HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

by

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Long stripes of yellow, red, purple, black. Otherworldly vividness.

Closer, they resolve into a thousand tiny dots of color.

Closer still, until we see: they're tens of thousands of TULIPS. Bright tops bobbing on long green stems.

A farmer in a wide straw hat and overalls surveys his vast tulip fields.

A windmill turns overhead.

Victorian houses. Neat lawns and picket fences.

An enormous statue of a wooden shoe. A wooden town sign:

In ***HOLLAND, MICHIGAN***

it's always

TULIP TIME

A row of little blonde preschoolers follow their teachers past the First Reformed church downtown.

Except -- they're frozen.

The cars are stopped too. A policeman chasing a dog, both posed mid-stride. Lovers in a café, holding hands forever.

The whole town is silent. Frozen in place.

We hold on those little preschoolers, all blonde, all perfect, until we realize: we're looking at a MODEL TRAIN LAYOUT.

At the town station, a model TRAIN thunders past. The ROAR of speed and smoke takes us to:

THE TOP OF A BED

Looking straight down on a pinwheel quilt, suddenly obscured by the contents of a whole DRESSER DRAWER, dumped out.

A woman's arms sort through it, push the mound around. Pull away the underwear, batteries, phone chargers until it's just

JEWELRY.

A tangled bolus of necklaces, bracelets, earrings, pins.

The woman roots through it. Searching. Checks the necklace/bracelet sets. Matches up the earrings.

We see her face. Pleasant, Midwestern. When she speaks it's in an accent thick with West Michigan and with annoyance.

NANCY
Gash darnit...

This is NANCY VANDERGROOT, 30s, sharp and sparky and eagle-eyed and, right now, glaring over at the dresser, where

A BLACK EARRING CASE

Sits open. A single LARGE PEARL EARRING inside.

A BIG EMPTINESS where its mate should be.

Nancy turns back to the metal mound on the bed. Searching for the pearl. Desperately trying to untangle the knot.

And off the missing earring, we

CUT TO:

A HUSKY, PERMED BABYSITTER.

Nineteen years old, Tasmanian Devil tee, and mystified expression. Staring across the kitchen table at Nancy.

NANCY
Is there something you need to tell me, Candy?

CANDY
Uhhh, like what Misses Vandergroot? Did I forget to do something?

NANCY
I mean, something you want to tell me before I find out myself.

CANDY
... Oh. Uh... No?

NANCY
Candy.

CANDY
Ah, shhh... ugar. Sugar sugar sugar! I don't know why I did it, Misses V. I'm so stupid!

NANCY
If it was just stupid, that's one thing. This is theft!

CANDY
Maybe I have a food addiction. People have that, ya know. That's what it's like for me when I see bacon. I know it was supposed to be for Harry, but I couldn't help mys--
(off Nancy's confusion)
Oh. You're not talking about that.

NANCY
Well, maybe I ought to be!

Candy digs in her purse. For her wallet and her dignity. Pulls crumpled bills from a Little Mermaid changepurse.

CANDY
It was two pounds of hickory smoked. I want to pay you back--

NANCY
I don't want that, Candy. Look, I'm talking about something else.

CANDY
What else? You said it was okay for me to have that ice cream--

NANCY
Candy, enough! I'm serious here.

Nancy inspects Candy's face, but Candy's utterly inscrutable.

CANDY
Are... are you firing me?

NANCY
Take tomorrow off, and think about whether there's something more you need to tell me. And I'm not talking about bacon. Then on Monday, we'll see.

Candy nods, and struggles not to CRY.

As Candy goes for the door, she's intercepted by HARRY VANDERGROOT, 11 years old. Harry rushes to her and gives her a big hug.

HARRY
I'm sorry! I told her about the bacon. I didn't mean to.

CANDY
Gosh Harry, it's not your fault...
It's okay, Har.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - LATER

We see the house now -- middle-class mid-century Midwestern. Ducks on the wallpaper. A big TV, always on.

Nancy watches Candy drive away, past the neighbor's four-foot-high sign, in red cutout letters: JESUS IS LORD.

HARRY
She's not a thief, mom! God, I'm so sick of this, this... sugar!

NANCY
So now it's okay to use that kind of talk in our house? I could bean you for that!

HARRY
(screaming mad)
Then bean me!

He stomps upstairs.

INT. HARRY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Harry talks on the cordless phone. Dwarfed by Redwings and U of M posters.

We can't hear what he says over the roar of the VACUUM. On the other end of the line is

FRED VANDERGROOT

Harry's dad. 40s, about 10 years older than Nancy. Glasses, beard, middle-aged spread under his blue button-down and pocket protector.

He's in his

OPTICIAN'S OFFICE

Holland Eye Care, right in downtown Holland. Loons on the wallpaper, Bibles in the waiting room.

He speaks with Harry, hands the phone to his receptionist, then heads back into the EXAMINATION ROOM.

FRED
Sorry about that. My son. Let's check those pupils now...

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - LATER

Nancy makes dinner. Fred comes in, hangs up his coat and hat. Without eye contact:

FRED
Hey, Nancy. Coupla hours?

NANCY
Sure. Gotta keep em on time...

Fred puts on a train engineer's hat and disappears into the GARAGE. A moment later, Harry flops down after him.

LATER

Nancy washes ground meat off her hands, peeks into

THE GARAGE

A MODEL RAILROADER'S HEAVEN. Workbenches and shelves of tools, and in the middle, the incredible

MODEL TRAIN LAYOUT.

The buildings and people we saw in the opening. Several train stations. Three model trains chug around the track.

The most extraordinary part is twenty tiny HOUSES built into the layout. Custom-built, perfect. There are even lights on inside.

Fred works under a big ring-light magnifier. Harry stands by with the other parts. They're deep in conversation.

Nancy closes the door. Back to the kitchen.

AT DINNER

Slabs of greyish meatloaf, slathered in Ketchup.

FRED
Lord, bless this food to our use,
and us to thy service. Amen.

The kitchen and living room are connected, so they all watch the big TV in the other room while they eat.

NANCY
Imagine it, Fred. Sitting right where you are. In my own home. In Holland! This isn't Allegan, for gosh sakes. Are you listening?

He's not.

FRED
I just think you're getting a little overly worked up is all.
(off the meatloaf)
You do something different here?

NANCY
Brown mustard! Instead of yellow. What do you think?

FRED
Very nice. So tomorrow morning, I gotta head to Frankenmuth. Another Alcon junket. Just the one night.

NANCY
Oh. When'd that happen?

FRED
This new contact lens. Micro-matrix. I'm skeptical, but Amtrak's running a narrow-gauge classic out that way, so there ya go.
(off the CNN)
Jeez. Since when do Lady Gaga's tweets count as "news"?

Eating in silence now. Nancy pokes at her meatloaf.

INT. NANCY AND FRED'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Fred, in his PJs, packs his overnight bag. An old routine. Nancy watches Ice Road Truckers from bed.

NANCY
You know, I can't stop thinking about Candy.

FRED
There's Twizzlers in the fridge.

NANCY
No, Candy DeBoer.

Fred's suitcase is disturbingly neat. He zips it closed.

FRED
Oh. Well, try to forget her. Not worth it. G'night.

A peck on her cheek, then he turns out his bedside lamp. Their first physical contact we've seen.

Nancy mutes the TV. Watches for a minute, then pokes Fred.

NANCY
Where'd you say those Twizzlers were?

A SMILEY-FACE BREAKFAST PLATE.

A pancake head, sausage mouth, two strawberries for the eyes, and pieces of bacon arranged to make hair.

Harry stares blearily at it. A morning show in the b.g.

INT. NANCY AND FRED'S BATHROOM

Fred flosses at the his-and-hers sinks.

NANCY
Have a good trip. Breakfast's on the table.

A peck on his cheek.

FRED
Mmrpg.

IN THE KITCHEN

She notices: Harry's happy-face breakfast is eaten -- except the bacon hair, which he's left precisely untouched.

NANCY
Oh for Pete's sakes. Come on, Harry! We gotta go!

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET

A vast supply closet for a High School health class. The contents are bewildering: rubber babies, wax food.

Harry stands in front of a cutaway model of a woman's torso. Transfixed by the plastic half-vagina.

NANCY
Harry, where's my pound of fat?

HARRY
Okay already!

He grabs a gelatinous block from a shelf and hurries out into

THE FOOD SCIENCE CLASSROOM

Like a science lab, but with ovens, stoves, and cooking utensils. Empty, sparkling, set up for the day.

NANCY
Come on, I'll drive you over.

LATER

The food science classroom is filled with HIGH SCHOOLERS. Mostly girls, almost all blonde haired and blue eyed. A contingent of LATINAS, self-segregated, poorer.

NANCY
Aprons on, mouths closed! We've got a lot to cover. We're going make Dutch Babies today.

A SNARF of laughter from the only boys in the room.

TALL SLACKER
Misses Vandergroot? If we're gonna to make a Dutch baby, Tod and I are going to need new partners.

PIMPLY SLACKER
Yeah. And a little privacy.

NANCY
I have a feeling you two might need a *liiiitle* more instruction before you get anywhere close to making Dutch babies. Of any kind.

Oooohs from the class, blushes from the boys, and a respectful silence.

NANCY
Now. A Dutch Baby...

LATER

Nancy patrols the classroom. Twenty highschoolers with knives should be a disaster, but somehow she keeps meticulous order.

Nancy's really good at this.

She pulls apart a Hispanic girl and a rail-thin Dutch girl in a ruffled shirt, who are bickering.

NANCY
Separate! See me after.

WHEN THE BELL RINGS

Twenty finished pancakes with apples. A surprising number seem edible.

The class is gone, except the two girls.

LATINA
She kept saying my pancake won't turn out because Catholics are the devil.

RUFFLES
It's in the Bible! It's not wrong to say the truth.

NANCY
That's not in the Bible. Honestly. You think John F. Kennedy is the devil? And what about Mr. Delgado?

Ruffles twists her pretty face into a little knot of spite. But who could criticize JFK? Not to mention:

JAVIER "DAVE" DELGADO

He's handsome, 30s, and Latino. In

THE SHOP CLASS

The male equivalent of the Food Science classroom. The students are gone, except one: SHAWN GRAUMANN, hugely fat and wearing white powder makeup.

DAVE
Most teachers look at this and think, ICP, uh-oh.

He holds up Shawn's notebook -- an intricate drawing of Insane Clown Posse.

DAVE
I see this, and I think, there's no way a kid with an eye like this should be getting less than an A in my class. You're better than C's. You gotta believe in yourself.

Dave notices Nancy at the classroom door. He lights up.

DAVE
All right, go to lunch.

SHAWN
Okay Mister Delgado.

Dave pulls off his shop apron and grabs his lunch.

EXT. THE SPORTS FIELDS - DAY

Dave and Nancy walk and talk around the edges of the sports fields. Sparks flying, even if they don't realize it.

Nancy speaks in double-time -- it's the opposite of the listless dinner conversation.

NANCY
Well that's just it! It's not about the bacon, for darned sure. You think you know a person, and then -- this.

DAVE
Well, everyone's got secrets.

NANCY
Not you, Dave! That's why we get along so good.

DAVE
Oh, me too. Even me.

NANCY
Really, like what?

DAVE
So. What's Fred say about all this?

NANCY
Nothing! As usual.

Across the field, a huge man in a red pickup. Watching them.

NANCY
Who's that over there?

DAVE
Squiggs Graumann. Bus driver? School let him go cause of his weight.

NANCY
Stop!

DAVE
Serious. 435. Can't fit in the bus any more. Got his son in shop. Good kid.

NANCY
Ew, he's creepy. Let's turn around.

ON A BENCH - LATER

They unwrap their sandwiches.

NANCY
There's no swearing in that?

DAVE
Mm, Samuel L. Jackson says "butt."

NANCY
I can deal with that.

DAVE
Say, how long's Fred gone for? I have an appointment next week.

NANCY
You do?
(laughs)
You're gonna get glasses?

DAVE
Hope not.

NANCY
You'd look cute. Like a professor or something.

DAVE
Yeah?

NANCY
Yeah.

They both laugh. A moment of intimacy. Then, when they realize it, they pull away.

Dave starts to say something -- wants to so badly -- then stops himself.

DAVE
Guess I could get contacts if I wanted to.

NANCY
Oh. Yeah. Those can be nice.

Spell broken. Dave finishes his sandwich, crumples the wax paper.

DAVE
Welp. Back we go.

EXT. THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Nancy pulls up in front of the grade school. A flood of tow-headed kids and moms. Harry on the steps with a friend.

NANCY
Harry! Over here.

Harry doesn't move. Instead, his NERDY FRIEND runs over.

NERDY FRIEND
Misses Vandergroot, can Harry sleep over my house tonight? My mom says it's okay.

NANCY
Yeah. Fun. Okey doke...

When she rolls up her window, it's just her and A VHS of JURASSIC PARK on the passenger seat.

CUT TO:

NANCY

Alone in the house, eating Little Caesar's and watching Jurassic Park.

SAMUEL L. JACKSON
Hold onto your butts.

NANCY
Tsk, language.

As soon as she says it, she feels stupid. Looks around at the empty room.

LATER

The movie's over, the Diet Coke's gone, she's all alone, and it's only 5 o'clock.

On the phone:

NANCY
Can you put me through to Fred Vandergroot's room? Thanks.

Ringing and ringing. No answer. She hangs up.

On the TV, HOARDERS. A massive woman whose house is completely filled with papers and cats. Nancy shudders.

Nancy catches a glimpse of the EARRING CASE in her purse. Opens it up. The SINGLE PEARL EARRING inside.

Her dark, empty house.

INT. NANCY'S CAR - NIGHT

Nancy PROWLS through the deserted streets of Holland.

EXT. STRIP MALL - NIGHT

Nancy, the only car on the road, drives by a bunch of teenagers hanging out by the payphone in the deserted strip mall parking lot.

Then, a block away, she SCREECHES TO A HALT. Reverses all the way back to

THE PAY PHONE

The TEENAGERS gathered around the phone gawp as Nancy rolls down her window, blasts a FLASHLIGHT beam until she finds

CANDY.

NANCY
Candy DeBoer. Get over here.

CANDY
Misses Vandergroot?

NANCY
What are you doing here?

CANDY
Hanging out? By the payphone?

NANCY
Yeah? That a joint you're smoking?
A marijuana joint?

CANDY
It's an American Spirit. Like the
Native Americans smoked. I'm 18, so.

NANCY
Mm. Let me see your ears.

CANDY
What?

NANCY
Pull your hair back and let me see em.

Candy does. She's got five piercings, but no pearl earring.

NANCY
Where'd you get those?

CANDY
Accessorize? At the Grandville Mall?

NANCY
Any other piercings?

CANDY
My belly button.

NANCY
Lemme see it.

CANDY
Misses Vandergroot, I'm really sorry about the bacon, but you don't have the right --

NANCY
Anything else? Besides the bacon. You want to tell me now?

CANDY
(almost in tears now)
That's everything, Mrs. V, I swear!

NANCY
Okay. Fine.

But as Candy turns to go, Nancy can't help herself.

NANCY
Belly button first.

Candy looks back at her friends, embarrassed. Comes close to the car and lifts her shirt to show her ample belly, pink rhinestone bellybutton, and fluorescent green lace panties poking out of her jeans.

CANDY
I feel really uncomfortable, Mrs. V.

NANCY
Me too, Candy. Believe me.
(driving off)
And pull your pants up!

EXT. A SPLIT-LEVEL HOUSE - NIGHT

Small, run-down, a bit shabby. On the outskirts of town.

The contrast with Nancy's house is so great that she checks again in the Teacher Directory before getting out of the car.

ON THE PORCH

DAVE DELGADO opens the door. Shocked.

DAVE
Nancy, what're you dong here?

NANCY
I needed to talk--

A woman calls out something in SPANISH in the b.g. Dave answers her sweetly in Spanish.

NANCY
Gosh, Am I, uh, interrupting... something...?

DAVE'S VOICE
Yeah, I got an older woman in there.

Nancy's face sinks.

DAVE'S VOICE
Just kidding. My mom's visiting. From Columbus.

NANCY
I knew you were hiding something. You're a secret Buckeye!

DAVE'S VOICE
Heh, don't go spreading that around, I'll get fired.

Nancy thrusts the earring box at him. The one earring inside.

NANCY
She has an odd number of piercings.

ON THE SIDE PORCH

Nancy paces. Dave takes it in. Not unskeptical.

NANCY
See, if she took both, I would know she did it. One, it seems like maybe I just lost it.

DAVE
Well...? That isn't impossible.

NANCY
Don't tell me to forget it. Or to calm down. That's what Fred's gonna say. I need at least one person in my life to take me seriously.

DAVE
I'm taking you seriously. That's why I say you have to search.

NANCY
So I'm supposed to upend my own house, because she stole from me?

DAVE'S MOM appears at the window. Harangues him in Spanish.

DAVE
Okay, mama, I'm coming. Sorry, Nancy. I gotta...

NANCY
Yeah, okay. Thanks, Dave.

DAVE
Listen, my advice? Don't make accusations until you're SURE. If you're right, nothing's gonna change in a few days except you'll have a stronger case. But if you're wrong, that can ruin a lot of reputations. Hers, *and* yours.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy takes a deep breath. Then starts the SEARCH:

- The dresser drawers. Shaking clothes out, searching the corners.

- The closet. The mountain of shoes. Finds an old pair of sexy red pumps. Tries them on. A hint of a past life.

- The closet shelves. Piles of sweaters, of junk untouched for years. Her wedding dress, mothballed in a box.

Then, FRED'S THINGS:

- His dresser, drawer by drawer. Totally neat and orderly. Knickknacks, tighty-whities, some travel brochures for Italy from twenty years ago. Yellowed dreams.

- In the closet, tips out his loafers, one by one. Nothing.

On his side of the closet, one pair of the dozen nearly-identical khakis is missing a BUTTON. The only sign of anything out of order.

UNDER THE BED - LATER

Nancy SNORES amid the Tupperware containers.

THE NEXT MORNING

In the LIVING ROOM, no earring under the couch cushions -- but an old after-dinner mint. She pops it into her mouth. Grimaces, spits it out and covers it back up.

LATER

The whole downstairs is searched. Nancy contemplates it. Then finds herself in

HARRY'S ROOM.

On his dresser, a handmade wooden TREASURE BOX. LOCKED with a cheapo diary lock. A moment of hesitation. Then Nancy turns the tumbler with a fingernail and it POPS open.

Inside, the treasures of an 11-year-old boy: a shark tooth, a Civil War bullet, a Sacred Heart medallion. Nancy smiles as she sifts through it all.

She collects his laundry into a basket, hefts it up.

But out in the hallway, she stops. Goes back to the BOX.

A coin stuck vertically along the edge. She pulls at it --

<u>False bottom</u>. She pries it up.

It's with some relief that she sees a stack of Victoria's Secret catalogues and Xena comics. Nothing worse than PG-13.

But underneath them -- A PAIR OF WOMEN'S PANTIES.

Fluorescent green lace. Exactly like CANDY'S.

NANCY
Oh God...

LATER, she lifts the panties with YELLOW RUBBER GLOVES. Deposits them into a ZIPLOCK BAG.

A glance at the KEEP OUT sign on Harry's door takes her to

THE DOOR TO THE GARAGE.

AMTRAK EMPLOYEES ONLY
ALL OTHERS KEEP OUT

She hesitates in the doorway. Then steps in.

It's dark and cold and she's hardly been in here before.

She walks through the garage, slowly, appraising. Everything's neat and labeled.

She circumnavigates the RAILROAD TRACK. It's a loop, with a hole cut out of the middle. She ducks down underneath the tables, then pops up in the middle of the layout.

Surrounded by it. She fingers one of the unmoving trains. Tentative, afraid to break it. A foreign world to her.

The houses, incredible. This close-up, you can see the precision of the work, the care.

She crawls back out, underneath.

As she does, she peers under the work benches. Lots and lots of DUST -- except in ONE CORNER.

A BOX. Jammed into the back corner. All around is dusty, but the box itself ISN'T.

Nancy's just working her way back towards it when --

HARRY (O.S.)
Dad says you're not allowed in here!

Nancy jumps. Turns to see HARRY in the doorway. Her face reddens in a deep BLUSH.

HARRY
What?

IN THE KITCHEN

FRED
I've got Frankenmuth. Looks like you've been busy.

NANCY
Why couldn't I get hold of you? I've been in crisis mode here.

FRED
Nance, come on. You're all worked up over nothing.

NANCY
That's just what I thought you'd say.

Fred hands Nancy a tiny Frankenmuth plastic camel. She can't help but smile. Takes Fred's arm.

NANCY
I'm glad you're back. I was lonely.

FRED
Awww, now. It was only one day.

NANCY
I know. It's just nice having you around. Like a golden retriever.

FRED
Yeah, woof!

She laughs. Fred kisses her forehead, then turns to Harry.

FRED
Practice time?

NANCY
I dunno, you think the railway can survive another hour without you? Could be mass carnage if one derails.

ORGAN MUSIC fills the house: ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS.

Harry and Nancy sing while Fred plays on the HAMMOND ORGAN.

INT. FIRST DUTCH REFORMED CHURCH - DAY

Fred plays the CHURCH ORGAN for the solemn congregation. Everyone in black suits. The pastor straight out of a Frans Hals painting.

Towards the front, Nancy and Harry sing along. Harry really belts it out, loud and proud.

LATER

PASTOR
What is “family time” for you? Is it sitting in front of Satan's Box? Or a clean, active hobby? Quilts, models: our inoculation against sexuality and sin.

Harry and Fred share a surreptitious fist-bump -- got that one covered. Nancy shifts uncomfortably.

The Pastor then turns to:

PASTOR
Now, in the end times, the Beast "causeth all to receive a Mark." Revelation 13. What is the Mark of the Beast? Let's look at the character of the Mark, and then at the capabilities of the iPhone 5....

AT THE END, Fred wraps things up with some exuberant improv on the church ORGAN. Then ends it with heavy chords.

OUTSIDE CHURCH

Fred, Nancy, and Harry chat with the Pastor and his family.

PASSING KIDS
Hey Deacon Fred.

FRED
Hey, scout. How those specs working out?

Nancy surveys the post-church crowd -- little knots of gossip and chatter.

LATER, Nancy tries to get away from the Pastor's Wife and another ROTUND MOM.

ROTUND MOM
Like I always say, "If it ain't Dutch, it ain't much!"

NANCY
(rolling her eyes)
What about the other 7 billion people on the planet? Honestly.

EXT. TULIP FIELDS - LATER

They drive past the fields of young tulips. Just beginning to crown in long strips of different colors.

A Dutch overseer in straw hat and suspenders inspects the HISPANIC DAY-LABORERS who are actually working.

NANCY
They're like slaves. Poor guys.

FRED
Well it's almost Tulip Time. Someone's gotta do it.

NANCY
Why don't you show THAT on your train layout. You make it all seem so... happy.

FRED
Maybe I will. Actually, I'm working on a new house. Cedar shingles. Or maybe shakes? Gonna try index cards, fringe them.

Nancy watches the tulips flicker past. Bored. Alone.

They pull into the driveway. Harry jumps out and heads right inside. Nancy just sits there. Staring at “Jesus Is Lord.”

FRED
You all right?

NANCY
Sometimes I just wonder -- why God would ever want to come down into this messed-up old world.

LATER

From the garage, the sound of Fred and Harry LAUGHING together.

She peeks through the door. Fred's at his drafting table, drawing up PLANS for a new house. Harry watches.

FRED
This is the fun part. You get to make up a story about someone you never met before, and direct their whole life. Like you're making your own movie, but even better.

OUT IN THE HALL

Nancy VACUUMS furiously. When she's done, she DUMPS the whole vacuum cleaner bag out onto the floor. Sifts through it. Sneezes.

NANCY
There's that button, anyhow.

The khaki button from Fred's pants. She re-vacuums up all the lint and dirt from the floor.

IN THE BEDROOM

She sews the button back on. As she does, she feels something in the pocket. Pulls out

A WAD OF PAPER that's been through the washer and dryer.

NANCY
I keep telling you to clean out your pockets...

FRED'S VOICE
Honey? I'm taking Harry out to get some glue. We'll be back in five.

Nancy sits at attention.

And as soon as the door slams, she slips downstairs into

INT. THE GARAGE

THE BOX. Dusty all around it, but the box itself isn't.

She opens it. Inside: TWENTY PACKS of POLAROID FILM. Unopened, still shrink-wrapped.

NANCY
What in the heck.

She looks at the box top. The shipping labels have been pulled off.

The sound of the CAR. She quickly replaces the box, slips out of the garage.

IN NANCY'S BEDROOM

Nancy sits on her bed, trying to figure out... everything.

She realizes -- she's absent-mindedly pulling at the WAD OF PAPER from Fred's pants.

The washer and drier have melded all the papers into one grey wad -- except for a FLASH of FLUORESCENT PINK.

She kneads it, and the paper cocoon splits.

The pieces are wrinkled, falling apart -- but she assembles them into

A PARKING TICKET.

NANCY
(calling)
Fred, did you pay...

And then she stops. Realizes--it's from MADISON, WINSCONSIN.

NANCY
Madison? When...

FRED'S VOICE
(coming up the stairs)
What's that, hun?

The dots vaguely connect in her mind -- and she scoops the pieces of the ticket up and shoves them into her pocket.

And, in the same movement, she scoops up the ZIP-LOC bag of CANDY'S PANTIES and shoves them under her shirt.

Fred comes into the room.

NANCY
Nothing, hun, just found your button for those khakis.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy sits awake in bed. A grin on her face. She looks over at Fred, sleeping, shakes her head in wonder.

Then sees his still-packed suitcase.

INT. NANCY'S BATHROOM/BEDROOM - MORNING

Nancy does her hair in the bathroom.

FRED
(from the bedroom)
You unpacked all my stuff! What a nice surprise.

NANCY
Well I couldn't sleep anyway, so --

She catches sight of

FRED, standing at the closet in his TIGHTIE-WHITIES. His pale legs, his pot belly.

And she can't help it -- she CRACKS UP.

FRED
What? What's so funny?

She waves helplessly at him, collapses on the bed, LAUGHING uncontrollably.

Fred grins. Not sure what's going on.

FRED
You're quite the Jolly Rancher today.

IN THE KITCHEN

Nancy makes Harry's PB&J. Has to stop because she CRACKS UP.

HARRY
Mom, you are officially weird.

INT. DAVE'S SHOP CLASS - DAY

The bell rings.

DAVE
Okay, glasses on hooks! Get a sheath on that saw, Mitchell.

As the students file out, Dave turns over the small jewelry box that big Shawn Graumann's working on. It's beautiful.

DAVE
Niiice. You're killing it, man. This edge, you can use the diamond rasp. I can show you after school.

SHAWN
Actually, my dad doesn't like me staying after. For shop.

DAVE
Ah. Okay. I could give him a call, if you think--

SHAWN
No! No, please. Don't do that. I just-- it's better if you don't.

DAVE
You all right? Everything okay at home? I know your dad lost his job.

SHAWN
(panic)
Everything's fine! Just -- please, don't call my dad.

Shawn waddles out. Dave looks down at the box. The top is sketched for inlay: a picturesque house with a picket fence.

IN NANCY'S CLASSROOM

She sits at her desk, taping together the pieces of the PARKING TICKET. Ignoring the class, who take a pop quiz.

IN FRONT OF THE SCHOOL

Dave exits the Principal's office. Watches Shawn get into Squiggs Graumann's red pickup at the edge of the lot.

DAVE
God, I hate that. I reported it. But I don't know...

NANCY
You know what? If you don't know, you know. You know?
(as Dave puzzles that out)
Can we go someplace we can talk?
(mouthing the word:)
Secretly?

CUT TO:

AN ENORMOUS IRON HORSE

Not just big. We're talking the biggest goddamn metal horse in the world. Because we're in the

FREDERICK MEIJER GARDENS

Gardens, greenhouses, and Leonardo's horse, 500 years after it was designed. Finally constructed in the Florence of America -- Holland, Michigan.

From the ground, the main thing you see is its 8-foot balls.

Nancy and Dave approach through the small parking lot.

NANCY
Ugh, look at that. Minnesota plates. “Land of 10,000 Lakes.”

DAVE
So?

NANCY
WellferPetesakes, Michigan's got 11,000 lakes! Is that all they've got to brag about, being second-best in lakes? It's pathetic.

DAVE
What's eating you?

NANCY
I just-- let's go in. I can't think with that huge crotch dangling over me.

They walk into the park, to

EXT. GREENHOUSES

A series of interconnected, airlocked glass houses, each one with a different ecosystem.

As Dave heads through the first airlock, Nancy blurts out:

NANCY
I think Fred's having an affair!

As soon as she says it, she clamps her hand over her mouth, and rushes inside to

INT. THE DESERT HOUSE

Dave stares at the crazy, taped-together parking ticket as Nancy lays it out in an urgent whisper.

NANCY
Here's the thing, he's never BEEN to Madison. Not that he's ever told me. He told ME he was at a conference in Fort Wayne that day.

DAVE
Okaaaay...

NANCY
PLUS, if he paid that ticket, how'd he pay it?

A family comes into the desert house. Nancy pulls Dave into

INT. THE JUNGLE HOUSE

A steamy jungle greenhouse. They immediately start to sweat.

NANCY
I checked all our credit cards and our bank accounts. So he's got secret credit cards somewhere. So what's that tell you?

Two teenagers on a sweaty date come in and start making out.

Nancy pulls Dave behind a palm tree, shoves her phone at him.

NANCY
Look at these pictures.

DAVE
What, is this Candy? Are you still--

NANCY
No, the next one. We don't own a Polaroid. Never did!

DAVE
Probably just for his trains.

NANCY
(victorious)
Nope! Researched it! The lens is no good. So why's he need a Polaroid so bad? No computer files, no film developer. Nobody sees your kinky sex photos except you and your lover.

Dave hands her back the phone.

NANCY
Don't you think he goes to an awful lot of conferences for an optometrist?

DAVE
I dunno. He's the only optometrist I ever knew. And I never even met him. You think he wasn't actually in Frankenmuth last week?

Nancy hates to admit it, but:

NANCY
Nah, he was. Even found this in his suitcase.

She hands over a tiny orange plastic camel.

DAVE
So a woman travels around the whole mid-west to optometry junkets, just to have sex with Fred.

NANCY
Maybe he has a few different ones.

DAVE
Fred Vandergroot has hoes in different area codes?

Nancy blushes, but can't help but laugh.

NANCY
I know! Just the thought of it. I saw him this morning in his undies. I cracked up! He must be a sex machine on the road, cause he sure isn't at home.

An awkward beat between them.

DAVE
Well. There must be something there. After all, he got you.

The compliment, the attraction, the fact of her marriage -- it all registers for Nancy.

NANCY
Well. A lot's changed since then.
(after a moment)
When I met him, I was pretty... low-down. He fixed me up. Got me, you know. Clean. And back then, he seemed, I dunno... glamorous. He'd tell me about these trains... I'd imagine like, North by Northwest.

A wave of vulnerability, of fear, washes over her.

NANCY
It's hot in here. I don't feel great.

They walk together into

INT. THE CARNIVOROUS PLANTS HOUSE

She leans on the railing. Breathing in the air.

DAVE
I dunno, Nancy.

NANCY
You think I'm making it up? Why would I WANT to think he's having an affair?

DAVE
Well you're the Great Mouse Detective here, you tell me.

They look down, annoyed with each other. At the pitcher plants, the Venus fly traps, the strange marsh plants digesting flies in pools of acid.

DAVE
You know what I think? You're like one of those flies. The more they flail around, the deeper they get, until they go right into the acid. If they'd just sit still, they could live forever on the funnel, drinking that nectar. But they flail around, even though they know it's not going to get them anywhere except deeper in.

Nancy stares down at the pitcher plant. A fly in the hairs, flailing, getting sucked, oh-so-slowly, down inside.

DAVE
You're flailing, Nancy. And you're gonna get yourself in trouble. You have a good life. Sit still, drink the nectar, and enjoy it.

Nancy shakes her head and turns her back on the plants.

NANCY
That's the dumbest thing I ever heard.

DAVE
Well. It's the best I got.

And he leaves her alone in the greenhouse. With the flies trapped in the pitcher plants.

She blows a dejected raspberry as he strides off.

INT. A NAIL SALON - DAY

Nancy gets her hands massaged and manicured by two Laotian women.

MANICURIST
You want toes too?

NANCY
Heck, why not. He gets to do what he wants, why can't I.

LATER, she stares down at her pink toes, spread like pearls in the white foam toe-separator. Those perfect little nails. Not quite what she's looking for.

INT. NANCY'S HOUSE - DINNER TABLE

Staring blankly at the CNN.

FRED
Oh, got a call from Alcon today. They want me to come back out there next week.

NANCY
To Frankenmuth.

FRED
Ay-up. Advanced training. Should be kinda fun. Just a three-dayer.

NANCY
A little vacation getaway.

FRED
Well. Nancy. It's work. I don't stay up to date with this stuff, 1-800-CONTACTS will kill me.

Harry looks from his mom to his dad. Is this a fight?

NANCY
Of course! I'm just glad you get to get away. Must be nice. Just get up and leave it all behind.

Nancy smiles a tight smile. Gets up to do the dishes.

INT. FRED AND NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy sits on the edge of the bed in her nightgown. Fred comes in.

FRED
Hey, hun, if this Frankenmuth thing is worrying you--

NANCY
Fred--

FRED
I'll tell them, no more two-parters. I only do this one every nine months or so anyway--

NANCY
Fred, I found a pair of Candy's underwear in Harry's room.

FRED
Pfft-- What?!

NANCY
What, is that funny?

She tosses him the plastic bag with the panties in it. He catches it, tries to keep from laughing. Unsuccessfully.

FRED
Sorry, I mean -- how'd he even get them? Master pickpocket...

NANCY
You need to go in there, tell him we know everything, and that it's unacceptable and needs to change.

FRED
Jeez, Nancy, you don't know much about teenage boys.

NANCY
There's another woman's underwear in my house! I feel so violated--

FRED
You feel violated? How you think Harry will feel when we barge in there dangling these in his face? You go in there, snooping in his private things--

NANCY
Oh, so now the problem is me.

FRED
There is no problem. Harry's a good kid. He's entitled to a private life. Sometimes love means letting him have his secrets.

NANCY
Is that true of our marriage too?

Fred's taken aback. A long beat. He indicates her toes.

FRED
You mean about the mani-pedi you got today and didn't tell me about? I wasn't gonna mention it.

She curls her toes under so the nails can't be seen.

Fred looks at her. Searching her profile for... something.

FRED
There's nothing wrong with our marriage, is there? Nancy?

NANCY
... No, Fred. There isn't.

And she actually means it.

NANCY
I just wish I could go back to, like, a week ago.

FRED
You can. I'll get Harry downstairs. You put those back, and forget them. Hit the reset button.

THE PANTIES.

Go back into Harry's box. Nancy covers them over.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS - NIGHT

Nancy digs the old PARKING TICKET out of her purse. Crumples it, shoves it down into the trash. Reset.

IN BED

Nancy scrolls through her phone. One by one, deletes the photos of the Polaroid box. She notices -- the partially visible POSTMARK on the box. Zip code: 49014. Notes it.

She turns to Fred. Watches him snore. The frothy puddle of drool by his mouth. She stares at it. Until--

EXT. DOWNTOWN HOLLAND - DAY [RAIN]

DAVE trots down the sidewalk of the perfectly manicured downtown. It's POURING RAIN and he's SOAKED.

NANCY pulls up alongside him. Rolls down her window.

NANCY
Get in.

DAVE
Car's just a few blocks up.

He keeps walking. She drives alongside.

NANCY
Get. In.

INT. MINNIE ZAFRONA'S - DAY [RAIN]

A back booth in the dark old diner filled with truckers from the furniture mills. Nancy leans in close.

NANCY
Sometimes in life, there are opportunities. To go beyond the walls we've built for ourselves.

She slides her cell phone across the table to Dave. The picture of the BOX'S POSTMARK on the screen.

NANCY
See the zip code? Fred's office. We're going to break in.

DAVE
Pfft-- Nancy, forget it.

He stands up -- comes face to face with the elderly WAITRESS.

WAITRESS
Honey glazed kruller?

Dave stands there a beat. Then sits back down. Accepts his kruller.

WAITRESS
And chocolate for the lady.

They both wait until she's out of earshot.

NANCY
I've got a whole plan. But I need your help. I need you, Dave. No one else will even listen to me. One kruller and one coffee. Can you give me that?

DAVE
... Well. I'll listen. But nothing more.

INT. NANCY'S CAR - DOWNTOWN HOLLAND - DAY [RAIN]

Nancy drives slow through the downtown.

Rolls past HOLLAND EYE CARE. Plate-glass storefront, green awning, old-fashioned wooden sign. Inside, the last few patrons try on glasses.

DAVE
It's alarmed -- see the sensors?

NANCY
Yeah, but look around here.

She pulls into

THE REAR PARKING LOT [RAIN]

Behind the shop. A sturdy back door and three windows. Two are BARRED. One ISN'T.

NANCY
When's your eye appointment?

DAVE
Why?

NANCY
During your eye exam, you go to the bathroom. And rig the window so when they close it, it only SEEMS locked. You could do that, right?

Dave considers the window, the surroundings, the office.

DAVE
It's too hard. Too... *crazy*.

NANCY
That's what's so brilliant! No one would suspect two old bores like us would do something so... DARING.

Dave drains his to-go cup.

DAVE
I'm done with my coffee, I'm done with my kruller. I'm gonna go now.

But just as he opens the car door -- Nancy grabs him and YANKS him down in the seat.

NANCY
Get down!

FRED comes out the back door. Holding a file folder over his head as an umbrella.

They watch intensely, slouched way down, until he drives off.

Then Dave realizes -- Nancy's been SQUEEZING HIS HAND the whole time. They linger there. In the intimacy of it.

Dave considers a long beat.

DAVE
My appointment's Friday morning.

Nancy beams. Victorious.

INT. DAVE'S SHOP CLASS - DAY

The big BANDSAW slices big Shawn Graumann's box to ribbons.

DAVE
Shawn! The heck --

Dave hits the emergency stop.

Shawn turns to reveal: he's wearing tons of white facepaint to hide the fact that he's been BEATEN.

DAVE
Jesus. Shawn, I--

SHAWN
You WHAT? WHAT? Huh, BITCH?! You wanna make some phone calls now? Some friendly advice? Call DSS? FUCK YOU, Delgado!

Shawn flings a table over on his way out the door.

AFTER SCHOOL

Dave sits at a workbench. Miserable. Piecing together Shawn's shattered box. Back into the quaint farmhouse scene.

Dave pulls a WINDOW FRAME from the storage closet.

Quickly builds a little jig that screws into the frame. A wingnut, a few pieces of wood.

He slips the device into the frame. Now the window closes, but doesn't lock.

INT. KITCHEN - THAT EVENING

Nancy prepares dinner. Fred and Harry in the living room, newspaper and homework.

NANCY
I talked with Gwen. She wants to go to Whole Foods Friday.

FRED
Pfft. Hope you talked her out of it.

(MORE)

FRED (CONT'D)
Three hour drive, with gas at four bucks? She just got her kid contacts too.

NANCY
There's some kind of cheese... Anyway, I told her I'd go.

IN THE KITCHEN

As Fred says GRACE, Nancy texts under the table:

TO: DAVE
MESSAGE: It's on.

Nancy surveys the room, her life. Her secret excitement makes everything shine.

INT. DAVE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME

Dave looks up from his TV dinner as the TEXT comes in.

“It's on.” A deep sigh. Dave looks around his crummy house. The messy little room, the TV tray, the futon bed.

Leans back to stare at the ceiling. Like, “What am I doing?”

EXT. HOLLAND EYE CARE - MORNING

An obese man in measuring-tape suspenders stares at

DAVE, nervously waiting in Fred's waiting room. Pretending to read "Dutch Life" magazine.

FRED (O.S.)
Mister Delgado comma Dave?

Dave looks up to see FRED looming over him. A moment of just staring up at Fred. He's never seen him before.

FRED
Let's get those peepers checked out.

IN THE EXAMINATION ROOM

Dave's head is pressed into the strange bondage contraption.

Fred sits REALLY CLOSE -- his face no more than an inch from Dave's. The kind of intimacy normally reserved for lovers.

Fred's breath on Dave's face as he peers blandly into Dave's eyes. Intensely creepy.

FRED
So. You're familiar with my wife. Nancy. Straight ahead for me.

The bright light in Dave's eye. Tearing up. Dave sweats.

DAVE
Don't think so. No.

FRED
Look up for me. I saw you've got MESSA. Through Holland High.

DAVE
Yessir. Yes. That's true.

FRED
So you must know my wife. Nancy Vandergroot. Life Management. Look left now.

The light, the questions, the orders. Interrogation.

DAVE
I may know her. I, uh, I don't know all the people there.

FRED
Pretty small place.

DAVE
I cut the grass. Maintenance.

Fred pulls Dave's head forward against the straps.

FRED
You're drifting backwards. You nervous?

Dave's hand nervously toys with the jig in his pocket.

DAVE
... Nope.

Fred's hands on Dave's forehead, pulling back his eyelids. Intense eye contact, at less than six inches. It could be an inspection of Dave's eyes -- or of his soul.

FRED
Well don't worry Mister Delgado. I don't bite.

Dave almost stops breathing -- then, Fred rolls away. Enters everything into the computer.

FRED
Well sir, we like to say that only God has perfect vision, but you come pretty darned close.

DAVE
You, uh-- you got a bathroom I can use?

FRED
Let's get these guys in there first real quick. Dilate you out so we can check the retina.

Two drops in each eye.

FRED
There ya go. Bathroom's down back. When you're done, you can wait out front, I'll call you back.

Dave rubs his eyes. That strange fizzy feeling of dilation.

IN THE HALL

Everything haloes and goes soft-focus. The drops kicking in.

Then he notices -- a man in uniform talking to the receptionist. He blinks, rubs his eyes -- it's a COP.

He spins and runs to the

BATHROOM

Locks the door. Opens the window. Through his dilated eyes, the world is a glittering, blinding blur.

He pulls out the WOODEN JIG. Slots it in -- but a glint of intense light from a passing car; he BOBBLES it -- and the jig FALLS OUT THE WINDOW.

DAVE
Shit.

He stands on the toilet -- there it is, on the concrete under the window. So close, yet so far...

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

DAVE
Uh, occupied, occupied--

Panicking now. Pulls a Swiss Army knife from his belt. Frantically unscrews the lugs from the windowframe.

KNOCK-KNOCK-KNOCK!

DAVE
Jesus...

The lug comes out -- but so does a whole strip of the FRAME, with a KLANK. Dave fumbles, drops the knife INTO THE TOILET.

VOICE
The heck you doing in there?

Dave rips his jacket off, plunges his arm into the toilet. Grabs the knife, pushes the window closed. It swings open.

VOICE
(pounding)
Don't make me break down this door!

DAVE
Shit shit shit...

He wets a wad of toilet paper, smears it onto the window frame, squishes it closed. It sticks.

DAVE
This is so stupid, Dave...

He shoves the knife in his pocket, flushes the toilet. Opens the door to find himself face to face with

THE COP. Huge, muscular. Looming over him, eyes narrowed.

COP
What you been doing in there?

DAVE
Uhhh... I...

COP
God, I nearly bust my bladder.

He moves Dave bodily aside and charges into the bathroom. The sound of an awesome PISS.

Dave forces himself to walk, not run, to the EXIT. But --

RECEPTIONIST
Mister Delgado, you're not done yet. You need a retina check.

DAVE
I don't know-- if, uh, I have time--

Dave heads for the door. The COP bursts out of the bathroom, comes striding after him.

COP
Hey, buddy-- Stop!

DINGLE-DINGLE!

OUTSIDE

Dave can barely see. Bumps into a woman as he strides off.

COP
Hey!

Dave glances back -- HOOOOONNNK! A car wooshes past. Dave's in the street -- Blind -- Reeling -- The Cop GRABS HIM --

COP
Buddy, you forgot your jacket in the can. They put those drops in your eyes? I hate that sugar.

DAVE
Yeah. I'm... Thanks for...

Dave gestures vaguely. The cop chuckles, slaps Dave's back.

COP
Just don't drive for half an hour. Don't wanna have to arrest you!

Dave leans on a lamppost for support. Jesus H. Christ.

INT. NANCY'S CAR - DAY

In the Wal-Mart parking lot. Nancy touches up her RED LIPSTICK. She's dressed up, looking young. Looking SEXY.

Dave glances around, gets in. He looks ashen.

DAVE
I'm out.

NANCY
You can't be out.

DAVE
I'm so out. I got a date tonight anyway. So. We gotta call it off.

NANCY
... What do you mean you have a <u>DATE</u>? Can't you cancel?
(MORE)

NANCY (CONT'D)
(off his silence)
Are you excited about it? About her?

A long beat while Dave stares out the windshield. Sullen.

DAVE
There's a lot you don't know about me, Nancy.

NANCY
Yeah. Evidently. I thought we were in this together. This isn't more interesting than some date you clearly don't want to go on?

DAVE
No. I mean. There was a cop there today. It freaked me out.

NANCY
Okay, but you still-- I mean, mission accomplished.

DAVE
No. It freaked me out because... I've been in trouble. With the law.

NANCY
Well heck we've all gotten speeding tickets and all that.

DAVE
Nancy. I've been in JAIL. I have a RECORD.

This takes the wind out of Nancy's sails. She stares blankly ahead.

NANCY
... Oh. What... what did you do? Was it... bad?

DAVE
I was seventeen. Some friends stole a car, went joy riding. Nobody got hurt, but the other guys ran faster than me, so.

NANCY
Oh fer pete's sakes! That's hardly nothing. You were just a dumb kid!

DAVE
But look, you get caught, no biggie. Hispanic guy, criminal record, in Holland? I'm guilty until proven innocent.

NANCY
Well, I understand. Go on your boring date.

DAVE
There's no date. I just. Didn't want you to think less of me.

NANCY
Ah Dave. You never have to worry about that with me.

A sweet moment between them.

NANCY
But you gotta know -- with or without you, I'm going in. So you gotta show me one thing.

INT. HOME DEPOT - DAY

An endless aisle of DOOR HANDLES displayed on mini doorjambs.

DAVE
Okay, just take the card, slide it in thirty degrees, it should pop.

Nancy tries to use her credit card to pick the lock. Can't get the angle right.

Dave puts his hand over hers, guides it. The lock CLICKS open. His hand lingers on hers.

HOME DEPOT GUY (O.S.)
Help you with anything?

They spring apart. Dave hides the card.

DAVE
We're good. Picking out doors.

HOME DEPOT GUY
Arright. Holler if you need me.

Dave and Nancy watch him move off.

NANCY
It... might be like this one here.

DAVE
That's more tricky. See, it's got a tongue, then a safety bar. Gotta lean against it, do the card, then come round with it.

NANCY
Guide me. C'mon.

He comes up behind her. His hand on her hand. Their bodies together. The scent of her hair.

CLICK!

She half-turns -- his face right against hers. Whispers:

NANCY
I got it.

DAVE
Yeah. You sure did.

And then -- they KISS.

It's impossible to say who made the first move -- they've both been wanting this for so, so long.

HOME DEPOT GUY (O.S.)
How you folks-- Oh. Gosh.

They spring apart. Turn bright red. The worker chuckles.

HOME DEPOT GUY
Don't mind me! I'm into doors too.

EXT. NANCY'S CAR / HOME DEPOT PARKING LOT - DUSK

Nancy pulls out. Dave comes running after, taps the window.

DAVE
Wait. I'm coming.

NANCY
You shouldn't. You're right--

DAVE
I'll stay outside. Keep watch. Just in case something happens.

NANCY
Okay then. Get in!

Dave jumps in, and Nancy revs the engine and peels out.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Fred throws his briefcase on the entry table.

FRED
Arright slugger, who's ready for some Mi Ranchito?

HARRY
Olé!

EXT. HOLLAND EYE CARE - NIGHT

The dark, empty downtown. Nancy parks a block away.

EXT. HOLLAND EYE CARE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Nancy and Dave sneak through the empty back lot.

Nancy pops open the bathroom window. Flakes of dried toilet paper rain down.

DAVE
I'll keep watch. Good luck.

Nancy nods. Nervous now.

Dave boosts her up through the window into the dark bathroom.

IN THE HALLWAY

The bathroom door creaks open. Nancy takes it in -- the whole office dark, silent, forbidden.

She cracks a smile. And steps inside.

INT. MI RANCHITO - NIGHT

A blast of Mexican music as Harry and Fred tuck into chimichangas. Harry gushes about some collectible card game.

Fred's cell phone rings. Then again. We catch snippets--

FRED
So the contact is still in the eye? No, it's okay. Can you get to my office?
(hanging up)
Bad news, Har.

EXT. BEHIND THE OFFICE - NIGHT

Dave keeps watch. Pacing.

NANCY (O.S.)
Psst!

Her face in the bathroom window.

NANCY
Can I borrow your credit card?

DAVE
You're kidding.

NANCY
I left my purse in the car.

INSIDE

Nancy pauses before a door marked OFFICE - PRIVATE.

Stares up at the motion detector just over her head: glowing green, but facing the other way.

She slides the card in, leans on the door. POP!

INT. FRED'S PRIVATE OFFICE

Loon wallpaper, bookshelves, some display model trains.

Nancy sits at the broad desk. Fingers a plastic pull-apart model of the eye. Turns it so it's not looking at her.

She goes through the drawers. Laughs at a hidden stash of mini-Snickers. Eats one.

One locked drawer. She looks around. "If I were Fred..." Inspects the model train on the desk. Lifts it: the KEY is underneath.

NANCY
Bingo.

The locked drawer is nothing but patient records.

Nancy swings around in the chair. Empty-handed.

Her eye catches a big FRAMED PHOTOGRAPH: her, Fred and Harry.

An old formal studio portrait. They all look a little dorky and stiff. But Harry's just three years old, fat and laughing. Nancy and Fred are beaming. Happy. Truly happy.

Nancy touches the photo. Wistful. How did she ever get from there.... to here?

And she's about to leave when she notices -- the photo's hung crooked. She adjusts it, and realizes: behind the photo is

A HIDDEN WALL SAFE.

INT. A FORD FOCUS - NIGHT

A woman, GWEN, and her teenage son ride through the downtown. The boy holds a compress to his eye.

GWEN
I don't know why this couldn't happen during normal business hours.

GWEN'S SON
I already said I was sorry, mom.

OUT BEHIND FRED'S OFFICE

Dave HIDES as they pull into the BACK PARKING LOT.

AT THE HIDDEN SAFE

NANCY
Anniversary?
(tries it)
Of course not.

Thinks for a minute.

NANCY
Harry's birthday.

Ten, fifteen, ninety three -- CLICK! The safe swings open.

INSIDE: a half-dozen neat white envelopes, and a pair of archival boxes. Nancy dives in.

OUTSIDE

Dave stares in horror as FRED pulls up in front of the office. Dave jabs at his cell phone.

IN THE PRIVATE OFFICE

NANCY
Ah-hah!

She pulls out CREDIT CARDS in Fred's name from an envelope. Flips her phone into camera mode, photographs them.

She doesn't notice that as she takes the pictures, she DISCONNECTS Dave's calls.

OUTSIDE

DAVE
Dammit Nancy...

He hides as Gwen and her son get out of the car.

GWEN
He's here. Hurry up!

DAVE
(dialing again)
Nancy, pick up, pick up...

INSIDE

Nancy opens the archival boxes and gapes.

The boxes are FULL OF POLAROIDS.

She was expecting women. But-- they're all photos of HOUSES. Nancy pulls one out. Recognizes it.

NANCY
From the train set... and inside.
How'd he get inside?

She starts flipping through the Polaroids -- pulling them out randomly -- there are hundreds -- where to even start?

A front yard and a hand-lettered sheet that says “LACEY ANN FOR BOLOGNA QUEEN.”

NANCY
“Baloney Queen?”

Houses and more houses... Then -- one photo with a PERSON in it. The only one.

A GIRL. Blonde--but she's distant, motion-blurred. A GHOST.

OUT FRONT,

Fred throws up the cage, unlocks the front door --

DAVE

Peeps at him from the alley. Dials again as Gwen greets Fred.

NANCY'S VOICE
Dave--

DAVE
He's here. Get out. NOW!

NANCY

Electrified -- stuffs the photos of Ghost Girl and the Bologna Queen front yard into her pocket --

Shoves the rest away, closes the safe -- And just as she rushes toward the hall --

THE HALLWAY LIGHTS GO ON.

The BATHROOM is across the hall -- no escape now. She SHUTS the Private Office door. Shutting herself in. Whispering:

NANCY
I'm trapped. Dave?

FOOTSTEPS in the hall. She CLICKS the door lock closed.

FRED'S VOICE
Just gonna wash my hands.

Fred's shadow passes the door. Running water in the bathroom.

OUTSIDE

Dave HOLDS the bathroom window closed while Fred washes his hands. When Fred leaves, he lets it go, and the window swings back open.

INSIDE

NANCY
My light. Can you see?

She waves her cell phone light at it.

OUTSIDE

Dave comes into the alley to see A SMALL TRANSOM WINDOW high up on the wall.

NANCY'S VOICE
You'll have to catch me.

IN THE EXAM ROOM

Fred examines the boy's eye with the scope.

FRED
Well, it looks like everything's okay. The contact--

Fred looks up at a NOISE from next door.

FRED
Um, will you excuse me one sec?

IN THE PRIVATE OFFICE

Nancy is climbing up the bookcase, trying to get through the small, high window. She gets her head through when --

CLUK-CLUK-CLUK. The DOOR HANDLE turns behind her.

IN THE HALL

Fred tries the door. Locked. Puts his ear to it. Listens.

INSIDE

The jingle of Fred's KEYS -- Nancy wriggles frantically --

NANCY
Darn Zone diet...

As she does, a CHARM gets ripped from her bracelet, and falls onto the thick shag carpet -- but she doesn't notice --

OUTSIDE

DAVE
Give me your hands --

NANCY

Squeezes her shoulders through -- reaches for Dave --

FRED

Unlocks the door and comes in just as

DAVE

Grabs hold of Nancy and PULLS and

NANCY'S FEET

Disappear through the window and she falls into Dave's arms just as

FRED

Turns on the light to find --

His empty office. Nothing out of place.

EXT. ALONG THE WOODED RIVERBANK

Dave and Nancy RUN through the night -- At first, it's fear -- but then it turns to ELATION --

The rush, the wind, laughing and running free. Together.

BACK INSIDE

Fred lingers in his office. Then returns to Gwen and son.

FRED
So. Wear your glasses tomorrow, then try again Sunday, kay Matt?
(to Gwen)
Hope you didn't come back early for this. I know Nancy was looking forward to it.

GWEN
Uh, how's that?

FRED
Whole Foods? With, uh, Nancy?

GWEN
“Whole Paycheck?” Pfft, with gas at four bucks a gallon? No thank you.

FRED
Huh... Well I guess we got our wires crossed there then.

GWEN
Yah, you think so? Whole Foods, gosh. Hafta tell Jim that one.

INT. DAVE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dave and Nancy spill into the futon. Kissing furiously, hungrily.

She pulls his hips into hers. Dave hesitates.

DAVE
You-- you sure about this?

NANCY
I've wanted it for so long--

He kisses her. Hard. Then they're fumbling at his shirt buttons.

She pulls her shirt off over her head -- and the lacy lingerie underneath is so alluring that

THEY DON'T SEE:

Through the big windows: A RED PICKUP TRUCK pulls in front of the house. The two men inside pull on WHITE HOODS.

INT. FRED'S PRIVATE OFFICE - NIGHT

The CHARM from NANCY'S BRACELET. A tiny pair of silver baby booties. Deep in the shag carpet.

FRED'S HAND plucks it up. Fred holds it in the palm of his hand. Considering it.

BACK IN DAVE'S HOUSE

Dave and Nancy grind away on the futon. Dave kisses Nancy's neck. She moans with pleasure.

Nancy rolls on top. Straddles him. Bites his bare shoulder.

She straightens up to take her bra off -- then sees--

NANCY
Fire. FIRE!

Dave pops up -- and for a second they're both topless deer in headlights -- staring out at

A BURNING CROSS in the front yard. No more than three feet tall. Flanked by two figures in ratty homemade KKK hoods and XXXL capes.

DAVE
Why those--

OUTSIDE

A shirtless Dave strides across the lawn.

KLANSMAN
Here's a message from the Brotherhood--

DAVE
Squiggs Graumann, you think I don't know that's you?

The Klansman stares out from the pathetic pillowcase hood. The cloak is a stained bedsheet with a hole, and can't nearly disguise Squiggs's immense girth.

SQUIGGS GRAUMANN
Uhhh... You don't know nuthin.

DAVE
I know one thing -- I'm gonna kick your ass!

Squiggs turns to run away, TRIPS, and falls in the dirt.

Squiggs squeals as Dave literally KICKS HIS ASS. Dave pulls off the hood. Squiggs covers his face, tries to crawl away.

DAVE
I'm not even black, you idiot! Shawn, man, you are SO suspended.

The second hooded figure, quite obviously Shawn Graumann, watches from the pickup.

SHAWN
Fuck you! Go back to Mexico!

DAVE
I was born in Fenville!
(to Squiggs)
You teach him that shit? Huh? While you were beating him?

He KICKS Squiggs Graumann again. Squiggs squeals like a pig, struggles to his feet and limps to his pickup.

SQUIGGS
Learn English! Keep your hands off our white women!

DAVE
WHAT?

He CHARGES. Squiggs leaps into the truck and locks the door.

SHAWN
Yeah, learn English, Beaner!

DAVE
You, Shawn--I thought better of you.

The PICKUP squeals off down the block.

DAVE
It's a cul-de-sac!

A moment later, the pickup speeds by in the other direction. Dave just shakes his head as it disappears into the night.

INSIDE

Nancy watches the whole thing. Wide-eyed, drinking it in. When Dave comes back in, she pounces on him.

NANCY
God, that was so MANLY!

Her hands on his bare chest. The sheen of sweat on it.

DAVE
Nancy. We shouldn't do this.

NANCY
So SEXY! Come here, my warrior!

DAVE
Stop! I mean ANY of this.

He pulls his shirt back on. After a moment of disbelief, Nancy flops down on the futon. Exasperated.

NANCY
You're going to let *Squiggs Graumann* tell you what to do?

DAVE
I'm gonna let my <u>CONSCIENCE</u> tell me what to do! Like I should've in the first place. You're <u>married</u>.
(closing the curtains)
You got your evidence now, right? Your photos or whatever? So work it through. Leave him. I want you so bad, Nancy. But not like this.

NANCY
I CAN'T. You know I can't.

DAVE
You can. You just don't WANT to.

NANCY
I CAN'T! For Harry. Look, when I fired CANDY, Harry blamed ME. She stole, she lied, he blamed ME. If I took his FATHER away--?!

DAVE
Please. It's not for Harry. It's for YOU. For your nice house, nice car, front pew at church, pancake dinners.
(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)
You want all that, and a little excitement, a little brown boy on the side, without sacrificing ANYTHING. Except ME. Except my self-respect. But you can't have it all, Nancy. If you want THIS, you commit to it. Otherwise...

NANCY
Dave...

And the way she says it means: “I can't.”

DAVE
Okay then. Don't forget your purse.

INT. NANCY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy stares at the muted TV. Falling asleep on the couch.

THE NEXT MORNING

Fred, dressed for work, sits on the arm of the couch. Considering Nancy. Touches the CHARM BRACELET on her wrist.

FRED
Hey, sleepyhead. I'm heading in. How was Whole Foods?

NANCY
Fine. I bought those truffles for Har, but Gwen ate them on the drive.

Fred, watching her. Knowing. She hides her face in the cushions, pretends to go back to sleep.

LATER,

Nancy examines her photographs of Fred's secret credit cards. She's on the phone with the card company.

INDIAN WOMAN
I'm seeing doo cash advances from ATMs, and one charge of dree hundred dollar and seventy cent, at a Harbin Jewelers, Grand Rapids.

NANCY
Great. And does it say anything about buying jewelry for his whore?

INDIAN WOMAN
I'm not seeing dat on my screen.

Nancy HANGS UP. Rolls over, buries herself in the couch.

Then -- her hand finds something deep between the cushions. She pulls it out. Stares.

THE PEARL EARRING. The one she thought was missing.

She stares at it. Stunned.

LATER

Nancy, shell-shocked and holding the earring like a stick of dynamite, heads upstairs into

HER BEDROOM

Stops short. On her dresser, a big WRAPPED PRESENT. She approaches it, uncertain.

FRED
(behind her)
It's for you. Open it.

She starts.

Fred sits on the bed. Watching her. It's not a joyful gift-giving. Something solemn, slightly dangerous about it.

Nancy strips the paper off of a big JEWELRY BOX. Polished wood, delicate carvings, sturdy lock. It's beautiful.

NANCY
From... from Harbin's?

FRED
It's got a good lock. Because it's so important to me that you feel <u>safe</u> here. In our house. In our <u>family</u>.

Fred sits on the bed, watching her. Waiting for something. Nancy opens the new jewelry box -- and freezes.

Inside, the CHARM from her bracelet. Two silver baby shoes.

FRED
Found that in my office last night. When *Gwen* brought her son by.

NANCY
Uuuuu-- Fred, I--

He's the spider. She's the fly. Everything he wanted to know, he just learned from her reaction.

FRED
Remember when we were first married? We fought over so many stupid little things. And then we learned to let things go. That's when things got good. When we learned to trust each other.

He stands, takes the charm from the box.

FRED
So. I'm not gonna ask. I'm just gonna repair the bracelet. Get it back the way it was. Get <u>everything</u> back. If you think we can.

Silence. Nancy looks down at the charm. At the pearl earring in her hand. Then, in barely a whisper:

NANCY
Yeah Fred.

FRED
Hm?

NANCY
Yes. I want to.

She uncurls her fist to show him the pearl earring. Found.

NANCY
I'm so sorry--

He waves her off. A peck on the lips. And a smile.

FRED
Reset.

She holds out her wrist, and he snaps the charm back on.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy and Harry sing while Fred practices on the organ.

INT. FIRST REFORMED CHURCH - THE NEXT MORNING

In the front pew, singing loud and proud with Harry.

EXT. FIRST REFORMED CHURCH - SUNDAY MORNING

After services. Nancy at the center of things, chatting up the Pastor's Wife.

NANCY
Not too late to volunteer, is it?

INT. THE CHURCH HALL - LATER

The HALL is decorated for a big PANCAKE SUPPER. Women buzz over the decorations and place settings.

IN THE KITCHEN

A gaggle of blonde women in head-to-toe Talbot's and mile-a-minute gossip.

Nancy stands over a griddle, flipping pancake after pancake.

NANCY
(over their cackles)
Gosh, I'd hate to hear what y'all say about me.

The ladies share a glance. Then one of them goes for it.

SOCCER MOM
WELL! There was something about you and a certain dark handsome colleague. Nobody believed it, of course. But still... juicy.

Nancy's mock-horror is confident and pitch-perfect.

NANCY
Ladies, you know me better than that! When it comes to men, my motto? “If it ain't Dutch... it ain't much.”

Squeals of laughter. And she's instantly back in the group.

On Nancy's face, just the slightest hint of inner death.

IN THE CHURCH HALL - LATER

The EMCEE talks about the TULIP TIME festival.

The women serve pancakes, wearing white DUTCH CAPS with yellow blinders on either side of the face.

Fred watches Nancy serve. Proud.

AT THEIR TABLE - LATER

Nancy sits down next to Fred and Harry.

PASTOR'S WIFE
Harry should do Tulip Time this year! He'd look so handsome.

HARRY
Didn't Pastor Bob say that dancing was the Devil?

NANCY
Not DUTCH Dancing, silly. Just all the other kinds.

Fred watches. Smiling. Under the table, his hand on Nancy's thigh. She starts, recoils. Controls herself, smiles back.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy stares at the ceiling, bored, while Fred screws her. His flabby white body jerks clumsily.

After. He sleeps, curled against her. She stares at the ceiling.

In her eyes, the question: Is this the rest of my life?

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nancy finishes arranging her jewelry in the big jewelry box.

It's her life. Shiny, neat, and dull. The PEARL EARRINGS, back together again.

She peeks underneath one tray. The TWO POLAROIDS she took from Fred's office: Ghost Girl and the Bologna Queen sheet.

Hides them again.

INT. FIELD'S FABRICS - DAY

Nancy and Harry examine the DUTCH COSTUMES hanging from the ceiling. Beautiful, hand-sewn takes on Dutch peasant wear.

AT THE CHECKOUT

The Field's Fabrics lady peers over her glasses at the roll of ELASTIC BAND that Nancy has with her fabrics.

FABRIC NAZI
I sure hope you're not planning to use THIS elastic with THESE fabrics.

NANCY
Well, I sure was.

FABRIC NAZI
Well were you planning to pass inspection? Because you won't. Not with conventional elastic.

She points to a sign: DUTCH ELASTIC KEPT BEHIND COUNTER.

Nancy just stares. Like -- *Seriously?*

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - DAY

Dave eats alone in the grey, lifeless teacher's lounge. Miserable.

On the other side of the room, NANCY eats at an all-female table. Nobody talks to her.

Both of them, trapped, separately.

INT. THE GARAGE - EVENING

Nancy wanders into the garage. Listless. Fred and Harry are hard at work.

Nancy sits down. Surveying the tiny happy town.

Notices -- the house with the SHEET SIGN out front. Identical to the POLAROID, except: on the sheet, instead of BOLOGNA QUEEN it says PROM QUEEN.

Nancy peers at it. Confused -- Why the change?

FRED (O.S.)
New house. Take a look.

She turns. He's built a tiny balsa frame, and now is cutting strips of paper into cedar shingles.

NANCY
Tulip Time steering committee meeting tonight. We'll see about getting you that blue scarf, Har.

A tiny woman in the model town carries groceries to her car. Frozen in place. Perpetually running some pointless errand.

INT. SHITTY LATIN BAR - NIGHT

A miserable hole. Mexican music blasts. Dave slumps into a barstool. The bartender sets a tequila and Tecate in front of him.

DAVE
I didn't order--

BARTENDER
From The Folks.

The Bartender indicates the back corner, where

LATINO GANGSTERS play pool. Gang ink. They all have QUARTER BURNS on their forearms, some haloed in tattoos.

Their leader nods to Dave. Recognition.

And we notice for the first time: Dave has an IDENTICAL QUARTER BURN on his own forearm.

Dave turns away. Rolls down his sleeve to cover his own burn, forces his cash on the bartender. Slams the tequila.

A short Latina in a velour leisure suit sidles up to him.

TRASHY GIRL
Hey, papi. You look niiice.

Dave considers her. Is this is his only alternative?

He turns away, then slams a second nasty tequila.

INT. TULIP TIME CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy makes her case to the sour women of the TULIP TIME STEERING COMMITTEE, including the FABRIC NAZI. A sea of Stepford moms watches.

NANCY
I think if you went to Spankenburg, you'd see people wearing all different scarves. Not just red.

The Fabric Nazi whispers about Nancy to another board member.

QUEEN BEE
Thanks for your input. Hands? The motion fails unanimously. Moving on--

HOCKEY MOM
Can I make a quick point? I hear there's been some question about the use of Dutch elastic in the costumes...

It's a sledge hammer. And Nancy's the nail.

I/E. DOWN THE STREET FROM NANCY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Nancy sits in her car. Parked down the street from her house. Trying not to cry.

The dark house in front of her. Dreading it.

Her CELL PHONE on her lap. She scrolls down to Dave's name. Hesitates for a long moment. Then dials.

EXT. LATIN BAR PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Dave sits alone in his car. Resting his head against the wheel. In a nearby car, the slutty Latina makes out with some other random dude.

Sees his phone ring. Sees who it is. Lets it ring and ring.

NANCY

Waits. Listening to the tinny BRRP-BRRRRRP.

DAVE

Waits til the last moment -- then PICKS UP.

A long beat of silence. Then,

DAVE
Hey.

NANCY has her fingers over her mouth. Silent a moment. Then,

NANCY
Hey.

And the silence that follows says everything. The sound of their breathing on the line takes us to

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

It's so tentative, so fragile -- undressing each other, piece by piece. Delicate with each other.

She's naked, standing so stiff.

DAVE
It's okay.

NANCY
I know. I'm sorry, it's...

DAVE
I know. I know.

He lays her on the bed. Like porcelain.

Kisses her. Then her neck. She GASPS and arches her back as he mouths a nipple.

NANCY
Dave... Dave... God...

She guides him -- and as he eases inside she begins to tremble -- her whole body SHAKING --

And she can barely breathe as he moves so slowly, so lovingly,

Until she BURSTS into tears, and Dave holds her and kisses at the tears until she stops shaking.

NANCY
I'm sorry, I'm sorry, it's just...

DAVE
Shhh... it's okay.

LATER, IN BED

Nancy runs her finger around the quarter-size BURN MARK on Dave's forearm. He searches for an explanation.

DAVE
From a, uh, tea kettle. I was a kid.

NANCY
Young Hhhhhhaa-vee-air.

DAVE
Javier.

NANCY
KHaveeair.

She trills the “r” in a funny way. They laugh.

NANCY
Least I don't call them queser-dillers any more. What's mine?

DAVE
Anamaria.

NANCY
Anamaria and Javier. Gosh, we sound so romantic! Like from a novel.

He laughs. She nestles into his chest.

NANCY
I'll leave him, Dave. I will.

DAVE
You don't have to. Not for me.

NANCY
For ME. It's for me. My life, it's carbon monoxide. You're so comfortable and sleepy you don't even know you're being strangled. They can cast me out, I don't care. At least I'll be ALIVE.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT

Nancy's just about to drive off when Dave comes running out. She rolls down the window.

DAVE
Listen. Fred's trip. I'll follow him. Bring a camera. Like, private-eye style.

NANCY
You can't do that, Dave.

DAVE
Why not? He doesn't know who I am. Look, for Harry. You need Fred to make it not your fault. If there are pictures of him with some girl, he'll have to just slink off and leave us all alone.

NANCY
But Dave, the truth is... Honestly, the cards, the photos... I... I don't even know any more.

DAVE
I thought you <u>knew</u>?

She shrugs helplessly. Her mind in total confusion.

DAVE
I'm gonna go. For you, Nancy. Cause if there's any chance we could get out of this whole thing clean, I gotta go for it.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Nancy gets ready for work. Comes in from the bathroom to see FRED hovering over his packed suitcase. Glum.

FRED
Listen. Nan. Honey. I'm... I'm really sorry about this trip. It's just, I... I get into these patterns, and they're so hard to shake.

NANCY
Hun, what's gotten into you? It's just a trip to Frankenmuth.

A peck on the top of his head. Dismissed.

EXT. HOLLAND TRAIN STATION PARKING LOT - MORNING

DAVE sits in his car. Waiting. Watches out the rear-view as

FRED pulls into the parking lot and heads into the station.

Dave gets out of his car, dressed like a business traveler. Takes a small grip from the seat, follows Fred inside.

INT. HOLLAND TRAIN STATION - MORNING

Dave strides right behind Fred to the TICKET WINDOW.

Leans forward to listen to Fred's order. When Fred leaves:

DAVE
I'll take the exact same thing.

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - MORNING

Dave pretends to watch the tracks. Glances at FRED, who's reading the Detroit Free News on a bench.

The TRAIN pulls into the station. Dave follows Fred on board.

INT. TRAIN - MORNING

Dave sits in an aisle seat, where he can see Fred's arm and the back of his head a few rows ahead.

INT. TRAIN/CHICAGO CENTRAL STATION - DAY

The train pulls into CHICAGO CENTRAL STATION. Fred takes his bag down at the last minute and gets off.

Dave gets off right after him -- just in time. Follows him through the crowded PLATFORM.

INT. EASTBOUND TRAIN - DAY

On a smaller train now. Heading East across Michigan. Flat, fertile land. Fields of corn, huge mounds of sugar beets.

Fred returns to his seat with a microwave cheeseburger and a beer. The Amtrak self-indulgence special.

Dave checks his watch. Then gets up himself and heads to

INT. THE DINING CAR - DAY

Where he takes a cup of coffee from the man behind the counter. The train is pulling into a tiny regional station.

Dave's just mixing the creamer into it when he sees

FRED walking right past the window. With his bag and coat. Heading into the station.

DAVE
Shoot!

BACK IN HIS TRAIN CAR

DAVE
Wait, hold the doors, please!

He grabs his GRIP -- and DIVES out onto the platform just before the doors close.

IN THE STATION

Where he spots FRED at the distant CAR RENTAL BOOTH.

Fred takes a key from the attendant -- and, a moment later, drives off in a nondescript BLACK IMPALA.

INT. CAR RENTAL KIOSK

DAVE rushes into the tiny office.

DAVE
I need a car. Fast.

ATTENDANT
Well for our best rates and speediest service, we should get you signed up for the SpeedyPass Gold Club. Members get SpeedyPass Golden Carpet Service and--

DAVE
Just get me a car. <u>Now</u>.

LATER, Dave takes the keys and the agreement from the Attendant, who's now pissy and tight-lipped.

DAVE
And I need a list of hotels. Every single hotel within ten miles.

The Attendant wordlessly puts a booklet on the countertop.

DAVE
This everything?

ATTENDANT
It's what we have.

DAVE
Okay. And which hotels are down that way? If I turn left?

ATTENDANT
You want full concierge, sign up for SpeedyPass Golden Carpet Service. Otherwise, your car's in the lot.

Oh snap.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Dave has the booklet of hotels open in front of him, and a big pile of quarters. Calling every hotel, one by one.

DAVE
Can you connect me to Fred Vandergroot's room please? Sorry. Thanks.

He crosses off yet another hotel. Dials again.

DAVE
Can you connect me to Fred Vandergroot's room please?

CONCIERGE'S VOICE
Vandergroot... One moment.

Some CLICKS, then the phone RINGS. Dave instantly hangs up.

Circles the hotel in the booklet.

I/E. DAVE'S CAR / HOTEL - DAY

The HOTEL is a Bavarian cottage on steroids.

Dave, in a clunky old rental car, pulls into the parking lot just as FRED drives past in the opposite direction.

DAVE
Shoot.

He pulls a 180, follows FRED

ALL THROUGH FRANKENMUTH:

Driving through the town center. The old Bavarian village, Zehnder's, the Glockenspiel. Like an obese Disney Germany.

Fred pulls in front of a HARDWARE STORE. Emerges a few minutes later with a shopping bag.

IN A SMALL STRIP MALL,

Dave watches Fred emerge from a CLOTHING STORE with some small bags, then go into a RITE-AID.

It's all so mundane.

EXT. STEAK N SHAKE - EVENING

Dave saunters up to FRED'S CAR in the parking lot. Peers through the windows into the BACK SEAT. The half-dozen plastic shopping bags. But he can't see what's inside.

He makes his way around the lot. Until he can see

FRED, inside the crummy strip-mall STEAK N SHAKE. Eating chili and a burger, all alone. Slumped in his booth.

THROUGH DAVE'S ZOOM LENS: Fred drops a chunk of chili on his shirt. The ultimate indignity.

Fred's face, washed out and tired in the blue fluorescents.

Dave watches from the parking lot as Fred dabs at the big grease stain on his shirt. Feeling sorry for him.

DAVE
Poor guy...

INT. NANCY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy and Harry snuggle on the couch. Eating Little Caesar's.

NANCY
This is our little secret, okay?
Don't tell your dad.

And she pulls out the JURASSIC PARK VHS.

NANCY
Hold onto your butts!

LATER

Just the two of them. Happy together. Eating popcorn and watching Jurassic Park.

A scary part. Harry hides his face in Nancy's sweater. She grabs onto him.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Dave reads the sign in the lobby: "ALCON Pharmaceuticals Welcomes its Michigan Optometrists!"

Sits down in the lobby. Peers around a column at

THE CRUMMY LOBBY BAR

Where Fred drinks what looks like an appletini. His third. The chili stain still on his shirt.

Fred pushes himself up to go to the bathroom. Dave hides himself in *East Michigan Magazine*. A thrilling read.

Then -- A HAND on Dave's shoulder. FRED. Looming over him. A little drunk.

FRED
I know you from somewhere. Where do I know you from?

And Dave realizes -- Fred's searching his memory. And he has to intervene before Fred finds the answer.

DAVE
Amtrak, right? 10:34 from Chicago, Northliner from Port Huron?

FRED
Huh. Yeah. Guess that's it.

DAVE
Trains. Love 'em.

As Fred nods and moves off, Dave thinks -- what the hell.

DAVE
You by yourself? Mind if I join you for a drink? Little lonesome, away from the wife and all.

FRED
Well... I'm just going to finish the one I've got. But sure, why not.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Dave signals for the bartender to bring them both fresh drinks. Fred tries to protest.

DAVE
Ah, come on. We're off the rez, we can go a little wild. Sometimes at home, it's like, God, the same old same old same OLD. You know?

FRED
Heh, alright. But it's the last one.

A beat as they sip their cocktails. Fred runs his hands over the formica tabletop.

FRED
Being an optometrist, that wasn't like my dream or anything. I was in school, and my mom... well, my choices were dentistry or optometry.

DAVE
Well, optometry's better than dentistry, right?

Fred shrugs.

FRED
Then I met my wife. Nancy. That energy, that excitement. I thought we'd end up just taking off together. Just, new worlds. You know?

DAVE
Why didn't you?

FRED
Funny thing. I think she liked me for the stability... Kind of a cruel joke, if you think about it.

DAVE
So it's like, there's this whole side of your self you can't share.

FRED
Yes. Exactly. Yes.

DAVE
(shrewdly)
And so you end up with this whole secret, forbidden life.

FRED
... Oof. It's past my bedtime. Conference tomorrow. Beauty sleep.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dave shadows Fred back to his room.

FRED
Night.

Fred closes his door and locks it.

Dave doubles back, listens. He hears Fred pee, then flop into bed.

INT. NANCY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy's CELL PHONE rings. She and Harry are both asleep, cuddled together, on the couch.

INT. DAVE'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dave gets Nancy's voicemail.

DAVE
Nance... I dunno about all this. I almost think... I don't know what to think. Maybe he isn't... anything. Well. Okay. G'night.

Dave sits on the edge of his bed in his boxers. Thinking.

In the bedside drawer, the Gideon's Bible. Inside, an "Index of Life's Problems." He runs down the list:

Where to Find Help When:
- Anxious: Philippians 4:6, 1 Peter 5:6-7
- Backsliding: Psalm 51, 1 John 1:4-9
- Bereaved: Matthew 5:4, II Corinthians 1:3-4...

It goes on and on. But this particular problem isn't there. Go figure.

He dumps the Bible back into the drawer.

INT. THE GARAGE - DAY

Nancy ducks under the table, into the center of the layout.

She's surrounded by the model town. Uses Fred's magnifying glass to examine the HOUSE with the SHEET.

Pulls out the POLAROID. It's uncanny. Everything's identical, except the SHEET: BOLOGNA QUEEN to PROM QUEEN.

Nancy scrutinizes them. This time, she's not letting it go.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - DAY

Dave knocks at Fred's door. No answer. Jimmies the door.

Dave takes in the room. The fanatically neat suitcase -- even Fred's dirty clothes are perfectly folded.

The PLASTIC BAGS of all Fred's purchases. A weird assortment: Electrical wire. Leather gloves. A black duffel bag. Some pillowcases. Fishing line and a fishing knife. And, in the middle of everything else,

DAVE
"Pup-eronis"?

Dave looks inside. It really is a box of DOG TREATS.

Then -- someone BEHIND HIM. He freezes -- turns to see

THE MAID. As embarrassed as he is.

MAID
So solly. I come rater?

DAVE
It's fine, I'm leaving. Thanks.

He hands her two dollars and strides out.

INT. NANCY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Nancy sits at the big iMac on the living room table.

Googling: *Bologna Queen.*

On a notepad, jotting down what she finds: *Yale, Michigan. Bologna Festival. July.*

Then, Googling: *lacey yale michigan bologna queen*

And on an amateurish website, photos of the 2008 Bologna Festival. Riding a huge bologna FLOAT, LACEY HARTNETT, middle-aged, with a big perm and a “BOLOGNA QUEEN” sash.

Lacey looks like a friendly 50-something nurse. Not what Nancy was expecting.

Nancy finds her PHONE NUMBER on YellowPages.com. Dials.

NANCY
Hi, is this Lacey Hartnett?

A long silence.

NANCY
Lacey?

WOMAN'S VOICE
No, she's not here.

NANCY
You sure? I'm a friend of hers.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Is this a crank call?

NANCY
Why would it be? I'm just an old friend. We haven't talked in a while, so. It'd be real nice to connect with her again.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Oh. God.

NANCY
I'm not trying to cause a problem or anything. If you're Lacey, you can say so.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Lacey doesn't live here any more. I'm just the lady who bought the house.

NANCY
Okay, well do you have a new address for her?

WOMAN'S VOICE
Gosh, lady. Don't you read the papers?

NANCY
Well not the Yale ones. I'm over in Holland. Why? What happened?

WOMAN'S VOICE
Well, Lacey Hartnett's gone missing. I mean, she disappeared. Like three years ago. Without a trace.

NANCY
Oh. Did she... Did she run off with a man? Maybe someone from out of town?

WOMAN'S VOICE
No. I don't know. I only read in the papers. They never found the body, but they think she's dead.

NANCY
Oh. Gosh.

The woman's voice trembles.

WOMAN'S VOICE
I'm real sorry to give you the news about your friend. I'm just the lady who bought her house, you know? She seemed like a real nice lady. I mean from the papers.

NANCY
... It's okay. We weren't so close...

Click.

I/E. HOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

Dave sits in his car. Watching FRED chat with the other optometrists. Fred detaches from the group, gets his car.

Dave FOLLOWS him as he pulls onto the road.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Nancy raids her jewelry box, pulling out all her hidden scraps of evidence.

IN THE GARAGE

She puts a sheaf of HOUSE PLANS into her canvas bag.

NANCY
Harry, ready to hit the library?

I/E. PAYPHONE - DAY

Dave watches Fred makes a phone call from a gas-station PAYPHONE. Fred hangs up immediately when someone answers.

DAVE
Weird...

INT. GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Nancy pulls the Ghost Girl picture out of her canvas tote. Examines it. The house in the background.

Barely visible in the background, a green sign: FISHER AVE.

Pulls the matching HOUSE PLANS from the model railroad. They're marked as “REVISIONS 4-26-99.”

The date: then follows it to the MAP: a blue flag on FORT WAYNE, INDIANA, marked “2 x April 1999.”

AT A COMPUTER TERMINAL

On Google Maps. None in Fort Wayne. *"Did you mean: Fisher Avenue, South Paw-Paw, Indiana?"* Clicks it.

Street View.

THE HOUSE.

AT THE REFERENCE DESK,

Nancy dashes off a Local Newspapers Archive request slip. South Paw-Paw Indiana, Yale Michigan, Madison Wisconsin. Shoves it at the librarian.

Glances over at Harry. Oblivious, buried in a book on bees.

I/E. DECKERVILLE ROAD - DAY

DAVE follows Fred into Deckerville, Michigan -- nothing more than a crossroads with a convenience store and a bar.

INT. GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

The librarian returns with boxes of local newspapers.

LIBRARIAN
Keep these in order. We're still microfiching.

Nancy pulls out the YALE OBSERVERS -- like a fast-forward montage of newspapers as she piles them on the tabletop:

- Yale woman missing
- Tearful appeal from Hartnett's family
- Police search forest, reservoir; no leads
- Hartnett “presumed dead,” family still hopeful

EXT. LAKEFRONT DRIVE - DAY

Dave follows Fred along a quiet two-lane road. VACATION HOMES looking onto LAKE HURON beyond.

Most are CLOSED UP for the off-season.

INT. GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Nancy roots through the box from SOUTH PAW-PAW, until:

On the front page, a photo of a DEAD WOMAN. Half-covered in leaves, being retrieved from the forest floor.

It's the GHOST GIRL.

NANCY
My god... Oh my God...

And suddenly, she sees the whole MAP she made of Fred's travels. All those post-it flags... Could they mean...?

I/E. LAKEFRONT COTTAGE - DAY

A small, cedar-shingled lakefront cottage. We recognize it as the new house Fred's building on his train layout.

The neighbors' houses are empty, screened by tall shrubs.

FRED approaches down the long front lawn. A half-dozen YAPPY DOGS spill out of the doggie door.

Fred's ready. He pats them, scatters treats on the grass.

We see all this through DAVE'S ZOOM LENS. *Click-Click-Click.*

A WOMAN opens the cottage door. She's about 45, short hair, jean cutoffs, menthol Kools.

DAVE
Cha-ching...

Dave snaps photos at light speed: Fred shaking the woman's hand -- her slight confusion -- then Fred, bringing his small duffel bag inside.

INT. GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

A strangled MEWING in Nancy's throat as the papers cover the table -- A flood of headlines from all over the Midwest:

Murdered... Missing.... Police searching...
Woman Found Dead in Home... Woman... Unidentified Body...

The long library table is COVERED in newspapers. PHOTOS of the women staring up.... their CORPSES.... their HOUSES....

HARRY (O.S.)
Mom? I finished my book.

NANCY
Harry, get out of here! Go back to your table!

He does. And she realizes --

NANCY
Dave!

HEAD LIBRARIAN
No cell phones in the library!

Nancy ignores her -- heads for the front doors -- RINGING --

NANCY
Come on, Dave. Pick up, pick up...

DAVE'S CELL PHONE

Buzzes on Dave's passenger seat -- but

DAVE isn't there. He's sneaking past the dogs, toward

THE COTTAGE.

Dave peeks through the screen door. A moment of hesitation. Then, what the hell... He steps.

INSIDE.

Camera ready. Through the empty KITCHEN, filled with dog bowls. Dave's feet crunch on spilled dog food.

Camera ready. Into

INT. THE LIVING ROOM

The room is dark, quiet. Filled with cutesy vacation-home knickknacks. An impressive view of the LAKE.

A freighter on the horizon. The setting sun. Beautiful.

Dave listens. HEAVY BREATHING coming from a side room.

He creeps toward it. Camera ready. Alert to every sound.

Through the sliver of open door:

FRED'S BACK, as he leans over the WOMAN. Humping her. Dave snaps a surreptitious photo.

Then he steps closer -- realizing: Fred's PANTS are still on.

One of the DOGS is just outside the door to the bedroom. Lapping at a dark liquid spilling out from the bedroom.

THE DOG laps at the liquid furiously -- the most delicious thing it's ever tasted -- then, panting just like Fred, the dog pushes open the bedroom door with its snout and

DAVE realizes all at once --

The dog is lapping at BLOOD -- flooding the floor, sticky, black-red -- and

FRED isn't humping the woman -- he's panting as he SAWS THROUGH HER NECK with the fishing knife -- her arms bound with fishing line and her head covered by a PILLOWCASE once white but now RED and

The DOG laps blood off Fred's shoes -- it has an erection -- and so does Fred, if we care to notice, as the thin fishing knife slices through the fine flesh and

DAVE is too stunned to photograph-- to do anything but STARE--

But even as he does, the setting sun makes the reflections in the windows more visible, and FRED looks past the woman's flopping, dying body to see DAVE's reflection in the glass.

And for a moment neither one reacts -- just locking eyes in the reflection --

Then the DOG sees its mistress's hand dangling down and YOWLS -- and in that instant of distraction

DAVE grabs a HAND-CARVED WOODEN GIRAFFE by the bedroom door and SWINGS just as

FRED brings up the knife to LUNGE at DAVE -- the giraffe snaps at the neck, just as a real giraffe would, a testament to the verisimilitude of the carving -- and the headless giraffe and the bloody knife both go flying --

And they both LUNGE for the knife -- and DAVE gets it, but FRED has the momentum and TACKLES Dave -- they roll into

THE LIVING ROOM --

The red sunset burning through the windows, the waves red-peaked and the WRESTLING strangely silent -- the two men barely breathing as they grapple -- until

FRED lets out a feral animal WAIL -- his hands in plastic gloves and his cuffs and ankles banded with rubber bands -- his yellowed teeth BARED and he

BITES Dave -- HARD -- on the SHOULDER -- there's blood -- but

DAVE recovers -- Brings up the knife and STABS FRED -- in the upper arm, just a graze, but Fred HOWLS -- pulls back --

Then Fred's at the FIREPLACE, going for the POKER -- gets the SHOVEL instead and CRACKS it down on DAVE'S BACK --

Fred's a bloody beast going for the kill -- SWINGS the shovel down -- Dave DIVES and the shovel SPARKS the stone floor and

FRED flings the shovel at Dave and runs into

THE KITCHEN

The KNIFE BLOCK -- and he's drawing the big BUTCHER'S KNIFE from the wooden block as

DAVE

TACKLES him -- and Fred falls THROUGH THE SCREEN DOOR,

OUTSIDE --

But the knives go flying out the door too and

FRED gets his fingers around a knife handle and he SWINGS -- makes contact -- but it's just the SHARPENING STEEL and

DAVE's unharmed and they're GRAPPLING -- rolling down toward the LAKE -- and finally FRED gets his fingers around a STEAK KNIFE and DAVE, no choice now, takes the fish knife, LUNGES --

And FRED stares down at the knife in his BELLY and at his hands and the blood pouring out and then, wide-eyed, at DAVE, who's so shocked that all he can think to say is

DAVE
Gosh. I'm sorry. Gosh.

But FRED is UP now -- on his feet, RUNNING down the lawn toward the RETAINING WALL and the LAKE beyond --

The SIX TINY DOGS pour after him, excited, yapping -- their hair in bows, faces happy with this strange game until

FRED kicks the lead dog in the face, sends it airborne -- and then disappears down the WOODEN STAIRCASE. The dogs line the retaining wall, barking into the DARKNESS.

DAVE leans against the house. The screen door is a twisted mesh net on the ground and then Dave VOMITS everywhere -- but then he realizes --

DAVE
Shit. Shit!

He picks the KNIFE back up and RUNS to the retaining wall --

The LAKEFRONT BEACH stretches in both directions -- EMPTY and DARK.

On the WOODEN STAIRCASE down, Fred's BLOODY HANDPRINTS.

And Dave doesn't want to, but knows he has to FOLLOW -- down

DOWN THE SANDY BEACH

At the FIRE PIT -- one rock OVERTURNED -- and BLOOD.

Dave SPRINTS down the beach in that direction -- But after that first spoor, there's no trace. NOTHING.

Dave runs and runs until he can't run any more. He doubles over, wheezing for breath at the end of a long spit of sand.

DAVE
Fred? Fred, you out there?

Movement. An EYE in the reeds. Dave fingers the KNIFE in his jacket pocket.

DAVE
Fred? I can help you. You're gonna die otherwise. I can help you.

Dave steps toward the eye and --

WHIP-WHP-WHP-WHP! A huge BLUE HERON explodes from the reeds and flaps off into the night.

In the dim moonlight, the realization that Fred could be ANYWHERE.

BACK IN HIS CAR

Dave SLAMS the door. Slaps the locks down. His hands shake. How did all this just happen?

He closes his eyes. Deep breath. When he opens them, sees:

Notices his phone. Sixteen missed calls from NANCY.

Then notices: FRED'S RENTAL CAR. Tucked away at the roadside. Right by the house.

He looks from FRED'S CAR... to NANCY'S CALLS... to the HOUSE... And realizes:

DAVE
They'll connect it. Her... Fred... Nancy... They'll connect the dots...

He looks around. Thinking. A sinking awareness of what needs to happen.

BACK IN THE HOUSE

Dave steels himself. Steps back into the CRIME SCENE.

Gathers up all the items from Fred's BLACK DUFFEL. Pulls on a pair of Fred's LATEX GLOVES.

Cuts the pillowcase off the dead woman, the fishing line from her wrists. Choking back the vomit.

Seals everything into the black duffel.

Wipes down door handles, the giraffe, everything he touched.

The DOGS follow him through the house. Barking and whimpering alternately.

DAVE
You guys'll need some food, huh?

In the kitchen, he opens a big bag of kibble and dumps it all onto the floor.

Wipes down the door handle on his way OUT.

I/E. DAVE'S CAR - NIGHT

Dave DRIVES down the long riverfront road. At a crawl, because he's TOWING FRED'S CAR by a piece of rope.

LATER

Crawling on. Through the interminable East Michigan farmland.

EXT. A CLOSED PRICE CHOPPER - NIGHT

Dave PUSHES Fred's car into an out-of-the-way parking spot.

At the payphone in the lot, he thumbs through the phonebook. Looking something up.

INT. NANCY'S HOUSE - THE GARAGE - NIGHT

Nancy stands in the center of the train layout.

All the tiny houses.

Nancy's matched each one to a NEWSPAPER CLIPPING --

NANCY
Trophies... these are trophies...

The whole room spins around her.

She nearly jumps out of her skin when

HARRY
Mom?

NANCY
Don't come in here! Harry, go upstairs and get a suitcase. Okay? Pack your clothes.

HARRY
Why? Which ones?

NANCY
Any ones. Just go!

When he leaves, she CALLS DAVE. Goes to voicemail. Again.

NANCY
Gosh. Gosh gosh gosh!

The possibilities running through her head. All the horrible possibilities.

Then she takes a deep breath. Dials again.

FRED'S VOICEMAIL.

NANCY
Hey honey! Just wanted to check in with you. I miss you, hope your trip is going okay. Looking forward to getting you back here. Love you!

And she whisks all the clippings into hiding.

ON THE TV

Jurassic Park. The water glass quivers as the T-REX gets closer -- Thump. Thump. Thump.

She turns it off.

INT. TINY RURAL HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Dave talks to the sleepy NIGHT NURSE.

DAVE
It's my brother, you know? Said he was going to the hospital.

NIGHT NURSE
This here's the hospital. If we're talking about Deckerville. Which we are.

DAVE
There isn't some little clinic or nothing?

NIGHT NURSE
This ain't Port Huron or some big city, you know. We're talking about Deckerville here.

EXT. HOSPITAL PARKING LOT / DAVE'S CAR - NIGHT

Dave sits in the parking lot. Watching nervously.

A CALL from Nancy. He ignores it. The HOURS tick by. Until

DAWN.

The sun rising slow and clean over the flat fields. And the relief washes over him in a trembling wave --

DAVE
Jesus. Jesus. Dead. He's dead...

He almost sobs in relief.

Finally, he calls NANCY. Holding himself together.

DAVE
I'm okay. Yeah, I know. Everything. I <u>saw</u> it, Nancy. I'm taking care of it. You gotta trust me.

INT. FRED'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Dave pops the door to Fred's hotel room.

Clears it out, wipes it down.

INT. THE FRONT DESK

Dave lays the keys on the desk.

DAVE
My friend asked me to check him out too. He's in room 215.

EXT. STATE FOREST - ROADSIDE - DAY

Dave splashes gasoline onto a pile of ALL OF FRED'S STUFF. In a ditch by the roadside. Lights it. Watches it burn.

INT. NANCY'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY

Nancy peeks through the window -- sees it's DAVE.

NANCY
OthankGod--

She unlocks the door -- lock after lock.

Lets Dave in. He stares at the KITCHEN KNIFE in her hand.

A moment where they just stare at each other.

DAVE
You gonna put that down?

NANCY
Can I?

DAVE
He'll never be back. Ever. I promise you.

She comes forward to hug him -- but he pulls back.

DAVE
Don't. I gotta clean off.

IN THE BATHROOM

Dave strips down. SCRUBS his hands, his face, in the sink.

Nancy paces. Scratching at her forearms. A wreck.

NANCY
Is he-- Is he...
(mouthing the word)
--dead?

DAVE
God. No. No! C'mere. I'm not capable of that. I'm not. I-- I'm just upset about... Listen. I caught him. In the act.

NANCY
Oh God Dave--

DAVE
I know. It was... I never seen...

Trying to hide his emotional fragility. Unsuccessfully.

NANCY
I been thinking about it, Dave. Those women, they got families, you know? We gotta tell the police.

DAVE
No. No way. No police.

NANCY
We tell them everything, the truth--

DAVE
Sure. Then they start asking why I was there. Why I didn't stop it. About <u>you</u> -- how long you knew, why you never said anything...

NANCY
We can tell them the truth. We didn't do anything wrong!

DAVE
Maybe they'll believe it. But the CNN won't. You think Nancy Grace will leave it be? You'll be crucified! This is Harry's childhood we're talking about. You want his picture on 60 darned Minutes?

NANCY
Someone'll make the connection anyway, figure it out, and then--

DAVE
They WON'T. I <u>PROMISE</u> you. They <u>WON'T</u>. I fixed it.
(taking her hands)
Nancy, I fixed it so we can get out, *clean*. Fred didn't see me at the house.
(MORE)

DAVE (CONT'D)
I sat him down later, in the hotel. Confronted him. I had photos, evidence, everything. And we talked it out.

NANCY
You did?

DAVE
He agreed, for Harry's sake. To disappear and never come back. I got everything in a safe deposit box now, and he knows, if any of us ever see him again, or if anything happens to me or to you or Harry, the police get the key. It's over.

NANCY
...But Dave-- is it okay now?

A long hug. They both desperately need it. Need more, but--

DAVE
It's okay now, Nancy. This is what you wanted, right?

And the question hangs there.

INT. HARRY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Harry's sitting on his bed, holding his suitcase. Scared.

HARRY
Who's that downstairs? Is it dad?

NANCY
Harry. This is hard to tell you. But your dad decided he needed some time by himself. For a while, anyway. Maybe a long time.

A long silence. Harry processes this. A noise downstairs.

HARRY
Who is that, then?

NANCY
Dave Delgado. He's a friend of mom's. A good friend.

Harry just sits there. Clutching his pillow. As Nancy's about to leave--

HARRY
Is everything going to be okay? Do we still have to be scared?

NANCY
Oh, honey. Come here...

INT. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Dave spreads sheets, blankets, pillows on the couch.

DAVE
It's better for Harry this way. For now.

NANCY
You can shower upstairs if you want.

They stand there. Across the room from each other. Unsure of the rules for their relationship.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dave comes out of the bathroom. Freshly showered. Notices HARRY, watching him through his open bedroom door.

HARRY
(off the PJ bottoms)
Those are my dad's.

DAVE
I know. That okay?

HARRY
Doesn't matter what I say.

DAVE
Sure it does. You're the man of the house now.

HARRY
Won't... won't he be coming back?

DAVE
Harry-- I--
(coming into Harry's room)
Man to man?

HARRY
Yeah. Man to man.

DAVE
He won't. It's better that way, even if you can't understand now.

HARRY
(hiding the pain)
Okay. I guess... you can use his PJs then.

DOWNSTAIRS - THE NEXT MORNING

Dave opens the blinds to look out on the perfect lawn, the bright tulip beds. The DAWN CHORUS from the woods behind the house. *Peace*.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Nancy and Harry come down in their pajamas to find DAVE making them breakfast. Harry pokes at his huevos rancheros suspiciously.

HARRY
What is this stuff?

DAVE
Salsa. Just try it.

Harry takes a tiny, tiny bite. His face lights up.

HARRY
Mom, why didn't you ever make this?

A few minutes later, they're LAUGHING together. A family.

I/E. FREDERICK MEIJER GARDENS - JUNGLE HOUSE - A FEW DAYS LATER

Dave, Nancy, and Harry surrounded by trees. Nancy leans over, whispers in Dave's ear:

NANCY
Can we be Anamaria and Javier again?

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - DAY

The sunlight POURS through the windows, illuminating their bodies as they strip each other naked.

A strong, silent moment. Holding, inhaling each other.

The SEX is a wave of bright relief washing over them.

Afterwards, they lie wrapped together. Quietly. At peace.

NANCY
We could be a family. A real FAMILY.

She pokes the ROUND BURN MARK on Dave's forearm. Kisses it.

He smiles down at her. And the bedroom glows.

INT. NANCY'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

A few days later. Harry puts on his big WOODEN SHOES, practices his Dutch Dance as Dave and Nancy watch. Harry's gotten pretty good, his loud STOMPING mostly in rhythm now.

BRRING-BRING! The phone rings. Dave glances at the caller ID. It's SPEEDY CAR RENTAL.

Panic. Dave grabs the phone and dashes into

THE KITCHEN

RENTAL GUY
Mister Vandergroot, this is--

DAVE
Yessir -- I'm real sorry, but I had a family emergency, had to leave the car at a Price Chopper in--

RENTAL GUY
Well, not any more it isn't! I'm looking at it right out my window. JCR-143! I was just calling to thank you for your business.

DAVE
... Oh. And... the keys?

RENTAL GUY
Got them right here in my hand! Heck, sounds like you got yourself a real guardian angel there!

Dave goes pale.

Holy. Shit.

BACK IN THE LIVING ROOM

Dave sinks into the chair. Ashen.

NANCY
Who was it?

DAVE
Nobody. Telemarketers.

Harry dances on. An ominous storm of sound.

EXT. NANCY'S HOUSE - EVENING

Dave stands outside the house. Surveying the darkness. Watching. A deep terror creeping over him.

He STARTLES as Nancy puts her arms around his shoulders.

NANCY
You wanna come upstairs? Javier?

DAVE
Not, uh. Not tonight. I got something I gotta take care of.

Nancy watches, confused, as Dave heads to his car.

EXT. BODEGA - NIGHT

Dave approaches a corner bodega. A drug corner, held down by a half-dozen Latino toughs.

A couple of SLANGERS move to intercept Dave. He shows them the QUARTER BURN on his arm. They glance at the BANGER on the steps, who nods. They stand aside.

Dave approaches the Banger. One SLANGER circles him in a low-rider bicycle. Hamburger tattoo on his calf.

BANGER
J-spot. Damn. Put your face on a milk carton, yo.

SLANGER
Homes too good for The Folks until he needs something.

DAVE
Hey. We just took different paths, B. Not better and worse. Just different.

SLANGER
Don't fucking condescend to me! Bitch leaves The Folks couple years, thinks he's Edward James Olmos. All inspirational and shit.

BANGER
Hey. Chill. We businessmen, right?

AROUND THE CORNER

The Slanger shoves a PAPER BAG into Dave's hands.

SLANGER
Now I KNOW you gonna keep your mouth shut, homes.

DAVE
Dimes?

SLANGER
Full up. You want more, you hit the Wal-Mart, yo.

The Slanger flashes a peace sign and pedals off.

INSIDE DAVE'S CAR

He opens the paper bag.

Inside, a chrome .22-CALIBER PISTOL.

He conceals it inside his pants.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dave sneaks in. All quiet, lights out. He makes up the couch as his bed.

Nancy pads into the room. Watches him from the doorway.

NANCY
I thought you were going to sleep upstairs tonight.

DAVE
Well, you know, Harry n'all.

NANCY
What's that mean? What's going on with you, Dave?

DAVE
Nuthin. Everything's fine.

NANCY
This is “fine”? You know Harry's having a rough time since you told him his dad wasn't coming back.

DAVE
He asked me straight out. Maybe it's time to be honest with the kid.

NANCY
Well you're the one who won't come upstairs! How honest is that?

A tense stand-off. Then Nancy stomps upstairs.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Nancy lies awake. Catches a whiff of something. Follows it to a COLOGNE BOTTLE.

She gives it a spritz. The smell takes her back.

NANCY
Fred...

A moment of missing him. His empty half of the bed.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Dave stands over the train layout.

The Lakeshore COTTAGE is there. It's incredible. Totally accurate. There are even miniature dogs playing on the lawn.

Dave shivers.

INT. GARAGE/HALLWAY - DAY

Dave pries the Amtrak signs from the door. Secures the outside garage door with a Kryptonite bike lock.

Installs a stout PADLOCK on the inner garage door.

Locks the garage shut. Sealing the train set in.

EXT. HOLLAND HIGH SCHOOL / DOWNTOWN - A FEW DAYS LATER

The whole town is preparing for the TULIP TIME FESTIVAL.

Nancy DRIVES SLOWLY, watching everything:

Chairs being arranged in perfect rows around the bandstand.

Out behind the high school, the marching band is practicing furiously, blasting Dutch songs.

By the CHURCH, Dutch Dancers practice their steps.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOLYARD - AFTER SCHOOL

Nancy spies Harry in the back corner of the playground. Talking to someone--to himself? Nancy can't tell.

NANCY
Harry? Harry, come on!

Harry turns and runs to her.

As he does, Nancy glimpses A SHADOW disappearing into the trees at the edge of the playground.

Huh. Must've been just a trick of the light.

INT. NANCY'S CAR - DAY

Driving home.

HARRY
I saw dad today. He came by the recess yard after school.

NANCY
Harry. I know this is a hard time, and you have a great imagination--

HARRY
I'm not lying! And I'm not an idiot!

NANCY
Okay! Enough!

Harry sulks. Nancy drives on.

EXT. NANCY'S HOUSE - DAY

They pull into the driveway.

NANCY
Wait a sec, Harry. I know you miss your dad. But it's not mommy's fault. It's not because of you or me. It's because of <u>him</u>.

HARRY
...Can I get out now?

She sighs. Harry stomps inside.

When Nancy gets out, a FLOODLIGHT clicks on. She stares.

The whole house is now rigged with new MOTION-SENSOR LIGHTS.

IN THE BACK YARD

She circles the house until she finds DAVE, setting a LADDER against the side of the house. Installing sensors and lights.

NANCY
Dave, what's all this? Weren't you feeling sick?

DAVE
Thought it couldn't hurt.

He shrugs. Climbs up the ladder with a floodlight.

Nancy notices the BULGE at the small of his back. Under his shirt. She can't tell what it is--just that it's suspicious.

INT. THE FRONT DOOR - DAY

Nancy fiddles with the BRAND-NEW DEADBOLTS on the front door. Peels the transparent plastic off of one.

The GARAGE DOOR. New locks there too. Meanwhile, the infernal CLOMPING of Harry's wooden shoes as he practices.

Amongst all the noise, the tiny HUM of the electric trains. Just a trick of the ear?

HARRY
Mom?

She startles.

HARRY
You wanna watch? I think I got it.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Dave moves the ARMCHAIR to face the DOOR. A view of the front yard through the windows. His nighttime sentry-post.

Fishes the pistol from his waistband. Rests it on his knee.

INT. NANCY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy puts on her nightgown in the lonely bedroom.

Out her window, a GLIMPSE of -- SOMEONE, down in the street. Watching the house.

But when she goes to look--he's gone. Just the empty street.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Nancy comes down. Sits on the couch.

DAVE
(off Nancy's look)
Can't sleep.

NANCY
You know Harry says he saw his dad at school today. There's no chance that--

The hair on Dave's neck stands on end.

DAVE
No. None. Didn't I promise you?

Dave surreptitiously pushes the pistol under the chair cushion as she approaches.

NANCY
Because if-- I don't think I could deal if--

DAVE
He knows, if he comes anywhere in the STATE, he's going to jail. He knows it. I *promise*. On my *life*.

Nancy comes and sits on the arm of the chair.

NANCY
You know, this isn't how I imagined this. I thought it'd be...simpler.

DAVE
Yeah. Well. When there's blood involved. Nothing's simple.

NANCY
Is-- is there anything you need to tell me, Dave?

DAVE
Just... that I love you.

It was a serious, sincere question. And he just blew it off.

Nancy nods. Hurt. Heads back upstairs.

Dave reaches under the cushion. Takes the pistol back out.

LATER THAT NIGHT

Dave comes awake just in time to see the MOTION-SENSOR LIGHTS turn OFF.

Shit shit shit. He pulls the pistol from its nylon holster. The click of the SAFETY lever loud in the silence.

He sits stock still. No movement. No sound. Just the light from "Jesus is Lord."

At the farthest edge of his perception, the faintest *shhhhk... shhhhk... shhhk...*

Follows the noise to

THE GARAGE DOOR.

Where the new padlock is OPEN. The door AJAR.

The *shhhhk...shhhhk...shhhk* of the RUNNING TRAINS. Dave's hair stands on end.

INSIDE

The lights are off. But the TRAIN IS ON. All the tiny houses are LIT UP from inside.

The TRAINS circle the track, lights on and steam puffing.

As one of the trains swings round a bend, its headlight suddenly illuminates

HARRY. Sitting in the middle of the train set, back to Dave.

Dave jumps out of his skin. Shoves the pistol away.

DAVE
Jesus. Harry. You really shouldn't be in here.

Harry doesn't turn. The *clack* of the trains orbiting him.

HARRY
Can you keep a secret?

DAVE
Yeah, buddy. I can keep a secret.

HARRY
My dad was here. He said he'll come to my dance. He said he wouldn't miss it for the world. But you can't tell Mom.

The trains' headlights throw eerie shadows over everything. A bead of sweat on Dave's upper lip.

DAVE
Are-- are you sure you weren't dreaming, bud?

HARRY
I know the difference.

Harry turns the dial. The trains slow, then stop. In one of the headlight beams, Dave notices --

Out in front of the cedar-shingled cottage, there's a CAR PARKED. The same color and model as DAVE'S RENTAL CAR.

A tiny MAN sitting inside with a camera. His clothes exactly like DAVE'S.

DAVE
Was-- was that there before? Harry?

But Harry's gone.

INT. HARRY'S ROOM - DAY

A few days later. Harry fusses with his DUTCH COSTUME. He looks like a fairy-tale Hansel. Wants to get it perfect.

EXT. HOLLAND TOWN CENTER - DAY

TULIP TIME is in full bloom. The Mayor leads the SWEEPING OF THE STREETS, pushing a broom. Behind him, a brigade of girls in DUTCH COSTUMES with PUSH-BROOMS and WOODEN SHOES.

Harry notices CANDY among the sweepers. He waves. She smiles at him, then averts her gaze when she notices Nancy.

OUTSIDE THE AUDITORIUM

Nancy watches the POLICE harass a group of loitering Latino GANGSTERS.

As the police move them along, she notices:

All the GANGSTERS have QUARTER BURNS on their forearms. Some haloed with tattoos.

Just like Dave has.

HARRY
C'mon, mom! We're gonna be late!

She's pulled along through the crowd. But her mind is working. Trying to understand what she saw...

INT. AUDITORIUM - BACKSTAGE - DAY

Harry and the other kids line up for costume inspection. Two old biddies work the line like drill sergeants.

They send one little girl away SOBBING. Non-reg klompen.

The biddies arrive at Harry. Whisper to each other.

OLD INSPECTOR
Check the elastic...

The Inspector rolls back Harry's cuffs. She's disappointed to find that the elastic is, in fact, Dutch.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Dave keeps glancing around. Scanning the crowd. His hand on the PISTOL in his pocket.

Nancy puts her hand on Dave's knee to stop it bouncing.

NANCY
Relax. He's gonna do fine.

ON THE STAGE

Applause as the curtain opens to reveal the YOUNG DANCERS. Thirty kids in identical costumes, with big wooden shoes.

Nancy waves at Harry. He smiles out at her and Dave.

The MUSIC begins, and the dancers begin to SING:

DANCERS
Tulips are blooming
In Holland, Michigan,
Tulips bright-colored and gay...

AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

Harry comes out for his bow, and Nancy gives a little WHOOP.

Up on the stage, Harry waves to them, then scans the crowd. Looking for his dad. His face LIGHTS UP.

Dave blanches -- WHEELS AROUND -- and for an instant, he catches a glimpse of the TOP OF FRED'S HEAD -- or is it?

Dave gets up to look, but the man DISAPPEARS into the crowd.

DAVE
Excuse me, sorry --

Dave LEAPS over the other parents toward the aisle --

NANCY
Dave, what're you doing?

IN THE BACK OF THE AUDITORIUM

Dave pushes through the parents flocking to the stage -- desperately searching for his ghostly adversary.

NANCY AND HARRY

Work their way toward the exit.

Nancy suddenly stops. Smells the air in the back of the auditorium. An old, familiar scent.

NANCY
Oh God. His cologne... Harry, was--

HARRY
Just like he said he would!

She GRABS Harry's arm and pulls him --

OUTSIDE

Into the insane TRIBAL DRUMMING of a THOUSAND WOODEN SHOES on the concrete.

DAVE finds himself in the thick CROWDS watching

THE TULIP TIME PARADE

THOUSANDS of husky high-school DUTCH DANCERS in wooden shoes, DANCING in pinwheels down the street.

A glimpse of FRED'S BACK through the crowd -- Dave CHASES after him --

The NOISE is OVERWHELMING -- the music, the clomping -- Dave hops up to see over the heads --

PUSHES through the people -- His HAND on the PISTOL -- He loses sight of Fred-- A MARCHING BAND blares past --

Dave, turning, reeling around in the thick crowd, searching -- And suddenly FRED IS RIGHT THERE -- his BACK to Dave --

Dave pulls the PISTOL from his pocket -- His moment, his one chance -- the DRUMS and the SHOES so loud --

Just a few yards now -- Sweat pouring from him -- A man steps aside, a CLEAR SHOT -- But then --

NANCY
(behind him)
DAVE! What's going on, Dave?

And FRED hears too -- sees DAVE, sees the GUN -- and a moment where the men lock eyes through the crowd before

NANCY
Dave?!

Dave's distracted for a split second -- just long enough for

FRED

To melt away into the crowd.

NANCY

Pushes Harry behind her because

SHE SEES THE GUN in Dave's hand-- Color drains from her face--

DAVE
He's here. Come on, we have to go!

And suddenly it's all reversed -- Fred is somewhere in the crowd, following --

DAVE
We'll go -- we'll go in the car, right now --

Dave pulls Nancy through the crowd, glancing behind them, terrified -- rushing into

THE PARKING LOT

Nancy, the FURY growing inside her, mixed up with the fear --

NANCY
(off the PISTOL)
You had that in my house? Around my SON?!?

DAVE
You don't understand, Nancy--

NANCY
Darned right I don't understand! Because if it happened like you TOLD me, like you PROMISED--

DAVE
I'll explain, but we gotta go --

NANCY
No. Me and Harry are gonna go. You can follow. I'm not gonna have that weapon in my car!

DAVE
What are you saying?

NANCY
I dunno, Dave, where should I start? With THIS? I know what this is!

She pulls his jacket sleeve up to reveal the QUARTER BURN.

DAVE
It was a long time ago--

NANCY
The lie wasn't! None of the lies were, Dave!

And she jumps in her car and PEELS OUT.

Dave runs to his car, jumps in, and FOLLOWS.

In the rush, neither one sees the GREY METAL BOX affixed inside the back fender of Nancy's car.

EXT. SLEEPING BEAR MOTEL - DAY

A small vacation motel on the shore of Lake Michigan. A wooded parking lot on one side, the DUNES on the other.

INT. SLEEPING BEAR MOTEL - RECEPTION - DAY

The chunky receptionist looks askance at Nancy.

RECEPTIONIST
It's the same price for lakefront. We're famous for our views.

She points to a sign: a picture of a bear drinking coffee under the words “We're FAMOUS for our VIEWS.”

NANCY
I don't want lakefront. Just get me something on the lot side, okay? And can I use that computer?

The ancient Windows 95 PC in the corner of the lobby.

AT THE COMPUTER

Nancy visits the COOK COUNTY DoJ website. Browsing mugshots.

She searches: David Delgado. No results.

Remembers. Types: Javier Delgado.

And DAVE'S MUGSHOT appears. Fifteen years younger, razor-sharp eyes and facial hair. A hard man.

Nancy shudders.

Prints the screen.

RECEPTIONIST
That's a dollar a page!

Nancy snatches the pages and her room key.

NANCY
Bill me.

INT. NANCY'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

The view of the parking lot wipes to BLACK as Nancy pulls the curtains closed. Triple-locks the door.

She spreads out the prints. We see: *...Charge of ASSAULT WITH A DEADLY WEAPON... GRAND LARCENY... ATTEMPTED MURDER...*

NANCY
Lied...

Criminal affiliations: Low-level member, Los Pueblos gang.

I/E. DAVE'S CAR - DRIVING - DAY

DAVE curses under his breath. He's lost Nancy's car.

Then -- catches a glimpse of it in the motel parking lot. Squeals a u-turn.

INT. NANCY'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Nancy sits on the bed next to Harry. Staring.

Then, a moment later, she's SOBBING.

NANCY
If I'd never looked... I coulda been happy forever...

HARRY
We can, mom. We can be happy. Is this because of me? Because of Candy?

NANCY
No, baby, no... I just wish we could go back...

HARRY
You mean like dad would come back?

NANCY
(clings to him)
Oh, love bug...

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

Dave parks out of sight.

INT. MOTEL RECEPTION - DAY

DAVE
The lady who just checked in asked me to get the room adjoining.

CHUNKY RECEPTIONIST
That's the side we're famous for!

She points up at the sign.

INT. DAVE'S MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Dave checks out the room. It opens right onto the SLEEPING BEAR DUNES. The flat expanse of Lake Michigan beyond.

Dave opens the CONNECTING DOOR to Nancy's room.

It's a double door, so you have to open both sides to get through. Nancy's door is still closed.

INT. NANCY'S ROOM - DAY

DAVE'S VOICE
Hey Nancy? Open up, it's me.

Nancy stares at the door. Frozen. Terrified.

NANCY
Dave? Harry and I are going away. To Canada. To disappear.
(beat)
Maybe it'd be best if you went away. Just for a while.

INTERCUTTING between DAVE and NANCY, on opposite sides of the thin door. Just inches from each other, but so far apart.

DAVE
I can't. I... I tried to kill him, Nancy. Out in Deckerville.

NANCY
Oh my God--

DAVE
It just happened. I didn't plan it, didn't mean to.

NANCY
You didn't think to tell me?! My God, that's why you said no police--

DAVE
I thought he was dead! And we'd never have to worry. Nancy, I was... I was falling apart. I don't know how to... hold it all inside. That's not the kind of guy I am.

NANCY
What IS, Dave? What kind of stand-up guy *are* you?

She slips the printouts under the door. His rap sheet.

DAVE
Let me come in. Let me explain.

Silence.

He SLAMS his hand on the door.

Nancy quietly props a chair under the connecting door's knob. Dave paces. Mad. Then calms himself down. Thinking.

DAVE
You'll need your passports, right? If you want to go to Canada. From the house. Someone has to go back.
(off her silence)
You're safe here, for now. I'll go. Just tell me where they are. Let me prove myself.

Nancy thinks for a long moment. The dresser, pushed against the connecting door. The papers, halfway under the door.

NANCY
In the kitchen. Drawer next to the stove. There's a folder. Harry's birth certificate too.

DAVE
I'll be back, then. Don't open the door for anyone else. Don't answer the phone. Just lie low.

His hand on the door. Her silence.

He wants so much more. But this is all he's gonna get.

EXT. NANCY'S HOUSE - DAY

Dave circles the house. Watching the windows, the neighbors. For any sign. For anything.

Then KICKS IN THE DOOR. Gun in hand.

INT. THE HALLWAY - DAY

Dark. Silent.

Listening. Is it a trap?

INT. THE KITCHEN - DAY

The FRIDGE clicks on behind him -- Dave nearly jumps out of his skin. Listens for a moment. Then goes to the drawer.

INSIDE, piles of junk. Old batteries, rubber bands. Old PHOTOS of Nancy, Fred, and Harry. At the beach. They look so happy.

In the back, an envelope. Passports, birth certificates. He checks them -- Fred's is there too.

INT. NANCY'S HOUSE - DAY

Dave, on his way out with the passports.

He notices -- all the TRAIN SIGNS are back on the GARAGE DOOR. The lock is open.

And he knows he shouldn't go in. But he can't help himself.

INT. NANCY'S ROOM - DAY

Nancy sits by the door. Waiting for something. She doesn't even know what.

Harry sits on the bed. Reading aloud, slowly and not understanding, from the Gideon's Bible.

HARRY
"He is coming! Every eye will see him, even those who pierced him. On his account all the tribes of the earth shall wail. So it is to be."

INT. THE TRAIN ROOM - DAY

The door to the garage CREEEAKS open.

The garage is pitch-black. Dave steps inside. Shivering. Maybe from the cold air. Maybe from what he sees. Because

ON THE TRAIN LAYOUT

There's a new building.

It's the SLEEPING BEAR MOTEL.

Down to the last detail. The room where they're staying. Nancy's car and Dave's car, both parked out front.

And as Dave gets closer, he sees

FIGURES:

Out in front of the motel room, a figurine of DAVE stands over the BLEEDING BODY of a WOMAN. A tiny silver nub in his hand that must be a gun.

Out behind the motel, a laughing BOY in Dutch costume runs into the arms of his DAD.

And on a nearby street, a second DAVE FIGURINE leaves his car and boards a NORTHBOUND TRAIN at the STATION. Escaping.

And in the middle of it all, a POST-IT NOTE. Written on it:

"*My Offer*."

EXT. THE LAKEFRONT DUNES

The expansive, shocking beauty of the pale dunes. As the sun sinks lower.

INT. NANCY'S ROOM - DAY

The PHONE rings.

NANCY
Wait, Harry--

HARRY
Hello? Oh, hi! ... She's pretty sad. ... Sure.
(to Nancy)
It's dad.

A long beat before she takes the offered receiver. Terror.

FRED

Holds his cell phone to his ear.

FRED
You understand, Nancy. I'm trying to save us. Save our family.

INTERCUTTING WITH

NANCY
I am too, Fred.

FRED
He found his way out. His only way to stay alive.
(beat)
Do you understand me?

NANCY
What's his way out, Fred?

FRED
I'm telling you this for Harry's sake. And because I love you, Nan.

NANCY
Fred--?

FRED
He goes to jail. For murder one. And I don't mean me.

NANCY
...I don't believe you, Fred.

FRED
He left me there to DIE, Nancy. That's who he is.

NANCY

Realizing -- she's totally alone.

NANCY
Fred--

FRED

Hangs up.

We pull back to reveal: Fred's in a CAR. IN THE MOTEL LOT.

Watching EVERYTHING. Like it's in miniature on his table.

DAVE

Roars into the motel lot. Hides his car out of sight.

Runs to Nancy's car. Looking around. Freaked out. Squats down and feels under the car.

NANCY

Watches out the PEEPHOLE. From her POV, she can't see what Dave's doing -- only that he's messing with her car.

DAVE

Finds the TRACKER. A small grey box with a nubby antenna, attached inside Nancy's fender.

Switches it off, pockets it.

NANCY

Through the peephole, sees

DAVE, striding toward her. He cocks his PISTOL, then HIDES it back in his jacket.

NANCY
Oh... God...

She glances at Harry, on the bed. Flings open the door to DAVE'S ROOM.

NANCY
Harry, come here --

THUMP-THUMP. Dave's knock at the door.

DAVE'S VOICE
Nancy, open up!

The room door handle jiggles. Locked. But flimsy.

She shoves Harry through into Dave's LAKE-FRONT ROOM.

HARRY
What's happening, mom?

NANCY
You stay in there two minutes. Then go out that back door, real quiet, and meet me at the car. Count to one hundred, then go, okay?

Harry nods. Scared. Nancy fixes his shirt. Lingers on what might be their last moment. Kisses his forehead.

NANCY
Love you, babe. Start counting now. Go head.

HARRY
One Mississippi, two Mississippi...

She nods, eases the connecting door closed.

Nancy steps silently toward the door. Picks up the LAMP from the nightstand.

NANCY
Dave. You gotta leave. Right now.

DAVE
I got the passports. And Fred's too, so he can't follow us.

NANCY
Dave. Just walk away. I mean it.

HARRY

Stands by the lakefront door. Eyes closed. Fidgeting with the door handle. COUNTING Mississippies under his breath.

DAVE

DAVE
I'm not kidding around here. Open the door, we gotta go!

He SLAMS his hand against the door.

NANCY

Leans against the wall by the door. Coiled. Tense.

DAVE

Sees a car reflection in the window -- turns to see

FRED in his CAR. Watching.

Dave FREAKS OUT. The PISTOL in his hand.

DAVE
Open it, Nancy! We gotta go --
NOW! NOW!

NANCY
Leave, Dave!

DAVE
OPEN THIS FUCKING DOOR!

He SLAMS himself against the door --

HARRY

Gets to one hundred -- Steps out into the WHITE LIGHT --

NANCY

Watches the doorjamb SPLINTER -- The door holds a second, held in place by the CHAIN --

Then CRASHES OPEN --

DAVE
I'm not jokin--

And Nancy SLAMS the LAMP down as Dave bursts in -- and the PISTOL flies out of his hand, skews across the floor, under the bed -- and that flash of metal confirms everything, confirms her worst fears and

NANCY brings the lamp back up and SWINGS it again, but he's too close and

He GRABS at her -- trying to stop her -- YANKS at her arm and she spins and he gets his ARMS AROUND HER from behind --

DAVE
Stop! Nancy--

SWINGS her off her feet and she DROPS the lamp -- she SCREAMS THRASHES -- Twists around -- RAKES her nails down his FACE --

DAVE
Whhhoh--

He DROPS her, clutches his EYES and

She falls face-down on the floor, scrambles toward the GUN -- but DAVE grabs her cuff and DRAGS her away --

She KICKS out, flailing -- catches his KNEE and Dave FALLS --

DAVE
Nancy! Stoppit! It's ME!

NANCY
KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF ME!

And in a sudden burst of strength -- Fighting for her life, for her child -- she could lift a bus right now, but there's only the

TELEVISION -- and it's suddenly in her hands and she BRINGS THE TV DOWN onto Dave's HEAD --

And everything's silent. Dave STARES at her -- a vacant, confused expression -- and then

His head SPLITS and an unbelievable quantity of blood GUSHES out.

NANCY

Falls backward-- slips in the BLOOD-- stumbles backward into

DAVE'S ROOM

Slams the connecting door behind her -- the blood oozes UNDERNEATH the door --

NANCY
Harry? Harry baby?

Squints in the SINKING SUN, blinding bright over the Lake. Steps out into

EXT. THE LAKEFRONT DUNES - DUSK

Where she freezes when she sees

FRED.

Standing there with HARRY in his arms. It's the image from the train set. So happy together.

Fred waves to Nancy. A serene smile on his face.

EXT. THE LAKESHORE - EVENING

Nancy staggers after the terrifyingly perfect image of Fred and Harry, walking along the beach. Harry still in his spotless Dutch costume.

FRED
Hey, hun? Why don't you come down here, wash your hands off.

Nancy stares at her hands. Brown with blood.

She staggers toward the water. Squats at edge, immerses her hands. The blood lifts off in a strange red haze.

Fred helps Harry pull his SHOES off. Sends Harry ahead.

FRED
Gosh, didn't we do great with him?

He whistles “Tulips are Blooming” as they walk side by side

DOWN THE BEACH

After a long silence, Fred SIGHS.

FRED
I'm so disappointed in you, Nancy. Do you have any idea, any CLUE, how hard I worked to keep you and Harry safe from all that? Can you *imagine* what a sacrifice that was for me?

He's getting mad now. Holding it in. He puts on a smile, waves to Harry up the beach.

FRED
Thirteen years. Not one trophy, not one slip. I never crossed the line. Not <u>once</u>. YOU did.

And right now, in this moment, she actually believes it's true. Because, in a way... it is.

NANCY
I... I couldn't stop myself. Even when I wanted to. Even when I wanted so badly to... to go back. To reset.

They pass a FAMILY of big people packed into small swimsuits--i.e., Canadians. Fred nods to them.

FRED
Beautiful day, isn't it?

CANUCK
Sure is, eh. Enjoying your va-ca?

FRED
Second honeymoon. Remembering why we fell in love.

Fred sighs as they pass out of earshot.

NANCY
But, God-- Fred-- How could you do that? How could you?

FRED
That's not ME. I'm not evil. It's just... it's not ME who does all that. It's someone else. The real me is here, with you and Harry. Just like the real you isn't back in that motel room, is it?

Nancy looks down at her hands. The nails etched in blood.

NANCY
No. It's not.

FRED
But you did what you had to do. To protect your family. Right?

NANCY
Fred, I--

FRED
Shhh. Take a look at Harry there.

Harry's splashing in the water. His Dutch costume, his blonde hair glowing. An icon of innocence.

FRED
Now you know what it's like for me. Look at him. We'd do anything for him, wouldn't we? To give him the life he deserves. All we have to do is... hit the reset button.

NANCY
How can we? How could I ever...

FRED
Because now we both have something to hide. We're in it together now. And we can talk about it, as a couple. And work through it.

Nancy stares at Fred. So harmless-looking, so loving.

FRED
We've both made mistakes. Didn't appreciate what we had.

NANCY
God. I didn't. I didn't appreciate it... until it was gone.

And she struggles not to CRY. Fighting back the tears.

FRED
Hey, hey... Lovey, it's not too late. It's never too late. That's what we believe. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." We believe that, don't we?

HARRY (O.S.)
Come down here, guys! It's cold!

Fred smiles, indicates the water with his head.

FRED
Let's go in. Wash it all away. Come out nice and clean and ready for a fresh start.

NANCY
It's not that easy, Fred.

FRED
Why not?

He's got a big, childish grin on his face. Nancy can't help but smile a little through her tears.

HARRY (O.S.)
Come on!

FRED
Okay, here we come!

He grabs Nancy's hand, and they RUN TOGETHER down the sand and then

Fred scoops up Harry and all three SPLASH right

INTO THE LAKE

A baptism, a new beginning.

EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - EVENING

They all gather at Fred's car.

FRED
We should take a real second honeymoon. Someplace exciting. Paris?

NANCY
Silly.

FRED
I'm serious! We gotta start over. Do it right.

Nancy giggles. The genie is back in the bottle.

INT. FRED'S CAR - EVENING

A memory troubles Nancy's brow.

NANCY
What about... you know.

FRED
I'll take care of it. After I drop you two home. The desk woman went home for the day, so.

NANCY
Our passports, though. Paris!

She squeezes Fred's hand excitedly. He relents.

INT. THE MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Nancy braces herself, steps into the room.

Averts her eyes as she steps to the CORPSE. Holds her breath, reaches into Dave's pocket.

Pulls out the three passports.

But something falls out of Dave's pocket when she does. A small yellow packet.

She picks it up. Unwraps it.

It's two tiny FIGURINES -- Dave with the gun, and Nancy, dead in a puddle of blood. Wrapped in the POST-IT NOTE: "*My Offer*."

A CAR HORN outside.

She starts. Looking from the car to the figures to the note. What does it mean?

I/E. FRED'S CAR - EVENING

Nancy gets in, holds up the passports.

NANCY
Got 'em! You buckled up?

HARRY
Yeah.

FRED
All aboard, Team Vandergroot!

Nancy TURNS UP THE RADIO.

NANCY
Actually, wait a second. Harry, your belt's all wrong.

HARRY
It's fine, mom.

NANCY
No it's not. Here--

She hops out of the car, opens the back door.

Leans over to fix Harry's seatbelt. And as she does, she WHISPERS to Harry -- nice and quiet under the RADIO NOISE:

NANCY
Harry -- get out of the car now and run as far as you can.

HARRY
What?

NANCY
It's a game. Trust me. Go! Now!

Harry's confused -- but he does as he's told.

FRED
Harry? Where're you going?

Harry gives his dad a SHRUG as he RUNS along the roadside.

Fred turns off the car, starts to get out -- but then NANCY'S THERE. Back in her seat.

She takes his hand. Loving.

NANCY
He just has to pee.

Fred smiles at her -- then the smile fades when he sees THE FIGURINES on the dashboard.

She sees the knowledge leap into his eyes. Her face twists in scorn. Everything was just confirmed by his reaction.

THE PISTOL in Nancy's hand.

FRED
Nan-- It's not what-- I love you--

NANCY
This, right here? This isn't ME, Fred. This is YOU. This is YOU.

And Fred LUNGES for the gun -- but too late -- Nancy FIRES --

ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

Harry hears the POP-POP-POP-POP, looks back to see the FLASHES from inside the car.

HARRY
Mom? Dad? MOM??

BACK IN THE CAR

Nancy pries Fred's hands off her wrists. Pushes him away. He flops down under the steering wheel.

His face wide-eyed and already BLUE.

DEAD.

Nancy's hands tremble. Drops the gun onto the floor of the car. And BREAKS DOWN SOBBING.

Notices HARRY, small in the distance, staring at the car.

Nancy opens her car door, goes to him --

NANCY
Harry baby, it's--AAAAH!

FRED'S HAND reaches out -- GRABS her by the hair and YANKS HER back into the CAR --

FRED
GRAAAAH!

Nancy SCREAMS as Fred PULLS her down by the hair -- Works his blue hands around her THROAT --

Brutal, his face a grey mask of HATE --

Nancy SCREAMS -- Grabs his hands, fighting to break his grip on her neck -- but he's unnaturally strong -- his final act, bringing her down with him --

Her hands scramble along the car floor -- then one closes on HARRY'S WOODEN SHOE.

She brings it up and SLAMS the shoe against Fred's skull -- OVER AND OVER -- Bashing him down with the WOODEN SHOE until he RELEASES HER and falls back.

His eyes stare blankly at the ceiling of the car. A gurgling sound in the back of his throat. Then silence. No life left in him.

Nancy throws the shoe down. Leaps out of the car and SLAMS the door closed.

DOWN THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

NANCY
Harry! Harry!

She RUNS for Harry --

Harry stares at her for a moment -- this bloody, ashen woman running for him --

And Harry turns and FLEES -- CRASHING through the brush and onto

THE DUNES --

Harry RUNS for his LIFE --

And Nancy GIVES CHASE -- Down the long, bright beach --

And we FREEZE FRAME -- And suddenly, they're like figurines:

Nancy, frozen -- forever chasing that innocence, that light, that blonde little dream --

Harry, glancing back at the bloody monster on his heels --

And the sun glows golden on the dunes, the lake, everything.

THE END.