

BOUND BY GUILT

Screenplay by
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I am a master of phantasmagoria.
A Season in Hell, Rimbaud

IN BLACK WE HEAR:

JIM

If I had a choice I'd have forgotten it... Let dogs lie, like the saying goes. But I can't. It hangs around my neck like a stone and I feel like I'm drowning-- all the time... but with drowning, at least you have the comfort of knowing death isn't far away. You take comfort in death.

FADE IN

INT. CHURCH - MORNING

We're PANNING DOWN the distant gaze of CHRIST staring broodingly into space.

JIM V.O.

Truth is, I don't think explaining it will make it any better. I don't think this'll help.

DISSOLVES TO

EXT. SKY - TWILIGHT

STILL PANNING DOWN; the sun bursts in strong rays through heavenly clouds.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - CONTINUOUS

From the angelic vision, we COME DOWN through a canopy of trees. The long shadows stretch across the street toward an active park where COUNTLESS CHILDREN, broken into small groups, are practicing soccer.

On the street, a MOTHER pushes a baby stroller. PRE-TEENS roll by on skateboards wearing helmets.

We move deeper into the neighborhood. A FATHER checks the oil in his SUV in the driveway.

ANTOTHER edges his lawn.

We continue into the corridor between two garages. The sounds of the neighborhood die out.

Behind the garage we peer over a CHILD'S shoulders. He's six years old, poking a sharp stick into a WOUNDED BIRD. It twitches.

CHILD

Cut that shit out. Cut that shit out, you little fuck. Cut that shit out.

The boy darts a glance over his shoulder as if sensing a presence.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - TWILIGHT

The DEAFENING BARK of a dog bellows after a DESPERATE MAN running full tilt in the middle of the street. He appears to have once been a businessman. But his clothes are torn, his face dirty and gaunt.

We follow him as he disappears around a corner in the distance.

Then we turn to see a BLACK SEDAN driving slowly, with steadfast assurance.

Behind the wheel a BRICK FACED MAN scans the lawns and crevices for possible hiding-spots of the Desperate Man. He's a mean son of a bitch, exuding nothing but hatred. His dark sunglasses reflect a black echo of the neighborhood.

INT. VIDEO STORE - CONTINUOUS

We TRACK across a wall of horror films --semi-clad women and horrible deformities-- into the classics/noir section, until we rest on the back of JIM'S head.

Jim is mid-thirties, business-casual khakis and a polo shirt- a cell phone is clipped to his belt. The picture of suburban mediocrity... but a glimmer of life flashes in his

dark eyes. His one defining characteristic is a mole on his right cheek. He turns to show us.

Jim's POV: The "Adults Only" section. He picks a film without looking at it and steps toward the beckoning curtain.

He bumps into an ATTRACTIVE WOMAN who is bent over checking out a title. An awkward exchange.

JIM

Sorry.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN

Excuse me.

Attractive Woman glances over at the 'Adults Only' area, obviously Jim's intended destination, then down at Jim's selection. She smiles.

ATTRACTIVE WOMAN

That's a good one.

JIM

Huh?

She nods at the DVD in Jim's hand: FEAR IN THE NIGHT.

Awkward pause. As Attractive Woman passes, leaving a trail of perfume, Jim's cell phone rings. He answers.

JIM

Hello... I'm here now...

Attractive Woman drifts away slowly.

JIM

I don't know, a mystery maybe, how 'bout...

Jim looks down at his hands. Then has a sour reaction to the caller. He turns, hiding embarrassment. His plea is pathetic.

JIM

Another one? We watched one of those *last* week... Ok... Ok... I will...

Attractive Woman smiles in empathy of Jim's situation.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The streets are darkening. Desperate Man is still running, panting heavily now, almost out of gas.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The sedan rolls along, full of imminent doom.

The black paint of the car reflects distorted suburban homes.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Desperate Man doubles over; peers back knowing the sedan is soon to follow. There's doubt in his eyes. And fear. Lots of it.

INT. VIDEO STORE - CONTINUOUS

Jim places a particularly cheesy ROMANTIC COMEDY on the counter.

A HIPSTER TEENAGE COUNTER CLERK rolls her eyes at Jim, scans it, and then slides the contract across the counter for Jim to sign. Attractive Woman is in line behind Jim.

When Jim turns to exit, he's embarrassed about the film he's settled for. So is Attractive Woman. She musters a wan smile.

EXT. VIDEO STORE - CONTINUOUS

As Jim walks out of the store, Desperate Man slams into him with lung-crushing force. Both men hit the pavement:

THREE VIDEO TAPES fly from Desperate Man's hands and scatter; one lies in the gutter. The Romantic Comedy, ejected from its case, makes a fragile spinning sound on the concrete.

Desperate Man gathers up two of the three tapes and stares pleadingly up at Jim from the ground. Still reeling from the collision, Jim doesn't know what to make of all this.

Desperate Man shimmies under a FORD EXPLORER with two tapes clutched against his chest.

Jim looks up to find the Black Sedan rolling up slowly. It stops on the street in front of Jim and the SUV (beneath which trembles the Desperate Man).

Brick Face faces forward, not at Jim, as he speaks.

BRICK FACE

You see a guy run by here?

Jim looks around as if this man couldn't possibly be talking to him.

BRICK FACE

You're the only one here, bright boy.

Jim stammers. A moment of hesitation. A moment of crucial decision.

Beneath the car, Desperate Man shakes with fear.

Just as Jim opens his mouth to speak, Attractive Woman steps out of the Video Store. There's a heavy silence as she walks away in SLOW MOTION. Time stands still.

As he turns toward Jim, we see Brick Face has horrific burn scars on his face.

BRICK

Like I was saying...

JIM

No. No, haven't seen anything.
Then again, I left my glasses home.

Finding no humor, Brick Face's stare is enough to kill. The silence in the wake of Jim's lie is shattering. Finally, the sedan drives away.

Jim steps over to the car where Desperate Man is hiding. His feet are inches away from the man's face.

JIM

Your boyfriend's gone.

Desperate Man shimmies out from beneath the car, clambers to his feet. He and Jim exchange meaningful glances before Desperate Man runs off in the direction he came.

Jim approaches the left-behind videotape lying in the gutter. It has no label.

He looks around to see if he's being watched. Contemplates picking it up for a weighty beat.

INT. JIM'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER, EVENING

Driving. The videotape is on the passenger seat. Jim glances at it occasionally.

RADIO

And we must be concerned, very concerned for our lives. We can no longer tolerate subversive elements who are out to destroy the things that made this city great. They are everywhere you turn. They could be your neighbors. Your wife. It is your duty to...

EXT. JIM'S SUBRUBAN HOME - EVENING

Jim pulls into the driveway of his quaint suburban dwelling and clicks off the radio chatter.

He sits for a long beat, considering the videotape. It's starting to get under his skin. Consuming his thoughts. He runs a finger over it.

Then, out of sight, out of mind, he swiftly shoves it under the seat and exits.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

From the Hallway, we MOVE SLOWLY toward the Bedroom where Jim sits on the bed quietly while PATTY does her make-up before a vanity mirror. She's attractive, but not warm.

PATTY

And so I said to her, if *my* husband ever spoke to me like that, well, I don't know what I'd do. I said, "if he doesn't think they need to go to counseling then maybe he doesn't think they should be married anymore either." You took your pill, hon?

No response - beat.

PATTY

Hon?

JIM

Yeah, I took it.

PATTY

And she said it's not so easy when you're *actually married* and have kids. I took that as a dig. Wouldn't you take that as a dig, hon?

Beat.

JIM

That's a dig.

Longer Beat. We're close to Jim now.

PATTY

We aren't getting any younger, Jim.

Jim is silent.

PATTY

Jim?

JIM

Yeah, time has a way of working like that.

Silence.

INT. CAR - LATER

Patty is driving. Jim is on the passenger side staring out the window blankly. They pass the landmarks of contemporary times: instantly recognizable fast food joints, convenience stores, strip malls, home-improvement warehouses.

PATTY

I'm not saying now... but I mean we're not even married yet. Don't you think that a little odd?

JIM

Depends who you ask, I guess.

PATTY

You don't have to get smart. It's a long time, Jim.

Acquiescence; his expression eases.

JIM

I know. Soon babe.

Silence. Patty takes Jim's hand in her's.

PATTY

I love you.

JIM

Yeah, me too.

Though there's something 'real' in the exchange, there's also something missing, an intangible void. They fall back to silence.

Jim notices the videotape peering out from beneath the seat. He gently pushes it back under with his foot.

Slowly, the sound of SIZZLING comes in.

EXT. ANDERSON DECK - LATER

Two fat steaks are sizzling on a grill. The Anderson house is straight down the middle middle-class. BILL ANDERSON, "acceptably" overweight and slightly buzzed, is drinking a Budweiser and chewing Jim's ear. He's wearing an apron.

A CONSTANT RYTHMIC THWACKING sound is heard in the background.

BILL

I don't know what you're complaining about. From what I hear, that's not so far below the average, I mean, those cocksuckers set it up like that. Over-projecting by a half point so they can justify the shitty increases.

JIM

Nothing to complain about.

BILL

Then they end up *making plan* by not coughing up the bonuses they put into the over-projection, saying *they gotta make plan*. Got it down to a science. But it's not like you can complain about it. Gotta go with the flow right?

JIM

Like a leaf in a stream.

BILL

That's what I say. *Leave well enough alone*. It's a damn good philosophy Jimbo. Keep you outta trouble.

JIM

Damn good philosophy.

Bill notices Jim staring off into the yard where BILL'S SON wails mercilessly on his play equipment with a whiffle ball bat (the *thwacking* sound). This was the boy poking the stick into the bird earlier. His voracity is unsettling.

JIM

Boy's got a swing.

BILL

Goddamn bastard's gonna be a slugger. I'll sign him up for the major's before the life kicks this body, you wait and see.

JIM

It's a good swing.

BILL

Helluva swing. Gonna make me a million. You wait and see.

A fork plunges into a steak.

BILL

How you like it?

JIM

Bloody rare.

Bill slaps well-done steaks on a plate.

BILL

Close enough.

A slap on the back. Bill walks away, leaving Jim to contemplate the boy battering his play slide.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

The light of the television paints Jim, Patty, Bill and his wife, EMILY in blue. They're all laughing at the film -- except Jim.

We push-in painfully slow on Jim's profile.

We could be a fly on his cheek we're so close now. He turns toward us.

We DOLLY FORWARD across the room (Inter-Cut with a DOLLY OUT ON JIM), through the window, into Jim's car and rest on the videotape beneath the seat.

For a long beat.

DISSOLVES TO

INT. BEDROOM - LATER, NIGHT

Jim is rolled over on his side, facing away from Patty. She lies staring up at the ceiling.

PATTY

It's just the change in the medication.

JIM

That must be it.

PATTY

That's what he said right? A side effect.

Jim stares coldly into the black.

JIM

Small change compared to the diarrhea.

PATTY

But still...

JIM

Yeah, but still...

Long tense beat.

Black.

EXT. SUBURBS - MORNING

Birds chirp. The sun rises. Automatic sprinklers sputter out their morning song.

We turn to an overpass, traffic jammed.

INT. JIM'S CAR, IN TRAFFIC - MORNING

Jim is miserable. Stuck in the inevitable morning rush hour jam. Hot thermos in his hand. On the radio, the usual right wing chatter. Jim turns it off.

He glances down at the passenger seat.

He reaches down for the tape- but spills hot coffee on himself.

JIM

Goddammit.

After wrestling with his thermos and the fresh stains on his shirt, he pulls the tape out from beneath the seat.

He inspects it carefully, angrily, before putting it into his carry case.

Then turns back to the never-ending line of cars disdainfully. He's not having it this morning.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

His car leaves the line of traffic and makes a u-turn, illegally crossing the divider for the open road going in the opposite direction.

INT. ATTIC - DAY

A naked bulb flares to life throwing a yellow glow on the relics of Jim and Patty's life so far. Jim rummages through Christmas decorations and old notebooks.

In a darkened corner, a stack of PAINTED CANVASES collects dust. He glances over at them dismissingly.

Then finds what he's looking for: A VCR.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jim yanks the window shades down with urgency, blotting out the sun.

The VCR, lying on the floor, is plugged into the front of the TV. Jim fires up the set.

Just as he feeds the tape into the slot: a SHARP RAPPING at the door. Jim looks up, startled.

AT THE DOOR:

Jim finds a HOLY MAN of sorts who shoves a pamphlet into his hand. The Holy Man's suit is sharp and clean, his hair plastered tightly down on his scalp. His eyes are surreal.

HOLY MAN

Brother, it's our duty as citizens
to put a stop to the fear pumped
into the veins of God's children
by crooked politicians.

JIM

You got the wrong house. No one's
home.

The pamphlet has a picture of a politician, PAUL ROBESON, depicted as a dictator beneath the words: GLOBAL CONSCIOUSNESS PROJECT.

Beyond, THREE OTHER MEN, of similar description as the Holy Man, stand on the sidewalk, pamphlets in hand, paused in their door-to-door objective to watch their colleague push his wares.

HOLY MAN

This is the right house, brother.

JIM

'scuse me. I got something in the
oven.

Jim shuts the door, but the Holy Man jams it with his foot. Jim is taken aback.

HOLY MAN

God blessed his children with free
will and these spawn of the devil
are trying to destroy it!

JIM

Tell it to someone who cares.

Jim shoves the man out with a brief scuffle. The door shuts.

He peers through shut blinds. The Holy Man is shouting as he walks away:

HOLY MAN

God said to his son Cain, "Thou
 Mayest." Not thou *shall*! He said
 Thou Mayest Brother! Cain had a
 choice! He had a choice!

LIVING ROOM:

Video Snow. The play button is pushed.

White flickers on Jim's face; his strained expression.

We see only extremely brief glimpses of:

TV SCREEN: Footage of Cheap Hotel Rooms. It looks like
 noisy surveillance footage, except the camera seems to be
 floating, looking down from high angles. In periods of
 tenths of a second we see human forms copulating in all
 flavors: Straight, homosexual, orgy, fetish.

The images burn in the blacks of Jim's eyes. For the first
 time in the film, Jim's expression conveys something other
 than detachment.

The SOUND of the front door opening. Jim looks up
 nervously. Just as he's about to hit the stop button:

TV SCREEN: Looking almost straight down, we see a MAN
 smothering a naked woman with a pillow. Though the shadows
 are heavy and the footage is grainy, as the camera lowers,
 there's no mistaking that this man, with an animal
 countenance, is Jim.

JIM

(under his breath)
 Jesus Christ.

PATTY

(calling, O.S.)
 Hon? Hon, you're home already?

Jim jams at the stop and eject buttons frantically trying
 to get the tape out. But it wheezes and won't stop
 flickering its horrible image: TIGHT on video-Jim straining
 to choke the life out of the woman in his clutches.

PATTY (O.S.)
Hon?

JIM
Right there.

PATTY (O.S.)
I have groceries.

The machine finally spits out the cassette. When Jim grabs it, it trails behind a stream of magnetic tape. Jim tries to finesse it out of the slot, but it snaps. Jim grunts in anguish.

PATTY
Hon!?

JIM
(angrily)
One minute!

Jim yanks the video cords and slides the machine and tape under the love seat. Heads toward the front door. We stay on the television and move in slowly.

PATTY (O.S.)
What are you doing home so early?

JIM (O.S.)
I- I'm not feeling good.

PATTY (O.S.)
You look like you've seen a ghost.

JIM (O.S.)
Something like that.

PATTY (O.S.)
What? - Can you grab the rest from
the trunk?

We rest on the video snow on the screen. The sound of
STATIC crescendos.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

At the trunk, a sea of grocery bags before him, Jim is visibly shaken.

A BLACK SEDAN rolls by. Jim stares at it with a sudden fear but sees it's just a SOCCER MOM in her over-priced evening car.

Along with the repulsion of guilt, Jim is conscious of newfound paranoia. His hands tremble slightly as he reaches for a grocery bag.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN (CLEMENZA) HOME - NEXT DAY

Jim sits in his car watching a house that's impeccable in appearance. Neatly manicured lawns, perfect roses before a white picket fence.

FLASHBACK. SAME IMAGE QUALITY AS THE TAPE HE JUST WATCHED (TO BE A RECURRING THEME): Jim sees a beautiful woman, EVE, standing on the porch. Though she is very young and full of the innocence of a woman just coming into her own, there is a sharpness in her features that's disconcerting. She raises a hand slowly in acknowledgement of Jim's presence.

FLASH - PRESENT Jim shakes the vision from his eyes. Drives away.

We linger on the house.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jim lies awake in bed. Patty sleeps soundly, a blindfold over her eyes.

Jim's agitated. Then relents to his desire; he sneaks out of the room.

INT. DINING AREA - NIGHT

He has the tape and its entrails spread across the surface of the table. He straightens it.

The clock reads 1:25.

Jim perspires as he splices the tape together with scotch tape. The tension runs deep in the lines of his face.

The clock reads 1:53

He winds it around the spool in the open case. He's mentally exhausted.

2:20

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jim feeds the tape into the VCR, his breath bated in anticipation. The white light washes his face.

This time we see only Jim's reaction as what he thought he saw the first time is confirmed: it's him.

Jim reacts severely, his anger escaping in spite of himself. Slamming the VCR.

Patty is on the steps in a pink robe and slippers.

PATTY

Hon?

Jim kills the set. Pulls out the tape quickly. He doesn't turn to talk to her.

JIM

Couldn't sleep.

PATTY

What is that?

JIM

Just an old tape. From high school. It's nothing.

Jim turns with the tape in his hands.

PATTY

Come to bed.

JIM

It's just something I found in the attic. It's nothing.

PATTY

OK.

He rubs his eyes in anxiety.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT, MOMENTS LATER

They're both awake. Staring up at the ceiling.

PATTY

Was it a porno?

JIM

No. No it wasn't a porno.

Jim turns away and shuts the light.

He stares into the black, his thoughts weighing on him heavily.

INT. DINING AREA - MORNING

Jim and Patty are having breakfast. The Paper is spread across the table. PAUL ROBESON, smug local politician adorns the cover: LOCAL POL HAS LIST OF ANTI-AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS.

Silence prevails in the heavily sunlit room. The clicking of silverware on plates. Jim breaks the yolk of an egg.

JIM

Do you remember... that time I was out of school?

Patty is startled by this. Everything stops. Long silent beat. A building, an uncovering of something long buried.

PATTY

That was sixteen years ago.

JIM

I know-

PATTY

And we promised never to talk about that.

JIM

I know. Just- Right around the same time... there was a girl...

PATTY

I know about the girl Jim. That was a long time ago.

JIM

I think I-

PATTY

What?

JIM

I may have done something-

PATTY

It was a chemical imbalance. The doctors even said it.

JIM

I had no memory. A year, almost a year of my life gone. I could have done anything-

PATTY

It was a long time ago. And that time is gone, like you said. That's all.

JIM

I may have done something horrible—I could have killed someone for all I know-

The words cut the room in half. Jim is severely affected but tries to hide it. Patty says nothing, hoping the issue will go away, or perhaps that it never happened.

Finally, Patty pushes his morning pill at him. He pretends to take it-- but spits it into his hand.

Jim looks down at the newspaper. Embedded in it is a handwritten note:

LIVES DEPEND ON THE TAPE -
MONTGOMERY PIER 11PM.

Shocked, Jim wheels around to the window, scanning the street. Outside, there's nothing unusual.

PATTY
What is it?

JIM
Nothing. It's nothing.

PATTY
That's your answer to everything.

He folds the note and discreetly puts it into his pocket.

PATTY
Are you ok?

JIM
I'm fine. I'm fine.

But both know this is a lie.

EXT. SUBURBAN (CLEMENZA) HOME - DAY

Same house that Jim considered the previous day. Now he's at the door, gathering up the will to ring the bell. He reaches out for it, but before he even touches it:

MR. CLEMENZA
Who the hell are you?!

Jim is startled. Clemenza's face is obscured behind a chain-locked crack.

JIM
Uh- I'm looking... I was a friend of
Eve's... a long time ago... in high
school.

Heavy suspicion.

MR. CLEMENZA

How do I know that?

JIM

I- My name is Jim. She was in the Italian club... with Mrs... Mrs. Spadafina.

MR. CLEMENZA

So you knew her.

JIM

There's something I want to tell you.

Another long beat. Two locks unlatch inside. The door opens.

MR. CLEMENZA is a man who looks much older than his fifty-six years. He's in a stained undershirt and shorts. Black socks in Birkenstocks. His face is lifeless and gray.

He hardly glances at Jim before turning back in, leaving the door open.

Jim contemplates entering, as if crossing the threshold is some kind of a profound decisive moment.

He concedes.

INT. CLEMENZA HOME, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The house is straight out of a Home and Garden Layout. Everything meticulously arranged, everything immaculate.

They pass through the living room where a television plays a CHEESY FAMILY SIT-COM re-run. The volume is LOUD.

Jim follows Clemenza toward the kitchen where MRS. CLEMENZA is on her knees scrubbing the floor with her hands.

At the entry in the kitchen:

MR. CLEMENZA

This is a friend of Eve's, dear.

She hops up as if on stings.

MRS. CLEMENZA

Oh- you should have told me, dear.
An ounce of planning is worth a
pound of- I- I have a Jell-o Cake.

Pushing her hair into place, she rushes to the counter and
lops off a hunk of green Jell-o cake with slices of peaches
floating in it, dish gloves still on.

MRS. CLEMENZA

It's fresh.

JIM

Oh- uh- No thank you.

CLEMENZA

He's short on time, dear.

Her expression betrays a wounded ego.

MRS.

Oh-

JIM

Maybe next time.

MRS. CLEMENZA

No. Please take it with you.
Please.

There's more in her pleading than just the acceptance of
Jell-o. It quivers sickly before him; he takes it.

MR. CLEMENZA

Excuse us dear.

MRS. CLEMENZA

She was a beautiful girl, you
know. Just beautiful.

Mr. Clemenza crosses the kitchen for the basement door and
disappears descending a staircase. Jim follows with
trepidation, nodding at Mrs. Clemenza. Feeling guilty about
stepping on her floor.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Mr. Clemenza pulls a string and turns on a bare light bulb dangling from a wire. The shadows it creates are thick and harsh. The basement is unfinished: a bit of rug on the floor, shelving everywhere, and a workbench. The concrete foundation walls and ceiling rafters are exposed.

CLEMENZA

You'll have to excuse her.

Clemenza fiddles with some arcane gadget at his workbench-- it's a habitual distraction for him as Jim sets his dish on shelves and notices stacks and stacks of paper: Thousands of hand-drawn mazes.

Clemenza talks/half-mumbles to his gadgetry as if it were an old friend.

CLEMENZA

She blocks it out. Thinks she was turned into an angel by god-- like it was a blessing that she's gone. I envy her that. She's happy, you know. Even a false happiness-

JIM

Then you know?

He turns as if he just realized Jim was there. Suspicion.

CLEMENZA

Know what?

JIM

What happened to her.

MR. CLEMENZA

Yeah... She ran away.

JIM

No.

MR. CLEMENZA

What do you mean 'no'?

JIM

There's more.

Jim takes a deep breath.

CLEMENZA

When was the last time you saw her...

JIM

Fifteen years ago... More... But... something came to light recently... I think it's important to know the truth even- even if that truth is something horrible. And I- I believe it's important to take responsibility for our actions-

Mr. Clemenza is more defensive than suspicious.

CLEMENZA

Responsibility? She was a good girl. She wouldn't hurt anyone. Do anything wrong.

JIM

I know.

CLEMENZA

You come in here, you say she did something horrible? You come in here- for what!? Did she send you?

JIM

No. Why-

CLEMENZA

Then, who are you to judge her?! To judge me! I did nothing to her. She left on her own. Ran away-

JIM

No- you don't understand. We were kids... When- when she disappeared.

CLEMENZA

You were the one. She ran away
with you...

JIM

It was a long time ago-

Clemenza, realizing that Jim may have some kind of new information, turns away to concentrate on the words, free of the distraction of eye contact.

CLEMENZA

And?

JIM

And I think... I *know*... your daughter
was killed— murdered.

A long silence.

CLEMENZA

When?

JIM

When we left. She was just a kid.

CLEMENZA

Who told you that?

JIM

I just know. Now I know.

Clemenza breathes out heavily. Reaches for something in a recess of the workbench.

CLEMENZA

No. She ran away. That's all.

JIM

Mr. Clemenza- I was the one who-

Clemenza places a handful of PHOTOGRAPHS in Jim's hand. Jim takes them with unease.

MR. CLEMENZA

(half-looks up)

She knows nothing about this.

Eve is older in the photos, in provocative clothing, standing in and around a strip club. Jim is surprised, but also restrains relief.

CLEMENZA

I took these with my own two eyes.

JIM

When- when were they taken?

MR. CLEMENZA

The things I saw looking for her.
Those fucks. The things those
fucks are capable of.

JIM

She was young. Too young to be a--

MR. CLEMENZA

(bitter anger)

The younger the better. You don't
know that?

Jim is silenced. Mr. Clemenza turns away from him.

MR. CLEMENZA

That goddamned city... When I found
her she wasn't my little girl
anymore. The way she looked at me...
like she didn't know who I was.
Like I was an insect.

JIM

I'm sorry.

MR. CLEMENZA

I followed her. I tried to bring
her back... Then -those fucks- she
was cut off... I couldn't get near
her... she disappeared... a couple of
years ago she disappeared. I gave
up.

(anguished now)

I just gave up on her.

He slams down his gadget, breaking it. Turns away from Jim.

MR. CLEMENZA

Do you know what it's like to give
up on your daughter?

Jim's silence is answer enough.

MR. CLEMENZA

You can't come back from hell. No
one can.

Beat.

MR. CLEMENZA

Not her. Not me. Not no one.

Mr. Clemenza is severely affected. Jim discretely pockets
one of the photos. He places the rest on the workbench.

He places a hand on Clemenza's back. He shoos it away
violently.

MR. CLEMENZA

She was a good girl. A good girl.

Jim leaves the broken man in the dingy basement fiddling
with his gadget.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Jim pauses at the top of the basement stairs to watch Mrs.
Clemenza sobbing over her gleaming tiled floor.

She looks up at Jim with an expression so helpless it
hurts.

Jim walks out.

EXT. MONTCOMERY PIER - NIGHT

Jim is a black silhouette against the water. The city looms
across the river.

He scrutinizes the photo: Eve is at a table smoking a
cigarette. Well-dressed businessmen surround her. Among
them is Brick Face.

Jim stares out contemplating the scene before him.

The nighttime skyline MATCH DISSOLVES TO:

EXT. MONTGOMERY PIER - PAST

FLASHBACK, GRAINY VIDEO FOOTAGE: Pan from the skyline to a car: A YOUNG JIM and a YOUNG EVE sit facing the river and city. Eve's head is on Jim's shoulder.

INT. CAR - DAY, PAST

Eve's hand moves lovingly over Jim's, indulging in the stains of paint on his skin.

EVE

We could run away if we wanted.
You and me... Nobody to tell us what
to do. No parents. You could
paint. I'd go on auditions...

JIM

You're dreaming Eve.

EVE

What's wrong with dreams?

Jim considers this with the magnitude of innocent youth. A smile.

INT. CAR - NIGHT PRESENT

VERY QUICKLY a darkened figure with a crow bar approaches and smashes the passenger side window (shattering the flashback illusion).

EXT. MONTCOMERY PIER - NIGHT, PRESENT

Jim's trip down memory lane is disrupted by the crash. He turns toward his car, maybe 75 feet away to see a man reaching in through the broken passenger side window.

Desperate Man opens the car door.

Jim runs toward him.

At the car Desperate Man fishes out the bag with the videotape from beneath the seat and runs.

Jim arrives a hair too late and chases after Desperate Man.

A FRANTIC CHASE ensues along the banks of the river. City lights blurring in the extreme background. Both men stumble through overgrown weeds and rocks.

Jim gains ground.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Desperate Man emerges from bushes to find two COP CARS sitting in a lot. He has nowhere to go. As he turns around, Jim tackles him.

The two men struggle in the bush and roll back down toward the river.

Finally, Jim gets the upper hand. He grabs the bag in one hand, Desperate Man's shirt in the other. They're standing before the river. The city beyond dwarfs them.

JIM

Who the fuck are you?

DM

Nobody. I just- my tape.

JIM

You some kind of pervert? Some sicko-

Desperate Man shakes his head. Jim cracks him.

JIM

I'm on that goddamn thing!

DM

You and half the city.

JIM

What is it... blackmail? Is that it?

DM

Maybe... maybe something like that.

JIM
Who the fuck are you?

DM
Nobody. Just a guy like you who
found a tape.

JIM
I'm not like you. Get it out of
your head.

DM
Great. You're a standup guy. Then
let me have it.

JIM
And what if I destroy it? Throw it
in the river.

DM
Then you destroy me. You might as
well throw me in too. I have a
wife. A baby.

He produces a photo.

DM
I'm begging you.

JIM
Who'll destroy you?

DM
Worst thing you can do is keep
that tape.

JIM
Who the fuck are we talking
about!!

DM
You don't want to know. Tapes like
that... they don't come from
nowhere. No one made it. It
doesn't exist. Please.

JIM
Until when?

DM
What?

JIM
Until they pull the plug and ruin
lives. Mine maybe.

Desperate Man chuckles at this.

DM
You think anyone gives a fuck
about you? You're nothing. Less
than that even. How many people
did you see on it? You didn't
recognize anyone on there except
yourself, you narcissistic cunt?

Jim swallows this, pausing in his realization that he's
just a small part of something much greater, he releases
the man.

Immediately seizing the opportunity, Desperate Man attacks
Jim, tackling him to the ground.

A fight ensues, but again Jim gains the upper hand, holding
a large rock, poised to smash Desperate Man's face.

DM
Don't. Please.

JIM
Start talking. Start talking fast.

DM
I can tell you where I got it.
That's all. I don't know where it
came from.

JIM
This rock's getting heavy.

He lifts it up an inch further.

DM

Paradiso Lounge. A guy runs it, Danny, some tech-wiz. Used to be an engineer or something. He gets them. I don't know where.

JIM

Does he make them?

DM

No. I don't know. He just gets them.

JIM

From the people who make them.

DM

I don't know.

JIM

And he gives them to you why?

DM

We made a trade.

JIM

What kind of trade?

Desperate Man cracks a slimy grin.

DM

A girl.

Jim smashes the rock down. It lands inches away from the Desperate Man's face.

JIM

Get up. We have people to see.

DM

You're joking.

JIM

Only if you think it's funny.

EXT. PARADISO - NIGHT, LATER

Jim pushes Desperate Man toward the run down club.

INT. PARADISO - CONTINUOUS

Jim and Desperate Man step into a moderately active fetish club. STRANGE SEXUALLY AMBIGUOUS CREATURES in shiny clothing hang about, dance and touch each other in various degrees and postures of provocation.

DESPERATE MAN

Having second thoughts, brave boy?

JIM

Where is he?

DM

Patience.

They approach the bar where a LEATHER-CLAD BARTENDER of unknown sex approaches them with disdain.

BARTENDER

So Strawberry Shortcake found a play friend. -- Fuck do you want, Virgil?

VIRGIL

Danny.

The Bartender runs loathsome eyes over Jim.

BARTENDER

Danny despises soccer moms and I know he sure as shit doesn't want to see your pathetic face.

VIRGIL

Just tell him its important, you freak. It'll only take a minute.

The Bartender turns and picks up a phone. He/She talks with his back turned for a minute while Jim observes the club and its inhabitants with amazement and horror.

Bartender turns back and signals to go ahead into a corridor behind the bar.

BARTENDER

Looks like you two have a date.

VIRGIL

(to Jim)

Ask and you receive.

Jim and Desperate Man enter into a darkened corridor and slowly approach a slightly ajar door. Inside, a light flickers.

As they near, Virgil becomes increasingly nervous.

VIRGIL

Look I don't know what you're trying to prove. You have questions to ask, ask them yourself. You don't need me anymore. Please, leave me out of it-

JIM

Shut your fucking trap.

Jim pushes Virgil along. We approach the mysterious flickering room.

They enter.

INT. DANNY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Inside. The room is dark except for a projector running a deteriorated silent film: SPARROWS. DOZENS of SHADOWY CATS creep in seemingly every inch of the room.

Standing in the middle of the projection, a VERY YOUNG GIRL in a straightjacket is clamped to two hooks on the wall. A leather blindfold over her eyes, she wears nothing below her waist except platform stiletto heels. Her pubic hair is shaved. The projection throws ethereal textures onto her.

DANNY is on a couch, back to Jim and Virgil (we only see him from behind now), shoveling greasy pieces of chicken into his mouth. He is a sickly obese bald man wearing huge

gold jewelry everywhere- a Jewish Star is prominent. No shirt.

On a phonograph, an Opera snap crackles and pops.

As they move in, Jim tries to ignore the woman and focus on the more threatening presence of Danny, but he's intrinsically drawn to steal glances at her. He doesn't notice how intently Virgil looks at the woman as well.

They slowly round the couch to a more frontal position, casting definition on Danny's face. Danny is seemingly oblivious of their existence gnawing on parts of the chicken's carcass.

As they creep around:

VIRGIL

Danny... I'm sorry buddy... I know I-
I know I promised- and- Danny I
fucked up, I know- This fucking
guy see- a tape- he-

With shocking quickness, Danny springs to his feet. Food flies everywhere, including from his mouth as he charges at the unlikely duo.

A meaty boulder-like fist pounds into Jim's gut and sends him immediately doubled over onto the ground.

Cats scatter everywhere. Danny grabs the bag with the tape out of Jim's hand, like taking candy from a baby, and turns his attention to Virgil.

As Virgil back peddles, Danny slaps him hard repeatedly across the face.

VIRGIL

Danny, please, Danny... I didn't- I-

At the door, Danny shoves the bag into Virgil's arms and slams the door, shutting him out. Just before the door closes shut, we see a glimmer of elation on Virgil's face. Danny locks the door.

Jim's POV: Through blurred vision, from his worm's eye view, he sees the woman's stilettos and polished toenails

across the floor-- Then Danny's feet stampeding right at him. A large foot is retracted and then slams into Jim's eyes.

Black for a short beat.

FADE IN

The opera music is blaring now. Jim's POV: Danny is a giant, standing half in the projector's shaft of light. As he moves and speaks, the light alternately cuts across his head, shifting tonal values radically. Jim regains consciousness to this nightmarish vision.

The Young Bound Girl is still and quiet, half in the projection, half in Danny's shadow.

DANNY

I heard once that film is more pleasing to the human eye because it reminds us of the stories we told each other when we were savages sitting around a fire. The flickering lights of the frames as opposed to the constant stream of video... all that shit. Less information in film, but to us it's richer, fuller.

Danny considers this with sincerity.

DANNY

Video on the other hand, is too much like real life so its effect is diminished, we don't believe it.

Danny leans over to Jim and one side of his head is blasted with light. The effect is horrific.

DANNY

The profoundest truth then, is found in the most abstract of fiction.

Jim looks up groggily.

DANNY

So now that we're acquainted, why don't you tell me what THE FUCK you're doing on my floor!

Jim pulls out the photo.

JIM

I'm just looking for a girl. She- I thought she was on the tape I found- Her name-

Danny starts to chuckle. It builds to an explosive cackle. Food flying everywhere.

DANNY

This fucker wants to know about the queen, kitty!

No response from the bound, blindfolded girl.

DANNY

This fucker wants to know about the queen! God fucking damn!

Danny has an asthmatic attack. He sucks on an inhaler.

Then suddenly grabs Jim by the back of the hair and slams it down into the floor.

He drags Jim by his ear over to the bound woman. Jim's arms and legs scramble to keep up with the pulling pain.

DANNY

Stick out your tongue!

Jim hesitates. Danny flicks open a large switchblade. Points it into Jim's Adam's Apple.

DANNY

Stick it out or so help me I'll cut it out of your throat and eat it.

Jim slowly sticks out his tongue. Danny grabs the back of his head and forces him to lick the woman's feet, jamming

it forcefully in between her gold-painted toes. The woman has a LARGE TATTOO of a spider on the inside of her ankle.

Cringing horror.

DANNY

Keep it out fucker.

Still with Jim's hair in his clutches, Danny raises him up the woman's leg. Jim's tongue trails a thin film of saliva.

DANNY

(whispering)

Now kiss it.

Jim hesitates.

DANNY

(through clenched teeth)

Kiss it!

Jim kisses the woman's vagina gently. Fluid leaks down her leg. Jim averts his eyes.

Danny releases Jim and slaps him on the back.

DANNY

She's flowing like the Goddamn
River Styx. Goddamn! Goddamn!

Danny flings Jim to the side of the woman. He hovers over him like a mountain. He licks his fingers and pats down Jim's hair. Jim is scared.

DANNY

Oh such a sweet little thing,
wants to meet Mommy Queen.

Danny pulls a black card from his pocket. He leans in and whispers in Jim's ear.

DANNY

(whispering)

You know what this is Charlie?
This is a golden ticket. This is
the queen, you fuck. I'm a fair
(more)

DANNY
(cont'd)
and equitable sort, Charlie. So
I'm gonna give this to you... for
the price of admission.

JIM
Just let me go.

DANNY
(whispering)
The price is you, Charlie. I'm
gonna fuck you like a politician.

JIM
Please.

DANNY
(whispering)
Take off your pants.

JIM
No. Please-

Danny jabs the switchblade into the flesh of Jim's neck.

DANNY
TAKE THEM OFF!!!

Jim wriggles out of his pants, knife in his neck.

DANNY
Oh, that's nice. The panties too.

Jim is naked below the waist.

DANNY
We're gonna give mamma a little
show.

Jim hesitates.

JIM
I won't.

Danny grabs him by the hair and slams him down, bent over the couch. Danny is on top of him, a horrible mound of flesh. Cats slinking around.

A knock on the door. Danny is infuriated at the interruption.

DANNY

Goddamn it!

As he approaches the door, Jim gathers his clothes in his arms. He notices the CARD and picks it up as well. He crawls into the second door, the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jim hustles to clothe himself. He approaches a window and opens it. Before he makes his escape, he peers back. Reflected in the bathroom mirror, he sees Danny at the door talking to Brick Face. This freezes him in his tracks.

After some brief discussion, which Jim can't hear, Brick Face plunges a knife into Danny's immense belly. He drags the knife up; intestines spill out.

When he drops to his knees, Brick Face slices Danny's throat from ear to ear. A pool of blood grows on the carpet. Danny flops down with an enormous, wet thud.

Brick Face enters the room, cutting across the projection. Jim is scared. He watches as Brick Face approaches the bound girl and touches her cheek.

The girl trembles and struggles violently, hopelessly in her restraints. Brick Face kisses her on the forehead, then turns to leave.

But he catches a glimpse of Jim in the Bathroom Mirror. Brick Face charges in.

He catches Jim just as he's about to drop outside through the window.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Jim is dangling from a window about ten feet from the ground, below CLUB GOERS in Fetish-wear gaze upwards.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brick Face and Jim make eye contact as Jim struggles to pry himself from the grip.

Jim pulls his keys from his pocket and jabs one hard into Brick Face's wrist, freeing him, finally. Brick Face recoils in pain.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Jim crashes down to the pavement making a minor spectacle of himself. He tries to regain composure, then rushes for his car.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jim is panicked. He jams the bloodstained key into the ignition and cranks it.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Jim's car on the highway.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Finally regaining calm, Jim looks at the card he stole from Danny:

June 6 - 1AM
311 REED ST.
(5 of 35)

Jim considers it. Then a sign outside that reads HOLLAND TUNNEL.

Jim takes the exit.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The City looms across the river, Jim's car dives into the tunnel.

FADE OUT, BLACK

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

Jim is bloody and bruised, sitting in the tub. Thinking...

EXT. REED ST. - NIGHT

Flashback. A dark hole of the city, all is quiet. Jim approaches an unmarked door and knocks.

He shows his card and he's let in.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING, PRESENT

Jim raises his hands to his swollen and beaten eyes.

Patty knocks on the door.

PATTY (O.S.)

Hon, can you hurry up in there?

INT. REED ST. BUILDING - NIGHT, FLASHBACK

FLASHBACK. An OLD MUSTACHED MAN IN A TUXEDO escorts Jim through a long, dark corridor.

They pass a series of doors. The old man stops at one marked 5 and opens it for Jim.

JIM

Will *Eve* be here?

OLD MAN

Our performers have no names, sir.

There is a silent exchange of suspicion between the two men. Jim enters the room.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING, PRESENT

A single sob of emotion bursts from Jim involuntarily.

PATTY (O.S.)

Hon, are you ok?

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT, FLASHBACK

Flashback. Jim sits in a small room, about 8' x 8'. One wall is covered with drapes.

The drapes part to reveal a small auditorium: Centrally located is a stage. Encircling the entire area is a series of private rooms, presumably just like the one Jim is in. The windows are all mirrored, concealing other voyeurs.

On the stage is a bed covered with bright white sheets. Flanking the bed are counters with shackles fastened to the surfaces. The stage is well lit and a microphone dangles down from the ceiling.

Jim gulps, sensing imminent horror.

A naked MAN and EVE (also naked) enter through drapes. Eve is older now, obviously, but still severely beautiful. They circle the bed staring at each other, as if performing a ritual. The man is missing two fingers on his left hand.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING, PRESENT

Jim is breathing in gasps. Knocking on the door again.

PATTY (O.S.)

I need to go shopping, hon. I have
a lunch planned with the girls.

His hand is below the water, near his genitals. We suspect he may be pleasuring himself, but are unsure.

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT, FLASHBACK

Jim watches. On stage, the man is on his back in a Christ-like pose, his arms bound by the shackles that flank him. Eve is on top of him.

The man is working quickly toward orgasm.

MAN

(whispering to her)
It's coming. It's coming.

EVE

(whispering)
You want it now.

MAN
(whispering)
Wait.

The man climaxes.

MAN
Now. God, now. Do it now.

In a flash, Eve grabs a BUTCHER'S KNIFE and brings it down with a fierce quickness on the man's arm, SEVERING it at the elbow. He howls in ecstasy and pain.

Jim turns and gags.

Suddenly, the door opens in Jim's room. The torsos of TWO LARGE MEN charge in, blotting out the frame.

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING, PRESENT

Jim weeps. There's no doubt that he's masturbating now.

SHORT BURSTS OF FOOTAGE: Repetitive glimpses of the sex act and Jim getting pummeled in an alley by the two thugs.

In the tub— He has a painful climax, then punches the side of the tub in torment.

PATTY (O.S.)
You're scaring me hon. Please,
please open up. Please...

FADE TO BLACK FOR A LONG, LONG TIME. We sit in complete darkness with nothing but our own thoughts.

Just like Jim.

EXT. CHURCH - MORNING

A bright morning stings our eyes. The Chapel points majestically to the sky, ringing its bell.

Patty leads Jim toward the church where people are filing in. She's dressed neatly, her hair is perfect. There's a crucifix around her neck.

Jim's bruises have subsided a bit but are still prominent. He looks as if he's being led to a slaughter.

INT. CHURCH - MORNING

The sorrowful gaze of Christ on the cross looks over the congregation basking in rays of sunlight.

The priest is talking of temptation.

PRIEST

How many times, oh lord, the
riches of this world, the
temptations of pride, greed, envy,
jealousy and egoism have dethroned
you my God from my heart.

We move in on Patty and Jim. Patty is paying apt attention. Jim's knee bounces up and down frantically, impulsively.

PRIEST

I sincerely repent of this insult
to your Majesty. Jesus, give me
the grace to be able to reject the
things of this world, to detach
myself from all that is around me,
and to cling strongly to your
spirit within me.

Jim sweats. Patty puts her hand on Jim's knee to still it. Jim looks angrily at her out of the corner of his eyes. Then buries a sour frown into his chest.

EXT. CHURCH - LATER, DAY

At the door, the Priest is shaking hands with his flock.

Jim walks quickly past him, through the clusters of CHURCHGOERS. Patty, forced to follow, is annoyed at not being able to socialize.

PATTY

Jim. Jim, slow down.

But Jim practically trots down the steps. Patty catches up and they continue to walk through the lot toward their car.

PATTY
What is it with you?

JIM
I don't have patience for it
anymore.

PATTY
It's once a week.

JIM
Once too many.

PATTY
You're not taking your meds.

JIM
I don't want to talk about it.

PATTY
You weren't just jumped last week
were you?

Jim doesn't answer.

PATTY
You know it's dangerous not to
take them. You're not the same
person.

JIM
Maybe I wasn't the same person
when I was taking them.

They've reached the car.

JIM
Give me the keys.

This isn't a question and Patty, sensing something strange
in Jim, doesn't protest. They get in and drive away fast,
drawing glances from various WHISPERING CHURCHGOERS.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

BLACK. FLASHBACK. Same quality image as the videotape: Jim steps out of shadow smoking a cigarette. The smoke lingers in the still air. He looks off-screen for a long beat.

On the bed Eve lies naked below the waist. Her legs are slightly spread. She is half-conscious, as if drugged.

Jim has a long SHARPENED SCREWDRIVER in his hand. He moves forward.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jim jolts awake in a cold sweat, laboring to catch his breath.

SIZZLING SOUND:

EXT. ANDERSON'S DECK - EVENING

Rows of cheeseburgers sizzle on the grill. Bill Andersen is in his apron holding a spatula.

BILL

So when they got up to the room,
we took turns taking them into the
bathroom--- you shoulda seen it--
like waiting on line at the
goddamn deli.

Jim studies Bill.

BILL

Don't look so shocked. I mean I
still love Emily and all that.

Jim is silent.

BILL

Don't tell me you've never been to
a bachelor party before?

JIM

How did you find them?

BILL
What- the girls?

JIM
They were on the street?

BILL
Hell no. I mean I guess you can...
But now you just pick them out of
the back of the paper- what is it?
The Voice. It's safer like that.
It's like a menu. Take out pussy...
heh-heh-heh.
(to his approaching son)
Oh, hi son...

Bill's son points a toy gun at Jim and pretends to shoot him. The seriousness of his expression is disquieting.

INT. ANDERSON LIVING ROOM - LATER, NIGHT

The two couples are watching their weekly Romantic Comedy. Jim is desperately distracted.

EXT. VIDEO STORE - NIGHT

It's raining steadily. Jim's car pulls up in front of the store. Patty is in the passenger seat chattering about something on her cell phone.

Jim lingers for an exasperated beat, conveying dismay.

He steps out with the DVD in his hands. He makes his way, trotting through the rain to the entrance.

INT. VIDEO STORE - CONTINUOUS

Jim steps in. Just as he's about to drop the DVD into the return slot, he sees Brick Face at the counter, flashing a badge at the Counter Clerk, making inquiries.

Jim is stunned, a deer in headlights. Brick Face spots him.

Jim spins and bolts.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jim is frantic. He screeches out of the parking spot.

PATTY

What is it! What's wrong?

Brick Face runs in front of the car. Jim slides to a halt. Steam from the rain rises off the hood; the hot light of Jim's headlights illuminates Brick Face like some unearthly being. They're locked in on each other.

PATTY

Jim! What's going on?!

Jim's foot pounds down on the gas. Patty SHRIEKS.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Brick Face is heaved onto the hood. Then rolls sideways onto the street.

He gets to his feet slowly but steadily.

He points a pistol at the car but it squeals around a corner.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Patty's fear surfaces as fury at Jim.

PATTY

You've lost your mind! Jesus Christ we're going to get arrested.

JIM

Shut up! Shut the fuck up!

PATTY

Stop this car! Let me out now!

JIM

I'm sorry. Jesus Christ. I'm sorry.

PATTY

Let me out!

She starts swatting at him. He fends her off. All the while Conservative Talk Radio plays on the speakers.

EXT. TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Rain still falls steadily. Jim's car screeches into the dimly lit station parking lot. A few TRAVELERS are on the platform waiting for a train.

Patty charges out of the car. Jim follows her. Grabs her by the arm.

PATTY

Let me go!

This draws attention from those on the platform. Jim and Patty are beneath a sign that reads: IF YOU SEE SOMETHING, SAY SOMETHING.

Jim drags her behind the station building. She protests.

A few travelers on the platform watch Jim and Patty's shadows, cast onto the asphalt, suspiciously, curiously, zombie-like.

EXT. BEHIND BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Jim has her in his clutches. She's squirming. They're both soaking wet now.

PATTY

Let me go. You're a madman.

JIM

You won't run? Promise me you won't run. You'll hear me out.

PATTY

Tell me what's happening.

JIM

I know- I know things have been hard. I know I've been less than what you need.

PATTY

You need help, Jim.

JIM

No, it's not about that.

PATTY

I don't want to talk to you until you're back on your pills. You're not thinking straight. You're paranoid. Shaking. You always shake when-

JIM

I'm shaking because we were almost killed! I'm trying to reach out to you, Patty. Please...

PATTY

The Jim I knew never would have- never would have dared-

JIM

To do something like that. But I had to. He would have killed me. You. I couldn't live with that.

PATTY

You can't do this to me. You can't fucking do this to me.

JIM

The other night. This guy- that guy back there- he killed someone- I never- I never saw anything like it.

PATTY

It's an imbalance Jim. It's chemical... it-

JIM

No. This is real. I saw it with my own two eyes. You have to trust me.

PATTY

Why should I trust you? You have to call the police.

JIM

He is the police. He has a badge anyway.-And you have to trust me because you love me. Because I love you. You're all I have. I know I haven't been fair...

PATTY

No.

JIM

Baby, I swear, do what I say, I'll take care of it. And when I get back-

PATTY

Where are you going?

JIM

I promise things will be different. I promise. We'll start our lives. I need to take care of something.

PATTY

Take care of what, Jim?

JIM

And when I get back, we'll get married. We'll start our lives. It's a long time. I know it's been a long time.

PATTY

You're scaring me. I'm scared.

JIM

I can- I think I can stop it- I just need to find someone. Explain myself.

PATTY

Who?

JIM

Someone who knows him. She may be able to help. She has to.

A heavy beat.

PATTY

It's a woman?

JIM

You have to trust me. Get on the next train, transfer at Newark and get a ticket to your mother's. Stay there until I call you. Maybe a week. Maybe more.

PATTY

You expect me to drop everything just like that? Work. My friends.

JIM

You have to. You have to trust me. I'm sorry. I can't tell you any more.

Patty considers this.

PATTY

You son of a bitch. This isn't how it's supposed to be. We had plans Jim. You promised. You promised.

JIM

I do promise. I do.

Patty breaks down. She starts swatting at Jim. He tries to fend her off; finally he smothers her in an embrace as she sobs.

JIM

(soothingly)

I love you. Please don't forget it. I won't forget. I love you.

The rain crashes down all around.

EXT. TRAINS STATION, PLATFORM - MOMENTS LATER

Jim stands on the platform watching Patty through a window of the train. There's infinite sadness, regret and anger in her eyes as the train pulls away.

Jim turns.

RADIO 1

And there's been rumors... reports of a classified antiterrorist program... the name they've given it on the Internet is...

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Jim drives into the tunnel. He's still wet.

The lights of the tunnel blur into white streams.

RADIO 1

(cont'd)

er... 'Global Consciousness Project...' Can you validate or disprove these rumors?

Jim is woozy- coming down from his medication regimen, shaky. All is foggy in his vision.

RADIO 2

As far as I know, these rumors are absolutely untrue. I have no knowledge or recollection of any such program and what's more, it is completely preposterous-- what they're saying about it- something out of a science fiction novel. It is nothing but an outshoot or er... a symptom of the hysteria these devils have brought to our great country... which only reinforces the need for vigilance and--

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. REED ST. THEATER - NIGHT

Jim approaches carefully. The lock is busted off the door and Jim makes easy passage inside.

INT. REED ST. THEATER - NIGHT

The light fixtures and decorations have been removed. Most of the dividing walls that created the private rooms are gone. It's an empty shell, abandoned.

Jim walks on what's left of the dismantled stage. Realizing he's standing on a large stain of blood, steps off.

In a corner, a gaggle of filthy PUPPIES are sucking on their mother's teats. Flies swarm.

Jim turns away.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY STREETS - CONTINUOUS

MONTAGE: SLOW MOTION Jim drives, surveying the street. There are PROSTITUTES and SEEDY MEN everywhere. A MAN in an alley is getting a blowjob-- he makes eye contact with Jim.

The streets are checkered with SEX SHOPS, their windows burn punctuation into the dark street.

Jim is disturbed by what he sees.

Jim asks VARIOUS STREET DWELLERS about the photo of Eve. Invariably, they shake their heads or take one look at his suburban attire and walk away without a word.

Jim walks the streets watching the filth from his car.

END MONTAGE

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

A dark street. A neon sign buzzes its stark message above a foreboding door: HOTEL. Jim approaches and pauses at the entrance.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY, PAST

FLASHBACK: the same quality image as the videotape. Eve is young and beautiful, staring into the camera, as if looking into Jim's eyes.

She poses playfully, like a game show girl in front of some kitchen appliance, at the entrance to the hotel.

Jim joins her side and holding out the camera, snaps a picture of them. Happy young couple.

MATCH CUT:

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT, PRESENT

Jim is woozy standing in the exact spot as his flashback. He props himself up in the frame of the door trying to regain composure. Inside, a DRUNK, or junky, is passed out, lying in the hall.

Jim has the bottle of pills, his medication, in his hands. He pulls one out and contemplates taking it. His hands shake.

But he stops. He pours all of the pills out onto the ground. Then drops the bottle entirely.

Finally, he walks into the building.

As he enters into the darkness of the hotel, a SCAVANGER emerges from the shadows outside and picks up the pills.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The back of Jim's head. The phone is to his ear.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(on phone)
Glamour Girls.

JIM
Um- I- I need a date.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(on phone)
Yeah. When?

JIM
Today. As soon as possible.

WOMAN
Where?

JIM
Hotel on 3rd and 15th. Room 6.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(on phone)
Any special requests?

The photo of Eve.

JIM
Yes. Dark hair. Blue- no, green
eyes. Very beautiful.

WOMAN'S VOICE
We'll see what we can do. About
six o'clock. Cash only.

Jim hangs up the phone.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A CALL-GIRL sits in Jim's room-- lit by a single dirty
bedside lamp. She lights a cigarette and stares at two
small canvases lying in a corner of the room- paintings of
a woman's eyes (Eve's) emerging from complete blackness.
Jim is uneasy. He doesn't know how these situations work.

CALL GIRL
Listen, I don't care what we do,
just nothing sick or anything. And
nothing in the ass.

JIM
You're not what I'm looking for.
I'm sorry.

Jim hands her a fifty.

JIM

For your trouble. I don't want to...
make love.

The Girl considers it briefly, then takes it.

CALL-GIRL

Usually get a lot more than this.

Beat.

CALL GIRL

You don't look like no fag to me.

JIM

No.

She uncrosses her legs purposefully. Jim can see everything
under her skirt. There's temptation in his brief glance.

CALL GIRL

You sure?

He turns away. She gets up with a shrug, a roll of the
eyes.

CALL GIRL

Whatever.

JIM

You know this girl? She's older
now. In her thirties.

She looks briefly at the photo.

CALL GIRL

No.

JIM

Are you sure? She was- just a
friend of mine.

CALL-GIRL

Fuck you.

She exits in a huff. Jim is frustrated.

INT. HOTEL - MOTNAGE

MONTAGE: A series of CALL GIRLS walking down the hall: With each step toward Jim's room, we QUICK DISSOLVE to a different girl, all have dark hair and light eyes.

Jim's face as he looks over the girls. Their legs. Their breasts. Their lips. Temptation.

Finally, Jim sits on the bed depleted. He looks tired, haggard, staring into space.

END MONTAGE

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

FLASHBACK. Same grainy image as the videotape. Jim and Eve are lying in bed- the same hotel room. Jim traces the contours of her face with a finger that barely touches her skin.

JIM

You're amazing.

They stare deeply into each other's eyes.

EVE

I love you.

Jim sits up.

MATCH CUT:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jim is sitting:

JIM

You're lying.

A woman, FRANZI, is sitting on the chair. Jim is staring at the LARGE SPIDER TATTOO on the inside of her ankle (This is the girl bound in Paradiso). She's beautiful, maybe sixteen years old, just a child. She has the photo in her hand, but is returning Jim's intense gaze. And chewing gum with a vengeance.

FRANZI

No.

JIM

What about the man she's sitting next to. To her right.

FRANZI

Don't know him.

Jim scans the girl's under-developed body- there's a hint of temptation. Then he turns away.

JIM

You're so young. A pretty girl like you shouldn't be-

FRANZI

You ain't gonna play Daddy on me, are ya? One thing I hate, it's guys who think they're Daddies.

JIM

No. I didn't mean to.

FRANZI

I'm old enough to do what guys like you want.

JIM

You got it wrong.

FRANZI

Please.

JIM

Don't flatter yourself.

But this but a half-hearted retort. Franzi ignores it.

FRANZI

There's nothing wrong with wanting what you want, ya know.

Jim finally looks at her.

FRANZI

And there's nothing wrong someone giving it to you. Need's a need. One hand washes the other.

JIM

You got it all figured out then.

FRANZI

I figure out what I need to get by.

Silent beat.

JIM

I still think you're lying.

FRANZI

You can think what you want. But it's the truth.

JIM

What about Paradiso, across the river?

FRANZI

Mister, if we're not gonna do it-

JIM

Have you ever been there?

FRANZI

Of course, I've been there. It's a fetish club. So what.

JIM

There's a guy who ran it. Danny.

FRANZI

Are you a cop?

JIM

No. Did you know him?

FRANZI

If you're a cop you gotta tell me.

JIM
Did you know him?

FRANZI
Not really. I heard he died.

JIM
He was flayed like a fish.

FRANZI
I don't know nothing about it.

JIM
So I'll say it again. You're lying.

FRANZI
Think what you want mister.

Jim scrutinizes her, plots his strategy.

JIM
And the woman in the photo.

FRANZI
Jesus, I can go.

Jim grabs her wrist as she stands. Then realizing the touch of her skin, releases her as if she were hot.

JIM
No. I'm sorry.

In one movement Franzi drops her dress. She's not much more than a girl. Nothing but lingerie and heels. Jim turns away.

JIM
I'll pay you to just-

FRANZI
(sarcastically)
Spend some time?

Beat.

JIM

Put your clothes on. You're
nothing but a kid.

She's a little embarrassed but experience has already grown
her a thick skin for such matters.

FRANZI

Your dime.

Franzi pulls her dress up. Wanders about the room, falling
in and out of shadow.

She looks at the photo in her hands. There's something in
her hesitation.

FRANZI

What was she to you?

JIM

Someone I used to know. Someone
who can help me. She's a... a call
girl now... I thought someone like
you might have-

FRANZI

You know how many of us there are
in this city?

Franzi puts the photograph of Eve in Jim's hand.

FRANZI

A million. Just like that. She's
nothing.

She walks across the room. Jim can't help but look.
Palpable tension... chemistry... something. Something uneasy.

She surveys the paintings stacked against the wall; there's
more now. She closes in on a particularly beautiful, but
haunting, portrait of Eve emerging from dark abstractions.

FRANZI

This is her.

She inspects the other paintings. All of Eve.

FRANZI

You got it bad, mister.

She lights a cigarette and soaks the images in. Jim is silent.

FRANZI

She's hot. I give you that.

Franzi looks into the mirror. Striking resemblance.

JIM

You look like her.

She turns and approaches him, standing close, her breasts near his face, her naked body, separated from him by nothing but thin silvery material. Jim tries not to look up.

FRANZI

As ordered.

Jim nods almost imperceptibly.

FRANZI

I see guys like you all the time, you know. Everyone has heartbreak. People they lose, people who leave us.

JIM

Don't.

FRANZI

You think you can have something you can't have anymore. Maybe you think this girl gave it to you once... a long time ago.

JIM

You think you're pretty smart.

She runs her fingers through Jim's hair.

FRANZI

And you're looking to get that something back; something this girl was a part of. Maybe you were a part of. That sound about right?

JIM

You're too young.

FRANZI

And when you close your eyes... you can almost see her... smell her perfume. Feel her skin.

Franzi's lips are so close to Jim now. Jim closes his eyes.

FRANZI

And maybe tonight... for a few minutes... you thought you could be with her... She can be here with you... She must've been around my age...

Franzi puts her hand on Jim's crotch. ALL JIM SEES IS EVE. He's so close to giving in. They're touching each other. His hand slides up her leg. Under her skirt.

Then he retracts it quickly.

JIM

No.

She chuckles, giddy with her own power, then kisses him, ever so gently, on the lips.

FRANZI

I'll see you again.

This is some mixture of request, prophecy, and permission.

JIM

Don't count on it.

She leaves.

Jim stands and paces like a caged animal. He catches a glimpse of himself in a mirror and is disgusted.

With an impulsive swat, he pushes the lamp off the bureau, extinguishing his image.

It dies with a white flash. And all is BLACK.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The room is lit with candles.

Jim holds one, casting a glow onto the walls, then the ceiling, as if searching for something.

He scours the room for any sign of a camera, his fingers picking into cracks in the wall. Now he's on a chair, looking into the ceiling panels. Staring at the corners. Scrutinizing every inch of surface.

Peering behind pictures. He turns everything over. Searching.

Finally, he rests on the bed. He's sweating profusely, trembling with withdrawal symptoms.

GRAINY VIDEO FOOTAGE: We float over him as he lies there amongst the paintings and overturned room.

EXT. CALL-GIRL SERVICE, DOWNTOWN - DAY

A small sign above a boutique says: HOT DATES. Jim is waiting, watching the entrance, staking it out.

Franzi appears behind him.

FRANZI

She come out yet?

Jim is startled.

FRANZI

You're not so good at this are you?

JIM

What?

FRANZI

I left ten minutes ago. There's an exit on the other side of the block.

JIM

I wasn't-

FRANZI

C'mon. We got nothing if we ain't honest, right?

JIM

What happened to your eye?

FRANZI

Ran into a wall.

(changing subject)

I told you I'd see you again. I must be like psychic.

JIM

A regular Nostradamus.

FRANZI

Listen, isn't it about time you ask if you can buy me lunch?

JIM

I don't think so.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY, LATER

Jim and Franzi walk along a peaceful walkway, just finishing a to-go lunch. We watch them from a distance, as if spying.

FRANZI

After that last one, I just told him I wasn't gonna go on anymore jobs like that no more.

JIM

Any more.

Franzi considers the rectification.

FRANZI

Any more and he got bent out of shape. Simple as that. I left.

Her black eye.

JIM

Some severance.

FRANZI

This'll heal in a week. -- I won't have to ever go back to that place again.

Jim stares at a young couple kissing in front of a pond. For an instant, they appear to him as Eve and a younger version of himself. He stares down at the ground.

FRANZI

You're shaking.

Jim changes the subject.

JIM

So you're done with the... call-girl thing for good?

FRANZI

With *that* clown, I am.

Jim looks at her with disappointment.

FRANZI

Girl's gotta make a living.

JIM

Why do you do it?

Franzi looks at him for a motive.

JIM

I'm just asking. Not as a - Just curious. Is it the money?

Franzi shrugs.

FRANZI

It's that. And something else.

JIM

What?

She hesitates.

FRANZI

You'll think it's stupid. Or naïve
or something.

JIM

No.

She smiles, half-embarrassed.

FRANZI

I'm an artist.

JIM

You're an artist?

FRANZI

I told you, you'd laugh.

She walks away miffed. Jim catches her.

JIM

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to.

FRANZI

For our eyes there's museums full
of paintings. To taste, there's
food. There's music. But what
about this?

Franzi runs her fingers so gently over Jim's wrist. They glide into the pit of his palm. A shiver runs down his spine.

FRANZI

The most important thing about art
is that it gets past those things
and gets in here.

She touches his forehead gently.

FRANZI

And here.

His heart.

FRANZI

What's better than sex for getting to what counts? The aesthetics of it- just like anything else- everyone has their tastes. Some like it soft and safe. Some like to look. Leather. Some like pain.

Beat of silence.

FRANZI

God knows what other people like. And some... like young girls.

Jim is speechless.

FRANZI

Your hands are trembling.

A SKETCH ARTIST on a nearby bench calls out to them.

ARTIST

You want your portrait done with your daughter?

Both are embarrassed. As they walk on, Franzi holds Jim's hand.

INT. CAB - LATER

Franzi and Jim are in the back seat. They're passing a moderately busy street market, stands peddling wares.

JIM

I was your age when I knew her. We dropped out of school and holed up here- in the city. We were just kids. I don't- I have trouble remembering what happened after that. I had some kind of... breakdown.

FRANZI
That's why you're looking for her.

JIM
Among other things.

Jim peers out the window.

EXT. STREET FAIR - PAST

FLASHBACK. Same video footage as previous sequences. Young Jim and Eve are standing in front of a stand.

JIM (V.O.)
We had dreams... stupid dreams.

Eve picks a SAINT CHRISTOPHER MEDALION from off a stand and places it around Jim's neck.

INT. CAB - PRESENT

Jim is staring down at the MEDALION in his hands. He presses it into Franzi's hand.

JIM
It's supposed to be good luck.
Protection for travelers. She gave
it to me.

FRANZI
A St. Christopher.

Jim is surprised she knows.

FRANZI
I'm not totally ignorant.

Jim grins.

JIM
No. Far from it.

Franzi stares lovingly at Jim. Jim is uneasy but he's trying to shove down the emotion.

JIM

The story about Saint Christopher
was that he was a giant.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

In the pale blue sunlit room, Jim undresses Franzi tenderly. She's so young... her body isn't even completely matured.

JIM (V.O.)

He was ten feet tall and mean as a
son of a bitch. Everyone was
afraid of him. One day he got it
in his head that he didn't have to
serve anyone.

They kiss softly.

JIM (V.O.)

Or that he'd only serve someone
meaner and more of a son of a
bitch than he was. That made him
pretty happy for a while.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Jim continues his tale. Franzi is holding his hand tightly.

JIM

Then after he thought about it, he
figured the Devil was the only
bastard mean enough for someone
like him to serve. So he pledged
himself to him.

FRANZI

Some saint.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Jim and Eve are making love now. Franzi has the St.
Christopher medallion around her neck.

JIM (V.O.)

Yeah. Well after he looked into
(more)

JIM
(cont'd)
the devil's eyes, he saw that even
the devil was scared of something—
that fear was Jesus.

As they near climax, Franzi guides Jim's hands around her throat.

In the throes of passion, Jim applies increasing pressure until he realizes what's happening and stops.

Jim orgasms in tormented slow motion.

JIM (V.O.)
He changed his tune then.

FRANZI
(whispering)
I love you.

We turn toward the window. Outside, in the darkening sky, a NEON CRUCIFIX is glowing and buzzing: a sign for a store selling church supplies.

Fade to black.

INT. BATHROOM - LATER

Jim is knelt down at the toilet bowl vomiting.

He fumbles through his wallet for a worn picture of Patty. She's happy... and so far away.

Jim tries to choke down emotion.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATER, NIGHT

Jim stares down at the sleeping Franzi silently.

She awakes as if sensing his gaze. His countenance is frightening.

FRANZI
Jim?

JIM

Can make a promise? You capable of that?

FRANZI

What is it? You're scaring me.

JIM

I don't want you ever going to places like Paradiso anymore. Don't get involved with tricks-people like that. It's dangerous. You know how dangerous it is.

PATTY

Ok. Fine.

JIM

Now I want you to go. And never come to see me again. I won't try to find you.

FRANZI

I'm not that young.

JIM

You're a child.

FRANZI

Are you gonna freak out every time we do it?

JIM

There won't be any more times.

FRANZI

Yes there will.

JIM

No! There shouldn't have been *any*. Go! I won't say it again.

FRANZI

I'm not. I won't.

JIM

God damn it.

Jim yanks her up. And pushes her to the door. He shoves her out with her clothes in her hand. Franzi starts freaking.

At the door:

FRANZI (O.S.)
You son of a bitch.

He closes the door on her. Then leans his head against the door.

FRANZI (O.S.)
You bastard! You think Eve would
give you the time of day. A
suburban loser like you!

A beat. Jim is struck with realization. He raises his head.

JIM
(under his breath)
I knew it.

He waits for her to leave. Then opens the door.

INT. HALL - CONTINUOUS

Franzi disappears around a corner. Jim follows her down the hall, out of the building.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jim follows Franzi, unnoticed, trailing her by half a block. She descends into a subway station.

INT. SUBWAY STATION - CONTINUOUS

He follows her through the station. He hops the turnstile a moment after she swipes a Metro Card.

The train is pulling in.

Jim takes cover behind a tiled column instead. He's starting to shake and twitch.

Undetected, he gets on the train two doors down just as they're closing.

INT. SUBWAY TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Jim watches Franzi from across the crowded car. He's trying to steady his hands against his chest, but it's futile. He needs his medication.

EXT. CHINATOWN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Franzi emerges onto the bustling street corner in Chinatown.

Jim is a few steps behind. He continues to trail her.

He follows her into a dilapidated apartment building. The lock on the door is busted.

INT. FRANZI'S APT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Franzi climbs the hollow staircase making echoing sounds with her heels. Jim is below a flight and a half, then stops:

VIRGIL

Jesus, where have you been?

Jim can see only from their waists down. Virgil is nervous.

FRANZI

You son of a bitch!

VIRGIL

I arranged it. Everything's set.

FRANZI

You son of a bitch. You left me to die.

VIRGIL

No.

FRANZI

I could have been killed.

VIRGIL

I had no choice.

FRANZI
You're a coward!

VIRGIL
Whatever it takes. You said that.
Whatever it takes.

FRANZI
You left me! You fucking left me!

Virgil grabs her by the shoulders.

VIRGIL
Baby calm down. I did what I had
to. I told you I would arrange it.
I did, didn't I? I did what you
said.

FRANZI
They agreed?

VIRGIL
Like gentlemen.

FRANZI
I told you they would. -- When?

VIRGIL
Tonight. Take this. It's safer
that way--

Virgil hands Franzi the bag with the three videotapes.

VIRGIL
I'll pick it up later- just
before- God, I feel like
everything's closing in on me.

FRANZI
Join the club.

VIRGIL
We- you got what you wanted. My
little girl got what she wanted,
didn't she?

FRANZI

I could have been killed. I would have- He would have killed me... And you run away- leave me there to-

VIRGIL

Baby girl... I did it for us. Daddy, would never do anything to hurt you. Baby gets her diamond ring now.

FRANZI

You did good. But maybe-

VIRGIL

No. No maybes.

FRANZI

Maybe we should go to the tv. The news. That'll hurt them worse wouldn't it?

VIRGIL

It'll hurt us worse. We'll be dead before it hits the air. You know that. Ain't no way to hurt someone like in their bank account. This is it. This is the only way.

FRANZI

It'll hurt them good, that much money, won't it baby?

VIRGIL

Yeah. Where it counts. Couldn't come sooner.

FRANZI

I missed you, Daddy.

Franzi starts kissing Virgil.

VIRGIL

Someone will see.

Virgil looks over the rail. Jim ducks out of sight.

FRANZI

Let them see.

Virgil lifts her skirt and turns her around. They start doing it there in the dirty hall, echoed groans of animal pleasure.

Virgil takes Franzi's purse and wraps it around her throat, choking her.

VIRGIL

You like it like this. You like it like this.

Jim reacts to this with perverted voyeuristic curiosity and a hint of jealousy. He's starting to perspire through his shakes.

They climax. Franzi is released and gasps for air on the floor. Virgil zips.

There's a marked change in Virgil's aspect with Franzi at his feet. An empowerment.

VIRGIL

I'll be back later.

Virgil steps over her, descends the stairs. Jim takes cover in a recess.

There's an instant of decision-making. He looks up to the breathless Franzi then chooses to follow Virgil.

EXT. CHIANTOWN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Jim follows Virgil through the alien neighborhood. The rain has started falling. Steam rising from the sewers.

To an Apartment building. This is a mere three or four blocks from Franzi's apartment.

Virgil enters but Jim misses the closing door and is locked out.

He goes around into an alley.

EXT. BACK OF APT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Jim stares up at a fire escape. He pushes a garbage can under it. Climbs it and jumps to grab onto the ladder.

He misses and falls in pain.

FLASH. INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jim steps out of shadow. The screwdriver in his hand.

FLASH. As in the earlier flashback, Eve is on the bed. Jim approaches.

FLASH. The bed is covered in blood below Eve's waist. Blood drips horribly from the screwdriver.

FLASH to Present. Jim jumps again and this time clings onto the fire escape ladder.

He climbs peering into the windows at every flight.

In the first is an OLD CHINESE MAN watching a television set. On it, Paul Robeson is making a paranoiac speech about unidentified threats.

In the second, TWO CHILDREN are watching the same thing unsupervised.

Mentally, Jim is crashing hard now.

At the Third flight of stairs he looks through the window to see Virgil on his knees begging Brick Face who stands like an omnipotent force in the middle of the room. Brick Face has a gun pointed at Virgil's WIFE; her hands are tied and mouth gagged. She's sitting on the shabby brown couch. The BABY is screaming in its playpen.

On the TV, Paul Robeson continues his rant. The volume is very loud.

Though Jim can hear only the muffled sounds of Robeson through the window, it appears that Virgil, stupidly, isn't giving Brick Face what he wants.

Brick Face shoots Virgil's wife. Because she dodges at the last second, she isn't killed instantly. Instead, a portion

of her skull flies off, exposing part of her frontal lobe. Her brain misfiring, she somehow gets to her feet and knocks around the apartment, crashing and knocking over the TV. Robeson consinues, sideways.

Finally, she falls convulsing on the carpet.

Virgil rushes over to her. He realizes she's dead and he looks up and utters pleading words at Brick Face.

Jim is agape.

Brick Face points the gun at the screaming baby in the playpen.

Virgil is begging. Giving up information. Now, scribbling something on a scrap of paper.

Finally satisfied, Brick Face turns the gun on Virgil and shoots him in the face.

Jim is beyond astounded. He rushes down the fire escape.

He hears a third gun shot just as he hits the pavement. He clenches his eyes at the thought.

EXT. STREETS - CONTINUOUS

Jim runs in a panic. On the street evil eyes stare knowingly at every turn; the city is closing in on him.

He's sweating. Shaking.

EXT. FRANZI'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The busted lock allows Jim to rush in.

INT. BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

He sprints up the stairs.

INT. HALL - CONTNUOUS

Jim bangs on all the doors. Screaming.

JIM
Franzi! Franzi! Where the fuck are
you?! Fraaaaanziiii!

A few doors open up to reveal FRIGHTENED INHABITANTS behind chain locks. As Jim rushes over to each door, they shut fast.

Jim is frantic.

JIM
Franzi! Fraaaaanziiii!

Finally, Franzi opens her door down the hall.

Jim races down the hall. Her door is still chain locked.

JIM
Open up!

FRANZI
Thought the honeymoon was over.

High on adrenaline, he smashes through the door.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The apartment resembles a college dorm room -junk food wrappers, magazines, a futon couch- except the walls are cracked and dirty.

JIM
I don't have time to play games.
Virgil is dead.

Franzi doesn't know how to react. Doesn't know how much he knows.

JIM
Where's the tapes?

FRANZI
What tapes?

Crack! He smacks her.

JIM
He'll be here any minute. Don't
play stupid with me. It's over.

FRANZI
Who? Who'll be here...

JIM
The guy who killed Virgil.

Brief moment of consideration.

JIM
Same as Danny.

Franzi goes pale, points to a bag behind the couch. Jim
grabs it.

FRANZI
Jim-

JIM
We gotta get out of here. Right
now.

Franzi picks up her pocket book, a sweater.

Jim rushes her to the door. But then stops.

INT. ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Brick Face's forboding figure enters the corridor.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jim turns away from the hall.

JIM
The fire escape.

They rush over, climb through the window.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Jim and Franzi dangle from the fire escape. Drop to the
street in turn.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

They look up to see Brick Face's silhouette in Franzi's apartment window.

EXT. STREETS, MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Jim is a mess. The lights of the streets are blurring together. He's sweating buckets. Trembling like an exposed nerve.

FRANZI

Jim?

JIM

It's the pills- not taking them-

Franzi is scared. Jim tries to look only at the concrete as they hurry through fairly busy streets.

When he peers up, every second or third person walking on the street looks back at him with a DEMONIC FACE, horrific deformed features. The effect is terrifying.

Jim tries to shake the vision from his eyes.

He turns to a cab, just letting out a FARE, dragging Franzi with him.

When he peers in the car, the CAB DRIVER'S eyes are inhuman, flush with flames.

Jim freaks, spins and rushes into a side-street alley.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

In the dank alley littered with trash Jim struggles with insanity. His back is to the brick wall, literally.

FRANZI

Jim--

JIM

You knew her name! I never told you-

FRANZI

Who?

Jim grabs her and shakes.

JIM

Goddammit!

FRANZI

Everybody knows her name.

JIM

What does that mean?

FRANZI

She's a legend. A hustler, like me- but she became something else.

JIM

What-

FRANZI

A kind of dominatrix, but more. I don't know. Her client list became elite. Now no one touches her. No one speaks her name. She has one man. One client.

JIM

Who?

FRANZI

You don't want to get involved.

JIM

I *am* involved.

Franzi looks around as if there were some chance of being overheard. She pulls a pen out of her pocket, tears a piece of brown paper from the videotape bag, then writes down a name on a piece of paper. She hands it to Jim.

JIM

Jesus.

FRANZI

Close.

Jim turns away from her, thoughts running this through his mind.

FRANZI
You're trembling.

JIM
You were at Paradiso that night. I saw you. I was-

FRANZI
You were Charlie. I know.

JIM
What does she have to do with the tapes?

FRANZI
Nothing. Nothing I know of.
Except...

Jim grabs her and shakes her.

JIM
Except what!

FRANZI
Except you think she's on one.
That's all! That's why you're looking for her, isn't it? To find the truth about her, about you?

Jim is stunned at hearing this out loud.

JIM
What about the guy who killed them, Danny and Virgil?

FRANZI
I don't know who killed Danny.

Jim pulls out the photo of Eve. Beside her is Brick Face. He points at his image.

JIM
He has burns on his face now.

FRANZI

He was our contact. Virgil's contact.

JIM

Why didn't you say something?

FRANZI

I didn't want you involved. It's too dangerous. I care too much about you.

JIM

Or you thought I'd want in...

Jim's gears are in high.

JIM

Hurt them, you said. Who- who are you hurting. Who are you blackmailing? Not Burn Face. Who was it?

FRANZI

You're holding the name in your hand.

Jim releases her. Jim is up against the world. He feels crushed. Somehow this revelation empowers Franzi. She pets him like a lap dog.

FRANZI

Why does it matter to you so much to find her?

JIM

She's the only hope I have.

FRANZI

Maybe you're not supposed to know what happened. Maybe that's why you blocked it out.

JIM

They'll find us and kill us.

FRANZI

So what.

Jim scrutinizes her: Could she really have no value for her own life?

FRANZI

Jim, I love you.

She attempts to caress him but he swats her away. Disgusted with her. With himself.

JIM

They'll find my wife. She's done nothing.

Jim is anguished. Then an inner resolution. He pulls out the key to his hotel room.

JIM

Go to the room. Don't go anywhere.
Don't call anyone.

FRANZI

Where are you going?

JIM

To put an end to it.

FRANZI

They'll kill you. You just said it yourself.

JIM

I don't have a choice.

She hesitates.

JIM

Go!

She walks out onto the sidewalk. Before she disappears she turns to the tormented Jim, and something, almost a smile appears on her face. Jim with his head cupped in his hands doesn't notice.

She disappears into the throngs of city dwellers.

EXT. FANCY RESTAURANT - NIGHT

An upscale, four-star restaurant. An exterior sign on an easel reads: POTENTIAL DISASTER RELIEF BENEFIT, KEYNOTE SPEAKER MAYOR P. ROBESON, SPONSORED BY ST. CHRISTOPHER CHURCH.

The door-to-door Holy Men who accosted Jim at his home are outside with signs of protest, yelling irrationally about free will and the Global Consciousness Project. They're being kept at bay by FOOT PATROLMEN.

We MOVE FORWARD with a few WELL DRESSED patrons entering the building. As we MOVE INSIDE:

ROBESON (O.S.)

We are not a fearful people. No, friends, we live in a city built on courage in the *face* of fear. Steadfast defiance in the shadow of doubt. Bravery in the cold light of cowardice. But now all of this, all of the things our fathers and grandfathers and *their* grandfathers fought for is threatened by subversives. Those in league with evil...

INT. RESTARUANT - CONTINUOUS

We move through the swank interior, past the coat check, into the main dining area.

ROBESON (O.S.)

...who threaten this city with acts of destruction-- and worse, with honey coated lies, so called ideas whose true aim is to strike out..

We move through the tables of HIGH-CLASS WHITE PEOPLE toward a small podium where Robeson is making his speech. ROBESON is a short man with silver speckling his once black hair. The passion in his voice is terrifying. Veins pulsate in his temples. He's in full command of his presence.

ROBESON

...at the very fabric of our morality and safe way of life. We must seek out these dissenters and serve them the righteous justice they deserve, the justice our loving god has entrusted us to protect and to cultivate.

An enthusiastic round of applause from the sea of wrinkled gray and approving faces.

ROBESON

I promise you that when re-elected I will continue to champion worthy causes such as potential disaster relief but what's more, I will develop programs to counter these attacks before they happen. It can be done. It CAN be done.

More applause.

ROBESON

Together, armed with courage and bravery, we will overcome these fearful acts of aggression my friends. I promise you that. I promise you that!

Uproarious applause. Robeson gestures gratitude and steps off stage. Shaking hands with AUDIENCE MEMBERS.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Jim is in his car, watching the restaurant, a limo at the front entrance.

Robeson appears at the door. He's with EVE, dressed in black evening attire. He hair pulled tightly back.

Jim watches this with utter fascination. Trembling.

Brick Face emerges from the driver's side of the limousine and opens the door for Robeson and Eve. They gets in.

The limo rolls away. Jim follows.

EXT. MISC. STREETS & HIGHWAYS - CONTINUOUS

Jim tails the limousine into the recesses of the suburbs and then onto wooded country roads.

EXT. DARK ROAD - CONTINUOUS

The Limo pulls into an all but hidden drive, concealed by thick trees and bushes.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

Jim takes sharp note of the driveway. Recessed from the road, twenty feet or more, is a gate. The limo rolls through it.

In order to appear inconspicuous, Jim drives past.

A couple of hundred feet away, Jim pulls the car over to the side of the road and pulls into some trees and shrubs.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Jim walks along the side of the road toward the concealed entrance gates.

A CAR approaches quickly. Afraid for his life, Jim ducks into the bushes.

The car passes without incident but Jim is rattled.

EXT. DRIVE/ENTRANCE/WOODS - CONTINUOUS

The heavy posts of the gates are camouflaged with thick ivy, topped with SECURITY CAMERAS. The gates are shut tight. The rest of the fence is lined with barbed wire above its wrought iron bars.

Jim moves along the fence for a long time. The shadows of the forest play tricks on his eyes and he struggles to maintain his perception of reality. He's still shaking.

Finally, he comes to an area where the fence cuts across a BROOK. Where the water runs, a small space, maybe 10 or 12 inches high, allows access to inside the grounds.

Jim flattens himself on his back and shimmies under the gate. As a result, he tears his clothes. He's wet and dirty.

He moves in through a thick forest. The moonlight throws black shadows everywhere, to Jim, they're the ghosts of the spirit world.

EXT. MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Jim approaches a once-great mansion. Now it's in total disarray. Portions of the walls are deteriorated, one side of the roof slumps in, and some of the windows are boarded.

Jim approaches. He peers into windows to see empty rooms.

He kneels to peer into a basement window. It's covered with black tar paper except in one spot where the tape has come loose, providing a peep-hole for Jim.

In the room, Eve and Robeson sit on a dilapidated sofa watching an image projected onto a wall. Robeson is resting his head on Eve's lap. She pets him as if he were a cat.

The PROJECTOR isn't a projector at all, but some contraption that looks like a science project gone bad. Gears spin. Wires soldered onto exposed circuitry on the "projector" on one end lead to glass cases on either side of the room where they terminate into larger circuit boards on the cases themselves.

The CASES are constructed of glass and inside FLESHY FORMS pulsate and squirm in murky water. These forms are human in texture and color, but their shapes are unfamiliar. Or rather, they appear to be disembodied mutations of limbs. There's no doubt they're alive.

Beside the projector is a video camera mounted on a tripod aimed at the projection. The red light indicates it's recording.

Jim absorbs all this briefly, but his eyes are quickly drawn to the projected images: The same quality as the videotape he watched so long ago.

PROJECTED IMAGE: The footage is jumping quickly to disturbing scenes of carnage and copulation. War images and

scenes of fetishism. Then Franzi steps out of shadow. She has a photo in her hand and holds it out. The grainy image overexposes the photo and we can't make it out. A hand reaches out for it. It's Jim.

At the window, Jim reacts with terror.

PROJECTED IMAGE: The image jump cuts to Jim throwing Franzi on the bed. Then he smothers her with a pillow. His face is contorted into something more animal than human. This is exactly the same scenario as he saw on the videotape. Franzi's delicate hands are on Jim's powerful arms as she squirms beneath him. Then they fall lifeless to the side. The squirming ceases.

JIM

Jesus. Jesus Christ.

Jim is spinning. He stands and backs away instinctively. He has no time to sort out his reeling mind: Brick Face is stalking toward him with a menacing gait.

Jim runs. A chase ensues.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Jim wriggles under the fence in the brook.

Brick Face appears an instant later. Jim and Brick Face trade glares from either side of the fence, terrified and hateful respectively, then Jim runs.

EXT. ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Jim can see his car in the distance, but he's cutoff from running to it by the flare of headlights emerging from the drive.

He crosses the streets and runs into more woods.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Jim is panting, running for his life.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - LATER

In a set-up recalling the opening scenes of Virgil's flight, Jim runs through the well-groomed lawns and gleaming SUV's of suburbia. He's haggard and desperate. Panting.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - CONTINUOUS

The Black sedan rolls slowly, searching, pregnant with doom.

EXT. ANDERSON HOME - CONTINUOUS

Jim veers off the street and pounds frantically at Anderson's door. After a beat, Anderson appears in his bath robe.

ANDERSON

Holy shit, fuck happened to you?

JIM

I need your car.

ANDERSON

Why don't you come in-- Get a hold of yourself.

JIM

Goddammit!

Jim grabs Anderson by the robe and shoots a look of insanity into Anderson's eyes. Saliva spewing from his mouth with his heavy panting. A madman.

Emily and the Anderson Boy have drawn curiously behind the head of the family. They're scared.

JIM

I need it.

ANDERSON

Ok. Alright.

Anderson lifts the key from the key hanger beside the door and hands it to Jim. Jim pauses briefly, staring at the man, but not quite succeeding in expressing gratitude. He turns.

Jim pulls the SUV out of the driveway and drives away, leaving the Anderson family befuddled and frightened.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Jim pulls Anderson's SUV up front. Races inside.

INT. HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

The hallway seems to be closing in on him. Jim reaches for the doorknob of his room but it's locked. He pounds on it.

JIM

Franzi! Franzi! Open up. Jesus Christ please, open up. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

Jim's head rests on the door. He seems convinced that she's not going to be there.

JIM

Please don't be dead. Please god, don't let her be dead.

The door opens. Franzi is half-dressed, scared.

FRANZI

Jim.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Jim rushes in and caresses her face, but his touch is inadvertently rough with fervor.

JIM

Oh god. Oh god you're alive. You're still alive.

FRANZI

Of course I'm alive.

Jim presses his lips to her forehead, her cheeks. He grabs at her, not quite trusting her physical reality. His weight pushes her down onto the bed.

He's on his knees on the floor.

JIM

Jesus. You're real. You're here.
With me.

FRANZI

It's ok. Everything's ok.

JIM

I would never hurt you.

FRANZI

I know that. I know. Did she hurt
you? What happened?

Jim suddenly becomes aware of the paintings all over the room. He springs into a sudden rampage, kicking at them, turning them over, trying to smash them. But his movements are wild and chaotic and he accomplishes mostly just making a mess and finally, lying amongst them. A wreck.

FRANZI

Did you talk to her?

JIM

I don't know what's happening. I
don't know what's happening to me.
These movies, I'm in them. She was
in them. I thought she was, but
it's you.

FRANZI

Me?

JIM

Maybe it's some kind of hoax. A
set-up. But for what—I have no
idea...

FRANZI

And... what happened... in...

JIM

You had a photograph.

Franzi turns away. Jim notices the effect the word caused.

JIM

You showed me a photograph.

Silence.

FRANZI

What was the picture of?

JIM

I don't know.

Silence. The tension is as thick as a knife. Jim is afraid, but not sure exactly why.

A chilling smile grows on Franzi's lips.

FRANZI

If I had a picture would you want to see it?

JIM

What- what do you mean? What are you talking about?

FRANZI

If you could see the truth... would you want to see it... or would you walk away without looking?

JIM

Don't play games with me, Franzi.
Don't fuck with me.

Franzi is at the night stand. Looking into her purse. She pulls out a PHOTOGRAPH.

FRANZI

No. I wouldn't fuck with you. Not you Jim.

She glides across the room and places the photo in Jim's hand. A look of confusion washes over his face. We don't see the photo.

Franzi stands back and soaks in Jim's reaction in the darkened room.

FRANZI

It was a room like this one, he said. Just a baby in a bloody bed and a photograph under the pillow. Said it was like Christmas to him.

Franzi is as serious as murder.

FRANZI

The man- the monster who found me said this was the only other thing in the room.

FLASH: The bloody bed of Jim's nightmares. But instead of Eve, just a SCREAMING BABY is on it.

FRANZI V.O.

He used to taunt me with it. Make me look at it.

Eve is at the door. She walks out.

HALLWAY- CONTINUOUS

In the hallway, a horrible looking man, a monster, watches Eve walk away. And then enters the room.

FRANZI V.O.

You know when he made me look at it, Jim? When he was fucking me. When he was fucking me Jim.

PRESENT: Jim is spinning. We see that the photo is of him and Eve, the one that Jim took at the entrance to the hotel. The young loving couple.

Franzi is seemingly unaffected by her own account. A hardened shell of a girl.

FRANZI

Well, I put an end to him. -- There's no mistaking Mom. The fruit doesn't fall far from the tree. That's what they say, ain't it?

JIM

It wasn't an abortion.

FRANZI

That's what you thought?

FLASH The same set-up as previously, Jim with the screwdriver, Eve on the bed, except now he has no screwdriver. It's a pen.

He flips over the photo of him and Eve and scrawls something on the back.

FLASH Present.

Jim is looking at the back of the photo. In his own handwriting:

I'M SORRY.

She cackles evilly.

FRANZI

How blessed you are to block your dirty laundry out, Jim. Or should I say *Dad*.

JIM

To hurt *her*. Me.

FRANZI

An eye for an eye.

JIM

You knew all this time.

FRANZI

Everyone has their own idea of love.

Jim springs up and launches her onto the bed. In unabashed self fulfilled prophecy, Jim holds a pillow over her face. She squirms beneath him, grasping at his powerful arms.

JIM

How could you? How could you do this to me?

Jim has sudden realization of the prophetic scene and releases his grip on the pillow.

He backs off the bed astonished with himself.

Franzi chokes and gasps for air.

Jim turns away. He catches his reflection in the mirror and attacks, shattering it into a million pieces, bloodying his hands.

He backs out of the room. Steps into the hallway.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The dark hallway has HANDS. They reach out of the black walls and grab for him.

He stumbles away after a nightmarish struggle to escape their clutches.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Jim staggers out into the street. Crazed.

The black limo skids to a stop, but hits Jim, knocking him onto the asphalt.

Brick Face emerges from the limo and pounds his meaty fists into Jim's face repeatedly.

Jim teeters on the edge of consciousness through his own blood.

Brick Face drags him to the rear door and slams him inside.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

This scene takes on the now-familiar GRAINY VIDEO treatment.

Eve is on the other side of the cabin smoking a cigarette. A bound man in a suit with a bag tied over his head, presumably Robeson, is beneath her feet on the floor.

Jim is less than conscious.

EVE

Long time. Long time indeed. --
What did you expect to find?
Answers? We make our own answers
to the questions we invent.

MONTAGE - JIM'S HOME

Quick glimpses of horrifically violent scenes.

BEDROOM Jim is smothering Patty with a pillow.

EVE

In seeking to uncover the
mysteries of your past, you found
find what you are capable of.

KITCHEN - slitting her throat with a knife.

EVE

And in understanding what you
could become, you became it.

BATHROOM - Holding below the water in the tub.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

JIM

No. I didn't-

EVE

Didn't you? I don't know. What
does it matter? She was just
another whore anyway.

JIM

No.

EVE

You invented an imaginary world. A
world of green lawns and smiling
faces.

OUTSIDE, they're passing the monotonous suburban homes of
Jim's neighborhood.

EVE

And I—I couldn't.

OUTSIDE, the homes are now on fire.

EVE

Sometimes I wonder who was the weak one. But then- such wonderment is meaningless. You should never face the things you once turned your back on Jim. There's strength in that. You should never look back.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - DAWN

It's the ghostly hour before the sun has risen. The limo comes to a halt. Brick Face comes around from the driver's side and yanks Jim out, spilling him onto the street.

Jim struggles to his feet and looks around. He sees that the suburbs appear to have been bombed. Some houses are still on fire, some are completely decimated, some are smoldering and black. There are CHARRED BODIES on lawns. Some burn victims rush around manically.

This is hell.

Jim stumbles toward what used to be his home. On the brick steps an OLD MAN is sitting blowing bubbles for a YOUNG CHILD who runs around trying to pop them. Both are laughing.

Jim approaches. Both Old Man and Child silence and look at Jim. Aside from age, both have similar features as Jim. And both have the defining characteristic: the mole on his right cheek.

Jim is overcome with cardiac arrest and falls convulsing onto the ground. The Child and the Old Man stand over him and prod at his body.

Jim releases his last breath.

The Child and the Old Man look up and off-screen simultaneously.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - DAWN

The sun has just risen. The limo pulls up. The door opens and Jim spills out.

He lifts his head to look around. The suburbs are completely intact. Birds chirping. The sprinklers pop up and sputter out their song.

Jim just rests his head on the street and falls into unconsciousness.

FADE TO BLACK

In BLACK we hear:

JIM

I'd like to think that if I had to do it again I wouldn't have done the things that I've done. I wouldn't have fished it out of the gutter that night, father.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

We come down from the distant gaze of Christ staring broodingly into space (same as the opening image) and back into the empty church toward the confessional booth.

JIM (O.S.)

That I would have let well enough alone. Resisted fate, or temptation, prophecy. Whatever it was.

INT. CONFESSION BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Jim is making confession.

JIM

I wouldn't have done any of those things that I did. But the truth is... the fact is that you don't get second chances. You can say you regret. You can say that you're sorry that you did something you
(more)

JIM
(cont'd)

know you shouldn't have done. But
you can't say you woulda did it
any different.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Jim is slipping the wedding ring onto Patty's finger.
There's joy but also sorrow in the faces of the bride and
groom.

JIM V.O.
They say the sin is in the
thought, not the action. And I'd
be lying if I said I wasn't
tempted. That these thoughts--
these thoughts aren't there.

INT. NURSERY - DAY

A BABY'S tiny fingers are wrapped around Jim's index.

The baby looks up and coos.

JIM V.O.
The temptation to see. Tempted to
find all the horrible things that
were in me, the sins I was capable
of. That I didn't enjoy seeing
those horrible things. I'd be
lying if I said that I wasn't
tempted to find the truth, father.

A tiny mirror in the baby's mobile flashes a reflection and
Jim, for an instant, believes he sees Eve and Franzi
standing behind him in the room.

He turns around.

PATTY
What is it Jim?

JIM
Nothing baby. Nothing.

He puts his arm around Patty and squeezes her.

The happy parents.

BLACK

JIM V.O.

Is it a sin to want to see the
truth, father?

THE END