

ENOUGH

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REVISED - 3B

Dialog in parenthesis is (not spoken aloud).

NOTE ON TITLES:

GRAPHIC TITLES pop up throughout. Some are chapter titles, others more like the explanatory arrows found in cartoons. Sometimes the words present themselves in normal fashion. At other times, they're loosely spaced or sharply angled or individual words flash up one after another. i.e., titles ought to be wilder and less uniform than I suggest on the

page.

HEY

HER FACE. FLASHES . She looks gorgeous, then ordinary, sloppy, white waitress uniform, gorgeous again, dishes

stacked

in her arms, turning, looking, happy, tired. INTERCUT

TITLES.

SLIM

Hi, can I help you?
What would you like?
Want a menu?
Hey Billy.
Hey Tom.
You take care, Rosie.

We get a sense of her: 23, smart, good attitude, proud to be

on

her own and supporting herself even if the job is menial.

She

moves quickly, physically, with an almost athletic grace -

SLIM

Sure thing, Annie. Have a good one.

That's two straight up.
You're good to go.
Morning.
Hey there.
Morning to you.
(beat, embarrassed)
What?
(looks down, sees she's
carrying lunch food)
Right. Afternoon.

fun
modestly
A sense of the diner too. 50's-style joint: hip, lively; a
place full of wacko signs that tell us we're in some
sized So. Cal. beach community.

SLIM

What can I get you?
Whattaya like?
Whattaya want?
(rolls eyes; good-humored
rejection of a.come-on:)
Nice try, bud -

(INCREDULOUS)

Does that ever work?
Hey, lemme get that for you.
Hey.
Common' right up.

END TITLES as we FLASH FOOD IMAGES:
beans/eggs/pie/burger/shake
/waffle/grilled cheese, fast flow of too much grub as words
fly

UP :

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HOW THEY MET

INT. "THE ORCA" RESTAURANT. DAY.

two
good
not

FLURRY OF MOVEMENT, WAITRESSES setting up for lunch, Slim joking with GINNY (28, knocked around but still spirited; kids at home from different guys; she somehow maintains a attitude). Slim views Ginny as her idol: for her attitude, her life. Catch them in mid-conversation, Ginny slightly offended, working-class accent:

GINNY

Why not? My grandfather was a lawyer... Plus: I have a logical mind...

SLIM

And you're only like 299 thousand short of what you'd need for law school.

FAST RIFF:

GINNY

I Piece of cake -

SLIM

Piece of pie -

GINNY

Piece of ass. So what would you do?

SLIM

I don't know...

GINNY

LIAR -

SLIM

(EMBARRASSED)

I'm also thinking... well ...I could go back to school.

GINNY

In what? I thought you hated -

SLIM

Psychology maybe, I don't know. I know it's not cool to say so, but I'd like to contribute something to society, even if - (it's just)

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GINNY

We contribute. We give 'em food,
energy, so they can go out and
save Western Civilization -
A bell rings, a CUSTOMER comes in, and the owner of the
place,
PHIL (45, Syrian, also the cook) sticks his head between
them:

PHIL

Ladies, please. Am I paying you?

GINNY

Not that we noticed.

(SEES CLOCK: 11:15)

Oh my God, speaking of time -
The lunch rush is coming; they start working triple speed -

INT. "ORCA." LATER.

up
Ginny and Slim converge carrying dirty dishes, piling them
for the BUSBOY, TEDDY (21, Hispanic). They haven't stopped
moving for two hours, but now they can take a breath, survey
the scene. Slim notices Ginny has a wet spot under her arm.

SLIM

Ever try the rock, hey?

GINNY

Excuse me?

SLIM

The deodorant thing. It's salts or
something, it comes in like a...it
looks like some kinda hippie crystal.

GINNY

You're saying I sweat.

SLIM

Perspire, Ginny. You lightly -

(PERSPIRE)

GINNY

(a vow to get even)

I'll remember that.

(as someone comes in)

Your turn, I'm sweatin' too much.

Slim gives her a look, grabs a menu, goes over to where the
new
seated.
customer, whom we will call for the moment OUR HERO, is

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a
When she reaches his booth, she notices he's got a book and
long-stemmed red rose. She hands him a menu -

SLIM

Waiting for somebody?

He shakes his head. She can't help noticing he's very
handsome.

SLIM (CONT.)

Something to drink?

OUR HERO

Just water, thanks.

SLIM

I'll give you a minute to look over -

OUR HERO

That's okay. I was in yesterday...

(reads her nametag)

Slim.

She nods, slightly uncomfortable. He hands her his menu.

OUR HERO

What's your real name?

SLIM

No.

OUR HERO

Hmm. I like it, but don't you think it's kinds negative?

SLIM

No, I don't tell my name.

OUR HERO

Okay. Coke and a turkey burger, coleslaw no fries, couple extra slices tomato. I write books.

SLIM

Oh.

OUR HERO

You read books?
She kind of half-nods half-shrugs.

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OUR HERO (CONT.)

What're you reading now?
She stares at him...

SLIM

Finneaan's Wake by James Joyce. A friend told me it's the hardest book in the English Language. Not the hardest hardest, just the hardest one it's actually possible to read, and I figure if I can get through that one, I can do the others.

OUR HERO

How long you been reading it?

SLIM

Six years. I'll be back with your

TB.

She leaves, goes back puts the order in, mutters to Ginny:

SLIM {CONT.}

Asshole.

GINNY

What'd he say?

SLIM

Wanted to find out how smart I was
so I told him I was reading the
hardest book in the English language.

GINNY

He likes you.

SLIM

I think he's just a dick.

GINNY

Slim...he was in yesterday -

SLIM

I know -

GINNY

And he's back today with a rose,
he pulls you into conversation.
Honey, if you can't tell he likes
you, you need to study psychology.

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SLIM

Okay, so he likes me.

GINNY

Do you like him?

SLIM

I don't know him.

GINNY

What's that got to do with it?
Slim: he is a major piece of

cake/piece of pie.

SLIM

I didn't notice.

GINNY

Trust me. Carrot cake. And when
a guy like that - cuter than you? -
he actually likes you -

SLIM

He's cuter than me??
tinny gives her a long stare; this is obviously a favorite

ROUTINE:

GINNY

Hey. Wise up, huh? No-one is
ever gonna go for you 'cause of
your looks.

SLIM

(NODS SOBERLY)

That is bad news, 'cause my
personality bites.
Ginny grins. Slim writes up a check for a CUSTOMER at the
counter. When she finishes, the turkey burger is up.
She carries it to the table:

SLIM

TB, coleslaw, and so forth. You
don't really write books, do you?

OUR HERO

Nope.

SLIM

I don't read Finneccan's Wake either.

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OUR HERO

I'm goin' into law. Enforcement.

She nods. This is more like what she expected.

SLIM

Who's the rose for?
He shrugs.
She's busy, so she starts to go:

SLIM

Enjoy your grub, huh?
She's seven feet away when she hears:

OUR HERO

HEY -

She turns back toward him -
He smiles, offers the rose:

OUR HERO

You.
She smiles back-their eyes meet... a sudden utterly magical moment. This is also the moment to note OUR HERO should be played by a famous actor doing a cameo. Because at this instant the scene changes.
The man (MITCH) in the booth behind Our Hero - a man we haven't noticed because all we've seen is the back of his head - turns and looks at Slim. Stands. Looks down at Our Hero...

MITCH

How much did you settle on?

OUR HERO

Excuse. me?
Slim frowns, steps closer so she can overhear:

MITCH

The bet. How much is it?
Our Hero has a completely blank look on his face -

MITCH (CONT.)

You and your friend. Yesterday.
Was it 200 or 500 or - ?

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SLIM

(TO MITCH)

What're you -

MITCH

He bet his friend he could get in your pants in less than twelve hours, starting noon today.

Our Hero rises to his feet and pushes Mitch in the chest,

which

looks like a stupid move, since Mitch is bigger -

OUR HERO

Is this your business?

(right in Mitch's face)

What are you, the morals police?

He pushes again and Mitch's hand shoots out like a snake striking. Grabs him by the collar. Lifts him. A frozen moment, more violence just a breath away, and a sense of

things

about to spin out of control... Our Hero's eyes are popping; he tries to hide his fear:

OUR HERO

Take it easy, M...man. She and I were just having some fun -

SLIM

(to our Hero)

Was it two hundred or five?

(VERY CALM)

I want to know what I'm worth.

Our Hero gestures to Mitch: would you mind putting me down? Mitch reluctantly obliges.

Our Hero does his best to recollect his dignity. Looks at Slim. Drops a ten on the table and smirks:

OUR HERO

The bet was two, but now that I know you? Way too high.

A pained look flashes across Slim's face -

Our Hero starts toward the door, but Mitch steps in his

path.

Speaks quietly but with authority; there's a physical power

in

his words. Since he's protecting Slim, the power is

COMFORTING:

MITCH

Don't come back here, buddy. Ever.
Our Hero nods nervously.
Mitch steps back 3 inches, just far enough to let our Hero
leave. Which he does with considerable relief.
Slim's leaning vs. the counter, shaken, tears in her eyes -
Mitch tugs his baseball cap, mutters as he heads for the

door:

MITCH

Sorry to get in your business.

SLIM

No. Hey. Thank you.
He nods, keeps going.

SLIM (CONT.)

(blurts out, grateful:)
I... I can't believe you actually
said something.

MITCH

(turns, shrugs)
If I'd kept my mouth shut, I'd'a
felt bad later.
Good luck, huh?
She nods.
He ambles out the door. A touch of the cowboy in him.
She shakes her head, looks at Ginny.
Ginny gestures as if to say, well?
At first Slim doesn't get it.
Ginny gestures more urgently: Come on. What're you waiting
for? She looks toward the door -
Slim follows her look. PUSH IN ON SLIM'S FACE as she tries
to
work up the courage...
Just as she starts toward the door, we:

CUT TO:

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BRIDE AND

EXT. OLD PASADENA ESTATE. NIGHT.

FLASHES:

Wedding photos. Mitch has lots of (surprisingly upper
crust)
family, Slim has a few friends. The more photos FLASH, the
more pronounced (and sad), the contrast. FLY RIGHT INTO:
Bacchanalian DANCING. French Champagne has flowed; shoes and
inhibitions were abandoned hours ago. THE CAMERA weaves
through the DANCERS to find:
Slim and Mitch, dancing close, never quite touching, every
move
intense, physical, like subtle public sex. Their eyes are
locked; she runs her veil down his body, his hand lightly
touches her ass; they slow down and stand, lips a millimeter
apart but not quite kissing, the sexual tension building...
We see how crazy they are about each other, how completely
physically involved - and how much fun they have.
Watching them is Phil, with Mitch's parents, MRS. TYLER (58,
confident, at ease with her power and family money, and
likeable despite monstrous flaws) and MR. TYLER (someone
Mrs.
Tyler married in a moment of cupidity).

MRS. TYLER

Mitch was kind of.. .evasive. Is her
father dead too?

PHIL

Dead to her. He left when she was
two.

MRS. TYLER

Oh. Well, I'm happy to pay for the

WEDDING -

MR. TYLER

Yes, we're very happy -

MRS, TYLER

(ignoring Mr. T.)

It's a way to build bridges... Not that you can... (repair all the damage) When there's such a vast body of water...

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PHIL

You don't get along with your son?
She gives him a look. She's both offended by, and appreciative of, his bluntness. Looks out at Mitch:

MRS. TYLER

He's like my father. Which means, I guess, that he'll do very well.

PHIL

He's done well to get Miss Slim.

MRS. TYLER

Yes, he has, hasn't he? He's married down, but he's gotten value.

As Phil reacts, he notices his wife, SALIMA, has joined him.

With her are two kids (5 and 2).

Salima's looking out at the floor: not at Slim, but at Ginny and her dance partner. We see a thought cross her mind. She bends down and whispers conspiratorially to the kids.

They whoop their response, run out to Ginny (who looks quite uncomfortable in her Maid-of-Honor dress).

FIVE YEAR OLD SON

Mom! Mom! Mom! Can we spend the night at Phil and Salima's house?
Ginny looks over, winks at Salima, and kisses her kids:

GINNY

Don't eat at their ice cream, huh?

They squeal with pleasure and run off.

Ginny turns back, resumes dancing with JOE (24, handsome in

a

casual way, a good guy):

GINNY

So this was during college or after?

JOE

During.

GINNY

What was wrong with you?

(off his puzzled look)

I mean-why'd you and Slim break up?

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JOE

Oh. Well. I'm terrible in bed.

(lets this hang for a moment
for shock value, then:)

Plus, I don't know: we just sort
of.. . evolved into being friends.

GINNY

Evolution? You were going the
wrong direction, bud.

JOE

That's kinda what .1 thought, but I
guess I was so totally pathetic -

GINNY

Why am I not believing this?

(INTRIGUED)

Can I take you home right now?

JOE

If you've got a sense of humor.

GINNY

My kids are out for the night, and...

JOE

Another thing: I live in Chicago;
women always want the possibility of

LONG-TERM -

GINNY

I didn't propose, huh?
I just want to have...
(looks at him...)
a brief and completely unsatisfying
sexual encounter.

JOE

Hey. I'm your guy.
She pulls him into a kiss, and...well: he's not a bad
kisser...
We glide from them to Slim and Mitch, hardly moving.
Suddenly:
tender and insecure and almost comic, she looks at him...

SLIM

You sure, you love me?

MITCH

Uh-huh...

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SLIM

For ever and ever?
He stops dancing. Senses the real issue beneath her
questions:

MITCH

You're safe with me, Slim. You're
safe, and it's okay to be happy.
We deserve it.
They kiss. Others stop to watch: how cute. Phil comes over,
waits. When they break:

PHIL

I'm sorry, I gotta get up five
o'clock to buy green beans.
He slips an envelope into Mitch's hand:

PHIL

In my country, it's tradition to give money to groom. You don't need it, but...
Slim shakes her head, touched, as:

MITCH

That's very sweet -

SLIM

(HUGGING PHIL)

Thanks for giving me away, okay?
You're the best substitute Dad a girl could possibly have.

PHIL

No substitute. I am real thing.
She kisses him, and he goes. They look after him.

MITCH

He really loves you.
She nods, not quite picking up how odd his statement is: of course he loves her; she nicked him to give her away.
Mitch turns her toward him and slips his hands inside the

top

of her dress (so the back of his hands touch her breasts; is this going too far?). He pulls her to him, whispers:

MITCH

You gonna give me babies?

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SLIM

Oh yeah.

MITCH

How soon?

SLIM

How soon can we get out of here?
He hoists her into his arms and carries her off the floor.
Applause from the GUESTS. It's a grand romantic gesture. You

have to wonder if Mitch is just a little too good to be true...

CUT TO:

CONQUERING HERO

EXT. SPANISH-STYLE HOUSE WITH GROUNDS. DAY.

Slim (4 months pregnant) stands on the walkway leading up to a large, simple, beautiful house. Mitch is knocking at the door.

The man who answers the door is 62, white-haired, vigorous. Looks like he walked out of a Viagra ad.

HOME OWNER

Hello?

MITCH

Hi. We've been driving around, and my wife has completely fallen in love with your house.

HOME OWNER

It's great, isn't it?

MITCH

We want to buy it.
The Home Owner's jaw drops as Mitch gestures toward his bulging

WIFE:

MITCH (CONT.)

My wife wants it for our family.

HOME OWNER

(polite but firm)
Well...we're not selling.

MITCH

Sure you are.

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Mitch hands him a slip of paper. Totally amiable:

MITCH

That's the price. Don't worry, it's well over-market.

HOME OWNER

(stunned, a little scared)
You... You're out of your mind.

MITCH

I know. That's just it. So before you say no again, think how miserable one determined crazy person can make you. Miserable today, miserable tomorrow, miserable for every single day until the day you sell. We glimpse the Home Owner's will just starting to crumble...

MITCH (CONT.)

Your kids are grown, you'll be happier in a smaller place.
MOVE OFF the Owner's face... SLOW PAN TO the window of the

house

.the SENSE that time is passing... and when we reach the window, we see SLIM inside. MOVE THROUGH the window...

INT. HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

Six weeks later. She's happily putting away groceries. Whistling to herself. What we can see of the house feels

good:

the furnishings are simple, casual, friendly. She's putting a bottle of oil up on a shelf. . .but it never quite gets there. Her face changes. Something's happened. The hand holding the oil lowers... the oil bottle slips

through

her fingers and smashes on the floor... Oil spreading across the floor... She stares at it.

on

Claws the air, grabbing the cordless phone as she plops down a kitchen barstool. Starts to cry. Punches the autodialer.

SLIM

It's Slim, is he there?
Water is flooding down the barstool; she's miscarried.

SLIM (CONT.)

Well, will you please just... Just tell him I'm sorry, okay?

CUT TO:

SECOND PREGNANCY

INT. MITCH'S OFFICE. DAY.

A central area with large offices surrounding it, GUYS IN SUITS, GUYS IN CONSTRUCTION GEAR, ARCHITECTS, ATTRACTIVE WOMEN. . .all moving quickly, purposefully. TWO UNIFORMED COPS come out of a room putting envelopes into their pockets. Projects everywhere. Models, photos, charts and timelines: when the concrete's going to be poured, when the inspector comes, etc. Mitch is building mini-malls. In the center of this activity, Mitch moves from one locus of energy to the next: answering questions, making suggestions. Gradually we perceive something, motion slower than the rest of the office. Slim. Coming toward him. He sees her. Sees her expression. She stops. He realizes:

MITCH

You saw the doctor?
It's so obvious from her face that she barely needs to say it:

SLIM

I lost this one too.

CUT TO:

B A B Y L O V E

INT. HOSPITAL. DAY.

Slim lies in bed. Very pale, a light dust of sweat. We assume she's between contractions. Mitch's face inches from hers;

smothering her with kisses.
The Nurse brings the baby in, starts to give her to Slim -

MITCH

Can I hold her?
The Nurse looks at Slim,. who nods, and gives Mitch the
baby.

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He kisses her head, dances with her.
Slim looks adoringly at father and daughter: the sight is
almost unbelievably sweet.
His cell phone rings. He keeps dancing, ignoring it.
After one ring, it stops.
He's kissing the baby's head over and over, just like he
kissed
Slim, and staring into the infant's eyes -

MITCH

She looks just like my baby
pictures.
His cell phone rings again. As if the previous call had been
a
signal.
Slim looks at him as the phone keeps ringing.
With some difficulty, juggling the baby, he turns the phone
off.
But he doesn't look at Slim.

SLIM

Who was that?

MITCH

I don't know. Who cares? Some
construction thing, I guess.
She stares at him.
He stares at the baby.

MITCH

Isn't she the most beautiful
thing you ever saw in your life?
Slim nods cautiously.

CUT TO:

THE MOMENT YOU KNOW

EXT. HILLSIDE. DAY.

Remains of a picnic. Slim's playing with their daughter, GRACIE, now 4. Says something and Gracie laughs. Slim laughs.

IS

Keeps laughing, which really gets Gracie going. Mitch looks on, tries to join in, but it's forced-and besides that: they're not even looking at him, not inviting his laughter; it's all between the mother and child. So he stops trying. Just watches them. And before his eyes, they become - for an instant - strangers. As this reaction, and the subtle hostility it engenders, flicker across his

face,

Slim looks up at him -
For one long moment they both seem to acknowledge the gulf between them...
Then Gracie says something. Slim turns back toward her, the "girls" are laughing again...and Mitch is not.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM/BEDROOM. NIGHT.

SHOWER STALL. Glass, opaque, streaked with water and soap so as to give a slightly freaky aspect. Someone inside. Slim watching. Smiles. Starts to take off her clothes.

SLIM

Hey.

MITCH

Hey.

SLIM

(FLIRTATIOUS)

Should I join you?

MITCH

I'm about to get out.

SLIM

(down to her panties)
Oh.

MITCH

I have to go to back to work, I'm
just doing this to wake myself up.

SLIM

(DISAPPOINTED)

Okay.
(starts to go)

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MITCH

(CALLS)

Sorry.

SLIM

(TO HERSELF)

Yeah. (Me too.)

She's in the bedroom now. It's underlit, full of shadows. In
scary-movie nomenclature, she's exposed, vulnerable; it

feels

like someone's going to leap out and attack her at any -
Not this time. She throws on shorts and a t-shirt -

INT. HALL. NIGHT.

She looks in on Gracie, sleeping peacefully. Consoling
image.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

She's washing dishes, bored, humming to herself. The
counter's

covered with take-out food containers: she didn't cook.
A noise. Pager. Not beeping, just humming slightly: she

wouldn't even hear it except it's on the tile counter.
Sounds vaguely like a vibrator. Lying there, just a few feet
from her. With Mitch's wallet and keys, his cell phone.
She looks at it. .knows she shouldn't... decides not to...
Can't resist. Dries her hands methodically on a dishtowel.
Picks up the pager. Reads: 33.
She stares, realizing: it's code.
She looks at the cell phone. Wonders whether...
Looks toward the hall. We HEAR the shower still running...
She picks up his cell phone. Tentatively - she's not sure

this

will work - she presses: RECALL 33.
The phone flashes NAME, but instead of a name there's: .
She stares at this, glances again down the hall-takes a deep
breath.. .and presses SEND.
Waits... listens nervously...

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WOMAN'S VOICE

(FLIRTATIOUS)

Hello there.

SLIM

You just paged my husband, right?

(HALF BEAT)

Mitch.

(HALF BEAT)

Who are you, what's your name?

WOMAN'S VOICE

I'm sorry, I -

SLIM

It's too late to deny it.
Tell me your - (name)
A rustle on the other end -

SLIM (CONT.)

Don't hang up! Don't be a coward!
Silence.

SLIM (CONT.)

Just your name. That's the least
you could do, don't you think?
A simple plea, one woman to another...

WOMAN'S VOICE

I'm...Darcelle.
Not only the name. Now we hear it in the accent: she's
French.
Dialtone.
Slim goes into slow motion. How oddly her arm moves
downward.
She looks at the phone. Blinks. Presses OFF.
Scans the room as if she's never seen it before.
One of Gracie's toys lies on the floor. Slim stares at it.
Reaches down to pick it up, but instead of the toy moving
up,
her body moves down. She slumps to the floor. Sits. Stares.

WIDER ANGLE. MINUTES LATER.

Slim sitting on the floor. Frozen. Head bowed.

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Mitch comes out, dressed, sees her.

MITCH

Hey.
She doesn't say anything.
He approaches her. Some instinct keeps him from speaking. He
sees she's holding his phone, the silly toy...

SLIM

How can you do this to Gracie?
He doesn't say anything.

SLIM (CONT.)

Darcelle paged you. That's where
you're going, right?
(off his silence)
Yeah. Wow. Mitch? Can you please?
Can you sit here with me?
He does.
She doesn't know where to start, how to talk about it...

SLIM

She's French?

MITCH

She isn't important.

SLIM

No.

MITCH

You're important.

SLIM

Yes.

MITCH

And Gracie.
She nods.

SLIM

Mitch?, I can't... I couldn't stand
for this to... (destroy our lives)
I'm happy, I've really been happy,
and I don't want to - (give that up)

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MITCH

You won't have to. Believe me.
She's nothing, she's no-one -

SLIM

You... Damn it! You said I was
safe with you!

MITCH

You are, Slim. You are. I promise.
They fall into an embrace. We feel how keenly they need each
other.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

They're hugging. Begin TIGHT on them. At first it seems like this is the same embrace shot from a different angle. Then we see we're in the kitchen, his briefcase is at his side; their clothes are different.

SING A SAD SONG

We watch Slim's expression slowly change. From pleasure. To confusion. Pain. Outrage. She whispers:

SLIM

I smell her.

MITCH

What?

SLIM

Her perfume. Darcelle or whoever.

MITCH

SLIM -

SLIM

(intense, sad)
How many, Mitch? How many are there?
How many have there been?

MITCH

What does it matter?
A stunning statement. Even more stunning because of the casual way he says it.

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MITCH (CONT.)

ID I mean what're you saying here, that I don't deserve to get laid? Please. I'm a man, Slim. With the pregnancies, Gracie, you don't have time and energy like you used to, and

I understand that, I really do. Men and women have different needs, and that's okay. Darcelle is willing to take care of it, and maybe that's better for everybody.

SLIM

Including you?
He contemplates his answer...and shrugs.

SLIM

No! No! No!

MITCH

Calm down, Slim -
Wild, violently invading his space and assaulting his authority,
screaming at him, her face just inches from his:

I

SLIM

I can't do this anymore! I can't!
Just take it, and take it, and take it!? I'm not strong enough! I don't know who would be. I love you, okay? I love you and I'm your wife and you can't do this! You understand me?!!!
No more! No more!
With the same speed he attacked "Our Hero" at the diner, Mitch's hand shoots out like a snake striking. Slaps her. A warning: stop it and stop it now. Her face: shock. Confusion. Outrage. She raises her hand to her cheek. Touches her skin where his fist landed...
He reads her expression and is almost amused:

MITCH

What, I can't hit you?

SLIM

(low, strong)
No. You can't.
He hits her again, this time with a closed fist.

24

Knocking her to the ground.
Stands over her like a boxer.
Sees rase flare across her face -

MITCH

You want to fight? I'm a mom,
honey; it's no contest.
She's silent, but we see (very small) her reaction: Oh

yeah??

MITCH {CONT.}

You have to understand, Slim.
I thought you did: make the money
here, so I set the rules, right?
It's my rules.
He waits for her response, but again she's silent.

MITCH

You with me?

SLIM

It's your rules.

MITCH

Yeah.
She keeps her voice meek so as not to offend:

SLIM

And if I don't like the rules??

MITCH

If you don't "like" them?!
She nods cautiously.

MITCH {CONT.}

Come on. Life isn't onl stuff we
like. We take the good with the bad,
right? That's what life is, what
marriage is. So maybe, for you,
today is a bad day.
Tomorrow may be great.

SLIM

Tomorrow may be great.

MITCH

That's right.

25

SLIM

Tomorrow will be great. (Without
you .)
He appears to miss her inference.

MITCH

Yeah. Today is the price you pay
for having such a good life.
She stares at him.

MITCH

I'm going out.
She says nothing.

MITCH {CONT.}

This is gonna be better, don't you
think?
She just cannot process the absurdity of this statement.

MITCH {CONT.}

I don't have to sneak around, pretend
I'm going to work. I can just say:
"I'm going to Darcelle's, I'll be
back in a few hours."
Her face is completely blank.
He bends down, gives her a kiss on the head. We feel her

skin

crawl.
She watches him go.
Waits.
Hears the front door close.
She gets up, walks to the window, watches him walk toward

his

car.
She turns away, looks at the room. We HEAR his car start.
She goes to the phone. Thinks.
Starts to dial-slowly, deliberately...
Shock: RAP AT THE WINDOW! He's there.

26

She reacts with guilt, but he doesn't look angry now. Behind him is his idling Mercedes convertible, driver's door open...

He motions for her to open the window.
She does.

MITCH

Who you calling?

SLIM

Your mother.

MITCH

What're you gonna tell her?

SLIM

I'm supposed to bring Gracie tomorrow. Maybe I better cancel.

MITCH

(NODS)

I was thinking. You...you know that I adore you, but if you ever want...if you want out...
For a second he can't talk. He's choked up.
She watches coldly. His emotion appears real, but who cares?

MITCH (CONT.)

.I'll understand. I really will.

(ALMOST TENDER)

But there's one thing: you can't have Gracie. She's my daughter.
Don't even think about taking her.
Slim stares at him. He adds calmly:

MITCH (CONT.)

If I see that thought even cross your mind, I'll kill you.
There. He's said what he needs to. He walks toward his car.
She shuts the window.
Stares after him.
In an odd and defiant way, she starts to whistle. Loudly.
To herself. Almost daring him.

27

He keeps walking.

CUT TO:

OUTTA HERE

INT. CAR. DAY.

Emotional, impressionistic. CLOSE ON her face, almost inside her skin: a visual symphony. The countryside behind her is out of focus, a blur. She pulls up at a gate, punches in a code. Drives up a long a driveway to:

EXT. PASADENA ESTATE. DAY.

FOUR JAGUARS lined up. At a respectful distance sit an old Toyota (the maid's car) and a pick-up (the gardener's truck).

Slim parks near the truck. Her hand moves to the door handle, but she can't bring herself to open it. She sits... paralyzed, a failure. In this prolonged pause, Mrs. Tyler bursts out of the house

-

MRS. TYLER

You're late, you're late, I was worried you wouldn't comet (looks, realizes) No Gracie? Slim shakes her head. Mrs. Tyler is clearly disappointed, but quickly covers it up:

MRS. TYLER

Well then, you and I will have a girls' luncheon and gossip about simply everybody! She's about to hurtle into the gossip when Slim turns her head and Mrs. Tyler sees (and we see for the first time) the result of Mitch's brutality: a nasty bruise on Slim's cheek. Mrs. Tyler's face falls as she realizes what this means. Underneath it all, she's a warm person; she hugs Slim:

MRS. TYLER

Oh baby. Oh baby, I'm so sorry...

28

HOLD a moment; like a mother-daughter tableau... Her tone stays sympathetic, not at all accusatory:

MRS. TYLER (CONT.)

What did you do? What'd you say to him?

Slim freezes. On her sad, shocked reaction -

CUT TO:

INT. "ORCA" DINER. KITCHEN. DAY.

wedged
down...
Ginny in the middle of an intense rap. She and Slim are in a corner booth. The off-season lunch rush has died

GINNY

Men are land mines. Some you trigger the first week, others it's years in. Problem is: you want a man man, meaning his veins run thick with testosterone, which is good 'cause he can fuck your brains out but he can also turn around, no warning, and beat your brains out too.

PHIL

I never touch Salima.
Ginny waves at him: of course not.

PHIL

But the other part, first part:
I can - (do that)

GINNY

Relax, Phil. Nobody's talkin' about your dick here, okay?
Phil brings Slim an iced tea and slice of pie:

PHIL

You went to cops, I hope?

GINNY

(Don't be stupid.) Mitch is in construction, Phil.

SLIM

(NODS)

He knows every cop in the city.

29

GINNY

Even if he didn't. My aunt? She got a restraining order? When it was up, this slimeball beat her into a coma.

PHIL

If he wants to put her in coma, why worry restraining order?

GINNY

'Cause he's a man, Phil! He's psychotic!
(calmly, to Slim)
You're leaving him today. Right now.

SLIM

(shakes her head, trapped)
I gotta pick up Gracie at pre-school.

CUT TO:

EXT. PRE-SCHOOL. DAY.

THREE 4-YEAR-OLD GIRLS running toward a car, squealing. They're all blond and adorable, and it takes a moment for us to realize none of them is Gracie. Slim sits in her car in the pick-up line. The Four Girls get in the Volvo station wagon in front of her.

line. The Volvo pulls out, and Slim moves to the front of the

The very hip PRE-SCHOOL DIRECTOR smiles at Slim:

PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR

Your husband got her.

SLIM

What??

PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR (CONT.)

Gracie was totally psyched. I told him he should do it more often.

smile Slim nods with feigned casualness and pulls away. Slight frozen on her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. HER HOME. DAY.

She pulls in. No other car there.

30

INT. HER HOME. DAY.

She looks around. Nothing abnormal except the quiet. As if they've gone and are never coming back.

She digs out her cell phone, punches the first number on the automatic dialer. Presses SEND.

Thinks. After one ring, she disconnects.

Immediately presses RECALL, then SEND.

HE ANSWERS:

MITCH'S VOICE

(FOR DARCELLE)

How is my little croissant?

SLIM

It's your loaf of bread.

MITCH'S VOICE

(cheerful, no guilt)
Oh. Hi. How's it going?

SLIM

Where are you?

MITCH'S VOICE

Zoo.

SLIM

Why didn't you tell me you were
going to - (pick up Gracie)

MITCH'S VOICE

I called you at home, left messages -
He's interrupted by a LOUD SQUEAL from Gracie, followed by a
question, which he answers:

MITCH'S VOICE (CONT.)

Your Mom.

GRACIE'S VOICE

Hey Mom! The elephants are peeing!

MITCH'S VOICE

(pleased with himself for
being a good Dad)
She's a little excited.

31

SLIM

When are you coming home?

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

Dinner. It's scary that Mitch will have this conversation in
front of Gracie, who's playing at their feet:

MITCH

It made me nervous when I

couldn't reach you.
Slim shrugs.
He stares at her. Smiles. His voice so soft and calm:

MITCH {CONT.}

Do you have any idea how bad things can get?

SLIM

Educate me.

MITCH

(embarrassed to say it)
Slim. I'm a determined person. I was determined to have you, and I did. This house...the company...I am, and always will be, a person who gets what he wants. You can either share in my success or leave us (meaning him and Gracie) right now. Which way you wanna go?
Beat.

SLIM

I want to be happy.
He's not sure of her subtext, but he's willing to give her the benefit of the doubt :

MITCH

Good.
With a sudden shock, Slim sees Gracie staring at Mitch: the girl has picked up on his tone.
Slim glances at Mitch to see if he notices Gracie's expression.
He doesn't.

32

affected
Slim looks back at Gracie: still staring at Mitch. If she already senses what's happening, how long before she's by it? How long before she sees Mitch become violent?
Slim's jaw tightens slightly; her resolve grows stronger.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Mitch asleep, Slim awake, listening. His breathing deep, rhythmic, slight hint of a snore.
In the distance, a DOVE coos.
She looks at her clock: 2:15.
She eases out of bed.
Goes into the bathroom. We hear the sound of her peeing.

INT. BATHROOM.

She's no peeing. A BOTTLE is propped up, running water into the toilet as Slim gets dressed. Quickly, silently.

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

She leans out the bathroom doorway, sees: he's still asleep. She moves quickly, bathroom to hall.

INT. GRACIE'S ROOM. NIGHT.

Gracie's fast asleep. Slim lifts her up, piles her prized teddy bear on top.

INT. HALL. NIGHT.

Slim carries Gracie toward the entrance. We MOVE with her. She's silent, terrified. Glances over her shoulder - No one there.
She keeps walking. The eerie sense of a house that's awake rather than asleep. The almost imperceptible but anxiety-provoking SWOOSH of her footsteps... EXTEND the suspense as long as we possibly can...

33

She reaches the front door.
Waits to make sure all is quiet.
It is.
She turns, looks back down the hall.
Empty.
Reaches toward the doorknob... hand closer, closer... she

starts

to turn it -

EXT. SLIM'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

at
Ginny, Phil, and Teddy are clustered under a tree, staring
the house. Waiting. Their VAN is parked down the road.
We expect the front door to open any instant.
It doesn't.
They wait. Casually. Not knowing where Slim was.
But we know. Did something go wrong? Slim was right at the
door.
In a casual way, her rescuers start to wonder.

TEDDY

Maybe she didn't hear the signal.

GINNY

She heard it.

PHIL

No. Teddy's right. She could still
be asleep -

GINNY

She's not asleep, okay? She's coming
out any second.
Phil nods.
They wait.
She does not come out.
Ginny shakes her head, looks at her watch.

34

GINNY

Do it again.
Teddy nods. Cups his hands, coos like a dove...
They wait again.
Beat.

INT. HOUSE. NIGHT.

Slim still frozen in exactly the same spot. Still carrying
Gracie, still with her hand on the knob. Listening. Turning

her head this way-that way. She hears the COOING DOVE NOISE come again from outside.
That settles it. She pulls the door -

MITCH FLYING AT HER -

Grabs her, catches her, catches Gracie, pulling Slim's hair hard, leading her away from the door -

EXT. HOUSE. NIGHT.

The three rescuers still wait.
Frozen.
Phil shakes his head. We see a baseball bat in his hands.

PHIL

We better go in.

GINNY

It'd be crazy to wake him. If anything's wrong, she'll flick the lights. .Right?
Phil nods skeptically, and Ginny herself doesn't seem so sure.
They look at the house-and wait. . .and wait... We want to scream: "GO IN! GO! SAVE HER!"
Suddenly something. Subtle. Was that A SOUND from inside???
They go on alert. . .step forward... listen more closely...
But hear nothing unusual.

35

Phil. looks at Ginny, shrugs -
Ginny shrugs back -
FLASH OF LIGHT, then darkness. The signal.
They run toward the house -
SCREAM. Slim. Intense horrible spit of sound, replaced by an even more horrible silence. Deadly silence. CLOSE ON GINNY
as
they run: as if we've lost Slim and Ginny's.our new protagonist. As we near the house, we realize: it's not silence. There are sounds from inside: almost inaudible
THUDS.
Sound of a beating. On Ginny's horrified reaction -
Baseball bat. Phil smashes a window.
They climb through the hole into the house -

INT. HOUSE. NIGHT.

room;
Silence. They move quickly, carefully toward the living
it's very dark, we can hardly -

MITCH

Another step and you're dead.
Mitch emerges from darkness. Light glints off his pistol.
Thirty feet behind him: Gracie's sleeping on the couch.
Mitch moves and they stare in horror. Lying at his feet is
Slim's body..
Pain springs from Ginny's throat, she rushes to Slim -
Mitch rams the gun into her head:

MITCH

Didn't you hear me?
Ginny feels Slim's pulse, says to Phil:

GINNY

She's alive -

MITCH

Unless you go, your brains'll be
on my rug i

36

PHIL

Sir. We are three people. If you
kill us all, you will go sure to
electric chair.

MITCH

I could give a shit.
Slim makes a SOUND as Ginny strokes her head...
Mitch FIRES the gun into the wall over Ginny's head. Muffled
sound: silencer. But he has everyone's attention now:

MITCH (CONT.)

This is your last chance.

PHIL

We are happy to leave, Sir: with
Miss Slim and Gracie.
Ginny's helping Slim to her knees.

PHIL (CONT.)

And make no mistakes. If you keep
them here, we will go to police,
who will arrest you with pleasure.

I/

Mitch stares at Phil. Walks to him. Is he going to hit him?
Shoot him? Mitch leans in, gun to Phil's head, and whispers:

MITCH

I don't want to say this in front
of the group, but you're just a
rug-head, nobody'll believe you.
You go to the cops, it's her word
against mine. They'll find drugs
in her bureau...
(before Phil can laugh)
Or her car, whatever.

(VERY STRONG)

Trust me on that.
(casual, confident)
I'll have custody of Gracie by the
end of the week.

PHIL

(SKEPTICAL)

And if we take them away, you will
shoot all four of us??

MITCH

That's right.

37

PHIL

Then we die young.
The others are uncertain, but Phil helps Slim up; Teddy

joins

him. Ginny tentatively follows his lead and picks up
Gracie..

SLIM

(VERY SOFT)

(This is no good.) You're
humiliating him.

GINNY

What?

SLIM

(a little louder)
He'll come after me and kill me.
Mitch overhears this, smiles.

MITCH

You hear that? That's why she
loves me.
(off their horrified looks)
Nobody cares like I do.
The others stare at him in astonishment, but continue toward
the door. Mitch leans toward Slim, whispers:

MITCH

See you soon.

CUT TO:

INT. VAN. NIGHT.

Gracie awake now in Slim's arms: staring, confused. Gentle
rocking of the van. The others barely visible, like shadows.

CHECK, PLEASE

INT. AIRPLANE. DAY.

Gracie asleep, Slim holding her. Blinds down, movie playing.
Despite Gracie's age, the angle and soft lighting make this
resemble a Madonna and child...

CUT TO:

EXT. NAVY PIER (CHICAGO). EVENING.

Open air market: shops, stalls; yuppie heaven. Slim carries Gracie on her shoulders. They're with Jog (her old boyfriend,
Gracie from the wedding). Horsing around, having a good time, eating a pastry. They stop and look out at Lake Michigan.

SLIM

Wow ... whattaya think, Toots?

GRACIE

It's a big ocean!

JOE

Well. It's only a lake, but we like it.

GRACIE

(nods, stares out...
Can we stay here a while?

CUT TO:

INT. JOE'S CAR. NIGHT.

They're driving along, suddenly Joe says -

JOE

Coming up, whattaya say?!

GRACIE & SLIM

(A GAME)

Bobbing for apples!
Slim (front seat) and Gracie (back) both drop their heads so they can't be seen from outside the car -
Joe turns the corner, presses a garage door opener, and drives into the basement garage of a nice-looking 4-plex.

INT. JOE'S 4-PLEX. NIGHT.

They come in from the garage, throw off their coats. All the curtains in the apartment are drawn.

JOE

Is there anybody who likes ice cream?

Gracie whoops -
The doorbell rings -

39

Slim and Joe freeze -
Slim whips her hand over Gracie's mouth -
Gracie looks horrified: why are you covering my -
Slim puts her finger to her mouth: shhh.
She takes Gracie's hand; they scurry out of sight -
Joe hurries to the stereo, puts it on. Music to cover

Gracie's

"whoop . "
He goes to the door, looks through the peep hole.
Sees a LARGE MAN IN A SUIT.

JOE

Yes?

FIRST FBI MAN

FBI. Can we talk?
He holds up an I.D. Not readable through the peep hole.

JOE

Go ahead.

FIRST FBI MAN

Would you mind opening up?
Joe glances over his shoulder: no sign of them. He opens the door, but not far enough to let the man in. Behind the large man are TWO OTHER MEN IN SUITS.

FIRST FBI MAN

We're investigating a kidnapping;
we'd like to look around.

JOE

You got a search warrant?

FIRST FBI MAN

Oh, we got a warrant all right.
He slaps a paper and pushes past Joe; the other men

follow...

JOE

Can I see the warrant?
First FBI Man ignores this.

40

JOE (CONT.)

Who're you looking for?
The FBI Man gives him a sarcastic glance.

JOE (CONT.)

A mother taking her own child isn't
kidnapping. I don't think you're
FBI at all.
This elicits no response. Joe moves to where he can see the
other two guys. Looks down the hall toward:

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

SECOND FBI MAN searching the pantry, looking around.
He opens the door to the garage and vanishes -

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

THIRD FBI MAN looks under the bed, in the closets... yanks
clothes aside. At any moment we expect him to find them...

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

JOE

Mister: unless you leave right now,
I'm calling the police.

FIRST FBI MAN

Oh...jeez...that's a scary thought.
Joe picks up the phone -
First FBI Man slams it down.

FIRST FBI MAN

I marri a cop, okay? I'm not in
the mood.
Joe accepts this. . .but only for the moment.

INT. GARAGE. NIGHT.

the Second FBI Man looks in the car, under the car... isn't this logical place for them to hide???

41

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

to Third FBI Man returns from the bedroom emptyhanded, starts search the living room:

THIRD FBI MAN

I'll look around here?

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

search... The Second FBI Man returns from the garage, starts to We're scared with every cupboard he opens that he'll find them.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

cabinet, Third FBI Man searches the room. SUDDENLY we go to SLIM'S POV...she and Gracie are in a looking out through a narrow horizontal slit. Watching the Third FBI Man makes his way methodically in their direction. First FBI Man stands over Joe, keeping him silent. Joe watches the Third FBI Man search the room... And then Joe blinks. Moves his eyes, and looks right in Slim's direction. He realizes where they must be hiding. The Third FBI Man's getting closer and closer to them... Joe realizes he has to do something. Abruptly Joe stands:

JOE

That's enough.

(VERY FORCEFUL)

You hear me? It's time to go. Now.
(off First FBI's. shocked look)

I know who you are, okay? I know who hired you.
First FBI Man whirls. Suddenly he's got a knife in his hand.
Definitely NOT FBI. Putting the. knife to Joe's throat:

"FIRST FBI MAN"

Yeah? You know what it feels like to have a knife hit your carotid?

JOE

(trying not to move)
No.

42

Inside the cabinet, Gracie gasps. Slim puts a hand over her mouth. But Slim herself has to fight the impulse to burst

out

of there to save Joe -

"FIRST FBI MAN"

You know what it's like to bleed out in less than two minutes?

JOE

No.

"THIRD FBI MAN"

(stopping his search)
Oh please, John Boy. Not the shiv

AGAIN -

"FIRST FBI MAN"

I'm just going to cut him a little -
Slim's eyes bulge -

"THIRD FBI MAN"

You are not going to cut him!

"FIRST FBI MAN"

I sure as hell am!
Slim's on the verge of bursting out when "Second FBI"

enters:

"SECOND FBI MAN"

John Boy, this is not listed on the program. Come on, they're not here; let's ride.

"FIRST FBI MAN"

Can't I just - (cut him a little)

"SECOND FBI MAN"

No! No slice and dice!

They head for the door.

As he goes, "First FBI Man" (a.k.a. John Boy) runs his knife along the couch, spilling out its contents...

.passes the tv set and stabs the tube...

.runs his knife along the wall, making a vicious scary mark.

And they vanish. We hear the door SLAM.

The horizontal band through which Slim was looking widens -

43

The cabinet door falls open, Slim and Gracie come out. Gracie's crying. Slim hugs her, says to Joe:

SLIM

Jesus, are you okay?

JOE

I guess.

(feels his neck)

I needed a shave, anyway.

The phone rings.

They look at it. It can't be who they think it is...

it rings again. Joe goes to it. Hesitates. Answers:

JOE

Hello?

MITCH'S VOICE

This is Mitch Tyler, Joe.

JOE

Hello, yes, how are you?

Joe points at phone: "It's him." He nods toward Gracie, indicating Slim should take her into the next room. Slim

does.

MITCH'S VOICE

(calm, friendly)
I assume Slim's called you.
Joe thinks for a split second, then:

JOE

Of course.

MITCH'S VOICE

Will you give her a message?
(off his silence)
If she calls again, I mean.
Slim and Gracie are in the next room, but Slim's looking
through the door back at Joe.

JOE

I don't know. I'm on her side
here, not yours.

44

MITCH'S VOICE

Her side? Come on, Joe, you're a
smart person. Let me say two words,
okay? "Lug nuts." You don't want to
worry they're loose every time you
get in your car. And how 'bout the
windows to your apartment: are they
still locked? A person could go
crazy thinking about stuff like that.

JOE

Goodbye, Mitch.

MITCH'S VOICE

Tell her to call her friends.
Joe hangs up. Slim comes back out.

JOE

Wow. Charming.

SLIM

He scare you?

Joe shakes his head - more at Mitch than in answer to her question.

SLIM {CONT.}

I shouldn't be here -

JOE

Sure you should -

SLIM

I'm dangerous to know right now.

JOE

(calm, forceful)

Slim. You can be here anytime.

She nods. They both know what he's saying: if he's willing

to

take this kind of risk, he's either a very good friend

(which

he is) or he's still in love with her (which he is, also).

JOE (CONT.)

Oh. He said you should call your friends.

SLIM

At the restaurant?

45

MOMENTS LATER.

Slim on the phone, listening as the phone rings. And again, again. Joe watching her, concerned. Finally:

GINNY'S VOICE

Awright already! Orcal

SLIM

Hey. Gin. You okay?

GINNY'S VOICE

We had to clear the customers out, some ridiculous bomb threat -

SLIM

What?

INT. "ORCA" RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Ginny on the cordless; Phil working nearby -

GINNY

Yeah, right during dinner. Like anybody's gonna bomb a diner in Carpenteria.

SLIM'S VOICE

What about you and Phil, did you -

GINNY

You know Phil. He won't leave his ship. We're doin' cleanup.

SLIM'S VOICE

Get out.

GINNY

What?

SLIM'S VOICE

I got a bad feeling, Gin.

GINNY

You got more than a bad feeling, hon. You got a bad husband.

SLIM'S VOICE

I know! That's what I'm saying! Get Phil and get out of there! Nowt

46

GINNY

All right, all right, take it easy -

(GRABBING PHIL)

Let's go -

PHIL

The police are -

GINNY

(heading out the door)

Screw the police, we're outta here.

SLIM'S VOICE

Run, okay? Ginny?! Runt

EXT. "ORCA." NIGHT.

They step out. The restaurant is at the end of a long pier. Ginny turns skeptically to the overweight Phil -

GINNY

Can you run?

PHIL

Like Michael Jackson!

As they sprint, sort of, toward the boardwalk:

GINNY

It's Michael Johnson, Phil.

PHIL

I know. But I run like Michael Jackson.

And he kind of does: arms flailing, not quite connected to his body. Just as when we're enjoying this comic sight -
EXPLOSION behind them -
They're thrown TOWARD CAMERA -
Debris flying everywhere -
They lie on the ground. Not moving. Are they dead or just stunned? Slowly they raise their heads. Blink.
Look back at the restaurant:
Starting to go up in flames.

47

INT. JOE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Slim holding her phone. Peculiar expression on her face.

SLIM

The line went dead.
Joe stares at her, concerned.
She presses redial, and we hear THE PHONE start to ring...
She- goes to the window, parts the curtain: OUTSIDE in the
street, the FBI MEN sit in their car -
No answer on the phone. Slim looks at Joe and shakes her

head:

this isn't good.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY.

Slim walking a crowded street, carrying Gracie; TransAmerica
Pyramid in the b.g. SAN FRANCISCO. Slim goes down an alley
behind a converted warehouse, enters a basement garage.

INT. OFFICE LOFT. DAY.

One floor, lots of windows, lots of ATTRACTIVE young people
in jeans working on lots of different projects. Sign on the
wall says: V.C.V.C. Viet Cong Venture Capital. A BLOND GIRL, 24,
nudges JUPITER SLAKOWSKI (52, ponytail, handsome,
confident):

BLONDE GIRL

Hey Jupe. Girl here says she's
your daughter.
Jupiter gives Slim and Gracie a skeptical look.

SLIM

I know you don't want to see me or
know about me, but I am desperate,
I had nowhere else to go...I need
your help!
(off his blank look)
You want me dead?
He shrugs affably and leads her into his office -

JUPITER

It's a good gig. To claim I'm your
father? What year were you born?

48

SLIM

You are my Dad, Jupiter. When Mom died, I wrote you, you didn't answer. I didn't have enough money to bury her, that was really fun.

JUPITER

Don't look at me, I didn't kill her.

SLIM

No, you had help.

JUPITER

That's a stupid thing to say. What do you want, money?.

SLIM

I thought you should meet your granddaughter.

JUPITER

(perfunctory, to Gracie)

Hi.

Gracie looks at him skeptically, nods.

SLIM

And yes, we need money. To survive.

JUPITER

Look sweetheart. From '68 to like '72, I had maybe 5 kids. Different women. It was like a joke to me.

SLIM

It's like a joke to me too.

JUPITER

You're the third to show up here with a hand out. I give all of you the same thing.

(taking it from his wallet)

Six bucks. Enough for a sandwich.

For you, it's' twelve, you can buy the kid a sandwich too.

SLIM

(stunned...)

Well. Now I know.

JUPITER

Yeah.

49

SLIM

Used to be if I did something nasty,
my temper got the better of me?, I'd
wonder where the hell it came from.
Thanks for clearing that up.

JUPITER

No problem.
She goes, leaving the \$12 on the table. He pockets it.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO ALLEY. DAY.

Slim stands behind Jupiter's building. In the shadows. Still
carrying Gracie. It's only after we hear Gracie -

GRACIE

Don't cry, Mom. Please don't cry.
- that we realize Slim is crying.

GRACIE (CONT.)

You have mtg.
Beat.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION. SANTA BARBARA. NIGHT.

Slim and Gracie climb off the train and are immediately
shepherded away by TWO SWARTHY MEN in Hawaiian shirts -

SLIM

Wait. Wait. What're you...?
Who're you...?

GRACIE

(WORRIED)

Mommy?

One of the Swarthy Men speaks to Slim, but in the flurry, we can't hear it. She looks relieved, turns to Gracie -
- but before Slim can speak, their bags are thrown in the

trunk

of a car and they're pushed into the back seat -
The car speeds off, whips into a left-hand turn -

50

EXT. SANTA BARBARA. ANOTHER STREET. NIGHT.

Now the car makes a right-hand turn, and a TRUCK pulls out, blocking traffic so no one can follow them -

INT. CAR. NIGHT.

Slim looks out the back, sees the Truck's maneuver.
Turns to face forward again.
Tries to meet the Driver's eyes.

SLIM

Hello? Where are we going?
The Driver answers her in a Middle-Eastern language.
Gracie looks alarmed.

SLIM

It's okay, Sweetheart, they're
friends of Phil's. (I think.)

EXT. MOTEL IN THE WOODS. NIGHT.

J

Gracie plays as Slim talks to Ginny and Phil. The car's
parked
guard.
below. Phil gestures toward the Driver, who's standing

PHIL

.so secret we don't even know who
this man is or where he takes you.

Slim nods.

SLIM

You're not afraid to help me?

PHIL

In my country people bleed their enemies to death out of their genitals. A fire? This is for roasting lamb.

GINNY

No letters, Slim, but you can call

US -

PHIL

Must be very short.

51

Slim nods. Phil ceremonially hands her a thin envelope. She looks inside... and clearly finds money -

SLIM

No. Phil, wait a minute, I -

PHIL

I have insurance from fire -

SLIM

I know, but -

PHIL

(VERY FIRMLY)

I will not discuss, okay?

We are family!

She nods. Gratefully. Ginny takes her hand. Beat.

SLIM

What about the police? The fire.
Do they -

PHIL

Mr. Mitch - of course - he has
beautiful alibi.

Slim nods again. Looks at Ginny...who's been working up to:

GINNY

You know, I keep having a bad idea.
The first time he hit you, we saw
your bruises. Second time, he beat
you unconscious. The next time?
Well. If you should fight back,
defend yourself, and he dies? Who'd
convict you? Who'd prosecute?

PHIL

This is American law??1

GINNY

I called my cousin, he's some shit-
for-brains lawyer over in Tarzana,
he says it's 2-1 she'd walk: self-
defense, justifiable homicide.

SLIM

2? That's good on a race-horse,
Gin, but for Gracie?, to lose both
parents? Besides, this is me, i
couldn't kill anybody1

52

GINNY

We're talking about Mitch here.

SLIM

Even so. I'm not that kind of
person, okay?

Ginny nods reluctantly. She's not sure the subject is

closed.

CUT TO:

NEW LEAF

FLASHES (LIKE THE CREDIT SEQUENCE)

weeks." MICROFICHE, NEWSPAPER DEATH NOTICE, "Erin Shleeter, 6

SLIM at COUNTY RECORDER'S DESK:

SLIM

Yes, I lost my birth certificate -
BIRTH CERTIFICATE for Erin Shleeter in Slim's hand -
SOCIAL SECURITY CARD, in her hand -
DRIVER'S LICENSE, with Slim's photo: her hair's a different
color and she wears glasses. The name is Erin Shleeter,.
DRESS SHOP: new clothes, new outfits, new look, new Slim -

INT. LARGE DRAB HOUSE. DAY.

HOMELESS "Erin" & Gracie being led by MUSTAPHA (40) past QUASI-

ARABS;, finally ending in a corner of a large room where two
small mattresses lie on the floor. Somewhere in Colorado.

MUSTAPHA

I'm sorry, this is the best we can -

SLIM! "ERIN"

It's fine, thanks.

Mustapha shrugs apologetically, leaves. Gracie whispers:

GRACIE

Mom...who are all those people?

SLIM/"ERIN"

They're kind of...friends of Phil's.

GRACIE

(stares at her mother)

They're strangers.

53

INT. DOUBLE "A" RENT-A-CAR. BACK ROOM. DAY.

the Mustapha working at one desk, "Erin" at another. Gracie on
floor, coloring. Bored. Prompts a look from "Erin" -

"ERIN"

Look. I have to find the right place and get you admitted, okay?

INT. DRAB HOUSE. NIGHT.

15 people being served from a large pot. "Erin" and Gracie each get a good portion of something that looks quite unusual.

"ERIN"

Thank you.

GRACIE

Thank you.
(looks at it, whispers)
What j it?

"ERIN."

Food.

INT. DOUBLE "A" RENT-A-CAR. DAY.

"Erin" works at her desk. Gracie shoots paper basketballs- into the wastebasket.. stops as Mustapha enters. He gives "Erin" an open FedEx pack.

MUSTAPHA

FedEx is like underground railroad.
"Erin" is stunned. She looks inside the package, finds another FedEx pack. Opens that.
Inside it is a wrapped present and note. She reads:

JUPITER'S VOICE

"Dear Daughter - (CONT.)

INT. JUPITER'S OFFICE. DAY.

Jupiter's at his desk as the THREE "FBI MEN" are shown in. He says something gracious to them.
For. a moment they don't respond. Then one of them speaks.

on
Whatever he's saying produces a subtle but profound change
Jupiter's features.

JUPITER'S VOICE (CONT.)

Yesterday three men threatened to kill
me if I helped you in any way.
Fortunately for you, this aroused my
interest. (CONT.)

INT. DOUBLE "A" RENT-A-CAR. DAY.

a
"Erin" opens the present and finds: Cash. Fifties. Probably
couple thousand dollars. She fights the impulse to cry.

JUPITER'S VOICE (CONT.)

I'm sending this via your former boss.
If you get it and need more, leave
word at my office.

JUPITER"

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. SMALL PRETTY HOUSE. DAY.

FLASHES:

Arab Men carrying in a couch as "Erin" watches.
"Erin" hanging sheets over the windows: makeshift curtains.
"Erin" fixing Gracie's room. Small bed. Two new Teddy
Bears.

"ERIN"

What do you think, you like this
place?

GRACIE

(SUSPICIOUSLY)

Why, are we moving again?

"ERIN"

No, we just - (got here)

GRACIE

Good. 'Cause I am sick and
tired to death of movingi

"ERIN"

Me too. So here's the deal. Try to remember, . while we're here, to call me Mom or Erin, but not Slim, okay?

55

GRACIE

I never call you Slim.

"ERIN"

I know, but...

GRACIE

I don't think you are that slim.

"ERIN"

Thanks a lot.

GRACIE

Do I get a new name too?

"ERIN"

I guess. If you want one...
Gracie stares at her blankly.

GRACIE

I have a crood idea .

CUT TO:

EXT. PRE-SCHOOL. DAY.

"Erin" approaches BETTY, Director of the Pre-School:

"ERIN"

Excuse me, Betty? Hi, I'm Erin Shleeter, I called you -

BETTY

Oh, hi -

"ERIN"

This is my daughter.

BETTY

(TO GRACIE)

Look at you!, you're so...(cute)
What's your name?

GRACIE

Queen Elizabeth.
Betty blinks. "Erin" shrugs: that's my daughter!

CUT TO:

56

INT. DOUBLE "A" RENT-A-CAR. BATHROOM. DAY.

Scissors. "Erin" cutting her hair in some odd primitive way that further changes her look. For the worse.

INT. DOUBLE "A" RENT-A-CAR. BACK ROOM. DAY.

T.T. (the African-American woman who works there) watches "Erin" exit the bathroom and put away the scissors. Not a

COMPLIMENT:

T.T.

Whatever you're goin' for, girl:
you're really getting there.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR. MORNING.

"Erin" driving, nervous. Gracie/"Queen E." is turned around
in her seat, looking out the back -

GRACIE/"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

He is not -

"ERIN"

Yes, he is -

GRACIE/"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Mom, he turned.

"ERIN"

He turned?

(looks in rear view)

Oh my God, you're right. He turned.

Wells (That's better.)

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

That's what I've been saying. There are other cars, okay? Just 'cause somebody's behind you doesn't mean - (stops ...blinks...)

Mom? You just drove past my school.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOUBLE "A" RENT-A-CAR. EVENING.

"Erin" and "Queen E." leaving work, bickering:

57

"ERIN"

I don't know, I can cook something.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Or we can go to McDonalds.

"ERIN"

We can't afford to eat out every night. I can cook, Tootster.

"Queen E." rolls her eyes as:

BRAD

Hi.

(off her blank look)

I'm Brad Zall, I just rented a car from you guys.

"Erin" stares at him. An insane moment of sustained paranoia.

Who is this guy,. really? What does he want?
Finally she realizes a normal response is required. Kind of

a

TRICK QUESTION:

"ERIN"

Is the vehicle all right?

BRAD

Yeah, it's fine. I was just thinking
that if you're not doing anything,
maybe I could buy you - and the kid
of course -

"ERIN"

Who are you?! Who sent you?! You
want a date?! You are totally out of
your mind if you think I'm gonna have
even this conversation we're having
right now! I'm not, okay?! We are
not talking! Get it?!

BRAD

Yeah, I get it.
And good luck with your psychotherapy.
He walks away. She stares after him. Again "Queen E." is
looking at her mother in astonishment.

SUP

58

"ERIN"

(STILL AGGRESSIVE)

What? You're thinking I over-
reacted? Huh? Just a little?

CUT TO:

INT. "ERIN'S" TAURUS. DAY.

"Erin" driving too fast. Her slight recklessness adds an

undercurrent of anxiety to the scene. She's also eating doughnuts, sharing a box with her daughter. They pass a gas station. "Queen E." sees pay phones.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

You know Mom? I like the doughnuts and all, but the driving...

"ERIN"

Don't get on my case.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Every Sunday, to drive for 55 hours?

In exasperation, "Erin" gestures with both hands - taking

them

off the wheel. Nothing bad happens, but again her

recklessness

makes us nervous -

"ERIN"

It's not 55 -

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Just to reach some phone booth?!

Hey can I call Daddy this time?!

Please??? Please please please...

"Erin" shakes her head.

"Queen E." gives her a mournful look.

"ERIN"

Don't beg. You look like a dog.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY STORE. DAY.

"Erin" is on the phone, "Queen E." at her side.

"ERIN"

Mrs. Tyler? It's Slim.

Oh thank God. Listen. Mitch is planning some legal action, you're depriving him of his rights as a father, some nonsense like that: you better have Gracie call him.

"ERIN"

Oh that's good news -

MRS. TYLER'S VOICE

I thought you'd want to know -

"ERIN"

I do, thanks, I appreciate it. Listen: we have to keep it short again or he might trace it, so I better put her on -
(hands phone to:)

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Hi Grandma! I have a new name!
(as "Erin" frowns...)
Yeah! You wanna hear it?
"Erin" pushes down the lever, ending the call, mutters:

"ERIN"

Sorry, your Majesty. Remember: names're secret.
"Queen E." nods. Puts on her mournful look...

"ERIN"

That is the most pitiful expression I've ever seen.

CLOSE ON "QUEEN ELIZABETH"

She listens, cradling the phone. "Erin" watches her daughter's face light up:

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Hi Daddy! We're having a great vacation!

(PAUSE)

I don't know. At a phone booth somewhere.
"Erin" shakes her head, takes the receiver away:

60

"ERIN"

No questions, okay?, or it ends now.

(hands phone back to

"Queen E." :)

Just tell him you love him and say

goodbye, okay?

"Queen E." nods, puts the receiver to her ear. Even "Erin"

can

hear Mitch yelling... "Queen E." 's face changes. Mitch keeps shouting angrily.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Goodbye Daddy.

She did not say "I love you." She hands "Erin" the receiver.

"Erin" hangs it up.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

I am really really sad.

"Erin" nods, angry at herself:

"ERIN"

Sorry, kid. My mistake.

CUT TO:

INT. FANCY OFFICE. DAY.

Mitch hands up his cordless phone, picks up another line.

MITCH

I know mine was (too) short, but

she made other calls, right?

Ginny?, or my mother?

He crosses to a map with colored pins. Sticks in another one

-

MITCH (CONT.)

Good. Good. Keep it up.

(hangs up, goes to intercom:)

Isn't he here yet?

Great, yeah, send him in.

To our shock, the person who enters is the man previously

known

as "Our Hero." ROBBIE (real name) and Mitch are good

buddies:

MITCH

Hey.

ROBBIE

Hey.

61

MITCH

Look, will you tell what's his face,
Lieutenant Harris: I bought his
Miata, I paid for his rec room, can
he please keep his patrolmen from
hassling my guys?

ROBBIE

You got me on a Sunday, for that?

(JOKE)

I could be out shaking down wetbacks.

MITCH

I didn't bring you for that.

ROBBIE

Her?

(off Mitch' s nod)

I told you not to be an asshole.

MITCH

Yeah, but coming from you...

ROBBIE

We had rules, okay? The rescue routine
- like in the diner? It always worked,
'cause we said: one time only. You
come, then you go. But you end up
marrying the bitch!

MITCH

I know where she is, Robbie.
More or less.

ROBBIE

That's a blessing.

MITCH

I need you to find her. Take your

VACATION -

(as Robbie rolls his eyes)
I'll make it worth your while, and
I'll fix it with the department -

ROBBIE

(DRILY)

Thanks. Thanks a lot.

MITCH

Who else'm I gonna get? Huh?
She stole my fucking child

62

C ; ROBBIE

Okay, okay. Ease it up.

MITCH

(walks to map, pins)
She made calls from these places -

ROBBIE

She's that stupid? You traced her?

MITCH

She's not stupid, okay? It says on
the Net it takes 84 seconds to trace
a call; she keeps hers well under.

(SMILES)

Of course-your equipment is faster.

ROBBIE

You're welcome, you're welcome...

MITCH

(drawing on map)

Okay: say she lives within a two hour radius...

CUT TO:

INT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

"Erin" and "Queen E." eating pasta. The sauce is unusual colors, grey and orange. "Queen E." pokes politely at her plate. "Erin" is understandably insecure about her cooking:

"ERIN"

What do you think, is it okay?
It's okay, right?
"Queen E." nods dubiously.

"ERIN" (CONT.)

No, it's not, it's horrible.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

It's not horrible, Mom.

"ERIN"

But it's not good, is it?
Is it good?

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

(INCREDULOUS)

(Good??) Mom, you tasted it.

63

"Erin" pushes her plate back. It's too much. in a second, silent tears are flooding down her face. This is not what "Queen E." wants to see. And she certainly doesn't want to reverse roles by giving comfort. Better just to pretend it's not happening.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Know what I think?

"ERIN"

(tries to pull

HERSELF TOGETHER)

What's that?

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

I think you miss Daddy.
This comment is so wacko that it's almost touching. Almost.
She feels compelled to be honest:

"ERIN"

Daddy yells at me, Toots.
"Queen E." nods. Thinks...

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Well. You miss somebody.

CUT TO:

NOT ALL MEN ARE HEADS

INT. SANTE FE AIRPORT. DAY.

bank

Joe gets off a plane with his carry-on luggage, goes to a
of pay phones, examines the numbers on the phones...

ANOTHER BANK OF PAY PHONES. MINUTES LATER.

When one of these phones rings, he picks it up -

JOE

Sorry, my plane was delayed -

EXT. ROADSIDE STAND. PAY PHONE. DAY.

"Queen E." is hitting stones with a baseball bat as "Erin"
talks on the phone:

64

"ERIN"

Rent a car, make sure you're not
followed, drive to the Taos airport.

JOE'S VOICE

Another plane??

"ERIN"

In Taos, go to Starbucks. Not the main one or the one by Hagen-Dazs. The one near the book store.

INT. SANTA FE AIRPORT. DAY.

Joe shakes his head, amused:

JOE

What is this, a treasure hunt? I'm gonna spend the whole weekend flying around?

"ERIN'S" VOICE

I'll call Starbucks in three hours.

(REASSURING HIM:)

Don't worry, you'll be here by four. Dialtone. He hangs up.

CUT TO:

INT. SMALL AIRPORT. DAY.

"Erin" and "Queen E." look out the window at a small prop plane, which is starting to unload passengers.

"ERIN"

I tell you it's this one.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

No, he's not. He's with...

She's looking at some OTHER PASSENGERS who have already entered through another gate and are walking past them.

"ERIN"

No, Toots. That one's from Reno.

(turns back, sees him)

There! Joel

She waves. "Queen E." waves too. Joe waves back.

65

Robbie: But that's not what we're looking at. We're. looking at walking slowly toward them with the other Reno passengers. He doesn't see "Erin", but in a moment he will. He'll turn the dogleg corner and be right next to them... Robbie pulls out his boarding pass. With it are old photos of "Erin" and "Queen E.11. He shuffles past the photos, finds his claim check. He's now only a few feet away from them... And they're oblivious of him... And he turns the little dogleg and looks at them - Except they're no longer there. They've moved toward the unloading area for Joe's gate... And Robbie goes safely past as Joe enters the terminal, sees them, shakes his head:

JOE

I can guarantee one thing in my lifetime: I was not followed. He embraces "Erin" and "Queen E."" The CAMERA looks past them to where Robbie might be watching. He's not.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. THEIR TAURUS/MAIN STREET, SMALL TOWN. DAY.

OLD "Erin" and "Queen E." are pointing out sights, passing an

FASHIONED DINER:

"ERIN"

And there's the diner where I do not work.

JOE

Where do you work?
"Erin" gives him a look: she's not telling. She resumes the tour, points to an old crumbling "movie palace:"

"ERIN"

There's the one-plex.
(pointing again at a

NOT-TOO-FANCY PLACE)

The â, -an restaurant where you'd take me if we were dating...
(for "Queen E.19

which we are not.

66

Very fast, like an old routine; we see how they play
together:

JOE

No way.

"ERIN"

Not at all.

JOE

Just friends, right Gracie?

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Queen Elizabeth.

JOE

Right. Sorry, your highness.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

No problem.

"Erin" pulls up in front of their house, gestures: here it
is.

INT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. HALL. DAY.

Continuing the tour, they're showing him:

"ERIN"

And this is the guest bedroom...

(CONT .)

INT. "QUEEN ELIZABETH'S" ROOM. EVENING.

He comes in, looks around. Clearly "Queen E." has painted
the walls herself : it's a "modern-art" mesa.

"ERIN" (CONT.)

.normally known as Buckingham
palace.

JOE

(nods, checks it out)
Very... colorful.

"ERIN"

You better warn him, huh?
"Queen E." looks confused. "Erin" whispers in her daughter's ear, and she confides in Joe:

67

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Oh yeah. The dreams in here
get really noisy.
Joe sets his suitcase down.

JOE

I look forward to that.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK. DAY.

Baseball diamond. Joe pitching underhand to "Queen E." He's using plastic balls the size of soccer balls, so it's easy

for

her to hit every one.

"Erin" is running, retrieving the hits.

FREEZE FRAME as she's caught in a photograph.

The image unfreezes and is followed quickly by a series of frozen frames, photographs of her, some wide, some tight.

REVERSE IMAGE.

The park. Mostly empty. No one taking their picture. A stand of green bushes. HOLD on the bushes for a moment -

EXT. PARK. AN HOUR LATER.

"Queen E." is curled on a blanket taking a nap as "Erin" and Joe finish the picnic.

JOE

You seem like you're doing great.

"ERIN"

Yeah.

JOE

How long can you stand it?
(off her look)
I mean: not to talk to your friends
or family or have anything to do with
your real life?

68

"ERIN"

(quiet, strong)
Gracie is safe.

JOE

Yeah, but what, now Mitch started
some kind of custody battle?, what

DOES -

ROBBIE

Are you Denise?
SHOCK. There he is, standing right over them, in bad clothes
and a baseball cap, dark glasses. Completely unrecognizable.

"ERIN"

Pardon me?

ROBBIE

You're Denise, right? Used to work
at the Pack 'N' Ship?

"ERIN"

I'm not Denise.

ROBBIE

Oh. Sorry, I... You look-but
you're right, your voice... (isn't)
You're not from New Zealand, are you?

"ERIN"

Never been there.

ROBBIE

Boy. Sorry to bother you folks.
He backs away, embarrassed. Joe stares after him warily...

JOE

What now? We call Pack 'N' Ship,
see if Denise ever - (worked there)

"ERIN"

Because of some homeless guy? Joe:
it could be the Pack'N'Ship in
Trenton, New Jersey.
(over his protest)
One thing I learned: I can't jump
every time someone says boo.
I can't do that to her.

69

Joe looks at "Queen E." and nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. NIGHT.

Looks peaceful. But why do we need this establishing shot?
Its very existence in the narrative is menacing.

INT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. NIGHT.

Joe gets up from "Queen E. 's" bed and goes into the
kitchen.

Gets some juice from the fridge, drinks it.
Looks into "Erin's" bedroom.

"Erin" is awake, "Queen E." asleep at her side. Half -
whisper:

JOE

Gracie was right.
(off her look)
'Bout the dreams in there.

"ERIN"

Yeah, mine too.

(BEAT)

Cuddle?

INT. "ERIN'S" BEDROOM. NIGHT.

As he gets into bed:

"ERIN"

You remember the house rules?

JOE

With Gracie here? Who can forget?
They hold hands.

"ERIN"

Joe.

JOE

Yeah.

"ERIN"

You ever think about what would've
happened...(if you and I had...)

70

JOE

Yeah.

"ERIN"

What do you think?
Beat.

JOE

I think Gracie is truly a great kid,
and any path that doesn't include
her doesn't make any sense.
"Erin" nods. Beat.

"ERIN"

Ginny told me about that weekend.

JOE

Of your wedding?
She nods.

JOE

She tell you how terrible I was?

"ERIN"

Joe. This routine? It might work
on other people, but you forget:
I've actually had you -

JOE

I didn't forget -

"ERIN"

(like a compliment's coming)
- and I'm telling you, from memory...

(DRY TEASE)

you are not that bad...
They both laugh. It subsides into affection...

"ERIN"

You really go tomorrow...?
He nods.

"ERIN" (CONT.)

Couldn't you quit your job, and stay
here and play the horses or something
and become independently wealthy?

71

Beat.

JOE

Please kiss me, Slim. I know we're
not supposed to, it's against house
rules and all, but for me to come
all this way and feel the way I do
and for us to not even -
She kisses him -
And he kisses back.
And they stop.

Incredible self control.
Lie next to each other-hold hands again...

JOE

You're a great person, Slim.
You're a great person just like
your daughter.
She squeezes his hand.

clashed
hands

THE CAMERA LINGERS FOR A MOMENT ON THIS SWEET IMAGE...
hands...THEN PULLS SUDDENLY BACK, so we're seeing their
from outside, through a crack in the window. Hold.

CUT TO:

YOU CAN RUNS s s

EXT. PRESCHOOL. DAY.

From an odd distance across the street, we watch "Erin"
dropping off "Queen E." Extend the mundane details of this
transaction... THREE DAYS LATER

INT. DOUBLE "A" RENT-A-CAR. DAY.

T.T. sticks her head in, to "Erin":

T.T.

I know you have a "back room" gig,
but with Sher out, four customers:
I need help here; I'm on meltdown.

72

EXT. DOUBLE "A" RENT-A-CAR. DAY.

We look. past a tree, through the windows...as "Erin" comes
warily out to the counter, looks over the customers...

INT. DOUBLE A RENT-A-CAR. COUNTER. LATER. DAY.

"Erin" working a calculator, muttering in frustration...

T.T.

Here, lemme do that.
As T.T. wrestles with the calculation, "Erin" looks up.

Frowns

slightly, her eyes shift... She senses something. This strange sensation, as if she's being watched, or... She looks out the window, doesn't see anyone... Glances into the back office - and notices the clock: 4:15.

"ERIN"

(runs for door)
Oh my God!, the Queen is out of dance class! I'll be back in 20 -

EXT. DOUBLE "A" RENT-A-CAR. DAY.

We watch from across the street as "Erin" hurries to her Taurus, gets in and drives away.

EXT. PRE-SCHOOL. DAY.

"Erin" in line for Pick-up. Betty the Pre-school Director comes up to "Erin" and says casually:

BETTY

Erin. I'm glad you're here.
We can't find Queen Elizabeth -

"ERIN"

You can't find her??!

BETTY

So many kids're staying for these after-school things -
She turns, distracted, as ANOTHER TEACHER calls -

73

gym or

n "Erin" blinks... looks around frantically... OTHER KIDS in dance gear, but no "Queen E."...and the knowledge of what's happened is hitting her...her eyes're dilating, breathing becoming frantic. Betty turns back as "Erin" mutters:

"ERIN"

I should've! ... I should've known!,

he did it before!
She rams the car in gear, rockets out of the pick-up line -
Almost hits a TEACHER and 4 YEAR OLD KID -
Slams the breaks, calls:

"ERIN"

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I... I...
Freaked out, frantic, she pulls to the side of the road,
yanks
up her brake, grabs her cell phone. Auto-dial #2.

T.T.'S VOICE

Double "A" Rent

"ERIN"

Did Queen Elizabeth call?!

T.T.'S VOICE

No, of course - (not)

"ERIN"

Anyone else?!

T.T.'S VOICE

Nobody called, Erin; are you - (okay?)
"Erin" presses STOP, then Auto-dial #1, waits, looks around.
Betty staring at her like she's crazy, walking toward her
car -

"ERIN'S" VOICE

Hi. Leave a message.

"ERIN"

Gracie, are you there?! Is anyone
there?! Please? Pick up!
No one picks up. Silence.
She beats the wheel in frustration... lowers her head.
For one long second, she seems completely beaten...

74

A KNOCK on her window -
She looks up, sees Betty.
Betty's talking, but it's as if "Erin" has gone crazy. For a
moment there's no sound, and then the sound is there but

unintelligible, and finally the words and sounds come together:

BETTY

.what I've been trying to tell you...

"Erin" nodding now, beginning to grasp the words...

BETTY (CONT.)

At the end of dance class, the teacher lets them go hide, and for a minute no one could find her -

leaps "Erin" looks past Betty, sees "Queen E." in her tutu and out of her car -

"ERIN"

Thank you, thank you, I... I'm sorry. I'll explain later, I...

She rushes forward, wraps "Queen E." in a big, not quite appropriate hug. "Queen E." looks at her as if to say, "This is nice, Mom, but will you please tell me what gives?"

CUT TO:

EXT. RENT-A-CAR. NIGHT.

toward From a distance, we watch "Erin" and "Queen E." trudge their Taurus. The end of the day; they're tired.

CUT TO:

INT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. KITCHEN. MIGHT.

in Making meat loaf. "Erin" consults the cookbook, seems confused, puts meat, breadcrusts, eggs, sauces, onions, etc.

a bowl. "Queen E." mooshes them with her fingers - a disgusting tactile job which she adores. IMPROVISE DIALOG to make the scene utterly mundane, two "girls" having fun...

The normalness of it makes us exceedingly nervous.

INT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. NIGHT.

"Queen E." sleeping peacefully in her bed.

slight "Erin" also sleeping peacefully. We OBSERVE her from a
 distance, to the left of the bed as we face it. Slowly the
 CAMERA BEGINS TO MOVE. . .down the bed...to the foot ...to
 the other side.. .back again on "Erin" sleeping peacefully...
 and the CAMERA RISES to show Mitch seated at her side.
 He seems calm and utterly content. It would be, hard to
 imagine a more terrifying attitude.

INT. HER BEDROOM. DAWN.

"Erin" wakes with a start, sits up, looks around -
 Everything's normal. Peaceful. No Mitch.
 "Erin" shakes her head, as if clearing away a dream.
 As she looks again around the room, her nostrils flare
 slightly. . .as if she smells him. She rubs her nose.
 Touches her wrist, and we notice something she's worn the
 whole time she's been Erin: a colorful elastic bracelet, probably
 a Swatch.
 She gets out of bed and looks out the window -
 Cold morning -
 She goes toward the hall...

INT. HALL. DAY.

Moving down the hall... each open door feels like a trap
 ready to spring...
 She glances into "Queen Elizabeth's" room... We half expect
 some sort of reaction or exclamation - "Queen E." may be
 gone - but instead "Erin" keeps right on going...
 Vanishes into the bathroom.
 HOLD the empty hall. HEAR the sound of her peeing...

INT. BATHROOM. DAY.

From the doorway, we see her on the potty... The window over
 her head is open slightly.

As she pees, she stares at the shower curtain-it rustles slightly in the wind from the window.
She wipes herself.
Still staring at the curtain...
She stands, pulls up her pajamas...
Stares.
Yanks the shower curtain aside -
Nothing.

INT. HALL. DAY.

She goes into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

She puts on the kettle.
Drinks a little o.3 from a carton.
Walks back down the hall -
In every moment of this, the tension is excruciating...

INT. HALL. DAY.

room
Facing her as she comes down the hall, passing the living doorway.. .we wait for Mitch to leap out at her -
He doesn't.
She keeps coming, past "Queen E's -

HE JUMPS OUT OF THE DOORWAY -

stifles
" Erin" starts to scream, looks toward "Queen E." and the sound.
They wrestle. Silently. Grim pantomime. The only sounds are GRUNTS, BANGING vs. the walls.
He's far too strong for her -
They slam against one wall, the other, CRASH to the floor -

MITCH

Wanna know a secret?
Whispering to her, his hands moving to her neck...

MITCH (CONT.)

Cops need a body. Without your body,
they'll think you disappeared again.
Her hands at his hands, clawing, trying to pry them loose -

MITCH (CONT.)

Which is kind of true.
One of her hands moves-away from his hands to that Swatch or
whatever it is on her wrist -

MITCH (CONT.)

'Cause where you're going, they
will never... ever... find you.
She turns the gizmo so it points away from her face...
Toward his face...
At the last instant he realizes what she must be doing -
But it's too late. She presses a button -
Orange spray hits his face, eyes -
He screams and releases her -
She leaps up - and Sees "Queen E." standing in her doorway.
Staring, mute and horrified. How long was she watching?!
"Erin" grabs "Queen E." and runs down the hall. Mitch
writhes
on the floor -

EXT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. DAWN.

"Erin" bursts out the back door, whirls, pulls a rope -
- Causing a slab of 2-by-4 to slide over the door: primitive
locking device -
She sprints for her Taurus. Still in her pajamas, still
carrying "Queen E." -
Her car has a number pad on the driver's door. She punches
numbers, opens the door, puts "Queen E." in -

Pulls a key from under the mat -
Fires the car up, rockets away -

Down the block, so far back we're not even sure it means anything, a CHEVY SUBURBAN pulls away from the curb...

EXT./INT. MALL/TAURUS DAWN.

Parked in back, near dumpsters. "Erin" jumps out of the Taurus, runs around to the trunk, pulls out a small suitcase.

MOMENTS LATER.

"Erin" and "Queen E." pulling clothes from the suitcase, getting dressed. A FRANTIC BLUR of pajamas and underwear and suitcase and the last thing we expect to see: KNOCK at the window. Robbie. "Erin" whirls, looks. For an instant TIME SLOWS as she stares at him...

FLASHBACK TO THE DINER, HIS FACE: she recognizes him - And realizes: he's with Mitch. Which means: Mitch was phony from the moment she met him -

Robbie reaches for her door handle -

She rams the accelerator, leaving Robbie behind -

The car rockets forward, toward the dumpsters -

She spins the wheel; the car swerves, kisses off the

dumpster -

Robbie running for his car, and now we see the Chevy

Suburban,

hidden behind some nearby bushes -

The Taurus pogos over the concrete/grass divider, rockets across the next parking lot...

Robbie jumping into his Suburban -

"Erin" half in, half out of her clothing, trying to drive, trying to see, sticking out her arm to keep "Queen E." (not

in

her seatbelt) from flying through the windshield.

"ERIN"

Seatbelti Seatbelti Put on your -

79

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

(trying to put it on)
Then slow down so I -

"ERIN"

I can't slow'-

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Who was that guy?!

"ERIN"

(looks in rear-view)

I don't know, some...

(sees Robbie chasing them)

Oh shit...

EXT. CITY. MORNING.

Three brief FLASHES of -"Erin" being chased out of the city. Freaked out to drive so fast, "Queen E." screaming, etc.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. MORNING.

Robbie's Suburban right behind them, closer, closer...

finally

slams into their Taurus, knocking them half off the road. He pushes them off again, again, "Queen E." covering her eyes, "Erin" coming back onto the road, fighting to keep control,

and

the road narrowing more and more, down to one tight lane.

This

looks like totally the wrong place to be leading someone.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

(WORRIED)

Mom?

Up ahead is a one-lane covered bridge crossing over a stream.

The bridge is very narrow.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Mom, are you sure...?!

Quite sure, thank you. "Erin" guns the accelerator.

Robbie's FACE... driving, confident, full of blood lust, and then his expression changes. Eyes widen. He realizes - shit! too late!! - that the bridge is way too narrow for -

"Erin" Is car slides through, scraping one side

The Suburban crashes into the bridge, careens into the water

-

at "Queen E." looks back through the rear view mirror... looks
her mother ...back and forth...

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

That was dangerous.

INT. CAR. MORNING

the Different country road. Parked ahead is a `78 Oldsmobile.
"Erin" pulls in behind it.
They get out of the Taurus. Using her keys, "Erin" unlocks
trunk of the Olds. Two large suitcases inside. "Erin" throws
their small suitcase in on top.
"Erin" reaches up under the driver's seat and pulls out a
wallet. Checks the contents: cash, credit cards.
"Queen E." pulls a red wig out of the glove compartment.

INT. OLDSMOBILE. MORNING.

a They're on a lightly travelled two-lane highway. "Erin" (now
redhead) looks in her rear-view mirror: no cars.

"ERIN"

Okay, Toots. We can talk.
"Queen E." stares at her mutely.

"ERIN" {CONT.}

Want me to tell you what happened?
"Queen E." blinks twice, shakes her head.

"ERIN" {CONT.}

Fair enough.
One thing, though: Erin's over.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

(Too bad.) I liked Erin.
Slim nods sadly: she liked Erin too.

SLIM

voice: You're not the Queen of England
anymore either.
Gracie nods fatalistically, stares out the window. Flat

81

GRACIE

I'm hungry.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER. DAY.

Gracie eating voraciously. Slim has no appetite. Their WAITRESS comes over, notices Slim's not eating -

WAITRESS

Everything okay here?

SLIM

(NODS)

Thanks.

WAITRESS

(TO GRACIE)

Hey there, cutie, what's your name?
Gracie looks up at her for a while.

GRACIE

I'm working on that one.
The waitress does a double-take and leaves. To Slim:

GRACIE {CONT.}

Maybe something normal this time.
Ann or Mary or...
(sees Slim is distracted)
Mom?

SLIM

I'm thinking.
Beat.

GRACIE

(Yeah,) I can hear it.

CUT. TO:

EXT. COURTHOUSE. DAY.

Slim parks. As she starts to get out, she says to Gracie:

SLIM

Anybody talks to you, hit the horn.

82

INT. COURTHOUSE. DAY.

front Slim in line at a COUNTY RECORDER'S desk. The person in
of her leaves, she steps up:

SLIM

I need the best lawyer in town.

(QUICKLY)

I know you can't give names, it's
against the law or whatever, but I
really need help, and I can see
you're a decent person.
She slides a paper and pencil across the desk:

SLIM (CONT.)

Please. Just a name.

INT. NICE LAWYER'S OFFICE. RECEPTION AREA. DAY.

Slim comes in, sits Gracie down and whispers:

SLIM

Watch how it's done.
117 Slim goes to the Receptionist's desk:

SLIM

Hi. Is Mr. Toiler with someone?

RECEPTIONIST

No, but he's -

SLIM

I'm not a crazy person.
She walks past the Receptionist -

RECEPTIONIST

Wait a minute! You can't
Slim opens the big door, enters:

INT. JIM TOLLER'S OFFICE. DAY.

The moment we see JIM TOLLER we know Slim's okay. The actor
pisses playing him is one of those cranky avuncular types who
bad and moans but always comes to the rescue and outsmarts the
guys. As we expect, he starts out disliking her:

83

JIM TOLLER

I don't know where you learned
manners, young lady, but this is
not the way to get my attention.

SLIM

I know, but I'm desperate.
(digging into purse)
My husband keeps trying to kill me,
and I need to talk to somebody who's
smart, okay?, smarter than me at
least.
(pulling out cash)
This is all the money I have - well,
all but twenty - it's almost 500, and
I'll give you all of it if you'll
just listen to what... (happened)...
just two minutes, okay? Please?
She's so charming and intense and discombobulated, he can't
help but give in.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER.

He's staring at her. Good poker player; we can tell nothing
from his expression. His voice very quiet and calm:

JIM TOLLER

Pardon my French, dear, but I hope you got pleasure from it, 'cause you have really fucked yourself. You had two chances to file a complaint with the police and put his violence on record. You ignored them. Which tells him to keep comin' till he kills you. Slim reacts to this.

JIM TOLLER (CONT.)

As for Gracie: his next move... he'll initiate a custody hearing.

SLIM

He...he already did.

84

JIM TOLLER

If you don't show up, the judge'll rule against you, you become a fugitive from the law. If you do show, Mitch will, as you say, portray you as a drug addict. For all I know you are one: you break in here, uninvited. I'd say your husband has a good chance for sole custody. Now if you don't mind: (pushes the money back at her) I'd like to go back to my work.

SLIM

(stares at him in disbelief)
.That's all?
(off his silence)
You're not gonna help me?

JIM TOLLER

No one can help you, lady.
She nods. Stares at him. And does not go. After a moment we see him have a thought... hesitate... look up at her...

JIM TOLLER

The custody hearing, if he pushes for it, is just a trick.

She says nothing. Listens. Watches as:
He plucks a \$20 bill from her stack of funds. Obviously he's
giving her a valuable piece of advice:

JIM TOLLER (CONT.)

It's a way to get you to a
particular place at a particular
time... so he can kill you.
He pockets the \$20.
She stares at him. Blinks. Of course. He's right...-

CUT TO:

INT. OLDSMOBILE. NIGHT.

Late. Few cars. Slim drives. Gracie curled up in the front
passenger seat. Slim glances at her. Looks back at the road.
Back at Gracie. Something building. Finally, softly:

85

SLIM

I gotta make you a solemn
promise, Grace.
Gracie is, of course, fast asleep.

SLIM (CONT.)

Ever since you were born ... well-one
day I started to think of all the
awful things that were gonna happen.
People you'd love who'd die, or leave
you, betray you, break your heart...
.Physical injuries: broken bones or
sickness or guys who hurt you some
way... And I thought that if I could
protect you even once, from any of
those, if I could absorb any part of
that myself...

(BEAT)

Well... Here goes.

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPORT. DAY.

around, Ginny comes off a plane with her two kids. in tow, looks heads for a bank of telephones... As she approaches, one of the phones starts to ring. Ginny looks at it with irritation, picks it up -

GINNY

This is the most ridiculous thing I've ever done.

SLIM'S VOICE

Oh yeah? How 'bout Horace? Ginny glances at one of her kids, evidently Horace's child.

GINNY

Okay, this is the second most -

SLIM'S VOICE

Rent a car, drive to Denver, then fly to Reno.

GINNY

You're out of your mind.

I

86

SLIM'S VOICE

(as though flattered)
You noticed.
Dialtone.
We watch from a distance as Ginny shakes her head in disbelief,
mutters to her kids. As they trudge off, the CAMERA FOLLOWS.

INT. AIRPORT. RENTAL CAR COUNTER. DAY.

From the same distance: Ginny and kids approach the counter.

INT. AIRPORT PARKING GARAGE. RENT-A-CAR AREA. DAY.

Ginny loading luggage into the back as her kids climb in.
As Ginny slams the trunk, SOMEONE'S RIGHT THERE -
Slim.

Ginny blinks, recognizes her, hugs her:

GINNY

What're you... (doing here?)
I thought we were... (driving to Reno)

SLIM

I had to make sure you weren't
followed.

GINNY

(re Slim's hair)
I like it.
(not so sure)
Maybe.

(SEES GRACIE)

Hey, Graceland.
Gracie slips out from behind Slim, goes and hugs Ginny as
Slim
holds up a wallet:

SLIM

There's a credit card and cash. It's
on me, but make no calls home, or to
Phil. Think of it as a vacation till
the Orca reopens. Toots?

87

This to Gracie, who started to climb into the car. Gracie
looks at Slim and again tries to climb in - she wants }}g

part

of saying goodbye - but Slim pulls her back into a hug.
Slim holds her for as long as Gracie can possibly tolerate.
When Slim is done, Gracie climbs into the car with Ginny's
kids. Slim has tears in her eyes.

SLIM

Take care of her, okay? Extra ice-
cream and... and if you need to reach
me...

(hands her a cell phone)
Just don't call your friends.

GINNY

Oh great. I'll call strangers.

SLIM

In an emergency, I'm #1 on the auto-dialer. Or I'll call you.
Any calls between us must run in seconds or less. Cake?

GINNY

PIE -

SLIM

Ass.
(re the vacation)
Enjoy it, huh?

GINNY

How long?

SLIM

The custody hearing's end of next month. That's my deadline.

GINNY

Deadline for what?
Slim looks at her...

CUT TO:

WE'RE SO CLOSE WE CAN'T TELL WHAT WE'RE LOOKING AT. CAMERA

SLOWLY PULLS BACK: EYES ...SLIM'S EYES.
Intense, focussed.

88

THE KNOWLEDGE

MAN'S VOICE

You ready?
She nods. CAMERA CONTINUES BACK, we see more of her face.

MAN'S VOICE

Sure?
Another nod. Perspiration streaming from her pores, running down her face. And a look we haven't seen before.

MAN'S VOICE

Can you lose?
She shakes her head.

MAN'S VOICE

Can he hurt you?
She barely dignifies the question with another shake. We're now far enough back to see we are:

INT. GYM. DAY.

Slim in a leotard.

MAN'S VOICE

Even though he's bigger?

SLIM

(v. quiet)
He's a lot bigger.

MAN'S VOICE

Even though he's stronger?
Finally see her INSTRUCTOR (6'4", 235 pounds, African-American,
0.4% body fat).

SLIM

He's a lot stronger.

INSTRUCTOR

So if he hits you -

SLIM

No way.

INSTRUCTOR

Say it.

SLIM

It takes twice as much energy to swing and miss as to swing and hit.

INSTRUCTOR

After he misses, what do you do?

She answers him with an intense look.

He nods and moves after her. Slow, strong, powerful:

predator.

She backs up. Her movements simple, graceful, economical but athletic: they remind us of the easy way she moved around

the

restaurant in the first scene...

Scattered over the mat are old-fashioned plastic SANTAS that kids use as punching bags. He backs her toward one...

.then another. As she nears them, she slides deftly to the side: like she has eyes in the back of her head...

He maneuvers her toward a desk-her back to it...

Rushes at her -

For a moment she seems trapped -

But as he reaches her, she slips to her left, tosses him

over

the desk and onto the mat.

She moves quickly to an attacking position, standing over

him.

He pats the mat beside him.

She sits.

He makes a motion and she closes her eyes.

INSTRUCTOR

One last thing. The hardest lesson:

we can't control the universe.

She listens.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

The unexpected may happen.

He slides his hand over the mat, an order. She lies down.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

Suddenly his maid enters, you're distracted for an instant, and he hits you...

SLIM

That's not possible -

INSTRUCTOR 4

We must prepare even for the impossible.
She stirs slightly, uncomfortable with this idea.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

We bend the universe to our will, but it will only go so far.

SLIM

You're saying -

INSTRUCTOR

(STANDING UP)

That's right -

SLIM (CONT.)

For the sake of this exercise, he hits me.
He's standing over her. She looks completely vulnerable.

VERY TIGHT ON HER AS:

INSTRUCTOR

Yes.
And you lie there as if dead.
But hear me.
Hold onto my voice.
She nods almost imperceptibly.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)

He's standing over you, he thinks he's won-and as sure as he's a coward, he'll try to kick you.

SLIM

(SOFTLY)

Yes.

91

INSTRUCTOR

And because you know what he'll do,
you're smiling inside,... (CONT.)
Her face blank, eyes still closed-but something changes; we
sense her confidence and serenity returning.
He draws his foot back as if to kick her...

CUT TO:

INT. JUPITER'S OFFICE. (San Francisco) DAY.
Slim strides through the office unapologetically
interrupting
over,
various conversations. Finally she spots Jupiter, walks
and without saying a word, demands his attention -

JUPITER

(to the others)
Ah. Just a sec, I'll be right back.
(to her, irritated)
I thought I made it clear you
weren't supposed to come here.

SLIM

I don't care what you want.
This almost makes him smile; he's getting to like her.

JUPITER

You're a different person.

SLIM

So?

JUPITER

How's that black guy I .set you
up with?

SLIM

Good.

JUPITER

Did he teach you how to think?
It's not the question she expected; it's more interesting
and

complicated.

92

SLIM

.I hope so.
(before he can speak)
The English guy is good too.

(ALL BUSINESS)

But that's not why I'm here. I need
a woman who looks like me. Someone
who can handle herself: an off-duty
cop or something.
(hands him photo)
Five four, one ten. Hair like this
but cut higher, over the ear -
(hands him key)
Miko hotel, room 509, 8 o'clock.

JUPITER

Tonic ? That's awful short notice;
I don't know if I can -

SLIM

What? I thought Jupiter was like
all-powerful, king of the Gods?
Oh yeah. One more thing. At some
point.. .not right now 'cause it'd be
phony ...I need you to acknowledge
that I'm your kid.
She walks away. He stares after her. Hint of a smile comes
to
his face.

CUT TO:

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE. DAY.

Slim is signing the credit card slip as the CLERK puts the
merchandise in a distinctive red bag -

SLIM

You sure this'll work?

CLERK

You bet your life.

SLIM

Thanks, I will.

She leaves, taking out her cell phone. FOLLOW HER as she goes:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET. DAY.

She walks up the street, punches in a number...

93

BUTLER'S VOICE

Tyler residence.

SLIM

Yes. Tony. Could you please tell Mrs. Tyler that I'll call her around four this afternoon.

BUTLER'S VOICE

Of course, Miss Slim. My pleasure. Slim hangs up, goes into a bagel shop.

INT.. BAGEL PLACE. LATER.

Slim sits at a table with a cup of coffee. A short guy, 28, built like a fireplug, dressed in sweater and jeans and wool cap, enters, walks to her, and says in an English accent:

ALEX

Today, hon, you graduate.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN L.A. STREET. DAY.

Alex and Slim are across the street from a strip joint.

SLIM

It's closed?

ALEX

Till six, eh?

SLIM

And I'd guess whoever owns it
isn't a very nice person.

ALEX

That's a safe one.
Slim starts walking toward the shop. As they go:

SLIM

Why here?

ALEX

You've got soft hands, you've worked
hard. The tricky part now is nerves.
They reach the entryway; Slim takes out her tools.

94

SLIM

People on the street?

ALEX

Yeah. And you have to go in when
his alarm's turned off -

SLIM

(NODS)

Meaning he's inside.

(has tools out)

I'm ready.

Alex moves slightly to block the view as Slim bends over and
slips her tool into the lock...

Slim working quietly, concentrating...

Alex looking. around...

A SHADY CHARACTER noticing them. Hesitating. Coming over..

ALEX

We got company, doll...

Slim still working...

The Shady Character has almost reached them...

ALEX

Forget it. You're too slow.
She opens the door -
Alex glances down, nods -
She closes the door again and stands just as:

SHADY CHARACTER

Hey. What're you guys up to?
Slim stares at him.

SLIM

We were hoping to see some action,
but it looks like they're closed.
The Shady Character stares back. He is ve skeptical.
He watches Slim and Alex walk off down the block. Alex
mutters
under his breath:

95

ALEX

"Action?"
Off her grin -

CUT TO:

INT. BEAUTY SALON. DAY.

Slim sits in a chair, cell phone at her ear. Her hair is
done;
now she's getting a manicure.

MRS. TYLER'S VOICE

And where is Gracie?

SLIM

She's coming day after tomorrow,
then we're flying to L.A. I was
thinking after the hearing, maybe I
could bring her by.

MRS. TYLER'S VOICE

Tell me something. Why is this call different? You were always worried about how long we talked -

SLIM

I was out in the country, Mrs. T. I'm in a big city now, meeting with my lawyer, so there're lots of cell phones. No one can trace this.

EXT. BEAUTY PARLOR. DAY.

Slim exits in a long gray coat. Stops outside for one moment, glances around - Sees a guy in a GREEN TRENCHCOAT across the street. She walks hurriedly away. Glances over her shoulder, sees Trenchcoat following her. She smiles slightly, to herself.

CUT TO:

EXT. SLIM'S HOTEL. DAY.

From a discreet distance, across the street, we watch her go into her hotel.

96

Trenchcoat is standing across the street.

INT. HOTEL ROOM. DAY.

Slim enters her suite. Sitting by the window is TOVA. As Slim walks over, Tova pulls on a wig which matches Slim's haircut. There is now a strong resemblance.

TOVA

I'm Tova Steinberg. Slim stares. Tova's voice is an octave lower than Slim's.

SLIM

Say something else.

TOVA

I was a cop. I got shot, took
the benefits.
Slim thinks about Tova's voice. Takes out her cell phone.

SLIM

They have to think I'm still here,
so use my cell phone, tomorrow, to
call my dad. Autodial 2.
Slim presses the autodial number, then SEND, and motions for
Tova to put on Slim's gray coat. It fits Tova perfectly.

SLIM (CONT.)

(lowering his voice)
Hey, it's me.

JUPITER'S VOICE

What happened to your voice?; you
okay?

SLIM

I don't know, I'm getting some
bronchial thing.

JUPITER'S VOICE

Otherwise everything's okay?

SLIM

Yeah.

97

JUPITER'S VOICE

Get some rest, huh?
She presses END, says to Tova, back to normal voice:

SLIM

Tomorrow stay in, order room service.
Call him twice. Keep it brief.
"Hello, I don't feel well..."

TOVA

And tonight?

SLIM

Go around the corner, eat at Guido's.

TOVA

I'll be followed?

SLIM

Green trenchcoat.

Tova nods and Slim takes off her own wig. Short dark hair.

SLIM (CONT.)

Wish me luck, huh?

TOVA

Good luck.

SLIM

Luck has nothing to do with it.

Tova smiles.

INT. HOTEL. HALL. NIGHT.

Slim waiting as the Service Elevator arrives.
Gets in.

EXT. HOTEL. REAR ENTRANCE. NIGHT.

Slim going out the door, down the alley...

98

INT. AIRPORT. NIGHT.

Slim getting on the plane to Los Angeles.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN PEDRO STREET. NIGHT.

Slim parks, looks across at a warehouse converted into
lofts.

BATTLE OF THE

shadows, She takes a duffle from the back seat. Steps into the

stares at the warehouse:
Brick building, modern door and light fixtures.

SEXES

She looks both ways:
The street's dark. Deserted.
She hoists her duffle, takes a deep breath.
And crosses the street.
Goes up the stairs to the stoop. Looks at the alarm panel on
the door: green.
Crouches, starts to work on the lock.

INT. WAREHOUSE/LOFT. SLEEPING AREA. NIGHT.

Mitch in bed, sleeping. Peaceful.
A SOUND, Off.
He stirs slightly.

ANOTHER SOUND.

He sits up. Frowning... dazed.
Cocks his head. Listens...
The SILENCE seems to have texture. He gets up.

99

into We glimpse: a beautiful brick warehouse converted inside
an open, loft-like space filled with bird's-eye maple, metal
beams, etc. Modern, glistening, expensive.
He walks around the place in the dark.
In his boxer shorts and t-shirt. He looks vulnerable...
SLIM'S POV... From one corner. Observing him. She has become
the stalker.
HER EYES, watching...
He decides everything's okay and goes back to the semi
partitioned sleeping area...
He gets back into bed - next to a YOUNG BLOND WOMAN, 22.
She turns over, mutters something, goes back to sleep.
He lies there, eyes open. Stays very still. Listening.

JARRING CUT TO:

INT. SAME WAREHOUSE. MORNING.

Bright light. Mitch in his bathrobe making coffee. The Young Blond Woman comes out, fully dressed...

MITCH

Coffee?

YOUNG BLOND

I gotta get home, change for work.
He nods, gives her a perfunctory kiss:

MITCH

I'll call you.
She stares at him a second.

YOUNG BLOND

You want my number?

MITCH

Sure.
She sees how "eager" he is to talk to her again. Irritated, she scribbles the number quickly, hands it to him -

MITCH

Thanks for everything.

100

For the sex, in other words. She gives it right back to him:

YOUNG BLOND

You too. I really appreciate it.
He's too self-centered to notice her ironic tone.
She lets herself out.
The instant she does, we go to a HIGH ANGLE looking down at Mitch. Alternate NORMAL and HIGH ANGLE during:
Mitch pours coffee, goes back into his "dressing area" and pulls on some clothes as he talks into his cell phone:

MITCH

Janie? Hey.

(BEAT)

Yeah, I was working late.

(BEAT)

No, tonight's no good either. I've got a morning flight to San Francisco.

Slim in the rafters, listening.

MITCH (CONT.)

If it was pleasure, you'd be going too. No, I'm going down to get my daughter.

Slim's reaction to this...

MITCH (CONT.)

Sure, the custody hearing's here next week, but it looks like Gracie's being brought to San Francisco and my ex-wife ...well, seems like she completely vanished.

ON SLIM. His words echo his threats when he was trying to strangle her in her hallway.

MITCH (CONT.)

Right off the face of the earth.

I doubt they'll ever find her this time.

Slim's jaw tightens.

When we come back to Mitch, he's dressed and packing his briefcase.

101

MITCH (CONT.)

Yeah, I want her to meet you.

We'll call when we get in.

(FAKE TENDER:)

You too.

He hangs up, takes a sip of coffee.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT looking down on Mitch as he heads out the door.

Slim waits in the rafters until the alarm system beeps: it's armed.

She climbs down, walks into the kitchen.

Notices his Mr. Coffee machine is still on.

Hesitates, turns it off.
Opens the fridge to find something to eat -
The alarm beeps again.
Slim drops silently to the floor.
SOUND of the KEY IN THE LOCK -
Slim scuttles away as we hear:
FRONT DOOR OPENING. FOOTSTEPS coming toward her.
She slips around the edge of the counter just as:
Mitch enters the kitchen. He goes to the Mr. Coffee... Looks
at it... Frowns. Didn't he leave it on...?
Slim in the foreground, crouched down, Mitch 15 feet away.

He

looks around. Is something wrong? Is someone here?
Slim frozen, trying not to breath.
Mitch listening. Wondering: should he search the place?
She looks for a place to hide -
He looks at his watch. He's late.
He walks right toward Slim, curls around the counter -
But she's not there any longer.
He heads for the front door -

102

Goes out. HOLD ON the hall, where she was, where he walked.
EMPTY. The alarm beeps again as he resets it.
One silent beat, then Slim rises in the kitchen. (She did a

360.)

with

She sighs. Pours herself some coffee, replaces the liquid
water. Auto-dials her cell phone.

SLIM

I'm in.

GINNY'S VOICE

Hey.

SLIM

Can you stay off the phone?

GINNY'S VOICE

For you, honey? (Anything.)

SLIM

I hope so.
She hangs up.
Retrieves her duffle bag from its hiding place and pulls out tools, equipment, etc. Picks up a screwdriver and starts searching the apartment, checking the phone line, following

it

to the place where it enters the apartment.
MONTAGE INTERCUT WITH FLASHES of Slim' a face: a running tab on her emotions. Intensity, focus, determination, fear,.

..and,

as the sequence builds: concern about what she doing...

MONTAGE IMAGES :

She disconnects the phone line.
Finds the electrical box, opens it, finds the main switch.
Removes all the knives from the kitchen... hides them...
Walks the apartment-familiarizing herself with every inch of it-occasionally she moves a piece of furniture slightly...

we

realize: she's assessing fighting spaces. angles...
She looks from one piece of furniture to another, back and forth, gauging the distance between them.
She eats a snack from his refrigerator...

103

I

Looks out the back (bedroom) window... and sees the water of

the

J

San Pedro harbor below her.
Uses a metal detector to search the apartment:
in a drawer of the night table beside his bed, she finds a pistol. Removes it. There are papers in the same drawer, notes or something. She throws these in the trash.
She takes out three letters. As the CAMERA sweeps over one

of

them, we hear her voice:

SLIM (V.O.)

". .thanks for letting me come talk about Gracie. And I'm glad you're willing to admit your temper, and -

let's not mince words - the physical
abuse you subjected me to."
And glances at SECOND LETTER:

SLIM (V.0.)

"Perhaps with your new attitude,
we can really work something out.
Per your last letter, I'll see you
the evening of..."

She puts the letters in the drawer where the pistol was.
They're not in envelopes; they're loose, open.
She picks up the metal detector, resumes her search.
The machine beeps insistently around his desk. She can't

find

anything. Finally she discovers a false bottom on one of the
drawers: a second gun is in there.

With the gun are papers: reports from private detectives
looking for her, an assessment of his custody rights...
She hides the guns in the bottom of the laundry hamper.
Finds a photo of herself with Mitch and Gracie. Rips it up.
Puts the metal detector back in the duffel.
Changes into sweatshirt and sweatpants.
Takes the distinctive red bag (from the electronics store)

out

of the duffel. There's a machine inside. She plugs it in,
tucks it behind the couch.
Puts her cell phone beside it.

104

She makes one last check: every wall, surface, every drawer.
Barefoot, she begins to glide around the space. Backing up.
Moving with ease and grace, sliding deftly to the side as

she

approaches a couch, desk, chair. She's building on her

earlier

reconnaissance: learning where the furniture is and how to
navigate around it...

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER. MAGIC HOUR.

Light fading toward darkness. She's still moving backward,
only now her sliding is smooth, graceful; almost a dance.
As if hearing a distant signal, she slows to a stop.

an
No.
her

For a long moment she stands perfectly still. Poised. Like
animal in the forest.
There's a chair facing the front door. She glances at it.
She walks behind the couch, turns off the machine, picks up
cell phone and auto-dials.

GINNY'S VOICE

Hey.
Slim says nothing.

GINNY'S VOICE (CONT.)

You okay?

SLIM

(SOFTLY)

Say it again.

GINNY'S VOICE

Say what?

SLIM

You know. What you told me.
Beat. On Slim's face as:

GINNY'S VOICE

Oh. You have a divine animal right
to protect your own life and the
life of your offspring.
Silence.

105

SLIM

Yeah.
She hangs up, turns the machine back on and stashes her cell
phone.
With simple ease, she lowers herself onto the chair. Facing
the door. Waiting in the fading light...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

Mitch walks down the street.
Up the steps, punches in his alarm code.

INT. MITCH'S PLACE. NIGHT.

Mitch enters, closes and locks the door.
Turns on the light.
He walks back to the rear of the space, hangs up his coat.
Goes into the bedroom area, takes off his jacket.
The lights go out.
Mitch freezes, shadow on shadow, a silhouette in the
darkness.
He looks out the window, sees:
The neighboring buildings still have light and power.
He cocks his head, listening.
Silence.
Walks to the door of the bedroom area. Waits.
Take two more steps -

SLIM'S VOICE

It's me.
He nods slowly.

MITCH

Yeah. (I thought so.)

106

He moves quietly to the bed... to the night table where Slim
found the pistol. Covers this by talking:

MITCH {CONT.}

This morning too?

SLIM'S VOICE

You always did forget to turn off
the coffee.
He rummages in the drawer. We hear the RUSTLE of the letters
Slim put there. He fails to find the gun. Gives up trying to
be quiet, tosses papers onto the floor -

SLIM'S VOICE {CONT.}

fishes

I found it, Mitch.
His hand leaves the drawer.
He thinks.
Picks up the phone, listens. Dead.
Looks around... can't see her...
Goes back to the chair where he hung his sports coat and
out his cell phone. We see the GLOW of its dial.
He punches 911 and pressed SEND.
The dial goes dark for two seconds, then blinks back on.
He stares at it.
Tries again. 911, SEND.
Again it goes dead.

SLIM'S VOICE

It's a machine. Knocks out cell
phones.
He throws the cell phone onto the bed.
Walks out of the bedroom area.
Looks around the vast space.
Spooky. Slanting light and dense shadow.
He doesn't see her.

107

Walks toward his desk.

SLIM'S VOICE

I found that gun too.
He stops. Doesn't know where to go. or what to do.

SLIM'S VOICE

Scared?

MITCH

(FUCK YOU)

Of what?

SLIM'S VOICE

Now is when you decide, Mitch.
(off his silence)
Whether you're a coward. If you
are, you can run. I won't stop you.

MITCH

(meaning the match is unfair:)
You have my guns.

SLIM'S VOICE

Threw 'em away.

MITCH

Then someone's here with you.

SLIM'S VOICE

No.

MITCH

(INCREDULOUS)

You're alone?

SLIM'S VOICE

Why not?

MITCH

'Cause it'd be stupid.
Silence is her answer.

MITCH (CONT.)

You're sayin' this is man to man?

SLIM'S VOICE

Woman, Mitch.

108

MITCH

That's what I meant: man against
woman - you sure that's fair?
The lights go back on.
Slowly Slim comes out from hiding...

SLIM

Fair to whom?
As he realizes her meaning, she moves into the open area
between two couches.
She has no weapon.

She's barefoot, in her sweats, feet spread for balance, arms just slightly raised. Compared to him: she's tiny. He moves toward her.

SLIM

This is what you wanted, right?
What you were going to San Francisco for: the chance to get me alone?
He lunges for her; she slides to the side and he misses. He begins to stalk her.
And as he stalks, she moves backward, slowly and gracefully, the way she was practicing.

in

MITCH

I don't understand, Slim.
How does this work for you?
She ignores his words. Watches his eyes and his chest. Wants to know where he's going to attack.

MITCH (CONT.)

I mean: this is carefully thought out, right?
She does not respond.
He throws three punches. None of them hits her. He's unfazed, keeps stalking...

109

MITCH (CONT.)

But say you succeed - beat me up or whatever. You're not going to murder me... (CONT.)
Her expression remains neutral, focused.
He takes this to be agreement.

MITCH (CONT.)

So all you've done is further piss me off.

SLIM

Self defense is not ,murder.
This stops him cold.. He lowers his hands a moment. Stares

at

her, trying to assimilate this new information...

MITCH

You don't have the guts.
She just looks at him.
He blinks, worried for an instant. Covers it with a smile:

MITCH

It's not self-defense when you
break in here and attack me.

SLIM

So far you're attacking me.
He lunges, almost hits her, rushes in -
She has to leap sideways with great speed and dexterity:

jumps

over the couch to avoid being hit.
He also jumps over the couch, but his balance isn't as good,
and she's waiting for him as he stumbles -
With perfect balance and full force, she slugs him in the

nose.

He goes down. Stays there. For the first time it occurs to
him: this might not be easy.
He climbs to his feet, feels his nose: blood.

SLIM

You see? I'm just defending myself.
He resumes stalking her. Only he's angry now, and it's

scary.

110

MITCH

If you fail, you can count on this:
you'll never see Gracie again.
She reacts -
He sees it, rushes her -
Punching as he goes. From the standpoint of pure physics, he
makes a terrifying force. Until:
She steps back, grabs his arm, whips him vs. the brick wall

-

He hits it, bounces off.
Cut on his forehead, blood streaming down his face.

He stares at her... breathing hard... trying to put it together:

MITCH

You really (think) ...you think you'll kill me and get away with it?!

SLIM

I told you. Self-defense. I came here, as arranged in our letters, to talk about Gracie -

MITCH

Letters? There are no -

SLIM

In the drawer where your pistol was. You just left prints all over them. He stares at her, stunned in every way. Touches his forehead, feels the blood...

SLIM

You attacked me, I fought back. And of course if you never touch me...

(SWEET SMILE)

I'll have to give myself bruises... He goes berserk. Leaps at her, covering ground quickly with his long stride, swinging his massive arms. This is the most terrifying form of combat: a huge person attacking a tiny one. If he should hit her even once, a glancing blow, she will go down, she will break, it will be over.

III

But he misses, and misses again. Sometimes his punches are wild, almost comical. Others come so close we hear-the wind, feel their power, feel his sweat on her... CONTINUE this terrifying choreographed dance with destruction for as long as it will hold. At every instant, we fear for her

Ali bones and her life. Sometimes she leans back like Muhammad
married to barely slip a punch, and we see terror on her face,
ashtray, to determination. She knows the score. and the odds.
Finally, in frustration at so many misses, he grabs an
hurled it at her -
it flies over her head -
He punches again and again, wildly.
She remains untouched.
He stops. With all the blood, he looks like a wild animal.
He makes a great effort to pull himself together...

MITCH

This doesn't bother me, Slim.
I don't care how long it takes.
We both know: I only have to hit
you once. Once, and it's over.
She laughs at him.
This is the last thing he expected and the last thing he can
stand. He rushes at her again, fast -
She starts left -
He blocks her way -
She starts right -
Again he's blocking her -
She lunges to the left, through a narrow space -
He punches, grazing her hair; punches again, just missing,
and a third time. We feel the awesome power behind these blows.
She's in the clear again. Smiles casually. Clearly part of
her strategy is to keep him angry:

112

SLIM

I'm confused, Mitchy. Aren't you a
man?

(QUOTING HIM)

I thought it was "no contest?"
I mean, can't you hit me even once?
He grabs a lamp, yanks out the cord, wields it like a club.

SLIM (CONT.)

(AMUSED)

A weapon?

He smashes the lamp down, just missing her head -

SLIM (CONT.)

It's a martial-arts cliché, honey.

A weapon throws you off balance -

SWISH -

SWIPE -

SLAM -

He misses her three times, the last time smashing the lamp
into the wall so hard that the impact hurts his hand. He yelps -

SLIM (CONT.)

You see?

He turns toward her, pain on his face, holding his hand -

And she truly attacks for the first time. Smashes her fist
against his head -

He flies back, bounces vs. the wall.

As he comes off it, she punches him again -

He roars with rage, lunges at her, head first, great speed -

She hurtles him in the same direction, increasing speed -

Right into the opposite wall.

The top of his head hits the wall.

He shudders like someone in a cartoon: a spasm running head
to

TOE -

He drops.

113

Face down.

Does not move.

At all.

She stares at him.

Goes to him. Wary.

Gives him a reflex test -

No reaction. He's unconscious.

She tests his neck for a pulse.
Apparently he's still alive, because she raises her hand
over her head.
Her palm vertical, like a knife.
She's about to deliver a karate chop.
To his neck.
it will break his neck.
It will kill him.
Her hand stays there, poised. CAMERA PLUNGES IN ON HER FACE.

FLASHES:

- Mitch hitting her the first time -
- Midwest house, Mitch leaping out from Gracie's doorway -
- Mitch beating her as she crawls across the floor of
their house. (Something we didn't see before.) She reaches
up, flicks the light switch; Mitch jumps on her back -
- Mitch: "You'll never see Gracie again."
- Earlier: "She's My daughter. Don't even think about
taking her."
- Strangling Slim, whispering: "...where you're going,
they will never... ever... find you."

114

BACK TO SLIM

Face contorted in rage, confusion -
She brings her hand down -
Misses. him.
Intentionally.
Turns away, tears in her eyes.
She retrieves her cell phone, turns off the cell-phone
blocker,
presses redial.
Stares out the window. We see the turmoil on her face, hear
it
in her voice:

SLIM

I can't, Gin.

GINNY'S VOICE

'Re you okay?

SLIM

Yeah.

GINNY'S VOICE

You're okay?!, you beat him?!

SLIM

YEAH -

GINNY'S VOICE

It worked?!

SLIM

Listen to me! I did it, but I can't
do it! I can't kill him!
Behind Slim, out of focus: movement, a soft blur...

GINNY'S VOICE (CONT.)

(URGENTLY)

Slim. He'll come after you -

SLIM

I know -

GINNY'S VOICE (CONT.)

He'll come after Gracie -

115

An indistinct shape, something rising over her head...

SLIM

I know all that!
I have to, but I can't!
I'm not a killer!
I'm not him!
Mitch. Crazed and bloody face. In his hand: the wooden lamp.
She senses something, turns her head slightly to one side -
- so the lamp does not land quite flush on her skull.
Still sends her crashing to the floor.
Now she does not move.
He stands over her. Looks insane: bloody, dazed, beaten: but
triumphant.

GINNY'S VOICE

Hello? Slim? You there?

The lamp moving in his hand. He's rotating it. A simple menacing image... . and we realize: he' s aoinq to hit her

again.

GINNY'S VOICE {CONT.}

Should I call the cops?!

Answer me?!

He's distracted by Ginny's voice. Picks up the phone.

MITCH

Listen to me, bitch.

Ginny's silent.

MITCH (CONT.)

if you value your children, don' t call anybody.

It's over, okay? It's all over.

He throws the phone on the couch and moves back toward Slim, lamp clenched tight in his fist.

SMASH IN CLOSE ON HER FACE.

CLOSER STILL. We're almost inside her head as we hear:

INSTRUCTOR'S VOICE

Hold onto my voice...

116

Is that the hint of a smile on her face?

INSTRUCTOR'S VOICE (CONT.)

You're ready...

Mitch sees the slight smile, can't believe it - Rage.

He pulls his foot back to kick her -

Her eyes are open, just a slit -

His foot swinging forward...

As it reaches her, she grabs it, yanks it -

He's pulled off his feet, crashing down on top of her -

But she's already rolling, out from under him... and up -

Coming to her feet -

He starts to rise, all fours, then into a crouch and ug...

SLOW MOTION. She's ready. Her face alert. Center of gravity

low. Arm low, .fist low... As her motion unfurls:
Boxers say that an uppercut, perfectly
executed, is the most difficult,
powerful, and beautiful of punches.
Indeed: when an uppercut starts low for maximum center-of-
gravity and hits the opponent flush on the point of the chin

-
the

as Slim's does here - it delivers a devastating message to
central nervous system, short-circuiting it completely.
Mitch flies backward...
There's a table behind him.
His head cracks on the table.
His neck snaps.
He lands on the floor: twisted, broken.
Slim stares at him.
There's no way a living man could assume the position now
occupied by her former husband.

117

She stares in disbelief.
Though she knows the answer, she feels his carotid artery.
Her face registers what she feels. Horror, relief.
She walks slowly to her cell phone, picks it up.
Listens: no one there.
She presses redial, waits...

GINNY'S VOICE

(in a panic)
H o?d

SLIM

Hi.

GINNY'S VOICE

Oh thank God you're alive.

SLIM

Gin, he's ...he hit his...he's not
breathing.

GINNY'S VOICE

oh.

SLIM

Yeah.

GINNY'S VOICE

Well: I called the cops, they're on their way.

Slim nods.

GINNY'S VOICE

Slim... can you hear me?, this is important.

Beat.

SLIM

Okay.

As Ginny talks, Slim puts the cell-phone blocker into the duffle and carries the duffle to the rear of the building.

GINNY'S VOICE

You're not him, okay? You're not him, and you never will be.

118

SLIM

See you soon.

She drops the cell phone out the bedroom window into the water.

Then the duffle. They both sink.

EXT. BROWNSTONE.

She comes out, sits on the steps. A siren is audible.

Cop cars speed down the street, screech to a stop.

TWO COPS LEAP OUT OF THE CAR, run toward her.

FIRST COP

You okay?

She looks at him, considering the question.

Shakes her head.

FIRST COP

Where is he?

and She makes a slight motion to indicate that Mitch is inside,
the OTHER COP runs into the apartment.
Slim lowers her head.
First Cop looks at her, sees the blood on her scalp.

FIRST COP

Looks like you're one of the lucky
ones.
She looks up, stares at him, and starts to cry.

SMASH INTO:

CREDIT SEQUENCE CREDITS OVER FLASHES:

INT. LAX. DAY.

herself Slim jumping up and down and generally making a fool of
with as Gracie runs off the plane into her arms. Ginny follows
her own kids; hugs all around -

WHIP PAN TO:

119

ANOTHER GATE AT THE AIRPORT. DAY.

Slim looking... waiting... seeing: Joe. He hurries to her -
and picks up Gracie instead, gives Gracie a big hug.
Joe lingers in the hug as Slim waits...and waits...
Finally he turns to Slim, hint of a smile:

JOE

at What rules are we playing by now?
She answers him with the kind of kiss you can get away with
a bar or airport and almost nowhere else.

WHIP PAN TO:

ANOTHER GATE AT AIRPORT. DAY.

hands Jupiter comes off the plane, is hugged by Ginny, shakes

with Joe. As he turns to Gracie, Slim says:

SLIM

This time be nice to her.

JUPITER

Is it gonna be like that?

SLIM

Yeah.

Jupiter smiles, shakes hands with Gracie:

JUPITER

I hope I can work into being
your grandfather, okay?
Gracie shrugs.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW "ORCA" RESTAURANT. DAY.

SIGNS all over: OPEN AGAIN AFTER BOMBING! SAME GREAT FOOD!

SAME BEAUTIFUL WAITRESSES! SAME TERRIBLE JOKES!

INT. NEW ORCA. DAY.

Slim, Joe, Jupiter, and Gracie eating, Ginny serving large
platters of gorgeous food:

120

GINNY

So whattaya say, Slim-girl, you
comin' back to work?

PHIL

(passing by, overhears and

JUMPS IN:)

After all I do for her... ?
She better not!
Ginny gives him a look -

PHIL

She has to go back to school, make
big success. Sigmund Freud, yes?!

(PATS JUPITER)

Don't worry, Mr. Moneybags will pay.

Jupiter gives Phil a playful look: thanks a lot.
Phil whispers to Gracie:

PHIL

But don't let her cook, huh Gracie?
You eat here all the time.
Gracie nods thanks, whispers back:

GRACIE

Call me Queen Elizabeth.

the
RUN TITLES ON THE REST OF THEIR MEAL. The longer it runs,
happier this odd family (including Ginny and Phil) seems...

FADE OUT.