

BEYOND RECOGNITION

by

John Tucker

8 Mountain View Dr.
Goffstown, NH 03045
603-244-9160
jgtuck@gmail.com

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FADE IN:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

Wind whips powdery snow along a moonlit street. Snow-covered cars in driveways and curbside. A few scattered lights in homes. Two shadowy figures bolt to a late-model Lincoln alongside the curb. They jump in and pull away. No headlights. Just as the headlights come on, an explosion shatters the peace and quiet. First-floor windows are blown out of a house as it bursts into flames. In the distance, the Lincoln turns a corner and drives out of sight. Two young children are leaning out of a second-floor window, screaming for help, as flames race out of the windows below.

INT. BOSTON TOWNHOME LOFT - NIGHT

Flame from a butane lighter as JOANNE CARTER (52), wispy light-brown hair, brown eyes, slender face and plump lips, lights up a cigarette. She takes a drag, then sips a bottle of beer and sets it next to an ashtray on the carpeted floor. Dressed in a Red Sox nightshirt, she's sitting with her legs crossed in front of a shoe box, sorting through a stack of greeting cards, some still in their envelopes. She tosses a couple back in the box, then pauses looking closely at one with no return address, but with a Seattle postmark and a date of Dec. 18, 1973. She pulls a card out of the envelope and opens it... "Merry Christmas to all." It's signed Aunt Sarah. She puts it back in the envelope, sets it in a small pile in front of her and continues going through the cards. She comes across another postmarked Reno, Dec. 18, 1976, and places it in the pile. She goes through the remaining five or six cards in her hand, tosses them in the shoe box. She takes another drag on her cigarette, butts it out and gets up off the floor, picking up her beer in one hand and the stack of a dozen or so cards in the other.

INT. TOWNHOME BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dimly lit master bedroom. Joanne Carter is sitting in a king-size bed, leaning against the large maple headboard, looking at her husband, JOHN CARTER (53), thinning brown

hair, somewhat gaunt and pale. He's lying on his back staring at the ceiling as though in a trance. Joanne is still holding the stack of greeting cards in her lap.

JOANNE

Do I need to knock?...

JOHN

What's that supposed to mean?

JOANNE

For you to let me in... Do I need to knock?

JOHN

That's cute, honey.

JOANNE

Wasn't meant to be... Shutting me out isn't gonna help us beat this.

John rolls over, facing his wife.

JOHN

I never took my life, or anything in it, for granted... I'm just not ready to die.

JOANNE

You're not going anywhere, fella. Not on my watch... But I am. This isn't over. Not by a long shot. There's still your brother...

JOHN

Talk about a long shot... It's been ten years. Chances are, Stu's not even alive. The FBI doesn't think so.

JOANNE

Yeah, and what would they think if we told 'em we've been getting Christmas cards for the past

(MORE)

JOANNE (CONT'D)

decade from all over the country...
from an aunt who's been dead
15 years?

JOHN

Even if he is alive, we're not
gonna find 'em. Not with his
background.

JOANNE

It can't hurt to try. I'm
flyin' to St. Louis tomorrow,
to talk to Jane.

John Carter, watery eyes, buries his head in Joanne's
lap... Joanne runs her hand through his hair.

JOHN

Tell Jane... I now believe
you're both nuts.

John smiles. Joanne restrains her smile at first,
then relents and tossles his hair.

INT. TOWNHOME LIVING ROOM - DAY

DIANNE CARTER, (31), short light-brown hair, green eyes,
dressed in blue jeans and a blue maternity top, standing
with her arms crossed, facing her mom. Joanne is seated
in an upholstered wing chair, next to her sons, ADAM
(26), dark hair, brown eyes, fit; and STEPHEN (28), brown
hair and eyes, tall and muscular; who are sitting on a
brown leather sofa.

DIANNE

Here's the deal, mom... We know we
couldn't talk you out of this if
we wanted to... So we're all in.
I'll take care of Dad and the
house; Stephen's gonna run the
business and Adam... Adam's going
with you.

Joanne, teary-eyed, rises with her sons, reaches her left hand to Adam and her right hand to Dianne, as Stephen steps over and joins in a group hug.

EXT. ST. LOUIS ROWHOUSE - EVENING

Adam and Joanne Carter on the front porch of a somewhat rundown, clapboard two-story home that's packed tightly between a couple of other almost identical homes. JANE CARTER (54), short dark hair with hints of gray, striking blue eyes, slightly overweight, in jeans and a dark green sweatshirt, opens the door.

JANE

Oh my God! I can't believe it... I didn't think I'd ever see you again.

She throws her arms around Joanne.

JANE

It's been...

JOANNE

Ten years. Almost to the day.

JANE

Let's get inside and catch up.
I wanna hear what you've done
with that degree of yours, Adam.

Jane leads the Carters in through a small living room to the adjoining kitchen.

JANE

Journalism, wasn't it? BU?

The Carters take a seat at the kitchen table, while Jane pours coffee.

ADAM

You got it, Aunt Jane.

JANE

I kept looking for your name
in the papers. Figured it'd just
(MORE)

JANE (CONT'D)

be a matter a time, you'd be one of those syndicated columnists, or a famous investigative reporter like them Watergate boys.

ADAM

Thanks, Aunt Jane... I gave it a shot, but my heart just wasn't in it.

JOANNE

Oh bullshit, Adam! The fact is, Jane, Adam was working on a story about Sapienza... and he got some noses out of joint, literally. I don't have to tell you how that works.

Jane takes a seat at the table.

JANE

I'm sorry, Adam. Stu and I never... Stu just didn't realize what he was gettin' into. He was lookin' out for us. Always lookin' for that one big score. He thought Sapienza was the ticket. He was wrong. And I was wrong... 'cause I didn't try to stop it.

ADAM

When was the last time you heard from uncle Stu?

JANE

The day he left. Ten years ago. Outta the blue: 'I luvya, but I gotta leave. Gotta disappear. For your sake, and for mine.'

JOANNE

Not a word or anything since?

JANE

You mean, like, from beyond?

Joanne and Adam chuckle a bit, Adam almost choking on a swig of coffee.

JOANNE

We think Stu might still be alive.

JANE

You're joking. Why the hell would you think that?

JOANNE

Christmas cards from a dead aunt, from all over.

JANE

What was her name?

JOANNE

Sarah. Sarah Murray.

JANE

You know... A few days after I got word Stu was killed, I got this weird phone call from an old lady...

Adam and Joanne are staring intensely at Jane, who pauses to take a sip of coffee.

JANE

All she said was, 'Stu's not dead... Sarah knows.' That was it. Then she hung up.

Adam and Joanne look at each other, wide-eyed, as if they know what the other is thinking.

ADAM

Did you tell anybody?...
The FBI?

JANE

It freaked me out, for sure.
But I just figured it was
Sapienza trying to put one
last scare in me. I mean, the
FBI told me Stu was dead...
That was enough for me.

EXT. NORTHLAND LUMBER MILL - DAY

The Carters are standing on a loading dock showing a photo to FRANK MCLELLAN (60), deep set piercing brown eyes, thick brown hair slightly receding and slicked back, crooked nose. A FORKLIFT OPERATOR (48), stalky, balding, approaches a flatbed tractor-trailer with a pallet of rough-cut lumber. He notices the Carters with McLellan and shuts off his engine.

JOANNE

Recognize him?

MCLELLAN

Ohh y-e-a-h... He's the guy that
got blown up with his buddy Wayne
'bout ten, eleven years ago...
Stan Wheeler.

ADAM

Stu Carter.

The forklift operator reaches down, grabs his lunch box and starts eating a sandwich, while eavesdropping on the conversation.

MCLELLAN

Some protection, huh?

JOANNE

Three people were killed.

MCLELLAN

Wayne's wife. Can't remember
her name... But the Baxters'
kids got out, thanks to a
neighbor.

McLellan, appearing uneasy, fidgety, looks over at the forklift operator. Joanne notices and looks in the same direction. The forklift operator nods, half smiling.

JOANNE

Did Stu have anyone else he might have confided in?

MCLELLAN

(lowering his voice)

I don't think so, not here... They pretty much kept to themselves. Damn good workers. Come to think of it, Stan, I mean Stu, did have a fiance. Card dealer in Reno, accordin' to shop talk.

JOANNE

Remember her name?

MCLELLAN

Sorry. Can't help you there.

McLellan turns his attention to a truckload of lumber followed by a white pickup entering the mill's lot. He holds his hand out in a stop gesture.

MCLELLAN

You'll have to excuse me.

McLellan reaches into his shirt pocket, pulls out a business card and hands it to Joanne.

MCLELLAN

If there's anything else I can help you with, please, give me a call.

McLellan turns and heads toward the trucks in the yard, leaving Adam and Joanne standing on the dock. Joanne notices the forklift operator waving them over. They stop

within a few feet of the forklift. The forklift operator keeps an eye on McLellan.

FORKLIFT OPERATOR
Cindy Taylor. Harrah's Tahoe.

The forklift operator starts the engine on the lift, ending the conversation abruptly, his eyes fixed on McLellan, who's looking in his direction. Adam and Joanne appear bewildered.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Joanne, sitting by a small desk, makes a phone call... Adam, wet hair, in a T-shirt and pajama pants, is sitting on the edge of one of the beds, sipping a cup of coffee.

JOANNE
Reno... Harrah's Tahoe.

Joanne listens for a moment, then presses a number on the touchtone phone.

JOANNE
Hi, could you connect me to your
personnel office?... Joanne Carter.

Joanne reaches for her cup of coffee and takes a sip, while waiting.

JOANNE
Hello, Mr. Murdock. Joanne Carter.
Not sure if you can help me, but...
I'm trying to track down someone
who worked there about 10 years
ago. A card dealer. I believe her
name was Cindy Taylor...

FLASHBACK - INT. HARRAH'S CASINO - NIGHT

CINDY TAYLOR (37), wavy light brown hair, twinkling green eyes, shapely, is shuffling cards at a \$15 blackjack table with five players: an OLDER WOMAN (69), white hair, plump, sitting next to an OLDER MAN (72), gray hair, thin; a CHINESE WOMAN (39), petite, fidgety; THE KID

(23), scrawney, brown crew-cut hair; and STU CARTER (43), confident, brown hair and brown eyes, muscular, sitting directly to Taylor's left. Taylor finishes shuffling and offers the cut to Stu. He appears captivated, looking straight into her eyes while his left hand cuts the decks. The older couple look at each other, smiling. The Chinese woman and the kid are smirking. The Chinese woman is tapping her fingers on the table.

THE KID

Any day now...

CHINESE WOMAN

Yeah, deal... Let get cards.

Cindy starts dealing the cards out, quickly, one down to everyone and one up to herself.

OLDER MAN

Do either one of you know how
to read lips?...

The Chinese woman and the kid look at each other, shaking their heads in the negative, almost in sync.

OLDER MAN

Let me help you out...
Up... your... ass!

Cindy and Stu (who's going by the name Stan Wheeler) are smiling at each other, as she flips an ace up to Stu. He turns over a King of Spades for blackjack with a hundred dollars in chips in front of his cards. The older man draws a jack and signals he's pat, his wife gets a 3 of diamonds and takes a hit, drawing a 7 of diamonds. The Chinese woman gets a deuce, takes a hit, draws a jack of diamonds and busts. The kid gets a 5 of clubs, hits and draws a 7 of clubs and busts. The dealer, a 10 of clubs showing, turns up a 5 of hearts, hits, draws an 8 of spades and busts.

OLDER WOMAN

You said it, Stan... It's in
the cards.

Cindy starts sliding chips to Stu and the older couple to pay off their winnings. A WAITRESS, buxom brunette in a mini-skirt, comes to their table.

WAITRESS

Would anyone like a drink?

OLDER MAN

Have another honey... Maybe
Stan won't be the only man at
this table to get lucky tonight.

STU

Luck be a lady tonight.

CINDY

(smiling, coyly)
Luck let a gentleman see

The Chinese woman, appearing miffed, slides her chair out and gets up to leave. The elderly couple are looking amorously at each other, and the kid looks perplexed.

CHINESE WOMAN

You people fucking crazy!

The commotion gets the attention of a TOUGH GUY (40), thick black hair slicked back, facial stubble, broad-shouldered, sitting at a blackjack table on the other side of the pit. He looks like a boxer, but he's dressed like a Wall Street executive, in a sharp navy blue pin-striped suit, with a red tie and white shirt. He appears to be fixed on Stu, reaches into his back pocket and pulls out his wallet. He opens the billfold and pulls out a wallet-size photo of a younger-looking Stu, raising a champagne glass in a toast with a couple guys on the stern of a yacht, the Boston skyline in the background. The tough guy looks down at the photo and then across at Stu a couple of times, before sliding his chair out and getting up. Stu's smiling, still flirting with the dealer.

TOUGH GUY

(quietly)
Holy fuckin' shit... It's him.

The tough guy makes a bee-line for a row of phones along the wall. He looks back every few seconds toward Stu's table to make sure Stu hasn't left. Stu has two face cards showing and rakes in \$200. The tough guy is on the phone now.

TOUGH GUY

I'm in Reno, at Harrah's. And guess who the hell just happens to be here playin' blackjack... Stu fuck'n Carter. I'm looking right at him.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - PRESENT DAY

Joanne, sitting at the edge of her bed, appears dejected as she hangs up the phone.

JOANNE

Pretty brunette. Always on top of her game. They were about to make her a floor supervisor, when she just up and took off with some guy she met at the blackjack table... Hasn't been heard from since.

ADAM

Hey!... Maybe both of 'em were in witness protection.

JOANNE

Yeah, maybe she was with Stu the night of the fire. Maybe she was the third victim.

Adam looks consoling, like he feels his mom's pain.

ADAM

Let's head back to Northland. Even if Stu didn't work there long, they might still have his social security number on file... With that and a little

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

help from the IRS, who knows,
maybe we'll find another lead...

JOANNE

Did you just say help and IRS
in the same breath?... Do you
know what a paradox is, Adam?

ADAM

Alright, ma. I gotchya. But I still
think it's worth a shot. Maybe if we
rub our clothes down in mothballs and
chew on some garlic, they'll tell
us everything we want to know, just
to get us the hell outta there.

JOANNE

Let's go for it.

INT. NORTHLAND HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE - DAY

Adam and Joanne are seated in slender, cold metal chairs
in the rather dingy, dimly lit office of personnel
director JOSEPH PEPPERDINE (56), balding, reddish cheeks
and nose, beer gut. They're surveying the clutter about
the tiny room and on Pepperdine's desk: paperwork, coffee
cups, empty soda bottles, food wrappers and an ashtray
chock-full of cigarette butts.

PEPPERDINE

Now isn't this somethin'...
A couple city slickers from
Boston all the way out here
in the Great North Woods...
lookin' for???

Pepperdine is shaking his head, shrugging his shoulders.
Joanne looks serenely and unabashedly at Pepperdine.

JOANNE

Any personnel file you've got
on Stan Wheeler.

PEPPERDINE

You realize Mr. Wheeler, AKA Stu Carter, was killed in a fire about ten years ago?

JOANNE

We realize Stu was thought to be dead...

PEPPERDINE

Y-e-a-h, I do seem to recall the FBI drawin' that conclusion.

JOANNE

We don't necessarily agree.

PEPPERDINE

Really? Well, I guess if you've got the time and money to spend on a wild-goose chase, that's your prerogative.

JOANNE

You got that right, Mr. Pepperdine. And we certainly wouldn't want to waste a whole lot more of your invaluable time. So if you wouldn't mind, we'd like to see Stu's, or Stan's file. Either would be just fine.

PEPPERDINE

He wasn't here long enough to draw a pension, so I don't know. And I'm not sure whether the FBI snatched it. I'll take a look and see what I can find... You got a number I can reach you at?

JOANNE

We'd be more than happy to wait.

Pepperdine's eyes, leading, begin to scan the room.

PEPPERDINE

I think you can see it's probably gonna take me awhile, and I've got a meeting in a few minutes. I'll have to get back to you.

Adam, his elbows resting on the armchair, rubs his right fist in his left hand, appearing perturbed.

ADAM

Pinecrest Hotel. Room 214.

Pepperdine picks up a notepad and pen and jots it down.

INT. MARBLE TOWN LIBRARY - DAY

Adam is leaning over Joanne's shoulder. She's sitting in a small cubicle poring over microfilm of old newspaper articles on the fire, and making copies.

We see headlines:

Mafia witness, couple
die in fiery explosion

Children, 8 and 5, are rescued.

Another:

Reputed mob boss freed
after fire kills witness

JOANNE

(reading quietly)

The first floor looked like it'd been leveled by a napalm bomb. Fire Marshal Mike Mitchell said. Total devastation. Just horrific. Those people never had a chance. Their bodies were burned beyond recognition, practically incinerated.

Joanne, appearing somewhat awestruck, turns and looks over her shoulder to see Adam's reaction. He appears captivated, intrigued.

ADAM

Read on.

JOANNE

Stu Carter, AKA Stan Wheeler, was the key witness in the murder and racketeering trial of reputed New England mob boss Vinny Sapienza. Sapienza's trial was to have gotten under way next week.

INT. CARTER'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The Carters are lying on their beds, facing each other, still poring over copies of the newspaper articles, when the phone rings. Adam picks up.

ADAM

Yeah...
Thanks for callin'.

Adam mouths Pepperdine's name to his mom, and signals her to toss him a pen from the desk.

ADAM

That's great!...
Yeah, fire away...

Adam starts jotting down numbers as he repeats them.

ADAM

One, one, two...three-eight,
two-eight, three-six.

Joanne, smiling and nodding her head, points both her index fingers at Adam. Adam reciprocates with one hand as he holds the phone to his ear with the other.

INT. REGIONAL IRS OFFICE IN SPOKANE - DAY

The Carters are having coffee in the clean and spacious office of IRS Regional Director SYD LANG (45), dark hair, fit and clean cut, wearing a white shirt and solid red tie. File cabinets line a wall, Lang's desk is neatly

organized: a miniature American flag in a stand, a small electric calculator, a few file folders and some family photos and a cup of coffee.

LANG

You haven't heard from Mr. Carter in how many years?

JANE

Close to eleven.

LANG

It's been about that long since we've heard from Stuart Carter or Stanley Wheeler.

The Carters appear somewhat mystified, looking at each other, and at Lang, who's leafing through some papers in a folder on his desk.

LANG

Seems Mr. Wheeler hasn't filed a tax return since March of 1972, and Stu Carter hasn't filed since '71.

He pulls out a small form and looks at it closely.

LANG

Wheeler's last W-2 was from Northland Lumber Mill in Marble, Washington.

INT. CARTERS' MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joanne is sitting at a small table, studying the newspaper articles by lamplight. Adam is lying on his back in bed, hands under his head, relaxing.

JOANNE

We're gonna have to head to Indiana. We've gotta talk to those kids.

Adam rolls over to face his mom.

ADAM

What good's that gonna do?
The boy was only eight. They're
not gonna remember anything.

JOANNE

Remember when we got caught
in that storm off the Cape?

ADAM

Oh my God! Are you kidding!?
I can't believe we got outta that
alive. Twenty-foot seas, 70-mile
winds. I thought dad was goin'
overboard, for sure...

JOANNE

Yeah, it was one helluva scary
ordeal for me, too... By
the way, Adam, you were eight
years old.

Adam leans his head backward, slowly, and then begins
nodding slowly, smirking.

ADAM

Let's go see those kids...

INT. BUD'S BAR AND GRILL - DAY

Adam and Joanne step inside and stop to survey the room:
rustic-looking, hardwood floors, natural pine-paneled
walls, thick wooden 6x6 beams running across the ceiling,
oak tables scattered about. Two guys shooting pool to
their right.

ADAM

N-i-c-e. Sure we can't stick
around for awhile, mom?

JOANNE

Move it, Adam.

They walk up to a shiny, L-shaped maple bar that stretches about 25 feet, a brass rail at the base and across the top. Five BAR PATRONS are watching a Cubs game on the TV behind the bar. Adam leans across the bar, noticing the hundreds of silver dollars embedded across its top, the entire length. He rubs his hand across the bar top.

ADAM

Check this out.

Joanne's attention is fixed on a couple of 14x20 pictures of Larry Bird in his Celtics jersey and his Indiana State jersey, hung on the wall behind the bar, but she breaks away to admire the bar top.

JOANNE

Wow! That's pretty cool.

BARTENDER (36), thin, straight brown hair with bangs, is down at the other end talking with the baseball fans, but notices the Carters and walks over to them.

BARTENDER

What can I get ya?

ADAM

We're here to meet Frank Baxter.

The bartender points to a man sitting across the room by himself at a table with a mug of beer, watching the game on another TV.

ADAM

Thanks. Can I get three of what he's having.

The bartender grabs some mugs and begins filling them from the tap. Joanne is fixed on the burly-looking guy at the table.

BAR PATRON I (V.O.)

What the hell was he thinkin'?!
That was right down the middle.

BAR PATRON II (V.O.)

Are you nuts, Joe? That was outside
by a country mile. You need to get
your damn eyes checked.

Joanne, unfazed, is still looking in the direction of the man the bartender pointed out; Adam is looking down the bar at the patrons squabbling.

BAR PATRON I

Norm, you need a different seat
so you can see the freakin' ball
straight on.

The bartender slides the three mugs of beer in front of Adam, whose elbows are resting on the bar.

BARTENDER

That'll be two and a quarter.

Adam hands the bartender a five-dollar bill, hands his mom one of the draughts and grabs the other two, while the bartender goes to the register to make change.

ADAM

Thanks. Keep the change.

BARTENDER

Thank you!

The Carters walk away from the bar and approach the table where FRANK BAXTER (61), burly, big and gentle, is sipping his mug of beer.

ADAM

Frank Baxter?

Baxter, dressed in overalls and a plaid flannel shirt, stands up enthusiastically, offering Joanne and then Adam a firm handshake. Adam hands him a beer, as they shake hands.

FRANK

Thanks... Glad you folks could make it. Grab a seat.

Frank sits back down, as the Carters join him, pulling chairs up to the table.

FRANK

Sorry about insisting I meet you first... I just wanted to get an idea of what you were planning to ask them... It took a long time for them to recover from all the trauma, and I don't want them to have to relive any of that.

JOANNE

We fully understand... If you sense at any point they're getting too upset, let us know, and we'll stop.

ADAM

We're just hoping... and we know it's a long shot, but we're hoping the boy might remember something, anything that might point us in the right direction.

JOANNE

We're grabbing at straws. But it's all we've got. And time's runnin' out.

FRANK

I don't think they're gonna be a whole lotta help. But as long as there's no harm tryin', let's give it a shot.

Frank takes a swig of his beer, sets the mug down and slides his chair out to get up. The Carters follow his lead.

EXT. FRANK'S FARMHOUSE - DAY

Sunny afternoon. The Carters pull their SUV into the driveway behind Frank's old beat-up pickup. Frank meets the Carters as they get out of their car, and leads them up a pebble walkway, to the farmer's porch of his paint-deprived, century-old white clapboard farmhouse.

JOANNE

Thanks for letting us do this, Frank.

FRANK

No problem.

They step inside to the worn wide-pine floors, old faded wallpaper and black-and-white photos hanging in the entryway. Frank leads them into the living room.

FRANK

Make yourselves at home. I'll get the kids.

Frank turns and heads over to the bottom of the staircase.

FRANK

(shouting)

Tim!.. Linda! Come on down.

Frank then walks down the hallway to the kitchen in the back of the house. Joanne and Adam take a seat on a faded sage-green couch with wooden arm rests.

FRANK (V.O.)

Margaret!... Come on out. We've got company.

Frank enters the living room and takes a seat in a rocking chair. MARGARET BAXTER (60), salt-and-pepper hair, medium build, enters the room with TIM BAXTER (18), tall, light-brown hair and brown eyes; and LINDA BAXTER

(15), sandy blonde and blue eyes. The Carters stand up to greet them, while Frank makes the introductions.

FRANK

This is my wife Margaret and
the kids, Tim and Linda.

Joanne extends a handshake, first to Margaret.

JOANNE

Joanne Carter... So nice to meet
you.

Then Joanne shakes Linda's hand, as Adam extends his to Tim.

ADAM

Adam Carter... Larry Bird fan?

TIM

Big time.

Joanne is shaking Linda's hand now.

ADAM

That makes at least three of us.
My mom couldn't get her eyes off
Larry's photos at Bud's Bar.

Tim and Linda smile and chuckle, as Joanne smirks.

FRANK

Joanne is Stu Carter's sister-in-law.
Adam's his nephew. You might remember,
Tim, Stu was a good friend of your
dad's. They worked together at the
lumber mill in Washington. Anyway,
the Carters just have a few questions
they'd like to ask you about Stu.

The Carters sit back down on the couch. Tim sits in an antique upholstered armchair, Frank takes the recliner, Margaret, a rocking chair, and Linda sits next to her on the floor.

FRANK

The Carters are hoping you kids might be able to give 'em a clue that'll help 'em track down Stu. Joanne's husband has leukemia and needs a bone marrow transplant. Doctors think there's a pretty good chance his twin brother, Stu, would have the same rare blood type. But the Carters haven't seen or heard from him in ten years. Not since before the fire.

Adam and Joanne are listening intently to Frank's lead-in. Joanne pulls out an old picture of Stu and hands it to Tim.

JOANNE

Does he look at all familiar?
I know it's been a long time.

Tim studies the photo. Joanne, who's sitting across from him, focuses on the boy's concentration.

TIM

Yeah, I remember the guy... But didn't he die in the fire along with dad?

JOANNE

We think he might have survived.

TIM

Really!? Why?

JOANNE

We've been getting Christmas cards ever since the fire, but they're from an aunt who's been dead even longer. And there was a phone message his ex-wife got after the fire, from someone claiming Stu was still alive.

TIM

I don't remember a whole lot. I know my mom and dad liked 'im, so he must a been a pretty nice guy. I went fishin' with him and my dad once... He caught all the fish. Course, he knew a lot more about it than me or my dad. We had fish just about every night that week; he gave 'em all to us. I remember him coming to the house a few times to watch a ballgame with dad. But that's really about it.

JOANNE

How 'bout just before the fire? Do you remember your dad saying anything about Stu planning to get married?

TIM

I don't know... Maybe. I'm not sure. I think he had a woman with him once when he came over, but I can't really remember much about her.

FLASHBACK - INT. BAXTER'S HOME IN MARBLE - NIGHT

Stu Carter, Cindy Taylor, WAYNE BAXTER (46), lanky, dark hair, brown eyes; and his wife, KAREN BAXTER (43), slim, shy, blue-eyed brunette, are playing cards and having some drinks, socializing at a table in the living room. Karen notices her 8-year-old son, Timmy, part way up the stairs, looking down at them.

KAREN

You OK, Timmy?

TIMMY

Can I get somethin' to drink?

KAREN

Get back to bed, honey, and I'll bring somethin' up.

Karen slides her chair out and starts to get up.

CINDY

He's so cute...

KAREN

Not always... He can be a little
devilish sometimes.

Karen heads toward the kitchen.

CINDY

Aren't they all?

STU

Y'ever take that boy fishin,'
Wayne?

WAYNE

No, but I got a feelin' I'm
gonna be real soon.

INT. FRANK'S FARMHOUSE - PRESENT DAY

TIM

Pretty, brown hair. That's
about all I can tell ya.

The uncle starts to leave the room.

FRANK

Hey, Tim, give me a hand for
a minute.

Tim gets up and walks out to the hallway with his uncle.
Frank returns moments later to the living room.

FRANK

I sent Tim upstairs to get somethin'
that was found in the fire.
He had it for a good couple of
years before anyone even noticed...
Timmy was in the hospital gettin'

FRANK (CONT'D)
his tonsils out, and he asked me
to bring him...

Just then, Tim re-enters the living room.

TIM
Dad's ring. At least I thought
it was.

Tim is holding the ring between his thumb and index
finger, while handing it to Joanne.

TIM
Till we realized what it was.

Joanne is studying the ring intensely: CLOSEUP of the
classic gold Navy SEAL ring, with the words, U.S. Navy
inscribed over the emblem and SEAL inscribed under it.

FRANK
We kinda figured it belonged
to a friend of Wayne's...
Would it be your brother-in-laws?

JOANNE
Stu was a Navy SEAL.

Adam and Joanne appear dejected, staring blankly at each
other.

FRANK
Great, it's yours... Until you
track him down, that is.

TIM
And a 10-year-old mystery
is solved.

JOANNE
Yeah, a mystery is solved.

INT. AIRPLANE IN FLIGHT - DAY

Joanne is studying the newspaper clippings about the fire. She appears almost angry, gripping one of the articles steadfastly in both hands. Adam is reading a sports magazine but sets it on his lap when he notices his mom's anxiety. He reaches over and rests his hand on hers. Joanne turns to look at him. She appears sad, a look of defeat.

ADAM

What was that gramma used
to always say when something's
got you down?

JOANNE

Rise above it.

Adam nods and then gives his mom a hug.

JOANNE

I'm trying, Adam, believe
me, but I've got a real bad
gut feeling.

Adam relaxes back in his seat.

ADAM

Just cause they found Stu's ring
there doesn't mean he's dead,
ma. This is Stu we're talkin'
about. He might've just taken it
off for some reason.

JOANNE

Yeah... Like maybe to do the
dishes.

ADAM

Ha, ha... Real funny, ma. How
'bout maybe to work on his car,
or play cards. Or maybe it was
just irritating him. Whatever,
let's just find Stu's landlord.
I gotta feeling he's gonna come

(MORE)

ADAM (CONT'D)

up big for us. So whadd'ya say
we rise above it?

Joanne, sitting in the window seat, turns and looks out.

JOANNE

Honey, I think we're about as far
above it as we're ever gonna get.

Adam smiles and goes back to reading the magazine. Joanne raises a newspaper article to where she can read, and we see closeup of a sentence that reads: "On a tragically ironic note, a federal marshal met with Stu Carter at a local restaurant lounge just a few hours before the fatal blaze, to discuss the FBI's itinerary for getting him to Sapienza's March 12 trial in Warwick, R.I."

JOANNE (V.O.)

A waiter at the lounge said
Carter and a female companion
left just before 9 o'clock,
about 10 or 15 minutes after
the marshal. Fire investigators
said the blaze broke out just
a few minutes after midnight.

Joanne plops her hands on her lap, slouches back in her seat and rests her head against the headrest. She looks over at her son, who's nodded off, then closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.

FLASHBACK - EXT. BAXTERS' HOME IN MARBLE - NIGHT

Sound of a defective muffler as an old model Oldsmobile pulls into the driveway. Wayne Baxter is coming out the front door to greet his company, Stan Wheeler (Stu Carter's witness protection name) and Stan's fiancee, Cindy Taylor.

WAYNE

When the hell you gonna get that
fixed?

STU

When the damn thing falls off...

Stu walks to the top of the front steps, as Cindy gets out of the car.

CINDY

Hey, Wayne!

Stu and Wayne shake hands.

WAYNE

Hi, Cindy. Hope you guys brought plenty of cash.

Cindy walks up the front steps.

CINDY

Bundles... Isn't that right, Stan.

STU

Hell yeah. But don't start countin', till the dealin's done.

Wayne chuckles a bit.

WAYNE

Alrighty then. Let's see if we can't share some of that wealth with the Baxter family.

Wayne holds the door open for Cindy and Stu, both smiling, as they enter.

INT. BAXTERS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Wayne and his wife, Karen, are raising their champagne glasses in a toast. Stu and Cindy follow suit, raising their glasses.

WAYNE

To Stan and Cindy, and a lifetime of happiness... together.

Just as they sip the champagne, the phone rings... Wayne gets up and heads to the kitchen, somewhat hurriedly.

KAREN

Somebody's got some great timing.

WAYNE (V.O.)

Hey Stan, it's for you.

INT. RESTAURANT LOUNGE - NIGHT

FEDERAL MARSHAL (45), dark hair, average build, gray suit, is in an enclosed phone booth against a wood-paneled wall. We only see his back side.

THE MARSHAL (V.O.)

We need to get together...
Trial arrangements, security.

(pause)

Sorry, Stu. We need to talk now.
You knew the deal. Tall Pines,
ten minutes.

INT. BAXTER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stu is looking somewhat troubled, nervous, holding the phone in his left hand at his hip with his forehead resting in his other. He slowly hangs up the wall phone and walks back into the living room.

STU

Honey, it's Mr. Whittaker. He's
taken a turn for the worse...
Sarah asked if I could drive 'em
to the hospital...

CINDY

Of course, hon... Let's go.

Cindy gets up.

STU

I'm sorry guys... We'll try to make it back. I'll giveya a call one way or the other.

KAREN

Don't worry about it... If you can't make it back tonight, we'll just do it again another night.

WAYNE

Maybe the cards will heat up for me in your absence.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Sound of screeching tires, roaring of plane engines as the jet touches down. Joanne wakes up and quickly goes back to looking at the newspaper clippings...

JOANNE

If Stu and Cindy left the marshal and both went back to the Baxters', that means somebody got outta there alive, other than the kids.

ADAM

And that somebody was probably Stu... It makes perfect sense.

JOANNE

Alright, I'm not ready to bury 'em yet either. Let's find the landlord and see where it goes.

INT. SUV - AFTERNOON

Rainy day. Adam is driving. Joanne is looking out her window.

EXT. SUV - AFTERNOON

A black newer model Cadillac is tailing the SUV, a few car lengths back. The SUV makes a right turn, and the

Caddy follows.

ADAM (V.O.)
Sagamore.

The Carter's SUV slows to a stop alongside the curb, and the Caddy pulls over several car lengths behind them.

INT. SUV - AFTERNOON

ADAM
This is it. One-thirty-eight
Sagamore.

EXT. SUV - AFTERNOON

Adam and Joanne get out of the SUV and start walking up to the front door of a three-story tenement.

EXT. BLACK CADDY - AFTERNOON

MOBSTER I (40), thick black hair slicked back, big and muscular, in a light gray pin-striped suit, gets out, goes around to the trunk and opens it. He removes two large vinyl cases, with Kirby labels on them. He struggles a bit with one, then walks around to the driver's side of the Caddy. The window is down.

MOBSTER I
What the fuck have you got in
these things!

MOBSTER II (42), lean, dark hair, brown eyes, takes a drag on his cigarette, then blows the smoke toward his partner.

MOBSTER II
"Big Baby." Vinny caught him with
his hand in the cookie jar. I haven't
had a chance to dump 'im.

MOBSTER I
Goddamn it, Frank. Benny Barboza!?
(MORE)

MOBSTER I (CONT'D)

That son-of-a-bitch weighed 300
fuckin' pounds.

MOBSTER II

Relax, Tommy. I got rid of his
torso. You can handle it.
(pointing to trash bin in alley)
Toss 'em in that dumpster
on your way back.

MOBSTER I

Fuck you, Frank. You're such
an asshole.

MOBSTER II

Lighten' up, Tommy.

EXT. FRONT PORCH OF TENEMENT - AFTERNOON

From the MOBSTERS' vantage point 60 yards away, we see
the Carters on the porch.

EXT. FRONT DOOR OF TENEMENT - AFTERNOON

There are three buzzers. Adam pushes one.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)

Who is it?

JOANNE

Joanne Carter. We're looking
for the landlord, or anyone who
might have known Stan Wheeler...
He lived here about 10 years ago.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)

Stan Wheeler!?

JOANNE

Yeah. He's my brother-in-law.

Sound of the front door buzzer.

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)
Come on up, honey. I'm on the
second floor. Door's open.

EXT. ELDERLY WOMAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

The Carters, Joanne leading, step to the top of the stairs. The door is ajar, and they step inside.

JOANNE
Hello?

ELDERLY WOMAN (V.O.)
Have a seat. I'm gettin'
some tea.

INT. ELDERLY WOMAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Carters shrug their shoulders and sit down on a high-backed flowery antique couch. They begin surveying the room: Black-and-white family pictures on the walls. Antique furniture, assorted knick-knacks on a few end tables and on a mantel over a fireplace. An old mongrel is sleeping in his bed in the corner of the room, next to a radiator. SARAH WHITTAKER (81), gray hair, small but spunky, enters the room with a tray, carrying a teapot, cups and muffins. Adam and Joanne rise. Sarah sets down the tray on the coffee table in front of them.

SARAH
Stan's favorite... blueberry muffins.

JOANNE
Thank you.

Joanne reaches out to shake Mrs. Whittaker's hand.

JOANNE
I'm Joanne, and this is
my son, Adam. Stu's nephew.

Adam reaches out to shake the old lady's hand.

ADAM

Nice to meet you, Mrs.?...

SARAH

Sarah. Sarah Whittaker. Let's sit down, have some tea and taste test these muffins.

ADAM

Sounds good to me.

Adam grabs a muffin and sits back down. Joanne follows suit as Mrs. Whittaker pours the tea and hands a cup to Joanne.

SARAH

I must say, young man, you look a heckuva lot like your uncle.

Sarah turns to Joanne.

SARAH

I know Stan Wheeler wasn't his real name... It was in the newspapers, after the fire.

JOANNE

That's right. Stuart Carter was his real name. Stu and my husband, John, are twins. Not identical, but they look an awful lot alike.

Joanne notices a small framed black-and-white picture on the end table next to the couch. She leans over to get a closer look, and then picks it up.

SARAH

That's Stu and the gal he was gonna marry, Cindy Taylor. They were such a beautiful couple. He met her in Reno at the blackjack table. Stu sure did love his cards. Kept me up late playing pinochle more than once.

Adam and Joanne look very interested.

SARAH

He was one of the nicest young men... Course, I probably don't have to tell you folks that. He took out my garbage, helped with my groceries. Always stopped by when he got home from work, to see if I needed anything... One time, in the winter, when we lost power, he brought over a blanket and some candles. He treated me like I was his mother. Sure do miss 'em... Old Dewey there serves as a constant reminder.

ADAM

How so?

SARAH

Dewey was Stu's pup. He said he'd be back for him. He was only gonna be gone a day or two. He never came back. I don't know if he had a feelin' or what. I know how much he loved that dog, and he knew how much I loved the two of 'em.

JOANNE

Did you ever hear from him again?

SARAH

Honey, Stu's dead.

JOANNE

Actually, Mrs. Whittaker, we don't think so.

SARAH

If Stu were alive, wouldn't he let you know?

The Carters look at each other with painful expressions.

JOANNE

I think he would, if he knew how
how much his brother needs him.
My husband John needs a bone
marrow transplant, and Stu may be
his last hope.

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - AFTERNOON

MOBSTER I is standing in front of the buzzers, Kirby
cases sitting beside him on the porch. We hear the
Carters coming down the steps. The mobster feigns as
as though he's looking at the names on the buzzers. We
see the names Dale and Sue Thompson, as Joanne opens the
door and steps out. The mobster turns his attention to
her, and smiles.

MOBSTER 1

Are you Mrs. Thompson?

Adam steps into the doorway, still holding the door open.

JOANNE

No. We don't live here. Sorry.

MOBSTER 1

That's OK, but would you mind
holdin' that door for a minute? I
gotta lug these up to the third floor.

ADAM

No problem.

Adam steps onto the front porch and continues holding the
door open as the mobster lifts the cases. We see a
trickle of blood leak out of one onto the porch. The
mobster's eyes widen as he notices, but the Carters don't
see it, and the mobster heads inside.

MOBSTER I

Thanks.

ADAM

No problem.

The mobster starts to make his way upstairs, lugging the cases.

EXT. TENEMENT - AFTERNOON

The Carters start to make their way down a small flight of stairs in front of the house.

ADAM

Helluva way to make a living.

JOANNE

If he's even making a living.

They step down to a cement walkway and start heading toward their SUV.

EXT. SARAH'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

Mobster's hand turns the doorknob, slowly. He continues opening it, steps inside, sets his cases down slowly and quietly closes the door. He slowly turns the deadbolt to lock it. He starts creeping through the living room toward the kitchen.

SARAH (V.O.)

It was killin' me not being able to tell her anything.

(pause)

I know what you're saying.
I understand, but that
doesn't make it any easier.

The mobster continues creeping toward the kitchen doorway. Dewey steps into the doorway and sees the intruder, the mobster almost simultaneously reaching around to his lower back and pulling out a semi-automatic handgun with a silencer attached. They stare down each other, both standing still.

SARAH (V.O.)

I felt so bad for them...
searching desperately
to keep hope alive, while
the husband and father lies

(MORE)

SARAH (CONT'D, V.O.)
at home dying.

Dewey begins to growl, not loud, but the mobster and Sarah take notice.

INT. KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

Sarah is sipping a cup of tea, while listening on the phone and watching Dewey. She's looking concerned.

SARAH
I think they might have come
back. Dewey's gettin' upset.
I'll have to call you back. Bye.

Sarah hangs up the phone and starts to move toward Dewey, who's quieted down a bit and just standing in the doorway. Sarah leans down to pet the dog and sees the gray slacks of the mobster. Startled, she drops her cup of tea and slowly rises back up. Dewey starts growling again. The mobster is holding his gun by his side.

MOBSTER I
If you want Dewey to see the
light of another day, shut him
up.

Sarah reaches down to pet the dog.

SARAH
It's okay, Dewey. It's alright.
You go on to bed now.

Dewey reluctantly, slowly makes his way back to his bed in the corner of the living room. His tail is not wagging. The mobster motions Sarah, with his gun, to step back into the kitchen. She turns around and walks back into the kitchen. The mobster follows.

MOBSTER I
Have a seat, Sarah.

Sarah sits down at the kitchen table, while the mobster, his back to her, starts pulling out the kitchen drawers, rifling through them. Sarah looks terrified, trembling.

MOBSTER I

So how's Stu doin'?

The mobster tucks his gun back into his pants on his lower back and continues rifling through the drawers, moving from one to another.

SARAH

I don't know what you're talkin' about.

The mobster pulls a nine-inch butcher knife out of a drawer. He slowly slides his thumb along the blade.

MOBSTER I

I'm a fan of yours, Sarah.
You sharpen your knives.

The mobster sets the knife on the counter, reaches into a back pocket, pulls out a pair of latex surgical gloves and starts putting them on. Sarah is shaking and starts to hyperventilate.

MOBSTER I

I need to know where Stu
Carter is, Sarah. And I need
to know now.

SARAH

Stu died ten years ago... in
a fire.

The mobster picks up the knife and moves toward Sarah. He stops within a few feet of her. She looks terrified, leaning back in her chair, one hand over her heart.

MOBSTER I

Do I look like an idiot, Sarah?
I heard you on the phone.

(MORE)

MOBSTER I (CONT'D)

Now what I need you to do is
rethink your answer very, very
carefully.

The mobster, still holding the knife, puts the knifepoint
on the table in front of her.

MOBSTER I

And while you're doing that, I want
you to picture your guts and your
dog's guts piled up right here on
your kitchen table.

Sarah gasps for air, her eyes bulging. She's in distress,
holding her dress with her right hand over her heart.
Then she suddenly slumps over, her head smacking the
table. The mobster grabs ahold of her hair and tilts her
head back, then lets go, her forehead smacking the table again.

MOBSTER I

Natural causes.

The mobster starts to walk out but stops by the wall
phone near the doorway, and turns to look over his
shoulder, then walks away.

INT. CARTERS' MOTEL ROOM - DAY

We hear the shower running. Joanne is sitting on the edge
of her bed, the phone to her ear.

JOANNE

In the early seventies. Probably
spring or summer... Cindy Taylor.

Adam enters the room from the shower, wearing a robe and
drying his hair with a towel. Adam drapes the towel
around his shoulders and makes an inquisitive gesture
with his hands extended. Joanne cups the phone for a
moment.

JOANNE

I'm on hold with a Nevada state
(MORE)

JOANNE (CONT'D)
police investigator.

ADAM
Do they have anything?

JOANNE
I don't know. He's checkin'.

ADAM
Well tell him to hurry the hell
up. We don't have all day.

Joanne shrugs Adam off and puts the phone back to her ear.

JOANNE
Yes... No, that wouldn't
be her. She would have been
a lot older. Maybe mid to late
thirties. Did you check both
years?
(pause)
Nothing? OK, thanks.

Joanne, looking disappointed, hangs up the phone.

JOANNE
That son-of-bitch.

ADAM
Who? The cop?

JOANNE
Sapienza! He killed her and the
Baxters. Not Stu. He's still
out there... How do we find him?

INT. CARTERS' TOWNHOME - DAY

John Carter is sitting up in bed reading the newspaper. He puts it down on his lap for a moment, wincing in pain. We hear the sound of a knock on the door, and John lifts

the paper back up to look like he's reading and to cover up his pain.

DIANNE (V.O.)

Daddy!?

JOHN

Come on in...

Dianne enters, while John again lowers the paper to his lap, making it seem as though everything is okay.

DIANNE

Stephen's takin' you to your treatment. I got a problem at school with one of the kids.

JOHN

What's the matter?

DIANNE

Dylan got in a fight with one of those McLean brothers again.

JOHN

Hope he kicked the shit out of him.

DIANNE

(half-hearted disapproval)

Daa-dy!

EXT. DOWNTOWN MARBLE PARK - DAY

Sunny day. Snow is beginning to melt. Adam and Joanne are sitting on a cast iron bench. A small group of pigeons is browsing for food. An elderly couple, hand-in-hand, are walking gingerly toward them along the brick walkway, lined by lampposts. Joanne is fixed on the couple. She begins to crack a subtle smile, her eyes filling with tears. Adam notices and puts an arm around his mom.

ADAM

That's you and dad in 30 years.

JOANNE

I hope so... They're beautiful
aren't they?

ADAM

Yeah.

JOANNE

(with conviction)

I can't lose your dad. I'm not
gonna let it happen.

ADAM

We're not gonna let it happen.

The elderly couple continues walking past them, gingerly,
hand-in-hand.

INT. CARTERS' MOTEL ROOM - MOONLIT NIGHT

Adam and Joanne are in their beds. Adam is sleeping.
Joanne's tossing and turning. The phone rings. An alarm
clock shows 1:13 a.m. Joanne grabs it on the first ring.
Adam, snoring, doesn't awaken.

JOANNE

(anxious but quiet)

Hello.

INT. TALL PINES RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Back side of Mobster I, still wearing a light gray pin-
striped suit, in a dimly lit phone booth in a far corner
of the bar.

MOBSTER I (V.O.)

Wasn't Mrs. Whittaker about
the nicest old lady you'd
ever want to know?

INT. CARTERS' MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joanne, startled, jumps up in bed, moving her legs over
the side and sitting up straight.

JOANNE

Who is this!?

INT. TALL PINES - NIGHT

Shift back to the man in the phone booth.

MOBSTER I (V.O.)

Dead men don't talk. Ashes
to ashes. Dust up, and go
home. Real soon!

INT. CARTERS' MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joanne looks upset, anxious. Adam is tossing around, but hasn't wakened.

JOANNE

Who is this!?

Clicking sound of the mobster hanging up the phone. Joanne nervously hangs up, shaking. She puts her right hand over her mouth, a look of concern turning to fright. Adam wakes up and rolls over on his side, facing his mom.

ADAM

What's the matter, ma? Were
you just on the phone?

JOANNE

Yeah. That was Dianne. Your
dad's havin' a rough go of
it after his last treatment.
Dianne's just got more than
she can handle. She feels
really bad, but she needs one
of us there to help.

ADAM

I was afraid she might get
overwhelmed.

JOANNE

Well Adam, it's a lot to deal
(MORE)

JOANNE (CONT'D)

with. She's got the kids, too.

Adam sits up in bed. Joanne looks at him, sadly, with puppy dog eyes.

ADAM

I'll see if I can catch a flight
in the afternoon.

JOANNE

I'll probably be home in a few
days. I'm gonna pay McLellan another
visit. And I wanna say goodbye to
Mrs. Whittaker.

ADAM

I wouldn't mind goin' with you.

JOANNE

I need you to get back home as
soon as possible. Seven months
pregnant... she doesn't need any
extra stress.

ADAM

Alright.

Adam rolls back over in bed to go to sleep.

ADAM

G'night mom. Love you.

JOANNE

Love you too, Adam. And thanks.

EXT. SARAH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Joanne is on the porch buzzing Mrs. Whittaker's apartment. She tries one of the other apartment buzzers, and the front door buzzer goes off. Joanne quickly opens the door, heads in and hurries up the stairs. She knocks on Mrs. Whittaker's apartment door. She turns the knob, and the door opens. Joanne slowly enters.

JOANNE

Mrs. Whittaker?

Joanne walks into the living room. Faint noise of a dog whimpering, coming from the kitchen. Joanne continues slowly toward the kitchen, scanning around the room and turning to look over her shoulder.

JOANNE

Sarah?

The dog's whimpering gets louder as Joanne approaches the kitchen doorway. When she gets to the doorway, she notices a cup and a puddle of tea on the floor just inside the kitchen. She steps into the doorway and sees Mrs. Whittaker slumped over in a chair, her head face down on the table. Joanne appears shocked, frightened.

JOANNE

Oh my God!

Dewey is sitting next to Sarah, still whimpering. Joanne goes over to her side and lifts her head off the table, leaning her back in the chair. Sarah's eyes are wide open, a look of terror on her cold blue face. The butcher knife is lying on the table. Joanne stares at the old lady's face for a few moments. Joanne's expression goes from sadness to fear and then anger, her eyes squinting. She steps back slowly toward the doorway, still looking at Sarah, and then coolly, methodically turns around and picks up the wall phone. Leaning back against the counter, still looking at Sarah and somewhat in a daze, she presses zero for an operator.

JOANNE

I need the police... There's
been a (pause) A death...
One-thirty-eight Sagamore.

EXT. SARAH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING

Dusk, and the sun is setting. Joanne is sitting on the porch at the top of the steps. A black hearse is parked in front of the tenement, along with a police cruiser. Sound of footsteps from the inside stairway behind her.

The front door is being held open by a doorstop. Sarah's body is being brought down the stairs on a stretcher. A slow-moving black sedan is approaching the tenement, as morticians start making their way down the front steps with Sarah's body, covered head to toe by a white sheet.

INT. BLACK SEDAN - EVENING

From the distant perspective of the MYSTERY MAN driving the sedan, we see Joanne standing up as the morticians pass by her. All we see of the driver is the back side of his head, brown hair, green plaid flannel shirt.

EXT. BLACK SEDAN - EVENING

Joanne watches as the morticians carry Sarah's body toward the hearse. We see the sedan slow almost to a stop. Joanne turns her attention to the car, looking curiously at it. She starts to make her way down the steps and begins to pick up her pace. The sedan reciprocates, picking up speed and moving on by, as Joanne hurries toward the curb. She doesn't get a look at the driver and is left standing near the hearse as the morticians slide the body into the back end, while she watches the sedan drive off.

INT. JOANNE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joanne is sitting on the edge of her bed drinking a beer. She grabs a cigarette from a pack of Marlboro's on the nightstand and lights up. She's nervous, shaking. She coughs after taking a drag.

JOANNE (V.O.)

Why would somebody want to
murder that sweet little old
lady? It doesn't make any sense.

Joanne chugs some beer and takes another puff of the cigarette. Only a slight cough this time. She reaches into her jeans pocket and pulls out Stu's SEAL ring, examining it closely, holding it between her index finger and thumb.

JOANNE (CONT'D V.O.)

Are you freakin alive, Stu!?

Joanne grabs another beer from the paper bag by her feet, and pops it open, quickly chugging some more. She sticks the ring back in her pocket, gets up and grabs a satchel lying on a desk, then dumps out a pile of photocopied news articles on her bed.

JOANNE

There's an answer here, Goddamn it, and I'm gonna find it.

Joanne butts out her cigarette and plops down on the bed. Nightstand alarm clock time: 11:45. Joanne takes another swig of beer and starts to pore through the articles.

EXT. TALL PINES RESTAURANT AND HOTEL - NIGHT

Lighted neon Budweiser and Miller Lite signs in the front windows of the rustic-looking restaurant. About a dozen or so cars in the parking lot. We see the black sedan that crossed paths with Joanne, pulling off the main road and slowly entering the dirt and gravel lot in front of the motel. It pulls up in front of an end unit, at the opposite end of the office, which is lit only by a counter lamp at the front desk. From a distance, we see a shadowy figure, the mystery man, get out of the sedan and go around to the trunk. He reaches into the trunk, pulls out a satchel and drapes it over his shoulder, then pulls out a large suitcase in one hand and a smaller one in the other, setting one down to shut the trunk. He heads toward his motel room, setting both suitcases down to get his room key out of his pocket and open the door.

INT. JOANNE CARTER'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joanne lights up another cigarette and resumes reading... The alarm clock time is now 1:07... Joanne cracks open another beer, lights up another cigarette and continues reading. Closeup: "The mob informant was reportedly engaged to a Reno card dealer. But the personnel director at Harrah's said Cindy Taylor quit her job a couple weeks before the fatal blaze, and she hasn't been heard from

since. Authorities said they've been unable to locate Taylor, and her whereabouts remain unknown."

INT. TALL PINES MOTEL - NIGHT

Back side of the brown-haired mystery man, clad in a dark green flannel shirt, sleeves rolled up, sitting at a small desk by lamplight. In front of him are a gallon jug of Chlorox bleach, a bottle of distilled water, a hot plate, a battery hydrometer, an enameled steel container and a couple boxes of Morton's salt substitute, a small block of wax and a jar of vasoline. The mystery man lifts the bottle of Chlorox and pours a pint or so into the deep hot plate, sets it down and then pours some of the salt substitute (potassium chloride) into a cup, filling it about half way. He adds it to the heating bleach. We see a small pile of white crystals on the desk. He then pours the distilled water into a clear glass mug, and adds the crystals.

INT. JOANNE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joanne, looking tired, sets the article down and appears to be straining her brain, rubbing her forehead. The alarm clock reads: 1:28.

JOANNE (V.O.)

Where the hell are you, Stu?

Joanne takes another swig of beer and reaches for the pack of cigarettes, when the phone rings, startling her. She hesitates to pick it up, and she lets it ring a second and third time before grabbing the receiver.

JOANNE

Hel-lo.

Joanne suddenly perks up, looking upbeat.

JOANNE

Heey... It's so good to hear your voice.

(choking up)

I miss you so much, John. I

(MORE)

JOANNE (CONT'D)

can't wait to see you.

(pause)

Yeah, I know. Tell Adam I'm sorry. He seemed pretty tired, and there wasn't a lot left to do here. I figured he could get home and help Dianne. And I knew he wouldn't leave unless I cooked something up.

(pause)

He'll get over it.

Sound of a car engine revving loudly outside her window. Joanne gets up and peaks through the drape, while holding the phone to her ear. A car's headlights are pointing directly at her room. The late model dark Cadillac backs up slowly and pulls away, as Joanne closes the drape.

JOANNE

Don't worry about me; I'll be fine... I love you too, honey. I'll seeya in a day or two.

INT. TALL PINES MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The mystery man is opening the lid on a cooler. Plastic tray of white crystals inside, on ice. The man, whose face we still don't see, lifts out the tray and spoons out the crystals onto some aluminum foil on the desk. The solution in the hot plate is boiling. The battery hydrometer in the boiling solution shows a reading of 1.3. He shuts off the hot plate switch; the solution has crystalized. Then he slides out the desk drawer and pulls out a cassette tape. He puts it into a small manilla envelope on the desk, turns the envelope over. It's addressed to Anthony Carlucci.

EXT. NORTHLAND LUMBER MILL - NIGHT

Joanne, wearing a brown suede jacket, jeans and dark blue Red Sox ball cap, her hair pulled back and tucked under the cap, pulls off on a logging road just a few hundred feet before the gated area at the entrance to the logging company. She drives back off the main road a couple

hundred feet and finds a place to park among some trees. She gets a flashlight out of the center console and hops out of the SUV, closing the door slowly, quietly. Then she begins a shaky walk through the dark woods around the company's perimeter. Howling of coyotes puts her on edge, but she focuses on a couple lights in the distance, and she has the look of determination as she continues through the woods. She looks relieved, even somewhat empowered, when she gets to the edge of the woods abutting the plant.

JOANNE

Alright, girl. Take a deep
breath.

Joanne leans her head back and inhales through her nose, almost yoga-like, then fixes her eyes on the plant and a few lights that are on. No sign of movement inside. Joanne makes her way between a bunch of logging trucks, and hunkers down behind a tire on one of the trucks, while surveying the building. She then bolts about 50 feet to the side of the building, and starts to move slowly around, laying low, looking for an easy entry, checking a couple doors. They're locked. She grabs one of the landscaping rocks at the front of the building and pops out one of the panels in a window that's almost shoulder high to her. She reaches in, turns the latch, pushes the window up and climbs in.

INT. SECURITY GUARD'S OFFICE - NIGHT

NIGHT WATCHMAN (35), thinning light brown hair, pudgy, reading the paper, eating peanuts and watching TV, a scene from Happy Days with the Fonzie.

INT. PEPPERDINE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Joanne, flashlight in hand, enters, puts the light on the file cabinets. She scans the labeling, A-D etc., finds M-K and opens the drawer, shuffling through the folders. She finds a file for McLellan and pulls it out. She hears the sound of a car engine and shuts off the flashlight. She moves to the window and peeks out. A red Dodge Charger is pulling into the lumber yard, parking just 20 feet or so from the room she's in.

HIT MAN (V.O.)

We've got some unfinished
business.

Joanne peeks over the windowsill. Two shadowy figures, the night watchman and the HIT MAN (39), slender, brown hair slicked back, are standing by the car.

HIT MAN (V.O.)

That fuckin' bitch is gonna
have to die.

NIGHT WATCHMAN (V.O.)

Come on, man. What the fuck!
She doesn't know shit!

HIT MAN (V.O.)

We're not takin' that chance.
Mac says we need to take care
of this. It's been dead ten years.
There ain't gonna be any
resurrection... Get your shit
and let's go.

NIGHT WATCHMAN (V.O.)

What if somebody breaks in?

HIT MAN (V.O.)

Then I guess you'll get fired.
Which beats gettin' shot.

NIGHT WATCHMAN (V.O.)

I'll be right back.

INT. PEPPERDINE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Joanne is hunkered down against the wall beneath the window. Still holding McLellan's file. Frightened but determined, she starts leafing through the file. Sound of a car tearing out of the lot. Joanne gets back up, and sees the car leaving through the front gate.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Joanne's SUV approaches. Its lights go out, as it pulls up at the far end and parks near the office, alongside a pickup truck. Lamp on the front office desk is still on.

INT. SUV - NIGHT

Joanne checks her watch: 2:49. She quietly gets out of the SUV, leaving it parked a couple hundred feet away from the main lot. She steps up beside the cab of the pickup, and, peeking around the windshield, spots the black Caddy with Nevada plates parked beside the building. She keeps her eyes trained on the Caddy and the side entrance nearby. MOBSTER II tosses a butt out of the window, then puts it back up. MOBSTER I exits the side of the building, then gets into the driver's side of the car. It starts up, lights go on, then it backs up and heads out of the lot in the opposite direction.

INT. CARTER'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Joanne enters, cautiously. Newspaper articles are still strewn about the bed. She goes over to look out the window, sees nothing and quickly starts picking up the articles and stuffing them in the satchel, then she starts throwing her clothes together in the suitcase, almost frantically. She stops and goes to the window again, looking out. She finishes packing, throws the satchel around her shoulder, grabs the suitcase and bolts down the hallway.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

She exits the outside entrance into a hallway between two sections of the motel. Headlights approaching from the roadway. The red Charger slows as it turns into the motel parking lot. Joanne turns and flees down the hallway to the back of the motel. She runs across the back parking lot and into some woods, breathing heavily, still lugging her suitcase and the satchel. She starts making her way to her SUV, keeping her eyes trained on the lights in the motel.

EXT. MOTEL - NIGHT

The hit man is hurrying back to his vehicle and hops in on the driver's side.

HIT MAN

She's cleared out. Runnin' scared.
We'll cut across Brown Run; she'll
be headin' to Spokane.

We see the Charger speeding off. Joanne steps out of the woods and walks to her SUV. She tosses her suitcase in the back seat and puts the satchel beside her on top of McLellan's personnel file, then hops in and starts up the vehicle. She backs up and heads out of the motel lot in the opposite direction as the Charger.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

Red Charger, speeding, makes a sharp turn onto the bumpy dirt road.

INT. JOANNE'S SUV - NIGHT

Joanne is rummaging through her satchel, trying to find her cigarettes, while keeping her eyes trained on the road. She pulls out the pack and taps it against the steering wheel, then uses the SUV lighter to stoke up. She's nervous, shaking. It's beginning to snow lightly. She puts on the wipers.

JOANNE

Please, God, get me home safe
to my family.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

The Charger pulls off to the side of the dirt road, just out of sight of the main road.

INT. CHARGER - NIGHT

Back sides of the hit man and night watchman. The hit man lights up a cigarette; the night watchman follows suit.

HIT MAN

Guaranteed. Ten minutes,
she'll be coming right by us.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

Hope you're right. I gotta
get back before the janitor
arrives, or he's gonna know
somethin's up.

The hit man takes a deep drag on his cigarette and blows it in the direction of the night watchman. It gets the watchman's attention. The hit man reaches down under his seat, picks up a semiautomatic handgun and, while still holding it, rests it on the seat between them.

HIT MAN

You're such a fuckin' pussy.

The hit man raises the gun and points it at the night watchman.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

What are you doin'?

HIT MAN

Time for you to grow some balls.

The hit man slowly hands the gun to the night watchman.

HIT MAN

You're gonna whack her. You can't
drive for shit, least I know you
can shoot.

The night watchman reluctantly takes the handgun from the hit man.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

You sure about this?

HIT MAN

Just don't fuck up and miss.

INT. JOANNE'S SUV - NIGHT

It's starting to snow heavier now. Joanne increases the speed on her wipers and hunches over the wheel. A deer darts in front of her. Joanne slams on the brakes, fishtailing, but managing to avoid a crash.

JOANNE

Holy shit!

The vehicle comes to a stop facing a snowbank along the road, next to the woods. After taking a couple deep breaths, Joanne backs up, then pulls out on the road and starts driving slowly.

INT. CADDY - NIGHT

The night watchman appears antsy, fidgety, looking at his watch.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

She shoulda been here by now
It's been almost 20 minutes.
I gotta get back. Let's just
blow it off; she don't know
anything.

HIT MAN

Hold your fuckin' horses.
You wanna be the one to tell
Mac we couldn't finish this
deal?

Just then, headlights appear in the distance. The night watchman leans forward, staring at the oncoming lights.

NIGHT WATCHMAN

Somebody's coming.

Hit man turns on the engine. Headlights still off. White SUV approaches, about 40 yards down the road, heading in their direction.

HIT MAN

That's her! That's the SUV.

Hit man moves the Charger up slowly toward the main road. The Charger tears out once the SUV passes, tires screeching as it hits the pavement.

EXT. AERIAL OF THE VEHICLES - NIGHT

The Charger is gaining rapidly. It's a hilly, winding and heavily wooded roadway. Both vehicles are on a straightaway now, the Charger within a quarter mile of the SUV.

INT. JOANNE'S SUV - NIGHT

Joanne glances into her rearview mirror, sees the Charger's headlights and notices it's gaining on her rapidly. She steps on the accelerator. The odometer reads 75. The Charger's still gaining. Joanne's gripping her steering wheel tightly, nervous, continuing to glance up at the mirror.

JOANNE

Oh my God!

Joanne's odometer: 80. It's still snowing. Joanne glances in the rearview mirror again, and sees the Charger headlights getting even closer.

EXT. BOTH VEHICLES - NIGHT

The Charger moves into the passing lane, just a car length behind the SUV now, both vehicles speeding.

INT. CHARGER - NIGHT

The night watchman rolls down the passenger window and starts to lean out with the handgun, tightening the silencer and getting positioned to shoot. He props his right underarm against the window opening and side of the car, while holding his right gun hand steady with his left hand, leaning out the window.

INT. JOANNE'S SUV - NIGHT

Joanne looks at her sideview mirror and sees the night watchman leaning out with the gun. The Charger continues to gain, and Joanne sees the watchman pointing the gun in her direction. She slams on the brakes and, simultaneously, turns her steering wheel to the left.

EXT. BOTH VEHICLES - NIGHT

The front end of the SUV slams against the front side of the Charger, decapitating the night watchman and ripping off his left arm. The head and arm hit the pavement. Both vehicles go into tailspins. Joanne's SUV breaks through some guardrails and goes down an embankment, coming to rest in a shallow stream. The Charger continues fishtailing down the road a couple hundred yards before being brought under control and slowly pulling off along the roadside.

INT. CHARGER - NIGHT

The hit man is stuck behind an air bag. We see his right hand reaching down to his ankle, lifting up his pant leg and grabbing a knife from a case attached to the side of his lower leg. He pops the air bag with the knife, then looks over and sees the bloody headless body of the night watchman, slumped over between the front seat and floor. The gun is lying on the seat. The hit man puts the car in reverse and backs up, near the spot where the SUV crashed through the guardrails. He stops the car, picks up the gun and gets out.

EXT. CHARGER - NIGHT

The hit man looks determined, angry, starts walking briskly toward where the SUV broke through the guardrails. He gets to the top of the embankment where the SUV went through, and sees the SUV marooned in the stream below. Handgun at his side, the hit man scurries down the embankment and steps into the stream. He slowly approaches the driver's side window. The door is slightly ajar. The hit man raises his weapon, as he opens it the rest of the way and peers inside. It's

empty, except for a manilla folder lying on the passenger seat.

HIT MAN

Fuck! You fuckin' bitch!

Hit man steps to the other side of the stream and sees Joanne's footprints leading back into the dark woods.

HIT MAN

(hollering)

Hey!... You OK, ma'm?...
I can help you... Come on
back!

(quietly now)

Shit... What the fuck.

EXT. BACK IN THE WOODS - NIGHT

Joanne is breathing heavily, trudging through the snow.

HIT MAN (V.O.)

(hollering)

Come on out! You won't
survive in there overnight!

Joanne, frightened, picks up her pace. Looking back over her shoulder, she falls down, her gloveless hands sinking in the snow. But she bounces up quickly and continues on.

EXT. SUV - NIGHT

The hit man is walking back up the embankment, nearing the top where the Charger is parked, engine running. He's hunched over, out of breath, handgun by his side. The hit man hops into the Charger and starts to pull away, but stops abruptly and gets out. He walks quickly back to the edge of the road where the night watchman's head and arm are lying. He grabs the night watchman's bloody head by his hair, walks several more feet and picks up the arm, then hurries back to the Charger and tosses them in the trunk. He goes around to the passenger side, opens the door and drags the night watchman's corpse around to the rear of the Charger, then lifts it into the trunk and shuts the lid. The hit man goes back to shut the

passenger door, then heads around the front of the vehicle, hops in the driver's side, and drives away.

EXT. DEEP WOODS - NIGHT

Joanne is shivering, hands on her shoulders, slowly trudging through the woods, disoriented. Moonlight shines into an opening in the woods. Joanne picks up her pace, breathing heavier, appearing hopeful, excited. She steps out of the woods, into a clearcut and a four-wheeler path. She stands there for a moment, looking one way, then the other. She takes a deep breath, looks up to the moonlit sky, lowers her head, looks to her right and heads in that direction.

JOANNE

At least I can see where the
hell I'm goin'.

She looks up to the heavens.

JOANNE

I hope you're with me. I'm
not gonna make it alone.

EXT. MCLELLAN'S ESTATE - NIGHT

The Charger turns down a long paved driveway lined by pine trees. It opens up to a large colonial-style brick home with a separate three-stall garage. Dogs barking. A light comes on upstairs, and then moments later, another first-floor light comes on, then outdoor floodlights. The Charger pulls around a circular driveway to the front of the house. The hit man gets out of the car and starts walking up the walkway. McLellan opens the door. The hit man stops at the bottom of the stairs, looking up at McLellan, who's staring at the Charger and its smashed-in passenger side.

MCLELLAN

What the hell happened?...

HIT MAN

We ran into a bit of a problem.

Hit man gets to the top of the stairs. McLellan facing him, looking curious, concerned. No handshakes. McLellan turns to head indoors, the hit man following.

McLELLAN

I can see that. What the hell happened?

HIT MAN

She rammed her fuckin' SUV into us just as Frankie was about to shoot. Took his head off; I got him out in the trunk.

McLELLAN

What about the bitch?

HIT MAN

That ain't gonna be a problem, Mac. She'll never make it through the night.

McLellan leads the hit man into his study, and takes a seat in the high-back leather chair behind his mahogany desk. The hit man stands in front of the desk.

McLELLAN

What the hell are you talkin' about, Tommy? Are you tellin' me she's still alive?

HIT MAN

Relax, Mac. It's done. She crashed over by Metaline Falls, wandered off into the woods. She ain't gonna survive the night out there in this weather.

McLellan discreetly reaches for a handgun in a holster fastened to the underside of his desk, while his chin rests in his left hand, elbow resting on the arm of the chair.

McLellan's face is fixed on the hit man.

McLELLAN

Why the fuck didn't you go
after her?

HIT MAN

I didn't get hired to freeze my
fuckin' ass off trackin' some
crazy bitch through the Great North
Woods... Why the hell are you so
damn worried about her anyway.
What the fuck's she got on you?

McLellan now has a firm grasp on the handgun.

McLELLAN

You know, Tommy. You're right...

McLellan slowly rises up from his chair, the gun
concealed below the desk.

McLELLAN

I hired you to kill her...
And you fucked up miserably.

McLellan raises the gun and points it at the hit man's
forehead. The hit man is frozen, in shock, eyes bulging.

McLELLAN

You're fired.

McLellan fires the gun, the bullet piercing the hit man's
skull between the eyes, blood splattering as he falls
backward to the floor. McLellan walks coolly and
methodically around the desk and looks down at the hit
man, a pool of blood curdling out from behind his head.
He reaches into the hit man's pocket and pulls out his
car keys.

McLELLAN

What a fuckin' mess; you
piece a shit.

EXT. MCLELLAN'S HOME - NIGHT

Mystery man's sedan, lights out, slowly pulls up along the road fronting McLellan's property. Slightly noisy muffler. Engine shuts off. The mystery man slowly, quietly exits his car. From a distance, we see him move toward the wooded edge of the property and bolts toward the home and the one dimly lit room. Hunched over, he edges up to the tall paneled glass window to glimpse inside.

INT. MCLELLAN'S HOME - NIGHT

The hit man's body, wrapped in a tarp, is being dragged through the doorway.

EXT. MCLELLAN'S HOME - NIGHT

The mystery man moves to the front of the house and kneels down behind some shrubs. front door opens. McLellan is dragging the body out to the Charger. He lays it down behind the trunk, reaches into his pocket for keys and opens the trunk. McLellan grunts as he struggles to lift the body, but manages after several seconds to get the torso into the trunk, and then stuffs the legs in. He appears pleased with himself, victorious. McLellan closes the trunk and pauses, appearing like he's forgotten something. He heads back inside. The mystery man bolts back to the edge of the property.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The mystery man starts up his car and slowly backs up. No headlights. He backs around the corner and parks, still in view of McLellan's driveway. We only see the mystery man's back side. He reaches for a pack of Marlboro's on the dash, but pulls back when he sees headlights coming out of McLellan's driveway. It's the Charger. Once it's almost out of sight, the mystery man pulls out, lights still off, and follows.

EXT. - DEEP WOODS - NIGHT

Joanne is panting, still trudging through a foot of snow on the four-wheeler path as fast as she can to stay warm. She's struggling, shivering, but determined.

JOANNE (V.O.)

Get me to a road, pleeease.
Just show me some lights.

She takes a fall, her bare hands sinking into the snow once again. She bounces up quickly and puts her hands under her arm pits to warm them up, still moving, but shivering. Sound of coyotes howling in the distance.

JOANNE

Yeah, I think I want outta
here... Like yesterday.

EXT. - NORTHLAND LUMBER MILL - NIGHT

The Charger is moving slowly down a gravel road, approaching the gated entrance to the lumber yard. McLellan is smoking a cigarette, nervously. The gate is open. McLellan stops the Charger just outside, butts out his cigarette before entering the yard. The Charger inches through the entryway, McLellan surveying the property, and looking into his rearview mirror. He parks the Charger between a couple of fully loaded lumber trucks, and lights up another cigarette, still surveying the area before getting out. Shift to the mystery man's sedan, headlights shut off as it nears the lumber yard. The sedan stops before the gate and backs down a logging road, out of sight from the main gravel road.

EXT. SEDAN - NIGHT

The mystery man gets out, wrapping the strap of a suede satchel around his shoulder. He's wearing a dark flannel shirt and jeans, and a pair of knee-high moccasins. We still don't see the mystery man's face. He starts to make his way through the woods, moving quickly but quietly through the snow, toward the lumber yard.

EXT. - DEEP WOODS - NIGHT

Joanne is approaching a bend in the four-wheeler path. She's pushing hard to get there. As she gets closer to the bend, a beacon of light shines through a break in the trees. She picks up her pace, falling once, and bouncing back up, pushing forward. When she gets to the bend in the path, she sees a floodlight in the distance, shining down from a cabin on the hillside.

JOANNE

Thank you, God!

EXT. - CABIN - NIGHT

Through a window, we see six hunters, some in plaid flannel shirts and others in camouflage outfits, sitting at a table, drinking beer, playing cards. We hear laughter. Joanne is trudging up the hill, just 40 or 50 yards away now. She's breathing heavily.

EXT. NORTHLAND LUMBER - NIGHT

The mystery man is hunkered down by a hemlock about 80 to 90 feet from the Charger, watching a tiny light inside the car as McLellan takes another drag on his cigarette.

INT. CHARGER - NIGHT

McLellan butts out his cigarette in the ash tray, opens the car door and gets out.

EXT. NORTHLAND LUMBER - NIGHT

McLellan surveys the lot again, before heading across the yard. The mystery man is watching McLellan's every move. McLellan removes one of his black leather driving gloves and gets a set of keys out of his pocket. The mystery man rises, as McLellan nears the side entrance. The mystery man starts to move in the direction of the Charger and the logging trucks. McLellan is looking through the key chain as he approaches the door. McLellan walks up a small cement staircase to the door,

unlocks the deadbolt and then uses another key to unlock the door. He opens the door and steps inside. The mystery man steps out of the woods at the front of a logging truck next to the Charger. He moves along the side of the truck, reaches into his satchel and starts packing plastic explosives between logs and behind braces securing the logs. Then he inserts blasting caps and runs the wire connecting them.

INT. PEPPERDINE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

McLellan enters the room holding a penlight. He stops in the doorway and shines the light around the room. He notices an open file drawer and moves toward it. As he gets closer, we see the letters M-O on the front. McLellan leafs through the folders, looking for the spot where his belongs. It's missing. He slams the drawer shut.

MCLELLAN

Goddamn it!... What the fuck
is goin' on!?

He goes over to the desk, picks up the phone and quickly punches in an 11-digit long distance number on the keypad.

MCLELLAN

Eddie!... Listen, tell Vinny
I gotta shut this down.
(pause)
I don't have time...

EXT. NORTHLAND LUMBER - NIGHT

The mystery man is hunkered down behind the hemlock. From his vantage point, we see McLellan exiting the building and locking the side door. He walks briskly toward the Charger, but slows as he gets to the rear of the car. He appears nervous, paranoid. The mystery man's hand is on the detonator. McLellan stops by the driver's side door and looks around the lot before getting into the Charger.

INT. CHARGER - NIGHT

McLellan slips on his left driving glove, then reaches up to the dash for the pack of cigarettes, gets one out and lights it up. He takes a slow drag, seems to find it relaxing. His hand on the ignition key when he notices the wiring leading from the explosives, then he sees the plastic compound tucked between some logs. Panicking, he turns the ignition key. Just as the engines starts, there's a loud explosion. A bright flash is reflected in the driver's side window, lighting up McLellan's look of terror, his eyes and mouth wide open. Thunderous sound of logs toppling onto the Charger, crushing it and McLellan. Moans and gurgling, followed by dead silence.

EXT. - NORTHLAND LUMBER - NIGHT

The mystery man picks up his gear, throws the satchel over his shoulder and darts through the woods, following his footprints back to his car. Under a moonlit sky, we see him getting into the sedan, hear the engine start and see the car tear out toward the gravel road, lights still out.

EXT. - LOG CABIN - NIGHT

An SUV outside the camp is running, exhaust pouring out of the muffler. Two HUNTERS escort Joanne, a blanket draped around her shoulders, out of the camp to the SUV, and help her into the back seat. They hop in the front and pull out.

INT. HUNTERS' SUV - NIGHT

Joanne is shivering, her head bobbing about nervously, looking ahead and behind. Headlights are coming in the opposite direction. Joanne slides across the seat to get a better view of the oncoming vehicle. She notices the car slowing down, then stopping.

JOANNE

Can you please slow down?
Just for a second...

HUNTER 1

No problem. What's up?

Joanne leans up against the window as they pass by the sedan - the mystery man looking in the opposite direction. We see the back of his head. He's looking off the side of the road at Joanne's SUV down in the stream.

JOANNE

Nothin'. It's fine. Thanks.

The SUV picks up speed and drives off. Joanne is looking back at the sedan, pulling off the road.

EXT. - LOG CABIN - NIGHT

Mystery man is driving down the backcountry road just below the camp. The sedan stops by the four-wheeler path. The mystery man gets out and walks to the side of the road, where he sees Joanne's footprints leading up to the still-lighted camp. Again, we only see his back side. He walks back to his vehicle and gets in. A manilla folder is on the passenger seat.

EXT. - NORTHLAND LUMBER - EARLY MORNING

Dawn is breaking as the SUV nears the gravel road leading to Northland Lumber. There's a police cruiser, lights flashing, parked sideways blocking the road leading back to the mill. The SUV slows. We see the sign: "Northland Lumber Mill."

INT. SUV - EARLY MORNING

Joanne is staring out the window. More lights flashing, ambulances, cruisers and firetrucks.

HUNTER 1

Wonder what the hell's
going on there. Sure is
plenty of commotion.

HUNTER 2

It's a loggin' operation; somebody probably got hurt.

Joanne continues peering out the window at the scene as the SUV slowly drives by. She relaxes back into her seat, tilting her head back.

HUNTER 2

(looking back at Joanne)

You OK?

JOANNE

Yeah, I'm fine. Thanks.

The hunter/passenger turns back around. Then Joanne turns around to look out the rear window, before leaning back to rest her head. She appears somewhat dazed.

EXT. - PATH ALONG THE CHARLES RIVER IN BOSTON - DAY

Light snow is falling as Joanne and Adam walk slowly, side-by-side, on a paved jogging path along the river, joggers occasionally passing them by.

ADAM

Where do we go from here?

JOANNE

I've been thinking about something.

ADAM

You still think uncle Stu's alive, don't you?

JOANNE

Yes, I do. But I don't know if we'll ever know for sure.

ADAM

What do you think really happened that night?

FLASHBACK - EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD IN MARBLE - NIGHT

Breeze swirling powdery snow along a deserted residential street. A newer model Lincoln is creeping along, slowly passing by the Baxters' home, parking about a block down the street. Two HIT MEN in thigh-length black leather jackets get out, scanning the neighborhood. One of the men keeps surveying the neighborhood while the other pops open the trunk, grabs what looks to be a suitcase, and they walk along the sidewalk toward the Baxters' home.

FLASHBACK - EXT. BAXTER'S HOME - NIGHT

When the hit men get close to the house, HIT MAN I veers off the sidewalk, scurrying alongside some shrubs to the back side of the house, where he crouches down behind some shrubs and begins opening the case. HIT MAN II continues on past the front of the house, and darts up the other side. He peers through a window at the side of the house.

INT. BAXTER'S HOME - NIGHT

Stu Carter, Wayne Baxter and Baxter's wife, Karen, are sitting at a table in the living room, playing cards and having drinks.

EXT. BAXTER'S HOME - NIGHT

Hit Man II scurries around to the back side of the house, where he meets up with the other hit man, who's assembling what looks like a mortar launcher.

HIT MAN II

He's in the living room.
Let's get movin'.

INT. BAXTERS' HOME - NIGHT

Cindy Taylor enters the living room with two mixed drinks. She sets one in front of Karen.

KAREN

Thanks, hon.

CINDY

You're welcome, girl. Now
let's kick some butt.

STU

Aren't you forgetting somethin', dear?

CINDY

Don't think so.

Stu slides his chair out and starts to get up.

STU

I'm still workin' on her
table manners, Wayne. She's
not used to servin' guys
anything but cards.

Wayne and Karen chuckle, while Cindy smirks at Stu, who reciprocates with a smile. Stu heads toward the kitchen door, which connects to the living room.

WAYNE

Just a beer for me, Stan.

STU

You got it.

EXT. BAXTERS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Hit man I is attaching the center base of what resembles a sawed-off bazooka to the foundation at the top of the tripod with thick anchor screws.

HIT MAN I

Grab the canister; this baby's
ready.

Hit man II grabs a rocket canister out of the case. Then he shuts the case, and the pair move quickly around to the side of the house facing the living room window, behind some tall shrubs that shield them from view of the neighboring home about 70 feet away. Hit man I extends one of the steel tripod legs, all three with sharp ends, into a light snow-covered ground. Hit man II drives another into the ground at the same time Hit man I drives in the third. Hit man I grabs two of the legs and shakes them a bit, then nods at the other hit man. Hit man II inserts the napalm rocket into the back of the bazooka. Hit man I closes the back end and connects a wire charge.

Then he lines up the bazooka through its sights, the crosshairs on the back of Wayne. We see his wife, too, but can't see the other side of the table.

INT. BAXTERS' HOME - NIGHT

Stu swings open the kitchen door, holding it open with his left hand.

STU

Comin' at ya, lumberman.

Stu tosses a Budweiser to Wayne, who catches it with one hand just in front of his wife's head.

CINDY

Stan!

STU

Don't worry, honey. Wayne's got great hands.

Stu turns to head back into the kitchen, but stops momentarily, noticing a shadow flash by the living room window. Wayne is shuffling the cards, Cindy's back is to Stu, and Karen is taking a sip of her drink. Stu walks back into the kitchen, pauses for a moment in the middle of the kitchen floor, looking troubled, then starts toward the refrigerator and his drink glass on the counter. He pauses momentarily again and turns toward the back door. He slowly, quietly opens the back door and begins to step onto the porch.

EXT. BAXTERS' HOME - NIGHT

A loud sudden blast hurls Stu over the porch railing and into the back yard near the spot where the hit man was assembling the rocket launcher. We see the hit men's footprints and indentations from the case in the snow, where Stu lies unconscious, as flames race out of the windows and doors on the first floor. The hit men's Lincoln is driving away. Sound of children screaming. A NEIGHBOR, clad only in his pajamas, runs into his garage. He comes out carrying a metal ladder. Stu is regaining consciousness, wiping snow off his face,

getting up on his hands and knees. He notices the footprints. The neighbor is holding his ladder against the windowsill, while the older boy helps his sister out the window and onto the ladder, smoke billowing over their heads. She starts to make her way down, as the brother watches from the window.

NEIGHBOR

Hurry up, Timmy. Get out...
I got her.

Stu sneaks around to the back corner of the house, and peeks around. The girl is stepping down the last couple rungs into the arms of the neighbor, and Timmy is making his way down the ladder. He turns around and hurries to the other side of the house behind the shrubs, where he sees the rocket launcher and tripod lying. We hear sirens and the commotion of neighbors, mostly in night clothes, gathering out on the street. Flames are shooting out the living room windows. Stu slides off his SEAL ring and tosses it through the window nearest the rocket launcher and into the living room.

JOANNE (V.O.)

Stu knew if Sapienza thought he
was dead, that would end it.

Stu takes off running through the neighbor's back yard, following in the set of footprints left by the hit men.

JOANNE (V.O.)

He probably felt responsible for
their deaths... and he wasn't gonna
be the reason for any more.

Stu's shadowy figure fades out of sight into the darkness.

EXT. - CHARLES RIVER - DAY

Adam is nodding, as they continue their stroll.

ADAM

Jesus, mom, you could write a novel about this. No joking.

JOANNE

Yeah, right. That would go over real well with Sapienza, I'm sure.

ADAM

One thing I can't figure is why the hell they'd try to kill you?... Ten years later? Just for askin' some questions about uncle Stu?

JOANNE

I have a feeling it's got something to do with McLellan. Maybe he was involved with the hit on uncle Stu, and was afraid we were gonna dig up the truth.

ADAM

Whatever... It's over now.

Joanne puts her arm around her son's shoulder as they continue their walk.

JOANNE

Not quite...

ADAM

You're scarin' me, ma.

JOANNE

If Stu is alive, there is one thing that might flush him out.

ADAM

What?

JOANNE

Think about it... What would make him feel safe enough to come home?

ADAM

Sapienza swimming with the fishes.
But what's gonna make that happen?

Joanne, her arm still around Adam's shoulder, pulls him in close, and slows her pace.

JOANNE

Remember that mob informer that brought down Anthony Carlucci?

ADAM

"Steelhead" McLean. What about him?

JOANNE

Suppose Sapienza was in cahoots with McLean and his Somerville gang. Both stood to benefit from Carlucci's demise.

ADAM

Where the hell are you goin' with this, ma? Nobody's ever tied the Irish mob to Sapienza's family. Besides, Carlucci just got out of prison. And God knows where McLean is. Probably tied to an anchor in the harbor.

The Carters continue their stroll along the jogging path, a breeze is stirring up the Charles River. Sun shining brightly, reflecting off the river, as joggers continue passing by.

JOANNE

You might be right about McLean. Witness protection is known for dropping the ball... on the protection part of the deal. As for Carlucci, you really think he'd just let bygones be bygones?

Adam, his eyebrows raised, is looking curiously at his mom. Then he begins to nod. A mourning dove by a park bench takes off in flight, fluttering in front of them.

JOANNE

No offense to that beautiful
dove, but we're gonna kill two
birds with one stone.

ADAM

Huh?

JOANNE

Let's get home, check on dad,
and I'll fill you in.

INT. - CARTER'S TOWNHOME - KITCHEN

Joanne is chopping vegetables at the kitchen island. A pot is steaming on a cooktop. Tile flooring, stainless steel appliances, oak cabinets. Adam enters the room from the adjoining living/dining area and takes a seat at the breakfast bar, a drink is waiting for him.

JOANNE

How's he doin'?

ADAM

Not too good... He's coverin'
well, though.

JOANNE

He's good at that.

Joanne stops cutting the vegetables and moves away from the island, her eyes tearing up.

ADAM

I wish I could do something
to make this all better.

Joanne moves toward Adam and looks him straight in the eye.

JOANNE

You can.

Adam looking curious, leans back against the kitchen island.

ADAM

Okay?...

JOANNE

Remember the two birds?

ADAM

Y-e-a-h?

Joanne moves closer to Adam to look him in the eye.

JOANNE

Your wife's sister, Michelle. Does she still work at the registry?

Adam turns, goes to the refrigerator and reaches in to grab a beer.

ADAM

Y-e-a-h?

JOANNE

We need the deeds to some properties.

ADAM

Wait a minute... You want me to ask my sister-in-law to steal some deeds for us?

JOANNE

Two birds... One stone.

Adam takes a swig of his drink at the breakfast bar.

JOANNE

Stu coming home to save your dad, and Sapienza swimming with the fishes.

ADAM

God, ma! Are you sure you wanna
do this? It could be awful risky.

Joanne goes over to a kitchen drawer, opens it and pulls
out a large envelope, then hands it to Adam.

JOANNE

Get the deeds to these
properties, for one night.

Adam takes the envelope.

ADAM

What the hell are you gettin'
us into?...

JOANNE

Nothin' we can't get out of.
Trust me... Get the deeds.

INT. ADAM'S HOME - EVENING

Adam hands a beer across the bar - decorated with Boston
sports memorabilia - in his basement family room, to
MICHELLE (22), petite, sandy blonde, who's sitting on a
bar stool... Adam gets another beer out of the bar
refrigerator, opens it and raises it for a toast.

ADAM

To the Red Sox winning the
pennant.

Michelle raises her beer up to tap Adam's, and they both
take a swig.

MICHELLE

Don't raise the bar too high,
Adam. God forbid we toast the
Sox winning the World Series.

They smile at each other, and Adam raises his beer again.

ADAM

To the Sox winning the Series.

They tap beers again and take another swig.

MICHELLE

Yeah, right... Like that'll
ever happen... So what's up, Adam?

Adam looks nervous, on edge.

ADAM

What'ya mean?

MICHELLE

Is it you and Sharon? Please
don't tell me you guys are
breakin' up.

ADAM

We're fine. It's just...
My mom and I have a favor to ask.
It's for my dad.

Michelle takes a sip of her beer and leans forward,
listening intently, curiously.

MICHELLE

Yeah, sure... What is it?

ADAM

You've heard of Anthony Carlucci?

MICHELLE

The Providence gangster that
just got outta jail?

ADAM

Yeah... He owned several properties
in Boston before the Fed seized
everything and auctioned it off.
We need the deeds, actually, just
copies.

MICHELLE

That's it? All you want is copies?
You could come into the office and
get those yourself.

ADAM

Actually, it's a bit more
complicated than that. Once
we've forged the copies, we're
gonna need you to replace the
originals with the forgeries.

MICHELLE

Are you outta your mind!?

ADAM

I'm not; my mom is.

MICHELLE

Yeah, I guess so... Is she trying
to get us killed, or does she
just want me to lose my job?

ADAM

Please, Michelle, trust us...

Adam reaches into his shirt pocket, pulls out a folded
piece of paper and hands it to Michelle.

ADAM

We just need these five. The
end will justify the means,
I promise. It's my dad's last hope.

MICHELLE

I hope you know what you're doin'.

ADAM

One night... Five deeds. Put the
originals back till we give you
the forgeries to replace 'em.
In and out.

Michelle is shaking her head, troubled.

MICHELLE
Jesus Christ, Adam. This sure
as hell better work.

Adam reaches across the bar to hug Michelle and kisses her on the forehead.

ADAM
It'll work, because of you.

EXT. BOSTON CITY HALL - DAY

Cars are pulling into the parking lot. One person is getting out of his vehicle as a couple walk toward the entrance.

INT. REGISTRY OF DEEDS - DAY

Michelle's CO-WORKERS, two women, are putting on their coats. Michelle is sitting at her desk in front of an IBM Selectra typewriter and behind a counter about 20-feet long.

MICHELLE
Enjoy your lunch, girls.

CO-WORKER
Thanks. Seeya in a bit.

As they exit, Michelle reaches down by her feet to get her purse. She sets it in her lap, opens it and retrieves the property list. She gets up and quickly goes over to the stack of file cabinets. Looking at the list, she pulls out a drawer marked A-B. She leafs through and pulls out a folder. Then she proceeds swiftly to the G-H file drawer, pulls it out, leafs through the drawer and pulls out another folder. Just as she's closing that drawer, a male CUSTOMER steps up to the counter.

CUSTOMER
Hi...

Michelle is startled and fumbles the folders, dropping them as she turns around.

MAN

Sorry... Didn't mean to
startle you.

Michelle bends over to pick up the folders and tucks them under her arm.

MICHELLE

That's alright. Coffee jitters.
How can I help you?

INT. CARTERS' HOUSE STUDY - NIGHT

Rich-looking study. Shiny Brazilian hardwood floors, built-in bookshelves, dark cherry desk, a couple burgundy leather chairs and a leather loveseat. Joanne is sitting behind the desk. Adam is standing beside her. Joanne is studying a deed for Vinny's Place... We see Vinny Sapienza's signature and Joanne, pen in hand, carefully forging his name at the bottom of another deed, with the title Harborside Marina at the top.

ADAM

That's beautiful. Where'd
you learn how to do this?...
Dad's checkbook?

JOANNE

Ha, ha, ha. Real funny, Adam.

Joanne puts the pen down and holds the forged document up next to the original, then picks up the deed for Vinny's Place and looks at the two sets of signatures, admiring her work.

ADAM

You nailed it.

Joanne smiles, looking over her shoulder at Adam.

JOANNE

Yeah... I think so.

Joanne sets the forged deed aside and places the other document in front of her, just a bit off to her left. Then she reaches for another deed off a small pile on the desk, sliding it in front of her, next to the deed with Sapienza's signature. We see the name Antonio Ristorante near the top of the deed, and the blank spot where the owner's name would appear. Joanne picks up her pen, hunkers over the document and starts to go to work, forging Sapienza's name.

INT. CARTERS' HOME, STUDY - DAY

Adam is sitting on top of the desk. His mom, leaning back in the leather swivel chair, lights up a cigarette.

ADAM

What's that all about?...

JOANNE

Nerves. And don't dare tell your dad.

Joanne pulls out a desk drawer, reaches in and pulls out the stack of forged deeds, then points to a large envelope on the other side of the desk, near Adam.

JOANNE

Hand me that.

Adam picks up the envelope and hands it to his mom. She starts to stuff the deeds into the envelope. We see the name Anthony Carlucci on the front, with an address of 785 Atwells Avenue, Federal Hill, Providence 02903. Joanne seals the envelope and hands it to Adam.

JOANNE

Now it's just a matter of getting this in the mail, and you making the call.

ADAM

Gee, I can't wait.

JOANNE

Remember. Winter Hill gang member

"Joey Mac." You served time with him in Danbury, where he told you how Sapienza double-crossed him, how he set him up with the FBI and acquired all of his Boston properties at a federal auction.

ADAM

I got it, ma. Don't worry.

INT. CARLUCCI'S PROVIDENCE MANSION - DAY

Sunny study. Mob boss ANTHONY CARLUCCI (69), silver hair slicked back, lean, tough-looking, sitting at a large mahogany desk. Dressed in pin-stiped dark gray suit, looking like a high-priced attorney. A Carlucci CAPO is sitting in a leather chair facing him. We see only his back side, his dark blue pin-striped suit, brown hair, one leg folded across the other. Average build. Carlucci pops a cassette tape out of a recorder and slides it into an envelope with his name on it.

CARLUCCI

That rotten fuck! All these years...

CAPO

Think this has somethin' to do with McLellan gettin' whacked?

CARLUCCI

I don't know. I'm gonna need you in South Boston tomorrow to find out what the hell's been goin' on... If this shit checks out, we're gonna have to take Mr. Sapienza deep-sea fishing.

INT. CARTER'S HOME -DAY

John, gaunt, pale and looking fatigued, sitting at the kitchen breakfast nook, having a cup of coffee and reading the newspaper when the phone rings. He slowly

reaches for the phone and picks up the receiver, gingerly, like an old man.

INT. CARTER'S MARINA - DAY

Stephen Carter is on the phone, standing behind a glass case loaded with fresh seafood and a couple of large tubs of lobsters.

STEPHEN

Hey dad, how ya' feelin' today?

EXT. CARTER'S MARINA - DAY

From a distance, 60 to 70 boats of various lengths docked. Two sharply dressed Carlucci GANGSTERS (mid 40s), tough looking, standing on the docks, admiring a 60-foot yacht, "The Molly Stark." One of the gangsters is nodding in agreement. They turn away and head toward the marina office.

INT. CARTER'S MARINA - DAY

Stephen is still on the phone as the two gangsters, dressed like businessmen but looking like boxers, enter.

STEPHEN

I'm gonna have to call ya' back, dad. Some customers just walked in.

Stephen hangs up the phone.

STEPHEN

Can I help you fellas?

GANGSTER 1

We're interested in takin' out one of your yachts.

STEPHEN

Any particular one?

GANGSTER 1

The Molly Stark.

STEPHEN

I shoulda guessed. Nothin'
but the finest. Wise choice.
Molly's our top of the line.

GANGSTER 2

Yeah, she looks like a real
beauty.

Stephen grabs a key off a rack on the wall. He gestures to the men to follow him out to the docks.

STEPHEN

Come on, I'll take you on board
and show you around. It's loaded
with amenities.

Stephen heads out the door, the gangsters following.

INT. CARTERS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joanne is lying next to John Carter, her arm wrapped around him. The phone rings, and John Carter rolls over to pick up the call. Alarm clock: 10:15.

JOHN

Hello. (pause) That's alright.
I wasn't quite off to sleep yet.
What's up?

INT. STEPHEN'S HOME, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Stephen finishes sipping a cocktail. He's on the phone.

STEPHEN

The two guys that ended our
phone call earlier, wanna take
out Molly.

JOHN (V.O.)

Yeah, so what's the problem?
Molly's available, isn't she?

STEPHEN

They wanna use their own skipper
and crewmates.

JOHN (V.O.)

Their own skipper? Who the
hell are these guys?

STEPHEN

I don't know. I'm assuming
they're businessmen... They
said they wanted to take a couple
clients out on a pleasure cruise.

INT. CARTERS' BEDROOM - EVENING

Joanne is sitting up in bed, leaning against the
backboard. John still listening, the phone to his ear.

JOANNE

(quietly)

That's not our policy, John.

JOHN

Just a minute, Steve.

John cups his hand over the phone.

JOHN

To hell with policy. Have you
seen the medical bills piling
up?... We need the money.

Joanne reaches out to John for the phone. He somewhat
reluctantly hands it over.

JOANNE

Hi Stephen. Listen. Tell 'em you're
gonna need a refundable \$2,500
deposit, \$5,000 for the day... Or
\$500 an hour with an eight-hour
minimum. Plus insurance.

(pause)

G'night.

John lays back in bed, looking pleased, impressed.

JOHN

Wow! I'm not gonna have to worry
about you running the business.

Joanne hands the phone to John, and he hangs it up.

JOANNE

You're right. 'Cause I'm not
gonna be running the business...
You are.

John reaches out both arms to Joanne, and she lies down
in his arms, resting her head on his chest.

JOHN

I love you.

JOANNE

I love you, too.

Joanne rises and leans across her husband to shut out the
light on the nightstand.

EXT. FISHING BOAT ANCHORED AT SEA - DAY

Carlucci and VINNY SAPIENZA, stalky, mid 60s, salt-and-pepper hair, sitting on the stern having cocktails, while one of Carlucci's goons looks on from the steps leading below deck. There's not another boat in sight. Sapienza extends his cocktail glass across an umbrella table to Carlucci for a toast.

SAPIENZA

To your freedom, Tony, and your
good health.

They tap glasses. Carlucci appears discontented, his eyes looking away.

SAPIENZA

Goddamn it, it's good to see ya.
Too many freakin' years.

CARLUCCI

Yeah, well, you know what they say?

SAPIENZA

What's that?

CARLUCCI

If you can't do the time, don't do the crime.

SAPIENZA

Ha, ha, ha.

Carlucci takes a sip of his cocktail and sets it down, looking serious now, like the fun's over.

CARLUCCI

You did pretty well for yourself while I was in the slammer, didn't you Vinny?

SAPIENZA

Jesus, Tony. Where the hell's that coming from?

Carlucci's eyes begin to squint, anger building.

CARLUCCI

Having me outta the way wasn't a bad idea at all.

SAPIENZA

What the hell are you talkin' about? You think I set you up? That's crazy, Tony!

Sapienza is getting jittery, looking around nervously in all directions for another boat. The goon on the stairs steps up onto the deck of the stern. He reaches around to his lower back and pulls out a gun and crosses his arms, with the gun resting on his left elbow.

SAPIENZA

Why would I do that? What's in
(MORE)

SAPIENZA (CONT'D)

it for me?

Carlucci reaches his right arm back over his shoulder and snaps his fingers. The goon approaches their table, reaches into his blazer pocket, pulls out a small tape recorder and sets it down in front of Carlucci.

SAPIENZA

What's this? What's going on, Tony? I didn't do what you think I did.

CARLUCCI

You were pretty chummy with that FBI guy... What was his name?

SAPIENZA

Donnelly.

CARLUCCI

Yeah.

SAPIENZA

I tipped a couple beers with the guy, but I never cut any deals. He was on the hook with the Irish boys over on Winter Hill.

Carlucci presses the start button on the tape player.

FBI AGENT (V.O.)

So this was a power play orchestrated by Sapienza?

MOB INFORMER (V.O.)

Hell yeah... Sapienza brokered the deal with the Winter Hill gang. Donnelly was the puppet. They couldn't go to war with Carlucci, 'cause he was hooked up with the Gambinos. And, I don't need to tell you this, but nobody fucks with the Gambino family.

FBI AGENT (V.O.)

So what happened?

MOB INFORMER (V.O.)

They used Donnelly to nail Carlucci.
And they split all of Carlucci's
operations in New England, outside of
Rhode Island, right down the middle.

Sapienza is visibly shaken, sweating. Carlucci stops the
tape player momentarily.

SAPIENZA

It's all a lie. I never...

Carlucci unfazed. Cooly and calculated, he starts up the
tape player, while looking at Sapienza straight in the
eye.

FBI AGENT (V.O.)

By they, you mean Sapienza and
the Irish mob in Somerville?

MOB INFORMER (V.O.)

You must be Dick fuckin' Tracy.
How'd you figure that out?

Carlucci shuts off the tape player.

SAPIENZA

It's a fuckin' joke! I didn't
do it. I swear to God, Tony.
Please, believe me!

Two more of Carlucci's goons emerge from below deck, one
holding a gun, the other, rope. Carlucci slides his chair
out and starts to get up.

CARLUCCI

It's appropriate, Vinny, that
you mention your maker. 'Cause
you're about to meet him... Then
again, a fuckin' rat like you is
probably more apt to rot in hell.

The three goons close in, as Carlucci turns and walks away, heading below deck. Sapienza starts to get up.

SAPIENZA

Tony, please!... Don't do this!

The goons shove him back down in his chair. One holds a gun to the back of Sapienza's head. Another gunman stands in front of him, while the third ties his hands behind his back, then proceeds to tie his feet together.

SAPIENZA

I can make you guys rich overnight.
Two million apiece. You'll never
see that from Tony... Not even
close. Not in twenty years.

The three gangsters pause for a moment, smiling at each other, seemingly amused.

SAPIENZA

I swear to God. If you let me
live, you'll be millionaires tomorrow.

The gangsters look at each other and nod. One gangster grabs Sapienza's legs by the feet while the other two pick up his torso.

SAPIENZA

You fuckin' idiots! What are you
doin'!? You got a chance here. You
don't have to be his goons any more.
Two million, cash.

The gangsters are holding Carlucci straight out at the side of the yacht. They start swaying him. From a distance, we see a vacant ocean in all directions, but still see the gangsters on the boat swaying Sapienza.

SAPIENZA (V.O.)

Dear God, who art in heaven.
Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom
come. Thy will be done. On earth
as it is...

Sapienza is flung over the side of the yacht and splashes into the ocean. The boat engine fires, some smoke rising from the rear of the vessel as it begins to cruise away. The gangsters head below deck.

INT. CARTERS' TOWNHOME - EVENING

Adam is eating a sandwich, drinking a can of beer and watching the TV news in the family room. A female ANCHOR. Adam is watching intently.

TV ANCHOR (V.O.)

The bound body of reputed New England mob boss Vinny Sapienza washed ashore in Boston Harbor this morning.

Adam practically chokes on his beer, hops up and hurries to the bottom of the stairwell.

ADAM

(hollering)

Mom! Get down here! Hurry! You gotta see this!

Adam heads back into the family room. Joanne pops in moments later and sits next to Adam on a maroon leather couch, both fixed on the TV news report.

ADAM

You're not gonna believe this.

TV ANCHOR (V.O.)

The FBI is investigating whether Sapienza's murder could be linked to a triple slaying on the other side of the country. Two weeks ago, the bodies of three men were discovered under a truckload of lumber at a mill in Marble, Washington, a small town near the Canadian border. WKYZ in Spokane provided us with this footage.

Joanne looks shellshocked.

JOANNE

Oh my God! It worked...

Adam and Joanne are focused on the TV and the video footage of a log picker lifting logs off the crushed Charger at Northland Lumber. Several policemen, plain-clothes investigators and firefighters are milling about.

TV ANCHOR (V.O.)

Two of the men were found in the trunk. One was shot in the head. The other, whose body had been dismembered, suffered what appeared to be massive head trauma. Police identified the victims as William "Crazy Willie" Callahan and Thomas "Tommy" McIntyre, members of South Boston's Winter Hill Gang. The driver, who's been identified as plant manager Frank McLellan, was crushed under the logs that police say were blown off a truck with plastic explosives. McLellan's connection to the reputed gangsters is still being investigated.

INT. CARTERS' TOWNHOME - EVENING

Adam goes over to the desk, opens the top drawer and pulls out the envelope with the forged deeds. He turns toward Joanne, holding up the envelope.

ADAM

I still have 'em. I was waiting to hear from Michelle.

JOANNE

And you didn't call?

ADAM

Nope.

Joanne, in jeans and a Red Sox T-shirt, and Adam are looking at each other in amazement, their eyes wide open.

JOANNE

Holy shit! What's it mean?

EXT. CARTERS TOWNHOME - EVENING

A silver 1982 Mercedes 300SD sedan slowly pulls into the narrow driveway alongside the Carters' townhome. We see the driver's hand reaching over to grab a leather satchel on the passenger seat. The car door opens and he gets out, then leans back in to check on a dog sprawled out on a blanket on the back seat. We don't see the driver's face.

INT. CARTERS TOWNHOME - EVENING

Adam and Joanne are looking at each other, still mesmerized, speechless. Adam slugs down some beer.

JOANNE

Get me one of those...

Adam starts to head toward the kitchen, when the doorbell rings.

JOANNE

Who d'ya suppose that is?

ADAM

Probably Stephen. I'll get it.

Adam steps into the hallway and goes over to the front door, switches on the porch light and looks out through the peephole. He sees the back of the mystery man's head, same dark green flannel shirt. Adam opens the door, and the man turns around to greet him. Adam looks like he's seen a ghost, his beer can slipping from his grasp and spilling in the doorway. Stuart Carter is smiling at him. He leans over to pick up what's left of Adam's beer, and hands it back to Adam.

STU CARTER
Christ, Adam, you look like
you've seen a ghost.

ADAM
Uncle Stuuu?!

Stu and Adam are standing in the doorway.

STU
Yeah, it's been awhile.
Mind if I come in?

ADAM
No... No. Come on in. It's
great to see you.

Just as Stu steps inside, almost simultaneously Joanne
steps into the hallway from the family room, and stares
at Stu in stone-cold, shocked silence.

STU
Hi Joanne... Long time.

JOANNE
Oh my God, Stu! You're not dead.

STU
No. I'm sorry it had to be that way.

A dog is barking outdoors.

STU
That's my dog. Would you mind
if I?...

ADAM
No sweat. I'll get him.

Adam walks by Stu and starts to step outside.

STU
He's in the back seat.
I think you've met Dewey.

Stu steps into the family room. The TV's still on. There's an empty beer can and an ashtray on the coffee table in front of the sofa.

EXT. STU'S MERCEDES - EVENING

Adam opens up the back door and sees Dewey. Adam reaches in to pet the dog.

ADAM

Hey Dewey. Come on boy.

Adam reaches down to the floor and grabs the leash. He notices the Spokane Spokesman-Review newspaper folded on the back seat... The lead headline: "Three men found slain at Marble lumber mill"

INT. CARTERS' TOWNHOME - EVENING

Adam steps inside with the dog, leans over and lets him off the leash. Stu steps out of the family room, and the dog immediately jumps up to him with his front paws, standing on his hind legs, while Stu pets his head and rubs his ears.

STU

Hey Dewey. How you doin', boy?

Joanne and Adam look at each other in amazement.

STU

So how's my brother doin'?

JOANNE

Not too good, Stu. He's got leukemia.

STU

I know. Can I see him?

JOANNE

Of course. He's upstairs in bed. Come on.

Joanne turns to lead Stu up the stairs.

STU

Just a minute. I've got something
for you.

Stu reaches into his satchel, pulls out a manilla folder
and hands it to Joanne. Adam is petting the dog.

STU

I think you forgot this. Pretty
interesting stuff... Whoever would've
thought a guy who grew up in
South Boston would end up running a
lumber company on the other side of
the country?

Joanne and Adam both appear mesmerized.

STU

Now, what do you say we go
shock the hell out of my brother?

ADAM

Let's do it.

Joanne takes the lead and starts heading upstairs, Stu
and Adam following.

EXT. CARTERS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joanne knocks on the bedroom door.

JOANNE

Can we come in, honey?

Joanne starts to slowly open the door and peek inside.

INT. CARTERS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

John is sitting up in bed, reading. He sets the book
aside, lowers his reading glasses, looking over the rim.

JOHN

Since when do we knock?

JOANNE

When we have company.

JOHN

I'm as decent as I'm gonna
get, so come on in. Who is
it, the Pope?

Just then, Stu steps into the room. John looks like he
just got an electric shock, his head snapping back, his
jaw dropping, utter disbelief.

JOHN

Oh my God, Stu! I thought...

STU

I was dead. I know. There was
a reason for that.

Stu walks over to his brother's bedside.

STU

I did what I thought I had
to do, so nobody else would
get hurt.

John just stares at Stu in amazement and bewilderment.
Then the dog enters the bedroom, strutting over next to
Stu. He stands on his hind legs, puts his front paws on
the bed next to John and licks his hand. John pats the
dog's head. Stu reaches out his hand, they shake and Stu
leans in to give his brother a hug.

JOHN

I'd get up and have a beer with
ya, but I haven't been feelin'
too good lately.

STU

So I hear. I stopped by your
marina the other day. That Molly
Stark sure is a beauty. One of
your dock hands filled me in.

JOHN

I'm not surprised. They'd make better reporters.

Stu sits down on the bed beside his brother. Joanne sits down on the other side of the bed. Adam and Joanne are looking happy, yet curious.

STU

Yeah?... Well I got some good news they can report.

Adam and Joanne are fixated on Stu now. John appears curious.

STU

I checked into Mass. General a couple days ago and had some tests run... Seems we share more than just our good looks. We're a perfect blood match. Which means, old boy, that I am here just in time for you to make a marrow escape.

John and Stu chuckle. John leans forward and gives Stu another hug. A tear runs down Joanne's cheek.

JOHN

I don't know where to start. Ten years. God I've missed you. Where have you been? What have you been doing? How did...

STU

We'll have plenty of time to catch up. Doc Mitchell was gonna call you, but I told him I wanted to give you the news myself, in person... We're gonna get in there and do that transplant day after tomorrow. Then we can get out and do some deep sea fishing. One thing, though...

JOHN

What's that?

STU

We're gonna have to use some
real good chum... The dock hands
said something pretty rotten got
tossed in the other day that scared
the fish away.

Stu looks over at Joanne, winking and smiling at her. She forces a smile back, and then looks over at Adam, both shrugging their shoulders, half smiling. Joanne gets up, walks over to the dresser and gets something out of the top drawer. She walks over to Stu, takes his hand and places the SEAL ring in his hand.

JOANNE

I dreamed this day would happen.
Thank you!

Stu looks down at the ring. He's awestruck. His eyes begin to water as he looks first at John, then back at Joanne.

STU

Thank YOU!

FADE OUT