. She plunges into reading again. A similar sound. Dwight looks up.

DWIGHT
(Still unsure)
What now?

She swings her feet onto the floor and shuffles toward the window and opens it. The image that greets her makes her stagger. She feels to her breast as she nearly screams.

You-know-who up the tree is nearly unidentifiable amidst the foliage, the ramifications and the darkness. Frazer puts an index to his mouth.

FRAZER
Sssssssh! Kristy! It's me. Dean.

Dwight recovers.

DWIGHT
(Panting)
What the hell are you doing there?

Frazer uprights and sees the other window. Closed.

FRAZER
Can't explain from here. I'll jump
in for a while. Don't worry. I
won't be long.

He trips but clings to the fork.

EXT. UP THE TREE-

Frazer takes one step toward the window. The fork on which he stands quakes and squeaks. Frazer has no point where to get balance. He looks down. A good gap. He looks up and resumes his advance.

A distance to the frame. He has no time for countdown. The branch cracks.

Frazer leaps off just as the branch detaches from the trunk, throwing him off balance in the air but... he clutches in time to the frame. He looks down, expecting his pursuers. Nothing.

INT. THUG'S CAR- NOAH

Crossing his arms behind the headrest. He folds his seat down, still chain-smoking. It relieves his aching back. He takes a moment to savor it.

INT. DICK'S ROOM-

The WC door opens. We hear a zip up. Dick is whistling a melody. He joins his lookout post, glances out. Nothing much going on. The street is deserted.

INT. DWIGHT'S BEDROOM-

Frazer is talking to a barely-believing Dwight.

FRAZER

Listen, Kristy. I just... I'll put what I have to say in words of one syllable. I'm not contending for barn owls tonight. Let me tell you... you aren't in a safe house.

*

DWIGHT

All this way to tell me. They..

FRAZER

(Cuts her off)

Bill Crossover. Does it sound familiar to you?

Dwight watches him closely for the first time.

DWIGHT

He's my ex-husband and... and...

FRAZER

A Microtech fired employee. I don't care much about it. But...why was he out listening when you, Mike and I were in the cabin? Because he's the instigator of your kidnapping.

DWIGHT

He wasn't fired. I got a tip off. He was still working for this electronics company, anyway. But how do you know him?

Frazer moves to the open window, sees nothing and comes back again. Dwight is not certain.

FRAZER

How'd he know about me, more like. We had a rousing to-do yesterday. gotten shot dead. Not me. I was convicted and I fled. Watched the news?

Dwight's eyes transfix on Frazer.

DWIGHT

Let's assume I'm not in a safe house. How' d they know where I'm lodging?

FRAZER

The cell phone. My cell phone. They came across the message you paged me. We have an appointment this place tomorrow morning.

Dwight ducks away in disbelief.

DWIGHT

Your story ain't holding no air.

Frazer sighs. He moves to her, seizes both her shoulders and turns her to face him.

FRAZER

Kristy... Kristy. Look at me. Look. Great. You certainly recall what I said back in the jeep. Things seem to be moving all so mundanely right. They aren't.

He touches her neck, runs his thumbs on her cheeks. Dwight ducks away.

FRAZER

I'm not a trail-blazer in justice making. This does not mean the situation is a laughing matter. I just want to know why two guys outside are looking for me. How'd they know I fled? Why are they spying out your every movement. (Beat) I understand they uppered the stakes this time. They want to kill me.

*

Dwight ducks away completely, makes a move toward the window. Frazer gets first. He pulls two slats lightly apart. Dwight stares out.

DWIGHT'S POV-

A blurred report of Noah nesting the snout in the palm of his clenched fist. The red tip is visible. Two stories up the opposite building, Dick sitting, cross-legged.

DWIGHT

(False unconcern)
Everything's quite normal.

FRAZER

Wasn't it when I took you to the cabin half-dead? You don't seem to grasp the reality intruding. I'm just asking for your help. Not outta here but from here.

DWIGHT

Ring the police.

FRAZER

No police. They've nothing against them. They'll catch me instead. I'm dead to them. Please Kristy. That's the last thing I'm asking. Give me a chance.

DWIGHT

How... could I help you?

Frazer sees a circular mirror. He ducks behind the wall, facing the mirror, the closed window and as it were the opposite building's second storey.

INT. NOAH'S CAR-

The WT beeps but Noah does not seem to notice. He is dead to the world. Asleep and snoring. Beep...beep...beep...Noah awakens, takes the WT from the dashboard.

INT. DICK'S ROOM-

(NECESSARY INTERCUTS WITH)

Dick puts the night-vision binoculars to his eyes. Nothing special going on. He lowers them, takes a sip on his brandy.

DICK

Were you asleep, Noah?

NOAH

Yeah. Half. Only nightmares keep awake at this time of night. Let's scam for Heaven's sake. I'm fed up to the back teeth.

DICK

It's all right.

NOAH

By God! Why don't we kill her and finish things off.

DICK

You ace of fools. We need her. Mackerel catching the whale.

NOAH

Do we?

He sighs.

INT. DWIGHT'S BEDROOM-

Frazer is still in duck position. He hands a lighted cigarette to Dwight.

FRAZER

Remember, Kristy. A three-flash signal. Are you ready? Do it.

DWIGHT

My husband has the right to see me in my close underwear. Not you.

FRAZER

All right Kristy. It would never be the part. I won't look at you.

She moves to the closed window.

INT. DICK'S ROOM-

Dick is still on the phone, fingering his binoculars and a rectangular black box. A carrying case. He takes a sip of his brandy.

DICK

You'll be awarded a bundle...what do you say? Ain't it great you end up as rich as Croesus? Hey...(beat) Noah, you listening?

NOAH (O.S.)

Stop fucking with me, Dick.

Dick sees something.

DICK

Wait!

The stretchers of the opposite open. He hits switch off on his WT and grabs his binoculars.

INT. DWIGHT'S BEDROOM-

Dwight leans out of the window, shams a fresh air inlet. She breathes deeply and comes toward her bed. She takes off her underwear revealing a fetching brunette in bra and pants. Only her eyes look to the opposite building.

FRAZER

What do you see?

DWIGHT

Top of someone's head taking...oh my God!

Her look slips down toward Frazer.

FRAZER

Look away! Look away!

He positions himself into duck-walk and stretches his neck to better see the man's report on the mirror. One half, the stringed butt of Dwight, the other the thug's glare.

FRAZER

No. These are night-vision binoculars.

*

DWIGHT

So he can see me better?

FRAZER

Not that.

Dwight shifts her eyes out again.

INT. DICK'S ROOM-

Dick adjusts his binoculars, never leaving the show. All his attention stirred, eyes riveted to the beauty opposite his room. He grabs the WT.

DICK

Noah! I think you ought to see this. Frazer ought to see this before he dies. She's making herself up for him. I'm sure now.

NOAH (O.S.)

Go to the devil, Dick. I'm not with you. I waited all night for ghosts and that topped the bill.

*

*

DICK

He's coming... he called her.

INT. DWIGHT'S BEDROOM-

Dwight tries a new dress on and takes it off instantly.

FRAZER

Okay Kristy. My part to play now.
I'll get out as quietly as
possible. Don't look at me. I wanna
trap them into looking here and
nowhere else. Just keep the ball
rolling.

Frazer duck walks, edging his way along to the window facing
the berry tree. He looks at his watch. It reads 10:30 pm.

FRAZER

You join me in half an hour.

*

Dwight studies her dress before wearing it. Frazer props his
chest to the frame, taking cover in Dwight's performance.
Below him, again the gap. He swings his legs over the frame
and takes a long breath.

EXT. BUCKLER STREET- VERY DEEP NIGHT

Frazer reverses the move of when he entered the building. He
flies off the frame, clutches in time to the trunk, slips
down. He strains his hold and comes to a stop. He sighs. A
gash is starting to bleed on the side of his cheek, exactly
where he has a scar. He looks toward the other building and
car. They heard nothing. He slips down the tree, crosses a by-
road on his left and vanishes amidst the shadows. HOLD ON.
For some moments we see but the blackness.

INT. NOAH'S CAR-

Some distance ahead, a black shade stealthily crosses the
street. Noah does not see it, absorbed in chain-smoking and
studying his own figure on the rear view mirror.

INT. MYRTLEBACK'S VILLA- VERY DEEP NIGHT

Loads of unsorted-out documents load Myrtleback's desktop.
Myrtleback is reading a heavy financial manual. By-and by, he
side-glances at the phone. He suddenly pitches off the
manual, one hands the receiver and dials the numbers.

MYRTLEBACK

Our friend didn't show up, yet?

(INTERCUTS WITH)

DICK

No, sir. I don't think he'll make
it tonight.

MYRTLEBACK

Don't think it. That's for your
biography.

DICK

It's getting too late to attempt...

MYRTLEBACK

It's peculiar to clever men to take their time when they really have not. What you call patience. Stay in you'll see.

DICK

All right, sir. Balls!

He switches off.

EXT. FARTHER SIDE OF THUG BUILDING--

Frazer stampedes behind the building. A blood drop is trickling from his cheek gash. Frazer does not feel it. It reaches the side of his mouth. Frazer brings his right hand up and retracts it instantly. The smell is an awful mephitic. Frazer pauses and remembers.

FRAZER

Cops ...can't drain their JT into a bog.

He sees a water puddle, washes the smell off from his hands. He perambulates and resumes his advance. From the upper corner of the thug building, he has an eye on the rear of Noah's car.

INT. NOAH'S CAR--

Noah is still smoking with propensity. He suffocates from the stagnated smoke and slides the window glass.

EXT. BEHIND NOAH'S CAR--

Frazer duck-walks cat-footed toward the car. He reaches the rear hood, moves to the driver door, straightens and knocks on. The door unlocks and Noah stumbles out, sleepy, eyes blurred.

NOAH

Well, at last...

Beat. He looks up, gets a shock. He struggles to take his pistol. Frazer has him in full Nelson. The palm of his hand gags Noah's mouth. His other hand snaps off Noah's MAUSER.

Noah giggles, Frazer cocks the hammer.

FRAZER

What? A fly in the ointment?

Noah shakes his head. His words are muffled. Frazer puts off his hand.

NOAH

Please I didn't do anything. I... I'm just... don't kill me, please.

I'm doing a job I'm paid for. My friend up there will tell you.

Frazer pushes him toward the lobby.

FRAZER

No time for a vacation? We'll pay a visit to your friend up there. You'll do as you are told. (Beat) don't negotiate.

Frazer ushers Noah to the lobby and they frog-march up.

INT. THUG BUILDING- CORRIDOR

Frazer and Noah frog-march along the corridor until they reach Dick's room door. Frazer has still the M2 ready, lined on Noah.

INT. DICK'S ROOM-

Dick grabs his WT, hears a knock.

INT. CORRIDOR

Noah standing right in front of the peephole. At his right, Frazer is aiming directly at him.

FRAZER

Move an eyelid and I'll blow your ugly brains out. *

Dick opens and strides back to his previous position. He hears the thud of a falling body. It slows his pace...beat. He freezes and spins. Frazer trains the Mauser right at us. Rock-steady, he raises the weapon to eye level, accurately taking aim, almost shooting.

FRAZER

Guests don't knock, eh? Drop your weaponry, take your friend inside. One more hiss and I'll plug your brains! *

Frazer cocks the hammer. Noah shakes the emotion off, catches Noah's feet and lugs him inside. Frazer shuts the door, closes in on Dick, checks for concealed gats and finds none but his own cell phone.

FRAZER

Bring this chair right here and give your ass a seat. *

He moves to the window, sees Dwight still in her diversion. He takes out his torch, switches it on and off across to her.

INT. DWIGHT'S BEDROOM-

Dwight puts her things back on. Anais comes in.

ANAIS

What's going on, mum? I heard you talking.

DWIGHT

Oh! My baby! It's nothing. I'll just get out for a while, okay?

She moves to the window and draws down the shutters.

INT. DICK'S ROOM-

Frazer ransacks briefly in and comes across a cord. He does not care about the black box. He starts strapping Dick to the chair.

FRAZER

So...you were spying out, weren't you? Tell me why.

Dick does not even wink.

FRAZER

This covered action's turned afoot? *

He finishes his firm strapping. He sees the black box. He lifts it up, out of curiosity, and flips up the lid. Inside are the taken-down parts of a handgun: the frame, the silencer and the laser illuminator of a H+K MK 23.

FRAZER

Wow... very nice. Mauser, HK... fine supplies. *

Frazer takes out the illuminator... Dick is confident.

DICK

You're a blockhead. You'll never see to using this. Far too advanced for cavemen in your genre, you dipshit!

FRAZER

Good. Your assertion is true up to a point...

He flicks a glance at his watch. It turns to 10:55 pm..

FRAZER

I mean up to the seconds I give you to answer my questions tick away. *

He picks up the frame of the MK 23. Dick's confidence vanishes.

FRAZER

I advise you to tell me everything.
Does it sound clear?

*

DICK

Dipstick!

FRAZER

You're in the throes and still defy
me. Okay. I dig in.

In flashy movements, Frazer assembles the frame, chambers the magazine, slides in the illuminator on the barrel rail and releases the safety lock. He turns round.

FRAZER

Well?

*

DICK

Go bark at the moon asshole!

Frazer says nothing. He screws on the silencer and checks the laser point on the palm of his hand. Without even aiming, he pulls the trigger.

Inches from Dick's leg, the plop drills the chair rest. It falls inches down. Dick looks up. The laser point settles on his chest. Frazer is slowly pulling the trigger. Dick shrinks back.

DICK

Okay! Okay! I'll tell you, madman.

*

FRAZER

I set no seconds.

He lowers the gun.

INT. LANCASTER'S BEDROOM-

Lancaster is leaning against the headboard. He is focusing on the milimetrical shadow play of the curtain and the foliage outside. He wrings his hands on his chest whether to turn over of get up and get going. The phone on the night table rings. Suzan springs up out of a shallow shut-eye. Lancaster picks up the receiver.

LANCASTER

(Tiredly)
Who is it?

FRAZER (O.S.)

Mike, it's me. Dean. Sorry...

LANCASTER

A hoax.

FRAZER (O.S.)
Mike... is it your turn to keep the
early hours?

Lancaster springs up, eyes wide. Suzan awakens.

LANCASTER
(Unbelieving)
Dean! Oh my...you alive? What did
happen? Where are you? Tell
me...Dean? Dean?

INT. DICK'S ROOM- FRAZER ON CELL PHONE

INTERCUTS AS NECESSARY-

FRAZER
Buckler Street. I merely know the
off-turns though I had business to
settle around. Building opposite
Kristy's lodging.

LANCASTER
Wait! Don't hang up!

He struggles to his feet.

FRAZER
I'm supposed to figure out the
reason of my repeated checkmates.
Someone here will explain
everything. Bring around the cops.
Bye for now.

LANCASTER
Dean! Dean! He hanged up..

He hears the line go dead and sets down the receiver. He
shows a leg and slips on his clothes.

SUZAN
Dean on the line?

LANCASTER
Yes. Aren't you gonna ask me how he
made it?

SUZAN
Telepathy.

Lancaster togs on his hoses and shoes.

LANCASTER
I'm going out.

He moves on.

INT.PARLOUR- CONTINUOUS

Lancaster grabs the keys and exits.

INT. MYRTLEBACK'S VILLA- HOME OFFICE

Myrtleback is gluing the cell phone to his ear, barely believing what he is hearing. He jerks up. He has his sales manager on the phone.

MYRTLEBACK

How's that? They can't do it.

SALES MANAGER (O.S.)

They know perfectly of the terms of agreement, the reopening clause. Someone reminded them. (Beat) first start, stock values already recessive will be dropping fast over the next 24 hours.

Myrtleback drops silent. Closes his eyes. A flashy remembrance.

INT. DICK'S ROOM-

Dick's WT beeps. Frazer picks it up.

NECESSARY INTERCUTS WITH:

INT. MYRTLEBACK'S HOME OFFICE-

MYRTLEBACK

Dick, is Dean out?

FRAZER

No, he's in. Hi, Ben. It's a month of Sundays.

MYRTLEBACK

Who's on the line?

FRAZER

Oh! Just an old pal. You're no more concerned than I'm supposed to be this minute and I must thank you for bringing the question up.

MYRTLEBACK

I don't see...

FRAZER

You do. Wait.

Frazer hears a faint knock. Dwight comes in, eyes wide open, shocked at the sight of the unconscious Noah. Frazer, without leaving the phone, jerks with his hand inviting her closer.

FRAZER

Ben... you've turned my life into a desolate existence just for a lost feeling.

MYRTLEBACK

Dean? Is that you? What's this nonsense?

FRAZER

Perhaps an optical vagary.

MYRTLEBACK

I thought you were dead. It's good to have you back around.

FRAZER

You thought I were dead. So did I.

MYRTLEBACK

(Gets the hints)

Till this hell freezes over, I'll owe you special credits for giving my life a sense of incarnation every time I feel desperate.

FRAZER

Yeah, incarnation of Jude Kisser.

MYRTLEBACK

I don't understand?

FRAZER

I doubt your hatchet man here will be stirred by such mental process.

He puts the WT to Dick's ear and the silencer to the other.

DICK

I'm sorry, boss. He knows everything.

Myrtleback registers the meaning.

DICK

The slut tricked us...

Frazer hits him behind the ear. Dick loses consciousness. Dwight shrinks back in shock.

FRAZER

Hey, Ben...before I hang up...remember you just smiled that day. It took me in.

Frazer switches off the WT and pitches it off into the darkness.

*

*

The crash of a glass and the immediate blare of a car's alarm. Frazer ushers the apprehensive Dwight close to Noah and Dick.

FRAZER
Your kidnappers?

*

Dwight points unsurely at Noah who has his face down.

DWIGHT
This guy. If I'm right he's got a
snake tattoo on his left arm.

Frazer rolls up Noah's left arm sleeve. A curled-up deeply tattooed snake. Frazer nods to Dwight and stands up. A distant police squad siren approaches.

DWIGHT
Who's Ben?

*

Frazer stares through the window and looks back to Dwight with a warm smile.

FRAZER
A school playmate. Okay Kristy. The
better for you is to change lodging
until all this is over. Sorry for
the inconvenience but we made two
strikes with one stone.

DWIGHT
Where are you going?

FRAZER
You heard me. I've an appointment.
I have four years out of my life to
work back.

Dwight registers the meaning.

DWIGHT
Don't go Dean ...please don't go.
Something's underway. I know it.
They'll kill you.

She hangs to his sleeve.

FRAZER
(Emotional)
Kristy. They'll kill me if I don't
go. I want you understand something
of much importance for me. My life
hinges on one thing now. I'm never
lucky when it comes to choices and
here I've no choice at all. I have
to risk it all.

In two hours time, I'll be free of any remorse, of any impediment to enjoy this panglossic side of life. That depends on breaking this circle of predators.

Dwight welds with him, strains him. Frazer hesitantly holds her tight.

DWIGHT

Don't go... please don't...

FRAZER

You just saved my life Kristy. This guy, Ben, is beyond any law. No one can get him. No one has a shred of an accusation against him from a judicial regard. I'll remind him of Dalesworth.

The siren grows louder. Dwight starts back. The name reminds her of an amnesia.

DWIGHT

What happened exactly?

FRAZER

I know the premise. He knows the conclusion. Be sure I'll get the guy and his mates. They are no pillow-fighters nor playboy trainees I admit. They almost certainly know I had their training. Ball is in my court.

The sound of the siren is a short distance off.

DWIGHT

But you can't trace his bunker now. You destroyed the WT.

FRAZER

No worry...

Noah recovers and shakes his head, dazzled. Frazer sees it, not Dwight.

FRAZER

Our friend is back to his spirits. I got the driver. It's good to quote it sometime. Some people never believe in retribution unless they learn it.

*

He moves closer to her, for some moments he looks deep into her eyes. He kisses her lightly on the cheek. Noah stands up. Frazer points with his HK indicating the door. He looks back once more to Dwight. Shared understanding.

INT. POLICE CAR- MOMENTS LATER

Lancaster bullets along the road, horns blaring out. At the crossroad, the traffic light goes red. Lancaster brakes sharp. Beat. He grinds the gas pedal.

EXT. CROSSROADS- CONTINUOUS

The squad swings into the heart of the crossroad. Another car from behind it is coming straight into collision with it as it screeches...

INT. SQUAD- CONTINUOUS

...and hits the rear of the car. It throws Lancaster slightly forward. Lancaster grinds the accelerator avoids the cacophony of crashing late-night vehicles behind him.

LANCASTER

Thank you.

He grabs the radio.

LANCASTER

Repeat. All units rolling to place?
Your bid.

*

VOICE (O.S.)

Roger. Affirmative.

Lancaster toggles the radio off and speeds up more.

INT. NOAH'S CAR-

Noah gets into the car at the driver side. Frazer climbs in, shrives the HK to Noah's neck.

NOAH

Where?

FRAZER

Another such insinuation and I'll
be sure to rearrange the back of
your head into a miser's moneybox.

NOAH

She's a slut...

Frazer stabs him to the back of the head. Noah grimaces in pain.

FRAZER

You see...

NOAH

I...

FRAZER

Will you shut up? Drive,
motherfucker!

Noah releases the handbrake and...

EXT. STREET ROAD-

...the rear tires reel in a shower of water particles spraying
back as the car drives off.

INT. MYRTLEBACK'S VILLA- SANCTUM

Myrtleback is on the phone.

MYRTLEBACK

I know, dear. I'm late. (Listens)
yes, yes... It's all business...it took
us slightly more time than
projected. Don't worry Kate. I'll
be home the day after tomorrow.
Love you honey. Bye.

He replaces the handset, shakes his head in disgust. He
removes a handgun from a drawer and cocks the hammer. One of
his men is standing by the door. Myrtleback points the gun at
him and pulls the trigger. CLINK! DRY SNAP. The other man
flinches back. He gazes up, ringent and unbelieving.

MAN

I ringed for night flight
reservation. All full, sir. I
booked for the first... Tuesday.

MYRTLEBACK

You sure I'll be free on Tuesday? I
must be out of town now. This
night.

MAN

I'm sorry, sir.

Myrtleback wobbles to the French window overlooking the yard.
Long beat. Myrtleback turns round.

MYRTLEBACK

The time you allocate yourself to
be sorry will be enough for you to
kick the bucket.

He raises his gun from the trigger guard.

MYRTLEBACK

If he breaks in, then maybe it's
your chance to be sorry.

He reverts, looks out.

*

MYRTLEBACK

*

He's a profound reader of facts and theories that would seem mundane. The like theories revert into satanic contraptions when he decides to apply them. I often read in his eyes, determination, respect for ideals and ecstasy for philosophy.

MAN

That's a nirvana.

MYRTLEBACK

Only Buddhists don't read the stuff. They process it mentally. The guy likes adventures about crusaders and time-free thinkers.

Myrtleback chuckles, an infuriated chuckle as he chambers a magazine into the handgun.

MYRTLEBACK

Hit the road. I don't want you here.

He brings the weapon up and his index crotchets to the trigger. The other man exits, hurriedly. Myrtleback takes hold on the desk edge, sighing, raging. He could not help it.

INT. BUCKLER STREET- THUG BUILDING HALLWAY-

Cops troop up behind Dick's room, decked out, weapons drawn. They kick the door open and storm in.

COP

Police! Freeze! Hands in the air.

Dick is still strapped but , still unconscious. A tiny paper sheet drops from up the frame. Lancaster picks it up and gets in.

EXT. CROSSROADS-

Noah's car comes to a slow down at the crossroads.

INT. NOAH'S CAR-

Frazer flicks a cursory look at his luminous watch. It reads 23:15 pm. He does not see the traffic light turn to red. Noah stops completely. Frazer looks up.

FRAZER

Why did you stop?

NOAH

Red light.

Frazer stares out through the windshield.

POV:

In the offing , a police squad in a left by-way waiting for speeders.

Frazer does not miss the significance. Beat. He looks back, gets the link.

FRAZER

Back up!

NOAH

What?

FRAZER

(Grinds his molars)

Back the fuck up and take another shortcut!

NOAH

This is the shortcut!

FRAZER

Yes, to the radar trap. You were gonna speed it. Back up!

He hits Noah again with the HK. Noah growls in pain and engages reverse gear.

EXT. CROSSROADS-

The reversing lights flare in the darkness. Noah slowly brings the car straight to a by-street and shunts right.

INT. DICK'S ROOM-

Police officers fill up the room now. Tactical, print seekers...Dick is still unconscious but unstrapped. Medics attend to him. Lancaster and Stingray are looking out through the opened window. They turn round, see the pandemonium and stride toward the exit.

INT. CORRIDOR-

An officer joins Lancaster and Stingray.

OFFICER

(Confused)

Tell me I'm not mad. Prints well and truly match a dead man. Dean Frazer.

He holds a look with Lancaster and Stingray.

LANCASTER

Thank you.

He and Stingray walk along the corridor. Lancaster remembers something. He comes out with the tiny note sheet and unfolds it. Stingray peers into it.

INSERT-NOTE

Frazer's handwriting style: THERE MUST BE AN END TO FOUR YEARS TONIGHT.

Lancaster and Stingray share a look. Mutual understanding. They screen the papersheet again as...

OFFICER
Lieutenant Stingray?

They turn round to face him.

STINGRAY
Yes?

OFFICER
The guy's name is Dick Trebber. Specially-credited former highly-trained bodyguard and a particular marksman. In disagreement with two of his former employees, he killed them. Five years in a maximum security prison, two on vocational rehabilitation.

Stingray considers this...

STINGRAY
A good data sheet. Interrogate him.

OFFICER
All right, sir.

They all start toward the room.

INT. NOAH'S CAR-

Hundreds of feet ahead, Frazer sees Myrtleback's illuminated and walled-in villa.

NOAH
We're almost there.

FRAZER
Okay. Cut the engine. Don't brake.

Noah turns off the engine.

EXT. TRENTON-ALLEY

A slight slope. The car continues its way like an undecipherable moving specter. It reaches the villa's fence and comes to a stop next to a lamppost that goes off.

INT. NOAH'S CAR-

Frazer peers at his watch. It reads 23:25 pm. He unbuckles his seat belt.

FRAZER
Take off your belt.

*

NOAH
So you can climb over the edge.
Stodgy.

He starts undoing his belt.

FRAZER
What? Yeah. You're right. I'm not standing for Keith Mallory... not tonight. Belts can have other uses. Think of the one you use when driving. Thanks for the drive..

He gun-slogs Noah behind the ear. Noah's senses slip away, instantly..

FRAZER
...and keep the change.

*

He brings back Noah's arms and crosses them.

EXT. TRENTON ALLEY-

Frazer carefully, noiselessly climbs out of the car absolutely free of any belt. He moves toward a dark corner and examines the high-footed wall. The lamppost goes on again, illuminating the area. Frazer gets it. His watch reads 23: 26. The second hand is running inexorably to the twenty seventh minute and the lamppost light goes off.

EXT. VILLA YARD- ANGLE FROM STREET

A squared 70cm hedge. A magnificent landscaping. A guard is crossing the yard toward our position behind the wall. He turns round, marches counterclockwise.

YARD- ANGLE FROM INSIDE ON WALL EDGE

Two pairs of fingertips clutch like some mollusk to the narrow edge. Frazer's head stealthily protrudes up from the outer façade.

FRAZER'S POV-

His place is bathed in darkness. The same guard is marching his way, reverts, and marches away again.

ANGLE- BALCONY

The balcony forms a parapet. Two sentinels survey the inner bailey either side. They are busy studying their ammunition by and by, they survey the entrance.

ANGLE FRAZER-

He lifts himself up, swings his legs over the top of the edge into the inner façade.

The yard sentinel has his back toward us. Frazer jumps in, on the tip of his toes as the sentinel turns round and the lamppost goes on again. Frazer runs for cover behind the hedge. He sees the sentinel steadily walking. He stops and checks his next move. He reaches for his MK23, turns on the illuminator. The point settles on the palm of his hand.

INT. SQUAD CAR-

Lancaster is cruising full speed, avoiding the jam of vehicles. Next to him, Stingray is holding his breath.

EXT. MYRTLEBACK'S VILLA YARD-

Frazer ducks firmly behind the hedge. He has set his next move. The yard sentinel stops his routine ten feet away from him and lights up a torch.

Frazer grinds his molars and looks for an issue. He feels his gun. Instead of advancing, the sentinel switches the torch on and off forward and then backward. What's that?

Frazer is indecisive. He peers ahead waits for the meaning of the move as he screws the silencer onto his HK.

Two shadow figures emerge. The other sentinels. It was a code-signal. They join the yard sentinel. Frazer is still not reacting, ears away trying to crack down the distant dialogue. The two guards break off toward their previous positions. The yard guard resumes his routine.

Frazer dubs it time for the move. He enchases the HK in a 30-degree angle with the top of the hedge, drives it in and turns on the laser. It rays obliquely up and the point settles on the villa's door lintel. Frazer breaks off in duck-walk.

INT. VILLA- HALL- MYRTLEBACK

Tucking something into the inside pocket of his coat. His mind is away. A slight whooshing sound outside. He turns round, pulls his gun to the direction. Nothing. He shakes his head and goes up the stairs.

On the first step he takes, the thing, a slide paper, falls off from the inside coat pocket but Myrtleback does not see it.

INSERT-SLIDE PAPER

A photograph. A shot of four persons. FRAZER, BECKS, CASEY AND FRAZER...HOLD ON then...

INT. SQUAD CAR-

Lancaster is caught in a red light jam. Stingray grabs the radio.

STINGRAY
Request immediate back up. Trenton
alley. You copy?

VOICE (O.S.)
Roger.

LANCASTER
Come on! Come on! Damn...

Stingray switches off. He is impatient. Lancaster is revving up the engine in anticipation.

EXT. VILLA YARD-

A fine, scarlet ray strikes the yard guard. It forms a red cobweb before his eyes. He stops abruptly. Uncomprehending beat. He starts toward the source. He reaches the hedge and attempts to drive out the HK. Frazer slaps him hard to the back of the head and lowers him down. He pulls off the guard's overcoat, grabs the torch and the HK.

He comes ahead, hits the switcher on the torch, code-signals the other guards.

ANGLE- GUARD 2

Twenty feet away to the right, guard 2 heads down again.

GUARD 2
What again?

He comes toward Dean whose back is toward us. He is light-switching guard 3. Frazer turns round.

GUARD 2-

He is unbelieving as his eyes go wide... He attempts to level his weapon but Frazer fires first. The shells throw guard 2 backward.

Guard 3 approaches behind Frazer who has his back toward us again, partially hiding our view of fallen guard 2.

FRAZER
(Wheezing)
You lonesome cretin. How'd he get
in? You understand me? How the hell
did he?

Frazer does not turn round. He gestures with his index finger inviting guard 3 to take a look. Guard 3 approaches and kneels down, returns his mate to face him. Beat. Frazer notices the perplexity. Guard 3 look up. The bore of the HK greets him.

FRAZER

Just to say good night. Take off your kevlar and turn round.

*

Guard 3 pulls his vest off and turns round. Frazer slams him hard behind the ear. Guard 3 falls on top of guard 2 who recovers. Frazer notices, brings his heel down smashing. It slogs guard 2 to the side of the jaw. He loses consciousness. A siren bullhorn is echoing in the distance.

INT. SQUAD CAR-

Lancaster reaches Noah's car and comes to a sharp standstill, snatches his automatic. He and Stingray climb out.

EXT. VILLA YARD- DOORSTEP-

Cautiously, Frazer turns on the doorknob, scrutinizes behind him and gets in.

INT. VILLA- CONTINUOUS

Above the vast hall is a veranda overlooking the hall itself and the ground floor. Right is the staircase whose landing extends all along the first storey.

Frazer pads along the hall, reaches the stairs. He stands in front of the newel post. He puts his hand on the cap wondering whether to go up...and sees the photograph. He looks up instinctively. Nothing. He bends down, attempts to pick it up.

His hands nearly touch the slide paper when a gunfire burst snaps off the newel cap and drills the handrail.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND VILLA-

Lancaster, Stingray and the other cops hear the furious discharge. They look at each other.

INT. VILLA- HALL-

Frazer throws himself down, sees a figure about to fire again. He pulls the trigger. The hits rip off the balusters next to the figure and the other slogs crash into the glass above it. The glass hails down in shards. Frazer dives under the stairs.

VOICE (O.S.)

I knew you'd come to remind me of the Old Lang Syne.

Unfortunately this isn't the way I
liked to welcome you back.

FRAZER
Doesn't seem like you wanted to,
Ben.

Myrtleback's eye protrudes from the wall outcropping.

MYRTLEBACK
I knew you'd come.

FRAZER
As you can see, I'm here to make
you recall what you never learned.

MYRTLEBACK
You do? What of?

FRAZER
You were gonna kill me just like
you killed them.

MYRTLEBACK
Killed who? Killed who? Nonsense
again.

FRAZER
You were gonna kill me and it's
nonsense.

Myrtleback does not answer.

FRAZER
Not nonsense but your philosophy on
optical illusions. Am I still a has-
been for such?

*

Myrtleback registers the meaning.

MYRTLEBACK
I can't see what you mean exactly.
All that's down chips.

FRAZER
I wouldn't be here if they weren't.
I can see through your trick.
Worked to a tee as yet.

MYRTLEBACK
It's time to quit your busted
flush.

FRAZER
Not for me.

He fires up. Myrtleback ducks for cover.

MYRTLEBACK

You always had it in the target's
ass. What's happened? Lost your
eyesight?

FRAZER

Good. It seems you recall now.

Off Frazer's eyes, WE..

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BARRACKS- INNER WARD- NIGHT- BLAZING ROOM

A younger Myrtleback smiling. He pulls an equally young
Frazer up. Frazer reels over but Myrtleback supports him
firmly.

MYRTLEBACK

You are all right.

*

Frazer's look transfixes on the burning room.

FRAZER

What's happening?

MYRTLEBACK

Casey and James are...gone.

Off Frazer's grim face...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VILLA- HALL

Frazer is on the warpath.

FRAZER

More. Why did you kill James and
Casey?

Myrtleback understands that Frazer knows a fragment of the
whole truth. He tries to throw him off aim.

MYRTLEBACK

Come on, Dean.

FRAZER

Why? It was your smiling... after all
it's a pure vagary that took me all
this time to understand. Tell me
why? I know the truth.

Myrtleback freezes. Frazer knows the right answer.

MYRTLEBACK

Because I failed to kill you.

Frazer feels a flush of energy. He releases the lock on the magazine.

FRAZER

Your whole jig's up now.

MYRTLEBACK

What do you suggest?

FRAZER

Either of us is gonna pull it off, the story. Yet someone ought to and we are here for, aren't we?

MYRTLEBACK

Yeah, poetic justice's gotta be in the long run.

The dialogue dries up for a while. Frazer reverses hold on the trigger guard of his gun and throws it off across to the stair landing.

FRAZER

Here, Ben. Let's do it for the sake of the Old Lang Syne.

He stumbles up and extirpates himself out of the staircase. Myrtleback moves forward, exits out of his cover, looks at his gun. Beat. He throws it off.

EXT. TRENTON ALLEY- NIGHT

Tactical police troop up along both pavements. Lancaster is still ducking behind his car, clutching his automatic. Stingray is next to him. Target: Noah's car.

ANGLE-NOAH'S CAR-

Two cops enter frame from both sides of focus, cat-foot toward the doused windows. TRACK WITH them as they approach.

A slight in-motion is tumbling the car. One of the cops jerks the door open.

INT. NOAH'S CAR- REVERSE

Noah is floundering to free himself of the belts ties. He can't make any sound because his belt straps his mouth. The cops unbuckle the belts and extirpate him out of the stake. Noah struggles fiercely.

NOAH

Let go of me. What the hell's going on?

COP

We need you answer some questions.

NOAH

I don't give them a crap, your questions. (Beat)... On whose affair?

COP

Good! You already know there's an affair.

NOAH

I'll get him. I'll get the son of... aaarrghh!

He bursts forward but the cop snitchers him firmly and both cops usher him to the back of a van. All of a sudden, the place becomes a resort for the first waves of onlookers and TV reporters. We see Lancaster conferring with other cops.

INT. VILLA-

Frazer is standing by the newel post, his eyes on the photograph.

FRAZER

We were friends once, Ben...all four of us.

Myrtleback awaits him on the stair landing.

MYRTLEBACK

Just scratched your back. March up, buddy.

Frazer starts up the stairs.

MYRTLEBACK

You were steadily raising the ranks, weren't you. I just wanted to bring you Rommel down. You know how it all happened? There was a heavy leakage in the fuel reservoir room. I did my damndest to drive them in. danger-sniffing canines. They tried to repair the line and...

*

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ARMY BARRACKS- INNER BAILEY- NIGHT

Myrtleback reminisces the amnesia in a voice over. We recognize Becks and Shyman firmly caught behind a locked-back steel door. They are hideously burned but alive. They scream through the grate.

BECKS

What the hell are you doing?
What do you want from us?

SHYMAN

You bastard, let us out!

They kick on the door. Becks sees something.

BECKS

Deeeeeeeaaaan!

MYRTLEBACK (V.O.)

I hid behind the room just to see
you struggle with the lock..

In SLO MO, Frazer runs for the blazing room. No sign of
Myrtleback.

FRAZER

James...Casey...what's happened?

BECKS

This...

Frazer struggles with the lock when he collapses to the
ground, stricken with incredible force.

MYRTLEBACK (V.O.)

You know... when your best friends
get stuck you run for them
instinctively..

A tremendous blast tears the blazing room into burning,
flying shards.

MYRTLEBACK

So you did. I had to knock you down
before anyone arrives. Feel it on
your cheek. When you woke up, your
friends were already blown to hell,
forever.

*

Off the blazing room..

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VILLA-

Myrtleback carries on his heated comment.

MYRTLEBACK

Martial justice isn't a fate. We
were tried.

*

Frazer is four steps down.

MYRTLEBACK

And you got away clean of your
crime. I was convicted while you
were awarded the distinguished
medal of bravery. You saved me.

*

MYRTLEBACK

OH...justice makers! A flock of
mugwumps.

*

Frazer stops two steps down. He is on the warpath. Myrtleback unexpectedly kicks in, missing Frazer's head. Frazer claws the swinging foot and rushes up. Myrtleback brings his clenched fists on Frazer's back ribs. Frazer lifts him up, feels something, trips and topples backward, bump in one shape down the stairs. They come to the hall, bruised and straighten fiercely. Frazer sees his gun, grabs it, sees Myrtleback in a mad onrush and drives him back with a kung fu moves that settles on his face.

FRAZER

Tell me, Ben. I wanna ask you a question you never got around to answer.

MYRTLEBACK

(Growling)
Don't bother.

FRAZER

Your mother's still alive?

MYRTLEBACK

I don't know.

FRAZER

I'm sure I don't know either. I was wondering whether she knew you didn't stop wetting your bed yet.

Frazer's eyes transfix on Myrtleback's fly. Myrtleback sees it. It's wet.

FRAZER

Because she'll whoop it up.

*

Myrtleback bull-rushes ahead. Both of them blast through the nearby door into...

INT. NATORIUM- CONTINUOUS

...the natorium. The door back-blows shut. Frazer and Myrtleback fall three feet from the pool waters. Myrtleback is atop of Frazer, attempts to strangle him. Frazer's clenched fists and gun barrel club Myrtleback to the ribs. Myrtleback racks in pain. Frazer throws him off.

Frazer brings his gun swinging on Myrtleback who dodges it but...does not dodge the swinging kung fu move that sends him staggering back. He struggles up, bleeding and unsteady.

MYRTLEBACK

You disposed of my top lieutenant, your savior when you and Bill were at close grips that night.

FRAZER

You like continuations. Replays.

MYRTLEBACK

You forget you're a military convict.

FRAZER

What's it to me?

MYRTLEBACK

You always were good at briefing. Quite.

FRAZER

The situation's more exciting. I briefed your business.

MYRTLEBACK

(Chuckling)

You're bluffing.

Frazer flashes a long grin.

FRAZER

Yeah...time's come to be my turn to but not in this circumstance. Truth would hurt you more than if I bluff.

Myrtleback is uncomprehending.

FRAZER

Your greatest mistake was to sign on the dotted line.

*

Significance strikes in. Myrtleback vociferates and sprints ahead. Frazer clubs him more but they topple backward, splash into the pool waters.

POOL WATERS-

Myrtleback jerks a hunting knife from his belt, pitches away the sheath and tilts at Frazer. Frazer avoids the hooking razor and sharp-edged of the KENT. He flings himself down as the arced-up blade hooks again...and drives a powerful blow to Myrtleback's solar plexus.

Myrtleback hollers and falls three steps back. Frazer sees the opportunity, charges with his empty gun...as Myrtleback brings the knife sticking up into Frazer's upper thigh. Frazer screams in agony and strains his injured leg, his gun dips down.

POOL UNDERWATER-

The injury is spreading trails of blood in the truncated waters.

POOL SURFACE-

Frazer herds himself back and takes aid on the pool's sidewall. His face ditched in water and sweat, registers a growing, unbearable pain. Myrtleback straightens.

MYRTLEBACK

(Inwardly)

That will teach you my friend. You are a low-level liar.

He strides toward Frazer, sending ripples across the surface. It's easy to diagnose his plan. Make the Natorium an altar. Frazer's leg is almost dumb now. His hands on the sidewall. It's over.

MYRTLEBACK

This round's the hackle riser.
Goodbye, Dean.

*

Myrtleback darts the blade, fiercely and point blank. Frazer lifts himself up. The blade settles between his legs. The impact on the tile lumps it. Frazer kicks Myrtleback to the face, hits him on the nose. Myrtleback howls, clutches his bleeding nose.

MYRTLEBACK

You wrecked my face.

*

FRAZER

So you did to my life.

Knife handle up, Myrtleback charges, expecting the same move. Frazer inches himself aside as the blade lurches by. His right elbow stabs Myrtleback to the scruff. The knife plucks away. Myrtleback strains Frazer's injured leg just on the gash and...Frazer growls in pain. He seizes Myrtleback from his hair. THEY BOTH SIDE-FACE FOCUS. EYE TO EYE CHALLENGE.

Frazer is inhumanly bearing the pain. He slams Myrtleback's face to the tile floor and draws him up... Myrtleback is almost breathless.

FRAZER

Here you get an overdose of your own medicine.

*

He slams him again and draws him up. Myrtleback is unconscious now, bleeding. Frazer pushes him back into the waters that turn red as he splashes.

ANGLE-SIDEWALL

Frazer treads on the edge, dragging up his dumb, torpid leg and edges himself into a sit. His hands are on both sides of the gash. The bleeding is massive.

Myrtleback is on his back, afloat, hands stretching in a horizontal crucifixion.

EXT. VILLA YARD- MORNING HOURS

Lancaster, Stingray et al from the police squadron enter the villa.

INT. NATORIUM-

Myrtleback is afloat on the waters. Frazer is clutching his injured leg just above the cut, trying to stop the bleeding. He shoves both his legs over the sidewall and lies back. He is motionless, even his eyes are no longer moving. CLOSE IN FARTHER AND FARTHER INTO the pupil of his eye then the sequence...

DISSOLVE TO:

SERIES OF CROSS-FADINGS

Frazer, Becks and Shyman performing their dry-runs and fatigue duties...Heavy packs on their backs, they yomp up a foothill...In tents, at night, laughing hysterically...All of them pose and the image stills as the photo camera flashes into a shot.

Frazer, concentrating on his rifle's scope and the target in a free-fire test. The target reflects Myrtleback's image for a while...Frazer's slug blows off the image, becoming the real target.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NATORIUM-

The door kicks open. The force officers pour in, filling the room. Lancaster breaks off of them, runs toward Frazer and kneels down. Frazer is blank-eyed, fixing a remote psychosensorial universe of his own.

LANCASTER

Dean! What's g...?

Frazer does not reply. Out of it. He lifts his hand slightly up.

LANCASTER

I'm here Dean. It's over. We know what's happened.

*

Frazer is not reacting.

CROSS-FADING THROUGH FRAZER'S POV-

The last images of Becks and Shyman slip away and the entire threnodic sequence morphs into the real SPATIOTEMPORAL SCENE. POV MOVES DOWN and Lancaster's head and upper body enter frame. The image is WHITISH, UNCLEAR reflecting Frazer's suffering.

FRAZER
I can't feel anything.

LANCASTER
You're okay.

Frazer's hand slips off his leg, reveals the deep cut and the blood-stained trouser leg. Lancaster is horrified.

LANCASTER
Oh my...(top of his lungs) call in an ambulance. Quick.

*

He pulls down a window curtain, strips it and runs back for Frazer.

LANCASTER
Dean! You're...you're gonna die.
You'll live. You'll be okay. Just hang on.

*

He strains the strip hard above the cut. No reaction from Frazer.

EXT. GMH- EMERGENCY YARD- MORNING HOURS

A siren bullhorn blares out its signal. An ambulance backs off the yard and cruises full-speed downtown. The Doppler trails away.

EXT. TRENTON ALLEY- MORNING HOURS

The place is a special resort for TV teams, reporters and by-watchers. Police officers back them off, barricade the perimeter. The ambulance screeches to a stop. A couple of paramedics drop down and rush to the villa with their load of life-support equipment: life pack, throat pump, oxygen cylinder...

The reporters excite.

REPORTER 1
Live reporting from Trenton alley where the actual unfolding scene behind me may be the ultimate resolution of a judicial controversy.

REPORTER 2
Even paradoxical, Frazer who was thought dead, untwisted a plot that imperiled his existence. For the time being, he just broke even.

ANOTHER REPORTER
This is an incredible reversal of the official report incriminating Dean Frazer.

Accumulation of evidence eventually
ascertains our previous assumptions
on a possible conspiracy. A big
spot in electronics industry seems
to have mastered...

The mob of onlookers thickens.

INT. NATORIUM-

Frazer is pain-racking in Lancaster's arms.

FRAZER

I'm afraid it's too late but... it's
just time not to be of this world.
I'm sorry. Just do me a favor. Tell
my friend I love her so much but I
can't keep my promise.

His eyes are closing slowly.

LANCASTER

No, Dean...don't...No...you'll be.

FRAZER'S POV-

Lancaster's report is feeble. The frame is three quarters
black as Lancaster's scream echoes.

LANCASTER

Deeaaaaaan!

*

The flicker of light shuts down.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN.

INT. MYRTLEBACK'S VILLA- HALL- MORNING HOURS

The hall fills with police squadrons, detectives, scientific,
tactical. In the b.g through the gate leading to the yard,
the scene is brawly, bustling.

INT. NATORIUM-

A paramedic clamps the oxygen mask on Frazer's mouth. A
second straps a garrote to the injured leg. They lift him up
onto a gurney. Lancaster leans over unconscious Frazer.

LANCASTER

Dean! Dean!

*

The medics hold him back and drop off. Lancaster moves to the
side of the pool where the second unit of paramedics is busy
with Myrtleback. One medic is already in the waters.
Lancaster watches thoughtfully as the medics take Myrtleback
out of the waters.

EXT. TRENTON ALLEY-

Lancaster exits into the street just to see the medics lift the gurney onto the ambulance and close the doors. He runs for them.

LANCASTER
Tell me he's going to make it.

MEDIC
One chance in a million.

LANCASTER
Can I ...?

The medic does not hear the question. He moves to the wheel and climbs in. The ambulance horns and rushes away full throttle. Lancaster stands there unable to make his mind. A voice from behind him attracts his attention.

TUCKER (O.S.)
Lancaster?

LANCASTER
(Spins)
Morning, Captain.

Tucker comes closer.

TUCKER
The longer you live, the lesser you
get answers.

He sees the second unit of medics and Myrtleback on the gurney and drops toward them. Lancaster is not satisfied though. He spins. Stingray is on his way.

STINGRAY
I was wrong, Mike. All my
congratulations.

LANCASTER
It's not time for that, Scott.

STINGRAY
Frazer? He'll make it all right. He
can't die this way. It's pointless.
He could have died when he was
really in danger.

They shake hands.

LANCASTER
Thanks, Scott.

He feels something on his hand. It's a small pin box. He looks up, intrigued.

*

Stingray is moving away toward the villa yard. Lancaster understands and smiles to himself. He runs to a squad car and rolls away.

EXT. GMH- EMERGENCY CORRIDOR- MOMENTS LATER

Lancaster is striding to and fro. He can't take the last images out of his mind. The surgery door opens and a tall doctor strides out. Lancaster runs for him.

LANCASTER

How's he, doc?

DOCTOR

Don't worry. He is quite comfortable now. The straight hit induced a massive loss of blood because the cut was both to the femoral vein and artery.

LANCASTER

Can he make it all right?

DOCTOR

We stitched the cut and stopped the hemorrhage. We thought the bone was subsequently damaged. The CAT scan is clean.

LANCASTER

Thank you, doc. Can I see him?

DOCTOR

Yes, of course.

Lancaster flies ahead. A new flush of energy rejuvenates him.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM-

A faint knock on the door that squeaks open. Lancaster comes in, hesitatingly, lets go of the lug and advances toward the mildly-anaesthetized Frazer. Frazer opens his eyes.

FRAZER

Mike. How are you my friend? Sorry I had to play the rest of the game in solo.

LANCASTER

Don't run that on. What makes me off is why you never told me about the guy.

FRAZER

I told you tonight. It was all confusing to this moment. Thanks God you were there.

*

Otherwise... I wouldn't ...forever.
Can't run that on. You know the
upshot.

LANCASTER

It's over. All over.

FRAZER

It can't be. Lifetime's too short
to forget four years worth of take-
ins. I was out of it for four
years.

LANCASTER

I was gonna offer you father's
rifle the day all started.

Frazer dries up.

FRAZER

I can't stay here. I need to get
up.

LANCASTER

No. you'll leave hospital tomorrow
at nine. You'll come to my house...

FRAZER

This time... you'll be right up in
the air.

LANCASTER

(Surprised)
Why?

FRAZER

I booked my flight the even date.
At three in the afternoon.

Lancaster's countenance turns grim. Surprised. Frazer
notices.

FRAZER

Sorry, I didn't mean it to happen
the way it did. I know I was
supposed to tell you earlier but I
kept it as a surprise. (Gestures
to his bandaged leg) Someone poked
his nose. Hadn't you been there I'd
have had both legs in the grave.

*

Lancaster is still silent.

EXT. GMH YARD- MORNING

Lancaster and Frazer exit out of the lobby and head directly
for the Lancaster's Ford.

LANCASTER

You better mind your leg. You need
it more than ever, huh?

They stop halfway.

LANCASTER

Kristy called me last night. She
didn't know of the very last
events. I wonder if she knew
something about Ben.

*

FRAZER

She's a reporter.

They walk again and reach the Ford. Lancaster moves to the
driver door, unlocks it. Something ahead catches his
attention. He looks at Frazer. Frazer does not understand the
penetrating look.

LANCASTER

Speak of the devil...

FRAZER

One more story?

Frazer follows Lancaster's sight line. Dwight is running
their way, out of breath. Lancaster flicks a glance at Frazer
and smiles. Frazer does not change his sight line, watches
Dwight reach them.

DWIGHT

Morning.

FRAZER

How're you doing, Kristy? You're
supposed to be tracking down more
details on some recent event.

DWIGHT

Paper's ready, details not. You
know why I must be here. You saved
my life the other day and almost
lost yours because of me.

FRAZER

It was honor.

They dry up for a while. Frazer trips. Dwight rushes for him.

DWIGHT

You okay, Dean? I didn't know you
were here.

FRAZER

Don't worry. I'm fine.

DWIGHT
Will you keep your promise for
today? Cell phone... pager...

FRAZER
I'll see about it.

DWIGHT
See you later. Gotta be going. Bye
for now.

She runs off. Lancaster looks at her for a while. Frazer releases the handle on the passenger door and gets in.

INT. FORD-

Lancaster climbs in.

LANCASTER
Time has come for drools?

FRAZER
How's that? Oh! Well... look... I ...I am
even not sure if that's a good
idea.

LANCASTER
It is. Without reserve.

They roll away.

INT. DWIGHT'S LODGING- NOON

Dwight pours two glasses of orange juice and turns round. Frazer is busy studying the decorum. He takes the glass of juice. Frazer is not unaware of her provoking flirt.

FRAZER
I like the way you arranged it.

DWIGHT
Your story's a fine top line.

FRAZER
You have it right from the genesis.

DWIGHT
The accident in Dalesworth was the
subject of my report. I'm lucky.
The luckiest reporter.

Frazer smiles and takes a sip.

DWIGHT
You leaving soon?

FRAZER

Three this afternoon. I can't forget how things all went.

DWIGHT

Something's missing?

Frazer is startled. He does not grab it. He empties his glass. Dwight sees his hurry.

DWIGHT

Time to go.

*

Frazer clears his throat to say something. Dwight sets her glass on a tray and strides toward Frazer, her eyes never leaving his. A passing moment. Frazer shivers as she welds to his chest.

FRAZER

Kristy... I'm not good at playing a distant lover's role dreaming of his beloved with each step he takes back home.

DWIGHT

The missing thing.

She is in full task patting Frazer's mouth with her fingers. The long, fine nails move top Frazer's neck base. It shock-waves through Frazer. His hands are in her hair now, his index runs her lower lip and...both of them kiss, eagerly...like true distant lovers. They break off.

EXT. LANCASTER'S HOUSE- YARD- EARLY AFTERNOON

Lancaster is in his car waiting. Suzan and Kenny watch Frazer with impatience as he tucks his backpack into the rear bonnet. He comes back, holding his thick paper scroll. Suzan is affected.

FRAZER

Suzan...you were the sister my mother should have made. All along these years... I'll never forget your sensuality. Here. This is for you.

He hands her the pack.

FRAZER

I've been trying very hard to smuggle a story. I believe it better infused into my mind when my actual one hadn't an end.

*

He kisses her lightly on the cheek, turns to Kenny and lifts him up.

FRAZER
Kenny. Be gentle with your mother.
Promise?

*

KENNY
I promise, Dean. You'll write me?

FRAZER
Yes, of course.

He lowers Kenny and backs off, gesturing farewell.

INT. GREENLAND AIRPORT-PASSENGER TERMINAL- AFTERNOON

Frazer sets down his backpack and brings up his wrist to read the time. Lancaster is silent. Nothing attracts him.

FRAZER
You sure are okay?

*

LANCASTER
(Startles)
Yes, I'm.

In the brawly room, the loudspeakers instruct the passengers to aboard the flight. Frazer takes his backpack and shoulders it.

FRAZER
Turning point, Mike.
Congratulations.

LANCASTER
What's that?

FRAZER
Don't bawl out the cops, Captain
Lancaster. I'll call you back.

LANCASTER
Just take care of yourself.

FRAZER
I will.

They entwine. Friends. Comrades...BROTHERS. They break off.

FRAZER
You were right. This is the
prelude.

*

Lancaster chuckles. Frazer departs toward the gate to exit, looks back at Lancaster and gives him the thumb up.

EXT. GREENLAND AIRPORT- HIGH ANGLE

Reviewed May 2008 133.

A plane rolls on the track and the titanic bird pulls higher and higher toward our position until half of the flight deck then the fan engine fills frame.

FADE OUT.

THE END.