

LIMITLESS

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Based on the novel by
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INT. A BLACK SCREEN

EDDIE (V.O.)
They found me.

INT. CLOSE ON - A HIGH-TECH RESIDENTIAL STEEL DOOR

being POUNDED in. WHAM! WHAM! Whoever's trying to get in is serious. The door shudders but doesn't give. It's state-of-the-art residential protection.

EDDIE (V.O.)
I might have five minutes.

We hear the WHRRRRR of POWER TOOLS going to work on his door. These people are determined. Professional. And prepared.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I'll never know how they got past security in a half-billion dollar building.

EXT. THE CELESTIAL - LOOKING INTO THE LOBBY - NIGHT

The sleek lobby is deserted. We SEE, through the GLASS, lying on the floor, the barest glimpse of the FEET of what are presumably TWO DEAD SECURITY GUARDS -- although their bodies are largely hidden behind their massive curly walnut desk. All the security monitors are BLACK -- the feeds clearly cut.

EDDIE (V.O.)
They've become sophisticated.
Before they couldn't have done this. But now...?

The CAMERA RISES, breathlessly, in a blur, up all 80 floors of this stunning new building, coming to rest on...

EDDIE MORGAN,

30's, lean and stylish, standing on the exterior ledge of his multimillion-dollar terrace. New York City looms around him, beneath him. His hands are outstretched. Balancing. He is calm, but fatalistic. He's clearly going to jump.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I will never let them touch me.

His attention is CAUGHT by the SOUNDS of a commotion in the next apartment. He looks over, at-

2.

THE ADJOINING TERRACE

Through the gauzy curtains of the window, TWO MEN force A MIDDLE-AGED MAN towards the windows... there is arguing.

EDDIE (V.O.)

My neighbor must've heard the noise. Opened his door to complain.

Two MUFFLED SHOTS - the neighbor drops. The door is pounded again. It doesn't give.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He bought me half a minute. I wish he hadn't. Last thoughts are self-pitying and mine are no exception: the waste. The waste of it all. I mean, how many of us ever know what it is to become... the perfect version of ourselves. I'd come that close. To having an impact on the world.

The pounding intensifies.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And now, the only thing I'd have an impact on...

He looks over the railing...

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

... was the sidewalk.

His smile is bitter, as we CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - DAY

EDDIE (V.O.)

Not so long ago, this was me.

Eddie is walking down the street, messily eating a street falafel. His hair is longer, his clothes schlumpier, his face rounder --he's out of shape. A belly bulges against his belt. He wears jeans and that worn-out corduroy "writer's" sport coat --the one that your girlfriend fights to give to the Salvation Army.

(CONTINUED)

3.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I was a writer. Two years after my copywriting job at Dexter & Kerr came to a non-mutual end, I had, in an extraordinary burst of desperate energy, bullshitted my way into my first book contract. This was it:

INT. EDDIE'S RATTY RENT-CONTROLLED APARTMENT ON AVENUE A- DAY

Eddie, slumped in his desk chair, is playing **COMPUTER SCRABBLE**.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Now, at last, I was ready to write.

QUICK CUTS: --Eddie sprawled on the couch, eating takeout and watching TV, the sink in the foreground full of dishes. -- Eddie shooting baskets into a toy hoop.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Gearing up, that's all.

--Eddie sleeping in his bed, sacked out, the clock beside him clicking to 11:59 a.m.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Getting psyched.

--Eddie sitting on the john, playing a game on his childhood Game Boy.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

A few days did pass this way...
maybe a few months...

--Eddie at his desk. He glances at his **LAND LINE**. The message light is unblinkingly green. No one's called.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Friends fled.

His POV **PANS** to the **FOOT HIGH STACK OF UNPAID bills** next to

the answering machine.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

And banks became attentive. But
just in case you think nothing ever
happened to me....

4.

INT. A MIDTOWN COFFEE SHOP - DAY

A FEMALE HAND slides a KEY across the counter to EDDIE. Eddie
stares in disbelief at his (now ex) girlfriend, LINDY, an
attractive, real-looking girl, late 20's. She's dressed in a
professional suit. She looks very sad.

LINDY

I don't think I can keep this.

Eddie is broadsided. Hurt.

EDDIE

Just like that.

She shoots him a look of almost intolerable sympathy.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I was kind of under the impression
you cared a little more than just--

LINDY

If I didn't care, maybe I'd be able
to stand to watch you do this.

EDDIE

Look, I'm going to give 90 pages to
Mark on Friday. If you could just
wait, see what he says--

LINDY

Stop. You think I don't know what
you do all day? I've loved you. I
know the good stuff, and I know the
shit.

EDDIE

And it's all shit to you now?

LINDY

You're the one living it.

(SYMPATHETICALLY)

Don't think I don't know it's worse
for you.

EDDIE

Then you know I could use a friend.

He tries to push the key back. He cares about her, but he's also "working" her sympathy, which she instantly smells.

LINDY

Don't you dare try that shit on me!

(CONTINUED)

5.

CONTINUED:

She pierces Eddie with a look. Doesn't take the key.

EDDIE

Well -- what'll work, then?

They both almost laugh. They know each other so well. But she looks away, steeling herself.

LINDY

I see where it's going. You'll lose your apartment. And then what? You'll move in with me--

EDDIE

Not with that enthusiastic invite--

LINDY

--And then it'll go on this way, and I'll rag on you, and finally boot you out -- and then what? I mean, have you run the film?

EDDIE (V.O.)

She knew what was beckoning: the lower bunk in my childhood bedroom in Newark. We'd even had sex on it once. And it was a thing to be pitied and avoided.

Eddie sighs. Drops the glib tone. Looks at her, finally mustering the honesty she deserves.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Lindy. I really thought I had it in me to do something. --I wasn't getting around it, but it was fucking there. And now, I, ah... don't think it is. There. --Anything. At all.

Lindy looks at him, clear-eyed, seeing him as he is, and loving him anyway.

LINDY

You know what...? I'd have had you move in anyway... if...

EDDIE

If, what?

She looks away. Its hard for her to admit this:

(CONTINUED)

6.

CONTINUED: (2)

LINDY

If it was me you wanted. And not
Melissa.

EDDIE

I never think about Melissa--!

FLASH!

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

We are in Eddie's mind, in his POV, and we are seeing a
LOVELY, WILLOWY BRUNETTE, wearing an undershirt, bending
seductively over him...

INT. MIDTOWN COFFEE SHOP - DAY

From Eddie's eyes we can tell the memory is still fresh. She
shakes her head, looks away. It's clearly over. She gets up.
He follows.

LINDY

I have to get back.

EDDIE

--Hey, well -- wait -- you didn't
tell me what happened yesterday.

We can see on Lindy's face that she's still vulnerably
pleased that Eddie remembered to ask.

LINDY

I got it.

EDDIE

You got it--?!

LINDY

Yeah. I'll have my own assistant.
You believe that?

EDDIE

(GENUINE)

You deserve it, Lindy.

LINDY

Yeah, thanks. I do.

She smiles weakly, breaks eye contact. No good to keep looking. It's over. Eddie makes an attempt to reach for the check, which Lindy grabs.

(CONTINUED)

7.

CONTINUED:

LINDY (CONT'D)

Oh, please.

He knows she knows he can't pay.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - DAY

Eddie is walking home, eying the homeless on the street, feeling his dismal future breathing down his neck.

EDDIE (V.O.)

She was right. I was almost 35.
No one talks about "potential" at
35. I had missed the on-ramp.
Soon I'd be sleeping in the lower
bunk of my childhood bedroom... my
father happy to welcome me into the
challenging field of dental supply
inventory...

He's interrupted by A VOICE - calm, amused:

VOICE

Eddie. Morgan.

VERNON GANT looks him over with condescending bemusement. He's 30, wears an expensive suit, looks like he comes from money.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Of all the useless relationships
better forgotten and put away in
mothballs, is there any more
useless than... the ex-brother-in-
law?

VERNON

Shit! It's gotta be-- 9 years--?

EDDIE

But who's counting.

VERNON

(taking him in)
Hey, you!!!

He genially whacks the sides of Eddie's arms. Eddie halfheartedly whacks back. Vernon sizes Eddie up.

VERNON (CONT'D)

Jesus, Eddie, pack it on, why don't you?

(CONTINUED)

8.

CONTINUED:

Eddie didn't need that. He's very self-conscious about his weight.

EDDIE

Sedentary job, you know...

VERN

So you're still trying to write?

EDDIE

As a matter of fact, I've got a book contract.

Vern looks half suspicious, half impressed.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

How about you?

(POINTEDLY)

Still dealing, Vernon?

VERNON

(SMUGLY)

Do I look like I'm still dealing?

Eddie sizes him up: the suit, shoes, watch, haircut.

EDDIE

No.

VERNON

Come on, let's get a drink. I wanna hear about this book.

EDDIE

Nah, I should go--

VERN

You can't tell me you're a health nut, now. Not with that tire-

EDDIE
(ANNOYED)

Enticing invitation. Thanks.

Vern plucks the pack of cigarettes from Eddie's upper jacket pocket.

VERN

C'mon, c'mon, one beer. Or I won't give `em back.

He holds the cigarettes just out of Eddie's reach.

(CONTINUED)

9.

CONTINUED: (2)

EDDIE

It's one o'clock in the afternoon, Vern.

VERN

When's that ever stopped you?

EDDIE
(SIGHS)

Fuck.

INT. BAR - DAY

A BARTENDER brings beers to Eddie and Vernon who sit at the bar. Eddie clearly wishes he were elsewhere.

EDDIE

So... how's Melissa?

VERNON

Ah-hah. That's why you agreed to the beer.

EDDIE

I'm making conversation, Vern.

VERNON

Well, I don't know how Melissa is.

INT. A BEDROOM - NIGHT (AN ALMOST SUBLIMINAL FLASH)

Melissa, naked, silhouetted in the bathroom door. BACK TO:

INT. BAR - DAY

EDDIE

How don't you know? You're her brother.

VERNON

I don't see her. She lives upstate now, she's got some kinda internet home sales kinda job... a couple of kids...

This is unfathomable to Eddie. He tries to keep his voice casual.

EDDIE

A couple of kids...

FLASH!

10.

INT. SAME APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM

Melissa, her lovely face over a mirror, doing lines. BACK TO:

INT. BAR - DAY

EDDIE

Who's the husband?

VERNON

What are you, jealous?

EDDIE

It's just a question, Vern.

Vernon can sense his emotion.

VERNON

Walked out on her, if you really want to know. But what do you care? You guys weren't even married six months, were you--? I mean, it was just a coke thing, right?

EDDIE

Is that what she said--?! "A coke thing."

It unexpectedly hurts Eddie. Maybe it's just a bum day. Or there's a deeper wound than he knew.

VERNON

But I wanna know about this book. How's it going?

EDDIE

(considering the question)
How's it going... Well... I'm behind. I'm behind on my book, and it's pretty well polluting my days

and nights if you really want to know.

VERNON

How much have you written of it?

A beat.

EDDIE

Not one fucking word, Vern.

(CONTINUED)

11.

CONTINUED:

VERNON

Wow. Creative problem, huh?

Vern appraises him.

VERNON (CONT'D)

I think I have something that can help you.

He reaches into his pocket. Eddie thinks he knows what's coming.

EDDIE

Oh, no-- no, no, no-

VERNON

You don't even know what it is.

EDDIE

You're still dealing.

VERNON

No -- yeah --will you listen?! This isn't recreational. I've been doing some consulting for a

PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY--

EDDIE

You mean a lab in some little Yalie's basement? Give me a--

VERNON

No, this is an exclusive product coming on-stream next year, they've had clinical trials, and it's FDA approved.

A long beat. Eddie bites.

EDDIE

Okay, what is it?

Vern reaches into his jacket, produces a tiny plastic sachet with his right hand, tapping something out into the palm of his left. He holds this up for Eddie to see... a TINY WHITE UNMARKED TABLET.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What's in it?

Vern puts the little white tablet on the bar.

(CONTINUED)

12.

CONTINUED: (2)

VERN

Just take it. Get you over the hump.

EDDIE

I'm too old for this, Vernon.

VERNON

Look, they've identified these receptors in the brain that activate specific circuits, and-- you know how they say you can only access like 20 percent of your brain? Well, what this does--

EDDIE

Vernon. Look at me. Do I look good? I smoke too much: my chest is sore. A fucking corpse has more energy than I do, I've got weird aches, possible lumps, rashes, maybe they're a condition, or a network of conditions. One of these days they're all going to hold hands, light up, and I'll keel over dead. My life's in the crapper, and I DON'T think it's going to take a sudden upswing into the stratosphere if I do some brand new, shiny designer DRUG!

Vern's phone rings. He holds up his index finger --shh! --and takes the call.

VERN

(INTO PHONE)

Gant.

(beat, getting agitated)
When. --I know, but when?
(looking at his watch)
Tell him we can't do that. He knows
that's out of the question. We
absolutely can't do that.

Vern is edgy. Very tense. He continues:

VERN (CONT'D)

No, I'm not going to tell him! You
tell him -- no, now!

He turns off his phone, gets up.

(CONTINUED)

13.

CONTINUED: (3)

VERN (CONT'D)

Fucking people. I'm afraid I'm
going to have to leave you here,
Eddie. But let's hang out again,
have another beer.

He takes out his business card, and places it carefully next
to the little white tablet on the bench.

VERN (CONT'D)

By the way, that's on the house.

EDDIE

I don't want it, Vern.

Vern smiles at him.

VERN

Don't be ungrateful, now. You know
how much these things cost?

Eddie shakes his head.

VERN (CONT'D)

Eight hundred bucks a pop.

He pats Eddie on the shoulder and goes. Eddie is still
looking at the pill.

Which seems to be looking back at him.

EXT. THE STREET - DUSK

Eddie makes his way home, a little tipsy and filled with self-loathing.

EDDIE (V.O.)

All the way home she was back on my mind ... Melissa.

FLASH!

A memory -- Melissa's face as she's talking, laughing.

EDDIE (V.O.)

She'd been so smart. Smarter than anyone around her. And oh, how she loved to provoke people...

14.

INT. A DOWNTOWN PARTY - PARTY - NIGHT

Melissa, sparkling, beautiful, surrounded by people, in intense conversation with a bunch of downtown types.

MELISSA

--Oh, please, you think professional women mentor one another? You think there's some mutually supportive empathetic touch-feely network of kindly pie-bakers? --Those bitches hate each other! Quick, who was the worst boss you ever had? A woman, right?! We can't delegate, we can't command -- I mean, there's a reason we're not generals--!

The men gasp, shocked and titillated. The women are furious. Melissa smiles to herself --she's trying not to crack up.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I thought, by now, she'd be curing cancer, directing movies, running for the Senate...

We HOLD ON MELISSA'S LOVELY, CONFIDENT FACE as her voice fades down and Eddie's fades in.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What had happened? Her life made no sense. I mean, I could see a direct, plausible link between this Eddie, broke and buzzed at three o'clock in the afternoon, and an earlier Eddie...

INT. A DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN BEHIND A DESK - DAY

--getting SPLATTERED by some ochre liquid from an offscreen source.

EDDIE (V.O.)

...vomiting on his boss' desk
during a presentation...

INT. A BEDROOM - NIGHT

A YOUNGER, THINNER EDDIE rifles through a bureau, an old lady in bed, sleeping, behind him --an oxygen mask on her. She's clearly terminal.

(CONTINUED)

15.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (V.O.)

... or stealing his dying Aunt's
Percocet.

EXT. THE STREET - DUSK

Eddie walks, pensive.

EDDIE (V.O.)

But there was no link between my
Melissa and this upstate Melissa
dumped, cold-calling people from
her living room.

EXT. EDDIE'S BUILDING - DUSK

An edgy neighborhood on the furthest edge of lower Manhattan.
This block may never be gentrified.

EDDIE (V.O.)

40 long blocks later I was "home."

He digs in his pocket for the keys and comes up with...

THE LITTLE WHITE PILL

INT. EDDIE'S BUILDING - STAIRWELL - DUSK

It's a former tenement, fourth-floor walk-up. Eddie trudges up the old stairs, the tiny tiles worn away in spots, the Victorian moldings disfigured from a hundred and twenty years of paint.

Eddie is suddenly seized by a racking cough -- a horrible smoker's cough that makes him double over. He sounds like he's 80 years old. He finally gets it under control, gets a glimpse of himself in the storefront window. He looks bad,

and he knows he looks bad.

He reaches into his pocket. THE PILL sits teasingly in the palm of his hand, looking up at him.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Well. There was less than nothing to lose.

Quickly, impulsively, he swallows it.

16.

INT. THE LANDING - DUSK

As Eddie passes, a neighbor's door swings open. Eddie tries walking faster.

EDDIE (V.0.)

I didn't want to see anybody.

VALERIE, 26 and attractive, emerges, dressed to go out.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

Especially not my landlord's nasty young wife.

She is immediately soured at the sight of Eddie. Eddie knows what she's thinking.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Tuesday.

VALERIE

Look, enough, okay--?

EDDIE

Just tell him-

VALERIE

Steve handles the rents. So feed your fucking bullshit to him.

EDDIE (V.0.)

I suddenly had extra reason to get away from her. I had thoughtlessly ingested a substance.

Valerie's tirade FADES up or down, depending on when we're hearing Eddie.

VALERIE

--Like the rent's not low enough--!

EDDIE (V.0.)

I had gotten remarkably little information from Vernon about what

this drug would do.

VALERIE

You could be a bike messenger and
come up with that!

Eddie continues up the stairs. But she follows, getting in
front of him.

(CONTINUED)

17.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (V.O.)

...What if it was a hallucinogen...
oh my God... listening to her rag,
if I were tripping...? I'd jump out
a fucking window.

VALERIE'S voice fades up.

VALERIE

--Look, I'm just telling you, he's
been talking about calling these
people he knows from the club to
muscle you out -- I've told him not
to do that, but he's really pissed.

We PUSH IN on Eddie's face, into his eyes... where we see his
pupils contract just slightly. A flicker.

EDDIE (V.O.)

And then... I felt it.

EDDIE'S POV - THE APARTMENT UPPER HALL...

The room is changing... springing into sharper focus.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Levels more, layers more, 3-D
more... galactically more. But the
same. Just the depth and beauty...
of clarity.

There seems to be more definition, more dimension, a little
more light -- he can see more clearly. The SOUND drops out
for a moment; he can see VALERIE'S FACE, mouth contorted,
continuing to heap the abuse, but there's something in her
eyes that's not mean... something anxious. He looks at her
with a sudden keen intelligence. And sympathy.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

She's taken aback.

VALERIE

W-What?

His eyes go to THE BOOK BAG in her arms.

EDDIE

"I was blind but now I see."

(CONTINUED)

18.

CONTINUED:

On a gut instinct, Eddie takes a shot, pushing his words forward with a new, sharp, penetrating intimacy, articulateness.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You don't like me, and I don't blame you -- you see a schlumpy energy- sucking defeated sack of shit sponging off your husband. You're hoping I'll blow my brains out. But my existence shouldn't make you this upset. What is it?

He's hit a nerve.

VALERIE

Look, that's none of your-

EDDIE

Something wrong at school?

VALERIE

How do you know I'm in school!

His eyes flick down at her bag.

EDDIE

People who aren't don't usually carry dry, academic constipated out of print books about Dorothea Lange.

VALERIE

Are you some kind of creep? Have you been following me?!

EDDIE

I just saw the book--

VALERIE

You can only see a corner of it.

How did you know?

He looks down. She's right --only a corner of the book is visible. Eddie realizes:

EDDIE

I've seen it before.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was true. 12 years ago. In college...

19.

INT. DORM ROOM - NIGHT

A slightly younger Eddie is flipping through the Lange book.

EDDIE (V.O.)

...sitting on the couch of a T.A. I was trying to make, waiting for her to come back out of the bathroom... hoping she'd have a condom...

BACK TO:

INT. EDDIE'S BUILDING - LANDING - DAY

EDDIE (V.O.)

Somehow, my unconscious had served that up... a memory I'd never even recorded. Or was it there the whole time... and all I needed... was the access?

ON EDDIE'S FACE - CLOSE

As it sinks in:

EDDIE (V.O.)

Vern was right. This was no recreational drug.

Eddie's eyes flick to the laptop in her bag, his manner suddenly intimate, confident.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

If you're writing a paper, that's not the book I'd use.

VALERIE

Well, who asked y-

EDDIE

Cal Berkeley has her oral history. I'd start there. Her son is still alive. You could Google him. Sons

of famous people always want to dish dirt about their parents. You'd get something no one else has, and you'd've gone the extra mile, a nice little apple for the professor.

During this speech, MUSIC COMES UP and the sound goes down...
SEVERAL QUICK CUTS...

(CONTINUED)

20.

CONTINUED:

Eddie and Valerie's mouths are moving... she's asking questions... he's supplying answers, lots of them...

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

Information from the odd museum show, a half-read article, some PBS documentary, was all bubbling up to my frontal lobes, mixing itself together into a sparkling cocktail of useful information.

Valerie's whole posture is relaxing, the look in her eyes becoming... friendly.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

She didn't have a chance.

INT. THE DOWNSTAIRS APARTMENT FROM EDDIE'S - NIGHT

A mirror image of Eddie's, but considerably nicer. We HEAR the SOUNDS of two people -- Valerie and Eddie -- HAVING WILD, mutually satisfying SEX from the other room.

EDDIE (V.0.)

We'd really worked on her paper, too. In 45 minutes it was a polished gem. She was pleased.

We see the laptop set up, books scattered -- then, obviously abandoned for a more pleasurable pursuit.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

One nice little side effect...? I stayed hard for hours.

We HEAR female groans of pleasure. Laughter.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A dishevelled Eddie opens the door to his apartment. He enters, looks around.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Happy and sore, I returned home.

EDDIE'S POV - HIS LIVING ROOM

It's the first wide shot we've seen of it, and it hammers home: what a mess. Books scattered across the floor, dirty dishes, broken Venetian blind sashes. The nest of a slob.

(CONTINUED)

21.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (V.O.)

... But it couldn't be my home,
could it? Who would live like this?

MONTAGE: Speeded-up shots of Eddie sifting through his books and tapes. Cleaning up the kitchen. The bathroom. Picks up books. He starts moving the sofa.

QUICK CUTS: the living room, rapidly whipped into shape. If not stylish, habitable. Final shot: he's sitting on the (repositioned) couch. Thinking.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

What was this drug? I couldn't stay
messy on it, I hadn't had a
cigarette in six hours...

He stares at the pack in his hands. It looks alien.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...hadn't eaten... So. Abstemious
and tidy. What was this -- a drug
for people who want to get anal?

He gets up. Paces.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I wasn't high, wasn't wired --just
clear. What I needed to do. And how
to do it.

His eye falls on his COMPUTER.

The MONTAGE CONTINUES: Eddie flipping through research books, typing onto his keyboard, the printer printing, doing Internet searches... pages and pages spit out of the printer.

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Eddie, in his underwear, is sleeping soundly. He stirs, rolls

over, cracks open an eye.

He gets up, schlumps to the mirror, looks at his unshaven face. The penetrating gleam is no longer in his eyes.

EDDIE (V.0.)

The next morning, I sent a little probe down into my brain. No surge of brilliance came up to greet me. I felt thick and stupid -- a shuffling zombie without my coffee and cigarette. In short...

(CONTINUED)

22.

CONTINUED:

CLOSE UP -- EDDIE'S UNDERWEAR is tossed at the hamper - missing it by about a foot. The underwear remain on the floor.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

I was back.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Eddie lies on the couch. (Already the room shows signs of being messed up again.) His eye suddenly falls on his desk.

EDDIE (V.0.)

But something remained.

INT. EDITOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Eddie drops A STACK OF FRESH PAGES on the desk of MARK SUTTON. Mark looks skeptically at Eddie, then the pages.

MARK

You're kidding.

EDDIE

No.

MARK

(SARCASTIC)

Words have appeared on paper.

EDDIE

Yes.

MARK SUTTON

Written by you.

Eddie knows he's on thin ice.

EDDIE

Three pages. That's all you have to read. If you read them in the next hour, and you don't want to keep reading I'll give back the advance.

EXT. FLATIRON DISTRICT - DAY

Eddie standing on the street, the crowd flowing around him. He turns this way and that, clearly anxious, impatient. Where to go? What to do to kill the time?

23.

EXT. STREET - DAY - THREE SHOTS:

1. Eddie orders a PRETZEL from a food cart. He is having to dig into his pockets to come up with the change. The VENDOR becomes so impatient he won't give him the pretzel, and serves another customer first. Eddie looks at HIS CELL PHONE. Makes sure it's on. No call.

2. Eddie sits on a stoop, slowly nibbling on his pretzel, his eye glued to his phone. No call.

3. Eddie tosses the finished pretzel's wrapper and SHAKES HIS PHONE in frustration. A RING! Eddie jumps up, fumbles with his phone just as a passing male WALL STREET SHARK pulls out his phone and answers. The ring wasn't for Eddie.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eddie comes in, then notices something's different. His ANSWERING MACHINE has a blinking red light. Eddie clicks the button, breathless.

MARK SUTTON'S VOICE

Eddie... give me a call when you get in... (BEEP)

The second message is from Mark too.

MARK SUTTON'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Eddie, I'm 40 pages further in... call me... it's a little grandiose, but I'm still reading...

A third message - BEEP!

MARK SUTTON'S VOICE (CONT'D)

Okay, how did you do this? I'd, uh, I'd really like to -- shit, just call me the minute you get in, call. Okay? Okay. (BEEP!)

Eddie jumps up, gleeful-- he knew it! Then his smile fades. Reality hits.

EDDIE (V.O.)

But how would I finish? It was
"enhanced" Eddie who displayed all
that brilliance. Not me.

EXT. VERN'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Eddie, holding Vern's card, buzzes the buzzer. There's no
answer. Eddie buzzes again and again. Finally:

(CONTINUED)

24.

CONTINUED:

VERN'S VOICE
(GROGGY)

Yeah?

EDDIE

Vern! It's Eddie.

VERN'S VOICE

Bad time, okay--?

EDDIE

Vern -- last night 90 pages just
wrote themselves! I totally chucked
the novel I pitched them --I
suddenly SAW, Vern, how this whole
societal economic class struggle --
and its solution -- didn't have to
be futuristic or fictional -- it
was actually ACHIEVABLE here, in
our lifetime -- and I could just
lay it out, like, like a manifesto,
or something, like Mein Kampf
except not by a crazy racist fuck!
(no response, realizing)
Okay, I won't talk any more about
this if you let me in.

The buzzer buzzes.

INT. VERN'S APARTMENT DOOR - DAY

The door opens. And Eddie is taken aback. Vern has been
beaten up. Really worked over. His lip is split, his face
puffy and bruised. His right hand is bandaged.

VERN

Well, that was fast.

EDDIE
WHAT HAP-

VERN

Don't ask.

Leaving the door open, Vern turns around and motions at Eddie with his left hand to come in. The place is all mismatched antique furniture -- the possessions of someone who collected once, with enthusiasm, but who's letting it all go to hell. Vern sits, keeping his injured arm elevated.

VERN (CONT'D)

So, Eddie. I guess you're interested after all.

(CONTINUED)

25.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

Yeah. That stuff's amazing.

VERNON

It works better if you're already smart.

Eddie can't get over how bad Vernon looks.

EDDIE

VERN-

VERN

You don't want to know.

And Eddie wants the drug more than he wants to know what happened.

EDDIE

What's... um... what's it called?

VERN

It doesn't have a street name yet, because it doesn't have a street profile. And that's the way we want it to stay. The boys in the kitchen are calling it MDT-48.

EDDIE

"The boys in the kitchen...?" Vern, that doesn't sound FDA approved.

VERN

"FDA-approved," that's a laugh. Did you really believe that shit?

Eddie stares at Vern as he pours himself a coffee.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Okay, so what did we have here?
Some unknown, untested, possibly
dangerous drug scammed out of some
unidentified lab somewhere, given
to me by a highly unreliable guy I
hadn't seen in years.

VERN

So you want some more of it?

EDDIE

Yes. Definitely.

Vern chuckles. He knew it.

(CONTINUED)

26.

CONTINUED: (2)

VERN

We'll talk about it. But first
maybe you can do me a little favor.

EDDIE

Uh... sure.

Eddie wants to get on with it and get out of there, but Vern
clearly has him by the balls.

VERN

You can see, I'm in no shape to go
out right now. Will you hop down to
the dry cleaners and get my suit?
And maybe pick me up a little
breakfast...?

Eddie sighs. Vern tosses him a set of KEYS.

INT. A DRY CLEANER'S AUTOMATED CLOTHING RACK - DAY

As the plastic-wrapped clothes spin towards us...

EDDIE (V.O.)

It was amazing how quickly it all
slotted back into place...

INT. A DINER GRIDDLE - DAY

As two eggs are flipped, over easy.

EDDIE (V.O.)

..the dealer-client dynamic.....

INT. VERNON'S BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

And here comes Eddie, carrying Vernon's suit, and greasy bag

of breakfast...

EDDIE (V.O.)

...the easy sacrificing of dignity
for the guaranteed return of a dime
bag, or a gram, or in this case a
little pill that was going to cost
me a month's rent.

He arrives at Vernon's door. He takes out the keys Vern gave him, but he doesn't need them. The DOOR is AJAR.

27.

INT. VERN'S APARTMENT - DAY - EDDIE'S POV

As Eddie pushes the door open, he can see Vernon sitting, quite normally, on the couch. As he enters the room, though, he sees that the place has been RANSACKED. Destroyed.

Eddie wheels back to ask Vern what the fuck. And then sees it.

VERN'S FACE -CLOSE

In the center of his forehead is a neat little BULLET HOLE.

EDDIE

is no tough guy, and sweat springs to his brow. He starts shaking... then, seized with horror that they might still be in here, he edges to the bedroom. We hear THE POUNDING OF HIS HEART as he peeks in...

INT. EDDIE'S POV - VERN'S BEDROOM

It's been ransacked, too. Torn to shreds, bureau drawers opened and dumped, pillows ripped open with knives. But no one is there.

INT. VERNON'S DESK - DAY

Eddie's shaking hand can barely hold the phone.

EDDIE

Yes... I... I need to report a
murder. Eddie. Morgan. --Edward J.
I won't.

He puts down the phone, puts his head in his hands.

VARIOUS CUTS OF: Eddie sitting. Shifting his butt in various positions. Holding a BASEBALL BAT he's found --just in case "they" come back.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It took them forever. And the

longer I sat there, the clearer I saw... Vern had known whoever had done this. He'd opened the door.

CLOSE ON - EDDIE'S FACE

EDDIE (V.O.)

And one guess what they'd been looking for.

28.

INT. VERN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eddie, cleverly wearing kitchen gloves, is now furiously tearing through the rubble the thieves have left behind, the scattered clothes, under the bed...

INT. BATHROOM -. DAY

Eddie pokes quickly through the medicine cabinet -- nothing but Tylenol.

INT. VERN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eddie sits on the couch with (dead) Vern, staring at him, as if a corpse could give up a secret. He looks down at VERN'S BREAKFAST CONTAINER.

EDDIE

At least you got your last meal.

There are lots of takeout containers around.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You never did like to cook...

Eddie's eye falls on VERN'S STOVE. Unlike the rest of the kitchen area, it's pristine. Unspattered. Eddie jumps up.

VERN'S STOVE - CLOSE

Eddie opens it. The inside is as clean as the outside. We HEAR SIRENS now -- the cops are finally coming, and Eddie must rush. Eddie pulls out

THE BROILER - CLOSE

Taped to the inside is A LARGE BROWN PADDED ENVELOPE. Slowly, Eddie pulls out the package, reaches into it.

EDDIE'S HANDS - CLOSE

He is holding about TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS in cash. But that's not all. He reaches in again... there's something else inside... Eddie's hand pulls out a LITTLE BLACK ADDRESS BOOK. But there's still something else.. he reaches in again. And

now Eddie's hand pulls out A PLASTIC CONTAINER WITH AN AIR-LOCK SEAL... he pries the seal off... Inside are FIVE HUNDRED **OF THE LITTLE WHITE PILLS.**

Eddie HEARS THE THUD OF APPROACHING FEET, voices. Making a decision, he quickly tucks the envelope into his jacket, jumps down from the chair... JUST AS A COP pushes through the door.

(CONTINUED)

29.

CONTINUED:

He sees Eddie, spins, POINTS HIS GUN right at him.

COP

Let me see your hands.

Eddie throws his arms in the air.

EDDIE

Heyheyhey! I'm the one that called you!

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

Eddie sits, making his statement to an overweight DETECTIVE.

EDDIE

... No, ex-wife's brother. I just ran into him on the street and he invited me up to, you know...

The Detective looks at him suspiciously.

DETECTIVE

Buy some drugs?

EDDIE

Wha-- No! Talk! What're you --

DETECTIVE

Okay, fine, what did this guy do?

EDDIE

He was -- I don't know, I heard he was sort of an antiques dealer.

DETECTIVE

A dealer?

CLOSE ON THE ENVELOPE hidden in his jacket, burning a hole in his side. Eddie tries to stay calm.

EDDIE

Yeah... of, uh... Viennese kind

of... chairs... sort of curlicue
leg kind of things--

The phone is ringing. The detective picks it up.

**DETECTIVE
(INTO PHONE)**

Yeah. That is correct. An Edward
Morgan. He's here.

(CONTINUED)

30.

CONTINUED:

Mysteriously, the Detective hands the phone to Eddie.

DETECTIVE (CONT'D)

The victim's sister.

FLASH!

EXT. A BEACH - DAY

Eddie sees young, beautiful Melissa, laughing, in the surf.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

Eddie can't believe it. He stares at the phone, then finally
speaks into it.

EDDIE

Melissa?

MELISSA'S VOICE

Eddie. You were there?

EDDIE (V.O.)

I hadn't heard her voice in 10
years.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Right before. I'd just run into him
on the street.

MELISSA'S VOICE

God.

(BROKEN)

This is all so weird...

EDDIE

Melissa --you don't think I had
anything to do with-

MELISSA

No, no, no, Eddie, I know that. I

wish I was more surprised. He was... involved in some stuff... I better not say any more.

EDDIE

Not on this line, no.

A beat. Eddie still can't believe he's talking to her.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Melissa... maybe...
(a deep breath)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

31.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Do you want to... meet somewhere,
or...?

He lets it hang in the air for a moment.

MELISSA'S VOICE

Eddie, I've got to do the funeral.
And God knows what else. I just...
we can't meet, okay?

EDDIE

Then... I'll see you at the
funeral.

MELISSA

No. I don't want that - please
don't... I'll call you at some
point, when this is over. Okay?

EDDIE

Okay.

A beat. Melissa's voice is wan, vulnerable.

MELISSA'S VOICE

Okay.

She's hung up. Gone. Eddie turns back to the detective who's
staring intently at him.

DETECTIVE

Something doesn't jell here.

Eddie tries not to look panicked. The cop looks up, taking in
the entrance of THREE newly arrested HIGH CLASS HOOKERS.

They are young. They are blond. They are wearing very short
skirts and fuck-me heels. The cop eyes them appreciatively.

EDDIE (V.O.)

But I knew, when his attention
wandered to something more
pressing, that he was going to let
me go.

EXT. PRECINCT - DAY

Eddie walks down the stairs, shaken up but profoundly
relieved. Even a little giddy. Then he stops.

(CONTINUED)

32.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (V.O.)

Only then did it occur to me that
someone could have followed me from
Vern's apartment.

EXT. THE STREET - DAY

Eddie walks, trying to cast inconspicuous glances over his
shoulder.

EDDIE'S POV - THE STREET

Is this guy following him? That guy? They all look innocuous.
They all look threatening. He has no idea.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

EDDIE (V.O.)

Probably not. Hopefully not.
Worth the risk?

Eddie enters, and, casting a surreptitious look around,
closes the door behind him.

INT. EDDIE'S DINING TABLE - DAY

The cash, the address book, and the bottle of pills are all
laid out on the table. Eddie sits, looking at them, realizing
that his life is now about to be jump-started. Yeah. Worth
the risk. A smile twitches at the corner of his mouth.

MUSIC UP UNDER:

EXT. MADISON AVENUE - DAY

Eddie is walking down the street, a brisk confidence in his
step, that penetrating gleam of intelligence back in his
eyes. We know right away that he's on MDT.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Back on MDT, it was obvious what I should do.

INT. A HIP DOWNTOWN MENS STORE - DAY

Eddie is being fitted for a sharp looking jacket. The camera moves to the mirror and we are suddenly (CONTINUOUS SHOT) in--

INT. TRENDY DOWNTOWN SALON - DAY

A hip, pretty girl is giving Eddie a haircut.

(CONTINUED)

33.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (V.0.)

Vern's cash...

THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO PAN... but instead of finding him the chair we are...

INT. GYM - DAY

Eddie's doing crunches, getting in shape.

EDDIE (V.0.)

...combined with an unprecedented surge of motivation...

THE CAMERA PANS to the mirror... but sees a reflection of...

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

He sits at his computer, a salad beside him. His printer spits out page after page of manuscript.

EDDIE

...enabled me to finish the book in four days.

INT. MARK SUTTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Eddie puts down a thicker manila envelope on Mark's desk. Mark is astonished.

INT. A SUGAR BOWL ON EDDIE'S TABLE - DAY

It contains ten tablets of MDT. Eddie's fingers reach in, take one.

EDDIE (V.0.)

A tablet a day... kept the torpor

away. And what I could do with my day... was limitless.

INT. THE MET - DAY

Eddie surveys paintings.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I now had cultural appetites.

INT. A PIANO CONCERT - DAY

Eddie sits attentively in the audience, reading the score along with the music.

(CONTINUED)

34.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

Learned to read music in a week...

INT. THE EAST RIVER - DAY

Eddie runs, earphones on his head. We HEAR, dimly, French phrases.

EDDIE V.O.

Even half-listening to any language, I became fluent...

Eddie becomes aware that there's ANOTHER RUNNER --a powerful-looking man, gaining on him, closer behind than makes him comfortable. Eddie flicks a glance over his shoulder.

EDDIE (V.O.)

The only cloud was the nagging feeling I was being followed.

With a surge of effort, Eddie speeds up, sprinting across the street just after the light changes. WHIZZING TRAFFIC cuts the mysterious runner off, stops him from following. He remains, panting, at the light.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Was I? Or did MDT create paranoia?

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY - (SERIES OF SHOTS)

EDDIE (V.O.)

The focal point of my existence quickly became... protecting my stash.

CLOSE ON: the plastic baggie of pills being DUCT TAPED inside the top of EDDIE'S BROILER. He SLAMS the broiler closed.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

Call it a homage.

INT. A BAR - NIGHT

Eddie stands there, in his new clothes, holding court. He has an entirely new aura. It's commanding.

EDDIE (V.0.)

I had a new, improved game.

He banters flirtatiously with a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

(CONTINUED)

35.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

(PLAYFULLY)

So you're saying that any author who's commandeered adjective status, "Orwellian, Dickensian--"?

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

--is prosaic. Yes.

EDDIE

Which means a prosaic author's work rests on a foundation of acclaim-

**BEAUTIFUL WOMAN
OR ZEITGEIST-**

EDDIE

So you're saying praise and fame are unrelated to achievement, that the greatest hits CD cannot possibly contain good songs? That Shakespeare's catchiness belies mediocrity?

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

I...

She breaks off, shrugs, smiles.

EDDIE

Well, then I'd guess you'd rather not hear about what I, personally, think could launch a thousand ships?

He puts a finger under her chin. He means her face, of course. The woman smiles, and blushes.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Fish in a barrel.

INT. UPSCALE BAR BATHROOM - (UNISEX, FOR ONE PERSON) NIGHT

TIGHT SHOT (LEGS ONLY) OF this regal, upscale women's panties down around her high heels and Eddie's legs between hers, pumping. A VASE shatters to the floor beside their feet, spilling its pricey orchids.

EDDIE (V.O.)

And it wasn't just women. I was,
for the first time in my life, a
presence...

36.

INT. ANOTHER BAR - ANOTHER NIGHT

The CAMERA circles around a European-looking crowd... that's clustered around Eddie. He's finishing a long story -in French.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Of course, all this seemed to work
better with people I didn't know...
than with people who knew me...

INT. A MODEST QUEENS LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eddie's MOTHER and FATHER, working class schlubs, sit on the floral sofa, staring at their now-dapper son, who is waving some paperwork in their faces.

EDDIE

...so, Mom, your 401 K is totally
mis-invested -- these guys are have
done ONLY the most Pliocene era
fundamental analysis and paid no
attention to eye candy psychology
surrounding the stock --
(realizing they're lost)
Okay, remember when I explained
default flops? Did any of that
stick?

(THEY'RE LOST)

CDS's? CDO's CBO's?

His parents stare at him. They don't know what to make of any of this.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I quickly returned to the

unfamiliar audience.

INT. ANOTHER UPSCALE BAR - NIGHT

A sizable crowd is around Eddie, including finance types in suits.

EDDIE

--Sure you get a short term spike,
but wouldn't that rapid expansion
devalue the stock completely in two
years?

A well-dressed broker - KEVIN DOYLE - shakes his head.

KEVIN DOYLE

No, no, there are safeguards--

(CONTINUED)

37.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

Against aggressive over-expansion?
There aren't, because there are no
safeguards in human nature.

Eddie's tone isn't aggressive -- it's genial, amusing.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

We're wired to overreach -- you
look at history, I mean, all the
countries that ruled the world?
Portugal? With its big, butch navy?
All that's left is salt cod and
cheap condos -- the Brits? Now they
just sit on their dank little
island, fussing over their suits.
Nobody stops and thinks, hey, we're
doing pretty well, we've got Poland
and France, and a big Swiss bank
account -- let's not invade Russia
in the winter! Let's go home and
pop a beer and live off the
interest!

The crowd laughs. Eddie takes a swallow of his drink.

KEVIN DOYLE

(smiles, gets it)
Yeah. It'll all happen again.

Eddie toasts him.

EDDIE

Hey, I want in on it!

Kevin Doyle, wishing Eddie was right, clinks his glass.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My brain was just pouring this
stuff out. Everything I'd ever
read, heard, seen, was now
organized and available --here it
is, here you go..

EXT. THE BAR - NIGHT

Eddie leaves with several people. Kevin Doyle presses a card
into Eddie's hand.

KEVIN DOYLE

You must have a portfolio, but if
you don't, I'd be very interested
in working with you.

(CONTINUED)

38.

CONTINUED:

Eddie politely takes his card. Smiles charmingly.

EDDIE

Thank you so much.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"I must have a portfolio." Very
well -- if I must, I must.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eddie pulls out the broiler and removes the ENVELOPE OF CASH
he's taped in there. It's much thinner.

EDDIE (V.O.)

But Vern's cash was low. And it
takes cash to make cash...

INT. MARK SUTTON'S OFFICE - DAY

Eddie stands opposite Mark's desk.

EDDIE (V.O.)

But it takes cash to make cash...

Another ELEGANT MAN is there too, Mark's boss, DUNHAM.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I'd like to re-negotiate my
advance.

DUNHAM

Well... sit down, we'll be discussing that.

MARK SUTTON

First, ah... I want to apologize, Eddie, if I in any way communicated a lack of faith in your abilities.

Eddie smiles coolly. In control. It's Mark who's a little nervous.

MARK SUTTON (CONT'D)

Mr. Dunham has read your pages, and we're prepared to make you what I hope will be a very exciting offer.

DUNHAM

What would you say to ten thousand more and another forty down the road?

(CONTINUED)

39.

CONTINUED:

Eddie holds there gaze, expressionless, but says nothing. After an uncomfortable moment, Dunham continues.

DUNHAM (CONT'D)

We think this could be an important title, maybe one in a series. I have to say, you came out of nowhere, but the good ones always

DO-

EDDIE

(INTERRUPTING HIM)

This isn't going to work.

DUNHAM

What's not going to work? The money?

MARK SUTTON

Eddie, we take you very seriously as a writer.

Eddie sounds almost regretful.

EDDIE

Yes, but I now see that writing, as a profession, is for marginalized whiners not fit for anything else.

Sutton thinks Eddie's kidding. He laughs nervously.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

No, I mean it, look at the life.
Incarceration, loneliness,
burrowing down into your own
psyche, increasingly insulated from
any truth, because you're not in
the currents of the world any more,
you're rattling around inside the
cage of your brain, self-
cannibalizing...

Dunham realizes he's losing Eddie, and jumps in.

DUNHAM

You don't think a best-selling
author would disagree?

(CONTINUED)

40.

CONTINUED: (2)

EDDIE

Oh, if you're good, there's some
remuneration, eventually, after
paperbacks, but at best your
career'll be oozing along like a
snail, a few thousand more copies,
whoop-dee-doo, you're "developing a
readership," -- for what? So you
can end up in Phoenix on a Saturday
night reading from your own work at
some holdout indie book store to a
bored audience of ten? --Half of
them there for the wine and cheese?

MARK SUTTON

Yes, but if your goal is to have a
VOICE-

EDDIE

(INTERRUPTING)

I don't think any goal will be
really achievable, Mark, until I'm
sitting on a large pile of cash.

The mens' mouths open. Then shut.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Financial reading material covers every square inch of floor.
Eddie now has three monitors operating side-by-side in his
living room, all spewing forth financial information as he
works the keyboard...

EDDIE (V.O.)

I would have to start very, very small... in a down market. No one was making money. But no one had **MDT...**

INT. AT A COMPUTER (LAFAYETTE TRADING FIRM) - DAY

Eddie stands behind a DAY TRADER who's spewing out an explanation of his work.

DAY TRADER

You've got your quantitative analysis - "quants..." Algorhythms to find minute price discrepancies... you're looking at numbers only. Price and volume patterns...

Eddie is staring at the screen, blocks of information forming and connecting in his mind.

41.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Eddie now sits, riveted to his laptop, keying.

EDDIE

Armed with Vern's last 800 dollars, I made 4000 in a day.

(BEAT)

It was too slow.

TIME/DAY CUT TO:

Eddie, differently dressed, surrounded by stacks of research, again keying away...

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Next day: \$7,500.00

(BEAT)

Still too slow. I needed more capital...

INT. A COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Eddie sits across from a sinister-looking young Russian in his early 30's. This is GENNADY.

EDDIE

Why not?

The two men stare at each other.

GENNADY

Because I don't see you before. And

I don't fucking like you already.
Why do I give you 100 thousand
dollars?

EDDIE

Because I quintupled my money four
days in a row.

Gennady barely glances at the papers Eddie pushes in front of
him and snorts, half amused, before pushing them back.

GENNADY

You're lucky.

EDDIE

It's not luck.

GENNADY

Okay, you tricked their computer,
you got some fix on the game.

(CONTINUED)

42.

CONTINUED:

Eddie now sees that it's better not to admit that he came by
the money legally.

EDDIE

You think?

Gennady smiles.

GENNADY

So you're a crook.

EDDIE

And that's a problem for you
because--?

Gennady laughs for a second. Eddie's not wrong about that.
Gennady looks in Eddie's eyes for a moment, calculating.

GENNADY

You people all get caught.

EDDIE

I won't. And what if I do? You
think I keep detailed records of my
investors? You'll have your money
back long before they figure out
what happened.

Gennady just looks at Eddie, thinking it over.

INT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

Eddie sits on a bench, waiting. Gennady appears. Hands Eddie a large paper bag. Eddie reaches for it; Gennady holds it aloft for one last second.

GENNADY

Okay, you take this... you mine.
You don't pay, you know what we do?
We cut you around the waist, peel
your skin, pull it up over your
head and tie knot in it. And you
don't die from that. You suffocate.

He lets the full picture sink in for a moment. Then:

INT. LAFAYETTE TRADING - DAY

Cubicle after cubicle of GUYS - all guys - at computers,
rolling the dice on the stockmarket.

(CONTINUED)

43.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (V.0.)

My new friend, Kevin Doyle, showed
me how you could leverage two and a
half times your cash at a day-
trading firm...

Eddie alone in a stall. He takes TWO MDT TABLETS out of his
wallet, downs them.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

I'd been upping the dose for over a
week. It seemed to cut my learning
curve.

OVERLAPPING DISSOLVES of Eddie working at a furious pace.
Another trader stands behind Eddie, watching. Second shot:
three traders are watching. Third shot: nine traders are
watching him, awed.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

It was instinct. But informed
instinct -- instinct based on huge
amounts of research, which, thanks
to MDT, was conducted more rapidly
and comprehensively than anyone at
Lafayette Day Trading would ever
know...

TRADER BEHIND HIM

Why are you buying that? The CEO

just got indicted...

EDDIE

But not for the big fat defense
contract he bribed his way into.
That's still on. Should be
announced in a week.

The trader shakes his head. How did Eddie know that?

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

At the end of the week my brokerage
account contained... over a million
dollars.

**INT. LAFAYETTE DAY TRADING - OVERHEAD SHOT OF ROOM -- "GOD
SHOT"-**

As still more people drift over to where Eddie is sitting...

(CONTINUED)

44.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (V.O.)

I'd heard the old metaphors about
the stock market: it was a
collective nervous system, a global
brain, a numerical representation
of the will of God...

EDDIE - CLOSE

Eyes taking in data, fingers reacting on the keyboard...

EDDIE (V.O.)

Whatever it was, I was jacked in,
booted up - my mind was living
tissue inside the greater,
functioning whole.

(BEAT)

By the end of the second week I had
2.6 in the bank....

INT. LAFAYETTE DAY TRADING BUILDING - DAY

Eddie at the computer, soaking up information, making trades.
Kevin Doyle stands behind Eddie, flabbergasted as he watches.

EDDIE (V.O.)

The word quickly got out.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Quick cuts of Eddie playing back his messages:

EDDIE'S MACHINE

You have... 19 messages.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Four job offers... my bank, raising
my line of credit... a reporter...

FEMALE VOICE

Listen, return my call, Mr. Morgan,
this article's about you's gonna
get written with or without your
cooperation... (BEEP!)

EDDIE (V.O.)

(SARDONIC)

All my new friends.

GENNADY'S VOICE

...you stupid shit, I be there
Thursday for the money, ten
o'clock!

(CONTINUED)

45.

CONTINUED:

Eddie makes a jerk-off motion, crosses to his window, looks
down.

EXT. EDDIE'S POV - HIS STREET - DUSK

There is a MYSTERIOUS BLACK CAR just sitting at the curb, in
front of his building. No one gets in or out. Eddie turns
back to his machine.

EDDIE (V.O.)

And finally, Kevin Doyle, trying to
sound casual.

KEVIN DOYLE'S VOICE

Eddie, I was having drinks with a
friend of mine, and... ah, you
won't believe this...

INT. A FANCY ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Lindy, Eddie's ex-girlfriend, is sitting across the table
from Eddie. She peers at him, confused. Is this dapper
stranger really her shlumpy ex?

LINDY

Carl Van Loon wants to meet you?

EDDIE

Apparently he does.

She is pleased for him, but flabbergasted.

LINDY

But you're not in the finance game.
What can you do for Carl Van Loon?
(shaking her head,

MYSTIFIED)

Eddie-- I --

THE BEAUTIFUL HOSTESS appears at Eddie's side. They have a brief conversation in Italian. Lindy stares, confused, as the hostess leaves.

LINDY (CONT'D)

Since when do you speak... what happened to you?

EDDIE

Self-improvement month. Someone gave me a wake-up call.

(CONTINUED)

46.

CONTINUED:

LINDY

God, Eddie -- I felt so bad about that.

EDDIE

Why? It stuck, didn't it?

Lindy eyes him, half pleased, half apprehensive. He seems so different.

LINDY

You didn't do all this for me.

EDDIE

Who says I didn't? So what -- it's not getting over? Is that it?

Lindy looks away, blushes. Sighs.

LINDY

All right, all right -- boy, you are really begging for it.

EDDIE

Begging for what.

LINDY

"I'm proud of you."

EDDIE

Gosh. This is so unexpected.

LINDY

I'm actually... more than proud.
I'm a little...

Eddie waits for her words, happily expectant.

LINDY (CONT'D)

... intimidated.

They smile at each other. A lot of affection flooding back.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Of course, we started up again.

INT. LINDY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eddie is making out with her on her couch.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Her place...

47.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

EDDIE (V.O.)

My place...

His apartment has been seriously transformed. Of course, it's nothing but a renovated tenement, but there are some new furnishings, rugs, lighting-- the total effect is now one of stylish prosperity. She and Eddie sit on the rug in front of the coffee table, drinking expensive wine.

INT. THE BACK SEAT OF A CAB - NIGHT

Eddie and Lindy, dressed to the nines, are clearly returning from a fancy party... and passionately entwined, at the point of having hot sex, driver or no driver!

EDDIE (V.O.)

Every place.

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Eddie stands, naked, at the window, looking out.

LINDY

What are you doing, hon?

EDDIE

Nothing.

He walks back over to her, looks down. She is snuggled up in Eddie's pillow, looking very pretty and vulnerable.

LINDY

What, you think somebody's watching?

EDDIE

No.

He's lying. He's not sure.

LINDY

Is there anything you want to tell me, Eddie? Now's the time.

He looks back at her, eyes unreadable. He shrugs.

EDDIE

With success comes enemies.

LINDY

Old Chinese proverb?

(CONTINUED)

48.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

No proverb. An inevitability.

LINDY

You should sleep. Isn't your Van Loon meeting tomorrow?

Eddie nods, sighs, turns away from the window. Then stops. He turns pale. Is sweating.

LINDY (CONT'D)

What. What.

Eddie takes a step. And suddenly... He's across the room. Boom. A skip in time.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Then... I found myself at the door. With no consciousness that I had moved.

He puts his hand on a table, steadies himself. He catches a look, in the mirror, of this lean, handsome, dapper shark he has become.

LINDY

Are you all right?

He doesn't look all right.

LINDA

When was the last time you ate something?

Dully the realization penetrates Eddie's fog:

EDDIE (V.O.)

It had been three days.

INT. THE ORPHEUS ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie sits at a table, discreetly wolfing a few appetizers. Kevin Doyle arrives, looking a little nervous.

KEVIN

Hey.

He sits, launches in.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

He'll be here in ten. Now look, since we have a minute, be warned: Van Loon's mercurial.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

49.

CONTINUED:

KEVIN (CONT'D)

One minute your best friend, the next...you're a leper. And he needs direct answers... anything tentative and you've lost him forever. I think we should rehearse a few scenarios..

EDDIE

I'm eating, Kevin.

There is so much quiet authority in Eddie's tone that Kevin just shuts up. But a moment later, looking at the sweat on Eddie's brow, Kevin is pecking at him again.

KEVIN

You up for this? You sure? Because I've got a little bit on the line

HERE-

EDDIE

Have a toast point.

Brazening it out again. Because Eddie isn't sure he can pull this off either.

ACROSS THE ROOM - LATER

There is that little stir from the hostess and staff that can only mean the entrance of a very rich and powerful man.

EDDIE'S TABLE -LATER

The martini is put down on the table. We tilt up to CARL VAN LOON, a young 50, no less vital and intense than the hungriest 27-year-old shark on the make. But he affects geniality. He sits; the middle-aged man with him, PIERCE, does the same.

VAN LOON

So. Eddie Morgan.

He looks Eddie directly in the eyes.

VAN LOON (CONT'D)

What's your secret?

A beat. Eddie looks at him back, directly in the eyes.

EDDIE

Medication. I'm on special medication.

Another beat. And Van Loon laughs. Pierce doesn't.
50.

ANOTHER ANGLE - LATER - THAT NIGHT

Eddie is in mid-spiel, Van Loon listening intently.

EDDIE

--Yes, that's partially what I'm
SAYING--

PIERCE

(CONTEMPTUOUSLY)

Pattern recognition? So that's your snake-oil? Look, if there's one thing we all understand, it's understanding itself --that's how the business works...

(SCOFFING)

Pattern recognition. Please.

EDDIE

(POINTEDLY)

Of course, not everyone can understand the patterns.

Kevin sucks in his breath. Pierce is annoyed. Van Loon is mildly amused, but not necessarily impressed. Eddie continues with his unstoppable, MDT-fueled insights:

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Look, there's no time for human judgement anymore. You see a chance, you blink, and it's gone. We entered the age of decentralized, online decision-making, with the decisions being made by hundreds of millions of individual investors around the world, people who don't even know each other -- making a killing in less time than it takes to sneeze.

PIERCE

Until they weren't.

EDDIE

Same rules, even in a panic. It's not understanding how companies work. It's understanding how mass psychology works.

**PIERCE
(SCOFFING)**

And you have a formula.

(CONTINUED)

51.

CONTINUED:

**KEVIN
(MEDIATING)**

Well, from 12 thousand to two point eight million in ten days--

EDDIE

Yes. I do have a formula, Mr. Pierce.

**PIERCE
(SNORTING)**

Delusions of grandeur.

EDDIE

I don't have delusions of grandeur.

A beat, as we PUSH IN on Eddie's face.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I have an actual recipe for grandeur.

Kevin stares in horror. Van Loon still says nothing.

EXT. THE ORPHEUS ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie simply stands there coolly; Kevin is nervously saying goodbye to Van Loon and Pierce, making small talk.

KEVIN

..and, oh, you know, she's on the wait list... Rosemary's pretty devastated...

VAN LOON

My daughter went there. I'll call the school for you.

Kevin blubbers with gratitude. Van Loon's car pulls up. Kevin pumps his hand. Van Loon looks past Kevin -- to Eddie.

VAN LOON (CONT'D)

Eddie. Ride?

It's the first real acknowledgement that he's taken Eddie seriously.

INT. VAN LOON'S LIMO - MOVING - NIGHT

Eddie and Van Loon regard each other. Finally, Van Loon speaks.

(CONTINUED)

52.

CONTINUED:

VAN LOON

I don't know who you are, Eddie, or what your game is, but I'm sure of one thing: you don't work in this business. I'm up to my ass in investment guys, and you don't have their half-cocky, half-terrified line of bullshit. Which is not to say I like yours any better.

He picks up a file, hands it to Eddie.

VAN LOON (CONT'D)

But you obviously pick your stocks in a way I haven't seen. So tell me. We're thinking of acquiring these companies. Take a few minutes. What's your take on them?

EXT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Van Loon's limo pulls up.

INT. VAN LOON'S LIMO - NIGHT

Eddie snaps the file shut, hands Van Loon back his pen flashlight.

EDDIE

But these companies aren't the question, are they?

VAN LOON

What do you mean?

EDDIE

Well -- you're upmarket energy -- what do you want with these little solar/windmill/hippie outfits?

Van Loon's gaze is expressionless.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

--Unless you wanted to play both sides of the fence, control the whole energy enchilada. But these wouldn't get you there in emerging markets. You'd need...

He eyes Van Loon, who is sitting up straighter. Eddie's hit a nerve. He smiels, whistles.

(CONTINUED)

53.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Whoa, whoa. This must be some big-ass merger you're contemplating.

A flicker in Van Loon's eyes. Bullseye.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

And there's really only one company with enough bling to justify a merger with Van Loon Associates...

VAN LOON

Have you been talking to somebody-?

EDDIE

Carl, it's just rationalization.

He says it like it's the simplest thing in the world. Which, to a person on MDT, it is.

Van Loon grinds his teeth. Wanting to talk about it, but too skittish.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Is Hank Atwood going to go for it?

A long beat.

VAN LOON

You are either an amazing con artist or a very smart young man.

EDDIE

Come on -- the two of you together? The world would have to come to you begging for energy like Oliver Twist with his little bowl of gruel.

A beat as the two men stare at each other.

VAN LOON

You realize that if the press got one whisper of -- I can't fucking believe I'm even discussing this--

EDDIE

It doesn't matter. It won't come off.

Now Van Loon chuckles, amused by Eddie's audacity.

(CONTINUED)

54.

CONTINUED: (2)

VAN LOON

The word "brazen" does not even begin to go there.

EDDIE

You'd have to back off Libya.

VAN LOON

Why? He's come this far--

Eddie suddenly pulls back the bait.

EDDIE

I don't think you'd want to hear about it from some shmuck who needs a ride home.

VAN LOON

You're a gusty little prick, Eddie.

EDDIE

Ooh. Now you're curious.

VAN LOON

Yeah. I must admit. You've hit a couple pretty big buttons. Go on. Tell me what you think.

EDDIE

(DISMISSIVE)

It's getting late.

Van Loon laughs.

VAN LOON

All right. You get your shot. Come to my office, tomorrow at ten, and tell me just exactly how the schmuck who needs the ride would re-structure this deal.

Eddie nods.

VAN LOON (CONT'D)

And you better be prepared.

EDDIE

I'm at your disposal.

Eddie opens the car door. Van Loon eyes his building, scoffs.

VAN LOON

You don't really live here...?

(CONTINUED)

55.

CONTINUED: (3)

Eddie smiles.

EDDIE

The Spartans weren't big on amenities.

VAN LOON

Yeah. And they eventually got their asses kicked.

He gets out. Van Loon drives off.

EXT. EDDIE'S BLOCK - NIGHT

EDDIE (V.O.)

I didn't go in.

Eddie keeps walking by his building.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

I wanted to walk, move, digest,
ingest...

His stride picks up, buoyantly.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

There are moments in life, moments
when you know you've crossed a
bridge, your old life is over. Van
Loon was my bridge. One week, two
weeks from now, I would be
hobnobbing with ambassadors, flying
to Dubai for meetings, blowing off
supermodels, vacationing in Medici
villas... And that too, was only a
bridge...

He steps off the curb.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

Suddenly...

A SHARP, JARRING

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSTON STREET - NIGHT

Eddie is stepping off another curb, God knows where.

EDDIE (V.0.)

There was another skip.

(CONTINUED)

56.

CONTINUED:

He stops, rocked.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

How had I gone that last 20 blocks?
I got another ten...

ON EDDIE WALKING...

EDDIE (V.0.)

... then...

...in mid-step...

EXT. UPPER 5TH AVENUE - NIGHT

Eddie is walking past the Metropolitan Museum.

EDDIE (V.0.)

I was back uptown.

A SHARP, JARRING CUT TO:

INT. A CLUB - NIGHT

Eddie is suddenly sitting at a bar, picking up a drink, people around him...

EDDIE (V.0.)

What bar was this? Was it Harlem...?

A SHARP, JARRING CUT TO:

Eddie is dancing with a BEAUTIFUL BLACK WOMAN...

EDDIE (V.0.)

Same bar? Different bar? How long had passed...?

He breaks away from her, starts for the door...

A SHARP, JARRING CUT TO:

INT. A CLUB LADIES ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie comes to in the act of banging THE BEAUTIFUL BLACK WOMAN savagely, against the stall door.

EDDIE (V.0.)

And it happened again--

A SHARP, JARRING CUT TO:

57.

EXT. HARLEM STREET IN FRONT OF BAR

Bam! A LARGE BLACK MAN crumples in front of Eddie -- goes down, hit, blood pouring from his nose. (Could he be the boyfriend of the girl Eddie's just banged?) Eddie stares at his bloody fist. It hurts--!

EDDIE (V.0.)

And again...

INT. A LOFT - NIGHT

EDDIE (V.0.)

And again...

Eddie sits on a plush sofa with several MIDDLE-AGED

INTERNATIONAL TYPES, some chattering in Italian.

He has a drink in his hand. There are paintbrushes, paints and canvasses strewn around... a live/work space.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

And again...

A SHARP, JARRING CUT TO:

(And now the images are speeding up:)

INT. A HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Eddie is walking down the plush corridor with an ATTRACTIVE MIDDLE-AGED LATIN WOMAN we saw at the artist's loft... Now it's just FLASHES --skimming stones of consciousness--A WINE CORK being popped. A PLATE OF MUSSELS swimming in wine sauce. Rumpled SHEETS. And then...A BLUR OF MOTION -- bodies, a swirl of riotous color --

A FRENZY OF SHOTS: A CAB STOPPING. A GARGOYLE ON A BUILDING.

A DOG LEASH ABANDONED IN A PUDDLE. No rhyme, no reason, just image, image, image...

And then blackness.

EXT. THE BROOKLYN BRIDGE - DAWN

Eddie is walking, now with a limp. He stops. Looks back. The familiar postcard view of Manhattan is ahead of him, looking like it always looks.

EDDIE (V.0.)

When it finally stopped, I couldn't account for the last eight hours of my life.

(CONTINUED)

58.

CONTINUED:

He notices his foot hurts when he puts it down. He has a limp.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

There was nothing to do but walk home.

He turns around and limps back towards the island.

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Eddie is sleeping in all his clothes.

EDDIE (V.0.)

It was my first sleep in two days.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eddie, looking very groggy, is holding a THICK PACKET marked "Van Loon Associates, -BY COURIER." The files Carl Van Loon sent. Sitting on the dining table is an MDT tablets. He stares at them.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Should I? Would I start "skipping time" again?

He pushes the tablets away. Doesn't take them.

ANOTHER ANGLE - TIME CUT

Eddie is sitting in his reading chair, exhausted, going through the paperwork.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Even off MDT, I decided to give Van Loon's files a shot.

VAN LOON'S FILES - CLOSE

Eddie leafs through them... pieces of paper charting corporate growth, covered with charts, graphs, and mind-numbing statistics. PUSH IN ON Eddie's face, as he realizes...

EDDIE (V.O.)

They were fucking hieroglyphs.

INT. A WALL STREET OFFICE - DAY

The phone rings. Kevin Doyle picks it up.

(CONTINUED)

59.

CONTINUED:

KEVIN

Hello--? Eddie--? What are you talking about?

And we CROSS-CUT between them:

EDDIE

I can't make the meeting, I'm, uh... I'm sick.

It's a lame excuse, it sounds lame as he says it, but then, he's off MDT.

KEVIN

Yeah, well, you can't have the
fucking flu right now -- he'll
never give you this chance again!

EDDIE

I need to, ah, analyze this data-

We see the two men continue to talk, Kevin growing more
agitated, Eddie growing more sheepish as we HEAR:

EDDIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Already I recognized it... the
thick tongue, the leaden synapses.
It was regular Eddie - the Eddie
that, now, was unbearable to be.

We FADE UP THE SOUND on the two men:

KEVIN

... Don't you get it?! This is your
test--!

EDDIE

Well, I can't pass a fucking test
right now!

KEVIN

And how am I going to look if you
don't?

Eddie looks pretty bad. He massages his temples.

EDDIE

Okay, Kevin. Okay.

He hands up on a still-yammering Doyle. He picks up the MDT
pill, looks at it.

(CONTINUED)

60.

CONTINUED: (2)

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was my first morning off MDT in
a month. The beginnings of a
headache was curling around my head
like a big fat, greasy python.

Again, he looks at the MDT tablet, weighing his options.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But the time-skips had me scared.

He puts the tablet back down on the table.

INT. THE REGENCY HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

Eddie walks in, much more tentative in his stride, fear in his eyes. This is the real Eddie, the non-MDT Eddie and he feels suddenly out of place with the curly maple paneling antique Persian carpets.

EDDIE (V.O.)

My thought -- such as I had one --
was to tap dance with Van Loon
until I could find out more about
MDT.

INT. BAR AREA - DAY

Eddie sits on a couch, Pierce on another chair, Van Loon opposite, watching him.

VAN LOON

What do you know about Hank Atwood?

EDDIE

Uh... iconoclast... owns, um, a lot
of Colorado...

He's struggling.

VAN LOON

Uh-huh. So this is "prepared,"
Eddie?

He shoots Eddie a look of withering contempt. Eddie holds the stare and shoots a look back.

EDDIE

What is this, Atwood 101? Everyone
knows about Atwood.

VAN LOON

Where was he two years ago?

(CONTINUED)

61.

CONTINUED:

A flash of panic in Eddie's eyes. What's the right answer?

EDDIE

Nowhere.

An agonizing pause. Then Van Loon nods.

VAN LOON

Two years ago Forbes didn't even have him on the radar.

EDDIE

Yeah, his Great Leap Forward.

Eddie is faking it. Pierce is looking at him intently. But Eddie's staying afloat.

VAN LOON

The guy comes on, out of nowhere, so fucking strong he has me on the run. Beat me out of two properties, invests in bumfuck countries with no oil, places I wouldn't go near, sextuples his money.

Eddie's glance flicks to the TV behind the bar. A WOMAN'S PICTURE flashes on the TV screen -- and he recognizes it. It's the ITALIAN WOMAN he met last night!

VAN LOON (CONT'D)

...Always picks green technologies, invests in them, and a year later he owns them.

Eddie strains to hear the ANCHORWOMAN'S VOICE...

ANCHORWOMAN

... found dead in her hotel room last night, victim of foul play.

Eddie tries to keep his face immobile. Van Loon's voice drones on, distorted now, as we HEAR Eddie's heart pounding.

VAN LOON

...100 billion if he has a nickel... and I have to convince him, somehow, that I can raise his game.

ANCHORWOMAN

An unidentified eyewitness has reported seeing a man with a limp leaving the scene.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

62.

CONTINUED: (2)

ANCHORWOMAN (CONT'D)

Anyone with information should contact local law enforcement authorities. --Steve?

Eddie bolts upright.

VAN LOON

You can't tell me he's in this to improve the fucking planet. He owns a ball team.

Eddie is pale, sweaty, faint. There's only one thing to do:

EDDIE

Excuse me.

Eddie dashes out. Van Loon and Pierce look at each other.

EXT. THE REGENCY - NIGHT

Eddie bursts from the door, VOMITS into the gutter.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I couldn't have.

He leans against a street sign, trying to right himself. He gasps for breath.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

...or could I?

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Eddie comes in, breathing wildly, panicked.

EDDIE (V.O.)

If I could walk, talk, conduct business, seduce a woman, fight-- with no memory... could I kill someone? Was it even me? Who was I?!

Immediately the PHONE RINGS. He nearly jumps out of his skin. He can't answer. He sits on the couch, head in his hands, rocking, as it rings. Finally, the machine picks up.

MELISSA'S VOICE

Hi, Eddie... it's Melissa. Listen, call me back as soon as you--

Eddie lunges for the phone, picks it up.

(CONTINUED)

63.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

Melissa--?

MELISSA

(surprised he picked up)
Eddie--?

EDDIE

Melissa, I want to talk to you.
Please. Meet me somewhere...

MELISSA

We're talking now.

EDDIE

Nonono -- at Charlie's, across the
street. At two.

MELISSA

You can't see me, Eddie.

EDDIE

Please. Melissa -- it's important,
please come -- you have to tell me
what you're talking about!

But she's already hung up.

CLOSE ON - EDDIE'S DRESSER DRAWER - DAY

Eddie's hands rummage through everything...

EDDIE (V.O.)

I realized that there were other
people who might know about MDT...

His hands find what they're looking for. Vernon's **LITTLE
BLACK BOOK.**

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Vernon's other clients.

INT. EDDIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eddie sits on the bed, the black book open on his knees.
Eddie looks at the page, then reaches for the telephone.
Picks it up. Hears **STRANGE CLICKS** over the dial tone.

He puts down the phone, fear on his face.

64.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Eddie walks, slipping through the crowd, trying to suppress
his limp... he looks nervously behind him... is that **MAN** in
the **TAN RAINCOAT** following him? He tries to walk faster, but
it makes his limp more pronounced. He turns the corner. He
seems to have lost the guy.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

Eddie sits on a park bench, making calls on his cell phone.

EDDIE

Hello, may I speak to Paul Kaplan,
please?

**WOMAN'S VOICE
(SUSPICIOUS)**

Who is this?

EDDIE

I'm a journalist. From Electronics
Today magazine.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Look... my husband died three days
ago.

Eddie is floored.

EDDIE

I'm... I'm so sorry. Goodbye.

SMASH CUT TO:

Eddie has dialled another number.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I, ah, may I speak to Jerry Brady?

MALE VOICE

Jerry's in -- who's this?

EDDIE

Uh-- Bill Johnson.

MALE VOICE

Well Bill... Jerry's in the
hospital...

(VOICE QUAKING)

...and he's really sick.

(CONTINUED)

65.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

Oh my God. What's wrong with him?

MALE VOICE

We don't know. He just started
getting these headaches a couple of
weeks ago...? Then, uh, last

Wednesday he collapsed at work...

SMASH CUT TO:

Eddie turns to the last page of Vernon's book.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Of all the people I called, three
were dead, and the rest were sick.

Eddie dials the last number. Instantly, there is a RING. We
RACK FOCUS TO-The MAN in the TAN COAT, sitting a discreet
distance from Eddie. His phone is ringing. Eddie turns white.

The man takes out his cell phone and answers.

MAN'S VOICE

Hello...? Hello...?

The man suddenly looks up. Locks eyes with Eddie. Knows that
he knows. Eddie leaps up, begins to run. The man leaps up and
follows.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - DAY

Eddie runs desperately, as fast as a person off MDT possibly
can.

He still has the limp from his blackout escapade, too. He
can't run fast.

Tan Coat is gaining. Eddie collides with pedestrians, steps
on street sunglass displays, sends a saxophonist sprawling.

EDDIE (V.O.)

In the end, my stupidity saved me.

Eddie, panicked, not looking, runs for the crosswalk.

EDDIE'S POV - A HUGE TRUCK

is barrelling, unstoppable, right towards him--!

(CONTINUED)

66.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE is frozen. The TRUCK SWERVES, up on the curb. Tan Coat
must dive out of the way, knocking down pedestrians like
bowling pins, as the TRUCK hits a STREETLIGHT, mangling it --
then is WHACKED -- twice -- by TWO CABS piling up behind it.
When Tan Coat extracts himself from the pile of prone
pedestrians, his last glimpse is of-

EDDIE - DOWN THE BLOCK

disappearing down into a Subway entrance. Swallowed by a crowd.

TAN COAT

hesitates, but knows that he can't catch up. Eddie's given him the slip. This time.

INT. CHARLIE'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Eddie, limping, enters, looking around anxiously.

EDDIE (V.O.)

What was I dealing with? Who could tell me? I hoped against hope... that Melissa would show.

EDDIE'S POV - SCANNING THE PLACE

Not one person in it could possibly be Melissa. Eddie sighs. Turns to go.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)

Eddie...?

Eddie turns back. There, sitting at a booth, is a thick-waisted, short-haired brunette middle-aged woman, wearing a large, shapeless sweater. Eddie had looked right at her... and not recognized her. She bears no relationship to the siren Melissa of his memories. Eddie tries to hide the shock on his face.

EDDIE

Melissa...?

He goes to her, sits. Yes, it's the same person, but dramatically, tragically changed. Her face is puffy, her pallor blotchy. There are lines under her eyes and around her mouth, lines brought on by more than the passage of a few years.

Eddie tries to conceal his shock.

(CONTINUED)

67.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You... how are you doing?

Melissa responds with a cynical shrug. Then, she eyes him.

MELISSA

Don't tell me I look good, because I know I don't. I didn't want you to see me this way...

(BEAT)

You look good.

EDDIE

I guess I lost some weight...

MELISSA

Yeah, well, MDT'll do that to you.

They regard each other for minute, unsure of where to start. Old emotions. New emotions. Shock. Dismay. Affection.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

I know you've been doing it. I just read the Post. Eddie. Short-selling stocks? Second-guessing the markets? You? Come on.

Eddie doesn't know what to say.

EDDIE

Since when do you read the Post?

MELISSA

These days, the Post's about all I can read.

EDDIE

Melissa, what do you mean?

MELISSA

I mean, I did it too. And I only took nine or ten hits. Vernon didn't tell you any of this, did he?

EDDIE

No.

Melissa snorts as if to say, typical.

MELISSA

Well, when he told me about this amazing new drug...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

68.

CONTINUED: (2)

MELISSA (CONT'D)

I was like, down the hatch. And it was amazing. I read Brian Greene's

The Elegant Universe in 45 minutes and understood it. My work rate increased... just, insanely, overnight. My boss started to hate me -- they offered me his job. And then I got scared.

EDDIE

Why?

MELISSA

I'm not stupid. I mean, nobody can keep up that level of mental activity and not crash. I stopped taking it.

EDDIE

And...?

MELISSA

I got sick. Headaches, throwing up... I went back to Vernon to see if I maybe shouldn't take another hit, or half a hit, and then he told me about... about the people who were dying. One guy didn't die, but he's a vegetable, his mother has to sponge him down every day...

(BEAT)

How much have you been taking, Eddie?

A long beat as they look into each other's eyes.

EDDIE

A lot.

MELISSA

Well, maybe they've worked out the bugs. Maybe... maybe this isn't the same batch...

Eddie hates the look in her eyes. His hands are at his temples.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

You're off it right now, aren't you?

EDDIE

Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

69.

CONTINUED: (3)

MELISSA

Are you getting a headache?

EDDIE

Finish your story.

MELISSA

Well, I didn't take more. And I didn't die. But after a while I found I couldn't concentrate on anything for longer than ten minutes. I missed deadlines. I got lazy... and slow... put on weight... the magazine let me go. My husband checked out. Sex? Get out of here.

She leans back, looks him in the eyes.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

That was two years ago, and I haven't been the same since. I can't read any more -- I mean, the fucking New York Post?

Eddie feels ill, physically ill, hearing this.

MELISSA (CONT'D)

After this, I'm going to have a migraine for three days. And I've got to pee. Which is another thing.

She gets up... goes to the Ladies room. And now Eddie sees -- she wears a LEG BRACE. Like a kid, from the old days, with Polio.

EDDIE (V.O.)

How many times had I thought of her, my first real love...

We see FLASHES OF YOUNG MELISSA...

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But that Melissa had unraveled in time and space -- she was a ghost now. I was never going to see her again, never bump into her in the street...

The tears gather behind Eddie's eyes. He can't help it. He puts his hand to his face to hide his emotions.

70.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Eddie leaves with Melissa. He is controlling his tears --

barely.

MELISSA

You have some left? Good. Go home and take it. Take the dose down, but don't just stop -- you'll die if you just stop. Try to taper off. Otherwise, the headache's just the beginning... I have to go--

Eddie, indeed, is rubbing his temples.

EDDIE

But when I run out--

MELISSA

I don't know. I have to go--

Eddie catches her arm.

EDDIE

Who invented MDT?

MELISSA

I don't know--

(BEAT)

Goodbye, Eddie.

He lets go of her arm. A puffy, crippled woman about to cry. She turns her back and moves away from him, stiffly, limping, without looking back.

EXT. EDDIE'S POV - HIS APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

EDDIE (V.O.)

No one seemed to be watching my apartment, maybe I could chance it.

ON EDDIE

He glances around - the coast is clear - and sets off across the street. He looks weak, ill - his breathing labored. He stumbles - catches himself

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I was getting sicker by the moment. Luckily I had one pill on me...

He pulls it from his pocket.

(CONTINUED)

71.

CONTINUED:

WHAM! He's pushed up against the wall of his building. Not

by Tan Coat.

By GENNADY THE RUSSIAN.

GENNADY

You fucking forget about me? Huh?

Eddie is stunned -- Gennady whacked his head against the building pretty hard. He still clutches the MDT tablet tight in his fist.

EDDIE

I... I... ahh...

GENNADY

One o'clock? And you not here?!
Eddie tries to catch his breath.

EDDIE

I'm here now!

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - ON THE DOOR

They come into his apartment, Eddie using all his energy to stay upright.

EDDIE

I'll get you a check.

Gennady turns to ice.

GENNADY

A check? A check?! You out of your
fucking mind?! What you think we
are, some financial institution?

Eddie realizes his brain isn't working --of course Gennady can't take a check.

EDDIE

Gennady, look-

GENNADY

I cut your balls off!

EDDIE

I wasn't thinking. Look, we just
need to go to my bank- OOF!

Gennady has punched him in the stomach. Harder than he's ever been punched. Eddie gasps for breath... holds his fist to his body, protecting the pill. Gennady notices.

(CONTINUED)

72.

CONTINUED:

GENNADY

What you got there?

EDDIE

NOTHING--

Gennady grabs Eddie's wrist and wrenches his hand open.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

It's aspirin.

Gennady snatches the pill away from him. Examines it.

GENNADY

Don't look like no aspirin I ever see!

His voice drips with crude contempt.

GENNADY (CONT'D)

What is it? Something good, eh?

In one swift motion, Gennady pops it in his mouth and swallows it!

Eddie is mute with shock.

INT. A BANK - CLOSE ON

Eddie's shaking hands are handing Gennady a thick envelope.

EDDIE

That's the whole thing, plus twenty.

He looks desperately ill. He can barely stand. Gennady, meanwhile, is coming on to MDT.

GENNADY

I feel good. What in that shit?

EDDIE

Aspirin and vitamins.

GENNADY

You fucking full of shit, Morgan. I know you lie about the movie script too.

He wants to hit Eddie again, but thinks the better of it with all the bank cameras.

73.

THE MONITOR -

We see Gennady give the camera a gay little wave, then turn and walk out.

EXT. THE STREET - DAY

Eddie lurches along the street, staggering like a drunk, barely able to walk. People avoid him, veering away.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I had to get my stash.

INT. LINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

Lindy clearly has a mid-level executive job; her office is better than a cubicle and she has a bit of a view. There is a KNOCK. A FEMALE ASSISTANT appears in the door.

FEMALE ASSISTANT

Lindy...? I wouldn't have let him in, but I know you know him...

EDDIE appears in the door, looking deathly ill.

LINDY

It's all right, Lisa.

The girl goes. Lindy, sensing something dire, leaps up and closes the door.

Eddie immediately collapses on the floor. Lindy kneels down to help him - competent, trying to stay calm.

LINDY (CONT'D)

Eddie-- What is it--?

EDDIE

I'm sorry -- I'm sick. I wasn't going to make it home-

LINDY

Okay. Okay, I'll get you to a

DOCTOR--

EDDIE

IT WON'T HELP--! I need to get-- it's very simple: I need my pills.

LINDY

What kind of pills?

(CONTINUED)

74.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

They're... for my headaches...

LINDY

What headaches? What are you--?
(beat, realizing)
Are you on some drug?

EDDIE

It's... complicated.

LINDY

Oh. Oh. So all this energy of
yours, all this focus... has been
some drug, Eddie?

EDDIE

Not... the way you...

LINDY

You need a doctor.

EDDIE

No. That won't--

Eddie's PHONE rings. He and Lindy look at each other. He answers it.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Hello?

INT. VALERIE (HIS LANDLADY'S) APARTMENT - DAY

Valerie is on the phone. And we CROSS-CUT BETWEEN THEM:

VALERIE

What the hell are you doing up
there?

EDDIE

W-what?

There are, indeed, LOUD NOISES coming from above her.

VALERIE

Are you tearing up your floor or
something?!

Understanding in Eddie's pained eyes. He clicks off the
phone.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I knew what was going on.

75.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT -A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS -DAY

MALE HANDS are ripping the place to pieces. Pulling the toilet from the wall. Cutting open the mattress. Taking apart Eddie's computer.

INT. LINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

LINDY

...a smart drug...?

EDDIE

It was supposed to be legal.

LINDY

Oh, Eddie... you jerk.

EDDIE

I have a supply... stashed...

LINDY

(knows what's coming)

No.

EDDIE

I just need... to get it...

LINDY

And I'm supposed to just GO?! In the middle of my work day?! To your APARTMENT to get you more DRUGS?

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The MALE HANDS have found Eddie's hiding place. They LIFT the old BROILER of the STOVE... ..and...

The MDT IS NOT THERE. The broiler is slammed down in anger.

INT. LINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

EDDIE

Not to my apartment. I moved it.

LINDY

You did--? Why?!

EDDIE

I was smart. I was on MDT.

LINDY

Then where did you keep it--?

(CONTINUED)

76.

CONTINUED:

He looks at her, guiltily.

LINDY (CONT'D)

Oh, you prick.

INT. LINDY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Lindy enters. Tense, panicked. She walks to a SQUARE END TABLE, takes the lamp off it. The table is actually a box -- she lifts the lid. She reaches in... and pulls out the PACKET OF MDT.

LINDY

You asshole... in my fucking
HOUSE?!

Furious, she stuffs it into her purse and goes for the door.

EXT. LINDY'S BUILDING - DAY

As she leaves, we see that we are in the POV of...

A MAN

across the street. He clicks open a CELL PHONE.

INT. LINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

There is a KNOCK on the DOOR. Lying on the floor, trying to breathe, Eddie ignores it. His PHONE rings again. It takes a lot of effort just to answer it.

EDDIE

Hi -- Have you got it?

And we CROSS-CUT BETWEEN:

INT. A MOVING CAB - DAY

Lindy is on the phone. Her voice is tense, terrified.

LINDY

Yes. --Eddie, there's someone
following me.

EDDIE

Are you sure?

LINDY

He got into the cab behind me, and
they're making every turn I'm
making!

(CONTINUED)

77.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

Don't get out.

LINDY

What the fuck did you put me in the middle of--?!

EDDIE

Call the cops.

LINDY

(PANICKING)

There's traffic. We're slowing down...

(to the driver)

Go around him! Go around!

(TO EDDIE)

Shit! We're stopped dead.

(A GASP)

He's getting out, Eddie -- he's walking over here-

Eddie, helpless on the floor, can do nothing.

EDDIE

LINDY--!!!

EXT. FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

Lindy bolts from the cab just as TAN COAT puts his hand on the opposite door. She takes off into Central Park. And he's after her like a shot.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Lindy veers off the path, through the trees, zig-zagging, trying to find a place not to be seen.

TAN COAT

Zig-zags too, not far behind her.

LINDY

Begins to scream, desperate:

LINDY

Help! Help!!

Up ahead, miraculously, A COP ON HORSEBACK. He steps the horse toward her. She races over and presses her body against the side of the horse.

(CONTINUED)

78.

CONTINUED:

She's so panicked and out of breath she can barely speak.

LINDY (CONT'D)

There's... a... man... chasing me.
He has a long, tan --

The cop seems to be paying attention, then suddenly GRUNTS and TWITCHES, his eyes flutter, glaze... and HE TOPPLES OFF HIS HORSE to the ground... ...revealing TAN COAT, on the other side of the horse. The BLADE in his hand is bloody. LINDY runs.... tries to lose herself in a WEDDING PARTY... comes to a section of huge, decorative BOULDERS and ROCKS. Dives behind one of them.

Ahead, she can see the outdoor ICE SKATERS, couples, families, enjoying the ice. It seems surreal. Several yards behind her is TAN COAT, looking behind every tree, every trash bin. Lindy picks up the phone, keeping her voice low, although she's hyperventilating.

LINDY (CONT'D)

Are you still there?

And we CROSS-CUT BETWEEN:

INT. LINDY'S OFFICE - DAY

EDDIE

Yes. What's happening?

LINDY

I'm hiding, but I'm stuck. He'll find me!

EDDIE

Just be still, stop talking.

LINDY

He killed a cop--

EDDIE

What?

LINDY

He's going to kill me, Eddie!

EDDIE

Listen to me. Can he see you?

LINDY

(CRYING)

You fucking asshole--

(CONTINUED)

79.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

Can he see you?!

LINDY

Not yet. --I don't know what to do!
What do I do--!

EDDIE

There is something.

LINDY

What?!

EDDIE

Listen to me. Reach into the bag
and take one of the pills.

LINDY

S-swallow one of those things?!

EDDIE

Yes.

Tan Coat is getting closer.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You will know what do to, Lindy.
Take one, and you'll know.

LINDY

He's got a knife -- I can't think
my way out of a knife--!

EDDIE

You'll come on in thirty seconds.
And yes, you will think your way
out, that's what it does. Are you
taking it--?

She swallows the pill.

LINDY

(A BEAT)

Yes. He's getting closer.

EDDIE

Lindy. I love you.

(A BEAT)

--Lindy? Are you there?

A beat. We PUSH IN on Lindy's eyes. Which are changing. Growing more steely. Determined.

(CONTINUED)

80.

CONTINUED: (2)

LINDY

Eddie...? I feel it.

She hangs up. Eddie is left looking at the phone.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Tan Coat is perhaps five yards behind Lindy and getting closer. But she's not crying any more. She's looking at-THE ICE SKATING RINK, and the skaters, whirling across the ice.

LINDY'S

eyes flash. She knows what to do. Suddenly, she BOLTS from her hiding place behind the rock, tearing down the hill as fast as she can. Tan Coat is behind her like a shot.

EXT. THE ICE SKATING RINK - DAY

Lindy races down the hill, pushing past the line of people, and onto the ice... Tan Coat is clearly desperate --he doesn't give a shit who sees him chasing her.

In a flash, he's on the ice after Lindy, running and sliding. People collide with him, he pushes skaters aside, sending them sprawling... Just as he's closing in on Lindy...

Lindy wheels around, grabs a SIX YEAR OLD GIRL under the arms, and HOISTS HER INTO THE AIR, swinging her legs at Tan Coat as hard she can! The little girl's skates arc through the air --whoosh! --and connect, CUTTING Tan Coat's FACE. Badly.

He sinks to his knees, hand to his cheek, welling blood. People scream and scatter. Lindy keeps her wits about her. She runs, sliding across the ice, and leaping the fence, with surprising grace. She's gone.

INT. LINDY'S OFFICE - DAY - ON EDDIE'S HAND - CLOSE

as an MDT pill is put into it. A WIDER SHOT shows Eddie swallowing it with a glass of water.

LINDY

sits across the room, looking at him, her expression cool and composed.

They look at each other, a look of understanding.

81.

INT. W HOTEL - LOBBY - DAY

Eddie finishes checking in, Lindy beside him. He seems completely restored to his sharp, snappy self. The desk clerk gives him a key. He puts his arm around her, leads her to the elevators.

INT. W HOTEL - ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie takes Lindy's hands, sits her on the bed.

EDDIE

We'll stay here for a couple of days. We'll be powered up, we'll be able to think our way out of this...

He kisses her hands. Looks into her eyes.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I'm back. All right?

Lindy looks at him for a long moment.

LINDY

Who's back, Eddie?

EDDIE

I can take care of you now.

LINDY

That was never what I wanted.

EDDIE

A lot's going to happen for us. And everything that I will have... I will share with you. I will love you.

Lindy's head comes up. She looks at him, steely.

LINDY

You know... you were always smart. You could have done this. Not this... but some of these things... maybe a third of these things... without any smart drug at all. A third of all this... to most people...? ...would be plenty.

She gets up, turns away from him.

(CONTINUED)

82.

CONTINUED:

LINDY (CONT'D)

I understand that stuff now, Eddie.
And I don't blame you for taking
it. No one could ever tell you,
till you take it, what it can do.
Invincibility in a bottle. And I
know I'm going to think about
taking it again every day for the
rest of my life.

There's eerie quiet to her tone that Eddie hasn't heard
before. A matter-of-fact chill.

LINDY (CONT'D)

But once you can see everything
that way, mapped out like that, on
a grid... and always be right...?
Who'd want to wing it? Who'd want
to fuck up? Who'd want to be human?

She heads for the door.

LINDY (CONT'D)

I just came up to say goodbye. I
don't ever want to see you again.
I'm not even going to stay in New
York. Don't try to find me, and
don't try to help me.

She goes. He knows there's no point in stopping her. She's
done with him.

EXT. W HOTEL - LATER

Eddie at the WINDOW, looking down...

EXT. EDDIE'S POV - THE STREET

He sees Lindy briskly walking away. RACK FOCUS as Lindy
passes... GENNADY. Leaning against a sign post. Lighting a
cigarette. And looking up at Eddie's hotel. Waiting.

EXT. W HOTEL - DAY

Gennady stands there, looking up at the hotel. So he's a
little surprised to find EDDIE walking right up to him.

EDDIE

Looking for me?

Gennady quickly gets aggressive:

(CONTINUED)

83.

CONTINUED:

GENNADY

You think you can run out on me?
You think I don't know where you
are?

EDDIE

I was under the impression that our
business was settled.

Something is jammed into Eddie's ribs. Something under
Gennady's coat. Eddie doesn't blink.

GENNADY

Walk.

Gennady walks him around the corner, down some stairs, to the
(deserted) ground entrance of someone's apartment. Eddie
remains cool.

EDDIE

So now you're going to rob me? I
thought you were a businessman.

GENNADY

I want some more of that shit.

EDDIE

What shit.

GENNADY

The pills.

He whacks Eddie, hard, across the face. Eddie, stoic, on MDT,
doesn't react.

EDDIE

Well, so do I. You took the last
one.

GENNADY

So you get me more.

EDDIE

I can't get more -- the dealer's
dead.

Now Gennady smiles.

GENNADY

Oh. Well. Too bad for you. Because how you gonna go to those fancy meetings with your nose fed to my dog?

(CONTINUED)

84.

CONTINUED: (2)

Eddie doesn't like that Gennady knows anything about his business life. But he stands his ground.

EDDIE

Nothing. I. Can. Do.

GENNADY

Make some calls. One hundred pills.

EDDIE

A hundred can't happen. The dealer's dead, I have to call three people to even get a line on--

The gun barrel is brought up beneath Eddie's chin.

GENNADY

You know I don't really do this. So clean, like this. What I do to you, I do in stages.

EDDIE

I might... be able to get ten.

GENNADY

Ten. Fuck your ten.

EDDIE

(holding his ground)
Ten. And no guarantee there's more.

Gennady looks at him for a long, menacing moment.

GENNADY

Oh, I think guarantee.

But he's accepted the ten. For now. He PUSHES Eddie against the wall, hard, knocking the wind out of him.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Self-pity and MDT were not compatible. One has to go on...

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - CLOSE ON - A SMALL ENVELOPE

being put into Gennady's hand. A wider shot reveals Eddie, watching Gennady with contempt as he grabs a fistful of nuts

off a bar table as he goes. Pig.

EDDIE (V.O.)

...Patch up what's left...

85.

INT. CARL VAN LOON'S OFFICE - DAY

VAN LOON

I won't deny you pissed me off,
Eddie.

EDDIE

I was sick. I shouldn't have gone
to the meeting. I tried to cancel,
but Kevin imploded on me--

Van Loon looks at Eddie penetratingly.

VAN LOON

I didn't know who or what I was
talking to.

EDDIE

A hundred and five, is what you
were talking to, Carl. Delirium.

VAN LOON

Look, there can't be any
instability. Not when you're
playing at this level.

EDDIE

I sent over my revised projections--

VAN LOON

I didn't ask for your projections.

EDDIE

I know, but I think if you look at

THEM-

VAN LOON

I already have.

A long beat as the two men size each other up. Van Loon looks
away, but a tiny smile creases the corner of his mouth.

VAN LOON (CONT'D)

As a matter of fact, there were
firings over your projections.

EDDIE

I'm sorry.

VAN LOON

...some things my team missed. So, oddly enough, I find myself... needing to fill a position.

(CONTINUED)

86.

CONTINUED:

Eddie stays cool. He's in.

INT. VAN LOON CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

EDDIE (V.O.)

Two months after I started MDT, I was helping broker the most important merger in corporate history.

Eddie sits with Van Loon, Pierce, and several POWERFUL LOOKING MEN, conferring. They look at an elaborate chart/graph that Eddie is sketching... even Pierce, his detractor, looks impressed.

INT. W HOTEL - NIGHT

Eddie is eating a luxurious room service dinner, going through files and projections.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I found that if I maintained an even dose... remembered to eat... drank no alcohol... the blackouts didn't recur.

Eddie shakes one MDT pill into his hand, downs it.

INT. LAYFAYETTE DAY TRADING - DAY

Eddie is back on the trading floor, a crowd around him.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I was quickly back up to speed...

INT. A MADISON AVENUE TAILOR'S SHOP - DAY

Eddie is being fitted for new suits.

EDDIE

Is it possible to construct an... imperceptible compartment?

TAILOR

Certainly, sir. How large?

EDDIE

Quite large.

The Tailor nods, makes a note. He's certainly not going to ask any questions.

(CONTINUED)

87.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I would never again stash my MDT, not in an apartment, not in Fort Knox.

INT. A WINDOWLESS ROOM - DAY

Eddie, buzzing with charismatic authority, speaks to TWO BEEFY MEN, who are professional muscle. (Note: one has very elaborate tattoos on his fingers.)

EDDIE

I don't want it known that I have any security. You won't precede me, you'll follow me, never less than ten steps behind... 'inconspicuous' doesn't begin to describe you. You're not there. You're a CEO'S wife -- you're wallpaper.

The men nod. They understand.

INT. EDDIE'S HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Eddie straightens his tie. Then opens his suit jacket, reaches in, and pulls along a seam. An invisible POCKET OPENS.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Safer though my stash now was, I was not sitting around until it ran out.

INT. A LABORATORY - NIGHT

The place is state of the art, but it's an after-hours, furtive meeting Eddie is having with a TECHNICIAN, who passes back a small PLASTIC ENVELOPE to Eddie. In it we see SEVERAL TABLETS of MDT.

TECHNICIAN

Well, it's nothing you can cook up on a stove top. Whoever made it, it's a real pro act.

EDDIE

Can you make more?

TECHNICIAN

Can I combine these ingredients in the same exact quantities? Yes.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

88.

CONTINUED:

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)

But the exact method of delivery to the brain...? Darts at a dartboard.

EDDIE

Meaning...?

TECHNICIAN

Clinical trials. Guinea pig people.

EDDIE

That's too long.

TECHNICIAN

It's what it is. Or you'll kill people. You need twelve, eighteen

MONTHS--

Eddie tosses the envelope back at him, gets up.

EDDIE

Two million dollars if you do it in six.

He holds up the packet. The guy considers. Then slowly reaches for it, taking the MDT back.

INT . RESTAURANT - DAY

Eddie is having lunch with several POWER PLAYERS. They are listening, mesmerized, to what Eddie is saying...

EDDIE (V.O.)

It was all going to work out...

His eyes flicker upwards. His two SECURITY MEN are seated at the bar. The CAMERA PANS to find... Also seated at the bar, is the DETECTIVE who questioned Eddie at the police station!

Eddie gets up, "casually" wanders over to where the detective is sitting, pretends to order another drink. He does not make eye contact with the detective, or look like he's talking to him.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I thought we straightened this out,
Detective.

DETECTIVE

This isn't about Vernon Gant, Mr.
Morgan.

(CONTINUED)

89.

CONTINUED:

Fear begins to prick the back of Eddie's neck. But he strives
for casual annoyance.

EDDIE

What is it about?

The DETECTIVE hands Eddie a magazine.

THE NEW YORK DAILY NEWS - CLOSE

It is turned to the middle, and there is a picture of Eddie,
candid, on the trading floor. That fucking article!

DETECTIVE

A witness identified the Donatella
Alvarez suspect as this person. You
want to tell me about your
whereabouts on the night of June
12?

Eddie keeps his cool, does not look scared. Wanders back to
the table, says a few cool words, and strolls back to the
detective. The detective gets up. Shall we go?

EDDIE (V.0.)

Luckily, I could now afford Morris
Brandt, the best lawyer in New
York.

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

Eddie walks down the steps, with a beautifully dressed shark
lawyer, MORRIS BRANDT, 50's.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Time was bought, and I was released
-- for now.

Eddie's two SECURITY GUYS, waiting, fall into step ten paces
behind him.

MORRIS BRANDT

You're lucky somebody wiped the room. Weak circumstantial at best. Just between us -- were you there?

EDDIE

I don't remember.

**MORRIS BRANDT
(SHRUGS)**

Busy life.

(CONTINUED)

90.

CONTINUED:

He's heard it all, and doesn't really care.

INT. CARL VAN LOON'S CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

EDDIE (V.O.)

Carl Van Loon and Hank Atwood remained unaware that soon, I would be in a witness lineup as a possible murderer.

Eddie is making a presentation to the Van Loon Associates -- and a skeptical-looking OLDER GUY -- HANK ATWOOD.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

...well, a unified front between Van Loon and Atwood would be lethally effective, and not a moment too soon.. SyCorps, Andine and others are jockeying for the same industrial concessions in Mexico that both our companies are secretly sniffing out...

HANK ATWOOD

How do you know this?

EDDIE

Well, the governmental bribe structure is, in itself, corrupt, so of course information about its inner workings, like anything, can be bought. And there are other barbarians waving cash at the gates. I have a list here, in descending order of threat...

Atwood rubs his temples, seemingly distracted. But then, he looks at Eddie piercingly.

ATWOOD

Go on.

INT. VAN LOON'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

The meeting has broken up. Atwood is leaving, surrounded by minions. Van Loon leans into Eddie.

VAN LOON

Eddie...? What's your read.

EDDIE

It flew. Of course, he's not going to tell you right now...

(CONTINUED)

91.

CONTINUED:

Van Loon notices -- Atwood is using a cane.

VAN LOON

Jesus. He seems frail.

EDDIE

Might be an act.

VAN LOON

Yeah, doesn't track. He's not even
60.

Atwood's gone. Van Loon looks at Eddie.

VAN LOON (CONT'D)

So, Eddie. What are you going to do?

EDDIE

When this is over?

(SMILES)

I don't know. You haven't given me the answer.

Van Loon eyes him. Eddie is only half kidding.

VAN LOON

You haven't asked the question.

EDDIE

All right. If all this comes off... what's my take?

VAN LOON

You should have pre-negotiated.

EDDIE

I trust you.

VAN LOON

You shouldn't.

Eddie returns Van Loon's look coolly, implying that it really might be in Van Loon's best interest to trust him.

EDDIE

Well, given the scale of my contribution, it can't be anything less than forty. Let's say forty-five.

VAN LOOK

Done. Forty five thousand dollars.

(CONTINUED)

92.

CONTINUED: (2)

Both he and Eddie start to laugh.

VAN LOON

Forty million's plenty, Eddie. There's plenty more where this came from.

He tries to read Eddie's smile which is removed, far away...

VAN LOOK

...But you're not going to continue working for me, are you?

Eddie opens his mouth. Pauses.

VAN LOON

Don't lie. You're already bored. Onto the next...?

Van Loon didn't get to where he is for nothing.

VAN LOON (CONT'D)

I would really love to know what, after a forty million dollar payout, is "next" to you. But you're not going to tell me that, either.

(SMILES)

And I'm not sure I want to know. Might singe my ego.

He shakes Eddie's hand.

VAN LOON (CONT'D)

I'll open a line of credit for you. Even a tough nut like you's going

to want a few toys.

INT. A HUGE, DELUXE EMPTY APARTMENT - (THE CELESTIAL) - DAY

Eddie is being shown the apartment by a thirty-something female REALTOR. The apartment is still under construction -- brand new -- and enormous, with a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows in the living room showing off spectacular views.

REALTOR

... three restaurants, health club, of course, a private screening room, wine cellar, walk-in humidor... unparalleled, three-tier security system...

Eddie looks out over the city, feeling a surge. Yes.

(CONTINUED)

93.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

What is the asking price?

REALTOR

Twelve point five.

Eddie has to look away from her, biting his lip. He can't show her any sign of sticker shock. The face he turns back to her is composed, even blase. He shrugs -- no problem!

We see an almost sexual excitement dance in her eyes.

INT. EDDIE'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

EDDIE (V.O.)

It was, as it turned out, a good moment to move.

Eddie comes in. The room has been completely ripped to pieces -- just like Eddie's apartment. Eddie just smiles. Because there was nothing for anyone to find.

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY

EDDIE (V.O.)

No one knew, or would ever know, that I now carried the pills with me at all times.

Eddie stands, waiting, his two security guys lurking 10 steps behind. GENNADY appears, now with TWO RUSSIAN THUGS of his own. This is new, and Eddie wasn't expecting it.

Gennady's security guys eye Eddie's security guys, and vice

versa. Gennady is wearing a suit and looks much more sophisticated. Eddie hands Gennady a small envelope. Gennady takes it. In his eyes is a penetrating intelligence.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

Right away, it was obvious he was on MDT.

Gennady whips out a silver lighter and lights himself a cigarette. His movements are elegant, refined.

GENNADY

Next week...? I require twenty pills.

EDDIE

Next week? You can fuck yourself.

(BEAT)

Not that you'll feel anything.

(CONTINUED)

94.

CONTINUED:

Gennady's eyebrow goes up. Gennady's security guys reach into their jackets. So do Eddie's guys. Gennady's eyes flick over the situation, motion to his guys to keep still. Gennady laughs, an unpleasant sound.

GENNADY

I don't think your Forbes 400 new financial friends would appreciate the details of your little dilemma with the police?

Gennady turns with a flourish and walks off. Over his shoulder, with smug confidence:

GENNADY (CONT'D)

Thursday. You have them here.

Gennady turns, walks to the curb, where a NEW BLACK TOWN CAR is waiting for him and his boys.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Obviously, this could not go on. But there is very little on this earth that 45 million dollars can't solve. And tomorrow at nine, Atwood would sign the papers.

INT. VAN LOON'S OFFICE - DAY

Eddie, Van Loon and associates are all waiting in the conference room. The clock on the wall reads 9:40. Van Loon looks glum. A long silence.

PIERCE

Well, you want to call it?

ASSOCIATE #1

Cold feet.

VAN LOON

There was all last night to tell us that.

Van Loon pushes the intercom.

VAN LOON (CONT'D)

No call?

SECRETARY'S VOICE

Not yet.

(CONTINUED)

95.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

Okay, the decision could have changed -- that makes sense -- but the discourtesy doesn't.

(BEAT)

It's still on.

PIERCE

(SARCASTIC)

Oh, based on your graphs and projections?

EDDIE

(CALMLY REPEATING)

I saw his eyes: it's on.

PIERCE

You know, remind me: who the fuck, exactly, are YOU?! --I'm sorry, Carl, I'm about at the end with this unqualified, posturing little-

VAN LOON

Pull it back, Pierce.

PIERCE

Since when is this little pisher the fucking Delphi Oracle?!

VAN LOON

PIERCE-

SECRETARY'S VOICE
(INTERRUPTING)

Mr. Van Loon, Mrs. Atwood is here.

Eddie and Van Loon look at each other. What? Van Loon nods at Eddie; the two men get up. Pierce starts to get up too.

VAN LOON

Pierce, you can stay.

Pierce looks bitter -- chastened -- as Van Loon and Eddie go.

INT. CARL VAN LOON'S INNER OFFICE - DAY

Van Loon and Eddie enter, to find MRS. HANK ATWOOD, a well-dressed, well-preserved and beautiful 50, standing at Van Loon's desk.

MRS. ATWOOD

I wanted this to be as confidential
as possible.

(CONTINUED)

96.

CONTINUED:

Van Loon and Eddie can't imagine what's coming next.

MRS. ATWOOD (CONT'D)

My husband experienced some pain
and dizziness this morning. He's at
Lenox Hill, undergoing tests.

She speaks with great dignity, distraught, but tightly
controlled.

MRS. ATWOOD (CONT'D)

Obviously, it wouldn't be in our
best interests for this to be
reported by the press, as it might
put some of his interests at risk.
I just want you to know that we
have every intention of signing the
contract, and, as soon as he is
able, we will proceed.

EXT. VAN LOON'S BUILDING - DAY

Eddie and Van Loon flank Mrs. Atwood, walking her to her car.

EDDIE

I realize that this is a useless
platitude, but... if there's

anything we can do...

VAN LOON

Obviously we want to be as helpful
and respectful as possible.

MRS. ATWOOD

Thank you so much. I rely on your
discretion.

She shakes both of their hands. A driver has the door open
for her; she gets in, now out of earshot.

VAN LOON

(LOW)

You think there's a proxy?

EDDIE

Cagey fuck like him giving away
power of attorney?

Eddie shakes his head. The two men look at each other darkly.
The driver closes her door, turns -- and now Eddie can see
his face. It's TAN COAT.

(CONTINUED)

97.

CONTINUED:

With a huge, angry scar slashed across his cheek. Eddie and
Tan Coat look at each other. A steely moment of recognition.

Tan Coat turns away, gets in the driver's side. Van Loon
watches the car pull away.

VAN LOON

Well. He'd better get better.

We PUSH IN on Eddie's face. Who now knows.

EDDIE (V.O.)

But Atwood wouldn't get better.
Because Atwood was out of MDT.

EXT. MIDTOWN STREET - DAY

Eddie, beautifully dressed, walks. Ten paces behind walk his
SECURITY GUYS. He is thinking.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Well. Why be surprised? How many
other meteoric rises might be
explained by MDT? At least I had
some; my life wasn't in jeopardy.

Only my money...

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY - CORRIDOR

EDDIE (V.O.)

...and my liberty.

Eddie stands with his favorite POLICE DETECTIVE and his lawyer in an anteroom leading to an institutional door. His lawyer talks to him, low.

MORRIS BRANDT

I've been all over them... we can't allow any disparity in race or physical type between you and the rest of the lineup -- they're as close to your clones as I could possibly get away with -- it's going to be one big handsome blur to this guy-

A FEMALE COP approaches Eddie.

FEMALE COP

Mr. Morgan...? I need you to change your jacket.

(CONTINUED)

98.

CONTINUED:

Eddie stiffens.

EDDIE

Why?

MORRIS BRANDT

Oh, that's me... I want everyone in the same shirt, better for the blur factor...

A beat.

EDDIE

Of course.

Another beat of hesitation... then Eddie hands Brandt his jacket, takes off his shirt, puts on the blue shirt... and stoically follows the female cop through the grubby door.

INT. THE LINEUP - EDDIE'S FACE

FEMALE COP'S VOICE

Please turn to the right. Eddie and four other dark-haired guys turn to the right. Eddie looks at the black one-way

window.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Who was out there? The woman's
husband? Was some bellboy I
undertipped about to end my life?

INT. POLICE STATION - ON EDDIE'S SMILING LAWYER

MORRIS BRANDT

Not the dimmest clue. He was
dithering.

Eddie blinks at him.

MORRIS BRANDT (CONT'D)

"Maybe the third from the right...
No not him..." --Oh. Here you go.

He hands Eddie back his jacket.

MORRIS BRANDT (CONT'D)

(re: the jacket)
Thing of beauty. You had it made?

Eddie just nods, his eyes steely. The lawyer feels the molten
stare and hands the jacket back.

99.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DUSK

EDDIE (V.O.)

They'd kept me all day.

Eddie rushes down the steps, two at a time, looks at his
watch.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I'd missed my meeting with Gennady.

INT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DUSK

Gennady, wearing a gorgeous cashmere coat, waits, now with

THREE SECURITY GUYS.

Gennady looks at his watch, then says something low and
sinister in Russian to his associates.

EDDIE (V.O.)

But I had more important
business...

INT. VAN LOON'S OFFICE - DUSK

Eddie hurries into the room. Van Loon doesn't look up. He's watching a monitor, which has a live news feed to a financial channel.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER

...And the Dow has been yo-yoing all day, amidst speculation that Van Loon Associates and Hank Atwood have negotiated a merger...

Van Loon turns to Eddie, furious, agitated.

VAN LOON

Have you been talking to anyone?

EDDIE

Not a word, Carl.

VAN LOON

Where have you been, Eddie--? This is the second time you've turned to

VAPOR--

(CONTINUED)

100.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE

Personal time, Carl. Phone off. You're not telling me there's been any movement.

VAN LOON

No. Atwood's in a coma.

EDDIE

A coma?

Black looks between them as the newscaster continues.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It had gotten out, somehow. But I felt thick, stupid, tired. A small pain was starting behind my eyes. I'd been unable to take my MDT, and I was overdue.

He shoots Van Loon a glance. Van Loon is miserably fixated on the TV.

INT. VAN LOON'S HUGE, SLEEK BATHROOM - DUSK

Eddie stands in a stall. Reaches into the lining of his coat.

Unfastens the opening of the compartment.

CLOSE ON THE OPENING

There is nothing inside.

EDDIE,

panicked, feels again. Nothing. The MDT is simply not there!!! He begins to hyperventilate. Spin in place. Push against the stall walls, trying not to scream.

EDDIE (V.0.)

Was it Brandt? Or someone else? The police station? A coat room? How? How?

He bursts from the stall, alone in the bathroom. Stares at himself, terrified, in the mirror.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

In an hour I'd be useless. In two I'd be sick. In 24, dead.
101.

INT. VAN LOON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Eddie bursts from the bathroom. Trying not to look too wild-eyed.

VAN LOON

Eddie--? This came for you.

Eddie looks at a LARGE BOX on Van Loon's desk. Indeed, his name is on it. Eddie, mystified, approaches it. As Van Loon continues to stare at the TV, disinterested in the box, Eddie gingerly opens it.

INT. THE BOX - CLOSE

Inside are the SEVERED HANDS OF EDDIE'S SECURITY GUYS. (One black hand, one with the distinctive tattoos.) Gennady. Clearly these guys are dead. Eddie grabs the box and starts from the room.

VAN LOON

What are you doing, Eddie--?

EDDIE--!!!

But Eddie's gone.

INT. VAN LOON ASSOCIATES - DUSK

People are leaving for the night. Eddie shoves past them,

still holding the damning box, frightened, jacked up, desperate, shoving people out of the way to get to the elevators.

INT. A LIMO - NIGHT - MOVING

Eddie sits in the back seat, the box freakishly sitting beside him.

EDDIE (V.O.)
I couldn't think.

ON EDDIE'S FACE

His brow is beaded with sweat.

EDDIE (V.O.)
Only MDT could help me. I had no MDT. And then...

PUSH IN on Eddie's eyes.

(CONTINUED)

102.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
One thought.

(BEAT)
Was there anywhere...

We begin to REWIND... in Eddie's mind... through many IMAGES we've seen in this movie... stopping briefly at all the places Eddie has stashed his MDT.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
... anywhere at all...I could have left one pill...?

We STOP at the END TABLE in Lindy's apartment, peer inside. Empty. We STOP at the UNDERSIDE of the GRILL on Eddie's old stove. Nothing. We continue to REWIND -- but every image we stop on reveals... nothing.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I had to keep thinking. Somewhere safe...

INT. THE CELESTIAL - EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie sits at his huge new steel dining table, the evil box on the table in front of him, head in his hands.

(The room is filled with labeled boxes he has never had a chance to unpack.) The TV is on in the background. It's a

financial channel. We see MRS. HANK ATWOOD is giving a statement.

MRS. HANK ATWOOD

There is absolutely no truth to the rumor of this merger. None whatsoever. My husband is having some tests, this is a difficult time, and I would appreciate your directing further questions to our attorney...

She motions at the gentleman next to her. --Who is also Eddie's attorney, MORRIS BRANDT. The one who was so helpful with the police. The one who held his jacket.

Bitter amusement in Eddie's eyes. At least he knows. The APARTMENT BUZZER buzzes. Eddie freezes. Looks at the door. It BUZZES again.

EDDIE (V.O.)

It wasn't downstairs security, alerting me to a visitor.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

103.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was my inner door. Someone was in the building, ten feet away, right now.

Eddie walks to his phone, picks it up. Pushes the button, puts it to his ear. It's dead.

He pushes the "on" button again and again. Nothing. The buzzer BUZZES again. Eddie rushes to the door, opens the COAT CLOSET. In the closet is a state-of-the-art SECURITY MONITOR.

Gennady and TWO MEN are outside his door! Suddenly the MONITOR goes BLACK. Eddie flicks the switch on the monitor. Nothing. Eddie flicks the switch again. It's dead. Someone, somewhere, has figured out how to disarm it.

The buzzer BUZZES again. Eddie backs away from the door. We HEAR Eddie's shallow, panicked breathing. He lunges for his briefcase, pulls out his CELL PHONE.

THE CELL PHONE - CLOSE

It reads "No Signal." BAM! The first slam on the door begins. BAM! The second. The door holds, but Eddie begins to back away in horror.

BAM!

We slowly FADE TO BLACK. And FADE IN ON:

EXT. THE CELESTIAL - EDDIE'S TERRACE LEDGE - NIGHT

EDDIE (V.O.)

And so... here I am.

And now we pick up Eddie where we left him, standing on the ledge.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I knew they would kill me, slowly
and horribly. But this choice would
at least be mine.

We now hear the ZZZZZZZZ! of some major power tool drilling at the door, punctuated by more BAMS! -- one way or another they're going to get in. Eddie takes a breath, tries to jump. He can't.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But we're instinctive creatures. We
want to live.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

104.

CONTINUED:

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So, my foggy brain tried to
remember... where one tablet of
MDT... might be.

We PUSH IN on Eddie's eyes... We are still REWINDING in Eddie's mind... images of where we've seen him keep MDT... nothing... nothing... nothing... We STOP at the SUGARBOWL on Eddie's dining table. Then go forward --no, wait!--rewinding, stopping again on the SUGAR BOWL. Pushing in on the sugar bowl.

Eddie spins around, looks back into his apartment, eyes intense.

EDDIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was possible. And possible was
enough.

INT. THE CELESTIAL - EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Eddie is tearing through boxes as the POUNDING and DRILLING become deafening... he rips open a box labeled "Kitchen" -

it's full of BOOKS. Mis-labeled. JUMP CUTS as he rips open other boxes... his hands frantically scattering CDs, cutlery, cans of food... The door begins to give. Under the deafening

DRILL:

MORE JUMP-CUTS as Eddie hysterically tears the packing paper off of promisingly- shaped objects. --No. A glass. --No. A vase. --YES! The sugar bowl. With sugar still inside! Eddie rummages, frantically, among the sugar cubes as the door gives a few inches, groaning, and we glimpse blurred faces on the other side...

EDDIE'S HAND

pokes, wildly, among the cubes... pushing them aside, revealing at the bottom of the bowl-

ONE MDT TABLET looks back up at him.

Yes. It's really there! Eddie grabs it, just as, with a splintering CRASH! -- The door goes down.

Eddie steps back, brings the pill up to his mouth... But as he steps, he TRIPS on a SOUP CAN he's scattered... he FALLS backwards... his HAND hits the side of the coffee table...

(CONTINUED)

105.

CONTINUED:

The MDT TABLET goes flying... (slow motion)... as... ...also in slow motion, Gennady and his two thugs smile as they advance into the room... THE MDT TABLET... flies... flies... towards a GRATE in the floor -- a heating vent -- and HITS it... rolling... ... before disappearing forever down the grate.

Eddie knows that's it. His life has ended. He sucks in his last breath -- then, with a YELL, he rushes back for the terrace... for his suicide leap...

Thug #1 is quicker. Gets to the door first. Eddie will not have the luck to be able to jump. He's trapped between the two Thugs.

GENNADY

I told you I want more. You don't listen. Maybe you think I'm joking...

He reaches into his coat pocket...

GENNADY (CONT'D)

But I'm down to this last one.

...and pulls out a syringe.

GENNADY (CONT'D)

See, I dissolve pill in solution.
You shoot it - goes straight into
blood and to brain. Works much
better.

He pulls the plastic sleeve off the needle. Jabs himself in
the arm and injects the cloudy liquid.

GENNADY (CONT'D)

Now. Where do you keep yours?

Eddie is backed to the wall. Nowhere to go.

EDDIE

I'm plum out.

Gennady just smiles -- that was an unfortunate choice. He
gives an order to the Thugs who grab their tools and
disappear deeper into the apartment. WE HEAR them starting to
tear things up. Gennady and Eddie are alone.

GENNADY

They will find it. Or I will make
you tell me. Which is quicker? We
see, huh?

(CONTINUED)

106.

CONTINUED: (2)

He clicks open a BLACK ATTACHE CASE. It is filled with
sinister-looking silver instruments, and knives.

INT. EDDIE'S STUDY - NIGHT

Thug #2 has found, behind a bureau, a SAFE. He calls
excitedly, in Russian, to the other room.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gennady calls back in Russian. Then picks up a particularly
delicate, yet sharp-looking KNIFE.

GENNADY

This is a waste of my time, you
know that? I am getting out of this
part of the business... starting
import-export company. Very
exciting stuff. A lot on my plate.
I need to learn to delegate...

Eddie is backed up against a table, which is covered with

stuff he's scattered, which includes a BUTCHER BLOCK with A KNIFE in it... Gennady starts arranging his instruments.

GENNADY (CONT'D)

First, I will cut skin from you,
flay you... you stay alive nice
long time... then maybe we cut meat
from you, steaks... or maybe softer
parts... I get inspiration...

He looks up, smiles, to see the effect his words have on Eddie.

ON EDDIE

Staring back at Gennady, hard, a fuck-you stare. We can't see behind Eddie's back, but we can see the butcher block, and the knife is gone.

GENNADY

senses something is not right. Looks at Eddie quizzically.

GENNADY (CONT'D)

WHAT--

Eddie brings the knife up as hard as he can, right into Gennady's stomach. Gennady gasps in surprise, chokes, writhes. Eddie drives the knife home, harder, grabbing Gennady's other hand, which lashes at Eddie with the fillet knife...

(CONTINUED)

107.

CONTINUED:

The men fall to the floor in a death-struggle. Eddie exhausted, off MDT, but determined not to let go. Gennady writhes, flails, but doesn't cry out... he's already choking on blood. Eyes shocked, surprised. Eddie turns the fillet knife back on Gennady, slashes at his other arm; blood spurts. But it's not necessary. Gennady's eyes are glazing. His gurgling gets quieter. He's quite dead.

Eddie lies alongside him, panting, arm grazed and welling blood from where Gennady's filleting knife slashed him, suddenly weak and exhausted.

From the other room comes the BRRRRRRR! sound of the drill -- the boys, oblivious, are hard at work on the safe. Eddie tries to get up, then falls back.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Not much of a triumph, was it?

He's got the shakes... no, more of a convulsion... he sinks

back to the floor...

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

Because I would die here, too.

There is a break in the convulsion. Then another one starts.

EDDIE (V.0.) (CONT'D)

Only MDT could help me, and the
last of it was in this fuck's
bloodstream...

Gennady's BLOOD wells around Gennady's body in a crimson puddle. A puddle that's creeping closer and closer to Eddie's face, which is lying, convulsing, on the floor...

ON EDDIE'S EYES

between convulsions, suddenly looking. Looking at the blood. It creeps closer to Eddie's face. Eddie is trying to move, trying to push his face closer to the blood... he's there...

And now he turns his face down into the blood.

And begins to lap it up.

INT. EDDIE'S STUDY - DAY

The Thug finally gets the safe open. Inside is only one item - the TATTOOED SECURITY MAN's SEVERED HAND.

(CONTINUED)

108.

CONTINUED:

And its middle finger has been arranged in a vehement fuck-you. The thugs are not amused.

INT. EDDIE'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

The thugs are coming down the hall, muttering angrily...

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mouth smeared with blood, Eddie is dragging himself by the elbows, across the room. Footsteps coming. Fast.

INT. EDDIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - THUGS' POV

They burst into the room, see Gennady dead on the floor. The camera WHIP-PANS around. No Eddie.

BEHIND THE COUCH

Eddie lies, panting. And then it hits. We PUSH IN on Eddie's eyes. He feels it. His old friend. MDT.

THE THUGS

look up at a NOISE. Just in time to see Eddie bolting out the front door of the apartment.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE EDDIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

They come thundering out -- see a flash of Eddie disappearing
INTO--

INT. THE OPEN DOOR OF THE APARTMENT NEXT DOOR - NIGHT

We are in jittery, handheld THUG'S POV shot as they burst back in, barreling by rooms, looking in them, pressing on to more rooms...

A MAN'S SHADOWY SHAPE AHEAD, IN THE KITCHEN -

Thug #2 BLASTS his GUN... the MAN crumples, the glass doors behind him EXPLODE..... the MAN goes down...revealing Eddie standing behind him --(he's been holding up his neighbor's body) and, just as this registers -- WHACK! -- Eddie gives THUG #1 a savage shot with a fireplace poker. Thug #1 goes down, unconscious... the gun skitters across the floor...

THUG #2 dives, reaches for it. Eddie grabs a piece of the shattered glass and, in a vicious swipe, brings it down on the Thug's hand. But this guy is not a tough Russian motherfucker for nothing. Bleeding profusely, he doesn't let go of the gun... his bloody hand comes up, tries to aim...

(CONTINUED)

109.

CONTINUED:

Eddie DIVES BACKWARDS, through the broken glass door to the patio. The thug stumbles after him...

EXT. EDDIE'S NEIGHBOR'S TERRACE - NIGHT

EDDIE'S HAND, still holding glass, CUTS the awning-rope holding up the awning... The awning comes down on the thug, a huge canvas curtain DROPPING between the Thug and Eddie. BLAM! BLAM! Several holes appear in the canvas as the thug tries to shoot Eddie anyway, but Eddie has leapt out of the way.

THUG'S POV - UNDER THE CURTAIN

As he wrestles it off... he sees Eddie, on the ground, prone, just watching him calmly. He starts to smirk. Eddie touches a

MATCH to the ground. The FLAME shoots across the floor to the thug, who now realizes he's standing in a puddle, the overturned can of BBQ fluid next to him. In an instant, his LEGS AND PANTS are on fire. Now the man screams. Shoots blindly. But - click! -- is out of bullets. He rushes at Eddie, screaming, on fire, in animal rage. Eddie brings up a wrought-iron patio chair to meet him, catching him squarely in the ribs. He gasps, bends over... looks up at Eddie, beaten...

The face that looks back is without pity.

EXT. THE CELESTIAL - 20 STORIES BELOW, A WIDER TERRACE - DAY

We are looking up at the penthouse. A SHAPE is dropping, fast, towards us -- the shape of a man.

It's here! The man's head EXPLODES against the railing like a pumpkin as the rest of him disappears down, out of sight.

EDDIE (V.O.)

Later, it would be noted that my neighbor was in the music business. One of his drug deals had obviously gone bad...

(BEAT)

And the night was still young.

INT. A HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A MAN is on a gurney. A NURSE puts a sheet over his head. Before our view of his face disappears we realize --it's Hank Atwood. Dead.

110.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

Tan Coat is sitting, stoic and red-eyed in a chair. He senses something. Slowly turns his head and looks.

EDDIE is sitting in the chair next to him. The two men look at each other for a moment. Then:

EDDIE

I'm sure you're curious about what's happened to your boss. I certainly am. If my attorney was really working for Mr. Atwood, to save his life, then why is he dead? At what point was the Pony Express supposed to ride in with the life-saving medication?

(A BEAT)

Or, did the Pony decide that he should be running his own Pony show? Minus the dog.

Tan Coat stares at him, his face without expression.

INT. A CONNECTICUT UPPERCLASS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

AN UPPERCLASS HOUSEWIFE enters, in sweats, from the gym. Immediately notices something is not right...

INT. THE HOUSEWIFE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The place has been ransacked.

INT. HER BEDROOM - NIGHT

She rushes in. We SEE her husband - MORRIS BRANDT - tied up and gagged, struggling on the floor. Next to him, a smashed PICTURE. It once covered a WALL SAFE which is now open. The SAFE is empty.

EDDIE (V.O.)

I would not go back. I would not be stopped.

FADE OUT.

TITLE: Eight months later

111.

INT. A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN OFFICE - DAY

Desks, employees, volunteers, ringing phones. REUBEN, LATE 20's, sharp, a JAMES CARVILLE-TYPE, sits on a desk with casual authority, is on the phone.

REUBEN

...actually, no, there's no more tickets. --Yeah, I know, an overbooked fundraiser -- there's a first -- well, here he comes, I'll ask him -- Edward!!

We see Eddie striding down the corridor, wearing a sharp suit, looking more dignified than we've ever seen him, more adult. The snap and crackle of something new -- power -- is in his step. TWO MALE AIDES flank him. Reuben approaches, falls into step with them.

REUBEN (CONT'D)

I think we're looking at a second, overflow event-- there's a wave of donations coming in -- and I don't think they're even going to try a second debate -- don't go yet --

EDDIE

I have a lunch.

They have arrived at Eddie's office. Reuben nods at the closed door.

REUBEN

John Steadman's in there.

EDDIE

Who's that?

REUBEN

--Eiben-Chemcorps? Look, they're your biggest contributor, give him his two shitty little minutes.

Eddie sighs, capitulating. Puts his hand on the door.

EDDIE

Eiben-Chemcorps. What are they -- research?

REUBEN

Pharmaceuticals.

Eddie shoots him a look.

112.

INT. A LARGE, CASUAL OFFICE - DAY

Eddie comes in to find JOHN STEADMAN, 50's, well-dressed and gentlemanly, waiting.

STEADMAN

Mr. Morgan.

EDDIE

Nice to see you.

He shakes Steadman's hand, but Steadman doesn't get up. Odd. In fact Steadman looks uncommonly relaxed, almost slouched in his chair, looking up at Eddie with a subtle gleam in his eye that Eddie doesn't recognize.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

We appreciate everything you've done for us--

STEADMAN

Well, you've done most of it for yourself. Senator Morgan.

He says this with a kind of casual, prescient authority. And suddenly, we know he's right. Eddie will win.

STEADMAN (CONT'D)

I mean, everything from here's a technicality, isn't it, Eddie?

Again, that smile. Eddie doesn't know what this guy is about. And nobody calls him "Eddie" any more.

STEADMAN (CONT'D)

I think we both know where it's heading...

(A BEAT)

If... you can maintain.

EDDIE

Maintain?

STEADMAN

Eventually you'll run out. I just want you to know we're here to help you.

Eddie blinks at him. Did he just say what Eddie thought he said?

EDDIE

What are you saying?

(CONTINUED)

113.

CONTINUED:

STEADMAN

We've gotten most of the bugs out. It's longer lasting - you'll only have to take one a week.

Eddie is now dead silent. A long beat. Is it possible? Is he really talking to someone who makes MDT?!

EDDIE

Have you been watching me from the beginning?

STEADMAN

No. Those of you who indulged... distinguished yourselves very quickly. You made yourselves clear to us.

EDDIE

Who's "us?"

Steadman just smiles, waves the question away.

STEADMAN

You went the furthest with it the

fastest, so of course, to us,
you're the most interesting.

EDDIE

How did it get on the street?

STEADMAN

Security breach. That was never
our intention. We took care of it.

Meaning, they took care of Vern.

STEADMAN (CONT'D)

It will never again be on the
street. It will never publicly
exist. Obviously I don't need to
detail the advantages for you.

A long beat. Eddie doesn't trust this guy -- not a bit.

EDDIE

And what about for you? Why don't
you take it?

STEADMAN

We don't have to. You'll take it
for us.

(CONTINUED)

114.

CONTINUED: (2)

EDDIE

And in return...? I do what.

STEADMAN

Just keep on doing what you're
doing. We won't bother you much at
first.

EDDIE

And later...? What will you be
"bothering" me with?

STEADMAN

Well, given where you're heading,
some of our ideas are... grandiose.
But, I think, achievable.

Eddie takes that in.

EDDIE

And if I don't like your ideas?

STEADMAN

Then we'll say Godspeed. And your candle will have shed a brief, but lovely, light.

Eddie knows now. They own his ass.

STEADMAN (CONT'D)

But let's not even go there. Right now you should feel relieved, your problems are over. We just want to keep you healthy... and brilliant.

EDDIE

Luckily I can do that myself.

STEADMAN

Well, no, ah, that won't be the case. We shut your lab down this morning.

EDDIE

My lab?

Steadman nods.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Which one?

Steadman doesn't blink.

(CONTINUED)

115.

CONTINUED: (3)

STEADMAN

All of them.

EDDIE

You sure?

Steadman suddenly chuckles -- not at all concerned by this. Even amused.

STEADMAN

We were right about you Eddie - you're gonna go all the way. Let's not do anything to jeopardize that. There's no downside here - we're offering you a limitless supply with fewer side effects. I think you'll be pleased with the arrangement.

(BEAT)

Come on, let's get some lunch. I'm starving...

He heads for the door. Eddie remains still.

EDDIE

Tell me something.

Steadman stops, looks back at him.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

Did I kill that woman?

Steadman looks puzzled that Eddie would ask.

STEADMAN

Do you really want to know?

Eddie thinks. No, he doesn't.

EXT. CAMPAIGN HEADQUARTERS BUILDING - DAY

Eddie and Steadman exit, come down the steps, Eddie looking thrown. He drifts along, half-a-step behind Steadman, deep in thought.

STEADMAN

It's not so bad, is it?

Eddie doesn't answer.

(CONTINUED)

116.

CONTINUED:

STEADMAN (CONT'D)

Doesn't every man on the path to greatness have to tolerate the wind-drag of compromise?

A black LIMO waits at the curb.

STEADMAN (CONT'D)

Overall, we'll all be better off... foreign policy, the courts, even the Constitution could stand a little tweaking...

They descend the last few steps. Steadman opens the limo door for Eddie...

But Eddie hesitates. Doesn't get in.

STEADMAN (CONT'D)

Eddie?

EDDIE

After you.

**STEADMAN
(CORDIAL)**

No, "Senator". You first.

Eddie gestures for him to get in.

EDDIE

Please.

STEADMAN

All right then...

He gets in. And Eddie CLOSES THE DOOR AFTER HIM. Stands outside the limo, looking back at Steadman through the rolled-down window, his face a cold mask.

STEADMAN (CONT'D)

Oh, now. Don't underestimate us.

EDDIE

Don't underestimate your own creation.

Steadman looks at him quizically.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

I mean, you invented it. What does it do? It puts me 50 steps ahead of you fucks.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

117.

CONTINUED: (2)

EDDIE (CONT'D)

You think I didn't spend my days on MDT devising a personal defense structure that would scare the shit out of the Israelis--? You think there's not people with a bead on you right now, right in this building? You think this conversation is private?

STEADMAN

You don't know the caliber of enemies you'll be making.

EDDIE

You want to push that button? I'll show you my silos if you show me yours.

STEADMAN

You'll run out. You'll die.

EDDIE

Or I'll think of something. Isn't that what MDT does? Makes you think of something? Might even tell me how to get off it.

A flicker in Steadman's eyes. Anger.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

What if I just ask the drug... how to tell the drug... how to fuck itself? I mean, isn't it like the 8-ball?

Steadman raises his hand to the driver and the limo pulls away.

EDDIE (CONT'D)

It always answers.

As the limo recedes into the distance, Eddie finally exhales.

And only then do we see it.

He's scared.

THE END