

The Hedonist

A screenplay by
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FADE IN:

Yellow and green feathers fill the screen. Beams of light dance over them, casting rainbows and reflections.

As we move higher up, we see the feathers are circled by a thick black ring. Beyond that white...

We're looking at the landscape of an eye.

Now we're moving down over flesh, luxuriating in the texture of it, the endless rolling mass of it.

The light is changing now, fading into blue neon: cold storage light. We begin to move faster and faster across the skin. The effect is chaotic, unsettling.

a mouth opens

eyes shut tight

hands rear up, beating against us, trying to push us away...

and then the sound comes. It starts as high-pitched as a muffled scream, but as it gets louder it falls in octave.

A roaring, rushing blast of pure noise...

EXT. STREET. NEW YORK. EVENING.

The blast of a car horn.

The light is fading as the stall-holders pack away the remnants of a market. There's a chill in the air and the wind blows up little whirls and eddies of dust.

Turkish music blares out of a truck window. The DRIVER leans out to shout at the people in his way.

Getting no reaction the DRIVER hits the horn again. The street clears and he moves his vehicle towards a bodega. The DRIVER leaps out of his truck as the first drops of rain begin to fall.

The DRIVER opens up the doors of the truck and heaves out bound stacks of magazines. He slings them onto the street, just outside the shop awning where MATT WALLINGER is standing, sheltering from the rain.

MATT is in his early thirties. He has a suitcase and some bags by his side. He unwraps his newly purchased cigarettes and lights one. The rain begins to soak the delivery of magazines.

A CHINESE SHOPKEEPER rushes out of the bodega, just as the DRIVER swings back into the seat of the van. The SHOPKEEPER sees the sodden delivery and swears. Turkish music drowns him out as the van drives off.

The SHOPKEEPER starts to drag the magazines under the awning.

The rain is coming thick and fast now.

The SHOPKEEPER reaches down and begins cutting the plastic binding around the magazines: glossies, porn, traders.

Water is seeping under the awning, close to a designer shoe bag next to MATT. He reaches down and moves it.

The rain hammers down, transforming the city into a uniform sea of grey.

O/C: The sound of a telephone ringing

EXT. MEATPACKING DISTRICT. EVENING.

The ringing continues, as does the rain.

Struggling with an umbrella, MATT drags his suitcase along the sidewalk.

MATT walks on down the street past a meat market. In the half-light we can make out the hooks and the stone pillars. The roof leaks rain onto the stained tables.

Pinned to the gates is a sign advertising dates and times.

There's the BEEP of an ansaphone.

O/C: CHEERY FEMALE VOICE
Oh hi there, this is Sylvie from Max
Lewis' office. I received your

references, no problems there and I'm just calling to say how much everyone is looking forward to meeting you tomorrow...

Her voice is drowned out by a gust of wind. MATT'S umbrella turns inside out and rips.

EXT. TENEMENT. NIGHT.

From a distance we can see MATT, drenched and yelling into an intercom.

INT. MATT'S ROOM. TENEMENT. NEW YORK. NIGHT.

A shaft of light cuts across the dark, empty room as MATT enters with BOBBY, a black man in his 30's.

BOBBY puts MATT'S suitcase down and switches on the bare light bulb.

BOBBY

Like I said, a little basic.

MATT

Oh no, man, it's perfect.

BOBBY

Well I applaud your enthusiasm.

MATT

Look, it's cheap, it's in the same block as my best friend and it has... extreme potential.

BOBBY laughs and holds out a package.

BOBBY

This might add a little character.

It's a photograph of BOBBY and MATT dressed for basket-ball and grinning at the camera. Balancing on MATT'S shoulders is a young kid, ELI, in an oversized basketball shirt.

MATT

How's he doing?

BOBBY

He'll be OK.

MATT

Are you OK?

BOBBY

Well I have to be.

There's an uncomfortable pause. MATT turns away and starts to poke around the room.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

He'll probably be a little distant at first. It really affected him when you checked out the way you did.

MATT opens up a door which leads into a large empty closet.

MATT

Look at that! My own executive workspace!

But when he turns around, BOBBY isn't smiling.

BOBBY

What the hell happened, Matt?

Silence.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

It's been a year, do you realize that? No phone call, no message.

MATT

I had a few problems I needed to figure out.

Pause.

BOBBY

That's it?

MATT

I'm back on track now, Bobby. I'm sorry I let you down.

BOBBY stares at him, incredulous. MATT stares back. After a moment, BOBBY decides to leave it.

BOBBY

So, what's this new gig you got?

MATT grins and shakes his head. BOBBY riles.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Are you not at liberty to say?

MATT

No, look, I just don't want to jinx it. I have the first interview tomorrow and if it doesn't go well, I'm out, so...

BOBBY

So... Well, I got a game on upstairs. Lakers and beer?

MATT

Oh now, I think you'll find I have an inordinate amount to say on the subject of Lakers and beer. Robert Sage, did you know that in 1994, Jimmy Reik of the Lakers scored more consecutive hoops than-

BOBBY / MATT

- any other white player before or since.

BOBBY

(Laughing)

Strangely enough I did know that, Matt. But that still doesn't mean you can jump for shit.

As they leave the rain starts to drip from the windowsill onto the floor.

INT. ROOM. NIGHT.

Water is dripping from a faucet. A man's hand reaches into the frame and turns it. The water trickles out. The man lets it run over the palm of his hand.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. MATT'S ROOM. TENEMENT. DAY.

MATT is dressed in a smart suit and is bent over, lovingly doing up the laces of his new, shiny shoes. He runs his fingers over the leather.

He sits up, opens a package on his bed and takes out: a stack of clippings on a man named Max Lewis and a 'Time' magazine identity card, bearing MATT'S image and name.

MATT seems stressed. He takes a deep breath and runs his hands through his hair.

MATT (CONT'D)
OK, OK, we can do this.

He stands up, pockets the card and nods his head.

MATT (CONT'D)
We can do this.

EXT. STEPS OF MATT'S TENEMENT. DAY.

There is a freshness in the air and the sun is bright, casting shadows onto the sidewalk.

Sitting on the steps of the building, copying words out of a bible is BOBBY'S son, ELI, about eight years old. The front door of the building opens and MATT steps out carrying a briefcase. He's in high spirits.

MATTHEW
Hey Eli, my man, what's up?

ELI is not pleased to see MATT.

ELI
Nothing.

MATTHEW
Dad in the darkroom?

ELI
Mmm hmm.

MATT lights a cigarette and leans over ELI'S shoulder.

MATTHEW
What you reading there?

ELI gives him a withering look. MATT inspects the cover.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
The good book. Very impressive.

ELI ignores him. MATTHEW starts down the steps

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Don't you want to know where I'm going?

ELI

(Sighs)

Where you going?

MATTHEW

Interview.

ELI

Who?

MATTHEW

Top secret, Eli, can't tell. But if it
pays off, I'll cut you some of the
action. What do you say?

MATTHEW continues down the stairs.

ELI

(Mutters)

Sure.

EXT. STREET. NEW YORK. DAY.

A run down district.

A buoyant MATT reaches the subway entrance, only to find it
chained up. He swears under his breath and looks around to
see a bus leave the stop and drive past him. Great.

INT. TAXI CAB. DAY.

MATT sits in the back of a cab as it drives through the
financial district. He's nervous, straightening his tie in
the rear view mirror.

He gets out a Dictaphone and switches it on. He holds it up
to the window to capture the sounds of the street. He
presses stop and plays it back.

EXT. STREET. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. DAY.

MATT struggles out of his cab and pays the driver. He turns
and looks at the building in front of him. Glass and steel
towers glisten in the morning sun.

INT. LOBBY. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. DAY.

A vast lobby. Marble plinths support elongated iron sculptures, twisted into female forms. MATT sits opposite them on an oversized sofa. He tilts his head to one side, trying to make out the shapes.

In front of him is a small table with neatly ordered copies of The Hedonist magazine. The images are highly erotic, explicit and beautifully photographed. Some are sadomasochistic and all are unsettling.

Each copy bears the slogan

Beyond the limit

MATT is distracted by a sound behind him. He turns to see slick promo footage being projected onto a wall.

CUT TO:

VIDEO FOOTAGE:

Yellow and green feathers fill the screen. Beams of light dance over them, casting rainbows and reflections.

As we move higher up, we see the feathers are circled by a thick black ring. Beyond that white...

We're looking at the landscape of an eye.

Now we're moving down over flesh, luxuriating in the texture of it, the endless rolling mass of it.

CUT BACK:

MATT'S focus is disturbed by the click-click of high heels as a sleek blonde woman crosses the floor towards him. This is SYLVIE, whose voice we heard on the telephone in the opening scenes. She is really super-nice and really *super-efficient*.

MATT rises to his feet.

MATT
Sylvie? Matthew Wallinger / Time
Magazine.

SYLVIE

/ Time Magazine. Hi. On behalf of everyone at The Hedonist, I'd like to welcome you to the future of adult publishing.

She guides him across the lobby.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

Now, this is a copy of your itinerary over the next few days. We've put together a comprehensive interview program, designed to enable you to observe Max both at work and at home.

As MATT and SYLVIE walk away, the camera lingers on an open copy of The Hedonist. On the inside page is a photograph of MAX LEWIS and his son DAVID LEWIS, arms around each other's shoulders, standing proudly beneath the Hedonist logo. Next to the photo is a mission statement. The camera scans the words on the page as we hear MAX LEWIS' distinctive drawl fade up from the background...

MAX V/O

The Hedonist believes in acceptance of all races, sexualities, preferences...

MONTAGE:

MAX'S V/O continues over a series of shots:

Smiling staff bustle down corridors

Conference rooms are filled with happy conversation and laughter as heads of department take their lunch together.

The Hedonist logo: golden, omnipresent.

MAX V/O (CONT'D)

We are not afraid to tell the truth about desire, we are not afraid to communicate this truth in a challenging way.

INT. MAX'S OFFICE. HEDONIST BUILDING. DAY.

MAX LEWIS is seated at a huge leather desk in his penthouse office with the most spectacular view over Manhattan.

MAX is in his late 50's: fit, exceptionally well-dressed with an unflinching stare.

MATT sits opposite MAX. If he's nervous he doesn't show it.

MAX (CONT'D)

We are committed to the pursuit of a society which embraces the freedom of the imagination.

MATT has forgotten to take his Dictaphone out. He fumbles for it, embarrassed. He puts it on the table and switches it on.

MAX (CONT'D)

I'm always on the record, Matthew, there's nothing I'm ashamed of.

MATT

Really?

MAX

Well, if it exists, I haven't found it yet. What greater warder of the human soul than shame, the key that turns the lock.

MATT

Very pithy.

MAX regards him for a moment, not liking his attitude.

MAX

Where d'you want to start?

MATT

I'm sorry?

MAX

No, I tell you what, let's start with you. Why do you think you're here, son? Come on, let's be honest with each other.

MATT

Publicity for the magazine's anniversary.

MAX shakes his head. He starts to play with a corporate toy on his desk.

MATT (CONT'D)

Um.. personal satisfaction, it's the first time you've done a profile so ...

MAX

You mean vanity. No.

He looks up at MATT who has no more answers.

MAX (CONT'D)

Respect. That's the word, that's the reason.

MATT

It's due?

MAX

To be honest with you, it's a little overdue. I'm a self-made man, Matt. I've worked for thirty years building up these magazines and I believe in the rights of the individual. Here at The Hedonist, we give that individual permission to feel desire without shame, without judgement. But the bureaucrats out there, they want to string me up and use me for some kind of moral dartboard. These people are trying to ruin me, Matthew. Conducting some kind of smear campaign.

MATT

Why would they do that?

MAX

Because they don't own me and let me tell you son, they never will.

(He laughs derisively)

Trying to dig up my past - well, believe you me, there's nothing they can find I haven't already announced and re-nounced. That's age'll do that to you. Age and children. Are you a family man, Matthew?

MATT shakes his head.

MAX (CONT'D)

Well, there I go again, wandering all around the subject. We were talking reasons. Now the reason you're here is because I want the man on the street to see me in my true colors and judge for himself. Damn it, if the public's going to put me on trial, then I want a fair hearing! When Time magazine called, I thought, well there's the people can give me one. So that's my only condition for this interview, Matthew, an open mind. Can you to give me your word on that?

MATT

Sure.

MAX stares at MATT intently, sizing him up.

MAX

I'm going to show you something.

He gets up from the desk, MATTHEW follows him.

MAX (CONT'D)

(Indicating the Dictaphone)

Don't forget your...

MATT picks it up and follows MAX into an adjoining room.

INT. ROUND ROOM. MAX'S OFFICE. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. DAY.

MAX and MATT enter a circular room stacked with publishing and style awards.

The walls are hung with large framed covers from nine anniversary editions of The Hedonist and at least twenty from an earlier publication: 'Peeping Tom'. The images are both erotic and hard-core.

MAX

Over thirty years of my life on this wall. You know, when we launched 'Peeping Tom' in '73 we were seen as maybe a rival for Playboy.

(He laughs, incredulous)
Playboy! Can you imagine?

MATT pauses at a cover depicting a model from the early seventies.

MAX (CONT'D)
That's Anna Louise, my first wife.

MATT
I heard she died, I'm so sorry.

MAX
Well she was a drunk. A violent drunk.
She drank herself into an early grave
and I have to say I was thankful for
it...

He sighs and stares at an empty hook on the wall, the tenth space in the succession of Hedonist covers.

MAX (CONT'D)
Back in the day, Matthew, I was not a
happy man.

He snaps out of his reminiscence.

MAX (CONT'D)
What I want you to understand here, is
that The Hedonist is different. When
you buy an issue, you don't know what
to expect. You don't know which of your
buttons we're going to press. But you
do know that we're going to excite you,
unsettle you. We're here to push back
the boundaries. Beyond the limit.

MATT
But, see the current argument is that
there are limits you *shouldn't* go
beyond. Morality, decency -

MAX
Decency?
(He laughs)
Who decides what's decent, Matthew? Do
I? Do you? Does God?

MATT smiles, anticipating where this is going.

MATT
People decide.

MAX
Well take a look at our sales figures,
son, see what decision they've made.
They like us because we tell the truth.
I like Time magazine because it tells
the truth. So that's what I want you to
do, Matthew. Call it like you see it.

TV SCREEN.

An evangelical preacher is holding forth to a lively studio audience:

PREACHER
Whosoever therefore shall break one of
these least commandments, and shall
teach men so, he shall be called the
least in the kingdom of heaven: but
whosoever shall do and teach them, the
same shall be called great in the
kingdom of heaven! Great! Let's think
on that folks!

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT. TENEMENT. EVENING.

ELI is sitting watching TV in his apartment.

The walls are hung with ELI'S drawings and BOBBY'S
photographs, including family portraits where a beautiful,
smiling woman has her arms around them both.

BOBBY is helping MATT into a dinner jacket.

BOBBY
... more or less a fit. How does it
feel?

MATT
It's fine. Thanks for this, man.

BOBBY
Surrounded by those kind of women, you
got to look fine.

ELI
What kind of women?

MATT
Don't worry about it, Eli.

ELI does not take this kindly.

BOBBY opens the door to his dark-room and walks in, starting to fix up developing trays. MATT follows.

INT. DARK ROOM. BOBBY'S APARTMENT. EVENING.

MATT hovers, examining BOBBY'S photographs.

BOBBY
How the hell did you get a gig like this, Matt?

MATT
Max wants Joe public to know the real, compelling and inspiring story behind his rise to global domination.

BOBBY
And how does that one go?

MATT
OK, picture the scene. The deep south: swamps, gators, white trash children with no shoes...

BOBBY pauses in his work. He smiles.

BOBBY
Should I be singing some kind of spiritual?

MATT
You're there. OK, so in this godforsaken land we see general reprobate Max Lewis living a life of sin and evil with his alcoholic wife.

CUT AWAY:

ELI is hooked. He turns down the volume on the television.

CUT BACK:

MATT (CONT'D)

We have the publishing of porn, the extortion, the violent binges... But what you have to remember is that deep in his heart Max is terribly unhappy. Because, secretly Max Lewis doesn't want to live this life of depravity.

BOBBY

No?

MATT

No! He wants to become a fully self-realized member of society.

BOBBY

That's beautiful.

MATT

Indeed it is. So enter new wife stage left, cue road to Damascus conversion as Max moves to New York, becomes the model citizen, creates the perfect family and sets about selfless charity work whilst becoming a millionaire on the side and running for mayor.

BOBBY

You're going to bury him.

MAX

(Nodding)

I am going to bury him.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT. EVENING.

As the two men exit the darkroom, BOBBY stands back from MATT and appraises his get-up.

BOBBY

Tie?

MATT

I think I can just about stretch to that.

BOBBY

If I was you I'd take a pitchfork.

ELI

Why?

They ignore him.

ELI (CONT'D)

Why?

The two men drop their voices, ELI can't hear. He narrows his eyes and turns the television up. The preacher is really going for it now:

PREACHER

Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out!

AUDIENCE / ELI

Pluck it out!

BOBBY

Eli!

ELI turns the sound down.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

(In an undertone)

Never thought I'd miss playstation.

MATT

I'll leave you to it.

MATT leaves.

BOBBY

What's up with you?

ELI shoots him a dark look.

ELI

I know what you were talking about.

BOBBY

You're watching too much of this stuff, you know that?

BOBBY tries to shift ELI onto his lap.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Give Matt a break, OK? Everyone
deserves a break.

ELI
Dad! We're missing the show!

BOBBY sighs, perplexed.

EXT. MATT'S TENEMENT. NIGHT.

MATT is out of the door and down the steps. Outside the building is a limousine, its driver waiting in front. Whistling to himself, MATT walks past them along the street.

CHAUFFEUR
Mr. Wallinger?

MATT turns back.

CHAUFFEUR (CONT'D)
This is your car for the evening, sir,
courtesy of Mr. Lewis.

The CHAUFFEUR opens the car door. The Hedonist logo glints in the light of the street-lamp.

INT. DARK ROOM. BOBBY'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

BOBBY closes the door behind him and switches the light to red. He begins to prepare developing trays.

MERGE WITH:

INT. DARK ROOM. NIGHT.

Another dark room, bathed in red light.

A MAN'S hands snap on latex gloves.

EXT. MEATPACKING DISTRICT. NIGHT.

MATT'S limousine drives past the meat-market we saw at the beginning of the screenplay.

A CARETAKER and his dog approach the wire gates of the market, jangling keys. He pauses to mutter disapproval over the broken padlock. The dog barks furiously.

INT. DARKROOM. NIGHT.

The MAN is developing a photograph in a tray of fluid. The image is faint.

EXT. MEATPACKING DISTRICT. NIGHT.

The dog is still barking. The CARETAKER peers into the market. In the darkness he can make out a silhouetted figure, obscured by a pillar. The CARETAKER moves toward it.

INT. DARKROOM. NIGHT.

The photograph gains clarity, the edges of the image sharpen...

MERGE TO REVEAL:

EXT. MEATPACKING DISTRICT. NIGHT.

The naked body of a dead girl is on all fours in the sawdust. She has been tied to the pillars to keep her in position. Her head is bound in PVC tape and pulled back in mock ecstasy.

The CARETAKER stands staring in horror.

EXT. MAX'S MANSION. THE HAMPTONS. NIGHT.

An enormous, modern house is lit up like a beacon amidst acres of land. A stream of expensive cars flow up the driveway.

EXT. STEPS. MAX'S MANSION. THE HAMPTONS. NIGHT.

MATT walks up the steps of the mansion in his dinner jacket. Couples drift past him. He pauses, looks around him, taking in the regal gardens stretching into the darkness.

INT. HALL. MAX'S MANSION. THE HAMPTONS. NIGHT.

MATT enters the house and finds himself in a vast entrance hall, guarded by an old BUTLER. A winding marble staircase leads into the upper regions of the house.

Dozens of other guests walk past MATT and are greeted with a smile and a nod from the BUTLER.

MATT approaches the old man gingerly. He smiles. The BUTLER smiles back. He nods. MATT nods back and moves through the hallway, past the staircase. He reaches a set of doors and turns the handle.

INT. BALLROOM. MAX'S MANSION. THE HAMPTONS. NIGHT.

A blast of chatter and music.

The large ballroom is lit with moody lighting, which illuminates the statues on podiums. They're identical to those in the Hedonist lobby: twisted iron bent into female forms. The largest is central and has a bar constructed around it.

MATT takes a glass of champagne from a proffered tray and surveys the room. It's packed with businessmen, super-sleek women and Hedonist models who are all dressed in slashed black crepe de chine, cut away to resemble the iron statues.

As MATT wanders through the crowd, he overhears snippets of conversation.

GUEST #1

...there she is! Look at that face.

GUEST #2

It's not so much the face they're going to be interested in.

MATT'S eyes light up as he spots a young man listening to a couple of suits. He's clearly bored out of his mind but he's managing to smile politely. This is DAVID LEWIS whose face we have seen in numerous photographs at the Hedonist building. MATT watches him. He jumps slightly as he hears a dry voice next to him.

TOM

I'm afraid you'll have to join the line.

This is TOM WINTERS, in his 40's, lounging by the bar with a drink.

MATT

I beg your pardon.

TOM

To speak to David. People have been queuing up for months in advance.

(holding out his hand)

Tom Winters.

MATT

As in the photographer, Tom Winters?

TOM

The very same.

MATT

(Shaking his hand)

Matt Wallinger, I'm a great admirer of your early work. The Wichita Portraits. Awesome.

TOM

Well, I certainly don't do that sort of work anymore.

MATTHEW

Can I ask, what made you decide to move into porn?

TOM

(mock whisper)

We're not supposed to use that word here. But in answer to your question, the official line is that I wanted a challenge.

MATT

Off the record?

The BUTLER drifts towards them.

HART

(To MATT)

Mr Lewis would like to see you, sir. If you'd follow me.

TOM

Good luck in there. And Matt? Off the record.. I wanted a challenge.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM. MAX'S MANSION. THE HAMPTONS. NIGHT.

The sound of voices raised in argument. They come to an abrupt halt as MATT is ushered into the room.

There are no other guests present. MAX is standing with his wife, HELEN LEWIS - a wholesome-looking, heavily pregnant woman in her forties who has her arm around a beautiful, furious young girl in a simple black dress. This is ELEANOR LEWIS. She hasn't made a huge effort with her appearance. She doesn't need to.

MAX

Matthew, glad you could make it. I want you to meet my wife Helen.

HELEN shakes his hand, radiating calm and sincerity.

HELEN

It's our pleasure to have you here Mr Wallinger. I can't tell you what it means to Max that you're writing this profile.

MATT smiles, a trifle uncomfortable.

HELEN

And this is the youngest member of our little clan, Eleanor.

ELEANOR

(Tense)

Hey.

HELEN

Ellie's just come back from Oxford University in England -

MAX

- and is apparently just about to return to it again.

ELEANOR

Can we carry on this conversation another time, please?

MAX

Well why not? I think you've made it very clear it's your own life you're intent on ruining.

HELEN
Max, please honey -

ELEANOR is losing her temper.

ELEANOR
Look, I just need to be somewhere I can
be known for my own achievements, you
know? Not just for being the daughter
of America's biggest porn lord!

HELEN quickly places a calming hand on MAX'S arm.

HELEN
How rude of us all, Mr. Wallinger, and
here you are waiting to dance with
Eleanor.

ELEANOR
Mom!

HELEN (CONT'D)
I won't hear another word about it,
this is your party, Ellie. Off you two
go and enjoy yourselves.

She smiles determinedly at MATT who offers his hand to a
mortified ELEANOR. They leave for the ballroom.

HELEN squeezes MAX'S hand.

HELEN (CONT'D)
She'll come around.

INT. BALLROOM. MAX'S MANSION. THE HAMPTONS. NIGHT.

The band is playing a tune more conducive to sleeping than
dancing. ELEANOR and MATT stand awkwardly for a moment.

ELEANOR
We really don't have to dance you know.

MATT
No, no. Great. I love to dance.

He takes her in his arms and they start a slow waltz. She's
pleased by how good he is.

ELEANOR

Sorry you had to witness that.

MATT

All families argue.

ELEANOR

Oh, not the Lewises. We're the perfect family. Always have been.

A troop of Hedonist models cross the dance floor wearing their cut-out dresses. ELEANOR looks after them with distaste. MATT is amused.

MATT

I notice your dress has no holes, Miss Lewis. Shocking lack of commitment to the cause.

ELEANOR laughs. There's a flash of attraction between them.

ELEANOR

Look, Mr. Wallinger -

MATT

Matt.

ELEANOR

I love my father. But what he does, what he stands for... I mean and he thinks it's some sort of art form!

MATT twirls her out and catches her. They carry on dancing.

MATT

Maybe it is.

ELEANOR

No, Matt, it isn't. Now matter how much you dress it up, it's porn. There are women out there -

(she takes a deep breath)

I've been known to get carried away on this particular subject.

MATT

Well I would have thought you have a pretty unique standpoint.

ELEANOR regards him for a moment.

ELEANOR
You could say that.

The music comes to an end and they stop dancing.

ELEANOR
Well. Thank you for the dance, I
should..

She indicates the guests.

MATT
Yes, you should, definitely you should.

She laughs.

ELEANOR
I'll see you later on.

MATT flashes his best smile.

MATT
I very much hope so.

ELEANOR
Do they teach you this in journalist
school?

MATT
I took evening classes.

She laughs again and walks away.

MATT turns back to the room. More guests have arrived and
the place is packed. None of the LEWIS' are in sight.

A WAITER passes with a tray of drinks. MATT takes one,
slugs it back and turns to face a small group of men on his
right. For a moment they look hostile.

MATT (CONT'D)
Hi, I'm Matt Wallinger, I'm doing a
profile on Max Lewis for Time magazine.

The magic words. The men smile and shake his hand.

FADE TO:

MONTAGE

Different guests sing MAX'S praises to MATT

GUEST #1

Oh, I've known Max and Helen for *years*
and I just have to say how -

GUEST #2

- absolutely wonderful Max has been,
you know he put our son through
business school? And did you know that-

GUEST #3

- in 1998, Max founded the Lewis
foundation for HIV research, I can't
tell you, I just -

END MONTAGE

MATT'S drink is full again. He's leaning on the bar,
listening to TARA, a Hedonist model. By the look of him,
he's been listening for some time. Drinking too.

TARA

- have such admiration for Max, because
he's out there, trying to create
something new, something really cutting
edge... You know what Max always says,
is that people have to be challenged,
because if they're not, we just have a
society that's totally, you know...

MATT

Apathetic.

TARA

Well, *exactly*.

MATT

Right... and The Hedonist?

TARA

Well, The Hedonist is all about self-
actualization, it's for people who want
to co-author their lives.

MATT can't keep the smile from his face. TARA looks
offended.

MATT

No, I'm sorry, it's just that a lot of people would say The Hedonist is for people who want to, you know...

She looks at him expectantly.

MATT (CONT'D)
... jerk off.

TARA half-laughs in disbelief.

TARA
Excuse me.

She leaves. MATT grins to himself and shakes his head. There's a noise over by the band, as MAX taps the microphone.

MAX
Your attention please!

The crowd stops talking. MATT picks up a fresh drink.

MAX is standing in front of the band with ELEANOR, DAVID and HELEN.

MAX (CONT'D)
I'm delighted that so many of you could be here with us this evening. Now, those of you who've been to similar events in this house may know that after a.. *moderate* quantity of fine wine, I've been known to take the mike and refuse to relinquish it for some considerable time.

Ripples of laughter and a few cat-calls. MAX grins.

MAX (CONT'D)
Now, instructive though those er..

DAVID leans into the microphone grinning.

DAVID
Lectures.

Laughter.

MAX

... thank you, David. Instructive through those words of wisdom have been, you'll be pleased to know that fate has decided to spare you this evening. My daughter Eleanor recently returned from University where she acquitted herself with flying colors.

DAVID puts an arm around ELEANOR'S shoulders. As MAX continues, MATT clocks ELEANOR giving DAVID a rather icy smile and then reaching down to pick at her dress, making it necessary for him to remove his arm.

MAX (CONT'D)

I can't tell you how much it means to me to have my family back together again and so I'd like you to raise your glass with me and toast the return of the prodigal daughter. To Ellie.

The room raises their glasses and toasts. The band break into a classic dance number and MAX holds out his hand to ELLIE. Laughing despite herself, she takes it and they start to dance.

At the bar, MATT takes another drink.

INT. CORRIDOR. MAX'S MANSION. NIGHT.

MATT steps out of the ballroom and the sound-proof doors swing shut behind him. He walks out into the marble lobby, footsteps echoing in the silence.

MATT walks towards a corridor, pausing to look at ornaments, pictures, anything that could give him an insight into MAX.

INT. LIBRARY MAX'S MANSION. NIGHT.

MATT opens the door into an enormous library. The shelves are filled with books which spill out over tables. MATT walks around the room, taking in the worn covers, the titles. He starts to examine an old set of first editions.

DAVID

The best ones are over here.

MATT turns to see DAVID LEWIS standing in the doorway. DAVID walks towards a velvet curtain and pulls a hanging cord. The curtain slides back to reveal a spotlit alcove. Upright reading stands support vast leather-bound books. MATT whistles in appreciation.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Dad collects them. I used to spend hours here when I was a kid. I'm sorry, I know who you are of course, but we haven't been properly introduced. David Lewis.

MATT

Matt Wallinger.

They shake. MATT turns back to the books, he runs his fingers over an embossed cover.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Go ahead.

MATT opens the book with care. Inside is an illuminated passage from the Bible. MATT shakes his head in wonder.

DAVID walks over to a cabinet and pours them both drinks.

MATT

My father always used to say you could tell a man by the books he read.

(He turns and takes a drink from DAVID.)

These are great books.

DAVID smiles and collapses into one of the leather arm-chairs. MATT sits opposite him.

MATT

Hell of a scene out there.

DAVID

(Raising his glass)
To surviving the evening.

MATT raises his glass and they settle back into their chairs.

MATT

He's a difficult man to get a handle on, your father. He's not entirely what I expected.

DAVID

I get the feeling we should be glad about that.

MATT

It's seeing him here with all of you. He seems... oddly *sincere*.

(Off DAVID'S look)

Sorry, I didn't mean to be -

DAVID

Believe me, I've heard worse. Look, like you say, Dad's a complex man and he has an.. interesting past. But when you're talking about The Hedonist.. I mean Ellie and me, we're his children, but that's his real baby.

MATT

And that doesn't bother you?

DAVID

Used to. Obsession's quite a difficult thing to comprehend when you're six.

DAVID stares at the ice cubes in the bottom of his glass.

DAVID (CONT'D)

The thing was, Ellie left for England and Dad went through this real rough patch, you know, depression... I think he felt like she wasn't coming back. So I had been working in editing for a while and he needed someone at the magazine and even though I'd always been rather lukewarm on the subject, I thought..

He shrugs.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And actually it's been amazing. Best decision I ever made.

(Off MATT'S look)

No, really, what we're doing with The Hedonist, it's truly original.

MATT raises an eyebrow.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Matt, no other magazine in the history of publishing has caused as much controversy: public debate, protests... Whether you support the ethos of the Hedonist or not, you can't deny it's shaken things up a little.

There are whoops of laughter as the sound of the party spills out of the ballroom.

ELEANOR O/C

David!

DAVID grins.

DAVID

But please, don't tell her I said that.

ELEANOR appears in the doorway and looks irritated to see MATT talking to DAVID.

ELEANOR

Hey, Matt.

(To DAVID)

So, your pay per view porn meisters have now passed out in Mom's bedroom with two people who seem to be hookers. Or, I mean I could be wrong, it's so hard to tell at this party.

DAVID

Thanks, Ellie.

ELEANOR

Any time.

She swishes out.

MATT

I'm getting the feeling that she doesn't view your move into adult publishing in a positive light.

DAVID grimaces and gets to his feet.

MATT (CONT'D)
(Of his own psychic abilities)
It's a gift.

He holds out his hand.

MATT (CONT'D)
I very much look forward to our
interview.

DAVID
Me too.

They smile at each other, DAVID leaves and shuts the door behind him.

MATT is left alone in the silence. He looks at the shelves and notices that one of them contains a set of photo albums.

MATT gets to his feet, takes an album off a shelf and flips through the pages. He stops at a portrait of the Lewis': MAX has his arm around HELEN and below them are DAVID and ELEANOR, holding hands. They all look radiant and happy. On the opposite page is a photograph of MAX and a 9 yr old DAVID. Both of them are grinning at the camera, dressed in identical business suits and briefcases.

MATT slides the photos out of their corners and pockets them. He replaces the album and walks over to the window. Parting the curtain, he looks out into the garden. He opens the french windows and lights a cigarette.

Nostalgic music filters out from the ball-room.

MATT can hear a vague murmuring of conversation. He steps out into the garden.

EXT. GARDEN. MAX'S MANSION. THE HAMPTONS. NIGHT.

MATT moves quietly into the velvet darkness, following the sound of voices. He comes to a folly walled in by trees. Through the gaps in the branches he can see MAX talking to TOM WINTERS.

VIEW THROUGH THE TREES

MAX looks stressed.

TOM
.. because there's been developments,
they got some new bitch in from vice-

MAX
You know as well as I do if they go
public the magazine is going to be
implicated. Sooner or later -

TOM
It's the same guy, Max, it's serial.
What do you want them to do?

MAX
Christ!

EXT. GARDEN. MAX'S MANSION. THE HAMPTONS. NIGHT.

MATT senses something and jumps as he turns to see ELEANOR standing behind him. She peers through the trees and sees her father and TOM together.

ELEANOR
(Hushed)
Original research, Matthew, the mark of
a true professional.
(Putting her arm through his)
Now, not that your style isn't
admirable, but I think it might be wise
to find your ride.

EXT. GARDEN. NIGHT.

MAX peers through the trees, sees the retreating silhouettes.

TOM
Who the fuck was that?

MAX stares after them, grim faced.

INT. LIMOUSINE. NIGHT.

The car drives away from Max's mansion. MATT turns his head to watch it's illuminated splendor receding into the night. He frowns and turns back.

MATT

Hey, man, can you put the radio on? The news station?

The DRIVER does so.

CHEERY FEMALE RADIO REPORTER

... that this evening the President visited a nursing home in the Bronx. Elsie Maud, one of the residents at The Sunnyville Home, had this to say about her meeting with the President -

MATT

Could you try a different station?

The DRIVER looks annoyed, but changes the channel.

MALE PRESENTER

With the current world climate we ask, what role has Hollywood to play in this decade of destruction?

MATT

No, no, the next one?

The DRIVER finds a Hip Hop station and turns the music way up.

MATT (CONT'D)

Hey!

The music goes up another notch. MATT resigns himself.

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT. MATT'S TENEMENT. DAWN.

The grey light of dawn. MATT is asleep in a battered old armchair. A radio set blares out more banal news.

MATT'S eyes flicker open.

RADIO V/O

... the discovery, last night, of the mutilated body of a young woman in Manhattan's Meat-Packing district.

MATT struggles to wake up as quickly as he can.

RADIO V/O (CONT'D)

The murder is being touted by sources as the work of a serial killer, known amongst insiders as 'The Hedonist' because of his unsubstantiated link to the pornographic magazine of the same name.

MATT

Fuck!

He races towards the door.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT. MATT'S TENEMENT. MORNING.

Violent KNOCKING on the door. BOBBY walks towards it.

BOBBY

OK, I'm coming.

He opens it, MATT is standing outside looking dishevelled.

MATT

TV.

BOBBY

What?

MATT rushes past him to the set and turns it on, searching for the news channels. ELI sits at the table, eating his oats and staring. MATT finds a channel where the story is playing.

ON TV:

A reporter is standing in front of the wire gates of the meat market. We can't see anything behind her - the whole area is cordoned off with police tape.

REPORTER

- where late last night the woman's body was discovered.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT. MATT'S TENEMENT. MORNING.

BOBBY frowns and turns to ELI.

BOBBY

Eli, go get your school bag.

The boy makes to argue.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Now.

ELI slinks off into the other room.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

(low voice)

That's two blocks away.

TV SCREEN

A police press conference headed by DETECTIVE MARIA NADAL, in her 40's, with intelligent eyes.

MARIA

The victim has been identified as Annie Loft, a 23 yr old publicist who worked at the Q company in Manhattan.

CUT TO:

A photograph of Annie, blonde and smiling.

CUT TO:

MARIA (CONT'D)

We are calling on members of the public to ring in with any information on Annie, especially as to her movements on the night of the 23rd of November.

REPORTER #1

Detective Nadal! Detective, can you comment on why the police believe the murders are linked to The Hedonist magazine?

CUT TO:

A graphic copy of The Hedonist appears on the screen, black tape hiding the cover girl's nudity.

CUT BACK:

MARIA

No, that is an unconfirmed rumor. That is not a connection that has been in any way indicated by the NYPD.

REPORTER #2

But it is the case that you believe this murder to be the work of a serial killer?

MARIA

At this stage of the investigation -

REPORTER #2

My sources tell me that corroborative evidence has now linked seven murders over the last three months.

There is a murmured reaction amongst the press.

REPORTER #2 (CONT'D)

If that's true, can you tell us why the NYPD has not released this information to the public?

MARIA

(uncomfortable)

These are unsubstantiated -

REPORTER #2

The public have a right to know!

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE. DAY.

Two plain clothes cops stand at the back of the room watching MARIA being filmed. These are officers COPE and BRUBECK.

MARIA

OK, that's it. Thank you.

Flustered, she gathers her papers and walks off the podium. COPE smirks to himself.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT. MATT'S TENEMENT. MORNING.

BOBBY

I guess your article just got a whole lot more interesting.

MATT stares blankly at the TV.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Matt?

MATT

I gotta go.

He's picked up his keys and is out of the door. BOBBY turns to see ELI standing at the kitchen table with his bag.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I'll give you a lift to school today,
OK?

ELI

Whatever.

EXT. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. MANHATTAN. DAY.

MATT is trying to push his way through a crowd of journalists, news cameras and anti-porn protestors.

There is murmur in the crowd as SYLVIE comes onto the steps of the building. She stands surveying the crowd.

MATT turns to a JOURNALIST.

MATT

What's going on?

JOURNALIST #1

They've locked the doors. Lewis is definitely inside.

SYLVIE

(Calling)

Matthew Wallinger? Is there a Matthew Wallinger from Time Magazine here?

JOURNALIST #2

Miss, excuse me, Miss! Pete Daly, Time Magazine, can I ask you some questions?

SYLVIE frowns. MATT pushes his way through the crowd towards SYLVIE. JOURNALIST #2 catches his arm.

JOURNALIST #2 (CONT'D)

Hey! You from Time? They told me it was an exclusive.

MATT

You got the wrong brief.

He pushes his way past JOURNALIST #2, who watches him go, perplexed. Security lets him through the barriers.

INT. LOBBY. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. DAY.

MATT and SYLVIE walk through the doors. Security guards reassume their positions.

MATT

That's quite a crowd you got out there.

SYLVIE smiles brightly at him.

SYLVIE

Matt, we have a company policy on this and I'm sure you won't mind abiding by it. As far as we're concerned, it's just business as usual.

They start walking towards the elevator.

MATT

I'm not sure I understand.

The elevator doors swish open.

SYLVIE

Just imagine none of this is happening.

Beat. MATT looks disbelieving.

MATT

You're telling me not to mention it at all?

SYLVIE smiles brightly and they step into the elevator.

SYLVIE

Max is so excited about your visit. I think you're going to enjoy your tour.

INT. PHOTOGRAPHIC STUDIO. DAY

CLOSE: TOM'S eye blinks against a viewfinder. Reflected in it are half-distorted forms.

The studio is lit with green and blue neon lights and dressed with iron trees that twist up to the ceiling. Snow covers the ground.

The models are TARA, dressed in black PVC with strips covering her eyes and mouth; a man strapped into an iron cage and another man, seated with his back to the camera in a voyeuristic position.

Through the camera lens: the model's movements blur, leaving trails of light.

MATT and MAX are standing in the darkness outside the set.

The whole studio is deathly silent. The only sounds are the click from TOM'S camera and the padding of feet as his young assistant, SHAUNA, moves back and forth with film.

MATT watches, disturbed and aroused by the intensity of the shoot. MAX watches him closely, leans forward and whispers...

MAX

How do you find it?

MATT

Sorry?

MAX

Does it do it for you?

MATT is uncomfortable.

MATT

Who comes up with these images?

MAX

(gesturing)

Tom. Tom Winters? I believe you caught a glimpse of him last night.

MATT glances at MAX, who smiles.

INT. CORRIDOR. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. MANHATTAN. DAY.

MATT and MAX walk along the corridor, SYLVIE is a few paces behind, carrying a checklist.

MATT
Great party.

MAX
Wasn't it though?

MATT
It was really good to meet your family.

MAX
Well they just adored you.

They reach a door and MAX opens it.

MAX (CONT'D)
These are the labs. Take a peek.

MATT leans his head around the door.

INT. LABS. HEDONIST BUILDING. DAY.

A warren of white corridors and print machines.

INT. CORRIDOR. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. DAY.

MAX shuts the door.

MAX
I'm taking you through to editorial now. You get a whole sense of the process.

They reach a set of swing doors, MATT can't stand it any longer.

MATT
Max, I have to ask it.

MAX
No, you don't.

MATT
Why are they linking these murders to the magazine?

SYLVIE looks fearfully at MAX, but he just sighs.

MAX

I'm sorry Matthew, but we have a company policy on this. I can't discuss it with you any further and if any of my staff discuss it, they face immediate dismissal. And let me tell you, if this article ends up being some sort of murder-mystery speculation, I'll be very disappointed. And my disappointment is legendary. Now make me a promise, son, concentrate on what's real and leave the fantasy up to us?

He pushes open the doors to the Editorial Offices.

INT. EDITORIAL OFFICES. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. DAY.

MATT and MAX walk through into a busy editorial office. Writers sit at desktops, phones ring. DAVID is bent over a desk scrutinizing layout.

MAX

This is where it all really happens. I come up with the ideas, Tom supplies the vision and David puts it all together. He's what you might call the alchemist of the operation.

They walk over to DAVID. He's working on the layout for the anniversary edition. He looks up and smiles at MATT, who leans over the desk to look at the shots. Polaroids of the shoot he's just seen.

SYLVIE enters the room.

SYLVIE

Max, your conference call is waiting in the board room.

MAX

(to MATT)

Then I leave you in capable hands.

He exits the room with Sylvie.

MATT examines the anniversary pictures.

MATT

That's a sinister picture. I mean, in light of everything that's happened..

DAVID

Look, we have a company / policy -

MATT

/ policy. Yeah, yeah, I know.

He bends over the editorial again and speaks in a low voice.

MATT (CONT'D)

Just thought you might want to talk, you know, off the record.

DAVID regards him levelly.

MATT (CONT'D)

Come on David, something major is going down here.

DAVID drops his eyes and becomes engrossed in the layout. He starts to shift the images and text around.

MATT (CONT'D)

All I'm asking you to do is talk to me about it.

SYLVIE has walked back into the editorial office.

DAVID

Sylvie, would you mind showing Mr. Wallinger out the back way?

MATT is caught by surprise.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Great to see you, Matt.

(Turning)

OK, Rodrigo, let's get them out there, see how they test.

INT. BACK ENTRANCE. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. DAY.

SYLVIE and MATT have almost reached the doors.

SYLVIE

Matthew, it's been wonderful to see you today. I hope you enjoyed your tour, which completes your time at The Hedonist building. There are just a couple of things..

She consults her agenda.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

OK, Max has asked me to schedule in a late dinner for the two of you tomorrow evening. This will be an opportunity for to you go over the more personal details of the interview in the relaxed environment of Max's family home.

(finding the right paper)

Now, I've got a list of proposed topics that Max would be glad to discuss with you and I've also noted down the no-go areas some of which you're already familiar with. OK?

MATT looks at her in disbelief. Just as he's about to speak, she hands him a corporate folder.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

And I thought you'd like to take a look at these, just some facts and figures on Max's involvement in urban regeneration schemes, HIV research and so on. OK, well, have a safe journey home!

MATT

Er.. David said that I should schedule in an interview -

SYLVIE

David and I had a conversation this morning and I'm afraid he's really swamped with the anniversary edition, so unfortunately...

MATT

Right.

He turns to walk away.

SYLVIE

Matt! Your building pass?

MATT sighs and reaches into his pocket.

INT. SUBWAY CARRIAGE. NIGHT.

It's late and the carriage is half-empty. MATT is lounging in a seat, scribbling in a notebook. He looks up, frowning.

INT. SUBWAY. NIGHT.

MATT pushes through the doors and walks down the grimy subway corridor towards the exit. He's still lost in thought. Half-way along he passes a man, slumped against the wall with his head in his hands. Beside him is a begging bowl and piece of cardboard with the words:

this is the way, walk ye in it

MATT stops, struck by the words. He lights a cigarette. Urine trickles across the corridor towards MATT'S shoes.

INT. MORTUARY. EVENING.

CAMPBELL, the pathologist, stands over the body of ANNIE LOFT with DETECTIVE MARIA NADAL and OFFICER COPE. CAMPBELL is a tired-looking man in his 50's.

The two men watch as MARIA walks around the body, deep in concentration, pausing here and there.

MARIA looks up at CAMPBELL.

CAMPBELL

You're going to ask me do we have any definite forensic evidence to link this murder to the other six and I have to tell you no. Apart from, of course, the similar way in which they were abducted - chemical solution injected into the blood system, one..

He lifts an arm which shows bruising from a needle.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

The similar way in which they died, through suffocation, two. The similar way in which their bodies were

mutilated, three. Aside from this we have no traces of any bodily fluid from the killer, no evidence of penetration, no hair, skin flakes, nothing. This guy is very clever, very persistent, very careful.

COPE'S mobile starts buzzing and he walks out of the room with it. CAMPBELL stares after him.

MARIA lifts ANNIE'S arm to look at the puncture mark left by the needle. She's aware of CAMPBELL'S eyes on her.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

They tell me you matched the injection formula. Photographic solution. Nice leap. I'd been trying to figure that one for months.

MARIA

I just thought, he poses them so exactly...

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

Takes us another step closer doesn't it?

CAMPBELL stares at MARIA. She looks up at him questioningly.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

Well, I just... I find it interesting. They send you in to take over the case...

MARIA

Officer Cope had no previous case experience in this area.

CAMPBELL

Oh, I know, I know. And you're good, Detective, you're fast. Who was first on the scene for Annie here? It was you wasn't it? That's right, that's what I thought. And that's when you found the magazine. Just seems to me a little strange that this magazine hadn't been there for the other victims. It's a

shame, that's all it is. It would have cinched the link with the Hedonist. It would have speeded things up for the investigation..

COPE can be heard outside the room, talking on his cell, CAMPBELL glances up at him.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

Just a shame.

COPE walks back into the room. CAMPBELL pulls the sheet over ANNIE.

INT. CLOSET ROOM. MATT'S ROOM. TENEMENT. NEW YORK. DAY.

MATT sits in front of a state-of-the-art computer looking un-shaven and tired. He's surrounded by copies of the Hedonist, half-full cups of coffee and ashtrays. On the floor beside him, computer boxes and foam packaging.

MATT lights another cigarette.

On the computer screen in front of him the title:

The last judgement of Max Lewis

An expose by Matthew Wallinger

On the desk, a stack of neatly labelled Dictaphone tapes read 'Max Lewis #1', 'Max Lewis #2'. MATT takes the first tape, puts it in the machine, rewinds it: a high pitched stream of backwards words. He lets it run.

MAX O/C

Here at The Hedonist, we give that individual permission to feel desire without shame, without judgement.

MATT presses stop. He prefaces the title with the words

A shameless life

He can hear voices coming from outside the apartment. Carefully shutting the door to the study he opens the main door to the stairwell.

INT. STAIRWELL. MATT'S TENEMENT. MORNING.

ELI is sitting on the stairs next to ELEANOR, who is carrying a bunch of sunflowers. They are talking, ELI laughs. It's the first time we've ever even seen him smile. They become aware of MATT staring at them.

ELEANOR

Oh, hey, Matt. I was just telling Eli about England.

MATT

(To ELI)

Shouldn't you be at school?

ELI

Shouldn't you be solving a murder?

MATT looks at the young boy, incredulous. ELI looks smug and nods at him. ELEANOR laughs.

ELEANOR

Hope you don't mind me looking you up like this.

MATT

Not at all. Come in.

ELEANOR plucks a sunflower from the bunch and gives it to ELI.

ELEANOR

See you later, Eli.

ELI

(Smitten)

Bye.

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT. MATT'S TENEMENT. MORNING.

ELEANOR looks around the dark, empty apartment.

ELEANOR

Wow, it's.. very minimalist.

MATT

Can I get you coffee or.. actually just coffee.

ELEANOR

Coffee's good.

He moves over to the counter to make it.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

I'm staying just around the corner, so

-

(Clocking MATT'S puzzled face)

Dad and I didn't quite see eye to eye
on some things.

MATT

You're going back to England?

ELEANOR

Couple of days. I have the kind of
family you appreciate better from a
distance.

MATT smiles and continues his coffee-making. ELEANOR fills
a vase with water, puts her sunflowers in and arranges them
on a table near the window.

MATT

I'd love to offer you milk, but -

ELEANOR

I'd only refuse. So, Eli tells me your
a basketball pro.

MATT laughs.

MATT

He said I suck, didn't he?

ELEANOR laughs and nods. She studies him for a moment.

ELEANOR

He seems a little angry at you.

MATT

Yeah. We're working on that one.

He hands her a cup of coffee. She perches on the edge of
the armchair. On the floor are SYLVIE'S corporate
brochures.

ELEANOR

I wanted to talk to you about your
profile.

MATT looks at her expectant.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

I wanted to ask you to promise me that, whatever happens, you'll tell the whole story. About my father, I mean. And I don't mean all of these fucking-

She gestures at the corporate folders. She's clearly angry and upset so MATT gives her a moment to collect herself.

ELEANOR takes out a bunch of stats from her handbag.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

I thought you should know why I went to England.

MATT looks at the stats. They're a record of an arrest and conviction for the rape of Eleanor Lewis.

MATT

Oh my God Ellie, I had no idea.

ELEANOR

No, well, my father pulled some serious strings. It never even made the press. I'd like to think it was for the sake of my privacy but I'm a little too old for fairy tales.

She shakes her head. MATT is concerned.

MATT

Are you sure you want me to drag all this up again?

ELEANOR

(Half laughs)

No.. yeah I do. I do. You don't know the way it happened, Matt... growing up as his daughter, everyone looking at you and just assuming, you know...

(she takes a moment)

The thing about it was, that he kept on publishing. And now you see, these girls are being *murdered* and he's going to keep on publishing. I don't know

what else to do, Matt, I don't know how to make him stop.

Distressed, she gets up and wanders around the apartment.

MATT

What about David.

ELEANOR

Oh, come on! I can't talk to David. He knew how I felt, he knew what happened! And then the next thing I hear, he's joined the magazine. David and Dad, the original pioneers!

MATT is about to protest on DAVID'S behalf.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Matt, please, don't even try. As far as I'm concerned I no longer have a brother.

MATT gets to his feet and goes over to her. ELEANOR tries to be bright and breezy.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

So, that's it really. I just wanted to
-

She breaks off, upset. MATT puts his arms around her. For a moment ELEANOR allows herself to cry and then she pulls herself together.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

No, OK, I should go.

MATT

When do you leave?

ELEANOR

The day after tomorrow.

MATT

Would you like to meet up again, before you go I mean? Coffee or dinner, whatever. Talk through all of this. Or not talk about any of it, you know, talk about nothing at all, or something.. else... and different!

ELEANOR laughs.

ELEANOR
That would be nice.

She looks up at him. From the tension in the air, it seems like they'll kiss. ELEANOR reaches into her bag.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
So this is to... this is for you.

She gives him an envelope and MATT opens it. It's a cheque.

MATT
I don't understand.

ELEANOR is very uncomfortable.

ELEANOR
Well, I wanted you to know you had my support.

MATT stares at her, suddenly cold. He hands the cheque back.

MATT
I don't need that kind of support to make up my mind.

ELEANOR stares at him, helplessly.

MATT (CONT'D)
Thanks for coming by.

ELEANOR turns and leaves the room.

MATT sits down in his battered armchair, his face rigid with anger. The room is silent. He takes out a cigarette and lights up. He lets the smoke curl out of his mouth before sucking it back in.

MATT stands up and walks into the small bathroom adjoining the room. There's a mirrored cabinet above the sink. MATT stares at his reflection.

His mobile phone rings in the living room. For a moment, MATT looks toward it, hostile. Then he sighs, walks back into the room and picks it up.

MATT (CONT'D)
Hello? Yes, this is Matt.
(tone changing abruptly)
Oh, yeah, thanks for calling back..

EXT. STEPS OF MATT'S TENEMENT. AFTERNOON.

BOBBY is carrying grocery bags and struggling with the door key.

MATT opens the door from the inside and holds it for him.

BOBBY
Thanks.

MATT
No problemo, Mister Sage.

He runs down the steps and across the road.

BOBBY
(Calling)
You around for dinner later?

MATT
(distracted)
Oh.. yeah, yeah! I have to go on after,
but say seven? Seven thirty?

BOBBY
You got it.

BOBBY closes the door behind him.

INT. STAIRWELL. MATTHEW'S TENEMENT. AFTERNOON.

As BOBBY makes his way up the stairs we can hear a phone ringing in MATT'S apartment.

INT. MATTHEW'S ROOM. TENEMENT. AFTERNOON.

The phone rings.

INT. SYLVIE'S OFFICE. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. AFTERNOON.

SYLVIE is at her desk in a headset. As the phone rings she fingers the photos on her desk absentmindedly: an adorable baby, photos of SYLVIE looking relaxed and natural and not at all like her day job persona.

O/C: MATT'S VOICE

Hi, this is Matt. Leave me a message..

SYLVIE tutts to herself and hangs up. She picks up a phone-book for the Time number and dials it.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

Editorial, please.

She waits a moment.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

Oh hi there, this is Sylvie at Max Lewis' office, could I speak to Matthew Wallinger.

(listening to the confused
reply)

Matthew Wallinger? He's writing the Max Lewis profile.

Pause, we can dimly hear them saying they don't know anything about the profile. The color drains from Sylvie's face.

SYLVIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I don't understand.

INT. KITCHEN. MAX'S MANSION. LATE AFTERNOON.

HELEN is cooking up a storm: roast chicken and all the trimmings. The radio is playing some old dance number and she's singing along, happy. MAX is seated at the kitchen table, reading a book with a large whisky.

The telephone starts ringing.

HELEN jumps at the noise and cracks a plate.

HELEN

Oh shoot.

INT. STRIP BAR. LATE AFTERNOON.

The air is thick with smoke and the whoops of a dozen truckers who sit on tables next to a stage watching a pole dance. The floor is littered with cigarette butts and spilt beer. The sunlight makes a sterling effort to filter through the haze, but here what light there is, is harsh and neon and makes everyone look dog-tired and ugly.

Everyone except MATT, who sits alert at a table, cradling a beer, his attention riveted to the POLE DANCER. Her face is covered by a veil which matches the tassles on her nipples and the fringed skirt. Her body is slim and lithe. She works the pole mechanically, with accomplished ease.

She comes to the end of her routine and the men clap halfheartedly. She's followed immediately by a stripper, which seems to make the men much happier.

MATT surreptitiously checks his Dictaphone in his pocket. He presses the on button and the red light flashes.

The POLE DANCER walks to the bar, and puts on a silk dressing-gown. The BAR-MAN leans forward and says something to her. They both look across at MATT. She walks towards him.

She sits down opposite him, removes her veil and for the first time we see her face. It's at odds with her body.

ANNA LOUISE LEWIS was clearly once very beautiful but the years have not been kind. Now, at 45, grief and alcoholism have etched themselves upon her. MATT tries not to register his shock. He flashes her a brilliant smile.

MATT

Anna Louise Lewis? I'm Matthew Wallinger, Time Magazine.

ANNA LOUISE

He made me drop the Lewis.

MATT

Thanks for agreeing to meet me.

ANNA LOUISE

(Lighting her cigarette)

Well, I meet a lot of men. Most of them like to buy me a drink.

MATT

Sure...

He stops a passing waitress

WALLINGER

I'll have a bottle of Miller and...

ANNA LOUISE

Vodka 7

The waitress nods and exits.

ANNA LOUISE (CONT'D)

See, I like you already.

MATT smiles.

MATT

Max told me you were dead.

ANNA LOUISE

Yeah, well, history was never Max's favorite subject. Tell me Mr. Wallinger

-

MATT

Matt.

ANNA LOUISE

What's Time Magazine's interest in an ageing pornographer?

MATT

He's the man behind one of the most successful magazines ever published.

Anna Louise shrugs.

ANNA LOUISE

The timing seems a little convenient. You know, the magazine's anniversary, the murder...

MATT

What do you make of that.

ANNA LOUISE

There are sick people in the world, Matt. I see them every day. Sitting right where you're sitting, sucking on their beers.

MATT

How long were you married?

ANNA LOUISE

Seven years, eight months, three days.

The drinks arrive.

ANNA LOUISE (CONT'D)

Thanks, Sukie.

She takes a long first drink.

MATT

And he was already publishing porn when you were married?

ANNA LOUISE

Yeah, *Peeping Tom*, but he didn't call it *porn*. He's got this bullshit philosophy...

MATT

During that time, did he... make any lasting enemies? Anyone who would want, you know, revenge.

ANNA LOUISE

You mean except me? Not that I know of. You think that's what this is all about, Matt, some wacko on a retribution trip?

MATT is silent. He reaches for a cigarette and lights it.

ANNA LOUISE (CONT'D)

You know how hard it is to kill someone? Just simple; strangle them or whatever? And this guy, he does a lot more than strangle them. Now, you don't do that because someone pissed you off a few years ago. You do that because the moment you opened your eyes in this world, something else was looking out too.

She fingers the cross around her neck.

MATT

What went wrong between you and Max.

ANNA LOUISE knocks back her drink in one quick action and looks thoughtfully into her empty glass.

MATT (CONT'D)

Sukie!

He gestures to the waitress. ANNA LOUISE sits for a moment and watches the next stripper. She suddenly looks very depressed. SUKIE arrives with the drink and ANNA LOUISE takes another cigarette with shaking hands. MATT lights it.

ANNA LOUISE

I was very lonely.

MATT

Of course.

ANNA LOUISE

I had an affair. Didn't help much, made me feel like I was... the same as him. And the stupid thing was, I did it so that I could tell him. So I could get a reaction. God! Anything. So, anyway, then I found out I was pregnant.

MATT

David.

Anna Louise nods.

MATT (CONT'D)

No, hold on, David isn't Max's son?

ANNA LOUISE

(Deep in her reverie)

But, you know the ironic thing was that Max finally noticed me. Came home every day, flowers, chocolates. So-

MATT

You didn't tell him.

ANNA LOUISE

You in some kind of a hurry, Mr. Wallinger? Or do you want me to tell you my story?

MATT leans back in his seat.

ANNA LOUISE (CONT'D)

Well... David was born, and I was sick, I was laid up in bed for months. Then

along comes Helen of Troy and next thing I know, bingo! Max wants out, wants to take David, pretend like I never existed. So I told him the truth.

She's very emotional, but trying to control the tears.

ANNA LOUISE (CONT'D)

So, anyway. Max gets these hot-shot lawyers and all these friends of his, our friends, to stand up in court and say I was an unfit mother. And he tells me that if I ever tell anyone that David's not his son, he'll make sure that both of us, me and the baby, both of us...

She breaks off, crying.

ANNA LOUISE (CONT'D)

... and I believed it. And mister, if you'd known Max back then, you would have believed it too.

She slugs back the last of her drink.

ANNA LOUISE (CONT'D)

So there you are. He got David and I got this.

She gestures to the bar.

ANNA LOUISE (CONT'D)

Ain't it grand.

MATT

You've never seen David since?

ANNA LOUISE reacts oddly to this.

MATT (CONT'D)

Anna Louise?

ANNA LOUISE

I, I used to go and watch him you see, when he was at the park with her.

She can barely hold it together. MATT reaches across the table and takes her hand.

MATT

Please, off the record, I promise.

ANNA LOUISE

You think I still believe in promises?

But she lets her hand remain in his for a moment. Then she draws away, takes a drag of her cigarette.

ANNA LOUISE (CONT'D)

He found me. Said the image of me had stayed with him all his life.

(she smiles to herself)

Just goes to show it's not that hard to see ghosts if you're willing to believe in them.

MATT

Does he know, about Max?

ANNA LOUISE

No. No... kid's been through so much, he idolizes Max and he loves that little sister of his so much... He just comes around, we get takeout. Few times he brings his girlfriends over late, didn't want Max sneaking over his shoulder. Once, he took me to this restaurant! Oh my god!

(She laughs in remembrance)

He going to help me off the bottle.

MATT

That's wonderful.

ANNA LOUISE

Yes it is. It is wonderful. All these years I've been looking for one good thing. I never found it 'til now.

She stares at him for a moment, emotional. Then..

ANNA LOUISE (CONT'D)

'Cept of course, vodka 7.

MATT smiles at her, leans back in his chair and raises his hand.

MATT

Sukie!

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT. MATTHEW'S TENEMENT. NIGHT.

BOBBY and ELI are sitting at the kitchen table eating up the last of their dinner in silence. There's an empty place at the table laid for MATT. The clock reads 8.00pm.

BOBBY forces a smile for ELI and pushes his chair back.

BOBBY

I'm going to do some printing, OK?

ELI nods. BOBBY enters his darkroom and shuts the door.

ELI stacks the plates and puts them in the sink. The room is silent.

ELI crosses to the settee and switches on the television. Turning the sound down and keeping a wary eye on the darkroom door, he finds the evangelical channel.

The muffled sound of the preacher's voice.

MERGES WITH:

INT. MATTHEW'S ROOM. TENEMENT. NIGHT.

The sound of the preacher's voice echoes through a grating in the wall.

A torch light moves methodically across the room. A MAN is in MATT'S room, taking polaroid pictures.

The MAN opens kitchen draws, looks through a collection of papers. Opening the closet door, his torch moves over MATT'S computer equipment, over copies of The Hedonist magazine.

Walking over to the other door the MAN enters the bathroom and looks at the same mirrored cabinet that MATT stared at earlier on. We see now that the MAN is OFFICER COPE.

COPE reaches forward and opens the cabinet door. His torchlight runs over the contents: deodorant, shaving cream and a small pill bottle.

COPE picks up the pills and examines them. He smiles.

Outside the window the grey rain is beginning to fall.

MERGE TO:

INT. ROOM. NIGHT.

Water is dripping from a tap. A man's hand reaches in and turns it. Water comes rushing out, the man lets it run down over the palm of his hand. His other hand comes into view now. The man rubs his hands together in the water.

MERGE TO:

INT. STUDIO. HEDONIST BUILDING. NIGHT.

SHAUNA, TOM'S photographic assistant is standing, watching the rain drops skid and tumble down the window. She traces one with her fingertip.

TOM walks into the studio and clocks her.

TOM

Hey! Van Winkle. Go home and get some sleep.

SHAUNA turns away from the window, grinning.

SHAUNA

Who's Van Winkel?

TOM

Didn't your mom read you stories when you were a kid?

SHAUNA

Yeah, goblins all that shit.

TOM hands a roll of film to SHAUNA and picks up his coat, getting ready to go.

SHAUNA

So what's the score in the penthouse suite?

TOM

Wouldn't you like to know.

SHAUNA

Well, I've been hearing all kinds of things: imposter reporters, Sylvie's ass is on the line...

TOM
Shauna, do me a favor and worry about your own ass.

SHAUNA
Why worry? You got it under surveillance 24/7.

TOM laughs and leaves the room. He pokes his head around the door.

TOM
And get them to call you a cab, OK?
It's too late to be taking the subway.

He's gone.

SHAUNA
(Calls)
On account?

TOM O/C
What am I? Midas?

SHAUNA laughs. She puts the film in a plastic bag.

CUT TO:

Later on. TOM'S equipment is packed away. SHAUNA is sorting through negatives.

There is a noise from the labs next door. SHAUNA looks up and listens...

Nothing. She decides not to worry about it and carries on with her work.

In the hallway a cleaning lady is vacuuming the corridor.

INT. LABS. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. NIGHT.

SHAUNA carries a stack of negatives into the labs which are lit by sterile white neon.

She turns a corner and reaches some long work-surfaces where trays are laid out. She pulls on some gloves and takes a canister of developing solution from under the bench.

There's a noise. Something falling on the floor.

SHAUNA

Tom? Hello?

Silence.

SHAUNA puts down the canister and walks around the corner.

On the ground in front of her is a copy of The Hedonist. She bends down and picks it up. It's an anniversary edition from a couple of years back. The cover model lies on her elbows, her head tilted back and her legs spread to the camera.

Someone has cut out one of the magazine models eyes, there is something wet in the hole. Transfixed, SHAUNA touches it and then looks at her finger. It's clotted blood.

The lights in the lab switch off, SHAUNA screams.

Suddenly a spotlight above SHAUNA'S head switches on, illuminating her in a column of neon light. For a moment she freezes. Then she scrambles away from the light, getting to her feet. The spotlight switches off and another one switches on again over SHAUNA'S head.

SHAUNA turns and runs but the spotlights switch off and on, disorienting her. Try as she might, she can't escape them.

SHAUNA is crying with fear, she can't find the door to the lab. She turns a corner and slams into a wall. It's a dead end. She falls to the ground. The lights switch off.

A torchlight is creeping along the floor towards SHAUNA. It reaches her feet and moves slowly up her body until it shines on her face.

SHAUNA looks into the beam of the torch. There's a silhouette behind it, coming closer...

EXT. ROAD. NIGHT.

The beam of a car's headlights on the dark road.

INT. LIMOUSINE. NIGHT.

MATT is sitting in the car, which is driving out of Manhattan.

EXT. MAX'S MANSION. NIGHT

In contrast to earlier scenes, the mansion is in almost complete darkness.

INT. MAX'S MANSION. NIGHT.

The entrance hall is lit by candles, the BUTLER is ushering MATT through the house. HELEN is visible in another room, her feet up, laughing at a television programme.

The BUTLER opens a door at the end of corridor and shows MATT into..

INT. DINING ROOM, MAX'S MANSION. NIGHT.

A cavernous dining room.

The door shuts behind MATT. In the center of the room is a large rectangular table lit by candelabras. There is a chair at either end. In one of the chairs sits MAX, in his shirt-tails. Behind him is an enormous fireplace where a fire is blazing, making the room sweltering.

MATTHEW

Hi, Max.

MAX carries on dissecting a chicken carcass. MATT sits down in the free chair.

MATT

Am I late?

MAX doesn't respond. MATT is uncomfortable. MAX finishes the meat on the bone and pushes the carcass away. It lies there, glistening with fat. MAX burps and gets up, standing with his back to MATT, facing the fire.

MAX

You enjoy the pole dance, Matthew?

Beat.

MATT

Why did you tell me she was dead?

MAX turns around.

MAX

Well you've seen her, she might as well be.

They stare at each other.

MATT

You lied about her and you're lying about the murders -

MAX

- What did I tell you about listening at doors -

MATT

- You knew about them months ago, Max and you paid off the department, didn't you? Got it all hushed up. Max Lewis and his gospel of reform.

(He laughs)

You're just as corrupt as that pornographic shit you dress up as art. "*Desire without judgement*", isn't that what you said? Well someone's sure as hell judging you now.

MATT'S up out of his seat.

MATT (CONT'D)

What's it going to take to make you stop, Max? Women are dying out there and you won't even talk about it. Your own daughter was raped and you carry on publishing. And then David, Jesus, you call yourself a family man? A Christian man? What kind of man steals someone's else's child!

MAX stares at him impassively. The BUTLER opens the door.

BUTLER

Will there be anything else, sir?

MAX

You can make that phone call now, Hart.

BUTLER

Very good, sir.

He disappears and shuts the door behind him. The key turns in the lock. MATT wheels around to look at the door.

MATT

What the fuck is this?

MAX pushes MATT back down in his seat.

MAX

You look a little stressed, Matthew.
You need to calm down.

MAX is holding a pill bottle, the same one that COPE found in MATT'S apartment. MAX pours the contents of a pill bottle onto MATT'S plate. A mass of little yellow and black pills. MATT stares at them fixedly. MAX regards him for a moment.

MAX

My wife suffers a little from nerves.
Terrible things, nerves. Makes a person
do all kinds of strange things.

(beat)

I heard this story today about a young
man, just starting out. Got his first
job as a reporter for a New York
newspaper. Pieces ran well, got his
first big commission, future looks
bright, doesn't it? But, you see, in
the final equation, the piece just
isn't juicy enough, not enough
skeletons in the closet. The Journalist
is nervous that no-one will like it. So
he lies, makes things up, fakes his
sources. Newspaper runs the article.
Newspaper gets sued for three million
dollars. Young man's future doesn't
look so bright anymore, does it?

(sighs)

So he disappears. Nobody knows where.
Peeping through the windows, longing
for the sun... Then one day he wakes up
and he thinks. What am I doing? I'm a

great journalist! I bet, if I could get in to do an interview with some controversial figure, an exclusive on someone the publishers would love to see crucified, and I dug up every bit of dirt on him I could, I did a real hatchet job on him.. hey, you know what? I'll no longer be an unemployable, incompetent hack, I'll be fucking made.

(moving closer to MATT)
And this is where we see life's wonderful pattern of endless replication. Because what does he decide to do? He decides to lie. And, to be honest with you, he's really rather good at it. He almost pulls it off. Almost.

Silence.

MAX (CONT'D)
Why don't you take a pill, Matthew, you've had a shock.

No reaction from MATT. He still won't look MAX in the eye.

MAX (CONT'D)
And then there were the murders. You must have felt the sun shine on you that day.
(laughs to himself)
Damn, you were good, Matt. Made friends with my son..

MAX crosses over and picks up a handful of pills. He pulls MATT'S head back with one hand and shoves the pills into his mouth with another. MATT struggles but MAX is amazingly strong.

MAX
(Forcing the pills down)
Danced with my fucking daughter.

MATTHEW chokes, fighting for air.

MAX (CONT'D)

An open mind, isn't that what you
promised me?

The BUTLER knocks. MAX lets MATT'S head go. MATT struggles
for air. The BUTLER unlocks the door and enters. Outside
the window we see police lights flashing red and blue.

BUTLER
The police are here, sir.

MAX
Thank you, Hart. Can you take Mr.
Wallinger to his car?

The BUTLER pulls back MATT'S chair.

MATT
It's not the whole story, Max.

MAX reaches forward and into MATT'S jacket pocket. He
removes MATT'S Dictaphone and clicks it off.

MAX
But it could be, son, and believe me,
that's something that should concern
you.

The BUTLER guides MATT out of the room.

INT. POLICE STATION. NIGHT.

A rush of noise. MATTHEW is being sick into a toilet bowl,
his hands cuffed behind him, watched over by BRUBECK, who
wrinkles his nose in disgust.

All around them are the sounds of a busy NYPD station at
midnight: drunks singing, women shrieking, babies crying...

INT. INTERROGATION CELL. POLICE STATION. NIGHT.

MATT sits slumped on the other side of a table to COPE.
BRUBECK is leaning against the wall.

COPE
OK, Matthew. Let's go through it again.
Where were you on the night of the
23rd.

MATT

At home, preparing for the interview.

COPE

Right, the interview. Didn't speak to anyone? Didn't see anyone?

MATT

My neighbor, Bobby Sage. You know all this! I told you -

COPE

We took a look at your apartment. Nice little shrine you got there.

He pushes some Polaroid shots over the table, they show MATT'S apartment: copies of the Hedonist litter a desk and photos from the magazine are pinned to the wall.

COPE (CONT'D)

What's the fascination with The Hedonist, Matthew? See, interesting, isn't it? You appear, wanting a sensational exclusive on Max Lewis... seven girls are brutally murdered. Adds a little value to your story, doesn't it?

MATT

Seven, you said?

COPE'S jaw flickers slightly, he's fucked up.

COPE

Just answer the question.

MATT

I was in the right place at the right time, that's all.

COPE

That's right. On the night of the 23rd
-

MATT

- No!

COPE

- When you abducted Annie Loft from outside her building, when you stripped

her, suffocated her, carved her up and left her, dead and elegantly posed at the Meat market.

Pause.

MATT

No.

COPE takes out some crime scene shots and pushes them across the table to MATT.

COPE

Do these jog your memory, Matthew?

INT. SURVEILLANCE ROOM. POLICE STATION. NIGHT.

MARIA is watching the interview through a two way screen.

MARIA

Oh, what the fuck is he doing?

She gets up out of her seat and runs out of the room.

INT. INTERROGATION CELL. POLICE STATION. NIGHT.

MATT looks at the shots:

Six victims, all covered in PVC tape, all in grotesquely erotic poses.

Then the photographs of ANNIE LOFT in the market. MATT pauses, something's lying next to her, more close-up shots reveal it to be a copy of The Hedonist, an anniversary edition.

MATT

My god..

MARIA opens the door to the room.

MARIA

Detective Cope, can I have a word?

COPE looks at her angrily and gets to his feet.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Yeah, why don't you bring the photographs with you.

He gathers them up and exits.

INT. CORRIDOR. POLICE STATION. NIGHT.

COPE is almost hopping with rage.

COPE

I was this close to cracking him,
Nadal, this fucking close.

MARIA

His alibi is confirmed -

COPE

For one out of seven!

MARIA

You're supposed to be taking a
statement on his research on Max Lewis
and Tom Winters.

COPE

Aw, what the fuck does Lewis matter,
look Wallinger -

MARIA

- doesn't even match the profile -

COPE

With all due respect -

MARIA

While we're on the subject, what the
hell do you think you're doing showing
a suspect, a suspect who is known to
you as an unreliable wanna-be fucking
journalist, un-released, confidential
photographs of crime scenes without
clearing it with me?

COPE opens his mouth and shuts it again.

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM. NIGHT.

MATT sits at the table, thinking furiously.

MARIA re-enters the room alone and sits down at the table.

MARIA

Those were classified photographs
Matthew, if I find their contents
leaked to the press, I'll know who's to
blame and believe me, I can make things
very difficult for you.

MATT isn't listening to her.

MARIA

Bobby Sage confirmed your alibi. You're
in the clear. Max Lewis is going to
press charges but you'll receive
notification of those. I suggest you
get yourself the best lawyer you can
find.

She gets up to leave. MATT stays where he is.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Mr. Wallinger, you're free to leave.

MATT

Those photographs, they're poses aren't
they? From The Hedonist. The
anniversary editions. You've got, what,
two days until the tenth edition comes
out? Seven down, three to go!

MATT is really annoying BRUBECK, he walks towards him.
MARIA makes for the door.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Stay away from this case, Matthew.

EXT. POLICE STATION. NIGHT.

MATT exits the police station, shrugging on his jacket
against the cold. BRUBECK steps outside with him for a
moment and watches him down the steps. MATT turns and gives
him a big fake grin.

BRUBECK

Any time.

MATT mutters and heads off down the street. Unnoticed, a
BLACK CAR pulls out and starts to trail him.

EXT. MATT'S TENEMENT. NIGHT.

Freezing cold, MATT arrives at the front door and is just putting the key in the lock when he notices the BLACK CAR come to a halt opposite. For a moment he stares at it, then, puzzled, he lets himself into the building.

INT. STAIRCASE. MATT'S TENEMENT. NIGHT.

MATT mounts the winding staircase and comes to his apartment door. A court summons is stuck to it. He rips it off and enters his apartment.

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

MATT almost switches on the light, then changes his mind, switches it off, crosses to the window and looks out:

VIEW OUT OF MATT'S WINDOW.

The BLACK CAR. Someone is sitting in it.

INT. ROOM. NIGHT.

The water runs from the tap again. In the background we can just make out someone lying on a bed.

CLOSE on the sink, where the MAN is taking off latex gloves. Water washes over them. It takes a beat to see that the sink is covered in blood.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT. TENEMENT. NIGHT.

MATT is now watching the car from BOBBY'S window.

BOBBY comes out ELI'S room and we catch a glimpse of the sleeping boy. Then BOBBY shuts the door behind him.

BOBBY
Still there?

MATT nods and goes to sit down at the table where BOBBY is now pouring him coffee.

MATT'S mobile phone begins to beep. He looks at the number calling and let's it ring.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Who's that?

MATT

Eleanor Lewis.

He lets it ring. BOBBY shakes his head.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Why don't you take my car? Get out of town for a few days...

The phone keeps ringing.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

... and get yourself away from that family.

MATT is silent.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Why the hell did you do it, Matt? If you needed money, you could just -

MATT

It wasn't about the money.

MATT lights a cigarette in the silence.

BOBBY

You need to get some help.

MATT

I know a lawyer.

BOBBY

I don't mean that kind of help. When Carol died I saw this great guy downtown, he got me through it.

MATT doesn't respond.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Then Jesus, Matt, just write the damn thing. Finish it. As it stands you could get cover on any magazine in the country. You pulled it off! You set out to get the dirt on Max Lewis. You got it.

MATT

But the murders, Bobby, that's the real story.

BOBBY

You're unbelievable, you know that?
They have the best criminologists in
the country working on this case and
you think you can solve it in two days.
Do you know how that sounds?

MATT

Just a few more pieces of the jigsaw.

BOBBY

Matt, you got to keep it together. I'm
serious man. Take the fucking car. Get
the hell out of here.

ELI'S door opens and he stands there in his pyjamas,
rubbing his eyes. BOBBY gets up to go to him.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

(Hushed to MATT)

You got a chance here, don't throw it
away this time.

MATT watches as BOBBY scoops ELI up into his arms and
carries him back to bed. He sighs and stubs out his
cigarette.

MATT walks over to the window again. The black car is gone.
BOBBY comes to stand behind him.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Well there you go, safe exit.

MATT turns and smiles sadly at his friend.

MATT

Thanks, Bobby.

BOBBY

Don't mention it.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR. NIGHT.

MATT lets himself into BOBBY'S car, he slings a pack and
sleeping bag in the back and starts the motor. He pulls out
into the street and switches on the radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

- phone in this evening on the wave of
terror sweeping Manhattan -

MATT switches the channel. Good old country and western. He hums along, determined not to think about anything else.

INT. SQUAD CAR. NIGHT.

MARIA is sitting in the back seat of the car, she's tense with nerves and adrenalin.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR. NIGHT.

MATT turns the corner into total chaos: cars are drawing to a halt and police sirens are wailing. Half-way down the street, MATT can see a roadblock. A COP is flagging down the traffic and turning it around.

MATT cranes his head out of the window: he can see a large crowd gathered outside a warehouse.

The COP waves him back. MATT parks his car in a hurry and approaches the block on foot.

EXT. WAREHOUSE. NIGHT.

The press are gathered outside a warehouse which has been roped off with police tape. Reporters are already going live from the scene.

MATT joins the crowd and watches as MARIA gets out of her squad car and is escorted through the screaming throng. She looks up briefly and catches sight of MATT.

MATT turns away from the crowd and lights a cigarette.
MARIA enters the building.

For a moment, MATT stands there, listening to the reporters shouting their questions, the police warning people to stay back. He takes a drag of his cigarette. The only indication of the effect all this is having on him is his breathing, which he's trying to control. He takes a drag of his cigarette.

And then he gives in to it.

MATT starts off towards BOBBY'S car, half way there he breaks into a run.

Back on the case.

INT. WAREHOUSE. MEAT PACKING DISTRICT. .

The warehouse is swarming with police. MARIA is led through into a large storage room, a section of which has been sealed off with plastic sheeting. BRUBECK is standing next to it. He starts to dress MARIA to enter the crime scene.

MARIA

(Pulling on plastic gloves)
Give me the low-down.

BRUBECK

The body was found this morning by a meat packer, could have been dumped at any point over the last twenty four hours.

He hands her a sterile gown.

MARIA

Is Campbell here yet?

BRUBECK

Nope, so, time of death unknown and what's happened under the tape, unknown.

BRUBECK hands MARIA a plastic cap.

MARIA

(Tucking her hair in)
Cope?

BRUBECK shakes his head. MARIA turns to him.

MARIA

Is it our guy?

BRUBECK

Take a look.

He holds the tent open and she steps through.

INT. PLASTIC TENT. WAREHOUSE.

SHAUNA'S body is lying in the center of the tent. We only see her from the back, but her head is thrown back, her

legs spread. MARIA steps around to look at the body from the front.

black PVC / dried blood / knife lacerations / an open mouth

MARIA shuts her eyes, then opens them resolutely. She looks down at her feet to where the killer has left the copy of *The Hedonist*, the one that SHAUNA found in the labs.

COPE comes hurrying through the plastic sheeting. His eyes flicker to the magazine on the ground. He looks flustered.

COPE

Why wasn't I notified immediately.

MARIA

Well you're here now, Cope, that's the main thing, isn't it?

COPE licks his lips nervously as MARIA gazes at him.

INT. NET CAFE. EARLY MORNING.

MATT sits at a table near a computer terminal.

He has a cup of steaming coffee and is sorting through a stack of computer print-outs of *Hedonist* anniversary covers and publicity articles. All of the articles are printed on publicist headed paper. As MATT sifts through the stack of papers, we see the publicity company logo is identical throughout.

All, that is, except for one article which is printed on paper bearing the logo 'Q Company.' MATT doesn't register the change. Then he stops, flicks back and stares at it.

He picks up his notebook and looks at a clipping detailing the murder of Annie Loft:

Annie Loft, an employee of Manhattan's Q company.

MATT laughs, psyched at the connection he's made. The next moment a thought strikes him and he's up and out of his seat, making for the door.

INT. MAX'S MANSION. THE HAMPTONS. MORNING.

MAX is standing by the door, picking up his keys and briefcase from the table in the hall. He looks grim-faced.

HELEN hurries into the hall, carrying a sandwich and a plastic cappuccino cup. She gives them to Max who looks at them blankly.

HELEN

Max?

He sees her worried expression and his face softens. He tucks her hair behind her ear and kisses her on the cheek. Then he's out of the door.

HELEN turns back into the hall. DAVID is coming down the stairs two at a time, attaching his hands-free mobile set.

INT. MAX'S CAR. MORNING.

MAX sits in the back of his chauffeur-driven limousine, staring blankly ahead.

INT. CAR. MORNING.

MAX'S car drives past MATT, who is sitting in BOBBY'S car, shivering in the cold morning air. He's parked a little way off from MAX'S mansion, waiting.

INT. MARIA'S OFFICE. POLICE STATION. DAY.

MARIA is sitting at her desk. COPE knocks and enters the office with a cup of takeaway coffee and a sandwich.

COPE

OK, so the report's back, blood on the magazine matches that of Annie Loft.

MARIA nods to herself.

COPE

And we got a positive ID on our victim. A Miss Shauna Brillant, resident of Manhattan. She was a photographer's assistant at, guess where?

MARIA

The Hedonist.

COPE

One decaf.

MARIA

Thanks.

COPE

And one cheese and tomato.

MARIA / COPE

I'll have it later.

COPE

You can't drive a car on no petrol.

She stares at him for a moment.

MARIA

Cope? I need to talk to you about something.

COPE

(Uncomfortable)

Sure.

MARIA

In just under -

(glances at watch)

One hour I'm going to go public on the link between these two murders and The Hedonist magazine.

COPE shifts in his seat.

MARIA (CONT'D)

I'm not going to ask why that makes you uncomfortable. Instead, I'm going to tell you what's on my mind.

As she talks, she places crime scene photos in front of COPE.

MARIA (CONT'D)

So, in the cases of the girl we found this morning, Shauna, and in the case of Annie Loft, the killer left a copy of the magazine at the scene of the crime, right? An anniversary edition from a certain year. And he made his victims resemble the poses, cut them to

pieces, tied them up and so on. And then, just to make sure we knew it was him, he even went to the lengths of leaving Annie's blood on Shauna's magazine.

COPE nods.

MARIA (CONT'D)

But here's the thing. As you know, there are also six other bodies which have been discovered in Manhattan, all of whom bear the trademarks of the same killer, *except* for the copy of the magazine. And as you know this is what prevented the NYPD from announcing any definite link between the Hedonist magazine and the murders, which was great for Max Lewis because it didn't affect his sales figures. But Cope, those six victims...

She puts down the photographs. Then she lays down six photocopies of Hedonist anniversary covers from the past ten years. Perfect matches.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Look at them, please.

COPE stares at them. A muscle in his cheek is flickering.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Now, I'm not going to ask you anything about your dealings with Max Lewis. Not right now. Not when this guy still has one published edition to work with and not when the tenth anniversary edition goes to print in less than two days. What I'm going to do instead is ask you one simple question. Do you still have those magazines?

COPE looks at her, his lip trembles. He shakes his head slowly. MARIA leans forward.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Now you listen to me. You've got us playing catch-up with the worst serial

killer this town has seen for a decade. Another girl is going to die, Cope, and another and each time it happens I want you to feel the weight of it on your shoulders. I want you to see their faces in your dreams.

She gets up and walks out of the room. COPE stays where he is, expressionless, staring down at the photographs.

INT. TOILETS. POLICE STATION. DAY.

MARIA walks into the empty toilets and goes to the sink. She runs cold water and splashes her face. Gripping the sides of the sink she stares at herself in the mirror.

EXT. MAX'S MANSION. DAY.

The gates to MAX'S mansion swing open again to let another car through.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR. DAY.

MATT spots the car drive past and starts up his engine.

INT. CAR. DAY.

DAVID is sitting in the back of his chauffeur driven car, talking on his headset. He is trying to remain calm, but the pressure is clearly getting to him.

The car is passing through Manhattan.

DAVID

... no, as I speak there is still no confirmed link between the magazine and these murders so... sorry, can I call you back in five - OK

(switching calls)

Hey Sylvie... aw Jesus Christ, what time? Does Dad know? Well have him call me as soon as. Oh you do, yeah, put her on.

(leaning forward to driver)

Ed, can you stop at Z bar or somewhere?

(switching calls)

Hello, David Lewis.

INT. DELI. DAY.

An upmarket deli. DAVID is seated at a booth, still talking into his headset.

DAVID

No, well this is just about damage limitation now... of course we are, we're not going to shut down the whole place because... no... no... OK.

(The call ends)

Shit.

He starts to remove his headset, it gets snagged and he rips it off in frustration. He puts his head in his hands. A WAITRESS arrives with a cup of coffee and a pastry. DAVID stirs his coffee mindlessly.

MATT

Lost your appetite?

MATT slides into the booth to sit opposite DAVID. DAVID looks at him in disbelief. He gets ready to leave.

MATT (CONT'D)

David, I know there's no reason in the world why you should talk to me, but please, one minute.

DAVID gathers his things, not looking at MATT.

MATT (CONT'D)

It's about your mother. David, it's about Anna Louise.

DAVID freezes. He sits back down and speaks in a low voice.

DAVID

How the hell do you know about Anna Louise.

MATT

I'm surprised Max didn't tell you. Oh, but that's right. There's a lot of things you don't tell each other in this family, right?

DAVID

What do you want, Matt.

MATT

What do I want? I want some answers.
Women are dying out there. And they're
going to keep on dying until we -

DAVID

We?

MATT

See, the police think they've nailed
the way this guy works. The anniversary
editions, you know about that, right?

DAVID hesitates and then nods. MATT smiles and shakes his
head.

MATT (CONT'D)

Wrong. He's way ahead of them. Look,
victim number five, Annie Loft, OK?
What did she do? She was a publicist,
she worked for the Q company. The same
Q company who worked on the last major
Hedonist publicity drive before being
fired and replaced by a different
outfit. And there's more here, David,
but I need your help. I can't get to
the information. I need anything that
could link the other victims with your
Magazine. I'm thinking personal
contacts, work history, anything.

For a moment, DAVID wavers, then he closes up.

DAVID

I don't see what I can do, Matt. I
don't know any more about this than you
do and I fail to see what this has to
do with Anna Louise.

MATT

You've got your priorities all messed
up, you know that? You know how he
treated Anna Louise. How the hell can
you show him any loyalty after that?

DAVID

Because he's my father, Matt.

MATT pauses, he stares at DAVID, deciding whether to tell him everything he knows. Then he takes a piece of paper out of his file and writes something on it.

MATT

In case you change your mind, here's my number.

He gives DAVID the sheet of paper.

DAVID

(Hollow)

What's this.

MATT has scrawled his number across the cover from the ninth anniversary edition of The Hedonist. It's a sado-masochistic pose, the girl's flesh pierced by several small hooks.

MATT

This is how they're going to find the next one.

MATT leaves. DAVID sits motionless at the table, staring at the picture.

INT. POLICE STATION. DAY.

MARIA is sitting, head in hands, staring and staring at the cover of the ninth anniversary edition.

EXT. CORRIDOR. HEDONIST BUILDING. DAY.

MAX is walking along a corridor. He passes in front of a meeting room, which is currently being used by BRUBECK, who is interviewing a visibly shaken TOM.

BRUBECK notices MAX looking through the glass at them and walks over to snap the blind shut.

EXT. STEPS OF THE HEDONIST BUILDING. AFTERNOON.

SYLVIE is standing, reading out a statement to the press.

SYLVIE

We at the Hedonist magazine wish to express our horror and sadness at the recent brutal murders of eight New York women, including most recently the

tragic murder of Shauna Brailant, an employee of this company. We are doing everything within our power to support the police as they work to bring the evil perpetrator of these crimes to justice.

She turns to go. The rabble of press outside the building explode with questions and shouts. In their midst, huddled in his coat is MATT. He raises his head and looks up towards the top of building.

EXT. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. AFTERNOON.

The camera slides up the side of the skyscraper, sheer angles and terrifying height.

INT. BOARDROOM. AFTERNOON.

ANGLE ON MAX'S face, as he peers out of the window down to the press below. Behind him is a long table filled by twelve somberly dressed businessmen. They are the board of his company, and include a CHAIRMAN, a NERVOUS INVESTOR, SUITS #1 and #2 and DAVID.

CHAIRMAN

Max? *Max.*

MAX turns to face the board.

CHAIRMAN (CONT'D)

While your concern for the press is admirable, I do think that there are more important matters.

MAX just nods. DAVID realises he's going to have to take the lead.

DAVID

The anniversary edition goes to print tomorrow, the tests have been great. As we see it, there's no cause for concern.

NERVOUS INVESTOR

David, put yourself in our shoes for a minute, OK? Which shareholder is going

to pride himself in investing in a company that caters to serial killers?

SUIT #2

Obviously no-one thinks you're personally responsible, Max, but the public image..

Everyone starts talking at once. MAX nods to himself.

DAVID can't believe MAX is taking this lying down.

DAVID

Gentlemen. Please. Could I take a moment? I think we need to refocus and look at the facts here..

MAX looks up. MARIA is standing outside the board room looking in on all of them. She holds his gaze for a moment.

INT. BODEGA. EVENING.

It's the same bodega that we saw at the opening of the screenplay. A large CHINESE WOMAN leans over the till, humming to herself. A doorbell tinkles as MATT.

MATT

Is Luke here?

WOMAN

Who wants to know.

MATT

Tell him Matt Wallinger.

The WOMAN sashays off down a corridor and returns moments later with LUKE, the CHINESE SHOPKEEPER from scene 2.

LUKE

You look like shit.

MATT

Thanks.

LUKE

You have a problem with the ID?

MATT

(Shaking head)

I need your help, Luke and I'm in a
real hurry.

The CHINESE WOMAN moves forward aggressively. MATT hands
her his car keys.

MATT (CONT'D)

In the trunk.

EXT. STREET. EVENING.

The CHINESE WOMAN walks out of the shop onto the sidewalk
where BOBBY'S car is parked. Opening the trunk, she finds
MATT'S computer equipment, boxed and ready to go.

Above her the street lamps start to buzz as the district
grid switches on.

INT. CORRIDOR. PENTHOUSE. HEDONIST BUILDING. NIGHT.

DAVID enters the room. It takes a moment for him to discern
MAX, standing alone in the darkness, staring out as the
Manhattan grid lights up. DAVID walks across to him and
puts a hand on his shoulders.

DAVID

We're going to beat this, Dad.

MATT smiles sadly at him and walks to his desk. He starts
packing away his papers into a briefcase.

MAX

David, I'm going to sell the magazine.

All the color drains from DAVID'S face.

MAX (CONT'D)

And, son, you've done a wonderful job,
wonderful. You gave the speech of the
century in that room back there. But
you need something that's really going
to challenge you.

DAVID

This challenges me.

MAX

Not really, David. Not if you're really
honest with yourself. The reputation

you've got now, you could make editor
on any magazine in the county.

DAVID stares down at the floor, silent. MAX puts down his
briefcase. He looks as if he wants to hug DAVID, but feels
awkward. They stand there in an uncomfortable pause.

MAX

This baby's coming and I want to be
there this time. I want to be a good
father.

DAVID flashes MAX a look of anger and rejection.

MAX (CONT'D)

I have a chance here, Davey. I'm not
going to get another one.

MAX shakes his head sorrowfully, he suddenly looks old and
tired.

MAX

You have to understand....

A muscle is flickering in DAVID'S cheek. He can't keep a
lid on his emotions any longer, so...

DAVID

Would you excuse me?

MAX

Of course.

DAVID makes for the door to the room.

MAX (CONT'D)

David...

DAVID keeps walking.

INT. CORRIDOR. HEDONIST BUILDING. NIGHT.

SYLVIE is hurrying down the corridor with a stack of paper,
she passes DAVID who is leaving MAX'S office. He's clearly
upset, he can't even look her in the eye.

INT. MAX'S OFFICE. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. NIGHT.

MAX is sitting at his desk, ashen-faced. SYLVIE puts her papers on his desk.

SYLVIE
Will there be anything else?

MAX looks up at her.

MAX
Yes, Sylvie. I'd like you to cancel the print run on the anniversary edition.
(Off her look of shock)
And get me my daughter on the line.

INT. CAR. NIGHT.

DAVID gets into his car and shuts the door. He clicks down the locks. He stares blankly out of the windscreen for a moment. His face crumples. He tries to stop himself crying but he can't.

INT. MATT'S ROOM. TENEMENT. NIGHT.

MATT is dressed in a smart suit and is bent over, doing up the laces of his shoes.

He sits up and opens an envelope on the bed, taking out a photo-identity card bearing the logo of the IRS.

He sighs to himself, weary.

INT. BOBBY'S APARTMENT. MATTHEW'S TENEMENT. NIGHT.

ELI opens the door to MATT.

ELI
Dad said you went on holiday.

MATT
It got cancelled. Would you give these back to him? Tell him thanks.

He gives the car keys to ELI and turns to go. ELI clocks MATT'S smart clothes.

ELI
Where you going now?

MATT pauses for a moment.

MATT

Top secret. You want a piece of the
action?

ELI pauses to consider. MATT smiles at the young boy, he ruffles his head fondly and starts down the stairs. ELI watches him go.

EXT. IRS BUILDING. NIGHT

MATT gets off the bus and walks towards the building. We see the IRS logo on the wall.

Through the glass front MATT can see security gates: the kind you need an electronic pass to get through.

INT. RECEPTION. IRS BUILDING. NIGHT.

MATT clocks the night receptionist, the two security guards.

He approaches the electronic gates. His hand reaches into his pocket as he takes out LUKE'S fake ID. He holds it up to the scanner.

The light goes red.

MATT tries again, same result. The security guards glance over. MATT walks over to the RECEPTIONIST.

MATT

Excuse me, there seems to be some
problem with my card.

He shows it to her. The security guards are eying him with suspicion.

MATT (CONT'D)

I'm on transfer from Virginia.

The RECEPTIONIST hands him back his card and presses a switch under the desk. The security gate swings open. MATT walks through.

INT. IRS BUILDING. NIGHT.

The lift doors slide back as MATT walks out. There's another receptionist. MATT puts on a big smile and walks towards her.

INT. IRS BUILDING. NIGHT

MATT sits himself down in front of a mainframe computer and logs on with a user-name and password that he's been given by the receptionist, who's gazing hungrily at him from behind her desk. He glances back at her, grins. She tries to look nonchalant and accidentally knocks over a glass of water on her desk.

INT. SYLVIE'S OFFICE. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. NIGHT.

SYLVIE is working late, frowning at her computer screen.

INT. IRS BUILDING. NIGHT

MATT is in the IRS mainframe now. He takes a piece of paper from his pocket and consults a list written on it. The names of the eight Hedonist victims. He scans to the top. Victim number one: Sophie Carey.

He types her name into the program, which tells him she's deceased. He types again. Sophie's previous employment history flashes up. There's nothing that could possibly link her to The Hedonist.

MATT sits back in his seat, annoyed. He glances at the clock: 2 am.

INT. POLICE STATION. NIGHT.

The clock on the wall reads 2am. The police room is empty except for MARIA. She is clutching a coffee and staring at the photographs on the incident wall.

INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT.

ELLIE is lying in the darkness, wide awake. She turns over and looks at the red LCD display on the alarm clock. 2am. She switches on the bedside light, picks up a book and begins to read.

EXT. HOTEL. NIGHT.

From the outside of the hotel we can see ELLIE'S room, light emanating from the windows. It's as if someone's watching her.

There's the sound of a car engine throbbing.

INT. SYLVIE'S OFFICE. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. NIGHT.

SYLVIE shuts down her computer and collects some folders from the desk. She takes a last look around the room and switches off the light.

INT. IRS BUILDING. NIGHT

MATT is still digging around in Sophie's files. No luck. he's about to give up when a thought strikes him. He types and Sophie's share portfolio appears on the screen. Scrolling down, he finds what he's looking for:

Sophie Carey owned shares in the Hedonist.

On a whim MATT clicks on the 'brokered by' option and a name flashes up on-screen: Ruth Williamson.

MATT looks at the victim list.

Ruth Williamson is Victim number two.

EXT. BACK ENTRANCE. THE HEDONIST BUILDING. NIGHT.

SYLVIE exits the building.

Someone is watching her.

EXT. CAR LOT. NIGHT.

Someone's POV:

Remaining behind SYLVIE as she walks through the car lot. Her heels click-click in the silence. It's beginning to rain.

She gets to her car and fumbles for her keys. She drops them and bends down to retrieve them from the ground.

The key's in the lock, the door is open. SYLVIE throws her folders onto the passenger seat, swings in and shuts the door behind her.

She presses down the automatic door-lock.

There's a knock on the window. She looks up, smiles and winds down her window.

SYLVIE

Hey, there mister, do you need a lift?

FADE TO BLACK.

DARKNESS

There is the sound of SYLVIE breathing. There's a faint chink of light.

INT. ROOM. NIGHT.

SYLVIE'S eyes blink open. She is heavily drugged and her POV is unstable.

The room is lit neon blue and green.

SYLVIE tries to move, but can't. The room swims in and out of focus as she lapses into unconsciousness..

... and wakes again to hear SOMEONE washing their hands in a sink. There's the snaps of latex gloves...

... HE'S sitting beside her now, SYLVIE can see his hands selecting a surgeon's knife from a collection in a tray.

... HE'S cutting through lengths of fishing wire, measuring exactly, methodically. He ties hooks onto the ends of wire...

HE pauses, noticing something. HE gets up, out of sight, SYLVIE struggles. HE returns. There's the sound of tape being pulled from a holder. HE moves towards SYLVIE'S eyes.

There's complete darkness now. And the only sound is the sound of SYLVIE breathing.

The she screams.

INT. IRS BUILDING. EARLY MORNING.

MATT wakes abruptly from his dream with a shout. The RECEPTIONIST gives him a suspicious look.

The printer next to him is just spooling out the final piece of paper. The rest of MATT'S print-outs are lying in the tray next to his computer. He picks them up and with a final bright smile to the RECEPTIONIST, he leaves.

INT. CORRIDOR. HEDONIST BUILDING. EARLY MORNING.

An OFFICE JUNIOR is walking along the corridor carrying the mail and a take-away cup of coffee. She switches on lights as she goes and props open the doors of boardrooms, readying the offices for the day.

EXT. IRS BUILDING. EARLY MORNING.

Pulling his coat around him, MATT exits the building. He hurries down the street. He tries to hail a cab, fails.

INT. CORRIDOR. HEDONIST BUILDING. EARLY MORNING.

The OFFICE JUNIOR opens the door of MAX'S penthouse room and switches on the light. A mechanized switch swishes the blinds back from the enormous windows.

It takes the OFFICE JUNIOR a second to take in what she sees outside of the window.

She screams.

A woman's naked body is hanging suspended outside the window of the penthouse office. Her arms are outstretched.

EXT. MAX'S PENTHOUSE SUITE. EARLY MORNING.

SLYIVE'S head is upright, her eyes masked by black tape. Her lifeless body is naked, pierced by hundreds of tiny hooks. She hangs in the still morning air as the city slowly comes to life below her.

EXT. STREET. NEW YORK. EARLY MORNING.

MATT walks through the bustling streets.

He passes a shop-window where dozens of TV-screens are playing different channels. MATT stops. At least three of the sets are showing footage of the Hedonist building, cordoned off with police tape, surrounded by press. An image of SYLVIE flashes up onto the screen.

MATT'S face registers shock and horror. He watches the screen for a moment longer, then he's off down the street, running.

EXT. POLICE STATION. MORNING.

MATT runs up the steps of the police station. He drops all his papers and scrabbles around, trying to collect them.

INT. POLICE STATION. DAY.

MATT is standing in an interrogation room with MARIA. He has laid out his anniversary covers along with the IRS folder.

MARIA

Mr. Wallinger, please, have some faith in police investigation. I really don't have the time for -

MATT

Just wait! One minute, OK?

He takes out printed photos of the victims and lays them down.

MATT (CONT'D)

Victim number one, Sophie Carey, owned a small amount of shares in the Hedonist Media Group. Nothing that would have come up on a surface trace. They brought and sold almost immediately. Victim number two, Ruth Williamson, a stockbroker who brokered the deal.

MARIA is taken aback.

MATT (CONT'D)

Number three owned a chain of bodegas which, despite protest from anti-porn protestors, continued to stock the magazine. Number four worked for a company that on one occasion advertised with the magazine. Once. Can you believe this guy? Five was an agent for models who appeared in the magazine. Six was a designer who set up the Hedonist website. Number seven, Annie Loft, a publicist who worked on the magazine's publicity campaign. Number eight, Shauna, Tom Winter's assistant. Number nine, Sylvie, Max Lewis' PA.

(beat)

And now he's going to crown it with
Eleanor Lewis.

MARIA

But Eleanor Lewis has always been
against *The Hedonist*, publicly so.

MATT

She let her father cover up the reports
of her rape. If she'd gone public it
would have damaged sales of the
magazine. It's about complicity, that's
the way this guy thinks. Everyone's
infected.

MARIA stares at MATT, then back at the photographs. She
gathers her thoughts and decides to level with him.

MARIA

OK, look, at her father's request,
Eleanor Lewis is being secured.

MATT

Being *secured*? What the fuck is that -

MARIA

He's cancelled the print, Matt.

MATT

What?

MARIA

He seems to have had a change of heart.

MATT sits down in a chair, amazed. Then he's alert again.

MATT

It could be someone working there,
someone who's seen the cover already.

MARIA nods. MATT looks at her, puzzled. She sighs.

MARIA

We arrested Tom Winters this morning.

MATT

What?

MARIA

History of mental illness, access to
the appropriate chemicals and the
victims...

MATT

Tom Winters...

MARIA

I have to go.

She turns away, turns back again.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Thank you for this information, Matt. I
think you may have cracked him.

MATT nods, utterly wrong-footed.

INT. STOCK ROOM. AFTERNOON.

Bound copies of The Hedonist anniversary edition are being
stacked neatly in boxes.

EXT. POLICE STATION. DAY.

MATT walks out onto the steps. He looks around him. He has
absolutely no idea what to do next.

MATT sits down on the steps at a loss. Litter blows around
his feet. Across the street the local community is going
about it's daily business: mother's pushing prams, people
in suits on their lunchbreak, talking and laughing...

... and MATT, alone on the steps of the station.

MATT gets a cigarette out and lights it. He looks at his
fingers - nicotine stains. He takes a long drag of his
cigarette. His mobile phone rings. It's his voicemail.

VOICEMAIL V/O

You have.. ONE new message.

Beep.

DAVID V/O

(stressed low voice)

Matt, it's David, listen I'm sure
you've heard about Tom, but look, this
is not the whole story, OK? We need to

talk, but.. OK, come to Anna Louise's house as soon as you can. You know the address and Matt, don't -

MATT'S phone cuts out. He switches it on again. Nothing.

MATT

Fuck!

Pocketing the phone he sets off towards the nearby subway.

INT. PRINTING ROOMS. DAY.

The anniversary edition of *The Hedonist* runs through the pulping machine.

INT. LIBRARY. MAX'S MANSION. AFTERNOON.

MAX is standing at the windows, staring out over the garden.

EXT. MAX'S MANSION. AFTERNOON.

Two suited bodyguards are standing outside the house. Walkie-Talkies crackle.

INT. KITCHEN. MAX'S MANSION. AFTERNOON.

ELEANOR is perched on a stool watching her mother wash up. HELEN is very tense, banging the plates and glasses. Her asthma is playing up and her breath is getting wheezy.

ELEANOR

Mom, Cecee will do that when she gets here.

HELEN ignores her. She bangs one glass too hard and it smashes. She cuts her finger. ELEANOR examines it and hugs her.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Please, Mom.

HELEN shrugs her away and walks out of the room, her breathing worsening.

ELEANOR pulls on the yellow gloves and finishes the washing-up.

INT. EN SUITE BATHROOM. AFTERNOON.

HELEN washes the blood from her finger and puts a band-aid over the cut. She takes an inhaler from the cupboard and takes a hit. It's the last of it. She throws the empty inhaler in the bin and sits down on the edge of the bath, calming herself. She turns the tap.

The water rushes out.

INT. SITTING ROOM. MAX'S MANSION. AFTERNOON.

MAX is standing at the window, frowning. ELEANOR wanders in.

ELEANOR

Dad?

But MAX is miles away.

Quietly, ELEANOR slips back out of the room.

INT. STAIRCASE. MAX'S MANSION. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE on ELEANOR'S back as she mounts the stairs.

INT. CORRIDOR. MAX'S MANSION. AFTERNOON.

CLOSE on ELEANOR'S back as she reaches the end of the corridor, enters a room and leaves the door half open.

MOVE right up to the door.

INT. LIBRARY. MAX'S MANSION. EVENING.

MAX watches as the skyline turns red and gold.

He sighs and turns away from the window. He goes towards the door. He turns the handle: it's jammed. He rattles it again. It's locked.

MAX

What the ...

There is a SCREAM from outside the room. MAX freezes.

CUT AWAY:

In the bathroom, HELEN hears the scream and turns her head towards the door abruptly. Her breath catches in her throat.

CUT BACK:

MAX pulls and hammers at the door.

MAX (CONT'D)
Eleanor! Eleanor!

There is another SCREAM and the sound of footsteps pounding through the hallway.

CUT AWAY:

HELEN is trying to get to the door of the bathroom, but she can hardly breathe, she's having an asthma attack.

CUT BACK:

MAX takes a run up to the door and charges it. Another run up and every pound of his huge frame CRASHES into the door, which splinters and gives.

INT. CORRIDOR. MAX'S MANSION. EVENING.

MAX comes crashing out into the main reception hall and reels at the sight of the bodyguards, stretched out on the floor, their throats slit.

MAX
Ellie!

He hears the sound of something smashing in the ballroom and runs toward it.

INT. BALLROOM. MAX'S MANSION. EVENING.

The room is dark except for pools of light which illuminate the iron statues.

The first thing that MAX sees is ELEANOR, standing alone in the middle of the room, blood dripping from her mouth where she has been hit. She sees him and screams.

ELEANOR
No, no, no -

MAX wheels around as a statue comes crashing off a pedestal into his face.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. EN SUITE BATHROOM. MASTER BEDROOM. EVENING

HELEN is hunched against the door, her hand on the lock. Her eyes are glassy as she struggles for breath.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. TRAIN. NEW YORK. EVENING.

MATT is rattling along on a graffiti-covered train bound for the outskirts. He's tinkering around with his cell phone, which is broken. He switches it off and on again.

Access barred

MATT glances at his watch. He's bored and impatient. He takes his notebook out of his bag and starts leafing through it.

He looks sketches he's made of the dead victims. He looks at the photograph of Annie Loft. Turning pages, he comes to the two photographs of the Lewis family that he stole from Max's library. They smile out at him, radiant.

MATT frowns, something is bothering him. He looks again at the photograph of DAVID and MAX in their business suits and briefcases. He flips it over and reads the inscription.

The original pioneers.

MATT looks up. A connection is forming in the back of his mind.

CLOSE: On DAVID'S young face in the photograph.

Flash: On DAVID'S smile.

CLOSE: On MAX'S hand, gripping DAVID'S shoulder.

DAVID V/O
(whisper)
... truly original..

Flash: DAVID'S hands positioning the layout for the anniversary edition.

Flash: DAVID'S hands positioning the layout for the anniversary edition. The movements speed up.

CLOSE: On DAVID'S young face, smiling into the camera.

MATT stares at the photograph.

The train has pulled into his station. MATT scrambles out of the carriage and onto the deserted platform.

INT. STRIP BAR. NIGHT.

The muted sights and sounds of ANNA LOUISE'S strip bar: men clapping, cheering, music plays.

The sounds and images distort.

INT. TRAIN STATION. EVENING.

MATT is banging the phone receiver against the set. It's broken. He goes to light a cigarette. The pack is empty.

He stands there for a moment. Then he pulls his coat around him and sets off down the road.

EXT. ROAD. EVENING.

It's like a ghost town. There's a disused petrol station and a row of condemned houses, boarded up.

The icy wind whistles around MATT as he walks along the middle of the street.

One of the houses is still lived in: there's light emanating from an upstairs window and a car is parked in the driveway.

EXT. BACK ENTRANCE. ANNA LOUISE'S HOUSE. EVENING.

MATT moves through the scrubby foliage and piles of rubbish. Cautiously, he looks in through the kitchen window.

The room is in darkness.

MATT tries the porch door, it opens.

INT. KITCHEN. ANNA LOUISE'S HOUSE. EVENING.

MATT steps into the kitchen. He hears a noise and freezes. It's the sound of a television coming from next door.

Carefully MATT picks up a knife from the dresser and moves quietly through the kitchen towards the corridor.

INT. CORRIDOR. ANNA LOUISE'S HOUSE. EVENING.

MATT keeps close to the wall, moving down the corridor towards the sound of the television. He is almost level with the door-frame to the lounge now.

Taking a deep breath MATT glances into the room.

From the back he can see that DAVID and ANNA LOUISE are watching television. The TV audience roar with laughter and so does DAVID.

DAVID

That's a classic.

DAVID gets up from the settee. MATT ducks his head back and flattens himself against the wall again.

DAVID walks out of the room and down the corridor in the opposite direction.

Quick as a flash, MATT slips into the lounge.

INT. LOUNGE. ANNA LOUISE'S HOUSE. EVENING.

MATT listens to DAVID'S retreating footsteps. He hears the click as DAVID switches a bathroom light on.

MATT makes for ANNA LOUISE.

MATT

Anna Louise, it's me -

He rounds the sofa and only just stops himself from yelling.

ANNA LOUISE is dead: her throat slit, her blood soaking the settee.

Reeling, MATT takes a step back. He looks around the room for a telephone: nothing. He makes for the door.

INT. CORRIDOR. ANNA LOUISE'S HOUSE. EVENING.

MATT can hear DAVID urinating in the bathroom. He makes for the stairs and starts up them.

The stairs creak. MATT freezes.

CUT AWAY:

DAVID'S eyes flick up. He's heard him.

CUT BACK:

DAVID comes out of the bathroom and walks calmly back into the lounge. Thinking he hasn't been spotted, MATT continues up the stairs.

INT. UPPER CORRIDOR. ANNA LOUISE'S HOUSE. EVENING.

There are just two doors up here.

MATT tries the handle of the first door. It opens to reveal ANNA LOUISE'S bedroom, empty.

MATT shuts the door quietly and walks the length of the corridor to the second door. Half way along, another floor-board creaks.

MATT leans carefully over the balcony to see DAVID'S head still visible on the back of the sofa.

CUT AWAY:

DAVID is smiling to himself, listening to MATT upstairs

CUT BACK:

Thinking he's safe, MATT opens the door to the second room.

INT. DAVID'S ROOM. ANNA LOUISE'S HOUSE. EVENING.

The room is dark and at first MATT can only make out silhouettes and shadows.

MATT switches on the light and the whole room is bathed in blue and green light.

The walls of the room are bare except for 9 spotlit photographs in frames. They're the anniversary covers from

The Hedonist. But as we move in closer we can see that they're not the real things. David has replaced the images of the real models with developed photographs of his nine victims. One last frame is empty.

In front of MATT is a recreation of the cover-shoot for the 10th anniversary edition.

The iron trees that featured in the shoot now twist up to the ceiling of the bedroom.

ELEANOR is lying unconscious, strapped to the narrow bed with yards of black PVC tape.

In front of her, his back to MATT, MAX is slumped in an iron chair, unconscious and bleeding.

And there in the corner is the iron cage from the cover shoot. The straps are untied. MATT'S eyes widen in realization.

It's meant for him.

DAVID
Hello, Matt.

DAVID is standing behind him, smiling.

DAVID (CONT'D)
So glad you could make it

MATT throws himself at DAVID and the two men fight. MATT is stronger. He pins DAVID to the ground.

MATT winces. DAVID has stuck a syringe into his hand. MATT reaches for his knife on the floor, but the room is fading away from him now. And there, above him, is DAVID'S smiling face.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Easy does it now...

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM. EVENING.

BRUBECK is outside the room, looking in at MARIA who is sitting across from a very upset TOM.

BRUBECK knocks at the door. MARIA turns and sees his face. The expression on it tells her everything she needs to know: they've got the wrong man.

FADE TO BLACK.

DARKNESS

DAVID

Matt... Matt.. time to wake up...
careful now...

As MATT regains consciousness he can make out colors, shapes... Reality rushes back in...

INT. BEDROOM. ANNA LOUISE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

MATT is standing in the iron cage, his arms and legs strapped in, his head held by a brace, a bit through his teeth. DAVID is standing in front of him, adjusting the brace. He smiles.

DAVID

That's it.

MATT can now do nothing but watch the scene in front of him.

ELEANOR is still unconscious. MAX is slumped in the iron chair. DAVID walks over to him and pulls him into a sitting position.

DAVID starts to strap MAX into the restraints in the chair. MAX'S breath rattles in his throat.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You know how great it was growing up as your son, Dad? God it was so cool. Every kid in school knew who I was, every kid wanted to be me... I used to look at other people's fathers and laugh. Those kids must have lain awake at night thinking, *wishing* they were like me, that they could have a father who took care of them like mine did.

(He smiles a little boy smile)

'Cos you always knew how to take care of things at home, didn't you, Daddy?

MAX'S mumbles something.

DAVID (CONT'D)
What's that you say?

He leans in closer and caresses MAX'S cheek.

DAVID (CONT'D)
You're a disease, Dad, you know that?
Everything you touch, everything you
are... All of us get infected in the
end, don't we? Even her. Just like me
now, isn't she, Dad? Just like all of
us. Ruined, like us.

There's the sound of a zipper as DAVID takes MAX'S penis
out of his pants.

DAVID (CONT'D)
That's it... That's better isn't it?

MAX moans. DAVID smiles. With his free hand he reaches up
and manouvres two final restraints over MAX'S hands. They
are metal buckles with sharp spikes at the end. Keeping his
hand on MAX'S penis, DAVID flips down both restraints. The
spikes drive deep in MAX'S hands. MAX screams. DAVID
straightens up.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Well..

DAVID walks over to the sink. He turns on the tap and lets
the water run over the palm of his hand. He rubs his hands
together. He snaps on latex gloves.

DAVID makes his way to a tray of surgical instruments next
to the sink. He glances at MATT. Keeping eye contact, he
picks up each instrument and holds it up for MATT to see.
He's teasing him, his face expressing a silent dialogue.
This one? No? What about this one?

MATT shuts his eyes. DAVID laughs. He walks over and starts
to adjust straps near MATT'S eyes. MATT can't see what he's
doing.

DAVID reaches towards MATT'S eye with his fingers and
places hard metal on the eyelid. He repeats the process
with the other eye. MATT tries to blink. Finds he can't.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Dad said these were too hard-core for the shoot. What do you think, Matt?

MATT stares back at him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Nothing's too hard-core for you is it?

DAVID walks to the bed and sits down by ELEANOR. He takes the spool of PVC tape and wraps it around ELEANOR'S eyes.

He pauses and turns to meet MAX'S eyes.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Beyond the limit.

DAVID takes his surgical knife and puts the tip of the blade on ELEANOR'S sternum, above her breast. He presses the point into her skin. A bead of blood runs down from it.

ELEANOR groans, she struggles in the blue light, moving in and out of consciousness.

DAVID presses again, more blood. DAVID seems to be finding this difficult. He swallows hard, determined to carry on.

CLOSE: On MATT'S eyes, filling up with saline.

DAVID takes a deep breath and cuts a line across ELEANOR'S sternum and down along her breast.

Underneath the tape ELEANOR screams. A strange noise comes from the back of DAVID'S throat. He turns and shouts at MAX.

DAVID (CONT'D)

That's enough!

CLOSE: MATT'S eyes flicker across to where MAX is in his chair, barely conscious.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You set out to do something and you do it! You follow through, simple as that. I can't have you spoiling this now.

(beat)

Ok?

There are tears running down DAVID'S cheeks, but he doesn't seem aware of them.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Good.

CLOSE: On MATT'S eyes, red-raw now.

Taking the knife, DAVID is about to press it into ELEANOR'S skin once more when he feels something. Looking down he sees that ELEANOR'S fingers are touching his.

For a moment, DAVID just stares at their fingers. Then a great sob escapes him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Ellie...

DAVID'S shaking hands remove the tape around her eyes. They look at him, full of tears and pain.

DAVID moans. He tears at the tape around her arms, freeing her from the bed. He scoops her up into his arms and cradles her, rocking gently back and forth, keening.

CLOSE: On MATT'S eyes, his focus blurring as he watches..

ELEANOR in DAVID'S arms, watching the surgical knife lying on the bed. As DAVID rocks her towards him, she gets closer to it. She can almost reach it. Then she's pulled back.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(Crying)

Ellie, Ellie..

ELEANOR

Sssh...

ELEANOR'S fingers curl around the knife. She brings it up and through the back of DAVID'S throat. He stares at her in shock and reels back. He collapses on the bed, pulling at the knife, but it's embedded in his throat.

ELEANOR watches him, strangely calm.

INT. CORRIDOR. ANNA LOUISE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

MARIA and BRUBECK come up the stairs, guns outstretched.

INT. BEDROOM. ANNA LOUISE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

The door bursts open and MARIA enters the room flanked by a dozen police officers.

DAVID is lying dead on the bed, MAX is in the chair, MATT is in the cage.

ELEANOR is over by the sink. She has turned on the tap and is letting the water flow over her hands. She turns and looks into MARIA'S eyes. BRUBECK is over to her in a second. He scoops her up and onto a stretcher as the paramedics rush in.

MARIA walks over to MATT. She examines the cage for a moment and then seeing where the catches are held, she flicks them back, delicately removing the restraints. Letting out a rasping breath, MATT finally closes his eyes. He opens them.

Everything is grey.

FADE TO WHITE.

The sound of birds singing in the darkness.

INT. SITTING ROOM. MAX'S MANSION. AFTERNOON.

The Manhattan skyline.

ELEANOR is standing looking out of the window. She turns away as MATT enters the room. He wears glasses.

ELEANOR

Hello Matt. Please sit down.

He does so. On the table in front of him is the leather-bound illuminated manuscript that DAVID showed him.

ELEANOR pours whiskies.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Drink?

MATT takes one.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

I always feel guilty about drinking alone.

MATT
Best time for it.

ELEANOR
We never did go for that dinner.

MATT
No, we never did.

Pause. ELEANOR forces a smile.

ELEANOR
Well...

MATT (CONT'D)
How are you?

She stares at the manuscript.

ELEANOR
He left a note, wanted you to have it.

MATT
This was David's book?

ELEANOR
(nods)
It's up to you, if you want to take it.
(beat)
You heard about Dad.

MATT
I'm so sorry, Ellie.

Pause.

MATT (CONT'D)
Where's your mother?

ELEANOR
She's here. She's due any day now. I'll
stay with her, you know, until..

ELEANOR takes a glug of whisky.

MATT (CONT'D)
Is there any chance that he could -

ELEANOR

No. Well, my brother crippled us all
one way or another.

(beat)

But at least you have an ending.

MATT looks at her sharply.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

For your article.

MATT

There is no article.

ELEANOR

But there will be. That's the whole
thing, Matt. That's why I asked you
here. I need you to write it, tell the
truth about all of this. Because
otherwise, what..

She starts to cry.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

Everything, all of this will just have
been..

MATT

Ellie...

ELEANOR

I've arranged all of it! You can have
any paper you want, anything.

MATT

It's over.

ELEANOR

But it's not over. It's never, never
going to be over and there has to be...
we have to make some sense of it all!
You know what they've done? They just
shut the magazine down and opened it up
again under a different name. It's the
same thing all over again. And you've
heard what they've all said, they don't
know, they don't know the truth of
it...

She sits down, sobbing.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)
I just need you to tell the truth.

EXT. GARDEN. AFTERNOON.

The birds sing in the garden.

MATT makes his way down a gravel path towards a fountain. He can see MAX in front of him in a wheelchair. Next to him sits HELEN in a garden chair, reading out loud.

MATT steps onto the grass and quietly, moves towards them.

MAX is mumbling a stream of syllables with no meaning. One of his bandaged hands begins to jitter up and down in his lap. HELEN places her own hand over his and carries on reading.

After a moment MATT turns and walks back towards the house.

INT. MATT'S APARTMENT. MATT'S TENEMENT. NIGHT.

MATT sits at his desk, a sheaf of paper in front of him. He stares at the vast expanse of white.

CUT TO:

MATT stands at his tenement window, gazing blankly down over the street. He turns and looks at the leather bound book, resting heavily on the table.

CUT TO:

MATT starts to write, as soon as he begins, the words seem to pour out of him, unstoppable.

CUT TO:

MATT is working feverishly, a pile of photographs and sketches lie next to the sheets of completed writing.

INT. STAIRWELL. MATT'S TENEMENT. MORNING.

MATT comes out of his door and locks it behind him. He clutches his stack of papers to him, unsteady. He turns to see ELI sitting watching him from his usual post.

MATT
How you doing?

ELI
I'm OK.

MATT
I have to go and um...

Distracted he sits down on the stairs next to ELI. He puts his head in his hands.

MATT (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, I'm just so sorry for all of it.

ELI puts his hand on MATT'S shoulder.

ELI
You did what you had to do, that's all. Just sometimes it seems like there's so much pain in the world, too much to bear. But all it is, is shadows. Just cast a light and they disappear.

MATT
Is that right?

ELI
That's what I heard.

MATT looks up and smiles at him.

MATT
No much of a godfather am I?

ELI
I don't know, you're the only one I got.

KID'S VOICE [OFF]
Eli!

ELI'S face lights up at the sound of his friends.

ELI
I got to go. But I'll see you later won't I? You and me and Dad could shoot some hoops?

MATT

Yeah, Eli. You bet.

ELI smiles but he looks sad, as if he knows MATT doesn't mean it. ELI takes a silver object from around his neck and puts it into MATT'S hand. MATT looks at it. It's a figurine of St. Christopher. MATT opens his mouth to protest, but ELI reaches out and hugs him tight. The next moment he's gone.

MATT stares at the St. Christopher. Carefully, he puts it on.

EXT. STREET. NEW YORK. DAY.

MATT walks down the street, through the monotone crowd of suits going to and fro between the towering buildings.

INT. TIME MAGAZINE LOBBY. NEW YORK. DAY.

The morning sun slants through the high glass windows, illuminating the solitary figure of MATT, waiting in the lobby.

Click, click, click of high heels approaching him. He looks up into the alert eyes of a secretary.

SECRETARY

Can I help you, sir?

MATT

I have something for your editor.

He gives her the stack of papers. She looks uncertain.

SECRETARY

Is he expecting this?

MATT

No.

The SECRETARY moves off towards the elevator. Intrigued, she turns over the top cover and reads

THE HEDONIST

She stops.

SECRETARY

Sorry, sir, I didn't catch -

She turns

SECRETARY (CONT'D)
your name..

The lobby is empty.

INT. STAIRWELL. MATT'S TENEMENT. DAY.

ELI and BOBBY come down the stairs to MATT'S room dressed in sweatpants and carrying a basketball.

BOBBY knocks on MATT'S door. To his surprise it swings open.

INT. MATT'S ROOM. TENEMENT. DAY.

The room is empty, stripped of MATT'S possessions.

BOBBY stands for a moment, ashen-faced, then he turns and walks out of the room.

On the desk the leather-bound book lies open. ELI steps forward and sadly traces the gorgeous swirls of color with his fingertips.

There's a sound from the street and ELI goes over to the window to see BOBBY bouncing the ball in a concrete court.

With a final glance at the book, ELI heaves the great cover shut, dust flies from the pages. The young boy turns and leaves the room, shutting the door behind him.

We hear the sound of his feet on the stairs, running down to meet his father.

THE END.