

LIGHTNING ON THE SUN  
Burr Steers

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EXT: TRIBECA STREET - NIGHT

The CAMERA pans up the elegant facade of a pre-war building to the fifth floor at the top. The huge street-side windows are completely fogged up.

SUPER: NEW YORK. 1992. ELECTION NIGHT.

INT: LOFT - NIGHT

The cavernous loft is wall to wall with prototypical Gen-Xers. Everyone's eyes are glued to a color TV that's been set up on a battered pool table. The air is thick with tension and pot smoke.

ANGLE ON... TV screen. PETER JENNINGS looks into the camera.

PETER JENNINGS

With more than a third of the vote counted, ABC news is now projecting that William Jefferson Clinton has been elected the 42nd president of the United States.

The loft explodes into a jubilant and clamorous celebration.

ANGLE ON... JULIE, late-twenties, a dazzling beauty in a brazen red dress.

She deftly fends off a schlubby guy trying to land a victory kiss. She notices a lone male figure still standing directly in front of the TV.

ANGLE ON... ASHER, late-twenties. An innocent and open expression on his boyishly handsome face. He's mesmerized by an image on the screen.

ANGLE ON... A 16 year-old Bill Clinton wearing his Scout uniform shakes hands with President Kennedy.

The network cuts away to a crowd of boomers getting down to Fleetwood Mac. Asher snaps out of his reverie. He glances about the party unconsciously mouthing the words to "Don't Stop." He's struck dumb mid-chorus.

ANGLE ON... Julie unabashedly scrutinizing him from across the loft.

She smiles at him. She knows his secret.

The next instant she vanishes back into the frenzied celebration.

ANGLE ON... Asher. The boy is smitten.

LATER ON

2.

The place is stupid with rich-kid dilettantes and poseurs expounding on art and politics. The old-fashioned radiators are going full bore creating a sauna effect. Everyone is sweating. No one cares.

ANGLE ON... PETER, late twenties, the overbearing host of the party holding court behind his deejay station. He slings his arm around Asher, toasts him with a bottle of Jim Beam.

PETER PRIVELEGE  
(pronounced lisp)  
"I've seen the devil of violence  
and the devil of... " Fuck!

Peter cues a record.

PETER PRIVELEGE  
To the heart of darkness! To Asher!

"HOLIDAY IN CAMBODIA" blares over the speakers.

Everyone's about to drink up when Julie appears at the group's periphery.

She lifts her plastic wine glass to Asher. He raises his cocktail.

ASHER  
Cheers.

JULIE  
Cheers. Big ears.

Peter notes their little exchange. He scurries out from behind the turntables and whisks Julie away.

ANGLE ON... a row of five paintings hanging on the scuffed wall. They're tracings of headstones colored in red.

The cage door to the industrial elevator opens and more revelers come pouring in to the packed loft.

INT: BATHROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

A cramped lavatory. The walls are papered with aluminum foil. Discarded cocktails line the sink. An ADDLED CHICK appraises herself in the mirror. Satisfied, she exits.

Asher enters. Someone squeezes in behind him, latching the door shut. Asher spins around to protest and comes face to exquisite-face with Julie. They stand there wordlessly for a charged moment, barely a tongue's length apart.

A wicked grin curls Julie's red lips. Just as Asher leans toward her the door bursts open and the former occupant barges in -- directly between them.

ADDLED CHICK

I lost my lude! Quaalude where are  
you?

She drops to her knees and starts frantically searching  
around on the the floor.

JULIE

Find me.

She promptly exits. Asher awkwardly attempts to step over the  
Addled Chick. He fails and comes crashing down in a heap. He  
pulls himself up by the sink and scrambles out the door.

INT: LOFT - CONTINUOUS

The first chords of David Bowie's "ASHES TO ASHES" sound.

ANGLE ON... a determined Asher as he fights his way through  
the crowd searching for Julie.

ANGLE ON... Peter. He has a bitter-shit look on his face as  
he observes Asher.

INT: PETER'S BEDROOM - LATE

Peter's bedroom has been designated the coat depository. A  
mountain of trendy outerwear has been piled up on the bed.

Asher enters. There's no sign of Julie. He checks the closet.  
He's about to leave when he hears a muffled giggle. He walks  
over to the bed and gently tugs one of the coats off. The  
giggling grows louder.

INT: LOFT - INTERCUT

Peter, walks from painting to painting gashing each with a  
stiletto.

INT: BEDROOM - LATE

The room is wrecked. Coats scattered everywhere.

In the course of a raucous and passionate romp Asher and  
Julie have landed on the floor beside the bed.

ASHER

What's your name?

She manages to roll him over so that she's on top.

ASHER

Tell me your name.

He traces her lips with his fingers.

JULIE

Julie.

FADE TO BLACK:

'ASHES TO ASHES' peters out...

SUPER: *"There were so many things he would never be now"*

EXT: NATIONAL MUSEUM GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

SUPER: THE PRESENT. CAMBODIA, 1997.

A lush garden courtyard surrounding the majestic rust-colored pavilion that serves as the National Museum. There's a murky dreamlike quality to it all as the tropical flower colors bleed into one another. We can make out a blurry figure sweeping the pathways.

The figure comes into focus with each stroke of the broom and we see that it's a beautiful Khmer woman. She wears a tight baby-blue dress with a slit in the back and white buttons down the front that accentuate her bosom.

ASHER (O.S.)

Fuck!

ANGLE ON... Her twin reflections in the binocular lenses.

EXT: ASHER'S APARTMENT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Asher jerks the binoculars down and wipes the perspiration from his eyes. Five hard years have drained the boyishness from his face. He sits rigid on a rickety metal chair.

Asher plucks a roach from a club ashtray on the balcony's rail and fumblingly tries to fire up with his Zippo. He fails, hurls the lighter against the wall and stalks into the apartment.

He re-emerges moments later with a steaming cold bottle of Stolli's and a cafeteria milk glass. He plops back down into his chair, pours himself a precise measure of vodka, and resumes his vigil.

ANGLE ON... the garden...Absolute serenity until...From under the pavilion's roof a great squealing cloud comes pouring out like black ink... Bats.

ASHER

(smiling)

Cheers, big ears.

He drains the vodka and pours himself another, which he gulps down like water. He pops the roach into his mouth, and lights up as he goes back inside.

INT: ASHER'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

We follow Asher through his one-room hovel of a flat.

The floor is littered with piles of dirty clothes, overflowing ashtrays and empty bottles. The bookshelves are crammed with paperbacks and stacks of newspapers.

Asher pulls on a pair of jeans. He strips off his clammy t-shirt and replaces it with a gray button-down.

He crosses over to the kitchen area and opens the freezer. He retrieves a plastic hotel bucket, digs into the brownish ice and pulls out a sandwich bag containing a thick wad of American bills.

He pulls a worn leather satchel out from underneath the bed, places it on the mattress. He unfurls the roll of bills and, with great precision, tucks them under the satchel's liner. He shoves a Paris Review and some dirty clothes inside and rebuckles it.

He slings the satchel over his shoulder and exits.

ANGLE ON... a crate beside the bed serving as a night stand. Propped up against a four-headed Buddha statue is an old photograph of Julie.

EXT: STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

Asher pushes his Honda Dream motorcycle out of the garage. A group of street kids descend upon him.

CHILDREN

Asher! Asher!

One kid tries to scramble on board for a ride. Asher gently detaches him as he rolls away, kick-starting the bike as he goes. The kids chase after him down the street...

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD - LATER THAT EVENING

An official-looking police roadblock has been thrown up under the guise of checking papers.

Asher looks around wildly for a turn-off but a truck has boxed him in on the right. He's funneled inevitably towards the flashing red lights.

There's one car ahead. It passes through. Asher's up. He withdraws an ID card from his wallet.

ASHER

Here you go, sir.

One COP checks the ID while the other blinds Asher with a flashlight.

ANGLE ON... an old photo of Asher's smiling face on a United Nations ID.

Cop #1, shows it to Cop #2 who's shining the flashlight in Asher's face. He looks at Asher and shakes his head.

Cop #1 directs Asher toward the fat SUPERIOR sitting on a lawn chair off to the side of the road block. Asher switches off his bike and dismounts.

ASHER  
(mutters)  
There's always a fat man.

Cop #1 hands Asher's card to the superior, who glances at the card and hands it back.

ASHER  
Thank you, sir.

Asher starts back toward his motorcycle. The superior says something in Khmer which prompts Cop #2 to step in front of Asher. Asher turns back to the superior.

ASHER  
Sir?

The superior indicates Asher's satchel. Asher slips off the shoulder strap and coolly tosses it over. The superior rummages through it.

Asher pulls out a pack of Marlboros while he waits and offers smokes all around. The cops accept.

ANGLE ON... A PROSTITUTE, with her john in tow, has hipped her way to the head of the line. She makes a lewd overture towards Asher -- which he playfully acknowledges for the cops' amusement.

The superior, satisfied there's nothing of value in the bag, abruptly two-hand heaves it back toward Asher--who, in the midst of his mock-flirtation, doesn't see the bag flying towards him.

ANGLE ON... the satchel as it hits the road. The seams on the bottom bust open, and the meticulously stashed green bills tumble out onto the pavement.

Asher stares at the bag in dumbfounded disbelief.

ASHER  
Fuck!

CUT TO:

INT: POCHENTONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

SUPER: THREE MONTHS EARLIER

ANGLE ON... VIBOL THOM, a diminutive, bejeweled Cambodian gangster with alligator loafers. He's unleashing a barrage of spit-drenched Khmer into the face of a high-ranking ROYAL AIR CAMBODIA official.

VIBOL THOM  
(subtitled)

My luggage didn't make the flight?  
If I owned this airline I would  
have one employee shot in the head  
each hour until my bag arrived!

Vibol Thom is flanked by his lickspittle RIGHT HAND MAN. R.H.M. attempts to cajole his boss and defuse the situation.

Thom's fury appears to have subsided. He abruptly steps away from the quivering airline official, who exhales in relief. It's short-lived relief however, as Thom grabs a pistol from his goon's holster and spins back around to BITCH SLAP the official with it.

ANGLE ON... a travel-weary HARRISON REESE, mid-thirties. He's clad in khakis, a sweat-stained button-down shirt and, in spite of the heat, a blue blazer. He has a pink Financial Times rolled up under one arm.

He's been pulled aside by the Cambodian Customs officials. They have no interest in his luggage, his Nikon camera, or numerous recording devices. Instead they're fascinated by his over-sized Yonex tennis racquet.

He turns to the sound of someone ranting in Khmer, just in time to have Vibol Thom knock into him hard. The pink newspaper flies from Reese's grasp.

ANGLE ON... the paper as it lands and is immediately trampled by R.H.M. scurrying after his boss.

Thom marches upstream against the flow of travelers as the armed airport security guards make no move to stop him.

EXT: POCHENTONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Thom strides out onto the tarmac where a ROYAL AIR CAMBODIA plane sits.

A pleading R.H.M. makes the fatal mistake of tugging on one of Thom's silk sleeves. Thom whirls around on him with the raised gun. A cowering R.H.M. holds up his hands to shield himself. BANG!

ANGLE ON... three fingers of R.H.M.'s left hand being blown off.



A shocked R.H.M. crumples to his knees. Thom marches under the wing, takes careful aim, and empties an entire clip into the tire.

The tire abruptly gives way and the wing drops, cracking Thom on the head. Furious, he hurls his empty pistol at the plane and stalks away.

A shiny black Land Cruiser drives onto the tarmac and whisks Thom and his freshly maimed henchman away.

ANGLE ON... Two frightened flight attendants peek out the door of the lopsided plane. The final shot of this impromptu Keystone Cops homage.

INT: POCHENTONG INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - MOMENTS LATER

ANGLE ON... Reese, with a sheepish expression on his face, has not advanced an inch since we left him.

The customs officers have gone from examining his racquet with awe to practicing the finer points of their ground strokes.

ANGLE ON... a sign: *WELCOME TO CAMBODIA 'MR. REESE'*.

It's being held aloft by PIN, a Khmer teenager in a black Metallica t-shirt and camouflage military pants. He stands by the airport's long entrance-way with the other drivers waiting for their passengers to emerge from customs.

CUT TO:

INT: ASPARA - NIGHT

The dimly lit lounge of the massage parlor has a seedy, Third World Vegas feel to it.

ANGLE ON... Asher, his battered face revealing that he did not part easily with his money.

He cases the joint from his spot next to the front door. His eyes adjust to the artificial light and he spies...

ANGLE ON... a mangled left hand delicately placing a lit Benson and Hedges between the smirking lips of Vibol Thom's mouth.

PULL BACK... to reveal the gangster buried in a leatherette love seat with R.H.M. hovering just behind him. Two armed goons lounge expansively on an adjacent couch.

Across a checkerboard from Thom sits the Aspara's owner, MR. HAWK, a portly man with an affable Buddha-like face. He studies the board nervously, pretending to be completely befuddled by Thom's strategic genius.

Asher looks away before the gangsters spot him. He makes his way across the bar, then stops directly in front of the camera. He considers for a moment...

ASHER  
(muffled)  
Thirty-four.

No response. Asher leans forward and knocks on the Plexiglas wall that separates him from the camera.

ASHER  
Thirty-four. You're my lucky  
number tonight... You have to be.

ANGLE ON... The numbered 'ladies' of the establishment huddled together in a Plexiglas box. Number thirty-four looks up and smiles.

CLOSE ON... Asher's face as his breath fogs the Plexiglas.

INT: PHNOM PENH INTERNET SHOP - DAY

SUPER: SIX MONTHS EARLIER

A bustling Phnom Penh internet shop along the Tonle Sap River.

Asher sits at a rudimentary computer pecking away at the keyboard.

ASHER (O.S.)  
I don't know how she found me...

ANGLE ON... The screen. His e-mail page ASHER@UN.ORG. comes up. The cursor scrolls down numerous debt notices. It comes to an abrupt halt on an e-mail from *JULIE G-Spot*.

ASHER (O.S.)  
...but one day I got on the  
internet and there she was after  
five years....

ANGLE ON... The black computer screen as Julie's simple message flickers on: "*SAVE ME ASHER*". We glimpse Julie's ghostly reflection in the screen.

The soft sound of Asher moaning...

INT: ASPARA MASSAGE ROOM - NIGHT

ANGLE ON... Asher, lying on his back as if in the midst of a painful dream. His eyes pop open wide with a grunt...

Number Thirty-Four stands over him in the cramped, windowless room, vigorously working him to climax with her hand.

INT: ASPARA - LATER THAT NIGHT

Mr. Hawk sits behind the bar, concentrating on the checker board. He plays both sides with a deftness and skill he didn't dare reveal in Vibol Thom's presence. Someone casts a shadow over the board. Mr. Hawk looks up.

MR. HAWK  
(cheerily)  
Mr. Asher. You look lost.

ANGLE ON... Asher, gripping the bar with white-knuckled hands.

ASHER  
I am... I am lost...

MR. HAWK  
(chuckles)  
I do not understand you.

ASHER  
I haven't started to make sense yet, Mr. Hawk... I need money.

MR. HAWK  
When?

ASHER  
Yesterday. I'm on a tight schedule.

MR. HAWK  
Tomorrow.

ASHER  
I don't need it tomorrow, Mr. Hawk.

MR. HAWK  
How much?

ASHER  
Just three thousand dollars.

He looks up from his board.

MR. HAWK  
I can give you three thousand.

ASHER  
Do you have it now?

MR. HAWK  
Yes.

ASHER  
Where?

MR. HAWK

Here?

ASHER

Where's here?

MR. HAWK

Here is here. Asher, you must wait.

ASHER

Can I have a beer then?

MR. HAWK

You didn't pay tonight.

ASHER

Tonight's over. We, my friend, are going somewhere else now. Give me a beer... please?

MR. HAWK

You are a crazy man.

ASHER

I'm the fucking Merchant Prince. Let's drink a toast to me. Where's my beer?

Mr. Hawk gets Asher an Angkor beer then disappears behind the bar. He reemerges moments later with the money and counts out three stacks. He wraps them neatly in a Cambodian newspaper, then secures them with rubber bands and places them in a white plastic LUCKY MARKET bag.

MR. HAWK

Three thousand. Ten percent a week.

ASHER

Too steep. How about ten a month?

MR. HAWK

Ten percent a week. Now you must say it.

ASHER

Ten it is.

Locking eyes, Hawk hands Asher the plastic bag.

MR. HAWK

You need a family, Asher. Children.

ASHER

No. Children suck. They're a burden. I'm into 'lightness'.

Asher checks the money then stuffs it in to his windbreaker.

MR. HAWK  
You need a woman.

ASHER  
I need to get back to the fucking  
world, my friend.

BRIT-ARISTO VOICE (O.S.)  
I like Vietnamese pussy!

MR. HAWK  
This is the world.

Asher smiles and flips back the last of his beer.

ANGLE ON... GERALD COATS (aka LORD YUM-YUM) a dissolute Brit  
aristo with a jaundiced pallor and an expensive suit. He's  
perched in a chair, studying the girls inside the cage as if  
they were items on a dessert menu.

GERALD COATS  
...I fancy the taste of it...  
Salty like the Delta from which it  
sprang.

MR. HAWK  
(calls over)  
New sisters from Samlot, Mr.  
Coats. The youngest -- two  
soldiers past her virginity --  
still a lullaby.

Gerald Coats sucks on his index finger then taps on the  
Plexiglas to get the youngest girl's attention. She smiles at  
him lasciviously. We see Asher passing in the background.

GERALD COATS  
Virginity, Mr. Hawk, is overrated.

FLASHBACK:

EXT: CEMETERY - DAY (NEW YORK, 1992)

A stately old cemetery outside of New York. Asher dutifully  
trudges up a hill after Julie lugging her art supplies.

ASHER  
(cheerily)  
Our first date.

JULIE  
It's hardly a date.

ASHER  
A tryst then.

JULIE  
You knew Peter at Harvard?

ASHER  
(nods)  
I sort of fell back into his orbit  
once I was in the city.

JULIE  
He's got a strong gravitational  
pull.

ASHER  
His money does at least.

JULIE  
So why don't I remember you from  
school?

Julie finds the headstone she's looking for.

ASHER  
I had no social life. I worked all  
the time. I was on scholarship.  
Dorm Crew...

JULIE  
(winces)  
...You scrubbed toilets?

ASHER  
I remember you... A bit chubby  
then.  
(off her look)  
Sorry, zaftig.

JULIE  
That's much better. Thanks.

ASHER  
You were fucking gorgeous.

She covers the stone with a sheath of tracing paper and  
secures it with tape.

ASHER  
Is this legal?

JULIE  
Doubt it. So you just up and quit  
your gig at Brewster Morgan?

ASHER  
They threatened me with promotion.  
I'm not corporate. I've tried. It  
doesn't take.

JULIE

Peter's theory about you is that you're some kind of turtleneck liberal, crypto-hippie and that your whole 'save Cambodia trip' is just an elaborate way of dropping out.

ASHER

Of what?

JULIE

New York. Because you don't have the balls to hack it here.

ASHER

Balls? I'm bringing peace and democracy to the fucking Killing Fields!

Asher kicks a nearby headstone in frustration, slabs come flying off.

ASHER

Oh shit.

He retrieves the pieces and tries to reconstruct the stone. It falls apart as soon as he withdraws his hands. Julie cracks up.

ASHER

Fuck Peter Privilege and fuck his theories... Why does he call you Julie G-Spot?

JULIE

Nicknames are his thing.

ASHER

That's more than a nickname.

JULIE

I was conceived in a '69 Ghibli Spyder. G is for Ghibli.

ASHER

And B is for Bullshit.

She looks up from the stone.

JULIE

The truth. When I was ten - without any provocation - a nasty little boy shot me with his BB gun.  
(off Asher's look)  
G-Spot because of where the scar is.

Asher smiles at her. She smiles back.

JULIE

Bet you're a good shot.

She starts inching up her skirt.

ANGLE ON... A burial in progress in another part of the graveyard. The solemn mourners try to ignore the unmistakable and gleeful sounds of sex.

A little boy stands beside his big sister. Perplexed by the cries and moans he starts tugging on her sleeve.

BIG SISTER

(whispers)

Ghosts.

ANGLE ON... the boy as his eyes widen with fear.

INT: INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CLUB - DAY (CAMBODIA, 1997)

Reese is turned out in 'old school' tennis whites, down to the classic Boast Marijuana leaf over his left breast. He pounds the ball back and forth with a wiry but game CAMBODIAN TEEN.

ANGLE ON... Reese as he becomes aware of someone hitting with equal power on the next court.

REVEAL... Asher, in cut-off khakis, and a faded Harvard Athletics t-shirt.

Reese and Asher, like mirror images, rush the net to hit winners.

Reese adheres to the etiquette of the court change. He walks into the shade beside Asher who stares at him unabashedly.

REESE

What?

ASHER

The drunk American in La Dolce Vita.

REESE

Huh?

ASHER

That's who you're supposed to be. Right? The glasses gave you away.

REESE

Amusing.



ASHER  
Want to hit?

REESE  
I am hitting.

ASHER  
With me. The kid'll never leave  
the baseline.

Reese's partner serves. Reese slices the return short and the kid has no chance to cover the distance.

ASHER  
Cambodians don't come to the net.  
They play timid.

REESE  
Genocide can do that to you.

ASHER  
Let's hit?

REESE  
Thanks but I've paid mine for the  
afternoon.

ASHER  
Me too. We'll pawn 'em off on each  
other.

Before Reese can protest, Asher has taken the initiative. He pulls a roll of dollar bills from his pocket and approaches the net to haggle with the 'pros'.

LATER ON

The equally matched Americans hit with great pace.

ASHER  
You're the new guy at Agence  
France Presse.

REESE  
Harrison Reese.

ASHER  
I'm Asher. I usually make a point  
of not associating with your ilk.

REESE  
My 'ilk'?

ASHER  
Journos. I hate fuckin' journos.

REESE  
What is it that you do, Asher?

ASHER  
I clean bat shit off the Khmer  
statues at the National Museum.

REESE  
Lucrative work?

ASHER  
I'm not in it for the money  
Reese...I'm all about the bat  
shit. I work for UNESCO.

REESE  
Very commendable. A  
preservationist.

ASHER  
That I am. All appearances to the  
contrary.

Reese lets the ball bounce past him. He prepares to serve.

REESE  
First ball in.

ASHER  
First one in.

ANGLE ON... Reese wields his over-sized Yonex, hammering the  
unfortunate ball -- BOOM! -- like a gunshot.

EXT: BAMBOO BAR - LATER THAT DAY

ANGLE ON... Asher, sweat soaked and overheated, sits across  
a pool side table from a fresh-looking Reese. Asher convulses  
into a smoker's coughing fit between sips of his Angkor  
stout. Reese focuses on the pool.

ANGLE ON... ELIZA COATS, a beautiful woman in her late  
thirties. She's in a red bathing suit standing at the far end  
of the pool. She tucks the last bit of hair beneath her cap.

ASHER (O.S.)  
Red on Saffron.

She dives in - a perfect racing dive - barely making a  
ripple. She takes her first stroke half a length across.

REESE  
(thinking it's her  
name)  
Saffron?

10.

Asher lights a cigarette with his Zippo. A couple of drags and his coughing subsides.

ASHER

May '75 this pool was filled with the bodies of Buddhist monks. To save bullets the Khmer Rouge bludgeoned them - crushed their skulls like egg shells... The monks bled red on their saffron robes.

REESE

Hence all the chlorine. How long have you been here?

ASHER

I came as Peacekeeper for the '93 elections. The irony of the job title was lost on me at the time.

ANGLE ON... Eliza Coats gliding through the water with a long and efficient stroke.

REESE

Who's the 'lady of the pool'?

ASHER

Eliza Coats. She and her husband Gerald run the Cambodian Sun.

ANGLE ON... Eliza executes a perfect flip-turn and starts back across the pool.

REESE

She's certainly got a routine.

ASHER

She certainly does. New Asher rule.

REESE

Asher rule?

ASHER

You have to construct your own order here. You need to invent 'rules', Mr. Reese, or you'll come apart. What's today?

REESE

Thursday.

ASHER

Tennis every Thursday night at five.

REESE  
Yeah... Okay.

They touch glasses. Asher swigs, Reese sips.

ANGLE ON... Eliza's extended arm reaching--reaching... She touches the end of the pool.

CUT TO:

THREE WEEKS LATER

ANGLE ON... Eliza, in a blue suit, stands at the end of the pool. She plunges straight as an arrow into the water.

REESE (O.S.)  
She left you for a Maserati?

ANGLE ON... Asher, in a worn white Izod shirt and shorts, looks like a faded reflection of Reese. They're both a bit drunk.

ASHER  
We just weren't fucking ready for each other. You know man? Not then.

Remy, a French journo, approaches the table.

REMY  
Reese, you're going back to New York? Yes?

REESE  
Yes.

Remy presses a letter into Reese's chest.

REMY  
You will mail this for me. It cannot wait for the Cambodian snail mail.

REESE  
Sure.

Remy winks at him then smiles and walks off.

REESE  
(off Asher's look)  
I have to go back. My kid sister's getting married.

Asher touches his glass to Reese. Reese focuses on Eliza as she glides effortlessly across the pool.

REESE  
I really like her... arms.

ASHER  
Don't be fooled. Teabag through  
and through... Clinically fucking  
British.

REESE  
Still. I really like her arms.  
(beat)  
What are you going to do now that  
the UN has pulled out? That's the  
end of UNESCO right?

ASHER  
I thought journalism.

REESE  
Fuck off.

CASPAR, 24, a gangly, long-haired Dutch kid, approaches the  
table.

REESE  
Hey Caspar. What've you got for  
me?

Caspar places some rolls of film on the table.

CASPAR  
Ambassador Quinn's speech. Caught  
one of your visiting congressmen  
napping.

REESE  
Great. I'll see if there's  
anything I can use.

CASPAR  
Brilliant. Thanks, Reese.

Caspar departs.

ASHER  
A lot of war photographers have  
been washing up in Phnom Penh  
lately.

REESE  
Why is that?

ASHER  
Same as you. They smell blood.

ANGLE ON... Eliza's hand tapping the end of the pool.

CUT TO:

THREE WEEKS LATER

ANGLE ON... Eliza Coats, in a gold suit, jettisons herself into the pool.

Asher and Reese sit at their usual post-match table. Asher pulls a folded fax page from out of his racquet sleeve and places it on the table in front of Reese.

REESE  
What is it?

ASHER  
A gift. My friend at World Bank faxed it to me. The French company that printed the Cambodian currency printed up an extra hundred thousand ten-thousand riel notes.

REESE  
Why?

ASHER  
To grease the cronies that secured their bid for the contract. Now all those counterfeit bills are about to come pouring into the Phnom Penh banks.

REESE  
How can the economy withstand that?

ASHER  
It can't.

Reese studies the FAX.

REESE  
Your friend's at the World Bank?  
(Asher nods)  
Can I talk to him directly?

ASHER  
Probably... but you can't quote him. He'd be fucked if you did.

REESE  
I won't have to. I'll get confirmation from someone else.

ELIZA (O.S.)  
Look at you, Asher...

ANGLE ON... Eliza, standing at the shallow end of the pool, peels off her bathing cap.

ELIZA  
...All tidied up.

REESE  
Harrison Reese.

ELIZA  
I know who you are.

ASHER  
Eliza knows everything.

ELIZA  
(wistfully)  
It's a great burden.

She gives her hair a shake for the boys then climbs up out of the pool and heads for the changing rooms.

FLASHBACK:

INT: JULIE'S STUDIO - DAY (NEW YORK, 1992)

Asher, in his boxers, sits Indian-style in a Plexiglas cube. He cradles a document in his lap.

ASHER  
(calls out)  
I got my U.N. contract. It's only going to be six months...

Asher crawls out of the box. As he crosses we see their clothes strewn about the studio.

ASHER  
And I'll be getting a per diem of \$145.00 on top of my handsome salary.

Julie, clad only in Asher's button-down shirt, is focused on applying the final touches to her latest canvas.

He comes up behind her, nuzzling into her long hair.

ASHER  
Come with me. Collect a trophy life experience. Be the envy of all your spoiled brat, debutante friends.

JULIE  
Already am.

ASHER  
It's just six months.

JULIE  
You said that.

ASHER

Meet me in Bangkok. We'll get a suite at the Oriental.

JULIE

It's a date.

Asher wanders off perusing Julie's work on the walls.

ASHER

How do you choose the stones?

JULIE

They all died in car crashes.

ASHER

Cheery.

ANGLE ON...well-worn paperback amongst Julie's art books.

Asher plucks it from the shelf. It's a copy of "A HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE". The margins of every page are brimming with Julie's notes. A snapshot of a beaming Julie slips from the pages. Asher retrieves it from the floor. He locates his jacket and hides the book inside.

ASHER

So where do you show your paintings?

JULIE

I don't.

ASHER

Then how do you sell them?

JULIE

My art's not for sale.

ASHER

It's not? Who subsidizes this hobby? A rich Daddy?

(off Julie's look)

Don't tell me Peter Privilege foots this bill.

JULIE

Don't ask me then.

ASHER

God. It must be great to be that rich. You can buy anything you want.

With surprising dexterity Julie hurls a small can of paint directly at Asher's head.



He manages to catch the can but can't avoid being splattered with red paint.

Julie laughs.

Asher rifles the can back at her. Just barely whistling past her head. It smashes into the white wall behind her.

ANGLE ON...the dripping red circle at the can's point of impact.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: CAMBODIAN FARMHOUSE - NIGHT (CAMBODIA, 1997)

ANGLE ON... On a red ball burning brightly as it twists and turns in a wooden bowl.

ANGLE ON... Asher, his face red as he sucks on a gurgling opium pipe.

KMAO, a wiry Khmer, crouches in front of Asher providing the flame for the bowl with a Bic lighter.

KMAO  
(commands)  
You smoke!

Asher pulls harder, the veins in his neck bulging. He tries to exhale through the corner of his mouth without dissipating the flame. He fails... he's blown the bowl.

ASHER  
(coughing for air)  
Fuck. I'm sorry, Kmao.

Kmao scrapes the bowl clean of the half-burned, useless opium. His shiny revolver rests nearby on a pillow.

A radio comes on downstairs. We hear a newscaster speaking in Khmer. Kmao barks out a command and the radio is abruptly switched to a music channel.

EXT: KMAO'S FARM - (A SHORT TIME LATER)

Outside Kmao's wooden farmhouse two small children battle for the best perch on Asher's bike. Their mother admonishes them from the doorway and orders them inside.

INT: KMAO'S ATTIC - CONTINUOUS

Asher removes the plastic Lucky Market money bag from his windbreaker and tosses it. Kmao starts counting the bills.

ASHER  
Three thou. As promised.

23.

Asher admires the serrated black plastic handle grip of Kmao's revolver and twirls the gun like a gunslinger.

ASHER  
(off Kmao's look)

Sorry.

He replaces the gun on the pillow. Kmao flicks open a switchblade and cuts open one end of a bamboo shaft. He slowly plunges the blade into its contents.

Kmao withdraws the knife and hands it over to Asher. He works a bit of powder off the tip of the blade and snorts it.

ASHER  
No burn, baby.

He snorts through his other nostril. Nothing. Kmao clicks his tongue and brings Asher a bowl.

KMAO  
You smoke.

ASHER  
A small one Kmao, tic, tic.

Asher holds the blade up to the light.

ANGLE ON... The heroin is a dull, caked white.

ASHER  
Beautiful.

Overcome, Asher drops the knife and wretches into the bowl.

Downstairs, Kmao's wife hums along to a cheesy Asian cover of 'Mac Arthur Park.'

Asher rises from the floor as Kmao hands him a fresh pipe and lights it. Asher gently pulls on the opium pipe, keeps it going at a consistent, sustainable pace. He has it this time.

ANGLE ON... the red ball as it begins to shrink and finally disappear.

KMAO (O.S.)  
Good smoke!

Asher falls onto his back and looks up at the ceiling slats. He bellows out a cloud of opium smoke, watches it float away.

CLOSE ON... Asher's face. 'Mac Arthur Park' grows louder and louder.

WEATHERLY (O.S.)  
(over the music)  
I love you, Julie.

The cheesy Asian cover morphs into Donna Summer's full blown disco version and we...

CUT TO:

INT: BABYDOLL - NIGHT (NEW YORK, PRESENT)

CLOSE ON... Julie's bemused face. She's still quite beautiful but the spark is missing. She's manning the bar of the divey strip joint.

JULIE  
I can't hear you.

WEATHERLY, a dissipated preppy in his mid-thirties, admires her from across the bar. At his side is a DRUNK GERMAN man with white blonde hair.

DRUNK GERMAN  
Sex on the beach.

WEATHERLY  
(inebriated)  
I said "I love you".

JULIE  
What?

DRUNK GERMAN  
Sex on the beach!

Julie allows herself the slightest of smiles as she mixes the German's drink.

A hand suddenly reaches around Julie and grabs her breast, as if testing the ripeness of a fruit.

GLEN (O.S.)  
Feel this. It's a real tit.

REVEAL... GLEN, standing behind her. He has the tweaked volatile energy of a meth-head and the lean, hardness of an ex-con.

WEATHERLY  
No thanks. I'm good.

GLEN  
Faggot.

Glen locks eyes with Weatherly, staring him down.

DRUNK GERMAN  
I would like to feel.

The German reaches for Julie but is thwarted as she fills his groping paw with a ready cocktail.

21.

She peels Glen's hand off her breast, plucks bills from the German's tab pile, and heads for the cash register at the other end of the bar.

GLEN

Why would you come here if you're a faggot?

WEATHERLY

You play disco.

Glen breaks the standoff with a jagged twitch of a grin and goes off after Julie.

He comes up behind her at the register as she organizes her receipts and money.

GLEN

My supply is fucked. I have nothing to sell. Airport John... that California asshole...has disappeared...

He nuzzles the back of her neck and gropes her body as he hisses into her ear.

GLEN

You're smart. You know a market of need is a sellers market. We can all make a lot of money here Julie.

She tolerates his invasiveness with the detached and patronizing manner of an adult coping with a brat-child.

GLEN

Now where the fuck is your boy?

JULIE

My boy's at the source. So there'll be more where this came from.

GLEN

'This' hasn't come yet.

JULIE

It's coming Glen.

GLEN

The moment it does I'll wire the money into your boy's account. One phone call. As easy as that.

JULIE

I understand, Glen.

Julie's focus hasn't wavered from the register.

GLEN  
Why do you hate me, Julie?

JULIE  
Hate you? How could I hate you,  
Glen? You're my penance.

FLASHBACK:

INT: SOHO ART GALLERY - NIGHT (NEW YORK, 1992)

An A-List A.I.D.S. benefit is in full swing. The place is buzzing with a mix of wealthy patrons, artsy types and activists. Lots of white wine, red ribbons and pink triangles.

ANGLE ON... The cube has been mounted on a stand in the middle of the gallery. Julie's inside. Her body and hair drenched in red paint. She kneels amidst discarded plasma bags, finger painting ephemeral red slogans on the Plexiglas.

ASHER (O.S.)  
Tell me to stay.

Asher crumples to the floor beside her.

ASHER  
Please... Just tell me that you  
want me to stay.

She looks out at him and smiles. With her forefinger she writes... "KISS ME". Oblivious to the crowd they're drawing he presses his lips against the glass. He lingers a bit after Julie's pulled back. "KISS ME" drips away.

EXT: RENDEZVOUS CAFE - MORNING (CAMBODIA, PRESENT)

Asher sits at an outdoor table reading a newspaper. A waiter brings him coffee and a bowl of morning soup.

ANGLE ON... TWO MORMON MISSIONARIES on bikes approach.

ASHER  
(calls out)  
God bless the great Salt Lake and  
the deep powder skiing of your  
native state.

They flip him off as they pedal by.

ASHER  
Happy Easter!

As he watches them go he catches sight of...

ANGLE ON... An orderly demonstration marching toward the National Assembly building. The placards are in Khmer. One bears the image of the dissident royalist 'LY OUDOM'.

ANGLE ON...LY OUDOM, at the head of the procession sporting a sleek French-tailored suit.

Asher turns his attention back to his paper.

INSERT...newspaper headline: U.S. OPTIMISTIC THAT '98 ELECTIONS WILL BE THE FIRST STEP TOWARD CAMBODIAN DEMOCRACY. The byline reads HARRISON REESE.

The morning air is shattered by the sound of three grenades exploding in quick succession.

EXT: NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

Three grenades have ripped through the crowd of peaceful protestors. The park in front of the Assembly building is covered in blood and human debris. The protestors wander about in stunned disbelief.

Reese P.O.V. MOVING QUICKLY THROUGH THE CROWD...An expressionless woman with a gaping shrapnel wound in her shoulder shuffles past...A man face down in a pool of blood tries unsuccessfully to curl himself into a ball...Another man slings his dying wife's intact arm around his neck. He alternately whispers into her ear and pleads for help from those who pass by.

Asher kneels next to a teenage cyclo driver who's propped up against the metal shudder of a closed shop. The wide-eyed boy's life bleeds out of him from a seemingly infinite number of wounds. Asher, clenches his button-down shirt in his teeth manically ripping it into tourniquet strips.

REESE (O.S.)

What happened?

Asher looks up. Reese is there, notebook in hand. Pin lingers just behind.

ASHER

Find a fucking phone and call Calmette Hospital. Get an ambulance here.

PIN

Nobody will come from the hospital, Asher.

REESE

What happened?

ASHER

Chhay Bopha's boys lobbed grenades into the crowd.

REESE

How do you know?

ASHER  
Because I know! Because everybody  
knows! Because this was a Ly Oudom  
demonstration.

Reese spots DAVIES, a grizzled Reuters photographer, in the  
thick of the bloody turmoil capturing shot after shot.

REESE  
(screams)  
I want those shots. Davies! Those  
are mine! Pin, where the fuck is  
Caspar?

PIN  
I saw him. He's here.

Asher starts to tie off the boy's stump leg.

REESE  
Do you know where Oudom is now?

ASHER  
Help these people!

REESE  
I'm not here to help.

Reese disappears into the crowd.

PIN  
He's dead, Asher.

Pin follows after Reese.

ANGLE ON...Caspar walking around in a shell-shocked daze.

Reese grabs him roughly.

REESE  
Why aren't you getting any of this?

Caspar shoves the camera into Reese's chest and wanders off.

The dead are being lined up and covered with their political  
placards.

ANGLE ON... Asher as he gently closes the boy's eyes.

FLASHBACK:

INT: LOFT ELEVATOR - DAY (NEW YORK, 1992)

ANGLE ON... Peter stands at the front of the elevator cage.  
Asher, visibly uncomfortable stands at the back. Peter thumbs  
the button repeatedly. The elevator lurches upward.

PETER  
I bought a Maserati.

ASHER  
Really? Where're you going to keep  
it?

PETER  
LA... New York's dead.  
(coldly)  
Hey thanks for coming. You're a  
good friend.

Peter yanks the gate open and enters. The loft is a beehive of activity. Peter's flunkies are busy packing up all his belongings.

It dawns on Asher why Peter invited him.

ANGLE ON... Julie standing in front of one of her paintings, stitching up the slashes Peter made election night.

Asher comes up behind her. Close enough for her to feel his presence. She never turns to look at him.

JULIE  
Bad timing for us Asher. That's  
all. Bad timing. Rendez-vous  
manque.

ASHER  
I took Spanish...

...but he got the the gist. He starts to leave. Comes back. His lips to her ear.

ASHER  
(trembling)  
I'm the one, Julie. That's why  
this hurts so bad. I'm the one.

With that he departs.

Tears start to roll down Julie's face.

ANGLE ON... The row of five paintings. She's painstakingly mended each of them.

CUT TO:

INT: DARKROOM - DAY (CAMBODIA)

Reese screens a roll of film on the analog viewer. Pin watches over his shoulder. They're all close shots of a fatally wounded Cambodian girl's last moments.



REESE

That's weird. What's that look on her face?

Pin studies the frame

PIN

She can see herself in Caspar's lens.

ANGLE ON... a shot of the dead girl looking directly into the camera.

JULIE (O.S.)

Dear Action Man, am anxiously awaiting Major Tom's itinerary...

INT: JULIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

ANGLE ON... computer screen. We hear Julie's voice as she composes the following e-mail.

JULIE (O.S.)

Will you personally be escorting him or has he found another mode of transport?

Julie's smiling reflection appears on the screen.

JULIE

Love and kisses from Ground Control.

PULL BACK to reveal Julie sitting in the dark, illuminated by the glow of her computer. She proofs her work. Then types...

JULIE

P.S. Don't forget what my Momma said...

She presses *SEND*.

INT: ASHER'S APARTMENT - DAY

ANGLE ON... Julie's e-mail flickers on the antiquated screen.

ANGLE ON... Asher sits at his computer. He's jury-rigged a phone line to the back. He eagerly begins to type in a response. The server crashes. He screams.

INT: FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB - NIGHT

The smoke-filled bar is a clusterfuck of drunken journalists, spouting ribald political prognostications. Gerald Coates holds court.

GERALD COATS  
Would you like to know the only  
reason the royalists won the first  
election in '93?

Reese stands next to Davies.

DAVIES  
Enlighten us Lord Yum-Yum.

GERALD COATS  
Hermes ties... Peasants are mad  
for Hermes ties. Though I have to  
say grenades can be awfully  
persuasive. Of course violence has  
always been an integral part of  
Cambodian politics...

REESE  
...Why is this election even  
taking place? The losers ignored  
the results of the first election.  
What's the point in funding  
another one?

Asher appears behind him.

ASHER  
(bellows)  
Democracy! We're planting a seed  
young man. Planting a seed.

The journos burst into laughter.

REESE  
Dude! I didn't think you'd come.

Reese throws his arm around Asher like a frat boy at a kegger  
and guides him toward the bar, holding up two fingers for the  
bartender as they approach.

ASHER  
When are you leaving?

REESE  
Wednesday. Crack of dawn.

The beers arrive. Asher lifts his glass.

ASHER  
To consummating your sister's  
wedding.

34.  
REESE

To three weeks in New York.

(they drink)

When was the last time you were  
back?

ASHER

Where did you get those khakis?

REESE

My mother.

ASHER

Nice. I thought only CIA  
operatives still wore pleats.

REESE

I've really got to talk to you,  
man. It's too loud in here.

Reese indicates the balcony.

EXT: BALCONY - CONTINUOUS

The balcony looks out on the Tonle Sap River. Boat lights  
float like dime jewels in the darkness.

ASHER

Where are you going to stay?

REESE

The Gramercy. Unwind a bit before  
I have to deal with the family.

ASHER

Have a drink at the bar there for  
me. Give me a vicarious First  
World thrill.

REESE

I'll have several in your honor  
because that's the kind of esteem  
I hold you in, Asher.

(uneasy pause)

I had to name your friend at the  
World Bank.

ASHER

What? You shit! You're going to  
get him fired.

REESE

I identified myself as a  
journalist. He talked to me...

ASHER

...What did he say?

REESE

Not much.

ASHER

But you're going to quote him. I'm sure he assumed it was an off-the-record conversation.

REESE

Then he made a mistake. I needed attribution or my editor wouldn't have run the story.

ASHER

You fucked him over.

REESE

I'm not going to apologize for doing my job. I followed the rules.

ASHER

No... you didn't.

Remy drunkenly ambles out onto the balcony. He approaches Reese, pressing another letter into his chest.

REMY

There you are, postman. Reese. One more. Yes?

REESE

Of course, Remy.

Reese pats Remy on the arm. Remy gives Reese a sloppy kiss and goes back inside.

REESE

This is the seventh love letter he's given me.

ASHER

It'll never work out. He's a Huguenot. You're Episcopalian.

REESE

Presbyterian.

ASHER

I have mail.

REESE

What is it?

ASHER

It's a novel... If you laugh I'm going to have to punch you.

REESE

I wondered what you were up to,  
man.

ASHER

It's like seven hundred pages.  
It's fucking epic. There's this  
guy at Random House who's  
interested...I don't want to e-  
mail it piece by piece...

REESE

Say no more.

ASHER

Really?

REESE

I owe you. What's it about?

The question catches Asher off guard.

ASHER

A drug deal.

REESE

Oh yeah?

ASHER

This guy is in with SLORK. It's  
set in Burma.

REESE

If he's in Burma he's in with Khun  
Sa.

ASHER

It's fucking fiction, Reese. It's  
a fucking book. I don't like  
talking about it...

REESE

Yeah. Don't waste it. Hemingway  
used to say that every word he  
yakked about his work was one word  
not written. So who's the Random  
House guy?

ASHER

(sharply)

What you did was utterly uncool.

REESE

Yeah...Look I should get back to  
my going away party. Drop it off  
at the office tomorrow.

REESE

If we're not there just pile it on my desk like everyone else has.

Reese gives Asher a slap on the shoulder and goes inside.

EXT: SUN BUILDING - LATER THAT NIGHT

Asher's cyclo pulls up in front of the building. The night watchman opens the gate for him.

INT: FRONT OFFICE - NIGHT

Asher enters. Ceiling fans spin in the dim light provided by a bank of computers. Eliza Coats sits on a long couch in the back, smoking a joint.

ELIZA

Asher. Splendid. Come to return Gerald's racquet?

Asher plops down in the chair across from her.

ASHER

Has Lord Yum-Yum missed it?

ELIZA

Hardly the point.

Asher takes a hit off her resinous joint.

ASHER

You got anything to drink?

ELIZA

Scotch or Vodka? We're a bit short on mixers. The staff pilfers.

ASHER

Vodka. Just tell me where it is. You're looking wonderfully stationary there.

ELIZA

Gerald's office.

Asher hops up and strides over to the door. He slips inside the dark office with the exaggerated stealth of a robber. Momentarily... CRASH!

ASHER (O.S.)

Fuck!

ELIZA

You'll see a little fridge in the corner.

30.

Asher emerges holding a bottle of Stoli's. There's a bamboo table in front of the couch with a silver tea set on it. Asher fills a tea cup and, pinkie extended, daintily knocks it back. Eliza watches him from the couch.

ELIZA

A civil war's brewing. The Oudom demonstration was just the start.

ASHER

I was there. It was a massacre.

ELIZA

That 'massacre' launched Oudom's campaign for prime minister.

ASHER

Please don't ruin Oudom for me. I need somebody to believe in.

ELIZA

Did you see he changed back into his blood covered clothes for the press conference? He already knows how to work us.

ASHER

I need another drink. Would you like a drink?

ELIZA

Just a spot.

ASHER

(mock British)

Just a spot?

ELIZA

I'm far too stoned to be mocked, Asher.

ASHER

You were saying, civil war.

ELIZA

You've lost some weight darling.

ASHER

Does it suit me?

ELIZA

In this light it does. Have we been powdering our nose?

ASHER

Never.

39.  
ELIZA  
I'm not reprimanding you, sweetie.  
I'm in dire need.

Asher reaches into his shirt pocket and takes out a folded New Yorker cover.

ELIZA  
Brilliant. I'll get the tray.

Suddenly motivated, she hops up from the couch.

ASHER  
Eliza. Could you do me a favor  
before we slip away?

ELIZA  
What?

ASHER  
I need the largest most official  
looking envelope you have in the  
office.

ELIZA  
Done.

Eliza returns with a bronze tray and a manila envelope bearing the paper's regal emblem.

Asher spills the entire contents of the 'New Yorker' onto the tray and rolls up a red five-hundred-riel note. Eliza carves four lines out with her business card.

ASHER  
This candy's awfully sweet.

ELIZA  
Fabulous.  
(she snorts)  
Oh my...Where did you get it?

ASHER  
The Ministry of Interior.

ELIZA  
How did you manage that?

ASHER  
Contacts and connivance.

ELIZA  
Are you being careful Asher?

He smiles reassuringly at her. The smack kicks in.



ELIZA

Oh my.  
(rising abruptly)  
Oh my.

Eliza walks briskly toward the bathroom and disappears.

ANGLE ON...Asher does a line. He slumps back against the couch. In the background we hear a faucet turn on and water being splashed about.

Eliza reemerges and floats back over toward the couch. She stands directly in front of Asher, legs spread a shoulder width apart, swaying ever so slightly. Asher looks up at her.

ELIZA

Are you able, Asher?

He takes a quick self-inventory.

ASHER

I think so.

Running his hands up her legs, he gently lifts her dress and plants a kiss on her inner thigh. She runs her fingers through his hair pulling him into her.

Eliza loses her balance and falls back onto the couch in a heap. Asher climbs on top of her. They slip to the floor with a thud.

ANGLE ON... the tea set and tray trembling on the table.

EXT: RIVER - NIGHT

Asher and Eliza stroll silently along the side of the river. Asher tries to put his arm around Eliza. She rebuffs him.

ELIZA

What do you need the envelope for?

ASHER

I'm starting a business.

ELIZA

A business? Oh dear Asher...  
Nihilism lost its appeal?

ASHER

That was just a phase I've  
outgrown. I'm on a Merchant Prince  
kick now. Gonna take advantage of  
this Cambodian economic boom like  
a good capitalist.

ELIZA  
(sadly)  
Indeed?

ASHER  
Indeed.

ELIZA  
Just don't fade away.  
(off Asher's look)  
The lure of this place is its  
curse as well. You don't hear the  
ticking of the clock here. Then  
one morning, quite by accident -  
and painfully sober - you catch  
your reflection in the mirror.  
It's ten years later. And...it  
ain't Peter Pan looking back at  
you.

ASHER  
I avoid mirrors.

ELIZA  
You need to go back to America,  
Asher.

ASHER  
I shall. Victorious and rich.

A group of ragged street kids appear, hands outstretched  
begging for money. Asher and Eliza, lost in their own  
thoughts, are oblivious to them.

ASHER  
Nothing works, you know? Even the  
things that should work in your  
life... even those things go all  
to shit... but then...

ELIZA  
Then?

ASHER  
Then miraculously... inexplicably  
everything starts to go your way...

ELIZA  
Is everything going your way?  
(softly)  
Take care, Asher.

INT: ELIZA'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING

ANGLE ON... Eliza in a drugged slumber, her arm dangling over  
the side of the bed.

ANGLE ON... the computer screen. We glimpse the words *MAJOR TOM'S ITINERARY* as they're typed into an e-mail.

REVEAL... Asher, sitting at Eliza's desk in the living room. His lips mouth the words as he types. He takes a moment to proof his work then presses *SEND*.

He waits for confirmation that it has gone through. He then clicks off the computer, retrieves a joint from an ashtray and gets up from the desk.

He crosses past Gerald Coats, who's asleep on the oval couch.

GERALD COATS  
(eyes crack open)  
For my wife's affections many men  
have tried...and all have  
succeeded!

INT: SHOWER - MOMENTS LATER

Asher, the stub of the joint still in his mouth, stands with his back to the running water. He finds shaving cream and lathers up. Brandishing a pink razor, he begins to shave.

He nicks his throat. He touches the wound with his hand, examines the blood on his fingers for a moment, then lets the water wash it away.

INT: BABYDOLL - DAY (NEW YORK)

ANGLE ON... the red door of the changing room.

PIERRE, the massive Haitian bouncer, steps up and raps his knuckles on the door.

PIERRE  
Julie's here.

They share a flirtatious smile as he pulls the door open. Julie touches the chunky gold cross that dangles from Pierre's neck for good luck and enters the room.

INT: CHANGING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Glen sits at the far end devouring a cream cheese-covered bagel into his mouth.

Julie appears behind him in the mirror and waits for him to speak.

GLEN  
I forgot where I'm wiring the  
money to. Where's it going? Write  
it out for me in my book.

He hands her his red leather memo book.

40.

GLEN  
I'll call Western Union.

JULIE  
Fabulous.

GLEN  
And the guy who is carrying has no  
idea what he's got up his ass?

JULIE  
No. He's a citizen. He just thinks  
he's lugging his buddies' mail.

GLEN  
What flight is he on?

JULIE  
I'm not his travel agent.

Glen stops gnoshing for a moment.

GLEN  
You're not? What flight is he on?

JULIE  
Per your instructions, he'll mail  
you the package when he arrives.

GLEN  
Why would I take a chance with my  
package in the mail?

Glen calmly gets to his feet and turns to face Julie. She  
meets his stare.

JULIE  
That's not the the plan, Glen.

She hands him back his notepad. Glen leans his face into  
hers, cream cheese and crumbs in the corners of his mouth.

GLEN  
I don't like your tone.

JULIE  
My tone Glen? Sorry. Sorry about  
my 'tone'.

We hear the sound of a knife clicking open. Glen brings the  
spike like point of his blade to Julie's jugular with just  
enough pressure to make an indentation.

GLEN  
What flight is he on?

JULIE

I don't know.

Glen abruptly sticks Julie in the stomach, just puncturing the skin. A red stain blossoms on her white t-shirt. Glen brings the blade back to her throat.

GLEN

You've sprung a leak. Where's he staying?

JULIE

Fuck you!

He jabs her again -- deeper this time.

JULIE

The Gramercy.

Another red stain appears on her shirt.

GLEN

What's his name?

JULIE

Reese. Harrison Reese.

GLEN

And what does Mr. Reese look like?

JULIE

Like an incredibly straight journalist who has no idea that he's holding. My boy has seen him leave the airport before - always in a blue blazer. He'll be the jet lagged blue blazer guy at the Gramercy.

GLEN

That narrows it down. And when should we expect Mr. Reese?

Julie forces herself to look away from the blade. She focuses on their reflection in the oval makeup mirror.

Glen sticks her again. The blood comes out. Julie's fear is replaced by seething rage.

JULIE

I'm calculating, you fucking prick! I'm calculating!

GLEN

Sorry.

JULIE  
He got in the air a few hours ago.  
Thirteen to fifteen hours.

Glen's lips move as he does the math...

JULIE  
Nine. Show up in the morning at  
nine.

Glen and Julie lock eyes, as he tries to figure out if she's  
told him everything.

GLEN  
Where's the fucking Gramercy again?

JULIE  
Right on Gramercy Park. Uptown  
side of Lex.

Glen puts his knife away and takes out a pen and memo pad to  
jot down the information.

GLEN  
You'll get your cut in two days if  
everything pans out. If it doesn't  
I'll kill you.

Julie turns to leave, her white shirt stained with blood.

GLEN  
You should get a tetanus shot just  
to be on the safe side.

INT: KENNEDY AIRPORT - NIGHT (NEW YORK)

Reese stands at the head of the long blue immigration line.  
He's dressed exactly the same way he was when he landed in  
Cambodia -- right down to the pink Financial Times rolled up  
under the sleeve of his blue blazer.

ANGLE ON... The CUSTOMS OFFICER, an older black man with  
clean rimless glasses and a stern manner. He eyes Reese's  
bulging suitcase.

CUSTOMS OFFICER  
You've been gone for quite some  
time.

Reese calmly meets the CUSTOMS OFFICER's scrutinizing gaze.

REESE  
Yes... I have.

The customs officer finishes scanning Reese's passport stamps  
it and hands it back to him.

40.

CUSTOMS OFFICER  
Welcome home, son.

He waves Reese through. On his way out Reese tosses his Financial Times in a trash can.

INT: GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

INSERT: Gramercy Hotel stationary: 'WELCOME HOME ASSHOLE...YOUR LOYAL SERVANT WEATHERLY... P.S. BE PRESENTABLE TOMORROW SCHMENDRICK.'

Reese stands at the hotel check-in counter reading Weatherly's note while the clerk confirms his reservation. Reese crumples it up and in a jet-lagged daze scans the lobby for a trash can.

ANGLE ON... Julie leaning on a column of fake marble.

Her hair is pulled back tightly from her face to accentuate her makeup-enhanced beauty. Her fresh wounds are hidden beneath a shiny silver rubber top which looks like it was painted onto her body. A razor black skirt and hose complete her ensemble. Reese is spellbound.

CLERK  
If we could just get your  
signature Mr. Reese. Mr. Reese?

Julie catches Reese gawking. She flashes him an amused smile.

CLERK  
Mr. Reese?

REESE  
Yeah. Yeah. Sorry.

Catching himself, Reese turns away and awkwardly shoves the crumpled message into his pocket. He signs the check-in form that's been placed in front of him.

He glances back at Julie and sees that she's walking off towards the bar.

INT: HOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Peter Jennings blares on the TV, delivering the evening news. A dufflebag full of dirty clothes has been dumped on the floor.

ANGLE ON... the mail strewn across the bed. The addresses are all handwritten save for Asher's hefty 'CAMBODIAN SUN' envelope with its neatly typed Long Island City address on it.

ANGLE ON... Steam billows out from underneath the bathroom door.

INT: BATHROOM

A wrinkled pair of khakis and a button-down shirt hang outside the shower.

Reese sings a PAVEMENT song at the top of his lungs as he simultaneously showers and shaves. He winces as he nicks himself with the razor the same way Asher did.

A bottle of Johnnie Walker Red sits on the edge of the ice-filled sink. Reese's bloody hand reaches out of the shower, holding an empty glass. He scoops ice into it, then fills it with Whiskey, and pulls it back into the shower.

INT: GRAMERCY HOTEL BAR

The clientele is the usual mix of Gramercy eccentrics and downtown scenesters. Julie sits at the L-shaped bar, rummaging through her large black bag. She moves a candle closer to illuminate the operation, excavates a mangled pack of Marlboros.

ANGLE ON... the mirror behind the bar. Reese appears behind Julie in the glow of the candle.

REESE  
(soto)  
Are you working?

Julie pops a cigarette into her mouth and turns to find Reese standing over her shoulder.

JULIE  
Do you have a light?

REESE  
I don't smoke.

The meaning of his question dawns on her.

JULIE  
Working?

REESE  
You were looking at me in the lobby.

JULIE  
You're cute.

REESE  
Thanks.

JULIE  
You think I'm a hooker?



REESE  
(beat)

No.

There's an awkward pause as Reese searches his travel-weary brain for a reparative quip. He's got nothing. Cutting his losses he retreats around to the end corner of the bar.

The bartender gives Julie a light. Then comes over to Reese.

REESE  
Maker's Mark.

Reese focuses on the bartender as he pours the bourbon into a glass. He glances over at Julie.

ANGLE ON... Julie turns towards Reese, freezing him mid-swig with a Baby Doll-honed, come-fuck-me look.

Reese swallows hard. Julie wets her lips with the tip of her tongue. Then abruptly contorts her face into a profoundly goofy expression and bursts out laughing.

Only slightly chagrined, Reese ambles back over to her.

REESE  
That's quite a face.

JULIE  
This one?

She makes it again.

REESE  
Yeah. It's too bad Diane Arbus is dead because you two would have really had something.

JULIE  
We all need a muse.

REESE  
I've been on a plane for twenty hours.

JULIE  
I hope you were flying.

REESE  
Yes. Flying. Only now am I regaining my equilibrium and my keen sense of humor and... What are you drinking?

Before she can respond, Reese plucks her martini glass from the bar and drinks the last drops.

49.

REESE  
(to the bartender)  
Vodka Gimlet. Stoli's?  
(she nods)  
Stoli's.  
(offers his hand)  
Harrison Reese.

She leaves him hanging.

JULIE  
Just Reese? No Roman numerals? A  
second? A third? Nothing?

REESE  
Sorry. No numbers.

JULIE  
Reese Zero? That's disappointing.

The bartender returns with Julie's Gimlet.

BARTENDER  
Freshen your bourbon?

REESE  
No. No I better not.

JULIE  
Pussy.

REESE  
One more.

He shoots the last third of his glass.

REESE  
I have to give a speech tomorrow  
at my alma mater. Impressionable  
young minds and all.

JULIE  
Here in the city?

REESE  
No, Massachusetts. I went to Grove.

JULIE  
Eliot House was rotten with Grove  
School boys.

REESE  
Ooof... and the H-bomb drops. When  
were you at Harvard?

JULIE

I'm not up for the name game Reese  
Zero. Not now.

REESE

What is it that you do?

JULIE

Well I was supposed to meet my  
pimp here. It's so unlike him to  
be late. He's usually such a  
prompt pimp... such a punctual  
pimp...

The bartender brings Reese his drink. He clinks his glass  
with Julie's. They each take a big swig.

INT: GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL BAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

A big band crooner sings. Reese and Julie are in the midst of  
an inebriated slowdance.

REESE

Have you ever talked to a stranger  
on a chairlift?

JULIE

What a provocative question.

REESE

What's the absolute worst  
conversation you've ever had on a  
chairlift?

JULIE

How do you even know that I've  
ridden on a chairlift before?

REESE

Assuming a hunch. I do that all  
the time in my work.

JULIE

Are you a bell ringer?

REESE

Journalist.

JULIE

Doesn't sound too healthy for a  
journalist.

REESE

It isn't. I was in a lift line --  
I'm much drunker than you are,  
aren't I?

JULIE

You were in a lift line.

REESE

Right-and this was in the great Scott boot era of the late 1970's western skiing-you know Rocky Mountain High...

JULIE

I'm well-versed in the suede gestalt...

REESE

This ski bunny goes 'Single' and this ski cowboy goes 'Single' and... He had really short pump skis...

JULIE

That's a sensational story.

REESE

That's not it. That's not the story. That was just an observation -- bear with me 'cause this is pretty brilliant. So then the cowboy goes - he goes 'So...you wanna hump?'

Reese looks at Julie expectantly then unable to contain himself, cracks up at his own story.

JULIE

The cowboy and the bunny huh?

REESE

Yeah. But I think I skipped something. There's got to be more. Right?

JULIE

No. There doesn't... Can I be the 'cowboy'?

INT: GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL FLOOR - NIGHT

The elevator door opens to reveal Reese and Julie in the midst of a deep kiss. Reese abruptly disengages and bounces out, leading/dragging Julie by the hand down the hallway.

JULIE

I have to tell you... and don't misconstrue this as false modesty but rather just an attempt to manage your expectations a bit here, Reese Zero.

JULIE

I'm really not a whore ya know...  
I'm undeniably going through a  
very, very weird period. A period  
wherein I seem to have this  
inexplicable compulsion to  
marginalize myself in every  
conceivable way but...

REESE

(grinning)

...I have a minibar.

INT: HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Julie stands patiently beside Reese as he drunkenly struggles  
to force open the locked minibar. She glances around the room  
for Asher's envelope amidst Reese's belongings.

Julie plucks the bar key from where it hangs in plain sight  
and hands it to Reese.

JULIE

Water.

She grabs a glass from the bar and heads to the bathroom.

INT: BATHROOM

Julie, clenching her handbag, appraises herself for a moment  
in the mirror.

REESE (O.S.)

You should come with me tomorrow.  
A drive through New England.

JULIE

I don't do cars. That's why I'm in  
New York.

REESE (O.S.)

You don't like them?

JULIE

I love them. I was buried in a  
Maserati.

REESE (O.S.)

What?

She turns the spigot on and fills the hotel glass. She  
reaches into her bag and removes ROPHYNOL TABLETS wrapped in  
foil. She drops them into the water and watches them dissolve.

JULIE

Do you want some water?

33.  
REESE (O.S.)

What?

Reese abruptly barges in. The door catches Julie, knocking the glass from her hand. It shatters in the sink.

JULIE

Fuck!

Reese hands her an airplane bottle of vodka.

REESE

(apologetically)

Smirnoff's.

He reaches around Julie to retrieve his bottle of Johnny Walker Red from the edge of the sink. He takes a seat on the toilet, twirls off the metal top and takes a swig.

Julie considers the broken glass in the sink for a moment her mind racing. She opens the Smirnoff and shoots it, tossing the empty bottle into the sink.

REESE

I know why Caspar snapped.

JULIE

What are you talking about?

She snatches the whiskey from his hand and takes a belt.

REESE

My photographer. The demonstrators had just been blown to bits. It was an absurd scene. Psychotically... brutally... absurd. But it wasn't the carnage that got Caspar. I saw his pictures. I saw...

JULIE

What?

REESE

The expression on the girl's face. He took shot after shot of this one girl. And you can see this extraordinary look come over her face... This look of wonder as she realized she was watching herself die in the reflection in his lens. That's what tweaked Caspar. That's what fucking laid him bare.

(starts to tear up)

But not me. I knew I had a hook. I knew those photos would get my story picked-up.

He covers his face with his hands and begins to sob. Julie looks at him in disbelief. This was the last thing she was expecting. She reaches over and strokes his hair.

He pulls her down so that she's straddling him, mashing his mouth into hers. Though she tries not to be caught up in the moment, Reese's vitality is contagious. He awkwardly stands and lifts Julie onto the sink.

JULIE  
Glass! Glass!

A panting Reese looks at her confused.

REESE  
(getting it)  
Right. Right.

He carries Julie out of the bathroom, her legs wrapped around his waist.

INT: HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON... The bed as they come crashing down in a heap.

Reese promptly rolls off Julie and lunges out of frame...We can hear him fumbling for, and then with, a condom. Julie takes the opportunity to scan the room.

ANGLE ON... The 'CAMBODIAN SUN' envelope atop a pile of mail.

No sooner has Julie glimpsed the envelope than Reese is back on top of her. He's immediately off and running.

JULIE  
(commands)  
Slow! Slow down!  
(softer)  
Slow.

She massages the back of his neck and a grinning Reese acquiesces. They find a languorous rhythm, their eyes never leaving each other's faces.

INT: BATHROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

ANGLE ON... the broken glass in the white sink.

Julie has donned Reese's button-down shirt. She stares intently at the sink. The dissolved tablets are unsalvageable.

Julie goes to the door and ever-so-gently pushes it open to peek out at the darkened hotel room.

ANGLE ON... a sliver of moon light falling on THE ENVELOPE.

Julie's about to make her move when... the night-light  
FLASHES on. She jerks the door closed and retreats to the  
sink. She turns on the faucet and douses her face.

INT: HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Reese's hands are under the sheet gingerly removing the  
condom. SNAP. He winces and then flings the offending  
contraceptive across the room.

ANGLE ON... The used condom sticking to the far wall.

REESE

Al dente.

JULIE (O.S.)

What?

The door opens a crack. He strains for a glimpse of her.

JULIE

Turn off the light.

He lunges for the night-light, turning it off just as the  
bathroom door swings open.

ANGLE ON...Julie's silhouette as she steps out of the  
bathroom. She slowly and deliberately unbuttons Reese's shirt  
and lets it fall to the floor.

REESE

You're... beautiful.

Julie climbs into the bed. He notices the puncture marks  
which she now makes no effort to hide.

JULIE

I fell off my bike.

REESE

I like scars.

He leans over and gently begins kissing her wounds.

JULIE

That's because you don't have any.

CLOSE ON... Julie's face, her eyes wide open.

PARAMEDIC (O.S.)

(muffled)

Ms. can you hear me?

FLASHBACK:



EXT: CALIFORNIA BEACH - DAY

The soothing sounds of waves rolling into shore. Kiddies frolic on the beach. It's an idyllic sunny California day.

INT: MASERATI - DAY

CLOSE ON... Julie's dazed face.

PARAMEDIC (O.S.)  
You're jammed in there pretty good. We're going to have cut you out.

She glances to her left. Peter's dead behind the wheel. His neck snapped. His eyes still open.

ANGLE ON... the Maserati, smashed like a soda can, by the side of the PCH surrounded by rescue vehicles and looky lou's.

A scream rolls up from deep within Julie's body.

The jarring ring of a phone...

INT: HOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

OVERHEAD SHOT...Julie's fallen asleep in the middle of the bed with a snoring Reese draped over her.

CLOSE ON...Julie's face as the ring shocks her wide awake --  
*OH FUCK!*

INT: ASHER'S APARTMENT - MORNING

CLOSE ON... Asher's sleeping face. A hand reaches in to give him a rude smack. He stirs.

ASHER  
What? What?

A teenage Khmer boy in a red Adidas suit and sporting a flat buzz cut, stands over him menacingly.

FLAT TOP  
Money! Mr. Hawk money!

ASHER  
Okay. Money. Right.

Asher crawls from his bed over to a shoe box. He withdraws a hundred dollar bill and holds it up to Flat Top.

ASHER  
(standing up)  
That's all I got kid.

Flat Top takes the hundred then delivers a lightning quick kick to Asher's chest. Asher is sent sprawling back onto his mattress with a thud. Flat Top swaggers out.

As Asher regains his breath he hears the sound of the street kids yelling down below. He hobbles over to the window.

ANGLE ON... Flat Top wheeling Asher's motorcycle down the street.

ASHER

No! Not the bike, motherfucker!

INT: GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL LOBBY - MORNING

Weatherly, stands at the front desk. He's sporting an orange crossing guard vest and silver whistle over his worn tweed jacket. The clerk hangs up his phone.

CLERK

The guest isn't picking up.

WEATHERLY

Give me his room number.

CLERK

I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to do that, sir.

The elevator beside the desk opens up, revealing Julie. She wears Reese's shirt over her clothes and has buttoned the bulky envelope underneath.

As they lock eyes a look of recognition flashes over both their faces. Weatherly is immediately self-conscious of his ridiculous get-up. Julie gives him a sassy wink which causes him to blush and look away.

CLERK

Would you like to leave a message for Mr. Reese?

WEATHERLY

If you would, good man, tell Mr. Reese that his dear and loyal friend, Mr. Weatherly is waiting...

ANGLE ON... Julie registering the exchange as she passes by.

INT: BMW SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

Pierre has wedged his corpulent body behind the wheel. Glen, is buried in the middle of the backseat.

Glen props up his steel-tipped cowboy boots on the middle console between the two front seats.

PIERRE  
What the fuck are you doing?

GLEN  
I'm stretching out.

Pierre considers this, then elbows Glen's feet off.

EXT: GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Julie walks out of the hotel. She freezes.

...a shiny black BMW cruises slowly down Lexington Avenue. Its vanity plate reads BCBG.

INT: BMW SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

ANGLE ON... Julie through the sedan's tinted window. She stands like a statue in front of the Gramercy.

Neither of the hoods sees her. Glen is too involved with baiting Pierre. He puts his boot up on the console, then quickly withdraws it as Pierre slams his fist down and hits nothing but console. Glen chuckles.

PIERRE  
Fucking piece of shit.

EXT: GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Julie's heart resumes pumping. She turns and walks hurriedly up Lexington Ave. A taxi pulls up along side her to see if she wants a lift. She waves the cab on.

EXT: TAXI STAND - MORNING (CAMBODIA)

Asher reaches the taxi stand, two Toyota sedans and a pick-up truck.

ASHER  
Siem Riep?

The driver of the pick up truck waves him over.

ASHER  
Siem Riep?

DRIVER  
Twenty dollars American.

ASHER  
I'll give you twelve and I wanna ride shotgun.

The driver nods. The payload is already full of country folk waiting patiently for departure. Asher hops in the front.

55.  
Seeing that the driver is negotiating with yet another potential customer, a fat gem merchant clutching a briefcase, Asher raps angrily on the side of the truck.

ASHER  
Come on man! Let's go. Let's get  
the fuck going!

The gem merchant lumbers over and climbs into the cab, forcing Asher into the middle.

ASHER  
I wanted the window.

The driver pulls out amidst a blare of horns into the market traffic. Asher pulls a Valium tablet from his pocket and swallows it with the last of his water.

ASHER  
All right boys. Siem Reap or bust.  
Who's with me?

Asher removes a pair of airplane blinders from his bag and within moments, slips away into a drooling slumber.

EXT: GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL - MORNING (NEW YORK)

An antiquated Volvo sedan is unapologetically double-parked in front of the hotel.

INT: WEATHERLY'S VOLVO

Behind the wheel, Weatherly wolfs down a Jackson Hole burger.

The passenger door opens and Reese, in his uniform blue blazer and khakis, collapses on to the wrapper-covered seat.

WEATHERLY  
(mouth full)  
God. You've really aged. Burger?

Weatherly shoves his mangled burger into Reese's face. Reese pushes it away. He focuses on Weatherly's fluorescent vest.

Weatherly reaches into his jacket and pulls out a scrap of 'New York Times' with Reese's story on it.

WEATHERLY  
Look at you, man. The paper of  
record. Your big break.

ANGLE ON...A triptych of Caspar's shots of the girl dying.

The cookies arrive. Reese forces the door open and spews onto Lexington. Unfazed, Weatherly downs the last of his burger, tosses the wrapper into his back seat and starts up the car.

INT: BMW SEDAN

P.O.V. of Weatherly's Volvo through a tinted windshield parked a few car's back.

Pierre is lighting up a fat rasta joint as Glen slips into the backseat.

GLEN

That's him. In his fucking blue blazer.

Without waiting for Reese to pull the door shut the Volvo lurches out into the oncoming traffic.

Glen slaps Pierre on the side of his face. WHACK! The joint goes flying from the startled Haitian's mouth.

GLEN

Go!

Pierre pulls the car out.

INT: JULIE'S KITCHEN - DAY (NEW YORK)

ANGLE ON... Asher's envelope lies on a butcher's block.

Julie slashes the seal open with a steak knife, to reveal a large zip-lock bag filled with heroin. She unseals the bag and pours out its contents.

JULIE

Fuck me.

She's dazzled by the mountain of powder.

INT: ASPARA - DAY (CAMBODIA)

A trembling Mr. Hawk sits in a booth across from Vibol Thom. The gangster sips daintily from a brandy glass. R.H.M. stands over them, checking a ledger. The men speak in Khmer.

R.H.M.

He is two months behind on his rent.

He places the ledger down on the table. Thom calmly picks up the ledger and slaps Hawk across the face with it.

MR. HAWK

There is no money since the U.N. pulled out. Only one out of twelve makes his payments on time.

VIBOL THOM

Lending foolishly is as fatal as borrowing foolishly.

VIBOL THOM

As a favor to you, I will make an example of one of your debtors so the others who owe you will think he met his end at your hands.

(Hawk hesitates)

Give me a name and I will make him pay.

Mr. Hawk deliberates for a moment.

MR. HAWK

Asher.

INT: BACKSTAGE PREP SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

WEATHERLY (O.S.)

God, Susan Rivers. Look at her tits. Her nipples...Her nipples are still like bullets.

ANGLE ON... The aforementioned SUSAN RIVERS, a beautiful woman in her mid-thirties, stands backstage chatting with HEADMASTER HUMPHREY, an older man with a jolly demeanor.

Weatherly and Reese watch them from the cover of the wings. Weatherly surreptitiously spikes an Orange Crush with a paper-bagged half-pint of Popov.

WEATHERLY

I remember these alumni lectures.

REESE

I remember fucking hating them. I don't know why I'm doing this.

WEATHERLY

Because they asked you. You're a success story, man. Not like me. They're not going to invite a pathetic schmuck like me back to lecture.

REESE

Nonsense. Kids really look up to crossing guards.

WEATHERLY

It's fucking Parent Patrol and it's the only way I get to see Penny.

(off Reese's look)

My daughter. Dipshit.

ANGLE ON... Susan, spotting them, gives them an enthusiastic wave.

WEATHERLY

God look at her. She's still so fucking... So fucking fecund.

Reese tries to focus through his compound hangover.

REESE

I think I got laid last night.

Weatherly gives him a quizzical look as he shakes the can. He hands it to Reese just as Susan and the Headmaster approach.

HEADMASTER HUMPHREY

Our next David Halberstram!

Reese takes a large swig of Weatherly's concoction and immediately explodes into a violent coughing fit. Weatherly slaps him on the back.

WEATHERLY

Windpipe.

INT: BACKSTAGE AUDITORIUM - LATER

ANGLE ON... Susan stands in the darkness just off stage, peering out at the auditorium as the students file in.

SUSAN

I did a LexisNexis search on you. I've read all your stories. But the last one -- the one in the Times with the triptych of the dying girl -- it penetrated my subconscious.

Reese, battling nerves, steals a peek over her shoulder.

SUSAN

I had this incredibly visceral dream.

They can hear the yammering of the distracted students as they settle into their seats. A stage light beams down on Susan's face. She turns to face Reese just inches away.

SUSAN

I'm going into chapel on Easter Sunday with the students and suddenly...

REESE

...What's the worst conversation you've ever had on a chairlift?

SUSAN

What?

Suddenly Reese looks as if he's having a heart attack.

REESE  
Fuck! Cue cards...

Reese starts frantically searching through his corduroy jacket. Susan pulls the cards from the outer breast pocket of his jacket. She smiles reassuringly. A bell sounds.

SUSAN  
You're on.

Reese watches her walking confidently up to the lectern at the center of the stage. She's greeted with a smattering of rowdy applause and wolf whistles.

SUSAN  
Today's alumni speaker began his career working for the Vietnam Investment Review. Since that time his stories...

Reese spins away and walks back to the stage door, where his spiked orange soda sits. Hands shaking, he shoots the last bit of it, takes a deep breath and heads back to the curtain at the edge of the stage.

SUSAN  
Mr. Harrison Reese.

Reese stiffly walks onto the stage and into the lights...

INT: LOBBY GRAND HOTEL D'ANGKOR - AFTERNOON

A travel grimy Asher bursts through the front doors of the posh lobby. He's oblivious to the looks of the guests and the staff.

INT: CONSERVATORY - AFTERNOON

Colonial high tea is being served. The place is bustling with white-gloved Khmer waiters and rich tourists.

At the head table sits ALEX, an impeccably dressed, slightly pudgy Pakistani man in his mid-thirties. He shares a couch with a rather 'pretty' thin teenage Khmer boy named FAT who sports the white uniform of the hotel.

Across from them sit CANDI and GEOFFREY STERLING, an old, Upper East Side high-society couple.

Mrs. Sterling plucks a lotus from the center arrangement and admires the intricate folds of its petals.

MRS. STERLING  
How do you get them to grow like this?



Distracted by Asher's appearance behind Mrs. Sterling, Alex stands to greet him with a handshake and kiss on the cheek.

ALEX

Asher!  
(in Asher's ear)  
You look dreadful.

Alex wipes Asher's dirt off his jacket.

ASHER

At least I'm not from Karachi.  
Where's your office? I need to  
make some calls.

ALEX

I'm a bit busy at the moment...

Much to Alex's chagrin, Asher plops down in the wicker chair next to Mrs. Sterling.

ALEX

May I introduce Geoffrey and Candi  
Sterling.

Asher grabs a handful of cucumber sandwiches. Geoffrey eyes him resentfully.

ASHER

(mock British)  
Fat, you gorgeous thing, while  
you're up...

FAT

I'm not up.

ASHER

I'd like a shot of tequila and an  
Angkor beer sweetie, if you could.

Fat starts to rise, Alex restrains him with his hand.

MRS. STERLING

Bullshot for me, thanks. Delicious.

Alex releases Fat, who rises and heads to the bar.

ALEX

Asher's an old mate. We served in  
UNESCO together some years ago. I  
ended up falling into the hotel  
business and Asher...

ASHER

...fell into nothing at all.

MRS. STERLING

What a coincidence. I'm here with the World Monument Fund.

(re: the entire room)

This is my gang from New York. I adopted a Garuda. Twenty thousand dollars and a Garuda is yours... spiritually speaking of course.

Asher nicks one of Mrs. Sterling's cigarettes from her silver case. He guides her cigarette hand over to light up.

ASHER

Fascinating. May I? Thanks.

Fat returns with the drinks. Asher's hand trembles. Aware that he's being watched by Alex he shoots the tequila, and the beer one-two.

MRS. STERLING

I'm organizing a luncheon at the Pierre for the WMF. I tell you I'm not allowing a soul through that door who hasn't brought their checkbook.

MR. STERLING

Candi is a cando girl.

MRS. STERLING

Peter Duchin's playing and Henry Kissinger's going to be the keynote speaker.

ASHER

At a Cambodian fund-raiser?

MRS. STERLING

Beverly Sills was booked.

ALEX

World Monument Fund, Asher. I'm sure there are monuments in countries Mr. Kissinger hasn't bombed.

MRS. STERLING

The man won a Nobel Peace Prize!

ASHER

I've heard that the WMF mines their sites at night to dissuade looters.

ALEX

No you haven't.

MRS. STERLING  
The WMF would never use landmines!

ASHER  
If they didn't, all the Garudas  
and Nagas in Preah Khan would be  
in a Bangkok antique shop.

MRS. STERLING  
Our director is on the board of  
the Halo Trust. The man has worked  
with Princess Di!

ASHER  
You should toss a fund-raiser for  
all the children your mines have  
dismembered!

There's an E.F. Hutton moment in the room as all the pudgy  
American faces turn toward Asher and Mrs. Sterling.

ALEX  
You had some calls to make old man?

Alex grabs Asher roughly by the arm and heaves him up from  
his chair. Asher scoops up some cucumber sandwiches as he's  
dragged away past the startled guests.

As they cross the large room Alex whispers to Asher through  
a clenched smile.

ALEX  
A bit self-righteous for a junkie  
aren't you?

ASHER  
I'm not a junkie. I chip...I'm a  
chipper.

ALEX  
Don't ask me for money.

ASHER  
I have to man.

ALEX  
No.

ASHER  
(pleads)  
Let me stay here for a few days  
then. Alex. My friend...Please!

He clutches Alex's lapel.

ALEX  
(grudgingly)  
For old times sake. For who you  
were, Asher.

INT: PREP SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Reese stands behind the well-shellacked lectern.

REESE  
Janet Malcolm, the author of *THE  
JOURNALIST AND THE MURDERER* once  
wrote...

Reese moves too close to the microphone, unleashing feedback  
through out the auditorium.

REESE  
'Every journalist who is not  
stupid or too full of himself to  
notice what is going on knows that  
what he does is morally  
indefensible.'

He pauses for effect.

ANGLE ON...a sea of bored young faces, stifling yawns.  
Weatherly stands and squeezes his way out to the aisle.

Reese takes a swig from his orange soda as he tracks  
Weatherly's flight.

REESE  
'He is a kind of confidence man,  
preying on people's vanity,  
ignorance, or loneliness, gaining  
their trust and betraying them  
without remorse." Yes, as a  
journalist I suppose that I have  
betrayed that confidence...

The sound of the door shutting behind Weatherly echoes  
throughout the auditorium.

INT: AUDITORIUM CORRIDOR - DAY

FOREGROUND... Weatherly trudges down the corridor. Behind him  
we can see another person slip out of the auditorium.

REESE (O.S.)  
...but it has always served a...  
I won't use the word noble... but  
a worthwhile end...

INT: AUDITORIUM - DAY

REESE

...accurate, important information  
delivered to my readers about the  
plight of the Cambodian people.

Reese waits for the applause. It's not coming.

REESE

Let's go to the slides.

Reese turns to face the screen behind him. A silence fills  
the auditorium as they wait... and wait.

ANGLE ON... Susan Rivers gesturing frantically in the front  
row, pointing to the left side of the lectern.

Reese is surprised to discover that the speech prop he's been  
holding is the slide machine remote control. He squints,  
trying to decipher the buttons on it, then abruptly tosses it  
to Susan.

REESE

Ms. Rivers is going to be running  
the show today.

Wolf whistles from the peanut gallery.

INT: BATHROOM - DAY

ANGLE ON... Weatherly stands at a urinal humming. He's got  
all the restroom faucets going full bore.

GLEN (O.S.)

Where's my package?

WEATHERLY

I beg your pardon?

Weatherly turns to find Glen at the adjacent urinal. A vague  
look of recognition comes over Weatherly's face.

WEATHERLY

What are you doing here?

Glen slams Weatherly's face into the urinal, then spins him  
around and kicks him savagely in the balls. Weatherly doubles  
over.

GLEN

Look at me.

Weatherly is hunched over gasping for air. Glen clicks open  
his stiletto, and places the flat of the blade beneath  
Weatherly's chin.

05.

GLEN  
Where's my package?

WEATHERLY  
Your what?

Glen slams Weatherly's face down on the rim of the urinal, shattering the porcelain. Weatherly writhes around on the floor, blood pouring out of his nose.

GLEN  
My package!

Glen reaches inside Weatherly's waistband and grabs hold of his underwear, hoisting him up into the air. Glen releases his grip and Weatherly falls back to the floor in a heap.

GLEN  
Your boyfriend carried a  
package - my package - back from  
Cambodia. Where is it?

WEATHERLY  
You gave me... a wedgie!

INT: PREP SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

A slide comes on, up side down and woefully out of focus. A chuckle ripples through the room. Susan quickly sharpens the image: it's Davies, with a bloodied forehead, standing next to a badly mangled white car, with the word NEWS printed on the hood in red.

REESE  
I call this the great Cambodian  
insurance shot.

INT: BATHROOM - DAY

Glen has dragged Weatherly into a stall.

WEATHERLY  
Oh come on, man! I don't know what  
you're talking about.

Glen grabs Weatherly by the hair and dunks his head in the bowl. Weatherly emerges gasping for air.

WEATHERLY  
Oh, the package...

Glen dunks him again, longer this time. Weatherly's body tenses up, then goes lax. Glen tugs him out by the hair and throws him onto the tile floor.

ANGLE ON... Glen's face as he looks down at Weatherly. We hear the sound of his zipper...

WEATHERLY (O.S.)

Oh man!

...then tinkling water.

GLEN

Tell your boyfriend I'm expecting delivery of my...

WEATHERLY (O.S.)

...package.

Satisfied, Glen zips up. He steps over a whimpering Weatherly on his way out the door.

INT: AUDITORIUM CORRIDOR - DAY

A smattering of tepid applause is heard from the inside.

ANGLE ON... The double doors burst open and the liberated students come rushing out like a jailbreak.

INT: BATHROOM - DAY

The bathroom door slams against the wall as students race to the toilets. They stop in their tracks.

ANGLE ON... Weatherly, lying face down in a puddle of blood. His tattered boxers hanging out of his pants.

INT: JULIE'S KITCHEN (NEW YORK) - DAY

ANGLE ON... the cutting board. An empty cornstarch box lies crumpled beside it. The scales are covered in white powder.

The stash has grown from three kilos to five as Julie, in a Martha Stewart cooking apron, carefully reseals the bag with electrical tape.

INT: GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

A DO NOT DISTURB sign hangs from Reese's door. The jimmed lock is the first clue the sign has not been observed.

INT: GRAMERCY PARK HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

All the mail Reese carried back from Cambodia has been shredded open--courtesy of Glen and his all purpose stiletto.

Reese searches the room for Asher's package.

Weatherly lies on the bed moaning, still in his blood-stained clothes. He has a huge bandage keeping his re-set nose in place and gauze shoved up his nostrils.

REESE

One more time. Try to be coherent.

WEATHERLY  
I think I'm concussed.

REESE  
You're not concussed.

WEATHERLY  
I could very well be concussed.

REESE  
Again. The perpetrator of your  
radical rhinoplasty was...

WEATHERLY  
...Glen. Who coincidentally is the  
proprietor of an establishment I  
frequent...

REESE  
...a strip-joint.

WEATHERLY  
Yes. Glen said -- and he was quite  
adamant on this point -- that you  
were carrying a package for him.

REESE  
It's not here.

WEATHERLY  
What?

REESE  
A fat manila envelope with a Long  
Island City Address typed on it.  
It's the only one missing.

WEATHERLY  
(brightens)  
Glen got his package. He's done  
with us. You're in the clear.

REESE  
I should notify... somebody.

Weatherly heaves himself up into a sitting position.

WEATHERLY  
Why? Why would you want to  
advertise the fact that you were  
so incredibly fucking naive - or  
stupid - or both, that you carried  
a package back through U.S.  
customs without the faintest  
fucking clue as to what was inside.



REESE  
(weakly)  
I trusted the guy who gave it to  
me.

WEATHERLY  
Good call.

Weatherly glances around the trashed hotel room. Something catches his eye and he chuckles.

REESE  
What?

Weatherly points to the condom stuck on the wall.

ANGLE ON... Reese. He's not laughing.

EXT: 158TH STREET - DAY

Pierre's BMW sedan is parked in front of a tenement on St. Nicholas Place, a small v-shaped street off of 158th.

INT: APARTMENT - DAY

The cramped dimly lit apartment is a beehive of activity. Young Haitian men carry boxes filled with cell phones into a backroom. In the kitchen area, old women cut precise measures of powder which they then scrape into envelopes.

ANGLE ON... MARCEL, 26, a lithe gentleman in a mustard-colored Ozwald Boateng suit. He browses a car catalogue while chatting with a hulk of a man named FELIX.

MARCEL  
(French)  
...No more Mercedes. This time I  
ordered a Bentley.

JULIE (O.S.)  
Screams nigga rich.

ANGLE ON... Julie flanked by Pierre and a teenager with a Basquiat-style Afro. They both look as though they've just pissed themselves. Slung over her shoulder is a large Bloomingdales bag.

JULIE (O.S.)  
(French)  
Bentleys are for peasants who've  
won the lottery.

MARCEL  
Who is a peasant?

Julie lifts her Audrey Hepburn-style sunglasses and looks fearlessly into his eyes, flashing her ripe Baby Doll smile.

JULIE  
M5, BMW.

MARCEL  
A fucking sedan?

Pierre winces.

JULIE  
It's a driver's car.

MARCEL  
Where's Glen?

PIERRE  
He's on vacation.

MARCEL  
Where?

JULIE  
Garden City. It's beautiful this  
time of year.

Julie heaves her bag onto a steel table.

JULIE  
I've got five K's here. Five K's  
that came from Cambodia. Five K's  
of serious shit.

All the Haitian underlings flinch in unison.

PIERRE  
(whispers to her)  
Marcel hates the cursing.

Julie removes a Ziplock bag and opens it.

JULIE  
Bon appétit.

Marcel whispers into Felix's ear. Someone flips a switch, and  
bright, clinical lights come on.

Felix comes over to the table. He has a claw for a pinkie,  
which he uses to scoop up the heroin and snort a hit. He  
sniffles as he ambles back over to the couch, whispers  
something into Marcel's ear as he plops down.

MARCEL  
Felix is impressed.

PIERRE  
Where's the money?

Marcel nods curtly, sending Basquiat and another henchman scurrying from the room.

Julie places all five bags on the table just as Basquiat returns with an official DEA drug testing kit. Marcel selects a bag and takes a hit. He hands the bag to Basquiat, who pours some of it into a small beaker.

MARCEL  
(to Julie)  
One-thirty.

JULIE  
The deal was a hundred and fifty.  
Now I'm hearing bullshit. You  
could step on this sh... stuff ten  
times over, and there's not a  
junkie in Harlem who wouldn't O.D.  
with a good taste.

After a tense moment, Marcel smiles.

MARCEL  
One-thirty. My mother still bakes  
with corn starch... She's a  
peasant.

Marcel erupts with laughter.

EXT: RACQUET CLUB - AFTERNOON

It's a windy, clear day and all the banners are flying. Reese steps out of the Racquet Club, still in his tennis whites. He holds his racket between his knees and pulls on a worn 'Grove School' sweatshirt.

Weatherly exits wearing a peacoat over his tennis gear. He still sports the massive bandage over his nose. Purple shiners have bloomed under his eyes like garish mascara.

REESE  
I don't know how could you play  
with that nose.

WEATHERLY  
I'm a mouth breather.

Something catches Weatherly's eye.

ANGLE ON... The far corner of the block. A group of pedestrians parts to reveal Glen standing there. He glares back at Weatherly.

WEATHERLY  
Malevolent fuck. It's him!

REESE

What?

Without explaining Weatherly takes off. Reese turns to see... Glen sprinting toward him. Reese pivots and sets off after Weatherly.

GLEN

(calling out)

Someone stop those guys, they stole my wallet!

ANGLE ON... An impatient yuppie waiting for an elderly lady to disembark from a cab. The light goes green and the cars behind honk. The elderly lady has just gotten her feet on the pavement when Weatherly and Reese pile in the far door.

ANGLE ON... Glen, huffing down the street, half a block behind.

GLEN'S POV... The irate yuppie struggles to open the door as Reese tries to pull it shut from inside. Reese wins the tug-of-war, the door slams shut, and the cab takes off.

INT: CAB - CONTINUOUS

WEATHERLY

He must have followed you from the Gramercy.

REESE

If he has his package why is he still after me?

EXT: FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

MONTAGE: in an homage to 'Breakfast at Tiffany's,' Julie's reflection appears in the windows of tony Fifth Avenue stores.

EXT: BERGDORF GOODMAN - CONTINUOUS

Julie strides through the arched stone doorway.

INT: OYSTER BAR - DAY

Reese and Weatherly have the back smoking room to themselves. Weatherly lifts his bowl of clam chowder to his face and begins slurping it down.

REESE

She was a brunette with that preternaturally pale downtown skin. A Harvard girl - but good looking. Hyper-articulate. Still affecting that kind of poseur postgraduate Adams House manner. Ya know?

Weatherly lowers the bowl revealing a chowder mustache and goatee.

WEATHERLY

I know her. She works for Glen...

INT: BACK ROOM GRAND HOTEL D'ANGKOR (CAMBODIA) - DAY

Old Khmer peasant women sit around a table folding the intricate petals of the hotel lotuses, gabbing away.

A distraught Asher sits huddled in the corner of the room, punching numbers into the phone.

ASHER

(hissing whisper)

Julie? Sweetheart, if you're there please, please, baby, please pick up the fucking phone. I just called Indo-Suez and nothing has hit my account. Please, sweetheart, if you're there, please--

JULIE (O.S.)

(phone-filtered)

I'm here.

INTERCUT:

INT: JULIE'S APARTMENT (NEW YORK) - NIGHT

ANGLE ON... Julie, she is barely recognizable as she sits on the floor, flanked by two large vintage Louis Vuitton suitcases. Her hair has been cut, coiffed and dyed a pale Bergdorf blonde like a Park Avenue Princess about to jet off for St. Bart's.

ASHER (O.S.)

(on speaker phone)

There was a hitch on this end. I had to borrow some money to make our purchase. Well it's collection time on that loan and I can't pay it back because your boss hasn't wired my fucking money into my fucking account!

JULIE

He's not going to.

ASHER

What?

JULIE

I've cut him out. He became obsolete.

ASHER

But I'm not obsolete right?

(no response)

You've got to wire me five thousand dollars Julie or I'm dead.

JULIE

I'm holding more than a hundred K, Asher and I'm coming to you. I booked a flight to Bangkok. I'll be in Phnom Penh in fifty-two hours.

ASHER

Why? Sweetheart just wire me the fucking money.

JULIE

That's not an option. It's become imperative that I leave this city.

The line starts breaking up...

ASHER

I'm losing you. Meet me at the Foreign Correspondents Club. It's on the river. The taxis will all know it.

JULIE

The Foreign Correspondents Club in fifty-two hours...

ASHER

In fifty-two hours. If I'm not there it's only because I'm dead.

The line cuts out...

JULIE

Me too.

PULL BACK to reveal the wreckage that is Julie's apartment. It's as if Glen had used only his stiletto to systematically shred and puncture every item in the flat.

Julie gets to her feet. She wants to leave but something is obviously nagging at her. She walks over to the speakerphone lying in the middle of the floor. Julie snubs out her cigarette and punches in three digits.

OPERATOR (O.S.)

What city please?

INT: WEATHERLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

An Upper East Side duplex on 93rd St. The buzzer brings Weatherly traipsing down the stairs with a silver shaker clasped in his hands, still in his tennis gear. He looks through the peephole and has barely unlocked the door when Julie comes bursting through.

JULIE  
You're listed!

She has her hair greased back to disguise the new color. She deposits the Louis Vuittons on the checkered foyer floor and then secures the door behind her, bolting all the locks.

Weatherly - drunk, stoned and quite marvelous - is oblivious to her urgency.

WEATHERLY  
Hey you.

JULIE  
You have to get the fuck out of here.

WEATHERLY  
I'd help you with those, but...  
(holds up the shaker)  
...Gimlets.

Weatherly saunters coquettishly back up his narrow staircase.

JULIE  
Weatherly!

WEATHERLY (O.S.)  
Julie, up here.

The TALKING HEADS' 'LIFE DURING WARTIME' can be heard from above. Julie stands with her back to the door, conflicted about whether or not to just take off.

JULIE  
Fuck!

She starts up the stairs after Weatherly.

INT: WEATHERLY'S LIBRARY - CONTINUOUS

An 'Old New York' style library: leather-bound books, a ladder with wheels, and a stone fireplace.

Julie stops in her tracks. Reese, is sitting on the floor next to the fire place nursing a Gimlet while he sifts through a pile of LPs.

12.

WEATHERLY  
Julie's here!

A startled Reese looks up, recognizes her.

REESE  
Hi... Julie.

JULIE  
Hi. Nice shorts.

Julie strides over to the fireplace digging a joint out of her bag as she goes. She plucks a long wood match from the mantel, strikes it on the stone, and fires up.

JULIE  
(regarding the joint)  
You mind? I'm tense.

Weatherly jogs over to open the French doors that lead out onto a small wrought iron balcony.

WEATHERLY  
We do actually have a designated  
smoking...

JULIE  
Perfect. May I have a drink please?

WEATHERLY  
Of course. Of course you can. I'd  
offer you a Vicodin, but I've only  
got seventeen left.

JULIE  
A Gimlet neat.

Weatherly heads for the bar. Julie steps out onto the balcony and scans the street below.

ANGLE ON... 93rd Street, a quiet residential side street between Madison and Park. It runs downhill toward the park.

Julie sits down in the doorway, half inside and half out. Weatherly brings Julie her drink. Reese has been staring at her all the while.

REESE  
What did I carry through customs?

Weatherly returns to the fireplace, flops down on a leather ottoman, and refills his glass.

JULIE  
Three keys of heroin.



WEATHERLY

Oh my God. That's right. You slept  
with Reese.

A sullen Weatherly gets up from the ottoman, and goes over to  
the turntable.

REESE

You know what the penalty for  
smuggling heroin out of Cambodia  
is?

JULIE

Death?

WEATHERLY

(brightly)

I would think so. I know it's  
'death' in Singapore.

With great care Weatherly slips an album out of the plastic  
sleeve, swaps it out onto the turntable.

JULIE

You're not safe here.

WEATHERLY

Really. Why?

JULIE

Glen needs to kill somebody and as  
I mentioned before, you're listed.

REESE

You're listed?

JULIE

You kept your bar tab on a credit  
card. He's got your full name. He  
just has to call information.

*AMERICAN PIE* starts up. A reverent Weatherly sways, mouthing  
the words. Julie and Reese watch him for a moment.

REESE

Call the cops!

Weatherly breaks from his musical trance.

WEATHERLY

No. I don't call cops. Besides  
they'll start asking questions  
about Julie...

REESE

Julie here risked my life and, at  
the very least, my career.

REESE

She is responsible for our situation.

JULIE

I'm sure you weren't an arbitrary selection Reese Zero.

REESE

By Asher?

JULIE

He's a stickler for retribution.

Weatherly's rummaging through his daughter's pink fanny pack. He removes a bottle of pills and heads back to the ottoman.

WEATHERLY

I don't like cops.

He pours some of the pills into a silver ashtray, and grinds them into a powder with his highball glass.

REESE

You're a home owner on the Upper East side of Manhattan. Cops are your friends, Weatherly.

WEATHERLY

No. Not so. For in me they sense a radical denial of their values...

Weatherly tosses the pill bottle to Reese, who catches it and reads the label.

REESE

Penny's on Ritalin?

WEATHERLY

Attention deficit issues.

Weatherly snorts up the Ritalin from the ashtray.

WEATHERLY

Really perks me up.

Weatherly sits at the desk with his hands covering his face and waits for the rocket fuel to ignite.

EXT: 93RD STREET - NIGHT

ANGLE ON... The black BMW sedan turns off Park and rattles to a stop. Pierre gets out and comes around to open the back passenger-side door. Glen steps out.

EXT: WEATHERLY'S BALCONY - NIGHT

Julie watches them for a moment. She taps out her joint, takes a swig of her drink and slips back into the apartment.

INT: WEATHERLY'S LIBRARY - NIGHT

Reese and Weatherly both look at her.

JULIE

They're here. Turn off all the lights!

WEATHERLY

Main switch downstairs.

With amphetamine-enhanced energy, Weatherly bounds up from his chair and sprints down the stairs. They hear Weatherly thrashing around in the storage closet. Then the click of the main switch and all the lights go out but the fire.

REESE

You did enjoy the sex, right?

Julie grabs Reese and kisses him flush on the lips as Don McLean's warble slows to silence.

EXT. 93RD STREET - NIGHT

Glen cases Weatherly's house from the street. He chooses the narrow garbage gate to the side for entry and nimbly climbs over. Pierre stations himself in front to keep look out.

INT: WEATHERLY'S LIBRARY - NIGHT

Weatherly comes bouncing back up the stairs armed with a hockey stick, Reese's racquet and a long black flashlight. Reese snatches his prized Yonex away from Weatherly.

WEATHERLY

Did you guys hear anything?

REESE

No.

Reese gets up and heads over to the phone on the desk. He picks up the handset, but before he can dial Julie rips the phoneline from the wall.

JULIE

(evenly)

Sorry but I really can't have cops.

Julie goes back to the hearth and lights up another joint. She's seemingly transformed by the flickering firelight.

WEATHERLY  
(giggles)  
You're like a Manson chick.

REESE  
Shut up.

From downstairs comes the sound of shattering glass.

WEATHERLY  
They've gone round back. Penny's  
room.

Weatherly keeps the hockey stick for himself and hands Julie  
the substantial flashlight.

WEATHERLY  
We have the light.

INT: WEATHERLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

They follow Weatherly down the creaky wooden staircase.

They jog down the hall and through the kitchen, huddling just  
outside Penny's door. Weatherly mouths one, two, three...

INT: PENNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

...The door bursts open. Julie shines the light in. She  
tracks along the piles of stuffed animals, and lands on  
Glen's head poking through the broken window.

WEATHERLY  
You fucking weasel!

Weatherly rushes forward. He winds up his hockey stick but at  
the apex of his upswing, the blade catches on the low ceiling  
and snaps harmlessly in two.

Reese hesitates -- Julie doesn't. She lets out a guttural war  
cry and rushes forward.

GLEN  
Julie!?

The beam of the flashlight arches upward, lighting the  
ceiling, before it comes crashing down on Glen's head.

Crunch! She lifts the flashlight from his broken occipital  
bone and slams it down again and again.

The flashlight finally goes out and they're left in the  
dark...

JULIE  
(hisses)  
Get out of here.

They run out of the room slamming the door behind them.

EXT: 93RD STREET - NIGHT

The quiet of the street is broken by the sound of Pierre trying to heave himself over the garbage-gate.

He glimpses Glen's lifeless legs dangling from Penny's window sill.

JULIE (O.S.)  
(from above)  
Bonsoir Pierre.

A startled Pierre jumps off the gate and looks up.

ANGLE ON... the empty wrought iron balcony. Julie keeps to the shadows of the french doors.

PIERRE  
I want another thousand for all my troubles.

JULIE  
I'll give you five. As a disposal fee.

ANGLE ON... Pierre smiles. Then it dawns on him what she means by 'disposal'.

PIERRE  
No. No this is not my problem.

He starts for his car.

JULIE (O.S.)  
It isn't?

CLOSE ON... Julie's mouth as she recites.

JULIE  
A three hundred pound Haitian man driving a '97 black BMW sedan with New York vanity plates... Bon chic, bon genre.

ANGLE ON... Pierre's plates BCBG.

JULIE  
You'll be tough to spot.

Pierre hesitates as he considers the situation.

PIERRE  
...Ten?

85.  
No response. Smelling money, Pierre walks back to the house. He addresses the empty balcony above him.

PIERRE  
You will pay me ten because you  
have no choice.

ANGLE ON... the balcony. Julie emerges from the shadows.

JULIE  
Ten it is. Catch.

She casually tosses the flashlight over the rail.

Pierre reflexively catches it in both hands before it hits the pavement. His smile abruptly fades as it dawns on him that he's gripping the bloody murder weapon.

PIERRE  
Oh fuck! Putain!

He fumbles the flashlight and it clatters to the pavement.

INT: WEATHERLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

ANGLE ON... The storage closet door. We hear Weatherly fumbling around in the dark, then the click of the main power switch being turned back on.

INT: PENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The lights come on. Reese stands in the doorway, a grim look on his face.

INT: WEATHERLY'S LIBRARY - NIGHT

ANGLE ON... The turntable starts up again. The needle drops and the first chords of American Pie come over the speakers.

THE SONG PLAYS THROUGH THE FOLLOWING SEQUENCE...

PULL WIDER to reveal the library and balcony are empty.

INT: WEATHERLY'S FOYER

Julie's suitcases are gone. The front door stands ajar.

INT: PENNY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

ANGLE ON... The broken window. Glen's lifeless eyes stare out from his bashed head.

ANGLE ON... Weatherly as he joins Reese in the doorway and absorbs the gruesome crime scene.

WEATHERLY  
We're fucked...

Pierre appears behind them. The Haitian mutters a prayer, brings his chunky gold cross to his lips. He then squeezes past them into the room.

EXT: 93RD STREET - NIGHT

'AMERICAN PIE' fades as CRACKER'S 'I HATE MY GENERATION' starts to throb.

Julie hurries down the street, lugging her bags. Tiny drops of Glen's blood are speckled on her perfectly made up face.

EXT: FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB - NIGHT (CAMBODIA)

CAMERA rushes forward through a mob of journalists in a news feeding frenzy outside the Club. They scream into cell phones or at camera crews -- trying to be heard over the gunfire and grenades going off in the background.

ANGLE ON... Julie, weaves her way through the crowd. A knockoff Prada bag swinging dangerously from her shoulder.

INT: FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB - NIGHT

Inside, it's packed and noisy. We follow Julie as she makes her way to the bar.

ELIZA (O.S.)  
(mock newscaster  
voice)

At least five soldiers were killed  
and scores wounded as chaos swept  
through the streets of Phnom Penh,  
full stop.

Julie gets the bartender's attention. She leans over the bar to speak into his ear.

ELIZA (O.S.)  
Troops loyal to Cambodian  
strongman and Second Prime  
Minister Chhay Bopha launched a B-  
40 rocket attack at First Prime  
Minister Kamol's residence, full  
stop.

The bartender shakes his head and points across the room.

CLOSE ON...Eliza Coats, holding court at the center of a group of journalists.

ELIZA  
Kamol, who was eating sturgeon in  
his residence south of Arles, was  
heard by a source close to his  
entourage to be singing, 'Je ne  
regrette rien'.

JULIE (O.S.)  
...Are you Eliza?

Eliza takes Julie in without responding.

JULIE  
Are you Eliza?

ELIZA  
I'm sorry -- didn't catch your  
name.

JULIE  
Julie.

She pulls Eliza aside with a presumptuous familiarity that visibly irks the English woman.

JULIE  
I'm a friend of Asher's. He told  
me to meet him here.

ELIZA  
Well I'm afraid the boy has  
skipped town indefinitely.

JULIE  
Where did you hear that?

ELIZA  
From Asher.

Julie and Eliza lock eyes for a moment. The lights in the bar go out, and the stereo drones to a halt. Lighters are raised in the air like at a concert, while down the street, the sounds of gunshots are heard at irregular intervals.

ANGLE ON... Eliza scans the bar to see where Julie has got off to. She's at the bar.

JULIE  
Asher was supposed to meet me here.

BARTENDER  
Haven't seen him for a month.

JULIE  
But you know where he lives?

The candlelight catches Julie's hopeful smile.

EXT: FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB - NIGHT

Julie exits the bar, taking a moment to get her bearings. A handful of journos are making their way down the street towards the fighting. Julie starts walking after them.



00.  
A flare arcs overhead, revealing Gerald and Eliza Coats trailing behind her. He tries to take a sip of his drink, it slips from his hand and shatters on the street.

GERALD COATS  
Bloody hell!

Julie whirls around to face them.

ELIZA  
I wouldn't go that direction unless you have a Prada flack jacket in that Prada bag.

Julie looks off in the direction of the fighting.

ELIZA  
If you like you can come home with us until things have calmed down a bit. We're in the safe part of town... so to speak.

JULIE  
Really?

ELIZA  
You do play backgammon?

EXT: RIVER - NIGHT

The city is quiet except for the fading pops of gunfire.

Gerald, a spectral figure in the moonlight, walks ahead of the women along the river.

JULIE  
What is going on exactly?

ELIZA  
The beginning to the end of even the semblance of democracy in Cambodia and the bloody consolidation of the totalitarian kleptocracy that's to come.

They pass an island in the river where the Buddhists have hung saffron banners calling for peace.

JULIE  
It's a knock-off you know. The bag. Canal St.

The two women walk on in awkward silence. They pass Gerald, who has stopped to pee in the river as raindrops patter down.

09.  
ELIZA

I'm afraid we're all in for a good soaking.

The rain swiftly grows into a torrential downpour.

INT: ASHER'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Julie enters warily through the kicked-in door.

The apartment has been thoroughly trashed. Mr. Hawk's thugs have been meticulous in their destruction.

Asher's books are in a heap next to the smashed shelves. Julie can't resist snooping through to see what Asher's been reading. She picks up a book and uncovers her long lost copy of 'A HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE'.

ANGLE ON... Julie, as a sad look of recognition registers on her face.

EXT: BALCONY FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB - DAY

ANGLE ON... Tonle Sap River as raindrops riddle the surface.

ANGLE ON... Eliza, looks out from the balcony of the Foreign Correspondents Club. She sits on a stool with a crumpled newspaper and a drink.

ASHER (O.S.)

Where the fuck is the manager?

A tightly wound Asher takes the stool next to her.

ELIZA

Hello.

ASHER

Have you run into an American woman who's looking for me?

ELIZA

Am I still pretty Asher?

ASHER

You're stoned.

ELIZA

(coily)

I've got a wee bit of china left back at the flat...

ASHER

Thank you, no.

ELIZA  
Don't tell me this tart of yours  
disapproves?

ASHER  
Have you seen her? She's...very  
noticeable.

ELIZA  
Come back to my place.

ASHER  
I'd be useless to you.

Eliza focuses her constricted pupils on him.

ELIZA  
Am I still pretty, Asher?

ASHER  
(beat)  
No... Nobody's 'pretty' anymore.

He disappears into the club.

INT: FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS CLUB

ANGLE ON... a tourist guide list of the hotels in Phnom Penh.  
The first six have been crossed out. The Renakse is the  
seventh.

Asher stands at the payphone.

VOICE (O.S.)  
(phone filtered)  
103.

ASHER  
What?

VOICE (O.S.)  
Room 103.

A stunned Asher hangs up the phone and scrambles down the  
stairs.

EXT: PHNOM PENH - AFTERNOON

Asher, invigorated, races through the flooded streets.

INT: RENAKSE HOTEL ROOM - AFTERNOON

Julie is lying on the bed smoking a joint. She cradles a  
well-worn edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's boyhood-  
adventure 'KIDNAPPED'.

ANGLE ON... Asher's name scrawled on the inside cover next to the date 1976.

Julie can't help but smile. She pages through to the N.C. Wyeth illustrations.

EXT: RENAKSE HOTEL ROOM - AFTERNOON

We follow Asher to room 103, drenched and gasping for air.

INT: RENAKSE HOTEL ROOM - AFTERNOON

The door bursts open. Julie reflexively hurls the book toward the intruder, beaming Asher in the head. Before he can speak she's all over him flailing away. He manages to wrestle her back on to the bed.

ASHER  
It's me. It's me.

He struggles to hold her down.

ASHER  
It's Asher.

JULIE  
I know.

They're face to face. Beads of water drip from Asher splashing down on Julie. She grins up at him and the years of separation dissolve. He licks the droplets from her face.

They're both tentative at first, gently rediscovering one another. The old chemistry ignites. Julie rips away at Asher's wet clothes.

INT: RENAKSE HOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Julie, wrapped in a sheet, wakes to find that Asher has already risen. He stands at the window in his boxers, nervously smoking a cigarette.

JULIE  
I killed my boss.

ASHER  
You killed a man?

JULIE  
No. I killed Glen.

Asher cracks the blinds. They observe each other in the light of day for the first time in five years.

ASHER  
I was wondering how you cut him out.

JULIE  
I crushed his venal little skull.

ASHER  
So we can't go back to the states.

JULIE  
Not for a while at least. Give us  
a puff.

Asher sits down on the edge of the bed, hesitatingly places  
the cigarette in Julie's mouth.

JULIE  
What's the plan?

ASHER  
There's a plan?  
(off Julie's look)  
As soon as Bank Indo-Suez opens  
we'll deposit the money.

JULIE  
And then after the bank we're  
going to have fun, aren't we?  
Please, tell me we're going to  
have fun.

ASHER  
Sure. We'll see about getting  
visas to Burma.

JULIE  
Screw Burma. I want to swim in the  
warm ocean. I need to. I haven't  
in so long.

ASHER  
Whatever you want. We can hire a  
car after I see Mr. Hawk.

JULIE  
No cars.

ASHER  
We can take the train to Kep then.  
We'll swim out to the casino  
island that never got off the  
ground. It'll be fun. The bar's  
have mirrors. You'll love it. It's  
the Miami Beach of Cambodia.

JULIE  
Fuck! I forgot my Lilly Pullitzers.  
(off Asher's look)  
What? Crows feet?

95.  
He's noticed the wicked marks Glen's stiletto left on her creamy skin.

ASHER  
What happened?

Asher tugs the sheet down to expose a cruel scar that cuts across Julie's midsection.

JULIE  
From the crash.

She smiles as her eyes start to well up.

JULIE  
Inside Asher... Inside I'm all wrecked.

Asher absorbs the full meaning of her words.

ASHER  
(softly)  
You're all I ever wanted.

He leans into her and tenderly starts kissing his way down the trail of scars.

ANGLE ON...Julie. Her whole body starts to quiver as Asher slowly makes his way further and further down.

EXT: VIBOL THOM'S MANSION - DAY

An armed bodyguard leads Mr. Hawk through a decadent French Colonial mansion to the grounds in back.

ANGLE ON... Vibol Thom as he reclines on a chaise lounge beside his pool. R.H.M. lathers him up with white tanning lotion.

Mr. Hawk timidly approaches. He holds out a neat, clipped roll of money. The men speak in Khmer.

MR. HAWK  
Asher has paid his debt.

R.H.M. walks over and wipes his hands clean on Hawk's shirt. He snatches the money away and goes off to count it.

Thom gestures for Hawk to resume R.H.M.'s peon task. Hawk kneels down and dutifully squeezes a gob of the white cream onto his hands. He begins to rub the lotion into the gangster's pedicured feet.

ANGLE ON... R.H.M., as he pokes a calculator with the remaining finger of his left hand. He double checks his figures.

R.H.M.  
It's all here. With interest.

VIBOL THOM  
You have done well, Hawk.

A relieved Hawk smiles up at him thankfully.

ANGLE ON... R.H.M. as he notes the transaction in his ledger. He pauses. Something isn't quite right. He picks up one of the crisp hundred dollar bills for closer examination. He checks the others.

R.H.M.  
These serial numbers are not from this country.

VIBOL THOM  
What?

R.H.M. brings the money over for Thom to inspect.

VIBOL THOM  
Where did Asher's money come from?

MR. HAWK  
What does it matter? He has paid his debt.

Thom flashes a benevolent and reassuring smile. Then unleashes a savage kick to Hawk's face.

ANGLE ON... Hawk, as he hits the flagstone with a bone-shattering CRUNCH!

EXT: TRAIN - DAY

The train tracks, running parallel with Route 3, separate from the road as mountains rise up on either side.

EXT: TRAIN ROOF - DAY

ANGLE ON... a group of peasant workers ignoring the lush scenery as they watch...

Asher with Julie pinned beneath him on the hot metal roof of the carriage car.

ASHER  
Tell me why they call you Julie G-Spot again?

JULIE  
Why are the first two cabins totally empty?

ASHER

It's a land mine thing. Don't change the subject. Why do they call you Julie G-Spot?  
(threatens)  
Tell me. Tell me why.

She shakes her head. He tickles her.

JULIE

No! Never! I'll never tell.  
(giggling fit)  
Stop you asshole! We're going to fall off the train!

Noticing the train has slowed, Asher relents.

ASHER

Fuck.

ANGLE ON... eight or nine soldiers in the distance standing on the rails.

The soldier on lookout at the front of the train waves at the soldiers on the tracks. He turns back, catches Asher watching him. He gives Asher a big thumbs up.

EXT: TRAIN - LATER

The passengers have been herded off the train. The soldiers wear sandals with rusty Kalashnikovs strung across their backs. Their pockets are stuffed with money stolen from the train's passengers, most of whom have been allowed to flee.

Asher and Julie are separated from the other passengers.

About ten of the other passengers are also singled out. A soldier/bandit pushes a woman cradling her child into the group.

BANDIT

Youn! Youn!

They line the Vietnamese up against the train.

Asher puts his hands over Julie's eyes as the young bandit puts his rifle on automatic.

ANGLE ON... The line of Vietnamese being mowed down by a spray of bullets. The woman dies holding her child.

INT: BANGKOK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

ANGLE ON... a newspaper: 'KHMER ROUGE GUERRILLAS HOLD TWO AMERICANS HOSTAGE.' Asher and Julie's photos, which look like they've been plucked from a high school yearbook, appear underneath.



PULL BACK to reveal...Reese, in his customary travelling attire, pouring over the article as he waits for his connecting flight to Phnom Phen.

INT: ASHER'S APARTMENT - DAY

ANGLE ON... Julie erected a tower from Asher's books. It stands in the middle of the ransacked apartment like a grave marker.

PULL BACK to reveal Reese sitting amidst the debris contemplating the column. He rises and walks over to it.

REESE (O.S.)  
I have a conflict of interest.

Suddenly he lashes out, sending the books flying.

FRANK (O.S.)  
(phone-filtered)  
That's all Cambodia is -- one big conflict of interest...

'A HUNDRED YEARS OF SOLITUDE' remains in place at the bottom.

Reese bends down to pick it up. He starts paging through, becoming absorbed in Julie's old entries.

ANGLE ON... the old photo of Julie falls out and flutters to the floor.

INT: REESE'S OFFICE - DAY

Reese, a phone to his ear, sits at his desk in his cement bunker of an office. A ceiling fan clatters overhead.

FRANK (O.S.)  
Look, this story has incredible legs. Incredible legs. Two Americans held hostage for fifty thousand a piece by Khmer Rouge. Come on. That's a sexy fucking story.

REESE  
We don't know it's Khmer Rouge.

FRANK (O.S.)  
Oh for fucksake Reese! Who else would execute all the Vietnamese on the train?

Pin enters from the other room with the wire copy.

REESE  
(to Pin)  
Spoons.

Pin exits.

FRANK (O.S.)

You should already be down there.  
This is the kind of story that  
makes a career Reese, or ends  
it... Call me from Kampot.

The phone clicks as Frank hangs up. Reese jumps to his feet and hurls his chair against the wall. A startled Pin re-enters with the steaming cold spoons in either hand.

REESE

We're going to Kampot.

PIN

My auntie lives in Kampot.

REESE

Great. Arrange for a car.

Reese lies down on the floor. Pin places the spoons on his eyes. Reese inhales deeply, exhaling slowly as he intones.

REESE

(mantra)

Calm thyself. Calm thy...  
Xanax?

Pin delicately drops the pill into Reese open mouth. He turns off the light and closes the door behind him.

INT: REESE'S OFFICE - LATER

ANGLE ON... Reese, spoons still in place, naps.

Reese doesn't stir as the door to his office bursts open and the lights are switched on. A manila 'CAMBODIAN SUN' envelope identical to the one which contained the heroin, lands on Reese's chest with a thud.

He bolts upright, sending the spoons clattering to the floor.

Eliza Coats, amped on coke and adrenaline, stands over him. She wears a lovely white sun dress and looks quite beautiful.

ELIZA

When do you leave for Kampot?

Reese takes a moment to get his bearings. He focuses on the familiar-looking envelope on his chest.

REESE

What is this?

Eliza, begins to pace about the small office. Her words fire out at hyper-speed.

ELIZA  
Asher's money. I emptied his  
account at Bank Indo-Suez.

REESE  
How did you manage that?

ELIZA  
Cunning and connivance.

REESE  
How did you get his money!?

ELIZA  
I used to fuck the deputy director  
of the branch.

REESE  
(winces)  
Claude?

ELIZA  
Albert.

Reese, still Xanax-groggy, pulls himself off the floor and  
heads for the sink in the corner of the office.

ELIZA  
When do you leave, Reese?

REESE  
Pin is getting a car.

Eliza begins rifling through Reese's desk.

ELIZA  
Where do you keep your...

REESE  
I don't smoke.

She doesn't seem to believe him and continues her search.

ELIZA  
Hopefully you'll beat the TV  
cameras from Bangkok.

Reese splashes water on his face, then packs his equipment.

REESE  
It is, to quote my editor, 'a very  
sexy story.' 'Renegade Khmer Rouge  
kidnap two Americans.'

ELIZA

The Khmer Rouge are all dead or driving around Phnom Penh in Land Cruisers wearing government uniforms.

This jolts Reese from his daze.

REESE

Then who did this?

ELIZA

Vibol Thom. That's why your embassy doesn't want to get involved. They know he's Chhay Bopha's muscle and they know Chhay Bopha will win the election either by tanks or votes. Two lives are a small price to pay to be on the winning side this time around.

REESE

But Thom's a drug lord.

ELIZA

Today's narco-fascist is tomorrow's minister of defense in the wonderful game of Nation Building.

REESE

How could Asher be so stupid as to cross Vibol Thom?

ELIZA

He wasn't. According to Gerald when Thom bought out Hawk's Parlor to launder his money he inherited Asher and his debt. Right now this is simply a case of Thom seeing an opportunity to extort money...but as soon as the TV cameras arrive from Bangkok...as soon as this becomes an embarrassment for Chhay Bopha... There's a hundred-thousand in the envelope and you should probably allow another three to five for the go-between...

REESE

(sharply)

I'm not fixing this. I'm not a fixer, Eliza.

Eliza ignores him. She's spotted something on his desk. It's the photo of Julie that Reese found at Asher's. She picks it up.

ELIZA

May I have this or will you be using it for her obituary shot?

EXT: MOUNTAIN TRAIL - DAY

Asher, Julie and a beefy MISSIONARY trudge up a steep, serpentine mountain path. Their captors are a mixture of soldiers and Khmer Rouge bandits.

The missionary's sweating so profusely that his short-sleeved shirt has become translucent. He plops down on the path.

MISSIONARY

I'm not going any farther. I can barely feel my legs.

One of the bandits, a scrawny eighteen year-old with a MAO CAP, kicks the missionary hard in the stomach. A soldier reprimands him. An argument erupts between the bandits and soldiers. Weapons are quickly drawn as the bickering escalates.

A shirtless older man in fatigue pants with a crescent-shaped scar on one cheek steps in to diffuse the situation.

Cigarettes are passed all around to soothe the tension.

MISSIONARY

We're all going to die.

ASHER

The Mormon Church is flush, they'll get you out of here in a day.

MISSIONARY

I'm a Seventh-Day Adventist.

ASHER

You're fucked.

Julie covers her face with her hands. Asher pours water into a bandanna and wipes the grime from her face.

ASHER

Your Daddy is going to hear about this in the morning paper and be on the next flight to Bangkok with a suitcase full of money. That's all these guys want. We'll be back in Phnom Penh in five days, max.

JULIE

There's no "Daddy" anymore.

In the distance...the whirring of approaching motorcycles.

EXT: MOUNTAIN ROAD - LATER

ANGLE ON... the steeple of a desecrated old Catholic church at the top of the mountain.

Asher and Julie ride past on the backs of their captors' motorbikes. Lagging behind is the overburdened bike carrying the missionary.

Across a vast meadow looms the rust-colored ruins of the once grand Bokor Palace Hotel.

INT: CAR - DAY

Pin drives with his Walkman blasting in his ears. Reese dozes in the shotgun seat next to him. In the distance, the mountains rise up before them.

A bump in the road jars Reese awake. He pulls out an official looking US Army map.

REESE

It's this next turn coming up.

Pin, of course, doesn't hear him. They speed past the turn off. Reese reaches over and yanks off Pin's earphones.

REESE

You missed the turn-off.

The car screeches to a halt and Pin throws it into reverse, backing up rapidly along the road.

PIN

You're going to save Asher and this woman?

REESE

That would be a great dereliction of my journalistic duties, Pin.

They take the road they missed before, down to the train tracks where the kidnapping took place.

REESE

Fuck.

ANGLE ON... A film crew, two men and a woman mill about the train tracks.

INT: PIN'S AUNTIE'S HOUSE - DAY

A cheery, wrinkled old woman with black teeth in a flowery red dress serves Reese and Pin tea from a French china set.

Pin and his Auntie chat in Khmer as she pours the tea.

REESE  
What is she saying?

PIN  
Auntie says it is nice to meet new people.

(Auntie smiles)  
She says that the whole mountain is mined but there's a man that goes to the top and back.

REESE  
The top of the mountain?

PIN  
Yes. Up with supplies...

REESE  
...and down with demands.

Pin nods his head.

REESE  
How do we get in touch with this man?

Pin puts the question to his Auntie in Khmer.

PIN  
He will be at the nightclub.

REESE  
Which nightclub?

PIN  
There is only one.

REESE  
How does she know about this man?

PIN  
Auntie used to be Khmer Rouge.

She puts a cookie on Reese's plate.

REESE  
(biting the cookie)  
What was she, like a cook?

PIN  
No, not cook. But she's nice now.

EXT: BOKOR - DAY

ANGLE ON... a fetid body of water, which at one point had been a swimming pool.

Julie stands at the edge of the pool in a tangerine bikini with flowers on it.

The missionary sits at one end of the pool soaking his feet. The young guard with the Mao cap stands at the other end. Behind them stands the long abandoned Hotel Bokor.

Suddenly, Asher breaks the plane of the water, gasping for air. He triumphantly holds a shiny quarter aloft. Julie applauds as Asher swims toward her edge.

Asher climbs out and dries himself beside Julie. The missionary flops into the water and begins breast stroking across it.

JULIE

What are our chances?

ASHER

If it's a straight money thing, it's much better than fifty-fifty. If it's political, if the KR want something political, then, sweets, I'd say one in three.

JULIE

Actually if it's a political thing we're dead. Aren't we?

Asher smiles, he can't lie to her.

Julie leans forward and starts kissing him. Asher glances nervously over at the guard, who's taking a cigarette break. She climbs on top of Asher.

MISSIONARY (O.S.)

I wish you wouldn't do that.

They ignore him.

ANGLE ON...the missionary holding the edge of the pool.

MISSIONARY

You're the reason we're here. I overheard the guards. They were looking for you.

ASHER

Shut up.

MISSIONARY

You're the reason those innocent Vietnamese were executed.

Asher dives into the water. He grabs the missionary by the neck and pries him from the edge. With both hands, Asher dunks the fat man's head under the water.



The commotion catches the guard's attention. He barks menacingly at Asher in Khmer.

JULIE  
Asher, let him up!

The guard begins to fire. Bullets riddle the water. Reluctantly Asher releases his grip and holds his hands up in the air. The missionary resurfaces, his blubbery chest heaving, water spewing from his nose.

EXT: PATH - DAY

Julie and Asher walk back toward the hotel, accompanied by the scarfaced guard.

JULIE  
Why haven't they raped me?

ASHER  
Orders. It's actually not a good sign.

JULIE  
Why?

ASHER  
It means that someone who isn't here is running the show.

Julie suddenly becomes emotional, tearing up. Asher wraps his arm around her and squeezes her tight.

They walk in silence as Julie wipes away the tears. She looks up at the mossy green hotel and starts laughing.

ASHER  
What?

JULIE  
If this is the Miami Beach of Cambodia, I'd hate to see the Boca Raton.

INT: NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

ANGLE ON... Three singers in gaudy red costumes performing a discordant rendition of 'HOTEL CALIFORNIA'.

Reese and Pin sit at a table, drinking beers. Pin grooves to the music while Reese scans the room.

ANGLE ON... A man walks through the entrance in a pair of red New Balance running shoes.

REESE  
That's him. Red Shoes.

Pin gets to his feet and walks over to the man, offering him a cigarette. The man declines.

Seeing their opportunity, a couple of whores converge on Reese, blocking his view. Pin returns and sends the ladies scurrying from the table.

REESE  
Shit! He didn't go for it?

PIN  
He will do it for five thousand.  
He said come to the train tracks  
early morning, first light.

REESE  
Do you think he's for real?

PIN  
We are from the same province.

REESE  
Tell him I accept.

As soon as Pin leaves, the whores reconverge on Reese. In spite of them he manages to observe Pin as he converses with Red Shoes. Red Shoes smiles and throws Reese a U.S. Army issue salute.

ANGLE ON... In a dark corner of the disco, a whore eagerly simulates oral sex on a man's hand. When the hand withdraws, we see that it's three digits short.

PULL BACK... to reveal R.H.M. wearing sunglasses.

INT: CASINO ROOM - NIGHT

The moon lights the room through a glassless window.

The Khmer captors crouch by the top of a stairwell, playing cards by the light of an oil lamp. The missionary sits at the edge of the lamp's glow like a dog begging for scraps. He attempts to ingratiate himself in sweet-toned Khmer.

At the far end of the casino...

ANGLE ON... A cross dangles from the missionary's empty hammock. There's a rhythmic squeaking noise in the background.

ANGLE ON... Julie's hammock, swinging back and forth as she and Asher are in the midst of a stealthy fuck.

Asher covers her mouth and coughs to drown out the sound of her moaning.

INT: CASINO ROOM - DAWN

In the gray light of dawn, we can make out smashed roulette tables.

ANGLE ON... a hammock. Julie wakes abruptly to the sound of the howling wind. She glances around the room and sees that she's alone.

In a panic, Julie runs to the top of a spiral staircase and starts down.

ANGLE ON... The staircase dangles precariously two stories above the ground.

Carefully, she retreats back up the steps. She heads toward the other stairwell at the far side.

INT: BALLROOM - DAWN

Julie runs through the expanse of the hotel's graffiti-daubed grand ballroom. At the far end is a great fire place flanked on either side by doorways. Julie dashes toward the doorway that has a glimmer of daylight.

Mao Cap appears, barring her way with his rifle.

EXT: FRONT LAWN - DAY

Mao Cap marches Julie down a path that meanders through the overgrown front meadow of the hotel.

ANGLE ON... Julie's eyes widen as she sees where he's taking her.

EXT: CHURCH - DAY

The captors are dressed in old school Khmer Rouge outfits -- black pants, threadbare green shirts, and Mao caps. In the churchyard, Asher and the missionary are digging adjacent graves at gunpoint. The missionary's hole is much deeper than Asher's.

MISSIONARY

How deep will you make yours?

ASHER

Shallow as Hell. I'm a cremation man.

MISSIONARY

You'll kneel with me when the time comes.

ASHER

Not fucking likely.

Asher becomes aware of Julie standing behind him, her eyes filled with tears.

ASHER  
This is just them fucking with us.

She climbs into the grave and wraps her arms around Asher. In the distance, they hear a motorcycle approaching.

ANGLE ON... The motorcyclist in his signature red shoes. He's got a duffle bag strapped across his back.

INT: CHURCH - DAY

The missionary sits at the entrance archway in deep prayer. Mao Cap stands guard just outside.

Asher and Julie are at the far end of the chapel, sitting on the stone altar as if it were a loveseat. Asher has his arm draped protectively around her.

ASHER  
(whispers)  
You were in that red dress and you were so fucking beautiful...so beautiful it hurt...And then you smiled at me...

ANGLE ON... Scarface has silently entered the chapel.

ASHER  
Someone came through for us.

The missionary springs to his feet and has a short conversation with Scarface. The missionary abruptly exits.

ASHER  
We're free.

He grabs Julie's hand and starts leading her down the aisle toward Scarface. As they approach, Scarface holds up his index finger.

SCARFACE  
Mooui. 'ONE'

Asher's face drops. He holds up two fingers.

SCARFACE  
Mooui. 'ONE'

ASHER  
Bpi. 'TWO'

Scarface shakes his head.

EXT: CHURCH - DAY

Asher and Julie come out in front of the church. In the distance, Asher glimpses the fat silhouette of the missionary as he reaches the edge of the plateau and disappears down into the mist of the mountain side.

Their captors are milling around like a rowdy Khmer Rouge bachelor party, laughing and groping at Julie. They try to push Asher on his way.

JULIE

Asher!

Scarface, standing apart from the commotion, won't intervene. He barks at Asher.

SCARFACE

Mooui. "ONE"

ASHER

She's going!

JULIE

No!

ASHER

(screams)

She's going!

(to Julie)

Get down the mountain as quickly as you can.

JULIE

Asher! I'm not leaving you!

Asher reaches over the guards, grabs Julie and rips her from their midst. He shoves her forcefully toward the path. She stumbles forward, sobbing.

Angry guards converge on him with their guns drawn. Asher throws his hands up in the air.

A dazed Julie reluctantly starts down the dirt road.

ASHER

(calls after her)

Go! I'll be fine. Just get money. Hurry.

A couple of the captors start after Julie, playfully beckoning for her to return. She glances back, unsure.

ASHER

Walk sweetheart! Please walk!

Julie hesitates, not wanting to abandon Asher. They lock eyes.

ASHER

I love you!

Mao Cap sticks Asher in the kidneys with the barrel of his rifle. Asher doubles over in pain.

JULIE

(calls back)

Asher?

ASHER

(screams)

Run!

He makes the decision for her. He grabs the barrel of Mao Cap's rifle and brings it to his head.

ANGLE ON... Asher's hand, gripping Mao Cap's and forcing him to pull the trigger.

JULIE'S POV... The rifle discharges, and Asher's head explodes like a balloon filled with blood. He crumples to the ground.

ANGLE ON... Julie. Her shock turns to hard resolve. She hurls herself down the road as fast as she can.

Bickering ensues amongst the guards as Mao Cap proclaims his innocence. Scarface abruptly ends the argument with a bullet in the back of Mao Cap's head. POP. Scarface turns and looks down the road.

Julie reaches the vanishing point at the mountain's edge and descends out of sight. It's as if she jumped off the edge of the earth.

EXT: MOUNTAIN PATH - DAY

CLOSE ON...Julie's face, glistening with sweat. All we hear is the sound of her breathing and the beat of her footsteps.

Flowers pop out of the mist, begin to blur together in a liquid kaleidoscope as Julie slips and slides down the path.

EXT: MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The path converges into the old road, a rutted mishmash of pavement and dusty earth. The sun beats directly down on Julie, her face red, her lips dry and chapped.

Her jog has slowed to a fast hobbling walk. She comes around a snaking corner.

ANGLE ON... the shirtless sunburnt missionary, curled up in a heap on the road ahead of her. He sobs into his hands. He looks up at Julie as she passes without acknowledging him.

EXT: FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD - DAY

In the distance Julie can make out the shimmering of light reflecting off camera lenses.

ANGLE ON... The press, crammed behind a red and white pole which hangs horizontally across the road. A pair of disinterested Cambodian soldiers patrol the inside of the barricade.

Julie picks up her pace, breaking into a gleeful schoolgirl skip as she draws closer.

ANGLE ON... The frenzied press jockeying for position at the barricade. The soldiers attempt to keep them at bay, blowing their whistles and shouting in Khmer.

ANGLE ON... Julie. It occurs to her that something is amiss as she draws closer. No one is running out to meet her. She comes to a halt.

ANGLE ON... Reese has fought his way through the melee to the front of the throng. He sees something in the distance.

REESE

Who the fuck is that?

DAVIES

Get out of my frame, Reese!

REESE

What's he doing? No... NO!

ANGLE ON... a bewildered Julie standing in place as the missionary - finish line kick in gear - lumbers past her. We hear the click of a landmine followed by an earth-shattering explosion...

ANGLE ON... the blue sky filling the screen. Peaceful silence... Just blue...

CRANE UP... to reveal that we're actually looking into Asher's lifeless eye. A puddle of blood haloes around his head. The camera rises to reveal the two fresh graves lying empty. We pull higher and higher above to a bird's-eye view. Then we plummet earthward toward the church, the graves and finally into the blue of Asher's eye...

INT: CAMBODIAN CUSTOMS SHACK - DAY

ANGLE ON... the old picture of Julie from Asher's apartment which has now been cropped to fit into a passport that reads 'Eliza Coats'. A hand comes into frame and closes the red British passport.

Reese and Julie, who is now clad in the white sun dress Eliza wore in Reese's office, stand across from a Cambodian border clerk. He hands them back their passports and ushers them through.

EXT: CAMBODIAN BORDER GATE - DAY

LONG SHOT... Across a no-man's land the length of a soccer field stands a large ornate gate with flowing Khmer letters. It swings open to reveal Reese and Julie looking very small on the other side. They silently make their way across the field.

Julie stumbles. Reese reflexively catches her. He notices blood staining the side of her dress. He takes her hand in his as they approach the Vietnamese border checkpoint.

INT: VIETNAMESE CHECKPOINT HALL - DAY

The Vietnamese official studies the soggy passport as Julie and Reese look on. He looks Julie up and down.

OFFICIAL  
You are English?

Julie nods. The official looks back down at the passport, then closes it and hands it back to her.

OFFICIAL  
Cheers.

REESE  
(quickly)  
Cheers.

JULIE  
(mumbles)  
Cheers.

The official indicates for them to pass. Reese leads Julie toward the exit. He walks beside her covering the stain in her dress.

JULIE  
(barely audible)  
Cheers. Big Ears.

EXT: VIETNAMESE CHECKPOINT HALL - DAY

LONG SHOT: Reese and Julie exit into Vietnam.