

FADE IN:

EXT. RESIDENTIAL AREA - BACKYARD - DAY - 1952

A HAIRY WOODPECKER pecks away near the top of a tree.

BOBBY MURPHY (5) gapes up at the bird. One end of the rope tied around his waist goes to a clothes line twenty feet away.

A small mouse comes out from under a porch connected to a large three-family house.

Bobby notices the mouse. He bends down and picks up a small rock.

The mouse sprints across the yard.

Bobby throws the rock.

The rock hits the rodent in the back of the head. It stops and lies motionless as blood flows from its head.

Bobby shuffles over to the mouse. He bends down and examines it.

Tears flow down his cheeks as he scampers towards the house.

Bobby stops in front of a man's legs. Frightened, he looks up.

The boney hands of a MAN wearing filthy khakis untie the rope around Bobby's waist.

MAN

Make a sound and I'll break your neck.

The man lifts Bobby and carries him out of the yard.

He rushes by two three-family houses and turns down a narrow dirt walkway that runs along the side of a run-down old house.

The man passes the end of the house. A baseball bat connects hard against his leg. He falls to his knees, dropping Bobby.

Bobby gets up and dashes down the walkway.

A wooden baseball bat hits hard against the back of the man's head. The loud SOUND of a bat hitting a skull.

He falls face first into the dirt.

Blood flies out from under both sides of the bat as it strikes his head again.

A tall BOY, carrying a baseball bat, flees down the dirt walkway. He gets to the end of the walkway and hurries down the sidewalk.

A white CAT peers out a second floor window. The reflection of the boy appears in the cat's eyes.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The white cat sits on the back of an old worn out sofa.

In the center of the sparsely furnished living room, RITA (4), and BEVERLY (3), stand in a playpen. They gaze at

WILLIAM MALO (5), wearing a three-piece suit. He stands in front of

MRS. MALO (26), a tall and big-boned woman. She places a brown derby hat on her son's head.

MRS. MALO

(slurring)

Our little pride and joy. You're
such a handsome little man, Billy.

Mrs. Malo kisses William on the lips.

MRS. MALO

Go tell your father you're ready
to go.

William trots out of the living room.

Mrs. Malo marches over to the girls. She slaps Rita across the face. Rita cries.

MRS. MALO

The next time I tell you, "You can't go," you better keep your mouth shut, you little bitch.

Beverly hugs her sister.

The cat turns his head and meows.

The SOUND of a police car's siren.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

TWO DETECTIVES stand over the body of the dead man.

DETECTIVE 1

If he moves, shoot him.

Detective 2 kneels and examines the ground.

Fresh sneaker prints in the dirt.

DETECTIVE 2

Looks like a size 10 sneaker.

DETECTIVE 1

That figures.

Detective 2 stands and glances down the dirt walkway.

TWO UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS hold back a crowd of onlookers.

Detective 2 stares at the corpse.

DETECTIVE 2

I wanted to kill him myself after I saw what he did to that little girl.

DETECTIVE 1

Two years. What's wrong with these judges?

Detective 1, steps on the sneaker prints as he moves around the body.

DETECTIVE 2

Careful, watch where you're stepping, partner.

DETECTIVE 1

If we pick him up, he'll end up in a mental institution or prison.

DETECTIVE 2

A good lawyer might get him off.

DETECTIVE 1

A good public defender? Not likely.

DETECTIVE 2

The Murphy boy saw him.

DETECTIVE 1

Yeah, but he's not talking. If he does, we'll act accordingly.

Detective 2 examines the body.

DETECTIVE 2

How could the mother not know what this scumbag was doing?

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: FOURTEEN YEARS LATER

Rita (18), gorgeous, sits on a sofa, legs crossed, revealing very shapely legs.

RITA

Ya wanna hear a joke, Bobby?

Bobby (19), good looking with a nice physique, sits across from Rita. He appears to be nervous, shy, and in love.

BOBBY

Sure.

RITA

Martha and Louis are in bed and it's very dark. Louis says let's play finga in belly button. Martha says okay. Then she says that's not my belly button. Louis says that's not my finga.

Bobby forces a smile and a little laugh.

William (19), very handsome, enters the living room.

WILLIAM

Let's go.

Bobby smiles at Rita.

BOBBY

Nice talking to you, Rita.

Rita winks at Bobby.

RITA

See ya.

Bobby tries to get up enough nerve to ask Rita out for a date. He hesitates for a moment, then he leaves the room.

EXT. THREE FAMILY HOUSE - DAY

A beautiful spring day.

Bobby follows William out the side doorway of the house. They go down the stairs and start down the walkway.

Beverly, (now 17), appears from the backyard.

BEVERLY

Bobby, wait up.

Bobby and William turn.

Beverly approaches Bobby.

BEVERLY

When are you going to ask my sister out?

BOBBY

I've been thinking about it.

BEVERLY

Ask her. She'll go out with you.

WILLIAM

Come on, let's go.

Bobby, looking at Beverly, follows William.

BOBBY

Maybe I'll call her tonight.

Bobby and William move towards a 1955 Ford sedan. The trees in the neighbor's yard are covered with green leaves.

EXT. DRIVE-IN MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

It's autumn and the trees surrounding the drive-in are covered with bright red, yellow and scarlet leaves.

A '55 Ford is parked near the back row.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Bobby, with a military haircut, and Rita neck in the front seat. While kissing Rita, Bobby tries to slide down her panty girdle. He gives up and sits back.

BOBBY

Damn! Why do you wear that thing?
You don't need a girdle.

RITA

It's for protection.

BOBBY

It works. Six months and I can't
get by that stupid thing.

RITA

No one has.

BOBBY

I'm going away for a year. Our
last night together should be
special.

Rita glances at the windows.

RITA

Okay, ya betta not tell anyone.

BOBBY

I promise.

Rita slides down the front seat and pulls down on her girdle.

Bobby stares for a few seconds. Then he reaches around Rita and pulls her against him. They kiss.

Bobby moves his hand over Rita's bare bottom.

Rita grabs his wrist and moves it off her. She moves away from Bobby and pulls her girdle up as she sits down.

RITA
I'm not goin' all-the-way.

BOBBY
I thought...

RITA
I'm not doin' it.

Bobby wraps his arms around Rita. They neck.

The SOUND of a zipper.

Rita pushes away from Bobby and looks down.

Bobby grabs her wrist and moves her hand towards his lap.

Rita jerks her arm away.

RITA
No! I'm not doin' that.

BOBBY
Why not?

RITA
'Cause I said so. That's why!

Frustrated, Bobby sits up and straightens his clothes. The SOUND of a zipper closing.

RITA
It's ugly.

BOBBY
That hurts. What if I called
your breasts ugly?

RITA
Are they?

BOBBY
No, they're fantastic. Take 'em
out. I love 'em free and quivering,
not stored.

Rita's hands go to a button on her blouse.

INT. TOY FACTORY - SMOKING AREA - DAY

Rita's hand with a large diamond ring on her finger.

She stands with her hand extended out in front of TWO GIRLS.

The girls examine the ring.

GIRL 1

It's beautiful.

RITA

It came yesterday.

GIRL 2

How's his back?

RITA

Fine. Just a few little scars.

GIRL 1

When's the big day?

RITA

He gets thirty days off after Vietnam. Maybe then.

GIRL

Better hurry up and decide. He'll be home before you know it.

INT. CHURCH - SIDE ROOM - DAY

A closed door. It opens and a PRIEST enters the room.

Bobby, wearing a tuxedo, and William, wearing a marine uniform, stand facing each other. One side of William's head has a long scar and no hair. He has a glass eye that's much larger than the other eye and part of his ear is gone.

WILLIAM

Forget about this. Let's go golfing.

BOBBY

I want to marry her. I love her.

PRIEST

This is your last chance.

The priest points at the backdoor.

BOBBY

Et too, Father?

PRIEST

Once you take that vow, it's a lifetime commitment.

BOBBY

To the day I die. I promise.

WILLIAM

You'll be looking forward to that day.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby and Rita lie on a bed under the covers. Rita, drunk, cries.

A half empty bottle of Anisette, a liqueur, stands on a end table.

RITA

(Hysterical)

I want my motha.

Bobby tries to comfort her. She pushes him away.

RITA

Keep away from me.

Rita, crying loud, turns on her side, her back to Bobby.

Bobby, wearing just army green boxer shorts, gets out of bed. His entire back is covered with large scars.

He walks over to the television and grabs the remote control off the top of it. He steps away from the television and turns it on.

Matt Dillon and Chester appear on the television screen.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A 1955 Ford moves along the highway.

INT. FORD - MOVING - DAY

Bobby sits behind the steering wheel.

BOBBY

You cried most of the night.

Rita, appearing hung over, sits on the passenger side.

RITA

I don't remember anythin'. Musta
been the Anisette.

BOBBY

A week from Saturday we're going
to a nightclub with a few of my
friends. Try not to drink too much.

RITA

Whatta ya, my fatha?

BOBBY

No! Just try not to get too
drunk, please.

RITA

If ya insist, daddy.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

A FOUR PIECE BAND performs on stage.

PEOPLE dance on the overcrowded dance floor in front of the
stage.

Bobby and Rita sit with TWO COUPLES. Their table is covered
with beer bottles and empty glasses.

Rita, drunk, downs a screwdriver.

Bobby appears uncomfortable.

RITA

I gotta anotha one. Ya wanna
hear it?

The two couples force a friendly smile.

MAN

Sure.

One of the women leans towards her date and whispers in his ear.

WOMAN

What's she on?

RITA

(Slurring)

This dark Italian gets on a bus
in Louisville. The driver tells
him to get in the back of the bus.

A WAITRESS approaches their table.

Rita notices her and raises an arm.

RITA

Anotha round.

Rita points around the table.

RITA

The Italian asks why? The driver
sez blacks hafta sit in the back.
The Italian sez I'm not black,
I'm Italian. The driver sez, oh,
you're a wop. Get off the bus.

Everyone at the table forces a smile and a little laugh.

Rita passes out and falls to the floor.

EXT. NIGHT CLUB - NIGHT

Bobby, carrying Rita across his shoulder, walks from the club to his car.

EXT. LOW INCOME HOUSING PROJECT - DAY

A Volkswagen pulls up and parks in front of the large brick building.

Across the street, young children play in a shallow pool.

A YOUNG GIRL (7), wearing a bathing suit and sandals, leaves the pool area. She hurries across the street and passes the front of the Volkswagen.

An arm comes out of the window on the driver's side of the car and beckons the little girl.

She goes up to the car and stands. Moments later, she runs around the front of the car and gets in on the passenger side.

The Volkswagen drives off.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

The girl sits on the passenger side. A hand missing half of a ring finger touches her thigh.

Frightened, the girl looks down at the hand then towards the man.

EXT. WOODED AREA - NIGHT

The girl's sandals and bathing suit lie on the ground.

A short distance away a little girl's foot sticks out from under a pile of leaves.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

TOM KNOTT, early thirties, struts away from the police station entrance. He goes over to his Volkswagen and gets in.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

The dashboard of the car is lit up. The radio plays.

NEWSMAN (O.S.)

Thomas Knott, a convicted pedophile, was questioned today on the abduction and murder of seven year old Rosemary Enos. The police have refused to comment at this time.

EXT. SMALL COTTAGE - NIGHT

A Volkswagen is parked in the driveway. The living room light is on.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tom Knott sits on a sofa watching Mission Impossible on the TV.

The CRASH of glass breaking.

Knott gets off the sofa and runs out of the room.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Knott, missing half of his ring finger, pushes a window curtain aside. He peers out the hole in the window.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

A cat, a rope tied to his tail, swings from a tree. It tosses and turns in all directions.

EXT. BACK OF COTTAGE - NIGHT

Knott comes flying out of the back door.

KNOTT

Noah, my little baby boy.

WHACK! A baseball bat hits the back of Knott's head. He falls to the ground.

The baseball bat hits Knott's head again. And again.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Bobby, Mrs. and MR. MALO, a little man in his early forties, sit around a small table.

BOBBY

I'll be going back to my old job
in the shipyard when I get out.

MRS. MALO

What if they're not hiring?

BOBBY

They have to give me my old job back.

Rita, pregnant, enters the kitchen area and walks up to Bobby. She takes his hand and places it on her stomach.

RITA
Ya feel him kickin'?

BOBBY
Yeah.

MRS. MALO
Rita never kicked. She was two months premature. She was so tiny we used cotton balls instead of diapers.

RITA
(Embarrassed)
Maaa!

MRS. MALO
Well, we did. My Billy kicked the hardest. I could tell he was a boy. He was the best of the bunch. That's why he's our favorite.

Rita appears hurt as she sits down next to Bobby.

RITA
Beverly isn't gonna have a wedding?

MRS. MALO
She took off with that freak. I don't want to see that tramp again.

MR. MALO
I save on the price of a tuxedo.

RITA
Do ya mind if we sleep in William's room tonight?

MRS. MALO
No, he might come home on leave.

BOBBY
Rita, we have reservations at the Holiday Inn.

RITA
We can't afford it.

BOBBY

When I get out of the army our money problems will be over. Things will be a lot better then.

Bobby shows Rita a smile and grabs her hand.

MRS. MALO

That's what you think.

EXT. COURTHOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

SUPERIMPOSE: 1977

JUDGE HOCHMAN, late 50's, struts through the parking lot.

STEVE JOHNSON (42), a huge muscular man, eyes the Judge. He turns on a small tape recorder and puts it in a holder behind his back. He hurries after the Judge.

STEVE

Your Honor, may I ask you some questions?

Hockman stops and waits for Steve.

HOCHMAN

Hello, Steven. The wife got up in court and said she didn't want to see him go to jail.

STEVE

What about the children?

They stroll through the parking lot.

HOCHMAN

The wife said sending Martinez to jail would hurt the children. The primary concern is ensuring the well-being of the children.

STEVE

What about the two counts of first degree sexual assault charges?

HOCHMAN

The police always overcharge. It was second degree. No force.

STEVE

He raped them.

HOCHMAN

There was penetration, but the girls gave consent.

Hochman stops next to a car and inserts his key. He opens the door.

STEVE

Your Honor, they're only seven and eight years old.

HOCHMAN

I know, this is a very bad case.

STEVE

A bad case?

Hochman gets in his car.

HOCHMAN

Look, he'll be on probation. He is prohibited from having contact with the two girls until their therapist agrees they can handle it. Even then, another adult must be present.

STEVE

Is that justice?

HOCHMAN

It's what the wife wanted.

STEVE

She had to know. She should have been charged with something.

HOCHMAN

Have a good day, Steven.

INT. INSPECTION OFFICE - DAY

INSERT NEWSPAPER HEADLINES: RAPIST GETS PROBATION

ROGER CRANDALL (39), tall and muscular, puffs on a Pall Mall as he holds a newspaper under the table.

CRANDALL

He was facing sixty years maximum.
And he ends up on probation.

A DOZEN INSPECTORS sit at six cafeteria style tables located in front of four large desk. A few appear to be busy: looking at drawings, and writing up reports.

Bobby and William, now 30, sit across from Crandall.

BOBBY

How does a seven year old resist
advances from her stepfather?

CRANDALL

She doesn't.

Crandall places the newspaper by his side.

WILLIAM

I think you got a chance of beating
Pinkston, Bobby.

CRANDALL

Most of the electricians I've talked
to said they would vote for you.

BOBBY

Here comes your electrician, Crandall.

Crandall looks over his shoulder as he puffs on his
cigarette.

JOE CEDIO (42), black oily hair, dirty clothes, strolls
towards him.

Joe stops next to Crandall.

CEDIO

The switchboard is ready. Cess
Poole sez he wants me to fix all
the unsats you find.

CRANDALL

I hear you took out Jaws last
night. What's between you and
her...besides dirt.

CEDIO

I wouldn't take out that bow wow.

Cedio grins. His teeth are few and green.

CRANDALL

Take her out? She's been telling people that you've been treating her like a postage stamp.

CEDIO

What?

CRANDALL

She says you lick her before you stick her.

CEDIO

No way.

CRANDALL

And she said, 'what you lack in size...

Crandall shows a small space between his thumb and finger.

CRANDALL(cont)

...you make up in enthusiasm'.

WILLIAM

How come they call her Jaws?

CEDIO

'Cause she bit a boss's crank. The poor guy hadda get stitches.

Crandall, holding a notebook, gets up from the table. A flashlight and mirror hang from his belt.

BOBBY

Is Martinez working today?

CEDIO

Yeah, but nobody's talkin' to um.

CRANDALL

I wonder why.

Crandall and Cedio leave the area.

WILLIAM
I can't believe Cedio was a cop.

BOBBY
I can't believe that Hochman's a
judge.

WILLIAM
Who?

BOBBY
The moron who gave Martinez
probation.

Their boss, LEO, mid 50's, glasses, large nose and a black
mustache, sits at his desk, glaring at that two inspectors.

LEO
Knock it off, you two. Look busy.

BOBBY
I bet Leo's nose and mustache
comes off with his glasses.

Leo shows them his middle finger.

The telephone on Leo's desk RINGS. He picks it up and
listens.

LEO
Murphy, see Martinez in the
engine room, 698 boat.

Bobby stands.

WILLIAM
Be gentle.

BOBBY
Why? I'd love to bash his head in.

WILLIAM
I'll loan you one of my bats.

INT. SUBMARINE - ENGINE ROOM

Bobby, wearing a hard hat and safety glasses, kneels in

front of an electrical controller. He writes in a notebook.

TILO MARTINEZ (30), fat and wearing glasses with very thick lenses, leans on a black cane.

Martinez raps the top of the controller with his cane.

MARTINEZ

Why so many nit picky unsats?

BOBBY

Just doing my job.

MARTINEZ

Whose this child molestin' asshole
ya keep talkin' about?

Bobby stands and pulls out a mirror. He puts it in front of Martinez's face.

BOBBY

That's the asshole.

MARTINEZ

Ya wanna take this outside the
gate?

BOBBY

Would love to, but I have better
things to do.

MARTINEZ

Keep fuckin' with me and you'll
regret it.

BOBBY

Excuse me. I have a job to finish.
If you have a problem with that,
see my boss.

Bobby inspects the controller.

Martinez glares at him. One of his eyes, magnified by the thick lens, starts to twitch.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A finger pushes 9-1-1 on the telephone mounted to a wall.

Rita, one side of her face swollen, talks into the handset.

RITA

A man just tried to break into
my house. I tried to stop him
and he hit me.

INT. FINISHED BASEMENT - NIGHT

A small window by a bar is wide open. The curtains blow in.

By the bar is a 8' pool table. Balls are scattered around
the top of the pool table.

Rita, followed by DETECTIVES EDWARDS (43), and FLAGG (36),
walks down a stairway.

Rita, pointing, moves towards the open window.

RITA

That's where he tried to get in.
When I tried to push him out, he
grabbed my robe and punched my face.

EDWARDS

Where's your husband?

RITA

Bowlin'.

EDWARDS

Tomorrow morning I want you to
come down the station and look
at some mug shots.

RITA

Okay.

EDWARDS

Don't close the window. We'll
be back to check for fingerprints.

The window curtains blow in.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Rita sits at a table. Detective Edwards stands next to her
holding some photos.

EDWARDS
Examine them closely.

Edwards places three color photos of black men in front of her.

RITA
None of them guys did it.

Edwards places three more color photos in front of Rita.

RITA
(points to a photo)
That's him.

EDWARDS
That's who I thought it was.

Edwards hands Rita the photograph.

EDWARDS
Take it with you.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Rita, Bobby, JOHN, 7, and DONNA, 6, sit around the kitchen table eating stew.

BOBBY
You make the best beef stew.

RITA
I put in a lot of garlic and onions
and a can of beer. It brings out the
flava.

JOHN
Will I get drunk?

RITA
No, the alcohol boils away and
the flava remains.

JOHN
Oh!

BOBBY
How did you make out at the
Police Station?

Rita reaches for her handbag on a counter behind her. She opens the bag and pulls out a photograph. She hands it to Bobby.

RITA

That's him.

Bobby examines the photograph.

BOBBY

I know this guy. You had to notice him at one of our union picnics.

RITA

Not that I recall.

BOBBY

You couldn't have missed him. I think he's bigger than George Foreman, the boxer.

RITA

Maybe, I just don't remember.

Bobby stares at the photograph and holds it up.

BOBBY

I can't believe he gave you this. That doesn't seem right.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

BROWN, mid thirties, leaves the courthouse. He stops before descending down the stairs and pulls out a cigarette.

Steve exits the courthouse and approaches Brown.

STEVE

Mr. Brown, what do you think of Judge Hochman's ruling?

Brown tags a drag out of his cigarette and turns towards Steve. They stand glaring at each other, a foot apart.

BROWN

Fuck off, asshole.

Brown starts down the stairs. Steve follows him.

STEVE

Was your apology sincere?

BROWN

Leave me the fuck alone.

Brown flips his cigarette at Steve. It flies by his head.

Brown steps off the last step and moves down the sidewalk.

Steve runs up to him and grabs his shoulder.

Brown stops and stares at Steve's hand.

BROWN

That's going to cost you, snooze
boy.

Steve removes his hand from Brown's shoulder and watches him stroll down the sidewalk.

INT. ELK'S CLUB - DINING AREA - DAY

Judge Hochman, eating, sits at a small table in the corner.

Steve approaches him.

STEVE

Do you mind if I join you, Your
Honor?

Hochman, chewing, points to a chair.

Steve sits down.

HOCHMAN

Steven, my quotes were taken out
of context.

STEVE

It's hard to imagine a context in
which the quotes would not have
sounded appalling.

HOCHMAN

It's common for judges to dispense
therapy in lieu of prison time. I
don't understand what all the fuss
is about.

STEVE

Obviously, like this morning. Brown was allowed to plead to risk of injury to a minor instead of first-degree sexual assault.

HOCHMAN

Off the record?

STEVE

Off the record.

HOCHMAN

(Pointing)

Off the record means just that. Turn it off.

Steve reaches behind and brings out his tape recorder. He turns it off and lays it on the table.

HOCHMAN

He was just masturbating the kid. If it wasn't for the disparity in age, we might not have heard about it.

STEVE

Disparity? He's a man. The boy's twelve.

Hochman pats his mouth with a napkin.

HOCHMAN

For all I know , the kid might have enjoyed it. I don't think he's going to become a homosexual because of it. It was not a gross case.

STEVE

In your opinion.

Hochman glares at Steve.

HOCHMAN

It's the Court's ruling. No force was used. Only coercion. He paid the kid.

STEVE

Several times.

HOCHMAN

Brown was very apologetic.

STEVE

So was Martinez. Molesting his stepdaughters several times. Risk of injury is letting your six-year-old cross the street alone. Not raping her.

HOCHMAN

Steven, let me finish my lunch, please.

Steve stands.

STEVE

Thanks for you time, Your Honor.

HOCHMAN

Remember, we were off the record.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The EDITOR sits behind his desk.

Steve stands in front of it.

EDITOR

What's this I hear about you once threatening Judge Hochman?

STEVE

That was many years ago. Back when I worked in the shipyard.

EDITOR

I still want to hear about it.

STEVE

I worked third shift at the time. He was collecting for his brother's oil company while suspended from practicing law.

FLASHBACK:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A much younger Steve sleeps in bed. The door bell RINGS.

Steve's eyes open.

The SOUND of a door opening.

WIFE (O.S.)

I'm sorry, but we have no
money for you.

HOCHMAN (O.S.)

Well, there are ways we can work
this out.

Steve, wearing a tee-shirt and jockey shorts, jumps out of bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Hochman stands by the doorway.

Steve runs into the living room.

Hochman, frightened, turns and runs outside.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Hochman dashes to his car and gets in.

Steve, barefooted and in his jockeys, runs towards Hochman.

Hochman starts his car and drives off.

Steve chases after the car.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The editor laughs.

EDITOR

That must have been a sight.

STEVE

I got dressed and drove down to his office. We met. He told me he didn't mean what I thought he meant and apologized for the misunderstanding. End of story.

EDITOR

So, it's not personal?

STEVE

He's a woefully inadequate judge. I want him off the bench. I'm going to the Judicial Review Board.

EDITOR

They won't censure him.

STEVE

It's worth a try.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Brown sits with a thirteen-year-old BOY in the back row by the wall. He hands the boy some money and the boy leaves.

About the center of the row in front of Brown's, the dark image of a tall broad man stands and moves towards the wall.

Brown stands and moves away from the wall. Just after he passes the man, a large baseball bat goes up in the air.

A movie plays on the screen. The sound of a bat hitting a skull.

The man, carrying a bat, steps over the seat. He raises the bat. WHACK.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Rita stands by the bed shaking Bobby. His eyes open.

BOBBY

What's the matter?

RITA

Get up. There's something taped to the front door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Bobby walks up to the front door and opens it.

A note taped to the storm door.

INSERT NOTE: BRING TROUBLE TO WORK, DEATH FOR
LADY

EXT. OUTSIDE SHIPYARD - LUNCH TIME

Bobby sits with a CO-WORKER on a step in front of a building. They both hold a can of beer.

SUGGS, 6' 4" tall and over 250 pounds, and another large BLACK MAN walk up to them. Suggs stands over Bobby with his arms folded across his chest. He stares at him.

Bobby stares back.

BOBBY

There was a note on my door
this morning. It said bring
trouble to work, death for lady.

SUGGS

Do you have a girlfriend?

BOBBY

No, why do you ask?

SUGGS

It said lady, not your wife.

The two men turn and walk away.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Rita stands by a counter top pouring vodka into a glass of orange juice. She takes a pill from a plastic container and puts it in her mouth. She takes a drink.

Rita carries her drink to the kitchen table and sits down.

Bobby enters the room. He walks over to Rita and tries to kiss her on the lips. She turns her head. He kisses her on the cheek.

Bobby, massaging Rita's shoulders, stands behind her.

RITA

I found another note in the mailbox,
it said, 'your lady's life is up to
you'.

BOBBY

Did you call the police?

RITA

Yeah, they don't care.

BOBBY

Give 'em time, they'll catch
him.

RITA

Time! They haven't even checked
for fingerprints on the window,
yet. It's still open.

BOBBY

Let's go downstairs.

INT. FINISHED BASEMENT - DAY

Bobby follows Rita down a flight of stairs.

BOBBY

I still don't understand why you
ran over to him.

RITA

I panicked.

Bobby walks over to the pool table and picks up a ball.

BOBBY

You could have thrown balls at
him.

Bobby lays the ball down and hurries over to the window. He
closes it.

RITA

Edwards said to leave it open.

BOBBY

If he doesn't like it, tell him
to call me.

Bobby stares out the window.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

John and Donna play on a swing set.

INT. FINISHED BASEMENT - DAY

Bobby stares out the window.

BOBBY

I'm going to take the kids to
the park. Do you want to go?

RITA

I gotta make supper.

BOBBY

We can go to the Ground Round
to eat.

RITA

Take the kids. I don't feel like
goin' out.

BOBBY

Ah, come on. Going out might do
you some good.

RITA

(Yells)

I said I don't feel like it.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Bobby, carrying a baseball bat, walks with Donna.

John, just ahead of them, tosses a ball into the air and
catches it.

DONNA

Is Candy in Heaven?

BOBBY

Yes, she is.

DONNA

Do you miss her?

BOBBY

Very much.

DONNA

A man told me to tell you hi.

Bobby stops walking. He kneels and takes Donna's hand.

BOBBY

Where was this, Donna?

DONNA

At school during recess.

BOBBY

Was he a black man?

DONNA

No, but he had a black stick.

BOBBY

Was he fat.

DONNA

Yes.

BOBBY

Remember what I told you before?

DONNA

I know.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby and Rita sit on the sofa watching The Lou Grant Show.

Bobby places his arm around Rita's neck. She stiffens and appears to be annoyed.

BOBBY

What's the matter?

RITA

(slurring her words)

The police think you're behind everythin'. Detective Edwards asked me, "Are ya sure your husband isn't tryin' to drive ya crazy?".

BOBBY
That's ridiculous.

RITA
Ya don't care what happens to
me. Otha husbands wouldn't have
let Suggs get away wit this.

BOBBY
What can I do?

RITA
Beat him up. Everyone I know says
their husband would do somethin'. Ya
won't protect me, I'll do it myself.

Rita gets off the sofa and hurries out of the room. She
returns in a few seconds carrying a small steak knife. She
goes over to the front door and opens it.

BOBBY
Where are you going?

RITA
I'm gonna guard the house myself.

After a few seconds, Bobby looks out the living room window.

Rita kneels by a tree by the sidewalk. The tip of her
cigarette glows a bright red.

INT. MURPHY'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

Bobby lies asleep on his bed. The bedroom door opens.
Rita, her face swollen and bleeding, enters the bedroom.

Bobby's eyes open.

BOBBY
What happened?

RITA
Someone grabbed me by the hair
and kept slammin' my head against
the tree until I blacked out.

Bobby gets out of bed.

RITA

Where ya goin'?

BOBBY

I'm calling the police.

INT. INSPECTION OFFICE - DAY

Bobby, William and Crandall sit at their table. At another table, three other inspectors appear busy.

Leo sits at his desk.

BOBBY

Rita said the cops think I banged her head against the tree.

WILLIAM

That figures. Blame the husband. That's one of the reasons I never got married.

Crandall takes a puff on his Pall Mall and blows the smoke towards William.

CRANDALL

I thought it was because of your face.

WILLIAM

Fuck with me and you'll end up like your father.

CRANDALL

You're not big or bad enough. And he was my stepfather.

BOBBY

Martinez was picked up for molesting a child again. He wasn't charged with anything.

WILLIAM

The Babe will be looking him up.

BOBBY

If I ever see him near my house or kids, Mr. Ruth will have to wait.

Crandall glares at Bobby as he lights another Pall Mall.

CRANDALL

You're not thinking of cheating
the king of swats out of number
six, are you?

WILLIAM

Brown was number seven.

CRANDALL

No. Four was a copy cat. The victim
wasn't a pedophile.

WILLIAM

The girl was only fifteen.

CRANDALL

Yeah. And he was eighteen and
black. I still think her brother
did it.

BOBBY

I know him. He's mean and crazy
enough to do it.

LEO

(Shouting)

What's this, a picnic over there?

CRANDALL

No, it's a fucking barbecue and
you're not invited.

LEO

At least have something in front
you. Look busy.

CRANDALL

(To Bobby)

Don't do anything foolish. It's
not worth it.

BOBBY

Why not? The police wouldn't mind.
Only five tickets were sold for
that movie, that night. I bet
they didn't even question the
person who sold the tickets.

WILLIAM

No way.

BOBBY

I think the babe is a cop.

Crandall glares at Bobby.

WILLIAM

Possible.

CRANDALL

Maybe a judge. Hochman pardons them, then kills them. My new hero.

BOBBY

Who was your old one?

CRANDALL

Charlie Bronson, of course.

WILLIAM

Ah! Death Wish. Great movie.

EXT. MURPHY'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - NIGHT

TWO MEN walk through the woods surrounding the backyard. They enter the yard.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby and Rita sit on the sofa.

RITA

Detective Edwards said all the cops believe you're behind everythin' and you're tryin' to drive me crazy.

BOBBY

That's ridiculous. I love you.

RITA

Why don't ya prove it.

Bobby stands and walks out of the living room.

INT. MURPHY'S HOUSE - BATHROOM

Bobby, carrying a rifle and three cell flashlight, enters the bathroom. He walks across the room and steps into the bathtub. He pushes the window open and peers out into the night.

The sound of a branch BREAKING.

Bobby places the barrel of the rifle on the window sill and looks down the barrel. He surveys the backyard. He stops and brings his flashlight next to the rifle.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

A beam of light shines on the bush. The man behind it starts to move.

INT. BATHROOM

Bobby stares out the window.

BOBBY

(yells)

Move and I'll shoot your fucking
head off.

Bobby aims his rifle. His finger starts to squeeze the trigger.

VOICE(O.S.)

Mr. Murphy, it's the police.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

A beam of light shines on another bush. The face of a white man behind the bush.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Bobby thinks for a moment, then turns off the flashlight. He takes the rifle and flashlight out of the window and closes it. He steps out of the tub.

INT. MURPHY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Rita, watching Dallas on TV, sits on the sofa.

Bobby strolls into the room.

BOBBY

There's two cops in the backyard.

RITA

It's about time.

BOBBY

I almost shot one.

RITA

(Whispers to herself)

Too bad ya didn't.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - NIGHT

A PSYCHIATRIST, mid 40's, sits and writes in his notebook.

PSYCHIATRIST

Don't stop there. You fought
back and he threw you on the
floor. Then what happened?

FLASHBACK:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

An empty can of beef stew rests next to a stove. The stew
cooks in a pan on top of the stove.

STEPFATHER, wearing dirty khakis, sits on top of a young
boy lying on the floor.

SISTER, 11, stands behind her stepfather.

STEPFATHER

So, you think you can take me.

The stepfather punches the boy in the face. The boy's face
is hidden by the stepfather's back.

SISTER

Leave him alone!

The sister grabs the pan of stew off the stove. She hits the
stepfather on the head with it.

Stew goes all over place.

The stepfather turns his head and glares up at the girl.

Sister looks back, petrified.

STEPFATHER

When I'm through with you, I
won't have to worry about your
sharp teeth ever again.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE - NIGHT

The psychiatrist stares ahead as he puts his pen in his
pocket. He looks at his watch.

PSYCHIATRIST

I can see that this is upsetting.
It's for your own good. We're
running a little late. We'll finish
this incident next time.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE ROOM

Detective Edwards talks to Bobby.

BOBBY

No, I don't have a girlfriend.

EDWARDS

Does your wife play around when
you're not around?

BOBBY

I don't think so. If I'm not
around, how would I know?

EDWARDS

Is your wife on any medication?

BOBBY

Yeah, too much. Phenobarbital,
azene, fuorinol, and something
for her nerves.

EDWARDS

Has your wife ever been committed?

BOBBY

She put herself in the Fuller's
Hospital for her nerves.

EDWARDS

When was that, Mr. Murphy?

BOBBY

A year ago. Shortly after our
oldest daughter died.

FLASHBACK:

A VIEW MASTER SLIDE

A large orange orangutan sits in a cage.

BOBBY (O.S.)

Now that's grandma Malo.
Your mother's mother.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

CANDY (7), looks into a view master as she sits on the sofa
between Bobby and John. Donna sits on the other side of
John.

Rita sits on a recliner.

RITA

Ya betta watch what ya tell her.
It could get back to my motha.

CANDY

That's not grandma. It's a
monkey.

Candy takes the view master away from her bright blue eyes.

BOBBY

That was an orangutan, Candy.

John reaches for the view master.

JOHN

Let me see. Let me see.

Candy hands John the view master.

Bobby looks at his wrist watch.

BOBBY

I have to go to a union meeting.
I'll be back in time for dinner.

Bobby goes over to Rita and kisses her on the lips.

BOBBY

I love you.

RITA

I know. I've been hearin' it
everyday for eight years.

Bobby heads for the door.

BOBBY

I'll be back in an hour.

He exits the house.

RITA

Candy, I want ya to go to
store and get a dozen eggs.

CANDY

Dad doesn't want me crossing
Mitchell Street alone.

RITA

Do what I told ya.

CANDY

Do I have to go now?

RITA

Yes. I'm makin' a birthday cake
for your grandma. I need them
eggs.

EXT. HUNTER AVE. - DAY

Candy skips up the quiet residential street and past manicured lawns, pink and red azaleas, purplish-blue and lavender-pink rhododendrons and Japanese maples.

WANDA (8), sits on the front step of her house. She stands and scampers over to Candy.

WANDA

Where you going, Candy?

CANDY

Cumberland farms. Wanna go with me, Wanda?

WANDA

Okay.

The girls stroll up the street.

CANDY

My mom's making a cake for my mean old grandmother.

WANDA

Is she mean to you?

CANDY

Yes. She told me I have stars in my eyes. That means I'm gonna die young. And she won't let me go in her living room. She says, 'That's for company'.

The girls reach the top of the street and step onto the sidewalk running along the main street.

WANDA

I'll race you to the store.

Candy takes off and stays about a yard ahead of Wanda. She looks back at Wanda and smiles.

WANDA

You cheated.

The girls race down the sidewalk and across a side street. They continue to race down the sidewalk. As Candy approaches the next side street, she turns her head and smiles at Wanda.

Candy runs onto the side street.

A loud SCREECHING sound of a moving car stopping suddenly.

Candy turns her head.

The car comes to a complete stop just barely striking Candy.

She is slammed down.

Her head hits hard against the pavement.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Bobby and Rita sit in front of a DOCTOR, early 30's, dark skinned. Rita shakes and cries.

A large male INTERN stands a couple of feet behind the doctor.

BOBBY

You said she was going to be okay.

DOCTOR

(Indian accent)

Yes, but there was extensive swelling of the brain. The pressure of her brain against her skull stopped the flow of blood to her brain. I'm sorry.

RITA

(Yells)

You're sorry? You're fuckin' sorry?

Rita lunges at the doctor. He puts his arms out as he steps backwards.

The intern grabs Rita from behind, pinning her arms.

Rita screams.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE ROOM

Detective Edwards continues to question Bobby.

EDWARDS

Do you own a rifle?

BOBBY

You know I do. I just bought a .22.

EDWARDS

We want you to get rid of it.

BOBBY

Why?

EDWARDS

We're afraid your wife may kill your children, Mr. Murphy.

Stunned, Bobby glares at Edwards.

BOBBY

That's ridiculous.

EDWARDS

Trust us. We know what we're talking about.

BOBBY

No, you don't. I know my wife would never harm her children.

INT. ROLLER SKATING RINK - NIGHT

Children of all ages and a few adults skate around the rink.

John and Donna skate.

Bobby watches them from behind a rail. He has a half smile on his face. His eyes move off his children and he stares across the room. He appears mad.

Martinez smiles at him from the other side of the rink.

INT. RESTAURANT - MORNING

Bobby and Crandall sit at a table eating breakfast.

CRANDALL

She's addicted. I know what that's like. Destroyed my first two marriages. They let me go and I deserved it. My second wife was so beautiful, but she wouldn't give it up. Then I fucked up big time.

FLASHBACK:

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A much younger Crandall talks to a young beautiful WOMAN, wearing a white nurse's uniform.

CRANDALL
(loud, slurring)
Why not? It's been ova a month.

WOMAN
The boys may come in.

CRANDALL
THE BOYS. THE BOYS MAY HEAR US.
THAT'S ALL I EVA HEAR.

WOMAN
Keep your voice down. You're
drunk. And it's only five o'clock.

Crandall grabs the front of her outfit and tears it open.
The woman slaps his face.

WOMAN
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

Crandall grabs her by the hair and yanks her to the floor.

The woman screams as Crandall drags her across the kitchen floor.

INT. BATHROOM

Crandall turns the handles on the faucets. Water pours into the tub.

Crandall lifts the woman and puts her into the tub.

WOMAN
What are you doing? Are you crazy?

Crandall pushes the woman down with his foot. He grabs a hair dryer and turns it on. He holds it in the air over the water.

WOMAN
NO! ROGER, DON'T DO IT.

Crandall drops the hair dryer. It splashes into the tub of water.

The cord and plug end of the dryer lies on the bathroom floor next to Crandall's foot.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. RESTAURANT - MORNING

CRANDALL

I was lucky the cord wasn't a little longer. We both would have been electrocuted. I haven't had a drink since that day. It's been over seven years now.

BOBBY

I wish my wife's psychiatrist would cut down on her dosage. She's on a twenty-four-hour high.

CRANDALL

Maybe you should be spending more time with your bride.

BOBBY

I know I should, but she never wants to go anywhere. When I'm home she rarely talks to me.

CRANDALL

Talk! I mean time doing the dirty deed. That's what she needs.

BOBBY

Sex? I'm lucky if I get it once a month.

CRANDALL

You animal.

EXT. MURPHY'S FRONT YARD - DAY

A cat struts away from the house.

Donna plays hopscotch on the front walkway.

John sits on the front steps watching Donna.

A hand lifts the cat off the lawn.

Donna stops and stares.

MARTINEZ (O.S.)
Is this your cat?

John rushes into the house.

DONNA
Put Cocoa down. I'm telling.

Martinez strokes the cat.

MARTINEZ
I like your pussy.

Martinez licks the top of the cat's head.

The front door flies open. Rita comes storming out.

RITA
Donna, get in the house.

Martinez puts the cat down and smiles at Rita.

Rita goes up to him and sprays him with mace.

Martinez drops his cane and rubs his eyes.

RITA
(Shouts)
Come near us again, I'll kill ya.

Rita turns and marches towards the house.

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

The sound of Rod Stewart singing "Tonight's the Night" comes out of two huge speakers.

A nude STRIPPER dances in front of fifty cheering MEN.

Crandall and Bobby sit at a small table away from the crowd.

Crandall takes a sip from can of Pepsi Cola.

Bobby takes a sip from a can of Budweiser beer.

BOBBY

See that Mark Hamill look-a-like
wearing the blue hat.

CRANDALL

Yeah.

BOBBY

He's the one that got his hair
caught in the drill press. It
pulled out all the hair on top
of his head.

CRANDALL

Ouch.

The stripper leaves the area.

BOBBY

Here comes the pervert.

Martinez, with cane, hobbles towards them.

MARTINEZ

Hi, inspector. I got a week off
because of you.

Bobby makes a move towards Martinez. Crandall stops him with
a hand and confronts Martinez.

CRANDALL

I read you like to fondle little
boys, now.

MARTINEZ

Anotha false arrest. They can't
prove shit. Besides, that was one
ugly kid. And hung like a gerbil...
I hear.

CRANDALL

Do you have any last words, fat
man?

MARTINEZ

What's your beef?

CRANDALL

I can't stand perverted scum. If
you don't get out of my sight, I'll
rearrange that ugly face of yours.

Martinez stares at Crandall. He turns and hobbles a way.

CRANDALL

Later.

EXT. LOW RENT APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Martinez staggers down a walkway between the buildings and a parking lot.

A car with its high beams on moves towards Martinez.

He stops and turns towards the car, shading his eyes.

The car moves up to the curb and stops in front of him.

Martinez, shading his eyes, stares ahead. The SOUND of a car door opening.

Martinez, blinded by the bright lights, moves his head side to side. The SOUNDS of footfalls and a bat rubbing against the pavement.

MARTINEZ

What the fuck?

The shadow of a large baseball bat goes over Martinez.

He brings his cane up and grips it with two hands in front of his head.

A bat splits the cane in two and hits Martinez in the head. He falls on the cement walkway.

The parking lot is dark. The loud SOUND of a bat hitting a skull.

The walkway and another loud WHACK.

A puddle of blood starts to form on the walkway.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby and John sit on the floor in front of the television

set playing video baseball.

Donna sits on the sofa.

Rita, wearing her coat and appearing drunk, staggers into the living room. She falters over to the front door and opens it.

Bobby observes Rita and stands.

BOBBY

Where are you going?

RITA

I'm goin' to Caldors.

Bobby hurries over to Rita and grabs her arm.

BOBBY

Give me the car keys, you're too drunk to drive.

Rita tries to shake away from Bobby's grip. Then she sticks her fingernails deep into his hand.

RITA

LET GO OF ME.

Bobby grabs the front of Rita's coat and pushes her against the wall.

Donna and John start crying and run over to Bobby. They both wrap their arms around a leg and hang on. Bobby gazes down on his son's crying face.

John, tears running down his cheeks, looks up at his father.

Bobby lets go of Rita.

BOBBY

We're upsetting the kids. Let me take you to Caldors.

RITA

Neva mind.

Rita staggers out of the living room.

INT. KITCHEN

Rita shuffles over to the refrigerator and opens the door. She takes out a quart of orange juice and pours some into a glass. She takes a half full bottle of vodka off the counter and pours some into the glass.

INT. LIVING ROOM

John, sniffing, rubs the tears off his face. He leaves the living room.

Bobby, his head down, sits on the sofa.

Donna sits next to him.

DONNA
I'm sorry, daddy.

Bobby looks down at her and gives her a hug.

BOBBY
No, it was my fault. I was worried about your mother driving to the store. I shouldn't have grabbed her.

DONNA
Mommy drinks too much, doesn't she?

Rita, holding a drink, enters the living room.

RITA
She's only repeatin' what she hears from you all the time.

BOBBY
You need help, Rita.

RITA
I need help? Ya try stayin' here day in and day out. What kind of a life do I have? Besides...

She lifts her drink up in the air.

RITA
... this makes waitin' to die a lot easier.

BOBBY

What do you want? What can I
do for you?

RITA

Make Suggs stop. Kill 'em if
ya have to.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The psychiatrist frowns.

PSYCHIATRIST

Of course I can't go to the police.
Everything you tell me is privileged.

Crandall rubs his temple.

CRANDALL

I was coming back from the ball-
field when I saw him go into Bobby's
yard.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. LOWER CLASS NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Crandall, 14, watches his stepfather enter a yard. Carrying
a baseball bat, he runs over to the entrance.

Stepfather unties a rope that's wrapped around the five year
old's waist.

Crandall dashes down the sidewalk and turns down a dirt
walkway. He gets to the end of a house and hides at the
corner.

With his back against the house, he grips the bat firmly
with two hands.

The SOUND of footfalls on the ground.

Crandall takes a deep breath.

Stepfather, holding Bobby, appears.

Crandall swings the bat.

The SOUND of a bat hitting a leg.

Crandall brings the bat over his shoulders, then swings with all his might.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Crandall's leg moves up and down, uncontrollably.

CRANDALL

It was his first week out of jail.
He got less than two years for almost
killing my sister. Broken jaw, knocked
her teeth out, and fucked up her face.
She hung herself a year later.

PSYCHIATRIST

When did the sex start?

CRANDALL

He started screwing her when she
was five or six.

PSYCHIATRIST

What about you?

CRANDALL

He made us do things together,
first. Then he started on me.
I was seven.

PSYCHIATRIST

What about your mother?

CRANDALL

She never suspected a thing. She was
never home. Worked for an insurance
company in Hartford. Lot of hours,
little pay.

PSYCHIATRIST

You never told her?

CRANDALL

I couldn't. He said he would kill
her and us if she found out.

PSYCHIATRIST

Roger, I have an associate.

CRANDALL

No!

PSYCHIATRIST

You could benefit a great deal...

CRANDALL

Don't even think about it. I opened up and feel worse. This is nothing but a waste of time and money.

PSYCHIATRIST

This is a long process. It takes time. Trust me.

CRANDALL

I don't trust you anymore.

The psychiatrist appears worried.

EXT. PSYCHIATRIST OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

The door opens. The psychiatrist, wearing a wool overcoat, walks out of the building. He scans the area as he walks down the walkway.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

The psychiatrist opens the car door.

A large man carrying a bat moves up to him.

The psychiatrist jumps back, startled.

A POLICEMAN smiles.

POLICEMAN

Sorry I startled you, Doc.

PSYCHIATRIST

I didn't see you. I looked, but...

POLICEMAN

I was kneeling behind your car. I found this underneath it.

The policeman shows him the bat.

The psychiatrist eyes the bat.

POLICEMAN

I noticed it when I was walking
my beat. It looks like there's
blood on it.

About thirty feet away from the two men, a parked car drives
away from the curb. It passes the two men.

INT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Crandall sits behind the steering wheel.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

The psychiatrist, worried, watches the car drive away.

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The psychiatrist and his WIFE sit at the table.

WIFE

Something bothering you, dear?

PSYCHIATRIST

Yes. I was just thinking about
that pedophile that was murdered
last week. I have a patient that
may have been involved in it.

WIFE

Are you thinking about going to
the police?

PSYCHIATRIST

Yes, and I think I'm ready for that
vacation you've been talking about.

EXT. MURPHY'S HOUSE - DAY

The front door opens. John comes running out. He hurries
down the stairs and dashes across the lawn.

EXT. MURPHY'S STREET - DAY

A fire truck, sirens BLASTING, moves down the street. It

stops in front of Murphy's house.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

A FIREMAN hurries down the hallway. He stops and grabs a doorknob.

INT. CHILD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Rita, appearing drunk, sits on the end of a bed facing a closet door. Smoke flows up from underneath the door.

The fireman enters the room.

INT./EXT. CAR - DAY

Bobby drives his car towards the fire truck. He parks his car behind it.

EXT. FIRE TRUCK - DAY

Two firemen stand next to the truck talking. Bobby walks up to them.

BOBBY

What's going on?

FIREMAN 1

There was a fire in your son's closet.
Your wife said your son started it.
He denies it.

BOBBY

What do you think?

Fireman 1 removes his hat and rubs his fingers through his hair.

FIREMAN 1

Your son ran to your neighbor's
house for help while your wife
sat on a bed staring at the door.
All I can say is she's lucky she
didn't open it.

Bobby looks at the two firemen.

BOBBY

Thanks a lot.

He shakes their hands.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bobby walks into the room.

RITA sits on the sofa. She's very drunk and has great difficulty talking.

RITA

I didn't start that fire. That little bastard did.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

The LAWYER, early forties, sits at his desk surrounded by bookcases full of law books.

Bobby sits on a chair in front of the desk.

BOBBY

If I can't have her committed, what can I do? I'm worried about her and my children's safety.

LAWYER

You can file for a divorce. When it goes to court, I'll request the judge to order a psychological evaluation.

BOBBY

She's seeing a psychiatrist now. I think he's part of the problem. Giving her all those prescriptions.

LAWYER

Have you talked to him?

BOBBY

No, he refuses to talk to me.

LAWYER

Then all I can advise is to file for a divorce.

BOBBY

I'm not leaving her. I love her. She just has a drug and drinking problem.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Rita and her children stand on the sidewalk.

A school bus pulls up in front of them.

Donna follows John into the bus. She waves to her mother.

Rita turns and walks away.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Water pours into a tub filled with water. Rita's hand turns the knob on a faucet. The water stops.

Rita steps into the tub.

She leans back and drinks down an orange liquid. She tosses the glass.

The glass hits the floor and shatters.

A razor blade lies on the tub.

Rita picks up the razor blade. She turns a wrist up and places the edge of the blade against a vein.

She brings her head back and looks up.

RITA

God, help me.

EXT. SHIPYARD - DAY

Bobby hurries between two buildings.

Suggs moves towards him.

When they reach each other, Suggs collides into Bobby, knocking him against the wall of a building.

BOBBY

You don't like working here?

SUGGS

(Pointing at Bobby)

Why are you and your crazy wife fuckin' with me, man? You cost me over three thousand dollars already.

BOBBY

I don't know if you hit her or not. If I knew for sure, you wouldn't be standing here.

SUGGS

A lotta talk for a little punk.

Bobby walks up to the much taller man.

BOBBY

You bother me or anyone in my family again, there won't be any more talking.

Suggs, grinning, looks down at Bobby

SUGGS

I want to knock you out so bad. Watch what you say to me. I might lose control.

BOBBY

Did you hit my wife?

SUGGS

I never touched your wife. That Detective Edwards is out to get me.

BOBBY

For what?

SUGGS

I broke his nose when I was seventeen. He was pissed that I got youthful offender. No record.

BOBBY

Tell your lawyer. In the meantime, just leave my family and me alone.

INT. INSPECTION OFFICE - DAY

Bobby sits with Crandall and William.

CRANDALL

Do you want me to meet with him outside the gate?

BOBBY

You'll need your bat.

CRANDALL

What?

BOBBY

No, of course not. At times I think he didn't do it. I don't know what to think.

WILLIAM

Rita's making everything up.

CRANDALL

Why would she do that?

WILLIAM

Looking for attention.

CRANDALL

What about the bruises?

WILLIAM

She got drunk and fell down the cellar stairs. And she must have banged her head against the tree herself. She's crazy. She's my sister, I ought to know.

BOBBY

Well, she's my wife. She hasn't been the same ...

Bobby gets chocked up and has a hard time talking.

BOBBY

...since Candy died.

Bobby is visibly shook up. He stands and leaves the area.

WILLIAM

Damn. I'm sorry I said anything. He's been under a lot of stress.

CRANDALL

He still keeps it in. That's why he never mentions her.

WILLIAM

He never cried until after her funeral. While driving away from the cemetery, he broke down.

CRANDALL

He's in denial. I know about that.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

John and Donna sit on the floor watching television.

Bobby and Rita sit on the sofa.

RITA

Anotha night out wit' the boys. Sometimes I think you're queer.

John turns his head.

JOHN

What's a queer?

RITA

Your father and uncle William.

Bobby gives Rita a dirty look.

BOBBY

Queer means something different. Like a cat with two tails.

DONNA

Some cats have two tails?

BOBBY

Maybe. That could happen and that cat would be different from the other cats. Queer.

DONNA

Oh!

RITA

And a man who likes anotha man is a queer.

BOBBY

They don't need to know that.

RITA

Why? I think they should know
what their fatha really is.

JOHN

Dad, are you queer?

BOBBY

No, John, your mother is just
teasing me.

Bobby stands and attempts to kiss Rita goodbye.

Rita turns her head away.

INT. BANQUET HALL - NIGHT

Bobby plays poker with five other men.

MAN(O.S.)

Bob Murphy, you have a telephone call.

Bobby stands and walks across the hall to a telephone. He
puts the telephone to his ear.

VOICE (V.O.)

Mr. Murphy. This is patrolman
Dunn. We'd like you to come to
the Groton Police Station to pick
up your children. Your wife was
stabbed in the leg, but she is
doing fine. Please come here
immediately.

BOBBY

(slurring)

I'll be right there.

Bobby puts down the telephone and darts back to his table.

BOBBY

I'm gonna shoot him tonight.

EXT. CAR - NIGHT

A car speeds down the road.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Bobby drives, firmly clenching the steering wheel.

EXT. MURPHY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A car screeches to a halt. Bobby gets out of the car and runs up to his front door.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bobby looks through his bedroom closet.

BOBBY

It's fucking gone. Those fucking cops.

INT. POLICE STATION - CONFERENCE ROOM

Edwards, holding a pair of dungarees, stands in front of Bobby. A small steak knife lies on a table.

EDWARDS

We believe your wife stabbed herself. The knife wound is twenty six inches above the floor. That's the same distance her hand is when at her side. The angle of the cut shows that it was self-inflicted.

Edwards shows Bobby an area of the dungarees.

EDWARDS

See the small hole next to the large cut?

BOBBY

Yes.

EDWARDS

That indicates that there was a hesitation. This is very common in self inflicting wounds. We also believe no one broke into your house and that your wife is behind all the notes.

BOBBY

Maybe she stabbed herself. But
I think Suggs hit her.

EDWARDS

We're dropping all the charges
against Suggs.

BOBBY

Do you have my rifle?

EDWARDS

Yes. We don't want you to do
anything foolish.

BOBBY

I want it back.

EDWARDS

We're going to hold on to it for
the time being. You can go now.
Your wife will be brought home
in a little while.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Bobby, Donna, and John sit in the sixth row from the
screen.

MOVIE SCREEN

SUPERMAN cries as he holds LOIS LANE in his arms. Superman
screams and flies into the air.

EXT. MURPHY'S HOUSE - DAY

Bobby and his children walk up to the front door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Donna walks over to the tv and turns it on. Then she walks
over to the sofa and sits down next to John.

INT. MURPHY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN

Bobby walks into the kitchen.

Rita stands in front of a counter.

On the counter top lies four empty plastic containers.

Rita looks like a zombie. Her eyes half shut. Her mouth is open.

BOBBY

(points)

Did you take all those pills?

RITA

(slurring)

I love you.

Rita's legs give out and she falls to the floor.

Bobby rushes over to her and places her across her shoulder.

He carries her out of the kitchen into the

LIVING ROOM

John and Donna sit on the sofa.

BOBBY

Get in the car.

EXT. MURPHY'S HOUSE - DAY

Donna, crying, and John run to the car. They get in the back.

Bobby, carrying Rita, runs up to the passenger side of the car. He opens the door and places Rita on the front seat. He runs around the front of the car to the driver's side. He gets in.

INT. CAR - DAY

Bobby sits behind the wheel.

DONNA

(crying)

Is Mommy going to die?

BOBBY

No. She just had too many pills.
We're going to take her to see a
doctor.

INT. HOSPITAL

Bobby, carrying Rita across his shoulder, runs down a corridor. The children follow close behind.

Two hospital ATTENDANTS take Rita from Bobby and place her on a gurney. They wheel her behind a long white curtain.

ATTENDANT

There's a waiting room down the hallway. You can wait there.

Bobby stands, staring.

There is an opening in the curtain. The attendants tend to Rita.

INT. WAITING ROOM

Bobby sits with his children.

A doctor walks into the waiting room. With his hand, he signals Bobby.

DOCTOR

Mr. Murphy.

Bobby walks over to the doctor.

DOCTOR

Your wife's condition is very serious. Please don't leave the hospital until we tell you to.

BOBBY

How is she?

DOCTOR

She's still comatose.

BOBBY

She's gonna be all right, isn't she?

DOCTOR

It's too early to tell. She could die.

Bobby looks as if he was about to pass out.

DOCTOR

You better sit down. We'll keep
you informed on her condition.

Bobby shuffles back to his chair. He sits down between his
children.

He stares. Tears run down his cheeks.

EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

The editor sits with his feet on top of the desk.

Steve sits on a chair in front of the desk.

The editor glances over a report.

EDITOR

The judge admitted that the statements
were inappropriate. He expressed
deep sorrow that his words may have
been wrongly interpreted.

STEVE

The majority, all lawyers,
exonerated him. The minority,
non-lawyers, file for a report
calling for censure.

EDITOR

Lawyers stick together. We
knew that.

STEVE

Well, I tried. I pray that he
doesn't get involved in any more
child abuse cases.

EDITOR

What about you?

STEVE

What do you mean?

EDITOR

How many days did you follow
Brown?

STEVE

Three days. I got a good story.

EDITOR

I know you did. Remember, you're
a reporter, not a crusader.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Bobby pitches a ball to John.

John hits the ball over Bobby's head.

Donna runs after the ball. She picks it up and tosses it to
Bobby.

Bobby catches the ball.

BOBBY

Okay. Let's go over to the tennis
courts and play a little tennis.

DONNA

How come Mommy doesn't come
with us?

BOBBY

I don't know, Donna. I asked her.

JOHN

Dad, am I ugly?

BOBBY

Of course not. You're a good
looking boy.

JOHN

Mom says I'm ugly. She says I'm
gonna be a fag just like you.

BOBBY

Your mother doesn't mean that.
That's the medication talking.

JOHN

What?

BOBBY

The pills make her say bad things.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Rita, intoxicated, sits on the sofa. Blood flows from her nose.

The front door opens.

John and Donna run in.

Donna sees Rita and dashes towards her.

DONNA

Mommy! Mommy!

The bottom of Rita's foot pushes into Donna's chest. Donna falls on the floor.

RITA

Get away from me, you little bitch.

Bobby hurries over to Rita and slaps her across the face.

BOBBY

(Pointing)

You ever hurt these kids again,
I'll put you back in the hospital.

RITA

Go fuck yourself, ya faggot.

Bobby picks up Donna and gives her a hug.

DONNA

What happened to your nose,
Mommy?

RITA

I hurt it opening the refrigerator
door.

BOBBY

I'm sorry I hit you. I just
lost it.

RITA

Ya betta neva touch me again,
I'm warnin' ya.

INT. SMALL LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room is very small. The only furnishings are a small sofa, an end table and a lamp, and a small black and white tv resting on a tv stand.

John and Donna sit on the floor watching tv.

Bobby sits on the sofa with his MOTHER.

BOBBY

We can try it for a week or two.
See how it goes.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Rita, yelling, stands in the middle of the kitchen.

RITA

Get the fuck outta my house.

EXT. MURPHY'S HOUSE - DAY

Bobby's mother stands on the lawn next to her suitcase.

A car pulls up.

Bobby gets out and rushes over to his mother.

MOTHER

She threw me out. I think there's
something wrong with that girl.

EXT. BALLFIELD - NIGHT

A canvass bag with several bats in it lies on the ground.

Crandall stands over home plate, tossing balls into the air and hitting them. A dozen balls lie on the ground near his feet.

Steve approaches Crandall.

STEVE

Mr. Crandall?

Crandall, holding the bat by his side, turns towards Steve.

CRANDALL

I know you. You're that crusading reporter.

STEVE

Something we have in common. I saw you go into the theater that night.

CRANDALL

If you're talking about the night Brown was murdered, I was at an AA meeting. I have witnesses.

STEVE

Were you ever questioned about any of the baseball bat murders?

CRANDALL

Once, but it seemed like the cops were more concerned about a cat than the murdering pervert. Go figure.

Crandall grips both ends of the bat and holds it behind his head.

STEVE

Did you murder your stepfather?

CRANDALL

No, but I did piss on his grave. Hey, that might make a good story. I'll even do it again. It'll make a great picture.

Crandall grips the bat with one hand and moves towards Steve, dragging the bat along the ground.

STEVE

If the judge had done his job, do you think he'd be alive today?

Crandall stands face to face with Steve, tapping the bat against the ground.

CRANDALL

If you think I'm a murderer, why aren't you afraid?

STEVE

I don't molest children. Let me tell your story. No names.

Crandall stretches the bat away from his body.

CRANDALL

It's getting late. If you help me shag some balls, I'll give you an exclusive.

STEVE

I'm listening.

CRANDALL

You promise to help me?

STEVE

Sure.

CRANDALL

My stepfather made me swallow. But you can't quote me. Too embarrassing.

STEVE

Off the record and I promise I'll never tell a soul, are you the Babe?

CRANDALL

You betcha! Batted over four hundred with nineteen home runs.

(Winks)

Six heads batted in.

Crandall walks over to the plate and picks up a ball. He hits it over the fence.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Rita swings a belt.

The SOUND of a belt hitting flesh.

John, crying, runs out of the kitchen holding the side of his face.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby sits on the sofa with a SOCIAL WORKER, an overweight woman in her forties.

SOCIAL WORKER

We don't want you leaving her alone with those children. Not even for a minute.

BOBBY

What do you suggest?

SOCIAL WORKER

That's your problem. You leave them with her again, and we're going to court.

Bobby stands.

BOBBY

I'll take another week out of work. I don't know what else to do. After that, I guess I'll be seeing you in court.

The social worker stands.

SOCIAL WORKER

If that's what you want.

Rita, carrying a drink, enters the room.

RITA

Yeah, we'll see ya in court, fatso. Ya can't prove nothin'.

INT. INSPECTION OFFICE - DAY

William sits across from Crandall. Leo sits at his desk. There are two other supervisors and six other inspectors in the office.

LEO

Crandall, get over here.

CRANDALL

Comin', boss.

Crandall gets up and walks over to Leo's desk.

Leo holds a thirty page report in his hand.

LEO

What is this T L T not applied
around foundations and wireway
supports?

CRANDALL

It prevents noise from traveling
to the outer hull, boss.

LEO

I know what it does. It's not
your job to write it up. That's
a structural unsat. Mind your
own business.

CRANDALL

Leo, you're so handsome when you're
mad. I'm not queer, but I'm
getting sexually aroused just
looking at you.

Leo hands the report to Crandall.

LEO

Take them back and write up just
the electrical unsats. What's
the matter with you now?

Crandall's eyes are wide open and he looks worried.

CRANDALL

(whispering)

I feel shitty. And I see three
of everything. Three Leos,
no wonder I'm scared.

LEO

You better go to the yard hospital
and let the doctor have a look at
you.

INT. INSPECTION OFFICE - LATER

Crandall walks into the inspection office.

LEO

What did the doctor say?

CRANDALL

He told me to see an eye doctor.

INT. BARROOM - NIGHT

William and Crandall sit at a table. William sips on a glass of beer while Crandall sips a glass of coke.

CRANDALL

I'm scared. I keep seeing triple.

WILLIAM

The doctor said it was nothing. He must know what he's talking about.

CRANDALL

Something's wrong, I know it. I don't think I can drive. Can you take me home?

WILLIAM

Sure.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

William drives. Crandall leans against the door on the passenger side.

Crandall closes his eyes and talks to himself. Almost a whisper and slurring his words.

CRANDALL

I couldn't help myself.

Tears flow down his cheeks.

CRANDALL

Somebody had to stop them.

WILLIAM

Stop who?

CRANDALL

Take me to the hospital, please. I'm dying.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

Crandall, slouching to his left, stands and talks to a NURSE. William stands next to him.

CRANDALL

(slurring)

I'm not drunk. I haven't had a drink in eight years. May I see a doctor, please?

NURSE

He said go home and get some sleep. You'll feel better in the morning.

CRANDALL

I'm not drunk. If you send me home, I'm going to die.

NURSE

You're not going to die. I'm sorry, but we're very busy, you have to leave now.

WILLIAM

Fuck these quacks. I'll take you to a another hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Crandall lies on a bed. Needles and tubes leave his body.

A DOCTOR, a WOMAN, and two young MEN stand in front of Crandall's bed.

DOCTOR

The stroke left Roger clinically brain dead. You will have to decide if you want to keep him on life support.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Bobby and William sit on the last pew.

Crandall's GIRLFRIEND, who is crying out loud, and his two SONS sit on the first pew by the open casket.

Less than twenty other ADULTS sit on other pews.

One of Crandall's sons stands and walks over to a small table by the casket. He pushes the play button on the recorder that's on the table. Debby Boone singing, "You Light Up My Life" plays.

The sounds of Debbie Boone singing and Crandall's girl crying.

Bobby's eyes begin to water and a small tear runs down his right cheek.

WILLIAM

(Whispers)

Must have been the Pall Malls
and all that greasy food he used
to eat.

BOBBY

(Whispers)

And stress.

WILLIAM

(Whispers)

Crandall, stress? Nah. You, being
married to my sister, yes.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bobby stands in the doorway. Rita walks restlessly around the room, gesturing with her hands.

RITA

(Yelling)

I want you outta here.

Rita goes to a cupboard and opens it up. She takes a bottle of vodka from the cupboard and carries it to the sink. She pours all the contents down the sink.

BOBBY

Your gonna miss that more than me.

RITA

(yelling)

Why don't ya go see one of your
whores? Go anywhere. Just get
out.

BOBBY

Why do you want me to leave?

RITA

(yelling)

'cause I can't stand ya. Every
time ya take off your shirt I get
sick to my stomach. You're nothin'
but a freak. You and my brother,
freaks.

Rita walks over to a sliding glass door, and puts her back
against it. She kicks it hard with the heel of her right
foot.

RITA

(yelling)

GET OUT.

She kicks the door again.

RITA

GET OUT.

She kicks it again and numerous cracks appear. Rita starts
to cry. She runs over to the telephone and pushes 9-1-1.

RITA

Can ya please send someone to 205
Hunter ave. My husband is beatin' me.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER

A uniformed POLICE OFFICER talks to Rita and Bobby.

RITA

After I poured the vodka out,
he threatened to kill me.

POLICE OFFICER

Do we have a drinking problem
here?

RITA

No. I just want him to leave.
Then he pushed me into the door.
(Pointing at the cracked glass)
I tried to break the fall with
my foot and the glass broke.

BOBBY

She kicked the door on purpose.
Look where the break is.

POLICEMAN

I know about you. You have to
stop wasting our time.

Rita brakes down and starts to cry.

RITA

(crying)
He won't leave, I'll leave.

Rita starts to walk out of the kitchen, crying
uncontrollably.

POLICEMAN

(to Rita)
Hold it, don't leave.
(to Bobby)
Okay buddy, you're under arrest.

Bobby

(stunned)
For what?

POLICEMAN

Assault.

INT. DR. COLEMAN'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dr. COLEMAN, early forties, sits on a leather recliner, his
legs are crossed and his hands are folded on his lap.

Bobby and Rita sit apart on small wooden chairs.

BOBBY

A week after she got out, she
started drinking again. She had
me arrested once, but the charges
were dropped.

RITA

A wife can't testify against her
husband.

BOBBY

Last night she was so drunk that she threatened to cut off my balls after I fell asleep. I locked the bedroom door when I went to bed because I was afraid she might.

DR. COLEMAN

What do you have to say, Rita?

RITA

He's lyin'.

DR. COLEMAN

I believe him, Rita.

Rita squints.

RITA

Ya callin' me a liar?

COLEMAN

(to Bobby)

I can't help you. You'd be wasting your money coming here.

BOBBY

What do you suggest?

COLEMAN

There's a story about a man with a beautiful white horse. Every time he mounted it he was thrown in the mud. Then he got smart and didn't mount the horse again. I can refer you two to a good divorce lawyer.

Bobby

I still love her. And what about our children?

DR. COLEMAN

Some how, under the worst conditions, children grow up to be respectable adults. Here's the name of a good lawyer, she'll take care of the both of you.

BOBBY

Didn't you hear me? I love her.
She just has a drinking problem.

Rita reaches over and yanks a business card out of Coleman's hand. She examines it.

EXT. MURPHY'S HOUSE - DAY

A car pulls up in front of the house.

Bobby gets out and moves towards his house.

A SHERIFF approaches Bobby.

SHERIFF

Mr. Murphy? Mr. Robert Murphy?

Bobby looks at the sheriff, confused.

BOBBY

Yes.

The sheriff hands Bobby a temporary restraining order.

SHERIFF

That's a restraining order. You can't go near your wife for the next fifteen days. During that time period you'll be given a date to challenge that order in a court of law. I'm sorry, but you have to give me the keys to your car.

INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE

Bobby sits with MAX SHAPIRO, late fifties.

BOBBY

I can't get any money. My checking account, savings account, credit card, all frozen.

MAX

That will change once we resolve this restraining order business.

Max examines the restraining order.

MAX

Did you push her into a glass door?

BOBBY

No.

MAX

Did you slap her face?

BOBBY

Yes, once. After she kicked
my daughter.

MAX

Well, that's all she needs for
the restraining order. I'll be
serving her divorce papers.

BOBBY

I don't want a divorce.

MAX

You don't have a choice, she
does.

BOBBY

Look! I want my day in court. I
don't think my children are safe
with her. Can you help me or not?

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

MS. MARIANI, late thirties, pretty, stands in front of Judge
Hochman.

MARIANI

Mrs. Murphy is agreeable to having
the D.C.Y.S. stay involved while the
matter of custody is studied.

JUDGE

Very well. Proceed.

MARIANI

Your Honor, I'll call Mrs Murphy to
the stand, if I may.

The Judge nods.

MARIANI

Mrs. Murphy, would you please take the stand.

Rita, well dressed and looking pretty good, hurries towards the witness chair.

MARIANI

Since 1969 have you had various problems related to drugs?

RITA

Yes, I have.

MARIANI

Are you now addicted to drugs?

RITA

No.

MARIANI

Okay. Now, we're here today to tell His Honor about the reason you want exclusive possession of the family residence. What, if anything, took place that has sought you to seek to have your husband removed from the house?

RITA

Well, now that I'm off all the drugs, I just got fed up with the way my husband has been treating me. He beats me and says he's going to take my kids and leave me.

MARIANI

Has he beaten you recently?

RITA

Yes, he slapped me in the face and threatened to put me in the hospital.

MARIANI

Okay. Now, has your husband made any other threats to you?

RITA

Yes, he threatened that if I ever get custody of the kids, he'd kill me.

MARIANI

Have you had the chief care of the children?

RITA

Oh, yeah.

MARIANI

Your husband goes off to work and leaves you to care for the children, correct?

RITA

Right.

MARIANI

Are you in agreement to having a D.C.Y.S. worker stop in periodically and survey your custodial situation with the children?

RITA

Yes.

MARIANI

I have nothing further, Your Honor.

JUDGE

You may inquire.

Max struts up to Rita.

MAX

You have a fairly long history of psychiatric problems, do you not?

RITA

I've been to psychiatrists, yeah.

MAX

You've had several stays in sanitariums, correct?

RITA
Because of drugs.

MAX
And mental health related problems?

RITA
Depression.

MAX
Did you set a fire in one of
your children's bedrooms?

RITA
I never set no fire.

MAX
Have you also had many problems
with respect to making complaints
to the police that were not borne
out?

RITA
I did do what you said. I was on
a lot of drugs then.

MAX
You said your husband slapped
your face. Is that right?

RITA
Yes.

MAX
Would you indicate to His Honor
what led up to that?

MARIANI
Well, Your Honor, I don't see
that that's relevant.

JUDGE
Overruled.

MAX
Tell the Judge what came before
he struck you.

RITA

I crossed my legs and accidentally
knocked my daughter to the floor.
He thought I did it on purpose.
I didn't.

Max stares at Rita and shakes his head.

MAX

Thank you. Nothing further, Your
Honor.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Donna sits at a desk drawing a picture.

It's a picture of two little figures and one large figures
playing in a park. The figures all have smiles on their
round faces.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Judge Hochman sits at the bench.

HOCHMAN

The Court clearly feels that the
wife should continue to be the
primary caretaker of the children.
Therefore, the Court will order
the exclusive possession of the
residence be given to the wife
subject to the right of the
defendant to visit the residence
in order to exercise a reasonable
right of visitation.

Bobby looks stunned.

Rita smiles.

Steve sits in the back of the courtroom shaking his head.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Judge Hochman strolls through the parking lot.

Steve follows him.

HOCHMAN

Have a nice day, Steven.

STEVE

Mr. Murphy seemed quite credible and concerned about his children's safety. And I don't blame him. I wouldn't want her looking after my children.

HOCHMAN

Children should be with their mother. There's a bonding. She did have some problems in the past. It's what she's done lately that really matters.

STEVE

How about what she might do?

HOCHMAN

He left her alone with those children every day. Now he's concerned about their safety?

STEVE

She's clearly a very disturbed woman. Those children shouldn't be left alone with her.

HOCHMAN

Your opinion. Now leave me alone.

INT. ELECTRICIAN SHOP - DAY

Bobby removes some tools from his locker. He looks very depressed and tired.

Suggs stands several feet away talking to a SUPERVISOR.

SUGGS

That bastard's lucky he got a job. He gets laid off in inspection and he uses his seniority to bump a good electrician out of a job.

Bobby

(looking into his locker)
He's a lousy electrician, I guess he's good at kissing ass.

Suggs walks over to Bobby and punches him on the side of the head.

Bobby falls to his knees. Suggs with a clenched fist brings his right arm back and then with all his power hits Bobby squarely on the nose. Bobby's body slams against the lockers, then falls to the floor.

Suggs stands over Bobby.

SUGGS

Do ya have anything else to say,
motha fucka? I warned ya not to
fuck with me again.

The supervisor dashes over to Bobby and kneels down next to him.

SUPERVISOR

Murphy, are you okay?

Bobby, blood flowing from his nose, lies on the floor. He attempts to get up and falls back down.

A half a dozen electricians gather around them.

Bobby, lying on his back, moves his eyes side to side, then closes them.

BOBBY

(Murmurs)

She won't hurt them. They'll be
all right. I know they will.

INT. INSPECTION OFFICE - DAY

An ELECTRICIAN, late twenties, stands in front of Leo's desk.

Leo sits back in his chair and removes his glasses, his nose and mustache remain on his face.

ELECTRICIAN

He got up and walked over to the
stretcher himself. I saw him do
it. He looked like he was going
to be all right. I heard he died
on the way to the hospital.

LEO

He was a good inspector. He was just too thorough. Must have thought a missing screw could sink a submarine.

INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY

Rita sits in front of Mariani.

RITA

That's all I get? What about his life insurance?

MARIANI

He changed his beneficiaries. Your children get it all.

RITA

But I'm still his wife.

MARIANI

Half of his assets: the equity in the house, savings, stocks, belong to your children.

RITA

Bullshit. I'm his wife. I don't believe that.

MARIANI

Without a will half of the estate goes to the children. That's the law in Connecticut.

RITA

What will happen to me if I spend their share of the money?

MARIANI

I have a client in jail for losing his stepson's share in Las Vegas.

RITA

Well, the state of Connecticut can have his fuckin' body. I'm not even goin' to cremate him, now. They can take a flyin' fuck.

INT. CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Rita sits behind the steering wheel across from Donna. John sits on the back seat.

DONNA
Mommy, is daddy in Heaven?

RITA
No, Donna. He's burnin' in Hell.

Donna starts to cry.

JOHN
Where we going, Mommy?

RITA
It's gonna be a big surprise.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

MALE AGENT, late thirties, exams a photograph of Rita.

MALE AGENT
You were a beautiful girl, what happened?

Rita sits in front of a conference table. Several thick manila folders lie on the table.

RITA
I gave birth.

FEMALE AGENT, pretty, late twenties, sits across from Rita.

FEMALE AGENT
So, you blame your children for your appearance? You don't think drugs and alcohol had anything to do with it?

RITA
I want a lawyer. I know my rights.

Male Agent lays the photograph on the table and picks up a folder. He skims over some on the reports.

MALE AGENT

Seventh grade. You don't know much. Only your brother graduated graduated high school. Why's that?

RITA

I went to work at sixteen. What's that got to do wit' my missin' kids?

Male Agent moves over to Female Agent and hands her a report.

Female Agent scans the report.

FEMALE AGENT

You like to make false complaints, don't you?

RITA

I was drinkin' then. You're not supposed to be lookin' at that, it's confidential.

MALE AGENT

Sue us.

FEMALE AGENT

What were you doing in the preserve?

RITA

I told ya, diggin' for treasure.

MALE AGENT

You're not a remorseful person, are you?

Rita slams a fist against the table.

RITA

I...didn't... do...nothin'.

A phone RINGS. Male Agent walks over to the telephone hanging on the wall. He puts the handset to his ear and listens.

MALE AGENT

Thank you.

Male Agent puts the handset back and moves towards Rita. He

leans across the table.

MALE AGENT

What is your problem? Were you
born without any humanity?

RITA

Did ya find my kids? Are they
alive?

Male Agent picks up a folder. He pulls out two photographs
and places them in front of Rita.

Photographs of Donna and John, both smiling.

MALE AGENT

Look at your children, Rita.

Rita, showing no emotion, stares at the photographs.

Both agents glare at Rita.

FEMALE AGENT

Was it just for the money?

Rita ignores her.

The male agent moves close to Rita.

MALE AGENT

You didn't waste anytime, did you?

RITA

It was a surprise. They always wanted
to dig for treasure. Then that pervert
with a gun took 'em away.

AGENT 2

Rita, we know why you went to Rhode
Island.

RITA

I told ya why. Where's my purse?

Male Agent walks over to Female Agent and whispers in her
ear.

RITA

I need my purse. I have to take
my medicine. I have rights.

Female Agent sits on the chair across from Rita.

FEMALE AGENT

Nobody kidnaped your children. We know that. Tell us what really happened.

RITA

I told youse what happened. He was a big guy. Find him.

MALE AGENT

We already did.

EXT. POLICE STATION - RHODE ISLAND - NIGHT

A car pulls up in front of the station. JOHN EGAN, early fifties, gets out of the car and hurries towards the station.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Steve Johnson sits on a small bench. An area of hair was removed from his head. Stitches are very apparent.

Several POLICE OFFICERS go about their business.

John Egan enters the area and marches over to Steve. He extends his hand.

EGAN

Mr. Johnson, I'm Federal Agent John Egan.

Steve stands and shakes Egan's hand.

Egan motions towards the bench.

EGAN

Sit, please.

They both sit down.

EGAN

You're a reporter?

STEVE

Yes, for a Connecticut newspaper.

EGAN

I really appreciate you coming back in to talk to me.

STEVE

No problem.

EGAN

Tell me what happened.

STEVE

Like I told the police. I read that her husband died. I was concerned for her children's safety, so I spent a few nights staking out her house. I thought I might see her abusing her children.

FLASHBACK:

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

A car with pitch-black tinted windows is parked across the street from Rita's house.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Steve sits behind the steering wheel. A camera with a long telescopic lens hang around his neck.

EXT. RITA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Rita and her children come out the front door. They walk down the walkway and get into her car. The car drives a short distance and makes a u-turn. It drives past Steve's car.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Steve starts his car as he watches Rita's car drive up the street.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Rita's car takes a right turn at the top of the street.

Steve's car pulls away from the curve.

MONTAGE

1. Rita's car turns onto interstate 95.
2. Steve's car turns onto interstate 95.
3. Donna watches Rita drink from a bottle of Screwdriver Mix. John sleeps on the back seat of the car.
4. Rita's car drives by a welcome to Rhode Island billboard.
5. Steve watches Rita's car take an exit by a sign that reads, "To Rhode Island beaches". The line on his gas gage is on E.
6. Rita's car passes a gas station. Steve's car pulls into the gas station.
7. Rita's car takes a turn on Moonstone Beach rd.
8. Steve's car drives away from the gas station.
9. Rita's car moves along a dirt road and stops by a sandy area.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. RITA'S CAR - NIGHT

Rita opens the trunk of her car. She pulls out a hand lantern and turns it on. She hands it to Donna.

Rita takes a spade out of the trunk and closes it.

Rita, Donna and John walk towards the beach.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

A full moon reflects off the ocean.

A sign that reads "KEEP OUT! WILD LIFE PRESERVE" stands in front of a roped off grassy swamp area that runs along the deserted beach.

Rita and her children trudge down the beach.

DONNA

I'm scared, Mommy.

JOHN

I'm tired. I want to go home.

RITA

(Slurring)

Stop the bitchin'! Both of ya.

A large smooth white rock lies under the rope by a narrow path.

Rita walks over to it and steps over the rope.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Steve's car pulls up behind Rita's car. His car door opens.

EXT. SWAMP LAND - NIGHT

A beam of light shines on the narrow path.

Rita, holding the hand lantern, stops and stares.

The light shines on a large hole.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

Steve exams the footprints in the sand. He dashes down the beach.

EXT. SWAMP - NIGHT

The hand lantern lies on the ground. Its beam of light shines over the hole. The spade sticks in the sand in front of the hole.

Rita, holding John and Donna by the hand, stands next to the hole.

RITA

Get in the hole!

Donna, petrified, gapes up at her mother.

JOHN

Why?

RITA

There's a hidden treasure down there. I want youse to find it.

Donna starts to sob.

John gawks at her.

Rita lets go of Donna's hand and uses both of her hands to place John in the hole.

DONNA

Please, Mommy, don't.

Rita lifts Donna and puts her in the hole. Then she marches over to the spade and picks it up.

The children, scared and confused, watch her.

Rita stands over them and raises the spade high in the air.

STEVE (O.S.)

Put it down!

Rita turns.

RITA

(Slurring)

Don't come near us.

Steve examines Rita. She appears high on drugs.

STEVE

What are you doing, Mrs. Murphy?

RITA

None a your business. Leave us alone.

Rita brings the shovel back in a threatening manner.

Steve moves over to the children and helps them out of the hole.

He knells and bends down to talk to them.

STEVE

What were you two doing in the hole?

John shrugs his shoulders.

The spade hits hard against Steve's head.

Blood splatters onto Donna's face. Startled, she jumps back and starts to cry.

Steve falls into the hole.

Holding the spade high in the air, Rita moves towards him. Steve rubs his head as he gazes up at Rita.

STEVE

Try that again and I'll break you
like a toothpick. Believe me, I
can and I will.

Rita stops.

RITA

Whatta ya want?

STEVE

I want you to follow us to the
police station.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Egan and Steve sit on the bench.

STEVE

Needles to say, she didn't follow
us.

EGAN

You probably saved their lives.
But, I'm sorry to say, we could
never prove it beyond a reasonable
doubt.

STEVE

Were the kids returned to her?

EGAN

No, her sister is going to pick them
up. We're working on a plea bargain
that will give her sister custody of
the children.

STEVE

That will be great. She's a very
dysfunctional woman.

EXT. CHURCH - 2000 - DAY

Donna, wearing a wedding gown, and BRIAN (29), wearing a
tuxedo, hold hands as they move through a CROWD throwing
rice at them.

INT. BARROOM - NIGHT

William, grey and balding, and RANDY (52), salt and pepper
hair, sit at the bar. Behind them, beyond a large opening,
the wedding guest dance to the music in the banquet room.

WILLIAM

She made a beautiful bride. Bobby
would be so proud...and thankful.
You and my sister did good job
raising them.

RANDY

Thanks. They were good kids. No
problem. Besides, Beverly brought
them up, not me.

Rita, looking much older than she is, and HER HUSBAND, 65,
enter the area.

William turns towards them.

RITA

Why aren't youse in the otha
room?

WILLIAM

The music's too loud.

RITA

Getta load of him.

Rita nods her head towards the opening.

Steve dances with his wife.

WILLIAM

Steve's a good dancer.

RITA

I can't believe Donna invited him.

WILLIAM

He's a great guy. Donna believes he saved her life.

RITA

Right. Like I would hurt my kids. I'm their motha, for Christ sakes.

FADE OUT

Crandall's two sons sued the hospital and two doctors. Each boy ended up with just over six hundred thousand dollars.

No one was ever arrested for the baseball bat murders. The last victim's body was found in the winter of '78.

Judge Hochman was promoted to a higher court.

Steve Johnson is still a reporter for the same newspaper.

Suggs served less than five years in prison for Bobby's death.

Shortly after Bobby's death, Rita moved to another state. Six months later she was arrested for burning down a house. The charges were dropped.

Rita made over twenty false complaints to the police, was suspected of starting four fires, and was arrested for calling in one bomb scare. She was never convicted of a crime.

Every word spoken by the judge was taken from newspaper articles and a court transcript.

All of this was based on true stories.

THE END