

GAME 6

Written by
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Revised
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INT. LOFT APARTMENT - MANHATTAN - MORNING

1
1

1

STEVEN SCHWIMMER, a drama critic, asleep on his bed. He wears a sleep mask.

2

The bed is a mattress on a makeshift platform.

Papers strewn on the floor.

An exercise bike.

A desk with an old manual typewriter, reference works, periodicals, Styrofoam cups.

and

A cast-off sofa with pants, shirts, sweater, underwear socks tossed haphazardly on the cushions and arms.

TV set

A counter that sets apart the kitchen area. A portable TV set on the counter. The remains of dinner for one.

on

A row of stacked cardboard boxes with mail spilling out the floor. Boxes are labeled in crayon: HATE MAIL.

gleaming

A coffee table with a candle nub in a saucer and six

.357

rounds of ammunition scattered next to a Llama Comanche

nine

Magnum with a checkered walnut stock -- overall length,

and a quarter inches.

scarred
A Port-O-San toilet, about seven feet high, orange,
and dented -- scavenged from a construction site.

of
A snapshot on the bedside table. It's a blurry picture
shadow
of Steven holding a cat. Steven wears a peaked cap, and a
radio,
falls across his face. Next to the picture is a clock
radio,
which comes on with a buzz as the clock shows nine AM.

RADIO ANNOUNCER begins to speak --

LONE EAGLE (V.O.)

(softly)

Traffic flowing smoothly on the

Deegan right now but if you're
lucky enough to have a ticket for
tonight's game, be sure to leave
early because it's going to be
bumper to bumper.

Steven does not stir.

EXT. LOFT BUILDING

2

Street near
Steven's loft is in an old squat building on 47th
Twelfth Avenue. The structure looks abandoned. Graffiti
everywhere. Entranceway filled with debris.

2.

LONE EAGLE (V.O.)

Another day of traffic. Traffic
everywhere I look. Cars stop and
move and stop again. People sit at
the wheel thinking their thoughts.

EXT. UNITED NATIONS PLAZA APTS - - MORNING

3

The shimmering glass facade of the United Nations Plaza

visible at
his

Apartments at 48th Street and First Avenue. A man
a window on one of the high floors, a cup of coffee in
hand.

LONE EAGLE (V.O.)

Day in, day out. Red light, green
light. Traffic on the major
arteries and traffic in the little
veins.

nearly

From his POV we see the traffic below creeping along,
at a standstill.

LONE EAGLE (V.O.)

Cars, vans, taxis, trucks, limos,
Mopeds, bikes and buses. Emergency
vehicles screaming and wailing.
Birth and death, walk and don't
walk.

The man takes a sip of coffee.

LONE EAGLE (V.O.)

Traffic yesterday, today and
tomorrow. Bumper to bumper, soul to
soul. This is Lone Eagle over and
out.

EXT. 47TH STREET AND FIRST AVENUE - A LITTLE LATER

4
4
in
wearing

The same man -- the playwright Nicky Rogan with his hand
the air, hailing a cab. He is forty-five, vigorous,
well-made sporty clothes.

In a corner of the screen --

OCTOBER 25, 1986

INT. TAXI

5

5
Stalled in traffic.

NICKY

I used to drive a taxi.

3.

DRIVER

Where you're going, mister?

Nicky glances at the driver's name plate

**KAGANOVICH
ANATOLI**

NICKY

I used to drive a taxi.

DRIVER

I used to be head of neurosurgery.
Big hospital in USSR. This
hospital, I'm not kidding.

NICKY

Very big.

DRIVER

I opened thousands of brains.

NICKY

What did you find?

DRIVER

Big mess every time.

NICKY

I loved my taxi. Went twelve hours
nonstop. Stopped only to pee. I
peed under the Manhattan bridge.
Peed many times in parks and
playgrounds.

EXT. STREET CORNER

6

6

life-
playing
there is
shoes,

47th Street and Third Avenue. A man is dancing with a
size cloth doll. His tape player is on the sidewalk,
and instrumental version of "Beautiful Dreamer" and
a cigar box for donations. A few people look on from a
distance. The man wearing an old cutaway, with running

reading
hand
three
is
The maid's room. The maid is smoking a cigarette and
New York magazine. The cover is partly obscured by her
but we can see a blurry black-and-white photo of a man
hurrying along a street with a newspaper over his face,
shielding himself from the camera. Over the photo,
words visible: THE PHANTOM WHO -- A second line of type
too small to be legible.

INT. BEDROOM -- LATER

10

10

slowly
window.
clothes.
Nicky and Joanna are undressing after the fact, very
and distractedly. Joanna stands by a chair near the
Nicky is on the other side of the bed and he alternates
between standing and sitting as he takes off his

JOANNA

Last night. Alan Albright called me
a handsome woman. Second time he's
done that. Son of a bitch.

NICKY

I hear Alan's sick.

JOANNA

Alan's very sick. He has to go to
New Mexico and sit in a lukewarm
solution.

NICKY

You know about Adele.

JOANNA

What about her?

NICKY

She's dying.

JOANNA

She died.

NICKY

I talked to her two days ago.

JOANNA

Apparently it didn't help. You know about Peter, of course.

NICKY

Our Peter?

JOANNA

Peter Redmond. They found out why he can't remember his lines. There's something living in his brain. A parasite he picked up in Borneo, doing the movie.

NICKY

Can he get through it?

JOANNA

They're watching him closely. There's a special rehearsal set for this afternoon. To bolster his confidence. And that's not all.

NICKY

I've got bigger problems, Joanna. Personal problems.

JOANNA

That's not all, Nicky. I've been backing your plays for fifteen years. And I've never been more depressed.

NICKY

About what?

JOANNA

Steven Schwimmer. The most powerful critic in America gets his first crack at Nicky Rogan.

(hiding his concern)
Look. All I want is a haircut. I'm not worried about this guy.

JOANNA

Ever since he started reviewing the Broadway theater, nobody in this business has been worried about anything else.

NICKY

They can send their heartless brilliant boy-critic. There's a much bigger thing going on than tonight's opening.

JOANNA

What?

NICKY

The Red Sox

JOANNA

You mean the World Series? I thought the Red Sox were winning.

NICKY

Three games to two. But if you know their history, you realize there's a tragedy in the making. I've been carrying this franchise on my back since I was six years old.

JOANNA

It can't be all that personal.

Joanna enters the walk-in closet to finish undressing and
get a nightdress.

NICKY

If you have a team you've followed all your life, and they raise your hopes and crush them, and lift them and crush them, do you want me to tell you what it's like? It's like feeling your childhood die over and over. J

JOANNA

I mean Nicky, really, no.

7.

Nicky follows her into the closet, still in his shirt and boxer shorts.

JOANNA

I'm proud of this play. It's so different from anything you've done.

NICKY

This is how we've managed to last.

JOANNA

We're able to surprise each other.

NICKY

In and out of bed.

JOANNA

Because we're completely mismatched.

NICKY

We don't even like each other, do we?

into Nicky walks out of the closet, takes off his shirt, gets into bed.

JOANNA

I used to tell myself. Talent is more erotic when it's wasted. Will I see you tonight?

NICKY

The Red Sox blow a chance to win their first World Series since 1918. You expect me to miss that for an opening night?

Joanna emerges from the closet in her nightdress and gets into bed.

JOANNA

It makes me so mad. Steven Schwimmer ready to strike. The exterminating angel.

NICKY

It's all worked out. They'll lose tonight. Then they'll lose tomorrow. I see it with stunning clarity.

8.

JOANNA

It's your best play, Nicky.

NICKY

They'll lose because they're my team.

JOANNA

He will absolutely hate it.

11

11

INT. STEVEN SCHWIMMER'S LOFT

Steven is just waking up. The radio plays soft music.

the

He reaches over and hits the off button, then activates cassette player. He struggles out of bed and Sufi music begins to fill the room.

twenties,
pajama

He stands at the foot of the bed, a man in his mid-hollow-chested, slightly potbellied, wearing rumpled bottoms and a Mostly Mozart T-shirt.

He does not remove the sleep mask.

The music has a sensuous, driving beat. Voices begin to chant.

begins
more

Steven holds his arms parallel to the floor. Slowly he to turn, clockwise. The beat picks up and he whirls quickly, his mouth coming open.

grows in

Now he begins to whirl about the room. The chanting

avoids intensity. Although he is blindfolded, Steve deftly running into furniture and other objects.

stops Steven stops whirling at the precise moment the music playing. He is back at the foot of the bed, arms stretched wide.

INT. TAXI

12

12

Creeping along. Nicky leaning toward the driver.

NICKY

I wrapped my sandwiches in tinfoil.
I ate and drove. I had one of those
big checkered cabs.

DRIVER

You are going where?

NICKY

Crosstown.

9.

DRIVER

Very bad today.

Driver's nameplate --

**CHOUDHURY
RAMASWAMY**

NICKY

I cleaned out the ashtrays
religiously.

DRIVER

I am sitting here five years in
traffic. It is one continuous
traffic since I arrive. Why must it
be?

woman in A taxi pulls up alongside. Nicky notices the young the rear seat. It is his daughter Laurel. He opens his

window.

NICKY

Laurel, stay there.

(to his driver)

Keep the meter running. And try to stay abreast.

Nicky leaves his taxi and gets into Laurel's.

INT. SECOND TAXI

13

13

slightly

Nicky pushes in next to her. Laurel is eighteen,

overweight, with a pleasant and expressive face. She is carrying books in a nylon haversack.

NICKY

I never see you anymore. Where are you all day?

LAUREL

I go to college. I thought you knew.

NICKY

Do you want to get some coffee?

LAUREL

I don't drink coffee, Daddy. And this is not what we should be talking about.

10.

NICKY

What do you want to talk about?
I'll talk about anything. What's this?

Nicky lifts a small radio and headset out of her bag.

LAUREL

I'm seeing your play tonight, remember?

NICKY

Why do you need a radio?

LAUREL

So at the intermission I can listen to the ball game. Do you know that mother is seeing a prominent divorce lawyer?

NICKY

That's completely crazy.

LAUREL

Is it?

NICKY

Don't talk like that. How prominent? What are you implying?

LAUREL

She's doing like those Iranians. 'I divorce thee. I divorce thee. I divorce thee'

NICKY

(indicating driver)
And he hears it the same time I hear it? What happened to family secrets?

Driver's nameplate ---

**TABATTABI
ABULHASSAN**

LAUREL

Mother is totally, you know, upset.

NICKY

Abulhassas, we'll be getting out here.

11.

Nicky pays the driver.

EXT. THE STREET

14

14

original

Nicky stands alongside the first taxi and pays his driver. Laurel reluctantly exits the second taxi.

15

15

INT. COFFEE SHOP

47th Street between First and Second Avenue.

by

Nicky and Laurel enter the coffee shop they are greeted
the owner, a hefty Greek named GEORGE.

GEORGE

Nicky, you don't come in for a
while. Everything's okay?

NICKY

Hello George. You're so healthy and
thick-bodied I want to punch you in
the chest. This is my daughter
Laurel. Just to hear the sound it
makes.

GEORGE

I saw your picture in the paper.
Two papers.

NICKY

That means they're getting ready to
kill me.

GEORGE

That's not what I hear. I have
four, five actors working here.
`His best play since "Yessiree Bob"
I'm telling you, they say it.

LAUREL

He doesn't want to hear it.

He leads them toward a booth.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - LATER

16

16

tea bag

Nicky is launched into a full breakfast. Laurel has a
in a cup -- no water.

NICKY

If lawyers for the mob are called
controversial, why are divorce
lawyers called prominent?

LAUREL

Because they get outstanding settlements. And Mother is determined that this time there's no turning back.

NICKY

I just had breakfast with her. She didn't say a word about this.

A young waiter recognizes Nicky and unobtrusively points him out to another waiter.

LAUREL

Because you refuse to believe she's serious. You've always refused.

NICKY

Don't be so steely-eyed. It's that course you're taking in criminology.

LAUREL

Oh please. Not now.
(beat)

She wants you to stop seeing What's-Her-Name. Finally. Now and forever. Do you think that's too much to ask? For a wife of nineteen years.

NICKY

You're too young to be studying criminal behavior. It's making you obsessive.

LAUREL

She is kicking you out.

NICKY

Your mother and I have something between us that's too strong to damage permanently. Believe me, I know this. That's right, nineteen years. And what about the days and minutes? Sharing small moments, sharing memories, raising a beautiful child. We're wedded in

the deepest and strongest ways.
Lillian isn't only my wife. She's
my best friend.

Nicky shrugs.

13.

LAUREL

Bullshit, Daddy.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NEAR THE CASH REGISTER - LATER

17

17

register,

Nicky and Laurel stand on a short line at the cash
each holding a check.

LAUREL

Mother won't tell me how long
you've been seeing this person.
She's embarrassed to tell me. So
why don't you tell me?

NICKY

Don't call her Mother all the time.
It makes her sound tragic and
unforgiving. What happened to Mom?

LAUREL

I didn't turn her into Mother. You
did.

NICKY

This person and I are a thing of
the total past. I promise you.

pay

Nicky takes Laurel's check away from her, intending to
himself.

Laurel snatches it back.

LAUREL

Know what Mother said to me?
Daddy's demons are so intense he
doesn't even know he's lying.

EXT. THE STREET

18

18

looming

"Taxi on
raincoat,
dressed men

Bank towers. The Bank of India, Banco di Napoli, Bear Stearns, the Bank of New York, The Chemical Bank, Manufacturers Hanover. A sense of real institutions

over the busy street. The bank names engraved on bronze markers, carved in granite, incised on glass.

Street level. A glimpse of the bronze statue called

Park Avenue" -- a man with and attache case and

hailing a cab. The real people hailing cabs, well-

and women striding along with briefcases -- purposeful, successful.

14.

INT. TAXI

19

19

Nicky rides again.

NICKY

It's life, it's taxis. People trying to make contacts, make deals, meet their lovers. Taxis are sexy. You can't have Manhattan without taxis. I was proud of my taxi. I kept my taxi clean.

across

of a

Chemical

Nicky shifts his gaze. He sees Elliot Litvak slinking

the street, looking faintly unclean and shows a trace

smile. He watches Elliot enter the lobby of the

Bank.

INT. BANK

20

20

transaction.

Elliot is at a cash machine, making an elaborate

sees

Nicky appears, approaching the adjacent machine. Elliot
him.

ELLIOT

Nicky. I was thinking about you. I
went to the preview last night.

NICKY

I don't want to hear about it.

Nicky attends to his own transaction.

ELLIOT

(whispering)
A lovely piece of theater. Small
but important.

NICKY

Shut up, Elliot.

ELLIOT

Quietly effective.

Nicky takes his cash and begins to move away.

We don't appreciate what they've
built for us. We're artists who are
too dumb to see that this is the
peak moment of Western culture.

NICKY

You're an artist. I'm a craftsman.

15.

ELLIOT

Press a button and they give us
money.

NICKY

Ride with me. We need a haircut.

21

21

INT. TAXI

the

Stalled between Park and Madison. The driver has opened

door and is standing just outside the cab, trying to determine the cause of delay.

ELLIOT

(whispering)
How is Lillian? I haven't seen her.

NICKY

She wants a divorce.

ELLIOT

Don't talk like that.

NICKY

It's over, finished and done with.

ELLIOT

That sounds so final. But are we really surprised?

NICKY

I'm completely stunned. I don't want this to happen.

ELLIOT

But didn't we know it would happen?

NICKY

Don't needle me, Elliot. Tell me how bad you feel. We're suppose to feel bad together. This is what friends do.

ELLIOT

(whispering)
Joanna Bourne. So rich and crisp. This woman lets you touch her body? You put your hands on her personal parts?

thinks
Nicky hits Elliot -- a token blow to the arm. Elliot
about it, then hits back.

16.

leaning
They swat each other, half kiddingly, each of them
away from the other to prevent being hit in the face.

EXT. THE STREET

22

22

sense

A whitish brown mist is building the west. There is a
of scurrying people.

2

3

23

INT. TAXI

The driver re-enters.

DRIVER

We must abandon.

NICKY

What do you mean, we must abandon?

DRIVER

Ruptured steam pipe.

ELLIOT

Ruptured steam pipe.

DRIVER

Asbestos lining. Do not inhale.

NICKY

We must abandon.

DRIVER

Contaminated substance. Very
dangerous. Shooting mud.

NICKY

Do not inhale.

ELLIOT

We must abandon.

DRIVER

Ruptured steam pipe.

NICKY

Very dangerous.

ELLIOT

Asbestos lining.

NICKY

We must abandon.

ELLIOT

Do not inhale.

17.

Driver's name plate --

**BODENHEIM
YEHOSHAFAT**

Nicky pays him.

24

24

EXT. THE STREET

The driver flees eastward. Nicky and Elliot run across Madison Avenue. A snowstorm of asbestos is shooting out of a man hole cover west of Fifth Avenue, reducing visibility to near zero. Cars and people are white shadows.

The two men, with collars raised and hands over heads hurry into a restaurant on 47th Street between Madison and Fifth.

2

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER

5

25

A small narrow room. Handsome wall paintings -- a Tuscan hill town. Very slow day.

Nicky and Elliot sitting with a carafe of wine, a bottle of mineral water and some bread sticks. Glancing at menus intermittently.

NICKY

I'm trying to think. When did you start looking so terrible? You look awful.

ELLIOT

I can tell you the year, the day,

the night, the minute.

NICKY

You used to love life. You don't exude this any more.

ELLIOT

What do I exude?

NICKY

Suffering. You exude a person who sits in a small dark apartment eating soft white bread.

ELLIOT

Tonight you find out what it means to suffer.

NICKY

Tonight. What's tonight?

18.

ELLIOT

Shit. They don't have any carrot soup.

NICKY

You mean because What's-His-Name.

ELLIOT

You will suffer because he is in the theater. And you will suffer a thousandfold when his review appears.

NICKY

It's just a review.

ELLIOT

It is just a review. Do not inhale. Very dangerous.

NICKY

What's the fuss? I don't get it.

ELLIOT

That's what I said eighteen months ago.

NICKY

What happened eighteen months ago?

ELLIOT

Before his Broadway days. He reviewed the one-act I did at the Fulton Fish Market. We did this play at four AM, outdoors in the rain. One performance. For the fish handlers.

NICKY

And he was there?

ELLIOT

Steven Schwimmer. I memorized every word of this review.

NICKY

That's awful.

ELLIOT

I recite it to myself with masochistic relish.

19.

NICKY

A year and a half later? You're still brooding?

A patron approaches the table and stares at Nicky with a fixed grin of crazed recognition.

MAN

Yessirree Bob! Yessisree Bob!

Nicky's jaw becomes set and he pours himself a glass of wine as the man backs off.

ELLIOT

You don't know about obscure writers, Nicky. How we have our anger to nurture and love. Our murderous fantasies for any amount of fame, money , power and sex.

The waitress comes by. She is Paisley Porter, attractive, in her mid-twenties.

PAISLEY

Guys ready to order?

ELLIOT

Paisley Porter. I didn't know you were waiting tables.

PAISLEY

Elliot?

ELLIOT

(to Nicky)

This is a great young out-of-work actress.

AISLEY

Elliot Litvak. Have you been ill? And Mr. Rogan. How nice.

NICKY

What's good?

PAISLEY

We have a very nice pasta today. Alla Putanesca.

ELLIOT

Say it again.

20.

PAISLEY

Alla puttanesca.

ELLIOT

(to Nicky)

Isn't she great? What did I tell you? A talent.

INT. RESTAURANT - LATER - SAME TABLE

26

26

in
his

The food has arrived. Nicky is eating compulsively -- contrast to Elliot, who sips his mineral water, dabs

mouth with a napkin, looks around the restaurant
between
bites. When Nicky is finished with his food, he begins
his picking among the items on Elliot's plate. Elliot uses
brief
fork to deflect Nicky's fork and the two men have a
using
duel with utensils, fencing silently but intently,
knives and spoons to vary action.

2

EXT. STREET

7

27
The asbestos mist still clings. Men in protective suits
and
masks move slowly, like moon walkers. Halted traffic,
abandoned cars. Mud covering the sidewalks and shop
windows.
A gauzy stillness, dreamlike.

INT. STEVEN SCHWIMMER'S LOFT

28

28
Stillness. A slow whirling 360-degree shot. The kitchen
area
is empty. The door of the portable toilet is open and
no one
is inside. The makeshift wardrobe is empty except for
four or
five hangers with shirts and jackets. There is no one
at the
desk or exercise bike.
A sound, faint but persistent, like an intake of air.
The bathroom. The toilet bowl has been ripped out and
taken
away, leaving a hole in the floor. Brownish water drips
from
the tap into the wash basin, which is indelibly
stained. The
drip makes a two-part sound and it matches the rhythm
of the
intake of air. One-two. Pause. One-two. The bathtub has
been
sprayed by a graffiti artist. Multi-colored swirls and
arabesques.

S

Steven is sitting on a mat in the tub, arms in the air
and

in
deep
matching the

folded so that his fists are close to his ears. He is
lotus position, breathing in serious meditation -- a
intake of breath followed by a softer expulsion,
beat of the dripping faucet.

He is still wearing the sleep mask.

21.

INT. RESTAURANT - MAIN ROOM - LATER

29

29

cluster and
having an

The kitchen staff is eating at a group of tables pushed
together. Nicky's table has been absorbed by this

he sits reading the sports section in a tabloid and
espresso with his cigar.

in
Elliot, Paisley and actor-waiter stand at the small bar
conversation.

game.
Next to Nicky, two kitchen workers talk about the ball

FIRST MAN

I got a good feeling about tonight

SECOND MAN

We got Ojeda going. He pitched
beautiful last time out.

FIRST MAN

Plus Darryl's due for a big game.

NICKY

I hate the Mets.

SECOND MAN

How come?

NICKY

When the Mets lose, they just lose.
It's a flat feeling. But the Red
Sox -- here we have a rich history

of interesting ways to lose a crucial game. Defeats that keep you awake, that pound in your head like the hammer of fate.

Paisley walks across the room toward the kitchen. Nicky pauses to watch her, then resumes speaking.

NICKY

You can analyze a Red Sox defeat day and night for a month and still uncover layers of complex feelings - feelings you didn't know you were capable of. The pain has a memory all of it's own.

EXT. SHEA STADIUM

30
30
members
batting

The parking lot is empty. The stands are empty. A few of the crew move the batting cage into place for practice.

22.

INT. SHEA STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM

31
31
doors
see the

The empty visitor's locker room. Uniforms hang on the doors of the lockers in preparation for tonight's game. We see the names Henderson, Stanley, Buckner.

INT. THE MEN'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

32
32
the
standing

2
Cramped quarters. Intensely claustrophobic. Elliot at urinal. Nicky at the hand-dryer. An actor-waiter between them at the sink.

ELLIOT

(quoting Steven Schwimmer)
`One thing saves Elliot Litvak's work from complete mediocrity, and

this is his lack of ambition.'

WAITER

It gets funnier.

ELLIOT

(zipping up)

It gets funnier. See, Nicky? They chart the laughs. This from a critic who lives like a fallen monk. Whose address is a carefully guarded secret.

WAITER

A critic who has to disguise himself.

NICKY

What do you mean?

WAITER

To go to the theater. Wears I don't know what. Make-up, padding.

NICKY

Why?

WAITER

Because he is so deeply hated by so many people in the business.

ELLIOT

He has to disguise himself, Nicky.

WAITER

For his own safety and peace of mind.

23.

The waiter squeezes past and leaves.

ELLIOT

Do you want me to tell you what it was like, reading that review at the newstand with trucks rumbling past and street vendors facing Mecca?

NICKY

What was it like?

ELLIOT

I said, 'I'm dead'. He killed me.

INT. RESTAURANT -LATER

33

33

it in

looking up

He

her.

Elliot standing near the front window, in a shaft of sunlight, examining a white after-dinner candy. He puts his pocket for later.

P

aisley eating lunch at the end of the long table, to see Nicky approach with liqueur and a glass on wine. sits opposite her, placing the wineglass in front of

NICKY

You've worked with Elliot?

PAISLEY

I was in the fish-market play. What happened to him?

NICKY

There was a review.

PAISLEY

I think I remember.

NICKY

So does Elliot.

PAISLEY

Not one of Steven's finer moments.

NICKY

Oh. You know him.

PAISLEY

A little.

NICKY

And he has finer moments now and then.

24.

PAISLEY

He has -- something. A funny little quality I find --

NICKY

Endearing.

PAISLEY

Engaging.

NICKY

Elliot wants to kill him with a railroad spike.

PAISLEY

A little drastic maybe?

NICKY

Say it again.

PAISLEY

What?

NICKY

You know what.

PAISLEY

Alla puttanesca.

NICKY

One more time.

INT. THE ENTRANCE WAY - A LITTLE LATER

34

34

and

Elliot watches Nicky embrace Giorgio. Nicky carries the tabloid he'd been reading -- the "Daily News". Elliot

Nicky stand at the door and watch the whitish mist that continues to linger.

ELLIOT

Is it safe?

NICKY

Do we care?

ELLIOT

I think we Nought to wait.

NICKY

I say we go.

ELLIOT

You say we go?

25.

NICKY

Do not inhale.

ELLIOT

I'm not ready.

NICKY

Here we go.

They pull up their collars and run outside.

EXT. STREET - DAY

35

35

his
trying
receptacle
It is
in
magazine. A
and a
the

The street is deserted. Nicky holds the newspaper over
face for protection. Each man has an arm in the air,
to hail a taxi. They are standing near a trash
that carries an advertisement for "New York Magazine".
a reproduction of the cover that we'd glimpsed earlier
Joanna's apartment when her maid was reading the
furtive man shielding his face with the newspaper --
headline about a Phantom. Nicky and Elliot do not see
receptacle.

them

A bus comes down the street with a large horizontal ad
covering its right side. It is the same ad -- five of
actually, five "New York Magazine" covers side by side.

ad. As
removing the
five
face

Magazine".

Elliot is trying to hail a cab and doesn't notice the
the bus bears down, Nicky steps out of the way,
newspaper from his face and getting a clear look at the
photos on the side of the bus -- a man concealing his
with a newspaper.

Nicky reads the text under the logo of "New York

THE PHANTOM WHO HAUNTS BROADWAY

Learning to hate Steven Schwimmer

carrying

Nicky stares after the bus. Another bus comes along,
the same ad.

Nicky watches darkly.

EXT. STREET - LATER

36

36

This is the diamond district. Store signs reading:

Antique Jewelry	We Buy Diamonds	Gold Emporium
Wholesale Jewelry	All Brand-Name Watches	Reduced

26.

INT. THE TAXI - NICKY AND ELLIOT

37

37

the

Nicky is reading the newspaper. The driver is speaking
Chinese into his two-way radio. Squawky replies from
dispatcher in machine gun Chinese.

ELLIOT

The man has taken over my mind.
He's not only out there. He's in my
head and I can't get rid of him. I
can't write a word without
imagining his response. I'm

paralyzed as an artist.

NICKY

I don't have the problems that artists have.

ELLIOT

You've been saying that for years.

NICKY

What?

ELLIOT

(mockingly)

'I'm just a professional. A dues-paying member of a guild.' Because you're afraid, Nicky. That's the darkest part of you. You don't think you're good enough.

Nicky lowers the newspaper.

Driver's nameplate:

WU LI

EXT. THE STREET

38

38

several
hats.
his
From

About a dozen people gathered together including diamond merchants in their beards, black suits and fur hats. They are watching the man in the cutaway dancing with his cloth doll. Someone places a donation in the cigar box. the tape player: "Dancing in the Dark."

side
bookstore

Elliot ends up near the Gotham Book Mart, on the north side of the street. Nicky looks right past him into the window. He sees something that interests him.

ELLIOT

Where are you going?

27.

NICKY

Don't wait Efor me.

ELLIOT

What about the haircut?

INT. GOTHAM BOOK MART

39

39

standing

Nicky walks along the main aisle, looking at a woman in the poetry nook.

Only a few people in the shop.

walking

He enters the back room and gets a glimpse of a woman through the opposite doorway back into the main room.

doorway.

He squeezes past a browser and looks through the

Someone is just leaving the shop.

He walks to the rear of the store, where the office is located. The door is open, the room is empty.

the top

He re-enters the main room and sees a woman seated on step of the stairway that leads to the basement stacks.

Her

back is to Nicky and she is reading a book. He

approaches

slowly and then squats by the doorway to get a closer look at her.

look at

She turns. It is Paisley Porter.

INT. GOTHAM BOOK MART - A MOMENT LATER

40

40

Nicky and Paisley in a corner of the back room.

NICKY

You keep slipping away. How do you do that?

PAISLEY

I was one of those silent,

listening children. Glued to the shadows.

NICKY

I was all noise. Played the radio loud. Battled constantly with my brother and sister. Here I am, world.

PAISLEY

I hear good things about the new play.

28.

NICKY

So do I. Over and over.

PAISLEY

Peter Redmond is an actor I admire enormously.

NICKY

Would you like to meet him?

PAISLEY

He doesn't want to meet some out-of-work ingenue.

NICKY

I'm trying to prolong our afternoon. In case you haven't noticed.

AISLEY

The fact is, I have to get going.

NICKY

Is it true?

PAISLEY

Is what true?

NICKY

He wears a disguise.

PAISLEY

Steven goes to extremes to protect

his privacy. No friends. No phone.

NICKY

But you're his friend.

PAISLEY

Sort of. Sometimes. You're not building an obsession about Steven, are you? Look. I understand opening-night jitters, but you've got one of the great actors in American theater starring in your play.

4

EXT. THE BARRYMORE THEATER

1

47th Street between Broadway and Eighth Avenue.

41

29.

INT. THE BARRYMORE THEATER - STAGE ENTRANCE

42

42

stage

Nicky has been cornered just inside the entrance by the manager, a small, fierce woman named RENEE SIMON.

RENEE

I can't take this anymore. He forgets simple lines. He forgets where to stand. We tell him and tell him and tell him. I know he's a sweet man. I love Peter. It's not his fault. But I've never worked in a show where the leading man has parasites in his brain.

4

INT. THE BARRYMORE THEATER - THE ORCHESTRA

3

43

space,

behind

toward

Nicky sits down in the orchestra, looking darkly into brooding. He surveys the set, a working class kitchen, it a backdrop of dark streets and looming tenements. A portly well-dressed man appears, moving along the row Nicky. This is SIDNEY FABRIKANT, the producer.

NICKY

Maybe we ought to postpone the opening.

SIDNEY

Joanna loves this play. She has sunk tons of money. She is completely committed.

NICKY

I don't appreciate that, Sidney. But our leading man can't remember his lines. And his understudy can't carry the play.

The Nicky looks out at the rehearsal in progress on stage. director, JACK HASKINS and the actor PETER REDMOND (50) confer, move about gesturing and blocking.

SIDNEY

I had lunch with Joanna. She said she told you about Peter. You weren't concerned, she said.

NICKY

That was this morning.

30.

SIDNEY

So what happened since? You're worried about this kid who writes these reviews?

alone, Nicky looks across the theatre. Paisley Porter sits tenth row center, watching rehearsal with rapt attention.

NICKY

I'm not worried about this kid.

SIDNEY

Well I am. Worried sick. Everybody

quotes Steven Schwimmer. He's here to announce the death of civilization. He kills a play every time he farts.

NICKY

Postpone. We have every right.

SIDNEY

Too late. All the elements are in place. Delay the opening and we lose the theater.

NICKY

I've had three straight washouts, Sidney.

SIDNEY

(deliciously)

You're dangling from the last letter of your last name.

INT. THE BARRYMORE THEATER -THE STAGE - NICKY AND PETER

44

44

REDMOND - A LITTLE LATER

leaning

The actor sitting on the sofa. Nicky on one knee, towards him in intimate conversation.

NICKY

Sidney remains optimistic.

PETER

Sidney.

NICKY

Sidney Fabrikant. Our producer.

PETER

I was educated by nuns.

31.

NICKY

Y
es.

PETER

I have excellent long-term memory.

NICKY

Yes.

PETER

I kissed Shirley Felder on the teeth.

NICKY

Yes, Peter.

PETER

But my parasite is consuming all the new memories. Eating my lines.

NICKY

You have to see the words. Try to build a mental picture of the script. Imagine your lines highlighted with a felt tip pen.

PETER

What color?

NICKY

What was your favorite color crayon, growing up?

PETER

Burnt sienna.

NICKY

Mine was cobalt blue.

PETER

This is your history, isn't it? Nicky? All around us. And my parasite is consuming it.

NICKY

Yes.

PETER

I kissed her while she was laughing.

NICKY

Yes.

PETER

I can see her face so clearly. Dear God. My heart was flying out of my chest with love.

INT. THE BARRYMORE THEATER - THE WINGS

45

45

Jack Haskins and Renee Simon

RENEE

I hear he got the parasite in Burma.

JACK

I heard Borneo.

RENEE

Why do we blame the Third World for our parasites? Maybe he got it in Denver or Minneapolis.

JACK

Maybe he got it in Borneo.

INT. THE BARRYMORE THEATER - THE STAGE

46

46

Nicky and Peter still conferring. Jack and Renee approach.

PETER

I feel shaky about one line in particular. If I can get past this line. I think I can handle the last long speech.

RENEE

Which line, Peter?

PETER

The Son says to the Father, This could be it.

NICKY

And the Father replies?

PETER

That's the line I can't ever, for the life of me remember. I just

can't get it.

JACK

It's the same line. The Father simply repeats what the Son says to him.

33.

RENEE

This could be it.

NICKY

This could be it.

PETER

I know it sounds easy. But something happens between the time I hear the line and the time I'm suppose to Jrepeat it.

ACK

This could be it.

PETER

(long pause)
This could be it.

JACK

Let's work on it.

PETER

(long pause)
Let's work on it.

INT. THE BARRYMORE THEATER - AISLE - A LITTLE LATER

47

47

Nicky and Paisley Porter make their way out of the theatre.

AISLEY

Do you think he can do it?

NICKY

I don't know.

PAISLEY

He's a very sweet man.

NICKY

Where are you going now?

PAISLEY

Home.

NICKY

Someone waiting for you?

PAISLEY

No one's waiting.

34.

NICKY

There's a certain kind of wounded young man who uses his oddness to get laid. Is that our Steven?

PAISLEY

If I'm sleeping with him, and I haven't said I am, then so what?

NICKY

(quietly)

So everything. That's so what. So I begin to hate him. So I want to do him grave harm.

PAISLEY

But you don't even know me. How can you care what I do with whom?

NICKY

I know you both. Enough. How much knowledge does it take before a man does something crazy.

PAISLEY

Do you want to talk about doing crazy things.

NICKY

Yes.

PAISLEY

Never mind.

INT. LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

48

48

They enter lobby daylight, squint a little.

NICKY

What? Come on, Paisley.

PAISLEY

Our Steven not only disguises himself.

NICKY

Yes.

PAISLEY

He goes to the theater armed.

MUTED BACKGROUND VOICES ON THE LOBBY PA: Jack Haskins
and Peter Redmond.

35.

JACK (V.O.)

This could be it.

PETER (V.O.)

This could be it.

They look up at the speaker.

PAISLEY

He feels he has to defend himself if necessary.

NICKY

I'm actually beginning to enjoy this.

49

49

EXT. BARRYMORE THEATRE - DAY

Wide of the theater. Nicky says goodbye to Paisley.

Reverse angle, Elliot watches them from across the street.

Nicky goes back inside the theatre. Paisley walks west on 47th street.

Elliot waits for a moment, then follows her.

INT. STEVEN SCHWIMMER'S LOFT

50

50

The Port-O-San. Steven emerges and goes to the stacked cardboard boxes against the wall. He is wearing a bath towel like a prayer shawl over his sweat clothes.

He drags one of the boxes to the ratty armchair. He sits in the chair by the filthy window that looks west toward the early-setting sun.

He takes a letter from the box, opens it, reads it, lets it fall to the floor. Takes another letter, opens it --

There is a knock at the door.

Steven tenses, does not move.

Another knock.

He moves warily toward the door.

PAISLEY (V.O.)

Steven, it's me. Will you open please.

36.

Steven releases the dead-bolt lock and opens the door.

STEVEN

You've come to me. I wanted to believe you would one day.

PAISLEY

I haven't come to you.

STEVEN

But you're here. So you must have
come to me.

5

1

51

INT. STEVEN SCHWIMMER'S LOFT - A LITTLE LATER

nervously
Steven is back in the chair by the window. Paisley
prowls the loft.

PAISLEY

In other words I never understood
until today how much pain and
anxiety you've been causing with
your reviews. Steven, it's so
unfair.

STEVEN

Of course it's unfair. The truth is
always unfair. Why do you think I
live this way? Hiding out. Stealing
electricity from a lamp post.
Because people who write the truth
are outcasts of society. I can't
live openly, in a nice clean
doorman building, with my name on
the mailbox. They'd come after me
in packs.

PAISLEY

Not if you stopped hurting people.
Write the truth gently.

STEVEN

The truth is never gentle. Listen
to me carefully. Each of us lives
in the thinnest possible wrapping
of wishes and dreams. Truth is the
force that penetrates this wispy
skin. It hurts and maims.

(

reaching down to clutch a
fistful of letters)

Look how they hate me for telling
the truth. It's an education,
Paisley. The College of Raw Nerves.

(MORE)

37.

STEVEN (cont'd)
Letters dripping blood. Cries of
revenge.

PAISLEY

Yes. I've seen your victims. One
past and one future. I thought I
might convince you to reconsider.

STEVEN

And I thought, at last, she's here,
she wants me.

PAISLEY

I don't want you, Steven.

Paisley moves towards the door.

STEVEN

Stay. Teach me to be compassionate.

PAISLEY

I'm going home to my machine.

EXT. STREET CORNER CASH MACHINE

52

52

Elliot looks up and sees Paisley emerging from Steven's
building. He crosses the street toward her.

W

hen Paisley sees him, she seems to freeze.

EXT. THE BARRYMORE THEATER

53

53

47th Street between Broadway and Eight Avenue.

hail a

two-

black-and-

holding an

Nicky walking slowly backwards, arm raised, trying to
cab. It is getting dark. He glances left, sees a large
panel poster in front of the theater. One half is a
white photo -- a younger Nicky Rogan, in a tuxedo,

award in his raised hand.

The other half is all type --

SIDEWALKS

The new
Nicky
ogan

daughter
short

He sees someone enter the theater lobby. It is his
Laurel. He follows, catching up to her at the end of a
line of people at the ticket window.

NICKY

Laurel. Tickets are all set. I
double-checked.

38.

LAUREL

Thanks, Daddy. But I just need one.
Mother's not going.

NICKY

Opening night?

LAUREL

I know -- why should a bitter
divorce interfere with tradition?

Laurel reaches the window and speaks to the clerk.

LAUREL

Rogan, Laurel. You also have a
Rogan, Lillian. She won't need it.
Sell it.

NICKY

Take it yourself. Take a date.

AUREL

I don't have a date. I don't want a

date.

They leave the window with Laurel's ticket.

NICKY

And you blame me. It's because we never talk. Let's talk.

LAUREL

I have a class. I'm late.

NICKY

Can we talk later? Will you be at the party?

LAUREL

I'm not sure.

stands She is out the door, hurrying across the street. Nicky under the marquee, calling out to her.

NICKY

I'll find you. After the show. Somewhere.

INT. TAXI

54

54

Moving very slowly.

Driver's nameplate --

39.

MOSHOESHOE

IBRHIM

DRIVER

A man is hit the other day by another taxi. I mean he is flying. Crash against the windscreen. Right here in my face. Blood is everywhere.

NICKY

I never left the garage without my Windex.

DRIVER

I was barrister in Kenya. I said to him, get off from here. I cannot drive with your body on my windscreen.

NICKY

I drove twelve hours straight through. Ate at the wheel.

RIVER

You have to eat at the wheel. You cannot get anywhere.

NICKY

That's the drama. We're waiting for life to continue. Where do you pee, Ibrahmin?

DRIVER

Under the Manhattan Bridge.

NICKY

That's where I peed.

EXT. THE STREET

55

55

high

47th Street between Eighth and Ninth Avenue. A hotel, a school, brownstones with fire escapes.

5

INT. MICHAEL ROGAN'S KITCHEN

6

56

old

day

Michael, Nicky's father, is making an omelette on the stove. He is pushing eighty, slow-moving, with a two-day stubble.

Knock at the door.

Michael goes to the intercom, inches from the door.

MICHAEL

(into speaker)
Who is it?

NICKY (V.O.)

I'm at the door.

MICHAEL

(into speaker)
Go way. I'll call a cop.

NICKY (V.O.)

Pop, will you let me in?

MICHAEL

(into speaker)
Where the hell are you?

NICKY (V.O.)

Right here. At the door.

Michael goes to the door and looks through the
peephole.

INTERCUT AS NECESSARY

57

57

MICHAEL

What do you want?

NICKY

It's me. Nicky.

MICHAEL

Nicky comes on Sunday's.

NICKY

Where are your glasses? Go get
them.

MICHAEL

If it's you, what are you doing
here?

NICKY

I'm on my way to get a haircut.

MICHAEL

Where does Nicky get his hair cut?

Nicky stands against the door, speaking softly into the

peephole.

41.

NICKY

Across Ninth Avenue. Dodgie's. Where you've been getting your hair cut for fifty years. Where Uncle Billy and Uncle Marty got their hair cut. Where Jim Rorty shot a man for cheating at poker.

MICHAEL

It was rummy, not poker. But I'll take a chance and let you in.

INT. MICHAEL ROGAN'S KITCHEN - LATER

58

58

table
refrigerator,
centerpiece

Michael is eating his omelette at a small enamel-topped table in the kitchen. Nicky stands by the boxlike refrigerator, drinking a beer. This is the kitchen that is the centerpiece of the theatre set. The new play is Nicky's young life.

NICKY

It's a constant shock to me, how small this place is. How did we do it? Five people in these little rooms.

MICHAEL

Get yourself something to eat.

Nicky takes some eggs out of the refrigerator.

NICKY

We must have been heroic.

MICHAEL

Five's not so many. There were families with seven kids. A grandmother. A dimwit uncle.

NICKY

Lillian says it once a week. 'Why doesn't he come live with us?'

MICHAEL

You know the answer to that.

NICKY

I do know the answer to that. Why don't we watch the ball game later? We'll go to Mannion's.

MICHAEL

They're only gonna lose.

42.

NICKY

Of course they're gonna lose. We'll watch them lose. What good is heartbreak if we don't experience it firsthand?

MICHAEL

The Red Sox are your problem. I never understood about you and the Red Sox. Everybody rooted for the Yankees.

Nicky is scrambling the eggs.

NICKY

Remember 1949? Last two games of the season. Against the Yankees. The Sox lost on Saturday. Then they lost on Sunday. First I cried for twenty-four hours. Then I had fist-fights the rest of the week.

MICHAEL

It's one thing for kids. You get older, you Nhave other things.

NICKY

It's all connected, Pop. It's one life. Baseball is memory. How do fathers and sons show their love? They go to a ball game together. Thirty-five years later, they sit in the kitchen and remember.

MICHAEL

But the son is suppose to stop

crying.

NICKY

I could have grown up happy. A
Yankee fan. A divorce lawyer.

Nicky sees his father's glasses on a shelf above the stove.
He puts them on the table.

NICKY

You'll need these. Tonight. For the
play.

MICHAEL

Don't make me sit through one of
your plays.

43.

NICKY

Hey, Pop. I know you don't like the
commotion of opening night. But I
especially want you to see this
play. It's new territory for me.
And for you too. I have to know
what you think.

MICHAEL

Since when did that matter?

NICKY

Let's not start that again.

MICHAEL

My back is killing me.

NICKY

Where's your elastic brace?

MICHAEL

I can't find it.

NICKY

You're suppose to wear it when your
back gives you trouble.

MICHAEL

I lost it. I lose everything.

NICKY

I'll go get you another one. You have to wear it.

for his Nicky takes a roll off the counter, makes a sandwich scrambled eggs, takes a bite and heads for the door.

NICKY

Be right back. Take a good look at me.

Michael puts on his glasses.

MICHAEL

So I know who I'm letting in.

Nicky leaves the apartment.

EXT. THE STREET

59
59
machine
44.
The man in the cutaway dances with his doll. The tape plays "In The Still of the Night."

father's
" The street is completely empty except for the dancer. Nicky, a small paper bag in his hand, reenters his building.

INT. MICHAEL ROGAN'S LIVING ROOM

60
60
at
weary.
long
Michael's end
The room bears some resemblance to the living room set the Barrymore. Michael sits at the end of the sofa, Nicky is taking an athletic bandage -- about four feet and three inches wide -- out of the package.
He sits in a chair that is set perpendicular to of the sofa, so that Nicky is looking at his father in profile.

MICHAEL

`Why doesn't he come live with us?'
Because everything is here.

NICKY

I know, Pop.

MICHAEL

I'm lucky they don't knock down the building. It could happen anytime. And everything worth remembering is right here.

NICKY

I think the building's okay. At least for the time being.

MICHAEL

You didn't think it was okay when you lived here. You wanted to get out so fast I thought you were running a marathon.

NICKY

Normal boy's ambition. I like coming back. You know that.

MICHAEL

You tell your friends your father used to work the docks. Callused hands. But you had an attitude when you were growing up that wasn't easy for your mother and me to understand.

that he
back.

Nicky is gradually unbuttoning his father's shirt so
can wrap the bandage around the old man's chest and

E

45.

NICKY

I was in a hurry to do big things, make big mistakes. Any mistakes were okay as long as it was big. But I'm trying to see these things clearly and honestly. That's the play they're going to kill starting tonight. There's a guy out there getting ready to rip it apart. And that's us. Who we were and where we come from.

MICHAEL

So what are you going to do about it?

NICKY

What do you want me to do?

MICHAEL

Show him who we are.

Nicky takes off the shirt.

Michael struggles out of his T-shirt and we see that he is wearing the elastic bandage he thought he had lost.

He is sitting with his head tilted up, eyes closed, and is unaware that he is wearing the bandage.

Nicky takes the new bandage, winds it tightly and puts it back in the box.

His father has gone to sleep.

EXT. STREET BUILDING

61

61

diagonally
Ninth

It is dark and cold. Nicky emerges and walks west, across the street, to a barbershop on the other side of Avenue.

lliot is on the stoop waiting for him.

INT. THE BARBER SHOP

62

62

customer's
less
named

Nicky sits in the barber chair. Elliot pulls up a chair and sits with his back to the mirror, more or facing Nicky. The barber, an elderly hawk-eyed man Dodgie, begins his preparations for Nicky's haircut.

NICKY

He carries a gun.

46.

ELLIOT

Then you should carry a gun.

at

He places the sheet over Nicky's upper body and fastens it the neck.

NICKY

I used to carry a gun when I drove a cab.

ELLIOT

Where is it?

NICKY

I gave it away. I thought, I'm a writer now.

ELLIOT

That was a big mistake.

DODGIE

You should never be without a gun. In this city?

ELLIOT

If he carries a gun, you have to carry a gun.

NICKY

We're making too much of this.

ELLIOT

No, we're not.

NICKY

I'm not a lonely spooky writer like

you. Nursing a hundred grudges. I'm
a man who loves life.

ELLIOT

We're talking about something
deeper than grudges. How do we
respond to personal attack?

DODGIE

In this city? And you don't carry a
gun?

ELLIOT

How do we maintain our dignity and
self-respect?

47.

NICKY

In other words why should we suffer
silently at this kind of abuse? The
man is out there ruining lives.

ELLIOT

It's your best play, Nicky.

NICKY

He'll hate it.

ELLIOT

He'll kill it. He'll write a review
so devastating it will shatter your
career and cause the most
unmanageable psychic grief. What
happens to your apartment on the
East River? Your house in
Connecticut, where you watch things
grow.

Dodgie goes to the cabinet on which the cash register sits.
He opens the cabinet door, slides out a drawer and removes
some hand towels. There is something there he wants Nicky to
see. An old pockmarked revolver.

Nicky sees the gun.

NICKY

We were thinking of putting in a
pool.

ELLIOT

(quoting)

'The most interesting thing about Elliot Litvak is that he writes the way he looks -- fuzzy, grubby and shifty-eyed.'

(beat)

I'm telling you as a friend.

NICKY

What?

ELLIOT

There are things that speak to us from the past.

DODGIE

In this city you don't walk five feet out the door and there is somebody trying to take what's yours.

48.

ELLIOT

Your truth is locked in your past. Find it. Know it for what it is.

(beat)

Shoot him, Nicky.

NICKY

Shoot him.

ELLIOT

The American theater doesn't need people like that.

NICKY

Shoot him, Nicky. Not that we really mean it. But where does he live?

ELLIOT

Keep going west. Last building before the river.

NICKY

How do you Eknow.

ELLIOT

Paisley Porter.

NICKY

What do you mean?

ELLIOT

About an hour and a half ago. I saw her come out of a place. She said she was visiting a friend. But she wouldn't tell me who.

NICKY

Had to be him.

ELLIOT

She was very evasive.

him Nicky gets out of the chair. Dodgie removes the sheet for
and Elliot smooths down his clothes and hair, like a pair of
grooms attending a warrior.

Nicky goes to the cabinet, gets the gun. He returns to the
chair.

NICKY

I'm enjoying this more every
minute.

49.

the Elliot takes an after-dinner candy out of his pocket --
lunch. He candy he pocketed in the Italian restaurant after
blows the lint off and eats it.

DODGIE

How do you want the sideburns.

NICKY

Elegant and refined.

63

63

EXT. SHEA STADIUM

Crowds of people pouring down the ramps from the train station, hurrying, late.

a last-

The umpire's room -- six men nibbling cookies, smoking minute cigarette, adjusting equipment.

of the

An unidentified room somewhere in there lower reaches stadium. Twenty cases of Great Western champagne ready for the postgame celebration.

stacked and

INT. STEVEN SCHWIMMER'S LOFT

64

64

under the
side

Steven shaving. He does it symmetrically. A stroke left sideburn; a stroke under the right sideburn. Left of jaw; right side of jaw.

jaw to

Steven standing in his shorts, applying putty to his make it square. Then a false mustache and a wavy blond hairpiece. Then a thick bronze makeup paste.

putting
appearance,
belly.

Steven in front of a full-length mirror near the bed, on a bulletproof vest, which gives him a solid bulking his caved-in chest and concealing his pot

bright
and
holster.

Steven putting on black trousers, a brash shirt with a bow tie, which he tips slightly askew. A pair of black white shoes with elevator heels. Then his shoulder

into

Steven leaning over the coffee table, inserting bullets the chamber of the revolver.

With the gun in his holster, he stands in front of the mirror. Takes the gun out, aims it, puts it back in the holster.

Does a dazzling karate move.

silk

Steven putting on a metallic rayon sport coat. A long scarf.

We see a handsome, dashing young man.

50.

He puts on a pair of dark glasses and heads for the door.

EXT. THE BARRYMORE

65

65

and tickets.

opening night crowd. The sidewalk is mobbed. Limousines and taxis pulling up. Men in tuxedos, other men scalping

talking

The TV crew with a female reporter doing interviews: to Joanna Bourne and Sidney Fabrikant.

well

A couple of ten-year-old break dancers entertain the heeled opening night crowd.

6

66

6

INT. TAXI

in the

Stuck in traffic. Nicky in the rear seat.

The driver is a black woman around fifty. Next to her front seat is her grandson, Matthew, who is ten.

drinking cup

The interior of the taxi is homelike. A plastic magnetically rooted to the dashboard. A small battery-operated fan next to the cup. The steering wheel is upholstered. There are family photographs on the and visors.

dashboard

seat. He

Matthew's schoolbooks are next to him on the front

is doing his homework.

Driver's name plate --

MOSEBY
TOYOTA

NICKY

I loved my taxi. A checkered cab.
Big and rumbly.

TOYOTA

I'm looking at you trying to think.
Put your face in the mirror. I know
I recognize you from somewhere.

NICKY

Everybody else does. Why not you?

TOYOTA

You're Frankie Lazzaro. The
gangster from Rhode Island.

NICKY

Oh yeah?

51.

TOYOTA

Matthew, look at him. When I lived
in Roxbury, the media followed this
man everywhere. He was bigger than
ten movie stars.

(to Nicky)

Where's your white Lincoln limo?

Nicky is delighted at the mistake and alters his voice
slightly, using a gangsterish inflection.

NICKY

(to Matthew)

Some little kid stole the hubcaps.

TOYOTA

The most charming gangster in New
England. Where are we going, Mr.
Lazzaro?

NICKY

Call me Frankie. And it looks like

we're going nowhere.

TOYOTA

Might be an accident on the West Side Highway.

NICKY

How come you got the kid with you?

TOYOTA

Matthew's my grandson.

NICKY

A grandmother. God bless you.

TOYOTA

He does bless me, each and every day. Matthew's mother works a hospital shift, so I pick him up at school. We stop for a meal usually around this time. He does his homework and gets some experience meeting people. But we never had a famous mobster before.

NICKY

It's the kid's lucky day.

TOYOTA

This is one charming crook. If shooting people is charming.

52.

NICKY

Now that's a complicated subject.

TOYOTA

That's a simple subject.

NICKY

Look, we're stuck here front and back. It's dinnertime for you, game time for me. Let's park the cab and go to Mannion's. What do you say, Matthew? We'll drink beer and talk baseball.

GRAINY IMAGE

67
parachute
at Shea
Security
Mets

67
Filling the screen. Actual footage. A man in a
coming down on an expanse of grass. It is the infield
Stadium. He carries a sign reading "Let's Go, Mets".
men hustle the parachutist off the field and into the
dugout as the game begins.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN

68
The
named

68
We see that the image is on a TV screen over the bar.
place is crowded, a neighborhood tavern.
Near the door: Nicky embracing the owner, a beefy man
Georgie. People coming and going.

NICKY

Georgie.

GEORGIE

Nicky, God bless. You're well? Your
family's well? That's all that
counts.

NICKY

Are you absolutely sure?

GEORGIE

Hey. I love this guy. Be good. Stay
well. I'm serious: Give my best to
everybody.

They embrace.

Faces lining the bar.

TV images from the game.

53.

look at
People at tables standing occasionally for a better

the game.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE -LATER

69

69

Nicky sits facing Toyota and Matthew. A young waiter is placing their food on the table.

MATTHEW

What happens if somebody comes in here right now and shoots you?

NICKY

This place becomes famous. Tour buses. Blind people feeling around for bullet holes in the wall.

TOYOTA

You see what you're doing, don't you?

NICKY

What am I doing?

TOYOTA

You're charming the boy.

NICKY

Hey, Toyota. He asked me a question.

TOYOTA

Frankie Lazzaro. Coming down the courthouse steps every day in the media. Children see this. They think you're the Secretary of the Treasury.

NICKY

That's my cousin, Angelo.

INT. THE BARRYMORE THEATER - DRESSING ROOM

70

70

A

exchange.

The actor Peter Redmond and the director Jack Haskins.

second actor, who is about fifteen, witnesses the

JACK

This could be it.

PETER

This could be it.

54.

JACK

This could be it.

PETER

This could be it.

JACK

Does it feel comfortable?

PETER

Does what feel comfortable?

JACK

This could be it.

PETER

This could be it.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE MAIN ROOM - LATER

71

71

People cluster around TV sets.

Raucous noise.

watching

A waiter with a tray of food standing transfixed,
the game.

watching

Nicky is now sitting next to Matthew and they are
the game.

MATTHEW

What's it like to shoot somebody?

NICKY

I respect a kid who does his
homework in a taxi. But let's put a
lid on the questions.

TOYOTA

Go on, tell him. Tell the truth.
Tell him how you feel, shooting a

piece of hot metal in somebody's
flesh who was once a child, who was
once the same age as this boy.
Somebody's flesh who was innocent
once.

NICKY

It's complicated. It's a whole
life. A person doesn't commit an
act of violence out of nowhere.
There are strong forces at work.

55.

directed at TV audio: derisive shouts from the stadium crowd

A
Red Sox players.

Action on the field.

TV VOICES

Dew-eeey! Rog-errrr!

The bar crowd picks up the chant.

TV images. The Red Sox have scored and lead 2-0.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

72

72

swings open

Nicky stands to see the action better. His jacket
and Toyota sees the revolver tucked into his waistband.

INT. THE BARRYMORE

73

73

sees

people seating themselves in the orchestra.

Noise from the tavern TV continues to be heard from the
subjective viewpoint of a man in the theater who has a
miniature TV and earphones.

Steven Schwimmer in an aisle seat in the orchestra. He

Paisley sitting in the theatre some distance away.

House lights go down.

Two figures hurrying down the aisle. An usher leading a young woman. The woman is Laurel Rogan, Nicky's daughter, wearing her headset antennas.

Laurel squeezes past some people and takes her seat, and Steven, sitting three rows back, watches her with interest.

The curtain comes open.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - LATER

74

Cheering from the bar crowd.

Nicky is a little disheveled. He has finished his dinner and is eating from Toyota's plate finishing and watching the game.

TOYOTA

You're a family man, Frankie?

NICKY

Wife and daughter. My father's still alive.

(MORE)

56.

NICKY (cont'd)

He outlives me, starting tonight. Because the Mets just tied the score. It was only a matter of time, wasn't it?

TOYOTA

An how many years does it take a person to make his family safe and secure and happy, and then in one dumb moment, what does he do?

NICKY

I don't know Toyota. What does he do?

TOYOTA

And the people he hurts the most are the people who love him. Despite who he is and what he does for a living. We're always saying we want to take control of our lives. You don't want to take control. You want to lose control. Jesus knows it.

screen
Nicky is standing again but he's not looking at the TV this time. His gaze is directed at someone who has just entered the tavern.

somewhat
Nicky's
A woman stands at the entrance, middle-aged and anxious, looking for someone. She is Lillian Rogan, wife.

NICKY

It's a complicated subject.

TOYOTA

It's a simple subject.

Nicky gestures that he will be right back.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE BOOTH

75

75

LILLIAN

Your father said you might be here.

NICKY

Two-all after six.

LILLIAN

I've been looking for you because I want to let you know what's been going on before you read about it in a gossip column.

57.

NICKY

We stranded five runners in the first two innings. This will come

back to haunt us.

LILLIAN

I want to be fair-minded, Nicky.

NICKY

All right. What's been going on?

LILLIAN

I've been talking to a prominent divorce lawyer.

NICKY

How prominent?

LILLIAN

He has his own submarine. I'll be getting everything that matters. I'll get New York and I'll get Connecticut.

Happy roars from the bar crowd.

A young waiter arrives with menus.

NICKY

I'll have whatever she's having.

LILLIAN

(to Waiter)

I don't want to be responsible for his food. Just a small green salad. And a Perrier.

NICKY

Bring me the bay scallops with mercury poisoning.

WAITER

Yessiree, Bob.

NICKY

Get the hell out of here. I don't want you bringing our food. Send a real waiter.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE BAR

76

TV images: action on the field.

76

crowd

Crowd at the bar. Noise like a massive pulse beat. Bar
picks up chant from stadium crowd.

BAR VOICES

Rog-errrr! Dew-eeey!

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE BOOTH - LATER

77

77

burns

Dinner has arrived with a bottle of wine. A cigarette
in the ashtray in front of Lillian.

NICKY

Opening night, Lillian.

LILLIAN

Who the hell cares?

NICKY

The whole thing is my fault. I took
unfair advantage of your patience
and understanding. You understand
me.

LILLIAN

That's always been my problem.

NICKY

And you've been extremely patient.

LILLIAN

You know why, don't you? Because I
am patient, chain-smoking Lillian.

NICKY

You smoked because I smoked. We
were falling in love, remember? I
used to see certain movies only
because you had seen them. I wanted
to see what you saw.

LILLIAN

I'd forgotten that.

NICKY

I went because you went. You smoked
because I smoked.

LILLIAN

That's very lovely actually.

59.

NICKY

Laurel wants us to be honest and open. Let's be open with each other.

LILLIAN

Be open with me. I'd like that.

NICKY

There may be things you'd rather not know about.

LILLIAN

I want to know. We haven't talked this way in years.

NICKY

I had an affair -- are you sure you want to hear this?

LILLIAN

Joanne Bourne.

NICKY

Alma Wetzel.

LILLIAN

Nicky, no. This is insupportable. How could you?

NICKY

I'm a man. She's, you know, a woman.

LILLIAN

She's my gynecologist.

Lillian begins to weep lightly.

NICKY

I am really, deeply sorry.

LILLIAN

It violates so many trusts.

NICKY

It was an animal thing. No real intimacy.

LILLIAN

I never thought of Dr. Wetzel as having a sex life outside the office.

60.

NICKY

We did it in the office. She thought her apartment was too impersonal.

LILLIAN

I'm glad we're having this talk.

NICKY

I feel great. I feel impeccably alive. I'm elated. Eat something. Please. I love you.

7

8

78

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE BAR

Moans from the bar crowd.

TV images.

Scoreboard: Red Sox lead 3-2 in the seventh inning.

EXT. THE STREET

79

79

Lillian

Nicky with one arm raised, hailing a taxi. He and kiss sweetly.

hands

A taxi pulls up and Lillian gets in. She and Nicky hold through the window.

LILLIAN

You look awful, sweetheart. Get a haircut. Get a lawyer.

with his
of the
Across the street, the man in the cutaway is dancing doll. The tape machine plays, "In the Wee Small Hours Morning."

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN

80

80

bottle

Nicky rejoins Toyota and Matthew. He carries the wine and his glass.

MATTHEW

Great game. Red Sox are winning.

NICKY

They're always winning. Until they lose.

TOYOTA

Your problem is you take the easy way out. Losing is easy.

61.

NICKY

Winning is easy. Losing is complicated. It's a lifetime's work.

TOYOTA

It may be work but it's not honest work. Faith is the real work.

MATTHEW

Clemens has a blister. Look. They're pinch-hitting for him.

TV SCREEN

pitches, two
strikes.
Mike Greenwell comes up to hit for Clemens. Two

NICKY

He's a twenty-four-game winner. He pitches seven solid innings. We scratch out a one-run lead. Of course he gets a blister. Of course they put up Greenwell even though Baylor's sitting on the bench. Of course Greenwell strikes out.

Third pitch. Greenwell strikes out.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

81

81

TOYOTA

You made him strike out. You wished it on him. You want to lose. It's too hard for you to believe in something. It's hard to have faith. It's hard Nwork to trust somebody.

NICKY

(reciting)

"It looked extremely rocky for the Boston nine that day."

TOYOTA

You're afraid to risk believing. Believe in them. Believe in your self. Take a risk. It will humanize you as a person.

NICKY

I want to believe.

62.

TOYOTA

If you believed, you wouldn't be walking around with a handgun in your belt. What does that tell me? You want to make the night come down.

82

82

INT. THE BARRYMORE

looking on.

iew from the wings. Jack Haskins and Renee Simon

of the
approaches

The stage. Peter Redmond as the Father sits at the end
sofa. The fifteen-year-old actor who plays the Son
him, sitting on a footstool and leaning close.

FATHER

I always thought a night's sleep is
what you get for a hard day's work.
But these last weeks I lie there
helpless. Hour after hour. I've
come close to praying for the first
time since I was your age. Pray to
God to put Sme out.

SON

I talked to the doctor again, Pop.
He said she's not getting any
better. He wants to talk to you. I
think he means right away.

FATHER

How bad is she?

SON

This could be it.

entering

Peter stares at the Son, a look of desolation slowly
his face.

desolate.

In the wings, Renee looks at Jack. She is equally

INT. THE BARRYMORE - THE ORCHESTRA SEATS

83

83

next

Laurel in the audience leans forward, waiting for the
line.

teven Schwimmer watches, giving nothing away.

INT. THE BARRYMORE - THE STAGE

84

84

eter staring at the Son. The Son looking increasingly

bewildered.

63.

Sound of coughing in the audience.

INT. THE BARRYMORE - THE WINGS

85

85

to

Renee takes a newspaper off a chair, offers a section
Jack, keeps the rest for herself.

8

Sound of coughing intensifies.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN

6

86

Boisterous noise from the bar crowd.

Two women exchanging high fives.

TV images.

Scoreboard: 3-3 after nine innings.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

87

87

Nicky is finishing his wine. Matthew is next to him,
standing.

TOYOTA

Say it and you'll believe it. Life
is good. Say it.

NICKY

I want to say it because my whole
life may depend on these next few
moments.

TOYOTA

Then say it.

NICKY

Life is good.

TOYOTA

Speak it like it's real. Matthew.

MATTHEW

Life is good.

NICKY

Life is good.

Raucous, mocking cries from the Bar Crowd.

BAR CROWD

Hen-duuu! Hen-duuu!

64.

TOYOTA

What are people?

NICKY

I don't know.

TOYOTA

Matthew.

MATTHEW

People are dependable.

NICKY

I don't know if I can say that.

TOYOTA

People are dependable.

MATTHEW

People are dependable.

NICKY

Let's see what Henderson does.

TV SCREEN

Dave Henderson stands at the plate to lead off the Red
tenth.

Sox

8

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

8

88

A real waiter arrives -- obese, slow-moving, with hair
curling out of his ears -- and he brings ice cream for

Matthew, coffee for Toyota and a stinger for Nicky.

NICKY

Finally, I get a waiter who doesn't know "Macbeth".

WAITER

But I know you, don't I? I seen you on a poster in the theater district. I'll think of your name in just a --

Nicky lifts his hand to stop the man.

NICKY

You know-

BAR CROWD

Hen-duuu!

65.

Then a moan and deep silence.

TV

Nicky disengages from the altercation and looks at the screen.

TV SCREEN

lead 4-

Dave Henderson has hit a home run and the Red Sox now

3.

89

89

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

join

Toyota and Matthew are jubilant, and Nicky is quick to them. It is the only lively table in the place.

MATTHEW

People are dependable.

TOYOTA

Life is good.

NICKY

Baseball is life.

TV SCREEN

singles,
The Red Sox push across another run when Barrett
driving home Boggs.

NICKY

Enjoy your ice cream, kid. When
you're an old man it'll come back
to you. The same deep sweet soft
toothy taste. And you'll remember
where you were and what you saw.

last of
Scoreboard shows: Red Sox 5, Mets 3, going into the
the tenth.

INT. THE BARRYMORE

90

90
he theater is nearly emptied out. A few people still
heading toward the exits. Laurel Rogan remains seated, wearing
her headset, listening to the ball game. She is
concentrating deeply, fists clenched.

It is
Only one other person is still seated, three rows back.
Steven and he is looking intently at Laurel.
The house lights dim.

66.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN

91

91
the
from
Matthew's
Toyota, Matthew and Nicky are huddled closely, watching
screen. Matthew is seated now and Nicky leans over him
behind, framing the boy's head in his hands so that

on the

attention will be directed unswervingly to the action
screen.

The bar crowd is somber.

Nicky drops his mob accent.

NICKY

This is something no one has been privileged to see in almost seventy years. Very few people now alive can say that they have seen what you are about to see, Matthew. The Red Sox win a World Series. This is deeply, intensely personal. All the mistakes I've made, all the envy, fear and violence that's encased in this little envelope we call a person -- all washed away in the next few minutes. And your grandmother knows why.

TOYOTA

Because God loves a winner.

NICKY

He used to love losers. But the laws of physics changed.

TV SCREEN

Backman flies out to Jim Rice. One out.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

92

92

NICKY

Backman flies to Rice. It's like a beautiful song lyric.

TV SCREEN

Hernandez flied out to Henderson.

67.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

93

93

NICKY

All the times I died when the Red Sox lost an important game they should have won. All the awful things I said to my mother and father. To Tmy wife and daughter.

TOYOTA

Washed away.

NICKY

Because life is good.

TOYOTA

Because faith is rewarded.

INT. RED SOX LOCKER ROOM

94

94

prevent
the
peeling

Attendants putting plastic in front of the lockers to champagne damage. Camera crew setting up. Men wheeling twenty cases of champagne into the clubhouse. A man foil from the tops of the bottles.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

95

95

NICKY

All the failures, all the fatalism.

MATTHEW

Washed away.

NICKY

One more out.

TV SCREEN

Carter singles to left.

The bar crowd remains silent.

NICKY (V.O.)

One more out. One more out.

Mitchell singles to center.

about to

Slight stirring among the bar patrons. A few people,
exit, return to the bar.

68.

TOYOTA (O.S.)

It's all right, Frankie. Just a
little touch of suspense. Life is
good.

MATTHEW (O.S.)

Baseball is life.

NICKY (O.S.)

One more little out. A nubber. A
pop-up. All year long, thousands of
outs. We want one more little out.

Mitchell

Knight singles to right center. Carter scores and
goes to third. The score is 5-4.

The whole tavern is rocking.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

96

96

TOYOTA

Don't worry. It's a test.

NICKY

It's a test all right. They're
bringing in Stanley.

TV SCREEN

Bob Stanley trots in from the bullpen.

NICKY (O.S.)

It's Stanley. It's the Steamer.
Fate has spoken to this man in the
depths of the night.

MATTHEW (O.S.)

What did it say?

NICKY (O.S.)

A thousand things.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

97

97

MATTHEW

You're hurting my head.

Nicky releases his grip on Matthew's head.

The bar crowd begins to chant.

BAR VOICES

Mookie, Mookie, Mookie, Mookie!

69.

TV SCREEN

Mookie Wilson stands in against Bob Stanley.

MATTHEW (O.S.)

We're still winning. That's what counts.

First pitch to Wilson -- he swings and misses.

Silence from the bar crowd, cheers from Nicky's table.

two

Second pitch to Wilson -- he fouls it off. No balls, strikes.

takes

Sound begins to fade. Wilson fouls off a pitch. Wilson a ball, outside. Wilson fouls off another pitch.

Absolute, unnatural silence.

and

Stanley prepares to throw. The silence suddenly breaks for the first time we hear the TV Announcers clearly.

ANNOUNCER 1

The Sox are one pitch away.

ANNOUNCER 2

One pitch away.

ANNOUNCER 1

Stanley's getting ready.

ANNOUNCER 2

This could be it.

ANNOUNCER 1

This could be it.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

98

98

Nicky recognizing the line from his play.

NICKY

This could be it!

MATTHEW

This could be it!

TOYOTA

This could be it!

NICKY

This could be it!

70.

a
and
Nicky is charged with excitement, hearing the line as
favorable sign, a positive connection between the play
and
the game.

TV SCREEN

Mitchell
Stanley winds up and throws. It's a wild pitch.
comes in from third with the tying run.
The bar crowd erupts in cheers.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

99

99

Shock and dread.

MATTHEW

It's all right. It's a tie game. We can still win it next inning.

Nicky drinks his stinger.

BAR CROWD

Mookie, Mookie, Mookie, Mookie!

TOYOTA

This is the time. Trust in people. Believe in life. Faith is hard work. Don't give in. Don't give up.

MATTHEW

Life is true.

NICKY

Life is real.

TOYOTA

Trust your team.

TV SCREEN

is in Stanley delivers to Wilson. Sound fades away. Action super slow motion.

base. Wilson swings and hits a bouncing ball toward first Stanley moves off the mound to cover first. Wilson drops his bat and races down the line. Bill Buckner, the first baseman, ranges to his left to field the ball.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE TABLE

100 Nicky watches as if in a trance. Complete silence around him. He is separate from everybody else, the only clearly defined figure in a group of shadowy and indistinct people.

TV SCREEN

light
Buckner
beats
with the
the ball
seems
twisted with
saying.

Nicky's viewpoint. An image of Bill Buckner in silvery expanding out of the TV screen to fill the larger environment. Moving soundlessly in slow motion, fields the bouncing ball and heads toward the bag. He Wilson to the base by an eyelash and the inning ends teams tied at 5-5.

Frozen moment: Buckner holding his glove hand aloft, securely gripped. In the drama of the moment, Buckner to be crying out a word or name, but his face is tension and exertion and we can't make out what he is saying.

INT. THE BARRYMORE

101
101
her
rises.
the
in
the
orchestra.
walls. The
strikingly

101
101

Laurel Rogan, seen from behind, is somewhat slumped in seat. She turns off the radio, removes the headset and She moves along the row toward the aisle.

She appears to be the only person in the theater.

She moves trudgingly up the aisle toward the exit. At head of the aisle she is startled by a figure standing dimness.

It is Steven Schwimmer.

They look at each other. Sound of the cleaning crew in lobby and then a door opening at the rear of the Light from a flashlight plays across the seats and beam hits Laurel first and then Steven.

The beam holds on Steven. What Laurel sees is a

off his

handsome young man, dramatically lighted . He takes
dark glasses, so she can see his eyes.

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - MEN'S ROOM

102

102

happy,

Cramped space. Nicky at the washbasin, disheveled but
washing his face.

his

One man at the urinal. SECOND MAN behind him, waiting
turn.

Nicky drying his face with a paper towel.

NICKY

Great game.

FIRST MAN

Unbelievable.

72.

NICKY

Classic.

SECOND MAN

Scintillating.

FIRST MAN

I still don't believe it.

NICKY

Have to hurry back.

SECOND MAN

Hurry back. Hurry back to what?

NICKY

Eleventh inning. What else?

FIRST MAN

(zipping up)

I think you're a little confused.
Nothing personal friend.

NICKY

What are you talking about?

FIRST MAN

What are we talking about?

NICKY

Yes. What are you implying?

The second man approaches the urinal.

SECOND MAN

Game six is history, pal.

NICKY

You're not making sense.

FIRST MAN

We're not making sense.

SECOND MAN

Did you see Mookie hit the ball?

NICKY

Of course I saw it.

FIRST MAN

Did you see the winning run score?

73.

NICKY

You're not making sense. Make sense.

They Nicky throws his paper towel at the men. No one moves.
are trying to interpret this action.

NICKY

You're implying I missed something.
What did I Fmiss?

IRST MAN

You missed the boat, Popeye the
Sailorman.

each Nicky charges the men. He and the First Man wrestle
other into the stall.

SECOND MAN

Hold him till I zip up, Tommy.

Second

Nicky and the First Man are grappling in the stall.
Man hurriedly washes his hands at the basin.

NICKY

Baseball is life. Life is good.

foot in
the

Al three men in the stall, wrestling. Nicky has one
the bowl as someone's elbow strikes the handles and
toilet flushes.

LITTLE 103

103

INT. MANION'S OLD TIMER TAVERN - THE BAR AREA - A

LATER

clustered

The crowd is slowly breaking up. A few people still
near the TV sets, which are showing replays.

on the
pants leg

Nicky is standing alone near a small set at the back
room. His clothing torn and stained. One shoe and
dripping wet. A bruise on his forehead.

He is watching a replay.

TV SCREEN

under

Wilson hits the ball. It bounces twice, then goes

Buckner's glove. Knight scores from the third with the
winning run. A 6-5 victory for the Mets.

keep
color,

The main light in the tavern goes out. The TV sets
replaying Buckner's error. Regular speed, slow motion,
black and white.

74.

Nicky stands in the darkness, brooding.

EXT. LOFT BUILDING

104

104

The

The condemned building where Steven Schwimmer lives.
street is deserted.

105

105

INT. STEVEN'S LOFT

blouse.

Steven and Laurel on the sofa. He is unbuttoning her

The small

Two sources of light. A candle on the coffee table.

sound

TV set on the counter -- showing a newscast, with
turned off.

LAUREL

Why won't you tell me your name?

STEVEN

It's only our first date.

Steven undoes the last button.

LAUREL

I'm willing to tell you my name.

STEVEN

Names are incredibly intimate. We
barely know each other. Trust me on
this.

She decides she will trust him. They kiss softly.

LAUREL

You have to tell me what you
thought of the play.

STEVEN

First you tell me.

LAUREL

Brilliantly moving.

She begins to remove his jacket.

STEVEN

What else?

LAUREL

Packs an emotional wallop.

STEVEN

What else?

75.

LAUREL

A flat-out hit.

Together they get his jacket off.

STEVEN

Are you majoring in theater
criticism.

Laurel sees the shoulder holster and gun.

LAUREL

Criminology.

They kiss passionately.

STEVEN

If you're wondering about the
firearm.

LAUREL

Yes.

STEVEN

This building is not secure.

They are all over the sofa, working on the removal of
Steven's shirt.

INT. THE ENTRANCEWAY

106

106

gone,
and

Nicky makes his way past the debris. The front door is
the inner door smashed and battered -- door knobs gone
locking mechanism ripped out.

He starts up the stairs past a dead or sleeping body.

INT. THE LOFT

107

107

is

Laurel

still on

On the sofa, Laurel is straddling Steven, whose shirt almost completely off, exposing his bulletproof vest. is blouseless and barefoot, with her unzipped skirt and her bra dangling from one shoulder.

LAUREL

I have this thing where I have to know a person is being honest with me before, you know, I can feel completely free to be myself.

76.

STEVEN

We're strangers in the night. The last thing we want is honesty.

LAUREL

What do we want?

STEVEN

Mystery. Deception.

LAUREL

Deception isn't something I personally consider sexy.

STEVEN

What's sexy?

LAUREL

Knowing who a person is. Down deep.

STEVEN

Even if the truth about a person is sad or depressing or shocking?

LAUREL

You won't even tell me your name. What's shocking about a name?

that he
close
Steven maneuvers himself into a sitting position so
and Laurel face each other at equal height and at
quarters.

STEVEN

Even if the truth requires a
certain adjustment?

scrape
And
agent
Steven begins removing the cosmetic putty around his
naturally shallow chin. He uses Laurel's hair clip to
his jaw clean. Then he peels off his fake mustache.
borrows Laurel's dangling bra cup to wipe the bronzing
off his face.

INT. THE LANDING

108

108

is out.
personality,
Nicky stands with his back to Steven's door. His gun
He holds it up near his face, muzzle pointed up.
He looks at the gun as if it had feelings and
and he speaks to it as to a sympathetic friend.

NICKY

I used to go to the movies all the
time.

(MORE)

77.

NICKY(cont'd)

I saw a hundred situations like
this. A man and a gun -- and a
locked door. Lee Marvin or Steve
McQueen. And I used to say to
Lillian because we went to a
hundred movies that we saw together
or that I saw because she had seen
them, and I'd say, 'Watch him kick
in the door with one kick,' And it
might be Steve McQueen or Jeff
Chandler, holding the gun up like
this, and he would turn and kick
the door and it would fly open at

once, and I would say to Lillian,
'How completely phony. Whoever made
this movie has no idea how hard it
is to kick in an actual door in
real life.' I still love Lillian.
But it's not easy to kick in a
door. I knew they would lose and
they lost, so what are we so upset
about? They lost tonight, they'll
lose tomorrow. It's written on the
wind.

1

INT. THE LOFT

09

109

removed
shorter

Laurel is on her feet, backing away slightly. Steven
his shoes and stands in his stocking feet, noticeably
than he'd been earlier.

Laurel to

He begins to unstrap the bulletproof vest, causing
retreat further.

INT. THE LANDING

110

110

NICKY

These wives named Lillian. I used
to say to her, 'You don't kick a
door once or twice and expect it to
open. It's only in the movies a man
can kick in a door with such
amazing ease. Because a real door
requires a tremendous and prolonged
pounding before it finally gives
way.' He's a great player...how
could that ball go through his
legs?

Nicky turns, steps back and kicks the door. It opens
at once.

78.

INT. THE LOFT

111

111

the Steven and Laurel are briefly immobilized by shock as door comes flying open.

Nicky moves toward the candle-lit couple.

zips Laurel realizes who he is and stands by the sofa. She her skirt.

gets it. Nicky is trying to understand what he sees, then he

NICKY

(quiet)

Laurel.

Bill Nicky holds his gun hand aloft, repeating the image of Buckner with the baseball in his glove -- Nicky's hallucination.

humans Then Nicky issues a cry, a sound from the time before life, acquired language. It is the audible anguish of his from the fetus onward.

on his We hear what he is saying in overlapping echoes and we elements realize he is crying out a name. We recognize the look face and the formation of syllables on his lips as we'd seen earlier -- on Buckner's face when he shouted something as he made N the "third out" of the tenth inning.

NICKY

Ste-vennnn Schwim-merrrr!

Steven's Laurel reacts with horror to the revelation of identity. She rearranges her bra.

Nicky stumbles, drops his gun. It goes off.

loft, his Steven flees toward the shadows at the back of the hand moving toward the gun in his shoulder holster. Nicky picks up his gun and begins to stalk him.

dark
Steven fires twice striking a nearby lamp. The room is
now. Lit only by the blue glow of the TV.
The TV sports roundup, which has been showing football
the Red highlights, has switched to baseball -- highlights of
Sox-Mets.
Nicky reaches Laurel.

79.

NICKY

(crying out)

This is my daughterrrrr!

Steven is wide-eyed at the news.

LAUREL

I don't think he knew, Daddy.

Nicky sees the photo of Steven and his cat. He shoots twice,
blows it away.

LAUREL

Daddy, I'm sorry. But he was so
beautiful. I trusted him. When I
saw what he really looks like --

A voice from shadows:

STEVEN

(OS)

Am I really so deeply repugnant?

LAUREL

Yes.

NICKY

Go home, Laurel. Tell your mother I
will be late.

Nicky walks toward Steven's voice, toward the shadows.

NICKY

You're going to die. You're a dead

man. You're dead.

He notices Laurel following behind him.

NICKY

Look. I'm sorry you keep running into dishonest men. But you're only eighteen. We can still turn it around.

LAUREL

Except I won't have a father anymore.

NICKY

I'll see you all the time. I'll get a place right nearby. One room. No distractions. We'll talk.

80.

He shouts into the darkness.

NICKY

YOU'RE DEAD!

Laurel puts her hand on his shoulder.

LAUREL

What will we talk about?

NICKY

Everything.

Nicky sees one of the New York Magazine ads, Steven Schwimmer's face mounted on the cardboard. He fires three times, wiping out Schwimmer's eyes.

LAUREL

Will I believe you when you tell me something?

NICKY

There's nothing left for me to lie about.

from Nicky starts into the darkness only to see Steven emerge the shadows, his gun lowered. Oddly, he seems distracted by

something on another part of the room. He is looking at the TV set on the counter.

Nicky watches him approach the kitchen area. He follows, gun raised.

Steven sits on a stool to watch TV.

Nicky approaches warily, his gun aimed at Steven's head, which is blue-lit by the TV screen.

NICKY

You're dead. I see you on a morgue slab drained of all fluids.

Laurel follows at a distance to see what they're so interested in.

Nicky puts the gun muzzle flush against Steven's temple.

NICKY

I see the outline of your body in chalk on this very floor.

81.

LAUREL

(whispering)
Daddy, wait.

Steven is watching slow-motion footage of Bill Buckner missing the slow roller.

STEVEN

Then they lost?

NICKY

Why does it matter?

STEVEN

If they lost tonight, they'll lose tomorrow. It's all over.

NICKY

Why do you care?

STEVEN

They're my team.

NICKY

No. They're not your team. They're my team.

Nicky cocks the hammer.

STEVEN

They're my team, too. I grew up on Boyleston Street. Right by Fenway Park. I went to fifty or sixty games a year. All by myself. I was one of those kids with scabby elbows. I called out to the players. `Look over here. Hi, I'm Steven. My parents are divorced.'

NICKY

I went to college in Boston so I could be near the Red Sox. I took summer classes and the cut them to go to the game. My wife is from Boston. Lillian Ziegler?

STEVEN

The Red Sox were my world. I surrendered my existence to a team that couldn't win the big one.

82.

NICKY

If you're such a devoted fan, why were you at the play tonight instead of the game? Answer carefully. This is important. You could have gone to the theater last night. There was no game last night.

STEVEN

Because I can't bear to watch. When they lose, I die inside. It's like some little person named Steve just crumples up and dies. I wait for the scores. I still die, hearing the scores, but it's over in a second. I can't survive the game pitch by pitch, inning by inning. I've done it too many times. And I can't do it anymore.

Nicky lowers the gun.

NICKY

I was six years old the day Pesky hesitated throwing home and Slaughter scored all the way from first. That's when I knew the Red Sox were my team. Pity and terror.

STEVEN

When I traveled through Asia this summer, I went to tremendous trouble and expense to rent a car with a phone so I could call up Sports Phone in New York and get the scores. I drove through the war in Afghanistan calling Sports Phone like every hour on the hour, for updates.

NICKY

What about my play?

LAUREL

Yes. And no more evasive tactics.

STEVEN

It's your best play, Nicky.

LAUREL

See, Daddy.

83.

STEVEN

I've seen it twice. I went back tonight to be sure. It's a brave and honest piece of work.

LAUREL

What else?

STEVEN

An artistry and sensitivity you've never shown before.

NICKY

And you're not saying that because of the gun in my hand?

STEVEN

You're out of bullets.

Nicky points the gun at the palm of his own left hand and pulls the trigger. A click.

LAUREL

See, Daddy.

STEVEN

And Peter Redmond helped immensely. These pauses were exquisitely timed. He made us wait and wait. He built a gorgeous tension and suspense.

NICKY

We worked very hard on the pauses.

Nicky places it on the counter.

STEVEN

I called Sports Phone from Lhasa, Tibet. Freezing in my little rented Fiat. Sheep on a hillside. Rocky debris dating back millions and millions of years, from the time the Himalayas thrust up when the plates of India and Asia collided. Red Sox 3, White Sox 2. A moment in the history of the world.

Nicky takes Steven's head and moves it tenderly against his chest. When Nicky releases the head, he has Steven's toupee in his hand. He looks at it briefly, then hands it to

Laurel.

84.

EXT. 48TH STREET NEAR ELEVENTH AVENUE

112

112

48th

elevations.

the

A yellow taxi comes speeding past, moving eastward on Street. We see it from various perspectives and elevations. It is a large checkered cab, the only thing moving in

taxi night. Steam comes billowing from funnel vents. The catches every light just before it turns red.

INT. TAXI

113
113
satisfaction.

Nicky is driving, his face showing intense
Laurel sits next to him.
Driver's name plate ---

**MEMLUK
SULEYMAN**

looking The driver sits in the middle of the rear seat,
somewhat nervous.

LAUREL
Faster, Daddy.

EXT. 48TH STREET

114
114
statue

The taxi crosses Park Avenue, speeding past the bronze
of a man hailing a cab.

bisects the It approaches First Avenue, where a road divider
thoroughfare. Nicky swings into a sharp turns, barely
averting contact with the divider, and stops abruptly.

driver Three doors open. On the empty street, Nicky hands the
divider. He a wad of bills. Then he and Laurel step over the
avenue puts his arm around her shoulders and they cross the
to the glass tower where they live.

The sun begins to climb out of the East River.

THE END