ENOUGH

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Dialog in parenthesis is (not spoken aloud).

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

HEY
HER FACE. FLASHES. She looks gorgeous, then ordinary, sloppy, white waitress uniform, gorgeous again, dishes stacked in her arms, turning, looking, happy, tired. INTERCUT TITLES.

SLIM

We get a sense of her: 23, smart, good attitude, proud to be on her own and supporting herself even if the job is menial. She moves quickly, physically, with an almost athletic grace -

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

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

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

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

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

UP:

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HOW THEY MET

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

**GINNY**

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

**SLIM**

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

**FAST RIFF:**

**GINNY**

I Piece of cake -

**SLIM**

Piece of pie -

**GINNY**

Piece of ass. So what would you do?

**SLIM**

I don't know...

**GINNY**

**LIAR -**

**SLIM**

*(EMBARRASSED)*

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

**GINNY**

In what? I thought you hated -

**SLIM**

Psychology maybe, I don't know. I know it's not cool to say so, but I'd like to contribute something to society, even if - (it's just)
GINNY
We contribute. We give 'em food, energy, so they can go out and save Western Civilization.
A bell rings, a CUSTOMER comes in, and the owner of the place,
PHIL (45, Syrian, also the cook) sticks his head between them:

PHIL
Ladies, please. Am I paying you?

GINNY
Not that we noticed.

(SEES CLOCK: 11:15)
Oh my God, speaking of time -
The lunch rush is coming; they start working triple speed -

INT. "ORCA." LATER.

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

SLIM
Ever try the rock, hey?

GINNY
Excuse me?

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

GINNY
You're saying I sweat.
SLIM
Perspire, Ginny. You lightly -

(PERSPIRE)

GINNY
(a vow to get even)
I'll remember that.
(as someone comes in)
Your turn, I'm sweatin' too much.
Slim gives her a look, grabs a menu, goes over to where the new customer, whom we will call for the moment OUR HERO, is seated.

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

SLIM
Waiting for somebody?
He shakes his head. She can't help noticing he's very handsome.

SLIM (CONT.
Something to drink?

OUR HERO
Just water, thanks.

SLIM
I'll give you a minute to look over -

OUR HERO
That's okay. I was in yesterday...
(reads her nametag)
Slim.
She nods, slightly uncomfortable. He hands her his menu.

OUR HERO
What's your real name?

SLIM
No.

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

SLIM
No, I don't tell my name.

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

SLIM
Oh.

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

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OUR HERO (CONT.)
What're you reading now?
She stares at him...

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

OUR HERO
How long you been reading it?

SLIM
Six years. I'll be back with your

TB.
She leaves, goes back puts the order in, mutters to Ginny:
SLIM {CONT.}

Asshole.

GINNY

What'd he say?

SLIM

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

GINNY

He likes you.

SLIM

I think he's just a dick.

GINNY

Slim...he was in yesterday -

SLIM

I know -

GINNY

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

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SLIM

Okay, so he likes me.

GINNY

Do you like him?

SLIM

I don't know him.

GINNY

What's that got to do with it?

Slim: he is a major piece of
cake/piece of pie.

SLIM
I didn't notice.

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

SLIM
He's cuter than me??

tinny gives her a long stare; this is obviously a favorite

ROUTINE:

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

SLIM

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

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

OUR HERO

Nope.

SLIM
I don't read Finnecan's Wake either.

OUR HERO

I'm goin' into law. Enforcement.
She nods. This is more like what she expected.

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

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

**OUR HERO**

**HEY**
Sheturns back toward him -
He smiles, offers the rose:

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

**MITCH**
How much did you settle on?

**OUR HERO**
Excuse. me?

Slim frowns, steps closer so she can overhear:

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

**MITCH (CONT.)**
You and your friend. Yesterday.
Was it 200 or 500 or - ?
SLIM

(TO MITCH)

What're you -

MITCH

He bet his friend he could get in
your pants in less than twelve
hours, starting noon today.
Our Hero rises to his feet and pushes Mitch in the chest,
which

looks like a stupid move, since Mitch is bigger -

OUR HERO

Is this your business?
(right in Mitch's face)
What are you, the morals police?
He pushes again and Mitch's hand shoots out like a snake
striking. Grabs him by the collar. Lifts him. A frozen
moment, more violence just a breath away, and a sense of
thing

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

OUR HERO

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

SLIM

(to our Hero)
Was it two hundred or five? -

(VERY CALM)

I want to know what I'm worth.
Our Hero gestures to Mitch: would you mind putting me down?
Mitch reluctantly obliges.
Our Hero does his best to recollect his dignity. Looks at
Slim. Drops a ten on the table and smirks:

OUR HERO

The bet was two, but now that I
know you? Way too high.
A pained look flashes across Slim's face -
Our Hero starts toward the door, but Mitch steps in his
path. Speaks quietly but with authority; there's a physical power
in

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

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

MITCH
Sorry to get in your business.

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

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

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

CUT TO:
BRIDE AND

EXT. OLD PASADENA ESTATE. NIGHT.

FLASHES:

Wedding photos. Mitch has lots of (surprisingly upper crust) family, Slim has a few friends. The more photos FLASH, the more pronounced (and sad), the contrast. FLY RIGHT INTO: Bacchanalian DANCING. French Champagne has flowed; shoes and inhibitions were abandoned hours ago. THE CAMERA weaves through the DANCERS to find: Slim and Mitch, dancing close, never quite touching, every move intense, physical, like subtle public sex. Their eyes are locked; she runs her veil down his body, his hand lightly touches her ass; they slow down and stand, lips a millimeter apart but not quite kissing, the sexual tension building...

We see how crazy they are about each other, how completely physically involved – and how much fun they have. Watching them is Phil, with Mitch's parents, MRS. TYLER (58, confident, at ease with her power and family money, and likeable despite monstrous flaws) and MR. TYLER (someone Mrs. Tyler married in a moment of cupidity).

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

PHIL
Dead to her. He left when she was two.

MRS. TYLER
Oh. Well, I'm happy to pay for the WEDDING –

MR. TYLER
Yes, we're very happy –

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

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

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

PHIL
He's done well to get Miss Slim.

MRS. TYLER
Yes, he has, hasn't he? He's married down, but he's gotten value.
As Phil reacts, he notices his wife, SALIMA, has joined him.

With her are two kids (5 and 2). Salima's looking out at the floor: not at Slim, but at Ginny and her dance partner. We see a thought cross her mind. She bends down and whispers conspiratorially to the kids. They whoop their response, run out to Ginny (who looks quite uncomfortable in her Maid-of-Honor dress).

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

GINNY
Don't eat at their ice cream, huh?
They squeal with pleasure and run off.
Ginny turns back, resumes dancing with JOE (24, handsome in a casual way, a good guy):
GINNY
So this was during college or after?

JOE
During.

GINNY
What was wrong with you?
(off his puzzled look)
I mean—why'd you and Slim break up?

JOE
Oh. Well. I'm terrible in bed.
(lets this hang for a moment
for shock value, then:)
Plus, I don't know: we just sort of... evolved into being friends.

GINNY
Evolution? You were going the wrong direction, bud.

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

GINNY
Why am I not believing this?

(INTRIGUED)
Can I take you home right now?

JOE
If you've got a sense of humor.

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

JOE
Another thing: I live in Chicago; women always want the possibility of
LONG-TERM -

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

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

SLIM
You sure, you love me?

MITCH
Uh-huh...

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

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

PHIL
I'm sorry, I gotta get up five o'clock to buy green beans.
He slips an envelope into Mitch's hand:
In my country, it's tradition to give money to groom. You don't need it, but...
Slim shakes her head, touched, as:

MITCH
That's very sweet -

SLIM

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

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

MITCH
He really loves you. She nods, not quite picking up how odd his statement is: of course he loves her; she nicked him to give her away. Mitch turns her toward him and slips his hands inside the top of her dress (so the back of his hands touch her breasts; is this going too far?). He pulls her to him, whispers:

MITCH
You gonna give me babies?

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SLIM
Oh yeah.

MITCH
How soon?

SLIM
How soon can we get out of here? He hoists her into his arms and carries her off the floor. Applause from the GUESTS. It's a grand romantic gesture. You
have to wonder if Mitch is just a little too good to be true...

CUT TO:

CONQUERING HERO

EXT. SPANISH-STYLE HOUSE WITH GROUNDS. DAY.

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

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

HOME OWNER: Hello?

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

HOME OWNER: It's great, isn't it?

MITCH: We want to buy it.

The Home Owner's jaw drops as Mitch gestures toward his bulging WIFE:

MITCH (CONT.): My wife wants it for our family.

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

MITCH: Sure you are.
Mitch hands him a slip of paper. Totally amiable:

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

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

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

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

INT. HOUSE. KITCHEN. DAY.

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

the furnishings are simple, casual, friendly.
She's putting a bottle of oil up on a shelf... but it never quite gets there. Her face changes. Something's happened. The hand holding the oil lowers... the oil bottle slips through her fingers and smashes on the floor...
Oil spreading across the floor...
She stares at it.
Claws the air, grabbing the cordless phone as she plops down on a kitchen barstool. Starts to cry. Punches the autodialer.

SLIM
It's Slim, is he there? Water is flooding down the barstool; she's miscarried.
SLIM (CONT.)
Well, will you please just... Just
tell him I'm sorry, okay?

CUT TO:

SECOND PREGNANCY

INT. MITCH'S OFFICE. DAY.

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

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

SLIM
I lost this one too.

CUT TO:

BABY LOVE

INT. HOSPITAL. DAY.

Slim lies in bed. Very pale, a light dust of sweat. We
assume
she's between contractions. Mitch's face inches from hers;
smothering her with kisses.  
The Nurse brings the baby in, starts to give her to Slim -

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

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

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

SLIM
Who was that?

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

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

CUT TO:
THE MOMENT YOU KNOW

EXT. HILLSIDE. DAY.


IS

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

Slim looks up at him—

For one long moment they both seem to acknowledge the gulf between them...

Then Gracie says something. Slim turns back toward her, the "girls" are laughing again...and Mitch is not.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM/BEDROOM. NIGHT.

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

SLIM

Hey.

MITCH

Hey.

SLIM

(FLIRTATIOUS)

Should I join you?

MITCH
I'm about to get out.

SLIM  
(down to her panties)  
Oh.  

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

SLIM  
(DISAPPOINTED)  
Okay.  
(starts to go)

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MITCH  
(CALLS)  
Sorry.  

SLIM  
(TO HERSELF)  
Yeah. (Me too.)  
She's in the bedroom now. It's underlit, full of shadows. In scary-movie nomenclature, she's exposed, vulnerable; it feels like someone's going to leap out and attack her at any -  
Not this time. She throws on shorts and a t-shirt -  

INT. HALL. NIGHT.  
She looks in on Gracie, sleeping peacefully. Consoling image.  

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT.  
She's washing dishes, bored, humming to herself. The counter's covered with take-out food containers: she didn't cook. A noise. Pager. Not beeping, just humming slightly: she
wouldn't even hear it except it's on the tile counter. Sounds vaguely like a vibrator. Lying there, just a few feet from her. With Mitch's wallet and keys, his cell phone. She looks at it. knows she shouldn't... decides not to... Can't resist. Dries her hands methodically on a dishtowel. Picks up the pager. Reads: 33. She stares, realizing: it's code. She looks at the cell phone. Wonders whether... Looks toward the hall. We HEAR the shower still running... She picks up his cell phone. Tentatively - she's not sure this will work - she presses: RECALL 33. The phone flashes NAME, but instead of a name there's: . She stares at this, glances again down the hall - takes a deep breath... and presses SEND. Waits... listens nervously...

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WOMAN'S VOICE

(FLIRTATIOUS)

Hello there.

SLIM
You just paged my husband, right?

(HALF BEAT)

Mitch.

(HALF BEAT)

Who are you, what's your name?

WOMAN'S VOICE

I'm sorry, I -

SLIM

It's too late to deny it. Tell me your - (name)

A rustle on the other end -

SLIM (CONT.)

Don't hang up! Don't be a coward! Silence.
SLIM (CONT.)
Just your name. That's the least you could do, don't you think? A simple plea, one woman to another...

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

WIDER ANGLE. MINUTES LATER.
Slim sitting on the floor. Frozen. Head bowed.

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Mitch comes out, dressed, sees her.

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

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

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

She's French?

MITCH

She isn't important.

SLIM

No.

MITCH

You're important.

SLIM

Yes.

MITCH

And Gracie.

SLIM

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

MITCH

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

SLIM

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

MITCH

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

CUT TO:

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

**SING A SAD SONG**

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

**SLIM**

I smell her.

**MITCH**

What?

**SLIM**

Her perfume. Darcelle or whoever.

**MITCH**

**SLIM -**

(intense, sad)

How many, Mitch? How many are there? How many have there been?

**MITCH**

What does it matter?

A stunning statement. Even more stunning because of the casual way he says it.

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**MITCH (CONT.)**

ID I mean what're you saying here, that I don't deserve to get laid? Please. I'm a man, Slim. With the pregnancies, Gracie, you don't have time and energy like you used to, and
I understand that, I really do. Men and women have different needs, and that's okay. Darcelle is willing to take care of it, and maybe that's better for everybody.

**SLIM**

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

**SLIM**

No! No! No!

**MITCH**

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

I

**SLIM**

I can't do this anymore! I can't! Just take it, and take it, and take it!? I'm not strong enough! I don't know who would be. I love you, okay? I love you and I'm your wife and you can't do this! You understand me?!!! No more! No more!

With the same speed he attacked "Our Hero" at the diner, Mitch's hand shoots out like a snake striking. Slaps her. A warning: stop it and stop it now. Her face: shock. Confusion. Outrage. She raises her hand to her cheek. Touches her skin where his fist landed...

He reads her expression and is almost amused:

**MITCH**

What, I can't hit you?

**SLIM**

(low, strong)
No. You can't.
He hits her again, this time with a closed fist.
Knocking her to the ground. 
Stands over her like a boxer. 
Sees rase flare across her face -

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

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

**MITCH**
You with me?

**SLIM**
It's your rules.

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

**SLIM**
And if I don't like the rules??

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

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

**SLIM**
Tomorrow may be great.

**MITCH**
That's right.
SLIM
Tomorrow will be great. (Without you.)
He appears to miss her inference.

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

M itch
I'm going out.
She says nothing.

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

M itch {Cont.}
I don't have to sneak around, pretend
I'm going to work. I can just say:
"I'm going to Darcelle's, I'll be back in a few hours."
Her face is completely blank.
He bends down, gives her a kiss on the head. We feel her skin crawl.
She watches him go.
Waits.
Hears the front door close.
She gets up, walks to the window, watches him walk toward his car.
She turns away, looks at the room. We HEAR his car start.
She goes to the phone. Thinks.
Starts to dial-slowly, deliberately...
Shock: RAP AT THE WINDOW! He's there.
She reacts with guilt, but he doesn't look angry now. Behind him is his idling Mercedes convertible, driver's door open...

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

MITCH
Who you calling?

SLIM
Your mother.

MITCH
What're you gonna tell her?

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

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

MITCH (CONT.)
I'll understand. I really will.

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

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

CUT TO:

OUTTA HERE

INT. CAR. DAY.

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

EXT. PASADENA ESTATE. DAY.

FOUR JAGUARs lined up. At a respectful distance sit an old Toyota (the maid's car) and a pick-up (the gardener's truck). Slim parks near the truck. Her hand moves to the door handle, but she can't bring herself to open it. She sits... paralyzed, a failure. In this prolonged pause, Mrs. Tyler bursts out of the house -

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

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

28
HOLD a moment; like a mother-daughter tableau... Her tone stays sympathetic, not at all accusatory:

MRS. TYLER (CONT.)
What did you do? What'd you say to him?
Slim freezes. On her sad, shocked reaction -

CUT TO:

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

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

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

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

GINNY
Relax, Phil. Nobody's talkin' about your dick here, okay?
Phil brings Slim an iced tea and slice of pie:
PHIL
You went to cops, I hope?

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

SLIM
(NODS)
He knows every cop in the city.

29

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

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

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

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

CUT TO:

EXT. PRE-SCHOOL. DAY.

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

    PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR
Your husband got her.

    SLIM
What??

    PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR (CONT.)
Gracie was totally psyched. I told him he should do it more often.
Slim nods with feigned casualness and pulls away. Slight smile frozen on her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. HER HOME. DAY.

She pulls in. No other car there.

30

INT. HER HOME. DAY.

She looks around. Nothing abnormal except the quiet. As if they've gone and are never coming back.
She digs out her cell phone, punches the first number on the automatic dialer. Presses SEND.
Thinks. After one ring, she disconnects. Immediately presses RECALL, then SEND.

    HE ANSWERS:
    MITCH'S VOICE
    (FOR DARCELLE)
How is my little croissant?

    SLIM
It's your loaf of bread.
MITCH'S VOICE
(cheerful, no guilt)
Oh. Hi. How's it going?

SLIM
Where are you?

MITCH'S VOICE
Zoo.

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

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

MITCH'S VOICE (CONT.)
Your Mom.

GRACIE'S VOICE
Hey Mom! The elephants are peeing!

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

SLIM
When are you coming home?

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

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

MITCH
It made me nervous when I
couldn't reach you.
Slim shrugs.
He stares at her. Smiles. His voice so soft and calm:

MITCH {CONT.}
Do you have any idea how bad things can get?

SLIM
Educate me.

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

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

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

32
Slim looks back at Gracie: still staring at Mitch. If she already senses what's happening, how long before she's affected by it? How long before she sees Mitch become violent?
Slim's jaw tightens slightly; her resolve grows stronger.
CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM. NIGHT.

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

INT. BATHROOM.

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

INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

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

INT. GRACIE'S ROOM. NIGHT.

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

INT. HALL. NIGHT.

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

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

EXT. SLIM'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

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

TEDDY
Maybe she didn't hear the signal.

GINNY
She heard it.

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

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

34

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

INT. HOUSE. NIGHT.

Slim still frozen in exactly the same spot. Still carrying Gracie, still with her hand on the knob. Listening. Turning
her head this way-that way. She hears the COOING DOVE NOISE come again from outside.
That settles it. She pulls the door -

**MITCH FLYING AT HER -**
Grabs her, catches her, catches Gracie, pulling Slim's hair hard, leading her away from the door -

**EXT. HOUSE. NIGHT.**

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

**PHIL**
We better go in.

**GINNY**
It'd be crazy to wake him. If anything's wrong, she'll flick the lights. .Right?
Phil nods skeptically, and Ginny herself doesn't seem so sure.

They look at the house-and wait. . .and wait... We want to scream: "GO IN! GO! SAVE HER!"
Suddenly something. Subtle. Was that A SOUND from inside???
They go on alert. . .step forward... listen more closely...
But hear nothing unusual.

---

**35**
Phil. looks at Ginny, shrugs -
Ginny shrugs back -
FLASH OF LIGHT, then darkness. The signal.
They run toward the house -
SCREAM. Slim. Intense horrible spit of sound, replaced by an even more horrible silence. Deadly silence. CLOSE ON GINNY as they run: as if we've lost Slim and Ginny's our new protagonist. As we near the house, we realize: it's not silence. There are sounds from inside: almost inaudible

**THUDS.**
Sound of a beating. On Ginny's horrified reaction -
Baseball bat. Phil smashes a window.
They climb through the hole into the house -
INT. HOUSE. NIGHT.

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

MITCH

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

MITCH

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

GINNY

She's alive -

MITCH

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

36

PHIL

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

MITCH

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

MITCH (CONT.)

This is your last chance.

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

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

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

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

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

**PHIL**

**(SKEPTICAL)**
And if we take them away, you will shoot all four of us??

**MITCH**
That's right.

**37**

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

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

SLIM

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

GINNY

What?

SLIM

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

MITCH

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

MITCH

See you soon.

CUT TO:

INT. VAN. NIGHT.

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

CHECK, PLEASE

INT. AIRPLANE. DAY.

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

CUT TO:
EXT. NAVY PIER (CHICAGO). EVENING.

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

SLIM

Wow ... whatta ya think, Toots?

GRACIE

It's a big ocean!

JOE

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

GRACIE

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

CUT TO:

INT. JOE'S CAR. NIGHT.

They're driving along, suddenly Joe says -

JOE

Coming up, whatta ya say?!

GRACIE & SLIM

(A GAME)

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

INT. JOE'S 4-PLEX. NIGHT.

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

JOE

Is there anybody who likes ice cream?
Gracie whoops -
The doorbell rings -

39
Slim and Joe freeze -
Slim whips her hand over Gracie's mouth -
Gracie looks horrified: why are you covering my -
Slim puts her finger to her mouth: shhh.
She takes Gracie's hand; they scurry out of sight -
Joe hurries to the stereo, puts it on. Music to cover
Gracie's
"whoop . "
He goes to the door, looks through the peep hole.
Sees a LARGE MAN IN A SUIT.

JOE
Yes?

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

JOE
Go ahead.

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

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

JOE
You got a search warrant?

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

JOE
Can I she the warrant?
First FBI Man ignores this.

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

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

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

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

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

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

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

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

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

41

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.
Third FBI Man returns from the bedroom emptyhanded, starts to search the living room:

THIRD FBI MAN
I'll look around here?

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

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

JOE
That's enough.

(VERY FORCEFUL)
You hear me? It's time to go. Now.
(off First FBI's. shocked look)
I know who you are, okay? I know who hired you.
First FBI Man whirls. Suddenly he's got a knife in his hand. Definitely NOT FBI. Putting the knife to Joe's throat:

"FIRST FBI MAN"
Yeah? You know what it feels like to have a knife hit your carotid?

JOE
(trying not to move)
No.

42
Inside the cabinet, Gracie gasps. Slim puts a hand over her mouth. But Slim herself has to fight the impulse to burst out of there to save Joe -

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

JOE
No.

"THIRD FBI MAN"
(stopping his search)
Oh please, John Boy. Not the shiv AGAIN -

"FIRST FBI MAN"
I'm just going to cut him a little - Slim's eyes bulge -

"THIRD FBI MAN"
You are not going to cut him!

"FIRST FBI MAN"
I sure as hell am! Slim's on the verge of bursting out when "Second FBI" enters:
"SECOND FBI MAN"
John Boy, this is not listed on the program. Come on, they're not here; let's ride.

"FIRST FBI MAN"
Can't I just - (cut him a little)

"SECOND FBI MAN"
No! No slice and dice!
They head for the door.
As he goes, "First FBI Man" (a.k.a. John Boy) runs his knife along the couch, spilling out its contents...
.passes the tv set and stabs the tube...
.runs his knife along the wall, making a vicious scary mark.
And they vanish. We hear the door SLAM.
The horizontal band through which Slim was looking widens -

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

SLIM
Jesus, are you okay?

JOE
I guess.
(feels his neck)
I needed a shave, anyway.
The phone rings.
They look at it. It can't be who they think it is...
it rings again. Joe goes to it. Hesitates. Answers:

JOE
Hello?

MITCH'S VOICE
This is Mitch Tyler, Joe.

JOE
Hello, yes, how are you?
Joe points at phone: "It's him." He nods toward Gracie, indicating Slim should take her into the next room. Slim does.
MITCH'S VOICE
(calm, friendly)
I assume Slim's called you.
Joe thinks for a split second, then:

JOE

Of course.

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

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

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

JOE
Goodbye, Mitch.

MITCH'S VOICE
Tell her to call her friends.
Joe hangs up. Slim comes back out.

JOE
Wow. Charming.

SLIM
He scare you?
Joe shakes his head - more at Mitch than in answer to her question.

SLIM {CONT.}
I shouldn't be here -

JOE
Sure you should -

SLIM
I'm dangerous to know right now.

JOE
(calm, forceful)
Slim. You can be here anytime.
She nods. They both know what he's saying: if he's willing to take this kind of risk, he's either a very good friend (which he is) or he's still in love with her (which he is, also).

JOE (CONT.)
Oh. He said you should call your friends.

SLIM
At the restaurant?

45

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

GINNY'S VOICE
Awright already! Orca!

SLIM
Hey. Gin. You okay?

GINNY'S VOICE
We had to clear the customers out, some ridiculous bomb threat -
SLIM

What?

INT. "ORCA" RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Ginny on the cordless; Phil working nearby -

GINNY

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

SLIM'S VOICE

What about you and Phil, did you -

GINNY

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

SLIM'S VOICE

Get out.

GINNY

What?

SLIM'S VOICE

I got a bad feeling, Gin.

GINNY

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

SLIM'S VOICE

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

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GINNY

All right, all right, take it easy -

(GRABBING PHIL)

Let's go -
PHIL
The police are -

GINNY
(heading out the door)
Screw the police, we're outta here.

SLIM'S VOICE
Run, okay?t Ginny?! Runt

EXT. "ORCA." NIGHT.

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

GINNY
Can you run?

PHIL
Like Michael Jackson!
As they sprint, sort of, toward the boardwalk:

GINNY
It's Michael Johnson, Phil.

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

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INT. JOE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Slim holding her phone. Peculiar expression on her face.
SLIM
The line went dead.
Joe stares at her, concerned.
She presses redial, and we hear THE PHONE start to ring...
She—goes to the window, parts the curtain: OUTSIDE in the street, the FBI MEN sit in their car—
No answer on the phone. Slim looks at Joe and shakes her head:
this isn't good.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET. DAY.

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

INT. OFFICE LOFT. DAY.

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

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

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

JUPITER
It's a good gig. To claim I'm your father? What year were you born?
SLIM
You are my Dad, Jupiter. When Mom died, I wrote you, you didn't answer. I didn't have enough money to bury her, that was really fun.

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

SLIM
No, you had help.

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

SLIM
I thought you should meet your granddaughter.

JUPITER
(perfunctory, to Gracie)
Hi.
Gracie looks at him skeptically, nods.

SLIM
And yes, we need money. To survive.

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

SLIM
It's like a joke to me too.

JUPITER
You're the third to show up here with a hand out. I give all of you the same thing.
(taking it from his wallet)
Six bucks. Enough for a sandwich. For you, it's twelve, you can buy the kid a sandwich too.

SLIM
(stunned...)
Well. Now I know.

JUPITER
Yeah.

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

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

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO ALLEY. DAY.

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

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

GRACIE (CONT.)
You have mtg.
Beat.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION. SANTA BARBARA. NIGHT.

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

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

GRACIE
Mommy?
One of the Swarthy Men speaks to Slim, but in the flurry, we can't hear it. She looks relieved, turns to Gracie - - but before Slim can speak, their bags are thrown in the trunk of a car and they're pushed into the back seat - The car speeds off, whips into a left-hand turn -

50

EXT. SANTA BARBARA. ANOTHER STREET. NIGHT.

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

INT. CAR. NIGHT.

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

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

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

EXT. MOTEL IN THE WOODS. NIGHT.

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

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

**SLIM**
You're not afraid to help me?

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

**GINNY**
No letters, Slim, but you can call

**US -**

**PHIL**
Must be very short.

---

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

**SLIM**
No. Phil, wait a minute, I -

**PHIL**
I have insurance from fire -

**SLIM**
I know, but -

**PHIL**
*(VERY FIRMLY)*
I will not discuss, okay? We are family! She nods. Gratefully. Ginny takes her hand. Beat.

**SLIM**
What about the police? The fire. Do they -

**PHIL**
Mr. Mitch — of course — he has beautiful alibi.
Slim nods again. Looks at Ginny...who's been working up to:

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

       PHIL
This is American law?!

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

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

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       GINNY
We're talking about Mitch here.

       SLIM
Even so. I'm not that kind of person, okay? Ginny nods reluctantly. She's not sure the subject is closed.

       CUT TO:

       NEW LEAF

FLASHES (LIKE THE CREDIT SEQUENCE)
MICROFICHE, NEWSPAPER DEATH NOTICE, "Erin Shleeter, 6 weeks."

SLIM at COUNTY RECORDER'S DESK:

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

INT. LARGE DRAB HOUSE. DAY.

"Erin" & Gracie being led by MUSTAPHA (40) past QUASI-
HOMELESS ARABS;, finally ending in a corner of a large room where two
small mattresses lie on the floor. Somewhere in Colorado.

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

SLIM!"ERIN"
It's fine, thanks.
Mustapha shrugs apologetically, leaves. Gracie whispers:

GRACIE
Mom...who are all those people?

SLIM/"ERIN"
They're kind of...friends of Phil's.

GRACIE
(stares at her mother)
They're strangers.

53

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

Mustapha working at one desk, "Erin" at another. Gracie on
the floor, coloring. Bored. Prompts a look from "Erin" -
"ERIN"
Look. I have to find the right place and get you admitted, okay?

INT. DRAB HOUSE. NIGHT.

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

"ERIN"
Thank you.

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

"ERIN."
Food.

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

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

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

JUPITER'S VOICE
"Dear Daughter - (CONT.)

INT. JUPITER'S OFFICE. DAY.

Jupiter's at his desk as the THREE "FBI MEN" are shown in. He says something gracious to them. For. a moment they don't respond. Then one of them speaks.
Whatever he's saying produces a subtle but profound change on Jupiter's features.

**JUPITER'S VOICE (CONT.)**

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

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

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

**JUPITER'S VOICE (CONT.)**

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

**JUPITER**

**CUT TO:**

**EXT./INT. SMALL PRETTY HOUSE. DAY.**

**FLASHES:**


**"ERIN"**

What do you think, you like this place?

**GRACIE**

**(SUSPICIOUSLY)**

Why, are we moving again?

**"ERIN"**

No, we just - (got here)

**GRACIE**

Good. 'Cause I am sick and tired to death of movingi
"ERIN"
Me too. So here's the deal. Try to remember, while we're here, to call me Mom or Erin, but not Slim, okay?

55

GRACIE
I never call you Slim.

"ERIN"
I know, but...

GRACIE
I don't think you are that slim.

"ERIN"
Thanks a lot.

GRACIE
Do I get a new name too?

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

GRACIE
I have a crood idea .

CUT TO:

EXT. PRE-SCHOOL. DAY.

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

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

BETTY
Oh, hi -

"ERIN"
This is my daughter.

**BETTY**

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

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

**CUT TO:**

---

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

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

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

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

**COMPLIMENT:**

**T.T.**
Whatever you're goin' for, girl:
you're really getting there.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. CAR. MORNING.**

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

**GRACIE/"QUEEN ELIZABETH"**
He is not -

"ERIN"
Yes, he is -

GRACIE/"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
Mom, he turned.

"ERIN"
He turned?
(looks in rear view)
Oh my God, you're right. He turned. Wells (That's better.)

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
That's what I've been saying. There are other cars, okay? Just 'cause somebody's behind you doesn't mean - (stops ...blinks...)
Mom? You just drove past my school.

CUT TO:

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

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

57

"ERIN"
I don't know, I can cook something.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
Or we can go to McDonalds.

"ERIN"
We can't afford to eat out every night. I can cook, Tootster.
"Queen E." rolls her eyes as:

BRAD

Hi.
(off her blank look)
I'm Brad Zall, I just rented a car from you guys.
"Erin" stares at him. An insane moment of sustained paranoia.
Who is this guy, really? What does he want?
Finally she realizes a normal response is required. Kind of a

TRICK QUESTION:

"ERIN"
Is the vehicle all right?

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

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

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

SUP

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"ERIN"

(STILL AGGRESSIVE)
What? You're thinking I over-reacted? Huh? Just a little?

CUT TO:

INT. "ERIN'S" TAURUS. DAY.

"Erin" driving too fast. Her slight recklessness adds an
undercurrent of anxiety to the scene. She's also eating doughnuts, sharing a box with her daughter. They pass a gas station. "Queen E." sees pay phones.

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

"ERIN"
Don't get on my case.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
Every Sunday, to drive for 55 hours? In exasperation, "Erin" gestures with both hands - taking them off the wheel. Nothing bad happens, but again her recklessness makes us nervous -

"ERIN"
It's not 55 -

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
Just to reach some phone booth?! Hey can I call Daddy this time?! Please??? Please please please... "Erin" shakes her head. "Queen E." gives her a mournful look.

"ERIN"
Don't beg. You look like a dog.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY STORE. DAY.

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

"ERIN"
Mrs. Tyler? It's Slim.
Oh thank God. Listen. Mitch is planning some legal action, you're depriving him of his rights as a father, some nonsense like that: you better have Gracie call him.

"ERIN"
Oh that's good news -

MRS. TYLER'S VOICE
I thought you'd want to know -

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

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

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

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

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

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
Hi Daddy! We're having a great vacation!

(PAUSE)
I don't know. At a phone booth somewheres. "Erin" shakes her head, takes the receiver away:
"ERIN"
No questions, okay?, or it ends now.
(hands phone back to "Queen E.")
Just tell him you love him and say goodbye, okay?
"Queen E." nods, puts the receiver to her ear. Even "Erin" can hear Mitch yelling... "Queen E."'s face changes. Mitch keeps shouting angrily.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
Goodbye Daddy.
She did not say "I love you." She hands "Erin" the receiver. "Erin" hangs it up.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
I am really really sad.
"Erin" nods, angry at herself:

"ERIN"
Sorry, kid. My mistake.

CUT TO:

INT. FANCY OFFICE. DAY.

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

MITCH
I know mine was (too) short, but she made other calls, right? Ginny?, or my mother?
He crosses to a map with colored pins. Sticks in another one

MITCH (CONT.)
Good. Good. Keep it up.
(hangs up, goes to intercom:)
Isn't he here yet?
Great, yeah, send him in.
To our shock, the person who enters is the man previously known
as "Our Hero." ROBBIE (real name) and Mitch are good buddies:
MITCH

Hey.

ROBBIE

Hey.

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MITCH

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

ROBBIE

You got me on a Sunday, for that?

(JOKE)

I could be out shaking down wetbacks.

MITCH

I didn't bring you for that.

ROBBIE

Her?

(Off Mitch's nod)

I told you not to be an asshole.

MITCH

Yeah, but coming from you...

ROBBIE

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

MITCH

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

ROBBIE
That's a blessing.

MITCH
I need you to find her. Take your

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

ROBBIE

(DRILY)
Thanks. Thanks a lot.

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

62
C ; ROBBIE
Okay, okay. Ease it up.

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

ROBBIE
She's that stupid? You traced her?

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

(SMILES)
Of course—your equipment is faster.

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

MITCH
(drawing on map)
Okay: say she lives within a two hour radius...

CUT TO:

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

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

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

"ERIN" (CONT.)
No, it's not, it's horrible.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
It's not horrible, Mom.

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

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
(INCREDOUS)
(Good??) Mom, you tasted it.

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

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
Know what I think?

"ERIN" (tries to pull
HERSELF TOGETHER)

What's that?

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

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

"ERIN"

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

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Well. You miss somebody.

CUT TO:

NOT ALL MEN ARE HEADS

INT. SANTA FE AIRPORT. DAY.

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

ANOTHER BANK OF PAY PHONES. MINUTES LATER.

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

JOE

Sorry, my plane was delayed -

EXT. ROADSIDE STAND. PAY PHONE. DAY.

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

64

"ERIN"

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

JOE'S VOICE

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

INT. SANTA FE AIRPORT. DAY.
Joe shakes his head, amused:

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

"ERIN'S" VOICE
I'll call Starbucks in three hours.

(REASSURING HIM:)
Don't worry, you'll be here by four. Dialtone. He hangs up.

CUT TO:

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

"ERIN"
I tell you it's this one.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
No, he's not. He's with...
She's looking at some OTHER PASSENGERS who have already entered through another gate and are walking past them.

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

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

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. THEIR TAURUS/MAIN STREET, SMALL TOWN. DAY.
"Erin" and "Queen E." are pointing out sights, passing an OLD FASHIONED DINER:

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

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

"ERIN"
There's the one-plex.
(pointing again at a NOT-TOO-FANCY PLACE)
The à-la-carte restaurant where you'd take me if we were dating...
(for "Queen E.19
which we are not.

66
Very fast, like an old routine; we see how they play together:

JOE
No way.

"ERIN"
Not at all.

JOE
Just friends, right Gracie?

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
Queen Elizabeth.

JOE
Right. Sorry, your highness.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
No problem.
"Erin" pulls up in front of their house, gestures: here it is.

INT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. HALL. DAY.
Continuing the tour, they're showing him:

"ERIN"
And this is the guest bedroom...

(CONT . )

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

"ERIN" (CONT.)
normally known as Buckingham palace.
JOE
(nods, checks it out)
Very... colorful.

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

67

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

JOE
I look forward to that.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK. DAY.

Baseball diamond. Joe pitching underhand to "Queen E." He's using plastic balls the size of soccer balls, so it's easy for her to hit every one.
"Erin" is running, retrieving the hits.
FREEZE FRAME as she's caught in a photograph.
The image unfreezes and is followed quickly by a series of frozen frames, photographs of her, some wide, some tight.

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

EXT. PARK. AN HOUR LATER.

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

JOE
You seem like you're doing great.
"ERIN"

Yeah.

JOE

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

68

"ERIN"

(quiet, strong)
Gracie is safe.

JOE

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

DOES -

ROBBIE

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

"ERIN"

Pardon me?

ROBBIE

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

"ERIN"

I'm not Denise.

ROBBIE

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

"ERIN"
Never been there.

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

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

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

69
Joe looks at "Queen E." and nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. NIGHT.

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

INT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. NIGHT.

Joe gets up from "Queen E. 's" bed and goes into the kitchen.
Gets some juice from the fridge, drinks it. Looks into "Erin's" bedroom. "Erin" is awake, "Queen E." asleep at her side. Half - whisper:

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

"ERIN"
Yeah, mine too.

(BEAT)

Cuddle?

INT. "ERIN'S" BEDROOM. NIGHT.

As he gets into bed:

"ERIN"
You remember the house rules?

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

"ERIN"
Joe.

JOE
Yeah.

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

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JOE
Yeah.

"ERIN"

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

"ERIN"
Ginny told me about that weekend.
JOE
Of your wedding?
She nods.

JOE
She tell you how terrible I was?

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

JOE
I didn't forget -

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

(DRY TEASE)
you are not that bad...
They both laugh. It subsides into affection...

"ERIN"
You really go tomorrow...? He nods.

"ERIN" (CONT.)
Couldn't you quit your job, and stay here and play the horses or something and become independently wealthy?

71
Beat.

JOE
Please kiss me, Slim. I know we're not supposed to, it's against house rules and all, but for me to come all this way and feel the way I do and for us to not even - She kisses him - And he kisses back. And they stop.
Incredible self control.
Lie next to each other-hold hands again...

JOE
You're a great person, Slim.
You're a great person just like
your daughter.
She squeezes his hand.
THE CAMERA LINGERS FOR A MOMENT ON THIS SWEET IMAGE...
classed
hands

hands...THEN PULLS SUDDENLY BACK, so we're seeing their
from outside, through a crack in the window. Hold.

CUT TO:
YOU CAN RUNs s s

EXT. PRESCHOOL. DAY.

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

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

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

T.T.
I know you have a "back room" gig,
but with Sher out, four customers:
I need help here; I'm on meltdown.

72

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

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

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

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

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

Frowns slightly, her eyes shift... She senses something. This strange sensation, as if she's being watched, or... She looks out the window, doesn't see anyone...

Glances into the back office - and notices the clock: 4:15.

"ERIN"

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

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

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

EXT. PRE-SCHOOL. DAY.

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

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

"ERIN"

You can't find her??!

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

73

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

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

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

T.T.'S VOICE
Double "A" Rent

"ERIN"
Did Queen Elizabeth call?!

T.T.'S VOICE
No, of course - (not)

"ERIN"
Anyone else?!

T.T.'S VOICE
Nobody called, Erin; are you - (okay?)
"Erin" presses STOP, then Auto-dial #1, waits, looks around.
Betty staring at her like she's crazy, walking toward her car -

"ERIN'S" VOICE
Hi. Leave a message.

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

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

BETTY
.what I've been trying to tell you...
"Erin" nodding now, beginning to grasp the words...

BETTY (CONT.)
At the end of dance class, the teacher lets them go hide, and for a minute no one could find her - "Erin" looks past Betty, sees "Queen E." in her tutu and leaps out of her car -

"ERIN"
Thank you, thank you, I... I'm sorry. I'll explain later, I...
She rushes forward, wraps "Queen E." in a big, not quite appropriate hug. "Queen E." looks at her as if to say, "This is nice, Mom, but will you please tell me what gives?"

CUT TO:

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

CUT TO:

INT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. KITCHEN. MIGHT.
Making meat loaf. "Erin" consults the cookbook, seems confused, puts meat, breadcrusts, eggs, sauces, onions, etc. in a bowl. "Queen E." mooshes them with her fingers - a disgusting tactile job which she adores. IMPROVISE DIALOG to make the scene utterly mundane, two "girls" having fun... The normalness of it makes us exceedingly nervous.

INT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. NIGHT.
"Queen E." sleeping peacefully in her bed.
"Erin" also sleeping peacefully. We OBSERVE her from a slight distance, to the left of the bed as we face it. Slowly the CAMERA BEGINS TO MOVE. . .down the bed...to the foot ...to the other side. . .back again on "Erin" sleeping peacefully...

and the CAMERA RISES to show Mitch seated at her side. He seems calm and utterly content. It would be, hard to imagine a more terrifying attitude.

INT. HER BEDROOM. DAWN.

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

She gets out of bed and looks out the window - Cold morning - She goes toward the hall...

INT. HALL. DAY.

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

INT. BATHROOM. DAY.

From the doorway, we see her on the potty... The window over her head is open slightly.
As she pees, she stares at the shower curtain—it rustles slightly in the wind from the window.
She wipes herself.
Still staring at the curtain...
She stands, pulls up her pajamas...
Stares.
Yanks the shower curtain aside—Nothing.

INT. HALL. DAY.

She goes into the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY.

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

INT. HALL. DAY.

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

HE JUMPS OUT OF THE DOORWAY—
"Erin" starts to scream, looks toward "Queen E." and stifles the sound.
They wrestle. Silently. Grim pantomime. The only sounds are GRUNTS, BANGING vs. the walls.
He's far too strong for her—
They slam against one wall, the other, CRASH to the floor—
MITCH
Wanna know a secret?
Whispering to her, his hands moving to her neck...

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

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

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

EXT. "ERIN'S" HOUSE. DAWN.

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

Pulls a key from under the mat -
Fires the car up, rockets away -
Down the block, so far back we're not even sure it means anything, a CHEVY SUBURBAN pulls away from the curb...

EXT./INT. MALL/TAURUS DAWN.

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

MOMENTS LATER.
"Erin" and "Queen E." pulling clothes from the suitcase, getting dressed. A FRANTIC BLUR of pajamas and underwear and suitcase and the last thing we expect to see: KNOCK at the window. Robbie. "Erin" whirs, looks. For an instant TIME SLOWS as she stares at him...
FLASHBACK TO THE DINER, HIS FACE: she recognizes him - And realizes: he's with Mitch. Which means: Mitch was phony from the moment she met him - Robbie reaches for her door handle - She rams the accelerator, leaving Robbie behind - The car rockets forward, toward the dumpsters - She spins the wheel; the car swerves, kisses off the dumpster - Robbie running for his car, and now we see the Chevy Suburban, hidden behind some nearby bushes - The Taurus pogos over the concrete/grass divider, rockets across the next parking lot... Robbie jumping into his Suburban - "Erin" half in, half out of her clothing, trying to drive, trying to see, sticking out her arm to keep "Queen E." (not in her seatbelt) from flying through the windshield.

"ERIN"
Seatbelti Seatbelti Put on your -

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

"ERIN"
I can't slow'-

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
Who was that guy?!

"ERIN"
(looks in rear-view)
I don't know, some...
(sees Robbie chasing them)
Oh shit...

EXT. CITY. MORNING.

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

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD. MORNING.

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

finally
slams into their Taurus, knocking them half off the road. He pushes them off again, again, "Queen E." covering her eyes, "Erin" coming back onto the road, fighting to keep control, and the road narrowing more and more, down to one tight lane.

This looks like totally the wrong place to be leading someone.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
(WORRIED)
Mom?
Up ahead is a one-lane covered bridge crossing over a stream.
The bridge is very narrow.

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
Mom, are you sure...?!
Quite sure, thank you. "Erin" guns the accelerator.
Robbie's FACE... driving, confident, full of blood lust, and then his expression changes. Eyes widen. He realizes - shit! too late!! - that the bridge is way too narrow for - "Erin" is car slides through, scraping one side
The Suburban crashes into the bridge, careens into the water
"Queen E." looks back through the rear view mirror... looks at her mother ...back and forth...

"QUEEN ELIZABETH"
That was dangerous.

INT. CAR. MORNING

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

INT. OLDSMOBILE. MORNING.

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

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

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

"ERIN" {CONT.}
Fair enough.
One thing, though: Erin's over.

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

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

I'm hungry.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER. DAY.

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

WAITRESS

Everything okay here?

SLIM

(NODS)

Thanks.

(NODS)

WAITRESS

(TO GRACIE)

Hey there, cutie, what's your name?

Gracie looks up at her for a while.

GRACIE

I'm working on that one.

The waitress does a double-take and leaves. To Slim:

GRACIE (CONT.)

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

SLIM

I'm thinking.

Beat.

GRACIE

(Yeah,) I can hear it.

CUT. TO:

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

SLIM
Anybody talks to you, hit the horn.

82
INT. COURTHOUSE. DAY.

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

SLIM
I need the best lawyer in town.

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

SLIM (CONT.)
Please. Just a name.

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

Slim comes in, sits Gracie down and whispers:

SLIM
Watch how it's done.

117 Slim goes to the Receptionist's desk:

SLIM
Hi. Is Mr. Toiler with someone?

RECEPTIONIST
No, but he's -

SLIM
I'm not a crazy person.

She walks past the Receptionist -
RECEPTIONIST
Wait a minute! You can't
Slim opens the big door, enters:

INT. JIM TOLLER'S OFFICE. DAY.

The moment we see JIM TOLLER we know Slim's okay. The actor playing him is one of those cranky avuncular types who

pisses and moans but always comes to the rescue and outsmarts the bad
guys. As we expect, he starts out disliking her:

83

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

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

DISSOLVE TO:

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

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

**JIM TOLLER (CONT.)**
As for Gracie: his next move... he'll initiate a custody hearing.

**SLIM**
He...he already did.

---

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

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

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

**JIM TOLLER**
The custody hearing, if he pushes for it, is just a trick.
She says nothing. Listens. Watches as:
He plucks a $20 bill from her stack of funds. Obviously he's giving her a valuable piece of advice:

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

**CUT TO:**

**INT. OLDSMOBILE. NIGHT.**

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

85

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

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

(BEAT)
Well... Here goes.

**CUT TO:**
INT. AIRPORT. DAY.

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

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

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

GINNY
Okay, this is the second most -

SLIM'S VOICE
Rent a car, drive to Denver, then fly to Reno.

GINNY
You're out of your mind.

---

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

INT. AIRPORT. RENTAL CAR COUNTER. DAY.

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

INT. AIRPORT PARKING GARAGE. RENT-A-CAR AREA. DAY.
Ginny loading luggage into the back as her kids climb in. As Ginny slams the trunk, SOMEONE'S RIGHT THERE - Slim.
Ginny blinks, recognizes her, hugs her:

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

SLIM
I had to make sure you weren't followed.

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

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

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

87
This to Gracie, who started to climb into the car. Gracie looks at Slim and again tries to climb in - she wants part of saying goodbye - but Slim pulls her back into a hug. Slim holds her for as long as Gracie can possibly tolerate. When Slim is done, Gracie climbs into the car with Ginny's kids. Slim has tears in her eyes.

SLIM
Take care of her, okay? Extra ice-cream and... and if you need to reach me...
(hands her a cell phone)
Just don't call your friends.

GINNY
Oh great. I'll call strangers.

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

GINNY

PIE -

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

GINNY
How long?

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

GINNY
Deadline for what?
Slim looks at her...

CUT TO:

WE'RE SO CLOSE WE CAN'T TELL WHAT WE'RE LOOKING AT. CAMERA
SLOWLY PULLS BACK: EYES ...SLIM'S EYES.
Intense, focussed.

88

THE KNOWLEDGE

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

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

MAN'S VOICE
Can you lose?
She shakes her head.

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

INT. GYM. DAY.
Slim in a leotard.

MAN'S VOICE
Even though he's bigger?

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

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

SLIM
He's a lot stronger.

INSTRUCTOR
So if he hits you -

SLIM
No way.
INSTRUCTOR
Say it.

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

INSTRUCTOR
After he misses, what do you do?
She answers him with an intense look.
He nods and moves after her. Slow, strong, powerful: predator.
She backs up. Her movements simple, graceful, economical but athletic: they remind us of the easy way she moved around the restaurant in the first scene...
Scattered over the mat are old-fashioned plastic SANTAS that kids use as punching bags. He backs her toward one... then another. As she nears them, she slides deftly to the side: like she has eyes in the back of her head...
He maneuvers her toward a desk—her back to it...
Rushes at her—
For a moment she seems trapped—
But as he reaches her, she slips to her left, tosses him over the desk and onto the mat.
She moves quickly to an attacking position, standing over him.
He pats the mat beside him.
She sits.
He makes a motion and she closes her eyes.

INSTRUCTOR
One last thing. The hardest lesson:
we can't control the universe.
She listens.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)
The unexpected may happen.
He slides his hand over the mat, an order. She lies down.
INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)
Suddenly his maid enters, you're distracted for an instant, and he hits you...

SLIM
That's not possible -

INSTRUCTOR 4
We must prepare even for the impossible.
She stirs slightly, uncomfortable with this idea.

INSTRUCTOR (CONT.)
We bend the universe to our will, but it will only go so far.

SLIM
You're saying -

INSTRUCTOR
(STANDING UP)
That's right -

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

VERY TIGHT ON HER AS:

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

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

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

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

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

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

JUPITER
You're a different person.

SLIM
So?

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

SLIM
Good.

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

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

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

JUPITER

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

SLIM

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

CUT TO:

INT. ELECTRONICS STORE. DAY.

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

SLIM

You sure this'll work?
CLERK
You bet your life.

SLIM
Thanks, I will.
She leaves, taking out her cell phone. FOLLOW HER as she goes:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET. DAY.

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

93

BUTLER'S VOICE
Tyler residence.

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

BUTLER'S VOICE
Of course, Miss Slim. My pleasure.
Slim hangs up, goes into a bagel shop.

INT.. BAGEL PLACE. LATER.

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

ALEX
Today, hon, you graduate.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN L.A. STREET. DAY.

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

SLIM
It's closed?
ALEX
Till six, eh?

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

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

SLIM
Why here?

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

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SLIM
People on the street?

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

SLIM
(NODS)
Meaning he's inside. (has tools out) I'm ready. Alex moves slightly to block the view as Slim bends over and slips her tool into the lock... Slim working quietly, concentrating... Alex looking. around... A SHADY CHARACTER noticing them. Hesitating. Coming over..

ALEX
We got company, doll... Slim still working...
The Shady Character has almost reached them...

**ALEX**

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

**SHADY CHARACTER**

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

**SLIM**

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

95

**ALEX**

"Action?"
Off her grin -

**CUT TO:**

**INT. BEAUTY SALON. DAY.**

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

**MRS. TYLER'S VOICE**

And where is Gracie?

**SLIM**

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

**MRS. TYLER'S VOICE**
Tell me something. Why is this call different? You were always worried about how long we talked -

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

EXT. BEAUTY PARLOR. DAY.

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

CUT TO:

EXT. SLIM'S HOTEL. DAY.

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

96
Trenchcoat is standing across the street.

INT. HOTEL ROOM. DAY.

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

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

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

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

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

JUPITER'S VOICE
What happened to your voice?; you okay?

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

JUPITER'S VOICE
Otherwise everything's okay?

SLIM
Yeah.

97

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

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

TOVA
And tonight?
SLIM
Go around the corner, eat at Guido's.

TOVA
I'll be followed?

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

SLIM (CONT.)
Wish me luck, huh?

TOVA
Good luck.

SLIM
Luck has nothing to do with it.
Tova smiles.

INT. HOTEL. HALL. NIGHT.

Slim waiting as the Service Elevator arrives.
Gets in.

EXT. HOTEL. REAR ENTRANCE. NIGHT.

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

98

INT. AIRPORT. NIGHT.

Slim getting on the plane to Los Angeles.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN PEDRO STREET. NIGHT.

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

BATTLE OF THE
She takes a duffle from the back seat. Steps into the shadows, stares at the warehouse: Brick building, modern door and light fixtures.

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

INT. WAREHOUSE/LOFT. SLEEPING AREA. NIGHT.


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

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

JARRING CUT TO:

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

MITCH

Coffee?

YOUNG BLOND

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

MITCH

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

YOUNG BLOND

You want my number?

MITCH

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

MITCH

Thanks for everything.

100

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

YOUNG BLOND

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

MITCH

Janie? Hey.

(BEAT)

Yeah, I was working late.
(BEAT)
No, tonight's no good either. I've
got a morning flight to San
Francisco.
Slim in therafters, listening.

MITCH (CONT.)
If it was pleasure, you'd be going
too. No, I'm going down to get my
daughter.
Slim's reaction to this...

MITCH (CONT.)
Sure, the custody hearing's here next
week, but it looks like Gracie's
being brought to San Francisco and
my ex-wife ...well, seems like she
completely vanished.
ON SLIM. His words echo his threats when he was trying to
strangle her in her hallway.

MITCH (CONT.)
Right off the face of the earth.
I doubt they'll ever find her
this time.
Slim's jaw tightens.
When we come back to Mitch, he's dressed and packing his
briefcase.

101

MITCH (CONT.)
Yeah, I want her to meet you.
We'll call when we get in.

(FAKE TENDER:)
You too.
He hangs up, takes a sip of coffee.
HIGH ANGLE SHOT looking down on Mitch as he heads out the
door.

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

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

102
Goes out. HOLD ON the hall, where she was, where he walked.
EMPTY. The alarm beeps again as he resets it.
One silent beat, then Slim rises in the kitchen. (She did a

360.)
She sighs. Pours herself some coffee, replaces the liquid
water. Auto-dials her cell phone.

SLIM
I'm in.

GINNY'S VOICE
Hey.

SLIM
Can you stay off the phone?

GINNY'S VOICE
For you, honey? (Anything.)

SLIM
I hope so.
She hangs up.
Retrieves her duffle bag from its hiding place and pulls out
tools, equipment, etc. Picks up a screwdriver and starts
searching the apartment, checking the phone line, following
it
to the place where it enters the apartment.
MONTAGE INTERCUT WITH FLASHES of Slim' a face: a running tab
on her emotions. Intensity, focus, determination, fear,
..and,
as the sequence builds: concern about what she doing...

**MONTAGE IMAGES:**
She disconnects the phone line.
Finds the electrical box, opens it, finds the main switch.
Removes all the knives from the kitchen... hides them...
Walks the apartment-familiarizing herself with every inch of
it-occasionally she moves a piece of furniture slightly...
we
realize: she's assessing fighting spaces. angles...
She looks from one piece of furniture to another, back and
forth, gauging the distance between them.
She eats a snack from his refrigerator...

103
I
Looks out the back (bedroom) window... and sees the water of
the
J
San Pedro harbor below her.
Uses a metal detector to search the apartment:
in a drawer of the night table beside his bed, she finds a
pistol. Removes it. There are papers in the same drawer,
notes or something. She throws these in the trash.
She takes out three letters. As the CAMERA sweeps over one
of
them, we hear her voice:

**SLIM (V.O.)**
"...thanks for letting me come talk
about Gracie. And I'm glad you're
willing to admit your temper, and -
let's not mince words - the physical
abuse you subjected me to."
And glances at SECOND LETTER:

SLIM (V.0.)
"Perhaps with your new attitude,
we can really work something out.
Per your last letter, I'll see you
the evening of..."
She puts the letters in the drawer where the pistol was.
They're not in envelopes; they're loose, open.
She picks up the metal detector, resumes her search.
The machine beeps insistently around his desk. She can't
find anything. Finally she discovers a false bottom on one of the
drawers: a second gun is in there.
With the gun are papers: reports from private detectives
looking for her, an assessment of his custody rights...
She hides the guns in the bottom of the laundry hamper.
Finds a photo of herself with Mitch and Gracie. Rips it up.
Puts the metal detector back in the duffle.
Changes into sweatshirt and sweatpants.
Takes the distinctive red bag (from the electronics store)
out of the duffle. There's a machine inside. She plugs it in,
tucks it behind the couch.
Puts her cell phone beside it.

104

She makes one last check: every wall, surface, every drawer.
Barefoot, she begins to glide around the space. Backing up.
Moving with ease and grace, sliding deftly to the side as
she approaches a couch, desk, chair. She's building on her
earlier reconnaissance: learning where the furniture is and how to
navigate around it...

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER. MAGIC HOUR.
Light fading toward darkness. She's still moving backward,
only now her sliding is smooth, graceful; almost a dance.
As if hearing a distant signal, she slows to a stop.
For a long moment she stands perfectly still. Poised. Like an animal in the forest.

There's a chair facing the front door. She glances at it. No.

She walks behind the couch, turns off the machine, picks up her cell phone and auto-dials.

**GINNY'S VOICE**

Hey.

Slim says nothing.

**GINNY'S VOICE (CONT.)**

You okay?

**SLIM**

(SOFTLY)

Say it again.

**GINNY'S VOICE**

Say what?

**SLIM**

You know. What you told me.

Beat. On Slim's face as:

**GINNY'S VOICE**

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

Silence.

---

**105**

**SLIM**

Yeah.

She hangs up, turns the machine back on and stashes her cell phone.

With simple ease, she lowers herself onto the chair. Facing the door. Waiting in the fading light...

**DISSOLVE TO:**
EXT. STREET. NIGHT.

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

INT. MITCH'S PLACE. NIGHT.

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

SLIM'S VOICE
It's me.
He nods slowly.

MITCH
Yeah. (I thought so.)

106

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

MITCH {CONT.}
This morning too?

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

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

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

107
Walks toward his desk.

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

SLIM'S VOICE
Scared?

MITCH

(FUCK YOU)

Of what?

SLIM'S VOICE
Now is when you decide, Mitch.
(off his silence)
Whether you're a coward. If you are, you can run. I won't stop you.
(meaning the match is unfair:)
You have my guns.

SLIM'S VOICE
Threw 'em away.

MITCH
Then someone's here with you.

SLIM'S VOICE
No.

MITCH
(INCREDULOUS)
You're alone?

SLIM'S VOICE
Why not?

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

MITCH (CONT.)
You're sayin' this is man to man?

SLIM'S VOICE
Woman, Mitch.

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

SLIM
Fair to whom?
As he realizes her meaning, she moves into the open area
between two couches.
She has no weapon.
She's barefoot, in her sweats, feet spread for balance, arms just slightly raised. Compared to him: she's tiny.
He moves toward her.

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

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

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

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

MITCH (CONT.)
So all you've done is further piss me off.

SLIM
Self defense is not murder.
This stops him cold. He lowers his hands a moment. Stares
her, trying to assimilate this new information...

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

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

SLIM
So far you're attacking me.
He lunges, almost hits her, rushes in -
She has to leap sideways with great speed and dexterity:
jumps
over the couch to avoid being hit.
He also jumps over the couch, but his balance isn't as good,
and she's waiting for him as he stumbles -
With perfect balance and full force, she slugs him in the
nose.
He goes down. Stays there. For the first time it occurs to
him: this might not be easy.
He climbs to his feet, feels his nose: blood.

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

110

MITCH
If you fail, you can count on this:
you'll never see Gracie again.
She reacts -
He sees it, rushes her -
Punching as he goes. From the standpoint of pure physics, he
makes a terrifying force. Until:
She steps back, grabs his arm, whips him vs. the brick wall
-
He hits it, bounces off.
Cut on his forehead, blood streaming down his face.
He stares at her... breathing hard... trying to put it together:

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

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

MITCH
Letters? There are no -

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

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

(SWEET SMILE)
I'll have to give myself bruises...
He goes berserk. Leaps at her, covering ground quickly with his long stride, swinging his massive arms. This is the most terrifying form of combat: a huge person attacking a tiny one.

If he should hit her even once, a glancing blow, she will go down, she will break, it will be over.

III
But he misses, and misses again. Sometimes his punches are wild, almost comical. Others come so close we hear-the wind, feel their power, feel his sweat on her...
CONTINUE this terrifying choreographed dance with destruction for as long as it will hold. At every instant, we fear for her
bones and her life. Sometimes she leans back like Muhammad Ali to barely slip a punch, and we see terror on her face, married to determination. She knows the score. and the odds. Finally, in frustration at so many misses, he grabs an ashtray, hurls it at her - it flies over her head - He punches again and again, wildly. She remains untouched. He stops. With all the blood, he looks like a wild animal. He makes a great effort to pull himself together...

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

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

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

(AMUSED)
A weapon?
He smashes the lamp down, just missing her head -

SLIM (CONT.)
It's a martial-arts cliche, honey.
A weapon throws you off balance -

SWISH -

SWIPE -

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

SLIM (CONT.)
You see?
He turns toward her, pain on his face, holding his hand -
And she truly attacks for the first time. Smashes her fist against his head -
He flies back, bounces vs. the wall.
As he comes off it, she punches him again -
He roars with rage, lunges at her, head first, great speed -
She hurtles him in the same direction, increasing speed -
Right into the opposite wall.
The top of his head hits the wall.
He shudders like someone in a cartoon: a spasm running head to toe -

He drops.

Face down.
Does not move.
At all.
She stares at him.
Goes to him. Wary.
Gives him a reflex test -
No reaction. He's unconscious.
She tests his neck for a pulse. 
Apparently he's still alive, because she raises her hand over her head. 
Her palm vertical, like a knife. 
She's about to deliver a karate chop. 
To his neck. 
it will break his neck. 
It will kill him. 
Her hand stays there, poised. CAMERA PLUNGES IN ON HER FACE. 

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

114

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

SLIM 
I can't, Gin. 

GINNY'S VOICE 
'RE you okay? 

SLIM
Yeah.

GINNY'S VOICE
You're okay?!, you beat him?!

SLIM
YEAH -

GINNY'S VOICE
It worked?!

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

GINNY'S VOICE (CONT.)

(URGENTLY)
Slim. He'll come after you -

SLIM
I know -

GINNY'S VOICE (CONT.)
He'll come after Gracie -

115
An indistinct shape, something rising over her head...

SLIM
I know all that!
I have to, but I can't!
I'm not a killer!
I'm not him!
Mitch. Crazed and bloody face. In his hand: the wooden lamp.
She senses something, turns her head slightly to one side -
- so the lamp does not land quite flush on her skull.
Still sends her crashing to the floor.
Now she does not move.
He stands over her. Looks insane: bloody, dazed, beaten: but triumphant.
GINNY’S VOICE
Hello? Slim? You there?
The lamp moving in his hand. He's rotating it. A simple menacing image... and we realize: he's aiming to hit her again.

GINNY’S VOICE (CONT.)
Should I call the cops?!
Answer me?!
He's distracted by Ginny's voice. Picks up the phone.

MITCH
Listen to me, bitch.
Ginny's silent.

MITCH (CONT.)
if you value your children, don't call anybody.
It's over, okay? It's all over.
He throws the phone on the couch and moves back toward Slim, lamp clenched tight in his fist.

SMASH IN CLOSE ON HER FACE.
CLOSER STILL. We're almost inside her head as we hear:

INSTRUCTOR’S VOICE
Hold onto my voice...

116
Is that the hint of a smile on her face?

INSTRUCTOR’S VOICE (CONT.)
You're ready...
Mitch sees the slight smile, can't believe it - Rage.
He pulls his foot back to kick her -
Her eyes are open, just a slit -
His foot swinging forward...
As it reaches her, she grabs it, yanks it -
He's pulled off his feet, crashing down on top of her -
But she's already rolling, out from under him... and up -
Coming to her feet -
He starts to rise, all fours, then into a crouch and ug...
SLOW MOTION. She's ready. Her face alert. Center of gravity
low. Arm low, fist low... As her motion unfurls:
Boxers say that an uppercut, perfectly
executed, is the most difficult,
powerful, and beautiful of punches.
Indeed: when an uppercut starts low for maximum center-of-
gravity and hits the opponent flush on the point of the chin
as Slim's does here - it delivers a devastating message to
the central nervous system, short-circuiting it completely.
Mitch flies backward...
There's a table behind him.
His head cracks on the table.
His neck snaps.
He lands on the floor: twisted, broken.
Slim stares at him.
There's no way a living man could assume the position now
occupied by her former husband.

117
She stares in disbelief.
Though she knows the answer, she feels his carotid artery.
Her face registers what she feels. Horror, relief.
She walks slowly to her cell phone, picks it up.
Listens: no one there.
She presses redial, waits...

GINNY'S VOICE
(in a panic)
Hello

SLIM
Hi.

GINNY'S VOICE
Oh thank God you're alive.

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

GINNY'S VOICE
Oh.
SLIM
Yeah.

GINNY'S VOICE
Well: I called the cops, they're on their way.
Slim nods.

GINNY'S VOICE
Slim... can you hear me?, this is important.
Beat.

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

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

118

SLIM
See you soon.
She drops the cell phone out the bedroom window into the water.
Then the duffle. They both sink.

EXT. BROWNSTONE.

She comes out, sits on the steps. A siren is audible.
Cop cars speed down the street, screech to a stop.
TWO COPS LEAP OUT OF THE CAR, run toward her.

FIRST COP
You okay?
She looks at him, considering the question.
Shakes her head.

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

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

**SMASH INTO:**

**CREDIT SEQUENCE CREDITS OVER FLASHES:**

**INT. LAX. DAY.**

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

**WHIP PAN TO:**

119

**ANOTHER GATE AT THE AIRPORT. DAY.**

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

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

**WHIP PAN TO:**

**ANOTHER GATE AT AIRPORT. DAY.**

Jupiter comes off the plane, is hugged by Ginny, shakes hands
with Joe. As he turns to Gracie, Slim says:

SLIM
This time be nice to her.

JUPITER
Is it gonna be like that?

SLIM
Yeah.
Jupiter smiles, shakes hands with Gracie:

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

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW "ORCA" RESTAURANT. DAY.

SIGNS all over: OPEN AGAIN AFTER BOMBING! SAME GREAT FOOD!
SAME BEAUTIFUL WAITRESSES! SAME TERRIBLE JOKES!

INT. NEW ORCA. DAY.

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

120

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

PHIL
(passing by, overhears and

JUMPS IN:)
After all I do for her... ?
She better not!
Ginny gives him a look -
PHIL
She has to go back to school, make big success. Sigmund Freud, yes?!

(PATS JUPITER)
Don't worry, Mr. Moneybags will pay.

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

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

GRACIE
Call me Queen Elizabeth.

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

FADE OUT.