Duplex

By

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Second Draft

June 24, 2001

(CONTINUED)
Ext. Prospect Park  
– Park Slope, Brooklyn – Afternoon

It’s a blustery Sunday in October. Bundled-up children GIGGLE and SQUEAL in a small, enclosed playground. Across a stone chessboard, an old Jewish man CACKLES at a black teen contemplating his next move. Dogs WRESTLE HAPPILY as their owners flirt shamelessly.

Music: “Sunny Side of the Street,” by Rickie Lee Jones

We follow a woman with a baby carriage across the street, finally settling on:

Ext. Building – 120 Prospect Park West – Continuous

A magnificent, if weathered, Victorian brownstone rowhouse.

Int. Apartment – Kitchen – Continuous

It’s smallish, but Good Lord: Viking stove, Sub-zero refrigerator, cabinets everywhere, and...

REAL ESTATE AGENT
You’ve got a butler’s pantry here.

WOMAN
A butler’s pantry!

MAN
Jeeves will be delighted.

The agent is MATTHEW, 40ish, a big guy in a bigger sweater. It’s not obvious that he’s gay.

The woman is ALEX, a bubbling fount of enthusiasms, whose dream is apparently coming true right now.

She giddily clutches the arm of WILLIAM, who does not seem entirely pleased to be here.

MATTHEW
(exiting, with a wave)
Dumb waiter...

William stops to look at the dumb waiter, but is lovingly yanked by Alex into: 

(Continued)
**Int. Apartment — Parlor — Continuous**

One wall is filled with a Victorian hutch; on another is an oak fireplace with an antique mirror above the mantle. There is ornate, carved wood everywhere. It’s real estate porn.

Matthew is low-key, letting the place sell itself.

**MATTHEW**

*(gesturing around vaguely)*

Built-ins, built-ins, built-ins... all the original moldings.

**ALEX**

*(huskily, to William)*

Original moldings.

**WILLIAM**

How old is this place anyway?

**MATTHEW**

I’d have to check. 1881 sounds right.

**WILLIAM**

*(not a good thing)*

Old.

**MATTHEW**

It was carved up into separate units in the early eighties.

**WILLIAM**

*(bad and worse things)*

Carved up. In the eighties.

**ALEX**

*(twirling around slowly)*

This entire house is an antique!

William shoots her a “remember what we discussed” look. Alex assumes her “buyer’s face.”

**ALEX**

Of course, this is the first place we’ve looked at.
M
MATTHEW
This probably isn’t for you, then. I’m sure it’s going to be sold by Monday.

Alex digs her nails very deeply into William’s arm, only half for theatrical effect.

MATTHEW
(pointing down)
Inlaid parquet floors...
(with a wave)
...original pressed tin in the hearth of the fireplaces.

ALEX
(buyer’s face vanishes)
Fireplace-es?

MATTHEW
There’s also one in the bedroom.

ALEX
(cozying up to William)
Fireplace in the bedroom.

She waggles her eyebrows saucily. He half-smirks in return.

Int. Apartment – Library – Continuous

Matthew has moved on.

MATTHEW
Now, this used to be the library...

ALEX
William’s a writer.

MATTHEW
(doesn’t give a shit)
Really? What do you write?

WILLIAM
Captions, mostly.

This was as Matthew expected.

ALEX
William wrote a novel. Which would look great

(CONTINUED)
(she indicates a wall of bookcases with an outsized spokesmodel flourish)
in these magnificent, built-in antique bookcases!

WILLIAM
(to Matthew, quasi-humble)
It was a small book. Literary, kind of. You probably never, it was called “A Coming of Age.”

MATTHEW
I’m sorry. I don’t read books.
(slides bookshelf doors)
Leaded glass doors.

ALEX
 stil in spokesmodel mode)
All your books. Behind leded glass.

WILLIAM
(explaining again)
Mostly I just own paperbacks. Trade paperbacks.

MATTHEW
(pointing up)
Curved canvas ceilings... the sellers used this as a formal dining room.

ALEX
(dreamily)
A formal dining room.

WILLIAM
It’s too bad it’s out of our price range.

ALEX
(gesturing)
It is at the top of our price range.

WILLIAM
(gesturing above her)
Over the top.
ALEX
(clasping his hand lovingly)
At the tippy top.

MATTHEW
Would you like to see the bedroom?

ALEX
Of course.

She squeezes William’s hand tightly.

Int. Apartment — Hallway — Continuous

Matthew leads them past an ornate, spiral planter and down a narrow, fairly dark hallway. The right wall of the hallway ends three feet from the ceiling; the remainder is filled out with glass bricks (which let in some light from the foyer).

MATTHEW
New construction, obviously.

WILLIAM
From the eighties.

MATTHEW
I’d knock out the glass bricks and replace it with some period stained glass.

ALEX
Oh, that would be pretty!

Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Continuous

They walk into the light.

MATTHEW
This is the bedroom.

Alex actually GASPS. Even William looks impressed. Seeing their faces, Matthew steps up his sales pitch.
M
MATTHEW
This was originally the front parlor. Fireplace is tiger-eye maple; if you look closely you’ll see that it’s actually hundreds of hand-carved pieces fitted perfectly together.

ALEX
(caressing fireplace)
Wow. Who could have done this?

MATTHEW
Craftsmen.

ALEX
I miss craftsmen.

MATTHEW
And over here you’ve got a little alcove, if that’s the word, a round outcropping facing the park.

ALEX
A nook!
(turning excitedly to William)
A writer’s nook.

William looks at the nook, and out the windows at the park. He smiles genuinely for the first time.

WILLIAM
I could do some writing there.

ALEX
Or it could be a nursery!

William resumes his previous attitude.

Int. Apartment – Library – Moments Later

The three emerge from the hallway.

MATTHEW
Well, you’ve got my card if you want to make an offer...

William stops at the spiral planter, looks at it.

(CONTINUED)
LEX (O.C.)
Can you call us if anybody else makes one?

MATTHEW (O.C.)
I’m not supposed to do that, but...

Over the proceeding, we follow William’s gaze up the planter. The plants still have price tags. The planter spirals to the top, where a rather obvious circular piece of wood has been painted white to match the ceiling.

WILLIAM
Excuse me, is this a stairway?

Now that he mentions it, it very clearly is a spiral staircase. Matthew doesn’t miss a beat.

MATTHEW
Oh, I’m sorry. I thought you realized. This is a duplex.

WILLIAM
There’s another floor?

MATTHEW
It’s on the listing sheet I gave you.

ALEX
(looking at listing sheet)
Two floors, for this price? You’d have to mentally ill not to buy two floors for that price!

Alex, standing right next to Matthew, turns to William with an almost accusatory look. Matthew smiles patronizingly.
WILLIAM
You two make a persuasive sales pitch, (pointing up) but why’s it sealed off? Were there a slew of murders up there? You have to tell us if there were.

MATTHEW
(smarmy chuckle)
Well, actually I don’t have to tell you — we got that law overturned — but it’s nothing like that. It’s just, there’s a sweet old lady who lives up there...

WILLIAM
(there’s the rub)
A tenant.

MATTHEW
Yes, and it is rent-controlled, so... but she’s so sweet and so, (annoying chuckle) she’s got to be a hundred years old.

WILLIAM
(good-natured sigh)
Well, that’s really too bad, because--

ALEX
Can we meet her?

Matthew CHUCKLES, in a shortling sort of way.

Int. Building – Foyer – Moments Later

As they climb the stairs, Alex caresses the wood banisters.

WILLIAM
Rent-controlled means we can’t kick her out, right?

ALEX
William!

Int. Building – Second Floor Landing – Continuous

Matthew stops at a door in mid-landing.

(CONTINUED)
MATTHEW
(that chuckle again)
It’s a legitimate question. No, you
can’t evict her. She has to decide to
leave, or...

Matthew lets that hang out there.

MATTHEW (CONT.)
(as if changing the subject)
Poor thing hasn’t been feeling well.

He KNOCKS, loudly.

MATTHEW (CONT.)
She’s hard of hearing.

The three stand there for a long beat.

MATTHEW (CONT.)
It may take a little while for her to
get to the door.

They all smile at each other. After another longish beat, we hear a lock being LABORIOUSLY OPENED on the other side. There is another beat.

MATTHEW (CONT.)
(mouthing, low volume)
Arthritis.

We hear a second lock being opened with a LONG GRINDING CREAK. A moment later, the door opens slowly, JERKING to a
halt at the end of the security chain.

Alex’s eyes widen in expectation; William is curious. Their
expressions flash to shock, then polite suppression of
shock.

Inside the door

Peering behind the chain is MRS. CONNELLY. She’s a tiny, frail lady, in a housecoat that may be as old as she is. She stares unblinkingly; this, combined with her total lack of make-up, makes her looks more than a little like a corpse. After a moment, her face flashes in recognition; she smiles sweetly and speaks with a slight Irish brogue.
MRS. CONNELLY
Matthew!

MATTHEW
Good afternoon, Mrs. Connelly! How are you feeling today?

MRS. CONNELLY
Oh, don’t let me burden you with my troubles...
(then)
I don’t feel good, Matthew.

On Matthew
Alex peeks over his shoulder into the apartment.

MATTHEW
I’m sorry to hear that, Mrs. Connelly. I’ve brought by a young couple, who might want to buy the apartment.

Matthew steps back to reveal Alex on tip-toe; she drops down quickly and interlocks arms with William.

ALEX
Good afternoon, Mrs. Connelly! I’m Alex, and this is my husband, William.

WILLIAM
Hello.

MRS. CONNELLY
I liked the boy who lived downstairs before. He brought me my medicines.

ALEX
Well, if you ever need anything like that, you just give us a call.

WILLIAM
If we buy the apartment.

ALEX
Do you mind if we look around?
Alex’s POV

As Mrs. Connelly speaks, Alex’s gaze drifts above her head. She sees only a sliver: another magnificent fireplace, an alcove matching the bedroom. The place is crammed with Irish Catholic tchotchkes: matching ceramic bleeding-heart Jesus and Mary, a framed print of Norman Rockwell’s portrait of JFK, with a black velvet shroud draped around the top, etc.

MRS. CONNELLY (OVER PRECEDING)
Oh, it’s in a horrible state. Haven’t had the energy to clean up in ages. I should be ashamed of myself. I can only imagine what it must smell like.

ALEX
(practically salivating)
We’ll be in and out in no time.

MRS. CONNELLY
Sorry, dear. I’m not feeling up to it.

The door CLOSES on Alex’s face. We hear the door slowly being LOCKED again. Then, from behind the door:

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)
(long, pathetic coughing; tiny squeak of sickly despair.)

Alex and William are thinking the same thing. Matthew puts his hands on their shoulders.

MATTHEW
Poor thing.

Matthew starts down the stairs; as they follow, Alex grabs William’s hand and squeezes it.

MATTHEW
Despite all that she’s going through, I understand she’s never missed a rent payment.

ALEX
(intrigued)
Rent?
MATTHEW

As I said, it’s rent-controlled, so it’s below market.

WILLIAM

How much below market?

MATTHEW

Considerably.

Int. Building — Foyer — Continuous

Matthew leads them toward the door.

ALEX

How many rooms are there up there?

MATTHEW

The drawing room, you saw, two bedrooms, 1 1/2 baths, and there’s a room in the back which I think originally was a children’s playroom.

ALEX

(barely contained excitement)

And that’s for the price we discussed.

Ext. Building — Stoop — Continuous

Matthew turns to face them on the steps.

MATTHEW

That’s the asking price. But there may be other bidders. Especially if you wait.

Alex looks across the street and sees the children playing.

ALEX

We’ll take it.

WILLIAM

We’ll think about it.

Matthew CHUCKLES.
Ext. Tompkin
Square Park in Manhattan – Night

The couple scurry across a busy Manhattan street and into the park. They cradle vente Starbucks cups.

ALEX
It’ll be a stretch. But we make enough.

WILLIAM
 Barely.

ALEX
We’re only going to make more money. Then we’ll have extra to fix some…
(crinkles nose)
Oooh. Like those glass bricks...

WILLIAM
You know, if we move to Brooklyn, we won’t be able to walk to our favorite Indian restaurant and pick up extra-hot-no-foam-lattes on the way home...

They pass a scruffy gentleman in a long coat.

SCRUFFY GENTLEMAN
(not so sotto)
Smoke. Smoke.

WILLIAM
And what if we want to buy drugs?

ALEX
This is our chance to grow up, William.

WILLIAM
A lot of grown-ups live in Manhattan. Woody Allen, Donald Trump...
(realizes he’s not making his point)
George Plimpton...

ALEX
(growing impatient)
It’s time for us to make a home.

WILLIAM
I like our apartment.

(CONTINUED)
ALEX
It’s a studio! Successful couples don’t live in studio apartments. And you and I are almost successful. If we live in a successful apartment, we’ll grow into it.

WILLIAM
Let me diagram that argument and get back to you.

(he gestures around them)
How can you leave Manhattan? There’s an energy here you can’t get anywhere else.

CRAZY LADY
You’re killing the frogs!

The woman swings at William, KNOCKING his latte all over him. Steam rises off his jacket. He turns to Alex.

WILLIAM
(re: her latte, nonchalant)
You gonna drink all that?

Int. East Village Apartment – Night

It is one large room, with various “areas” designated by the placement of mismatched pieces of furniture. The “bedroom” sits behind a Chinese scrim. BARELY MUFFLED STREET NOISES invade the space.

The couple lies in bed. William is on his back, eyes closed. Alex lies facing William, staring at him.

ALEX
You awake?

WILLIAM
(eyes remaining closed)
Let me check. Yes.

ALEX
Can we talk about the house?

WILLIAM
What house?

(CONTINUED)
ALEX
Let’s buy the house.

WILLIAM
Can I sleep on it?

ALEX
Of course, sweetie. Sleep away.
(afterthought)
My sweet.

She kisses his cheek, then rolls away from him to turn off her bedside table. Streetlight through the barred windows casts a classic prison shadow across the couple. In the distance we hear a SIREN. William EXHALES in annoyance, leans over to his side of bed and turns on a noise machine. We hear the sound of OCEAN WAVES.

ON WILLIAM

He closes his eyes, concentrated on the waves. Just as one of waves gently crashes:

WOMAN (O.C.)
(BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM)

Then even closer, right below their window:

MAN (O.C.)
I’m gonna fuck you up!

ANOTHER MAN
I’m fucking you up!

William opens his eyes. From below we hear the two men FUCKING EACH OTHER UP, smashing GARBAGE CANS and setting off CAR ALARMS in the process. Alex appears over William’s shoulder and cuddles up to him. She smiles and closes her eyes. His eyes remain open, staring into his future.

Int. ♂ Magazine — Art Department — Morning

We PAN across several, large framed magazine covers (which, instead of a name, bears the logo “♂”.)

A naked babe in a catcher’s mitt squats behind home plate, side cleavage escaping her chest protector, mitt barely concealing muff. “PUT IT THERE!” the main coverline reads.
A naked babe in a scuba mask emerges from the water just far enough to reveal her remarkable buoyancy. The coverline reads, “MAN THE PONTOONS!”

“RACK ‘EM UP!” A babe spills out of her evening gown as she bends over a pool table toward camera, her mouth curiously open as she attempts a shot. We pan down her impossibly long cleavage to reveal Alex, talking on the phone.

Alex sits at drafting table primarily occupied by a large portrait computer monitor. (On it is a stylish layout of high tech guy toys: PDAs, MP3s, ETCs.)

ALEX (practically squealing)
Mom, we bought a house!

ALEX (CONT.)
A duplex! It’s two stories in this 1880 brownstone… Two stories is a duplex…
Well, it is these days… Okay, technically it’s a condo, but it’s huge, and it’s right on the park… No, Prospect Park… It’s not regular Brooklyn, though, Mom. It’s Park Slope. A lot of up-and-coming people live there… Well, no we can’t afford it on William’s salary, but we do have my salary, too…

(they Mom sigh)
When I have a baby, I’ll freelance…
I’ll get a nanny…

Alex puts her hand over the receiver to compose herself.

ALEX (CONT.)
It is too late to back out, Mom. We’re closing tonight… See, this, right here, is exactly why I didn’t tell you earlier…

Something catches Alex’s eye. It’s MIKEY, her boss. He’s a big, ramshackle guy with a boyish face; he’s given up on being handsome and instead has decided to be a character. Today he’s wearing an orange prison jumpsuit with “MIKEY” stenciled over the chest pocket.
ALEX

Gotta go, Mom.
(hangs up, smiles)
Yes, Mike?

Mikey unfurls a color proof of a photo spread, featuring some pop nymphet trying to shed her bubblegum image.

MIKEY
(wandering British accent)
Sexy Lexie. I was going over these Dulcinea pages, very pretty layout, but here’s the rub: where’s her nippules?

ALEX
(flatly)
We can’t show her “nippules.” She’s only fifteen.

MIKEY
Ah, yes, the whole child pornography hoo-hah. Well, you did the best with what you had then.

Alex scrunches her face at Mikey as he wanders off. After a beat, she clicks something on her screen. The PDA layout disappears and a DVD-ROM program boots up.

On screen, a CGI house spins around; the walls fall away so we can see how everything is arranged inside. The opening title flies up: DECORATOR 3D. Alex CLICKS again and the screen changes to a digital rendition of their parlor.

Alex holds a snapshot of the real parlor up next to the screen and smiles.

On screen, a FLAMBOYANT CARTOON MAN walks into the room.

FLAMBOYANT CARTOON MAN
Let’s decorate!

ALEX
Let’s.

Int. nyny Magazine – Hallway – Morning

William (carrying a stainless steel, no-spill coffee cup) walks with taller, handsomer COOP past several nyny covers.
A Central Park vista with the coverline, "ROOMS WITH THE VIEW" and subhead, "Lovely to look at – and out of!"

Sarah Jessica Parker under a pile of shoes with the head, "SHOE SLUTS" and subhead, "The Imeldas of Manhattan"

WILLIAM
(as they walk)
The bank just gave us the money. A cursory look at our financials would have revealed we can’t afford this...

He pauses beneath a cover of Jerry Seinfeld in a nursery with the coverline, “ROCK-A-BYE, STAR BABY!” and subhead, “22 Celebrity Nurseries.”

WILLIAM
Do I look like a homeowner?

Coop puts a reassuring hand on William’s shoulder.

COOP
Not in those pants.

They continue walking. William looks down, wondering what’s wrong with his pants, as the pair stroll into:

**Int. Office – Continuous**

Very modern. The white walls are lined with huge blow-ups of b&w paparazzi photos featuring assorted New Yorkers posing with a woman perky beyond her years. This is CAMMY, the nyny’s editrix, the same woman currently sitting cross-legged on her solid glass desk in a supercute outfit she is easily twice too old for.

A motley pack of editors sit on fashionably uncomfortable chairs facing her. William and Coop take the last two.

CAMMY
(chirpy hostility)
All right, okay, I guess we can get started.

Cammy picks up the only other thing on desk: a hardcover book with the easy-to-read title, “BLOOD IS THICK.”

(CONTINUED)
CAMMY
All right. Let us begin by offering congrats to Frank Cooper, our very own crime scribe especial, on his new “tome,” which a little bird tells me was on the N-Y-T Bestsellers list last week.

Cammy puts the book down and claps like a cheerleader.

CAMMY
Yeah, Coop!

The other editors turn to Coop and APPLAUD. Coop accepts their accolades aw-shucks-ily, as William sits next to him, clapping awkwardly.

CAMMY
All right. Story ideas! I hope you have some, because I sure don’t!

(laughs to indicate she isn’t quite the idiot she seems)

Seriously, we need ideas.

A DESPERATE MIDDLE-AGED EDITOR sorts anxiously through a manila folder of clippings from papers and other magazines.

DESPERATE MIDDLE-AGED EDITOR
Drew Barrymore’s got a new --

CAMMY
(dismissive wave)

Five minutes ago.

The desperate middle-aged heavyset editor shrinks with a shudder. William turns to Coop, entre nous.

WILLIAM
Five minutes ago is a little five minutes ago.

CAMMY
I’m sorry, Will-yam, I didn’t realize you were talking. You have an idea?

WILLIAM
I do, actually. This is the fortieth anniversary of Hemingway’s death—

(CONTINUED)
Cammy’s look of perplexed boredom throws William.

WILLIAM (CONT.) Ernest Hemingway. Uh, he wasn’t a New Yorker per se, but I thought we, I could do a piece on how publishing has changed since the days of great editors like Max Perkins — he edited F. Scott Fitzgerald, too; of course you know that — it’d be a think piece, but, but with quotes from celebrities and their editors, maybe some nice pictures of Michael Korda’s country house...
CAMMY
(with happy head tilt)
You know what? No.
(faux gasp)
But that does give me an idea!
(takes object from her wrist)
All the Brearly girls are wearing these; they’re woven by blind or deaf Native Americans or something. They’re called Braidlets, which I think is very clever. I’d like a page on them.

WILLIAM
(Disingenuous confusion
masking dread certainty)
You want... me?

CAMMY
Pictures with captions.
(squeezing forefinger to
thumb; chiding)
Captions, William.

All the other editors glance at William, CHUCKLING KNOWINGLY. William forces a shit-eating smile.

Ext. Seventh Avenue — Park Slope — Evening

It’s early November, and cold. A cab pulls up in front of a turn-of-the-century office building, and Alex and William exit. William leans into the cab.

WILLIAM
Can you swing back here in an hour; we’re going to need a ride ba—

The cab PEELS out.

WILLIAM (CONT.)
Great. How are we going to find a cab in Brooklyn?

Alex smiles and grabs his hand, leading him up the steps. Behind them, available cabs pass in both directions.

(CONTINUED)
Int. Lawyer’s Office — A Little Later

Alex, excited, and William, pissy, sit on one side of a conference table flanked by Matthew and THEIR LAWYER. The SELLERS sit across from them, beaming, with the SELLERS’ LAWYER. Alex and William are signing thousands of documents, and William is writing several checks.

WILLIAM
Two-hundred and sixty-six dollars and sixty seven cents? What’s this for?

WILLIAM AND ALEX’S LAWYER
That’s the interest for the last three days of the month. Your mortgage starts on the first.

WILLIAM
They don’t miss a thing. Wait, there’s only two more days before the first.

MATTHEW
There’s today and the weekend.

WILLIAM
Today’s almost over.

ALEX
(apologizing for William)
We’ve never bought anything big before.

MATTHEW
Okay, and nine-hundred for first month’s maintenance…

WILLIAM
Nine-hundred? I thought it was six.

SELLING WIFE
The building voted to raise it last week. Just until heating oil prices go down.

WILLIAM
Meaning never. And why wasn’t I told—

(CONTINUED)
LEX
They told me, sweetie. I’m sorry, I forgot to tell you, you know, with all the other details.

WILLIAM
But this changes the whole equation...

SELLING WIFE
(jumping in)
We’ll pay the first month.

SELLERS’ LAWYER
You don’t have to do that.

SELLING HUSBAND
(eager)
But we will if it’s going to be a problem.

Alex smiles at them, thinking “what a lovely gesture.” William stares at them, thinking, “what’s going on here?”

Obligatory Moving Montage

Music: “Happy Days Are Here Again,” by Squirrel Nut Zippers

Ext. Building — 120 Prospect Park — Sunday Morning

A “NICE JEWISH BOYS” moving van is double-parked in the street. William, holding his no-spill coffee mug, “supervises” the African-American movers.

Int. Apartment — Parlor — Continuous

A mover places a large, heavy box on the floor. Alex examines it and calls him back. She shows him that the box is labeled not just PARLOR but also “N.E. CORNER.” He picks it up and starts for one corner; she redirects him to another.
Ext. Building — Continuous

William reads the New York Times Book Review (The cover is a caricature of Hemingway with the head, “The Hemingway-Plath Letters.”). Two movers pass him with a large TV. After a moment, William looks up and sees the two “movers” make off down the sidewalk with the TV. Before he can do anything, two of the real movers run after the would-be thieves.

End of Obligatory Moving Montage

Int. Building — Foyer — Late Afternoon

William and Alex stand outside the ornate double doors; Alex stops William from opening the doors and pulls a small object out of her pocket.

ALEX
Wait. I got us this.

WILLIAM
(puzzled)
Isn’t that one of those, uh...

ALEX
(practiced)
Meh-ZO0Z-ah. “And thou shall write the word of the Lord upon the door posts of thine house, that your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children.” Look, it’s got a Velcro™ backing.

WILLIAM
Uh, honey. Neither one of us is Jewish.

ALEX
(matter-of-fact)
Everybody’s Jewish, under the Christianity.

Alex affixes the mezuzah next to the doorframe. She smiles at William suggestively.

ALEX (CONT.)
Now we have a threshold.
William gets the
hint and puts out his arms. She GIGGLES and jumps into
them. He awkwardly fiddles with the door, and half-staggers
into:

**Int. Apartment — Library — Continuous**

He walks two steps and lets her down. She surveys the
apartment, thoughtfully. There are boxes everywhere, of
course, but what really sticks out is the furniture: a
mixture of Ikea and kitschy fifties and sixties stuff.

**ALEX**
That’s what I thought. This furniture
has all got to go.

**WILLIAM**
A shame we just spent all that time and
money moving it here, then.

Alex cuddles up to him.

**ALEX**
You can get me a couch for Christmas.

She hugs him. He softens.

**WILLIAM**
Well, why don’t we just move this stuff
back to the apartment? We can sublet it
furnished.

**ALEX**
*(knows he’s going to angry)*
I gave up the apartment.

**WILLIAM**
How could you give up the apartment? It
was my apartment.

**ALEX**
*(shrugs)*
I signed something.

**WILLIAM**
I loved that apartment! I lost my New
York virginity in that apartment!

*(CONTINUED)*
ALEX
I thought that was your second apartment.

WILLIAM
Your point?

ALEX
(turning it on him)
Did you really expect to keep your bachelor apartment, William? You’re not a bachelor anymore. You do know that, don’t you?

She stalks past him and down the hallway to the bedroom. He stands, determined not to follow her, then follows her.

**Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Moments Later**

When he walks in, William encounters not the angry spouse he expected but his beatific wife, glowing.

Golden afternoon light pours into the room. It’s like the bedrooms in heaven. Alex turns to William, her eyes welling up in sublime joy. She takes him by the hand and walks him to the bed. She sits on the bed, and then yanks him roughly on top of her. He looks not displeased.

ALEX
(sexy growl)
Let’s make a baby.

He rolls off her with a small EEP. They both stare at the ceiling for a LONG BEAT.

WILLIAM
Nice ceiling.

ALEX
We agreed we would have a baby in two years. It could take me a year to get pregnant.

WILLIAM
We agreed we would start trying to have a baby in two years.
ALEX
So you don’t want to have sex for the next two years?

WILLIAM
Not baby sex. Besides, we don’t have room in this apartment for a baby.

ALEX
(points upward)
We will, though. I mean, God forbid.
(a beat)
How old do you think Mrs. Connelly is?
(another beat)
We should go say hello.

WILLIAM
Yeah, okay.

William rolls off the bed and heads for the hallway.

ALEX
Not dressed like that!

Int. Apartment — Parlor — About an Hour Later

William, in slacks, pullover sweater and tie, looks as uncomfortable as a twelve-year-old going to visit his grandmother. Alex, in a conservative sweater set and wool skirt, licks her fingers and smoothes down William hair.

ALEX
We should bring something.

WILLIAM
We’re the ones moving in.

ALEX
To be nice.

William turns to the mantle, which has several gift bottles of wine on it. He considers and decides.

WILLIAM
Merlot.

He reaches for a bottle. Alex reaches past him and takes a different one.
ALEX
This one’s got a pretty ribbon.

Int. Building — Second Floor Landing — Moments Later

Alex KNOCKS LOUDLY on Mrs. Connelly’s door. William examines the bottle of wine.

WILLIAM
This is a really nice bottle of wine.

After a couple of seconds, Alex knocks EVEN MORE LOUDLY.

WILLIAM
Maybe I should—

William turns to go downstairs; Alex grabs him. We hear the locks all OPEN, as laboriously as before. The door CREAKS open to the end of the chain, and we again see Mrs. Connelly’s suspicious eye. Only now it’s surrounded by bright blue eye shadow.

ALEX
(a little loudly)
Mrs. Connelly? It’s Alex and William, we just moved downstairs?

MRS. CONNELLY’S EYE (MOUTH O.C.)
Ohhhh. Oh!

She SLAMS the door. We hear the chain being UNHOOKED. She opens the door again. Mrs. Connelly, wearing make-up usually reserved for the wake, stands there in a red satin cheongsam (that mandarin slip dress that was briefly popular 40 years ago) covered with a tiny, pink sweater jacket.

MRS. CONNELLY
Come in! Come in!

Mrs. Connelly patters in. Alex follows eagerly, and quickly scans the apartment. The magnificent parlor is somewhat overwhelmed by old lady clutter: praying hands sculpture close to the door; assorted Lladro figurines, mostly from the angel series.
The parlor is dominated by a huge brass-plated birdcage containing a giant macaw. Abutting it is a ratty easy chair next to an even rattier couch, all oriented toward an old TV (with knobs) on a brass-plated rolling cart.

ALEX
You have a lovely apartment, Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY
Oh, please call me Katie.

WILLIAM
(offering wine)
We got you this, Katie. Ah. Housewarming.

MRS. CONNELLY
(accepting bottle)
Oh, I don’t drink, dear. It’s a sin.

WILLIAM
(that’s an interesting fact)
Irish Catholics don’t drink.

Alex elbows him.

MRS. CONNELLY
Sit down, sit down.

Mrs. Connelly gently pushes Alex and William over to the sitting area. She directs William to the easy chair.

MRS. CONNELLY
You sit in my chair.

William looks down in the seat of the chair. It has a very distinct, slightly greasy, impression in it.

MRS. CONNELLY
(re: wine)
Let me open this for you.

Mrs. Connelly patters away. We notice for the first time that the back of her dress is completely worn away, revealing saggy gray old lady underpants.
Mrs. Connelly walks to a kitchenette (created circa 1980) and picks up a bartender’s corkscrew that happens to be sitting on the counter. With one swift motion, she UNCOCKS the bottle. She takes a small glass off a shelf and returns. She hands William the glass, which we now see is an old Peter Potamous jelly jar, and pours him approximately an inch of wine. She puts the bottle down without offering any to Alex.

MRS. CONNELLY
(remembering something)
Oh.

She patters away, and starts RUMMAGING around the kitchen. Alex, on the couch, moves to the far edge and tries to peek down the hallway. William turns toward the macaw.

It’s a pretty sad specimen: hunched over, lots of feathers missing. Suddenly it LUNGES toward camera. Its beak comes through the bars on the cage, missing William’s eyeball by a 32nd of an inch.

William lurches back, and settles himself with a swallow of wine. He eases back into the chair. He feels something funny. He lifts up his arm adjacent to the cage and sees the armrest is speckled with white and green clumps.

MRS. CONNELLY
Here we go.

Mrs. Connelly places a black lacquer tray on the brass-plated glass coffee table. The tray features a Polynesian dancer, whose toplessness has been strategically covered by a plastic bowl full of Bugles™ and a container of French Onion Dip, half empty with numerous Bugles™ strafings in it.

WILLIAM
Wow, they still make Bugles™.

Mrs. Connelly holds a Bugle™ up to the cage. The bird gently takes it by the tip, and rears its head back.

BIRD
(BUGLE-LIKE TOOTLE)

WILLIAM
That’s a great parrot you have there.
RS. CONNELLY
He’s a macaw, dear. I’ve had Mr. Fawkes for sixty years now. I couldn’t live without him.

ALEX
(re minded)
How are you feeling, Katie?

MRS. CONNELLY
Why do you ask, dear?

ALEX
Because the last time we were here, you were quite ill.

MRS. CONNELLY
(diss imi sive laugh)
Oh, I had a bit of a cold. I’m in fine fettle now, please God. But tell me all about yourselves. What do you do, Bill?

WILLIAM
Nothing.

ALEX
William wrote a novel. He’s really a novelist.

MRS. CONNELLY
I never thought of that as a job, but I suppose it is, isn’t it?
(noticing William’s glass is almost empty)
Oh, let me fill that for you.
(mostly to Alex)
Mr. Connelly had the taste, too. The drink took him from me in 1959. We had been married forty years.

Alex and William are doing the math in their heads. Mrs. Connelly sits down on the couch, between William and Alex.

ALEX
You must have seen such amazing things, I mean going all the way back to...
MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, I’ve mostly been sitting in my apartment, dear.

ALEX

So what brought you here, to the states, was it the famine?

MRS. CONNELLY

(chuckles good-naturedly)

I’m not that old. That was a hundred and fifty years ago, dear.

WILLIAM

(lamely jocular)

A lot of potatoes under the bridge since then.

MRS. CONNELLY

More than a million people died. My grandfather among them.

ALEX

Oh, I’m sorry.

MRS. CONNELLY

I know, dear.

William reaches for his wine glass. We hear a WATERY PLOP. William looks over and sees Mr. Fawkes’ tail feathers hanging over his glass. He pulls his hand away uneasily.

MRS. CONNELLY

In a way he was lucky. He wasn’t around for the Great Consumption...

William glances at a clock built into a Pietà reproduction. It reads 7:15 p.m. The face MATCH DISSOLVES to 8:37.

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)

We lost Uncle Dennis and little Nuala in the influenza outbreak of 1918...

The clock face MATCH DISSOLVES to 10:24.

Mrs. Connelly sits between a stupefied William and Alex.
RS. CONNELLY
I did have one sister, Lily. But she died horribly.

ALEX
I am so sorry.

MRS. CONNELLY
Ah, well, it’s the Irish way.
(noticing)
Look, I’ve kept you up. I’m sorry; I didn’t notice the time. Let me show you out.

Mrs. Connelly stands to lead them out. As William rises, Mr. Fawkes dives at him, tearing a hunk out of his sweater.

ALEX
You know, Katie, I’d love a tour of your apartment, if it’s not too much trouble.

MRS. CONNELLY
Oh, it’s much too late for that.

She opens the door. William exits quickly. Alex lingers.

ALEX
If you need anything, anything at all, don’t hesitate to call.

MRS. CONNELLY
Thank you, dear. So kind of you.

She says this as she CLOSES the door in Alex’s face.

Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Night

Alex sits in bed with a pad and pencil. William, in T-shirt and underpants, walks up reading a dictionary.

WILLIAM
A macaw is a parrot.

William SLAPS the book closed with satisfaction and gets into bed. Alex is figuring something on her pad.

ALEX
She’s between 95 and 105 years old.
A little puzzled, William turns out his light. So does Alex. Their faces are bathed in a flickering glow.

Their POV

A tiny blaze burns in the fireplace. Soft street light filters in; the quiet, black outline of Prospect Park beyond makes it feel like the country. The room seems even more majestic than in broad daylight. Alex suppresses a squeal.

ALEX
We’re millionaires!

William smiles, and KISSES Alex on the cheek. She KISSES him back on the mouth. They lie down, KISSING.

Close on William and Alex

They make out, in a procedural manner. Under the sheets, Alex slips down her own pajama bottoms, then starts to push up William’s T-shirt. As she reaches his armpits, he seems to resist. She realizes:

ALEX
(flatly)
Would you like me to put in my diaphragm?

WILLIAM
If that’s okay.

Alex sits up abruptly. She attempts to hop out of bed while simultaneously pulling up her pajama bottoms; she TUMBLES to the floor.

ALEX
Shit.

Alex kicks off the pajama bottoms, and gets up.

ALEX (CONT.)
(answering unasked question)
I’m okay.
Alex walks over to several unopened moving boxes by the bathroom, and bends over to read them in the firelight.

WILLIAM
You packed your diaphragm?

ALEX
It’s not like I’ve had to whip it out of my purse any time recently.

WILLIAM
Look, maybe we can just, take turns on each other.

ALEX
No, that’s okay.

Alex SMASHES a box with her fist, popping it open. She reaches deep inside, feeling around, and pulls out the diaphragm (and, of course, a tube of Gynol™ spermicide)

ALEX
Sorry for the delay.

Alex FIDDLES under the sheets, putting the diaphragm in. As a conciliatory gesture, William KISSES her neck. She SCREWS UP HER FACE as the diaphragm lodges in place.

Alex KISSES William on the forehead, and NUDGES him onto his back. She pushes up his T-shirt, exactly as before; he simultaneously WIGGLES out off his underpants. That stage completed, they KISS. He remembers something. He leans over and turns of his noise machine. She rolls her eyes. They KISS again. Just as one of waves GENTLY CRASHES:

Music (Loud): “Hawaii 5-0” theme.

Startled, the two roll onto their backs.

WILLIAM
Wow. She is fucking deaf.

ALEX
(excuse to be mad at him)
She’s a sweet old lady.

William moves in for a conciliatory kiss.

(CONTINUED)
LEX (CONT.)
I’m kind of tired.

Alex rolls away slightly, fiddles under the covers, removes her diaphragm and tosses it away blithely. She gives William a perfunctory kiss and rolls away from him. After a beat:

Music (Much Louder): “Hawaii 5-0” theme.

Alex rolls back and they both stare at the ceiling.

Dissolve to Later

Alex and William roll around, placing pillows on their heads, etc., trying to sleep.

VERY LOUD TV MAN (O.C.)
Simply put the beef...

VERY LOUD TV WOMAN (O.C.)
Or chicken?

VERY LOUD TV MAN (O.C.)
Or chicken. Or fish. Into the chamber, snap the SureSeal™, and pull back the Infuser™.

VERY LOUD TV WOMAN (O.C.)
And then we wait, what, an hour?

VERY LOUD TV MAN (O.C.)
It’s done.

VERY LOUD TV WOMAN (O.C.)
It’s done?!

VERY LOUD TV MAN (O.C.)
It’s marinated! Throw it on the grill!

SFX: Huge audience applause.

Alex and William stare at the ceiling.

Int. Building — Second Floor Landing — Even Later

William BANGS on the door.
Music (from inside): “Underdog” theme.

WILLIAM
(between bangs)
Mrs. Connelly? Katie?!

Int. Apartment – Bedroom – Early Morning

Sunlight comes through the window. Alex and William lie face up, bleary eyed.

Music (from above): The Theme from “The Bill Cosby Show.”
(The one in which he played gym teacher Chet Kincaid.)

The music stops. Alex and William close their eyes.

SFX: Alarm clock buzz

Int. Building – Second Floor Landing – Morning

A bedraggled Alex stands there. The last LOCK disengages.
The door CREAKS open. Mrs. Connelly (dressed as she was the night before) peers out across the chain.

MRS. CONNELLY
Please forgive me, dear. I must look awful. You woke me.

ALEX
I apologize for that, but Katie—

Mrs. Connelly furrows her brow as if insulted.

ALEX (CONT.)
Mrs. Connelly, we had some trouble sleeping last night; your TV was on, uh, quite loud.

MRS. CONNELLY
(merrily)
Oh, was it? I’m stone deaf! Getting old is a terrible thing.

ALEX
Well, if you could…

(CONTINUED)
RS. CONNELLY
It’s just that it gets so quiet at night, and I get frightened. The television helps me fall asleep.

ALEX
(impatient, but polite)
Could you turn the TV down, Mrs. Connelly?

MRS. CONNELLY
(put out)
Yes, Mrs. Rose.

ALEX
Rose is my husband’s name. I’m Alex Kendricks.

MRS. CONNELLY
Kendricks. That’s an Irish name, isn’t it?

ALEX
It could be. I’m on my way to work--

MRS. CONNELLY
Wives not taking their husband’s names. It’s a new world. Now the children, will they be Roses or Kendrickses?

ALEX
That’s a discussion we haven’t had. But I really--

MRS. CONNELLY
You should talk to your priest. What parish are you from?

ALEX
I do have to go, Mrs. Connelly; I’m going to be late for work.

MRS. CONNELLY
Oh, dear, before you go, could you take a look at my shower? The pipes in there are making a bangety-bang sound.
ALEX
Well, it’s an old boiler; they make sounds sometimes. It’s nothing.

MRS. CONNELLY
It’s a new sound. It goes bangety-bang, then… bang-bang.

ALEX
I do have to go. But I tell you what: right after work, William or I’ll look at your shower and see what we can do.

MRS. CONNELLY
That would be wonderful.

ALEX
Have a good day, Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY
(sweetly)
You have a nice time at work, Miss Kendricks.

She SLAMS the door, and starts RELOCKING.

Int. nyny Magazine – William’s Cubicle – Late Morning

An exhausted William sits in his cubicle sorting through a huge pile of “braidlets.” He picks one up and stares at it, waiting for inspiration. (On the cubicle wall behind him is a blown-up Publisher’s Weekly review of “A Coming of Age.” The headline is, “A respectable debut.”)

COOP (O.C.)
Rosie!

Coop enters with a SMALL, STRANGE-LOOKING MAN.

WILLIAM
(re: Braidlet)
What color would you say this is?

COOP
Cerulean. Listen, I want you to meet Ronald Hauge. He’s the guy who’s been killing all those prostitutes.
W
ILLIAM
“The Dollmaker”?

The Dollmaker bows in acknowledgement.

COOP
You know that number he was carving into their heels? I figured it out: It was his Social Security number!

(musses Dollmaker’s hair)
Criminal genius here!

THE DOLLMAKER
We’re writing the movie together!

COOP
First we turn you in. Then the book. Then the movie.

Coop starts to escort the Dollmaker off.

THE DOLLMAKER
And I reserve all toy rights.

COOP
(laughing)
There aren’t going to be any toys, you sick fuck.

William watches for several moments, then returns to his “Braidlets,” even more demoralized.

Int. θ Magazine – Art Department

Alex sits at her terminal, as SYN, also in her late 20s but much more downtown, watches over her shoulder.

On screen, we “walk” through a remarkably well-rendered CGI version of Alex and William’s apartment. Syn compares this to some old blue blueprints Alex has laid out next to the computer.

SYN
Jesus. How long did it take you to input all this?
Back to Scene

ALEX
Just a few hours. Syn, you have to see this place. The fireplaces are ten times more intricate than this... Ooh, watch this.

On Screen

The cursor clicks on a couch (which looks like one in the real apartment), and drags it to Dumpster™ in the corner.

ALEX (O.C.)
Bye-bye, Ikea!

The FLAMBOYANT CARTOON MAN suddenly pops onto screen.

FLAMBOYANT CARTOON MAN
Feng shui alert!

Back to Scene

ALEX
Oh, shut up.

Syn taps Alex on the back; she immediately clicks on the screen so a magazine spread pops up. Mikey walks up wearing an old Nazi uniform.

ALEX
(all business)
This looks great Syn, but maybe vary the point sizes on the quotes, and, oh, hello, Mike.

MIKEY
Lexual healing, Occasion of Syndie! Lex, we were wondering if you could do us a favor and test out this month’s sex tip.

Mikey hands Alex a galley; she and Syn read it together.

ALEX
Ew.
M
IKEY
I only ask because I know you’re married, and I think you’ll agree it’s not the sort of thing you’d want to spring on an unsuspecting date.

SYN
(suggestively)
Oh, I don’t know.

Before Alex can object, William turns to leave.

MIKEY
No need for the whorey details; a simple thumbs up/thumbs down will suffice – no pun intended.

As Mikey goosesteps off, Alex sadly regards the galley: it’s more than icky; it’s as an indictment of her marriage. Syn plucks it away.

SYN
I’ll do it.

ALEX
You don’t have to --

SYN
No worries.

Int. nyny Magazine – William’s Cubicle – Late Morning

William stares balefully at his computer. There are Braidlets everywhere.

CAMMY (O.C.)
Will-yam!

Cammy struts up, wielding a galley.

CAMMY
“Cerulean”? I had to look it up. I don’t like to look things up.
(handing him the galley)
And cut twelve lines.

WILLIAM
It’s only sixteen lines.
CAMMY
(happy head tilt)
Cut twelve of them.

She struts off, making an LOUD EXASPERATED SOUND.

**Ext. Park Slope F Stop — Early Evening**

It’s sleetling. Several commuters with umbrellas exit, followed by William, holding a nyny magazine over his head.

**Ext. 120 Prospect Park West — A Minute Later**

William runs up the steps.

**Int. Building — Foyer — Continuous**

William enters, soaking. He approaches his door, then remembers the Wiz™ bag he is holding. He turns around.

**Int. Building — Second Floor Landing — A Minute Later**

William waits impatiently as the door OPENS to the end of the chain. William grins. The door SLAMS, and reopens again.

**Int. Mrs. Connelly’s Apartment — Parlor — Continuous**

Mrs. Connelly is still wearing the Oriental dress. William talks to her, standing in the outside hall.
ILLIAM
(reaching into bag)
Hi, evening, Mrs. Connelly. I bought you these headphones, for your TV.
(glances at old TV, unsure)
I’m sure it has an ear jack, somewhere...

MRS. CONNELLY
That is so sweet, dear, but I could never wear those. I don’t pay thirty dollars a week for this hairdo just to muss it up.

WILLIAM
You get your hair done every week?

Alex, also soaking, appears behind William.

ALEX
(overly solicitous)
Good evening, Mrs. Connelly!

We hear VERY LOUD BANGING. William and Alex are startled.

MRS. CONNELLY
Oh, let me introduce you to Mr. Dzerzhinksy.

Mrs. Connelly patters off and the couple follows her to:

Int. Mrs. Connelly's Apartment - Bathroom - Continuous

MR. DZERZHINSKY, a very large Russian man, stands in the tub, using a huge pipe wrench to fasten some new copper piping in the shower. The entire wall has been torn open.

MRS. CONNELLY
This is Mr. Dzerzhinksy, the plumber.

MR. DZERZHINSKY
(grunt)

Alex points to a pile of broken ceramic on the ground.

ALEX
Those were the original tiles.
M
R. DZERZHINKSY
(climbing out of tub)
Yeah, you’re gonna need a tile guy.
(looks down at William)
You the landlord?

WILLIAM
Yes, but I didn’t order any work.

Mr. Dzerzhinksy hands a bill to William anyway, and goes about packing up his tools.

ALEX
Mrs. Connelly, I told you I would take a look at this when I got home.

MRS. CONNELLY
I know, dear, but it started going bang-bang-bang-bang-BANG and I thought it was going to explode.

MR. DZERZHINKSY
(shrugs)
It coulda.

WILLIAM
(re: bill)
You were here for four hours?

MR. DZERZHINKSY
More or less.

WILLIAM
I’m not going pay for something I didn’t auth—

Mr. Dzerzhinksy belly-bumps William.

MR. DZERZHINKSY
Look, my friend, I already did the work. Or I can rip the pipes outta the wall.

WILLIAM
(giving up)
No, no.

Mr. Dzerzhinksy exits. William and Alex walk with Mrs. Connelly back toward the door.

(CONTINUED)
ALEX
This is my card at work, Mrs. Connelly. In the future, please call me before...

(remembering)
Oh, and I got you a present.

Alex pulls a device out of a Lechner™'s bag. Mrs. Connelly looks at it dubiously.

ALEX
It’s one of those clap-on, clap-off things. We can attach it to your TV and then, when you’re falling asleep, you can clap to turn off the TV.

MRS. CONNELLY
It sounds so complicated.

ALEX
No, all you have to do is clap. We just plug it into the wall.

MRS. CONNELLY
It might start a fire. Thank you anyway. Oh, Billy, before I forget, it’s the first of the month.

She patters over to a counter and retrieves a small stack of money. She counts it out into William’s palm.

MRS. CONNELLY
Twenty... forty... fifty... fifty-five...
sixty... sixty-five... seventy... seventy-five... seventy-six... seventy-seven... seventy-eight... seventy-nine... eighty-one... eighty-two... eighty-three... eighty-four... eighty-five... eighty-six... eighty-seven... eighty-eight...

She goes back to the counter and returns with a coin purse. She opens it and dispenses one coin at a time.

MRS. CONNELLY (CONT.)
Eight-eight twenty-five... fifty...
seventy-five... eighty-nine dollars... and twenty-five, thirty-five, forty-five, fifty cents.
ALEX
Thank you, Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY
Would you like to count it?

WILLIAM
You look like an honest person.

**Int. Apartment — Foyer — Moments Later**

William and Alex enter and hang their wet things on the spiral-staircase-cum-coat-rack.

WILLIAM
I’m gonna put a stop on that check.

ALEX
You can’t do that.

WILLIAM
So he sues me.

ALEX
He’ll beat you with a wrench.

Alex disappears down the hall into the bedroom. William silently reenacts his confrontation with Mr. Dzerzhinsky, with him winning this time.

ALEX (O.C.)
(Horrified Shriek)

**Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Continuous**

Alex stands, looking up in abject terror. William trots in. Unable to speak, Alex points to the ceiling.

**On the ceiling**

A fairly large water stain has started in the corner, apparently caused by Mr. Dzerzhinsky’s plumbing.

WILLIAM
*(not that upset)*
We’ll just patch it.
LEX
(near tears)
It’s a canvas ceiling! You can’t patch it; you have to replace the whole thing.

WILLIAM
(sardonic laugh)
Well, we’re not doing that.

Alex CHOKES on a SOB.

WILLIAM
Okay, look: I’ll fix the leak, so at least it doesn’t get any worse.

ALEX
You’ll fix the leak.

WILLIAM
(gesturing to stain)
Or, by all means, call a professional.

ALEX
(sniffles)
I’m going to bed.

She exits frame. He looks at his watch.

WILLIAM
It’s only eight-o-clock.

William then realizes he’s exhausted and starts to button his shirt as he exits frame.

Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Night

Alex and William stare at the ceiling. From above we hear SOME KIND OF JAPANESE GAME SHOW.

Ext. Midtown Manhattan — Outside a Starbucks — Morning

Music: “Let’s Have Another Cup of Coffee” by Lyle Lovett

A dog-tired William slurps coffee from his stainless steel cup as he dodges sidewalk traffic. He continues half way down the block, realizes his cup is empty, and turns back for more.
Int. f Magazine —
Alex’s Workstation — Afternoon

Alex sits at her computer, but appears to be fast asleep. Mikey enters (wearing a tiny fez), smiles and leans in close to Alex’s. He licks her lips. Her eyes flutter open. Startled, she falls off her chair (and out of frame). She pops back up a moment later and hops onto her stool, smiling gamely at Mikey.

Int. Mrs. Connelly’s Apartment — Bathroom — Night

As Mrs. Connelly looks on from the door, an exhausted William reads a home fix-it book. He asks Alex for something; she wearily rummages in a shopping bag and pulls out a brand new wrench. William takes the wrench, consults the book again, and gives one pipe a quarter turn. Water sprays out of five different locations.

Ext. Prospect Park — Morning

It’s very cold, but bright. Young couples walk strollers and dogs toward the park.

Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Continuous

Alex and William lay on the bed, on top of the sheets, still in their work clothes. (The water stain now extends onto the wall.) Alex awakes, and shakes William.

ALEX
Up, up! We’re going shopping today.

WILLIAM
No, Saturday. Sleeping.

William rolls over onto his face.

ALEX
Shopping.

But she doesn’t move. She closes her eyes. A moment of peace.

We hear LOUD CACKLING and BANGING. Alex opens her eyes.

Int. Building — Foyer — A Few Moments Later

Alex peeks out her door. Three OLD BIDDIES lug cases for a tuba, trombone and French horn up the stairs.

(CONTINUED)
FIRST OLD Biddy
It’s a cold one.

SECOND OLD Biddy
Cold for November.

THIRD OLD Biddy
Winter’s coming.

Int. Apartment – Bedroom – A Moment After That

Alex trudges back in and collapses on the bed. From above, we hear INDISTINCT CACKLES OF GREETING and CHAIRS SCOOTCHING. Then BRASS INSTRUMENTS warming up. Then agonizing silence. Then a “SONG” starts.

WILLIAM
ohgod.

ALEX
What song is that?

WILLIAM
“On the Street Where You Live?”

ALEX
It sounds like “Every Breath you Take.”

William sits up, wearily.

WILLIAM
Let’s go shopping.

Ext. Manhattan – 25th Street Flea Market – Day

Alex haggles with an ANTIQUES MERCHANT.

ALEX
I’m sorry, but I can’t go over one-sixty.

ANTIQUES MERCHANT
Then I’m sorry, too.

ALEX
Okay then.

Alex start to walk away, but then turns back.
LEX (CONT.)

(laughing)
You win that one.

Alex writes a check. William walks up excitedly, holding a manual typewriter.

WILLIAM
A Remington Royal! Twenty dollars.

ALEX
What were they asking?

WILLIAM
Twenty dollars.

Alex shakes her head in disappointment.

Ext. The Strand Bookstore — Afternoon

Int. The Strand — Basement — Continuous

William walks down the “Q-R” aisle, knowing exactly where he’s going. He looks up at a shelf, where we see the slender spines of “A Coming of Age W.S. Rose” He counts the copies, and frowns.

WILLIAM
(hasn’t changed)
Thirteen.

William pulls a copy down and lovingly opens it. There’s a big red sticker on the first page.

WILLIAM
A dollar!?

Ext. Grand Street — Outside SOHO Antique Fair — Continuous

Alex supervises a cabbie as he finished tying down a trunk crammed with antiques. Satisfied, Alex opens the passenger door, revealing the inside is also crammed with bags and furniture. Even the cabbie’s front passenger seat is packed with stuff. Alex wedges herself into the cab strategically.

Int. The Strand — Information Desk — Continuous

William, thirteen copies of “Coming of Age” under one arm, addresses a typically laid-back STRAND WORKER.
WILLIAM
Where do you keep the good books?

STRAND WORKER
We don’t make those kind of judgments.

WILLIAM
I mean, you know, the good-looking books.

STRAND WORKER
Good looking books?

WILLIAM
Good books, but also, nice-looking.

STRAND WORKER
Third floor. We sell them by the yard.

Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Late Afternoon

William lovingly places his Remington Royal on a stand in the nook. He rolls in a piece of paper, looks out the window for inspiration, and HITS a key. It sticks. He unsticks it, HITS another key. It sticks. He notices something out the window.

His POV

Alex is across the street, watching children play in the park. She has the sad, yearning smile of a man by himself at a strip club. She looks up, sees William in the window, and waves at him, smiling giddily.

Ext. Building — Night

There are Christmas lights in the window.

Music: “Baby, It’s Cold Outside” by Dean Martin and Jill Scott (Scott mixed into Martin original)

Int. Apartment — Parlor — Continuous

A mini-stereo is on the mantle, with a CD cover leaning against it which reads, “A Pottery Barn Holidays.”

Alex happily rearranges several small pieces of furniture around the parlor. She has shoved their old couch against the wall and stacked much of their old crap on top of it.

(Continued)
Int. Apartment –
Library – Continuous

William stands on a chair, placing nice leather-bound books into his leaded glass bookcases. He exudes self-satisfaction.

Alex enters, carrying a small end table. She puts it down, walks up behind William and hugs him around the waist.

ALEX
(romantic)
We’re making a home.

WILLIAM
It’s kind of hot in here, isn’t it?

ALEX
(the mood is ruined; she releases him)
It’s steam heat. We’re on the first floor so we get the full blast. It’ll go off in a couple hours.

WILLIAM
Welcome to “This Old, Old House.”

Alex picks up a book off William’s unshelved pile.

ALEX
“Itanho”?

WILLIAM

ALEX
It says it’s by Walter Scott.

WILLIAM
There were two versions.

ALEX
(picking up another book)
“Geographical Survey of N.E. New York State, 1945.”

WILLIAM
It’s research. For the new novel.
ALEX
I thought the new novel was about a novelist forced to work at a city magazine.

WILLIAM
I’m tossing around a couple of ideas.

ALEX
I didn’t know you spoke German.

WILLIAM
What?

ALEX
(re: third book)
This one’s in German.

William steps down from the chair.

WILLIAM
(defensive)
Books aren’t completely for reading.
It’s not like all the furniture you’re buying is completely practical.

ALEX
It all serves a purpose.

William points to two end tables sitting side by side.

WILLIAM
So that end table, it serves as an end table to that end table?

ALEX
Well, first of all, that’s not an end table, it’s an antique telephone stand, and second of all, it’s not going there, it’s going upstairs in the hallway.

WILLIAM
We don’t live upstairs.

ALEX
But we will. Eventually.
WILLIAM
How about that? What purpose does that serve?

He points to what looks like a two-foot tall wooden pyramid.

ALEX
That serves a design purpose.

WILLIAM
What is it?

ALEX
Obviously, it’s a pyramid.

William is about to go off on that, but then notices a small antique rocking crib.

WILLIAM
What’s this?

ALEX
It’s a conversation piece.

WILLIAM
And what conversation would that be?
(looks around)
How much shit did you buy anyway?

ALEX
It won’t look so crowded once we get the old stuff out.

Before William can respond, there’s a knock on the door. Alex jumps to answer it. It’s Mrs. Connelly, in Church clothes.

MRS. CONNELLY
I hate to bother you two on a Sunday evening like this, but I’m cold.

Int. Mrs. Connelly’s Apartment – Doorway – A Minute Later

Mrs. Connelly leads the two in. William rolls his eyes.

ALEX
It doesn’t seem that cold in here, Mrs. Connelly.

(CONTINUED)
RS. CONNELLY
I’m cold. Mr. Fawkes is cold.

She gestures to Mr. Fawkes, who just sits there.

WILLIAM
Maybe that’s because Mr. Fawkes is supposed to be in a South American rain forest, not New York City in November.

Alex shoots William a look, and puts her hand on Mrs. Connelly’s shoulder, gently. She leads her to her chair.

ALEX
The heat just started up, Mrs. Connelly. I think if you wait, it’ll be fine in just a few minutes. If you want, I have a sweater you could borrow. Or a caftan.

MRS. CONNELLY
No, that’s all right, dear. I understand.

Int. Apartment — Moments Later

As they re-enter:

WILLIAM
It was at least seventy degrees up there.

ALEX
Oh, she’s just lonely.

WILLIAM
I don’t think her one-eight-nine-fifty covers paid companionship.

(surveys apartment)

Alex, I don’t want to be a spoilsport, but we need to make a budget for all this furniture you’re buying.

ALEX
Let’s not forget your “books.”

WILLIAM
My books only cost $40 a yard.
Alex, trying to make up, hugs William.

**ALEX**
You’re such a good shopper.

**WILLIAM** *(surveying the room)*
I don’t know; it just feels like we’re putting all our eggs in one basket.

**ALEX** *(about to cry again)*
It’s not a basket. It’s our home.

There is a KNOCK on the door.

**Int. Building — William and Alex’s door — Continuous**

The door opens, revealing an exasperated William.

**WILLIAM**
Yes, Mrs. Connelly?

**His POV**

Two police uniforms. He adjusts his gaze upwards into the large, sober faces of OFFICER DAN and OFFICER SANDRA.

**OFFICER SANDRA**
We have the report of a heat emergency.

**WILLIAM**
She called you?

**OFFICER DAN**
Come with us upstairs, please?

**Int. Building — Second Floor Landing — Moments Later**

Officer Dan KNOCKS. William rolls his eyes.

**WILLIAM**
You’ll see. She’s old, and, you know, likes to complain.

We hear the recognizable sound of WINDOWS SLIDING SHUT. The door opens (without the usual rigmarole). Mrs. Connelly stands there, wrapped in several shawls, tiny and weak.

(Continued)
RS. CONNELLY
I’m terribly cold.

The officers walk into the apartment. We can see their breath. It’s like “The Exorcist.”

OFFICER DAN
Good Christ.

MR. FAWKES
So cold. So cold.

Ext. Building – Street – A Few Minutes Later

The squad car is parked in front, lights flashing. William and Alex stands on the sidewalk, shivering without coats. Officer Dan is writing a citation.

OFFICER DAN
That poor, dear sweet woman.

WILLIAM
Look, I think it’s pretty obvious she opened all the windows to –

OFFICER DAN
(pointing aggressively)
Shut up, you little fuck. What I should be doing is throwing your naked ass in a cell and hosing you down for the night, but there’s been a lot of bad publicity lately, so all I can do is fine you.

He hands the citation to William.

WILLIAM
A thousand dollars?!

OFFICER DAN
Are you complaining, fuck?

ALEX
No, we’re not.
OFFICER DAN
Next time I enter Mrs. Connelly’s apartment — and I will be checking in — I want to break out in a sweat, I want to be on the goddam beach at Hedonism II, do you understand?

WILLIAM/ALEX
Yes, officer.

They shiver for a long beat.

WILLIAM
Is that all?

OFFICER DAN
No, it’s such a lovely night, I thought we would stand out here for a while.

We PULL OUT slowly as they continue to shiver.

Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Later that Night

The two sit in bed, wearing little but still drenched in sweat. Several bills and fines are laid out before them.

WILLIAM
(wiping brow)
I sure hope she’s comfortable up there.

ALEX
It says the fine isn’t due for 45 days.

WILLIAM
Oh, well, everything will be different then.

ALEX
It will be. We’ll get our year-end bonuses, our raises...

WILLIAM
(re: credit receipt)
Couch? What couch?
ALEX  
*(excited about this)*  
Oh, it’s being delivered Tuesday. It’s really more of a love seat, but it’s a George Smith and —

WILLIAM  
Let’s cancel it.

ALEX  
*(hurt)*  
It’s my Christmas present.

WILLIAM  
Your Christmas present is  
*(pointing to ceiling)*  
granny’s trip to Hedonism II up there; mine is all that lovely exposed copper piping in her bathroom.

ALEX  
*(broaching)*  
Well, you know what we could do…

WILLIAM  
We’re not taking money from your parents.

ALEX  
My parents won’t give us any money. They don’t like you, remember?

WILLIAM  
Even if they would, we won’t.

ALEX  
*(fearing his reaction)*  
I think maybe we should dip into the  
*(under her breath)*  
Fuck You Money.

WILLIAM  
*(reacting poorly)*  
Not the Fuck You Money! I need that in order to be able to say, “fuck you!”

ALEX  
It’s there for emergencies.
W

ILLIAM

(you just don’t understand)
Without the Fuck You Money, I have to
just say, “O-kay.” If you take away my
Fuck You power...

ALEX

(switching tactics)
You know what? Forget I said it. You’re
right. We’ve invested a lot of money
into this house, and it’s time it
started paying us back.

WILLIAM

(thrown)
Um. And how, by what mechanism...

ALEX
You’ll find out at the party.

WILLIAM
What party?

Ext. 120 Prospect Park West – Evening – A Few Days Later

A series of town cars pull up, disgorging media swells.

Music: “I Got the World on a String” by Jerry Lewis (or, if
this proves distracting, the Sarah Vaughn version)

Int. Building – Foyer – Continuous

A coat check has been set up; Alex greets some guests at
her door.

ALEX
Welcome to our home.

With a sweeping gesture, she introduces the apartment. All
traces of their old furniture are gone; it’s perfectly
done. The spiral staircase is covered with hay; a few tiny
pumpkins and ears of baby Indian corn suggest a
Thanksgiving theme.

The apartment is filled with New York media types. We TRACK
through the crowd, hearing snippets of conversation.
TINA BROWN
They could not have gotten this for
less than a million.

KURT ANDERSEN
Look at the gadrooning on this
sideboard.

JANE PRATT
(re: couch)
Oh my god, is that a George Smith?

Int. Apartment — Kitchen — Continuous

William is at the door to the kitchen, talking to a server.

WILLIAM
Let’s try to spread the shrimp out over
the whole evening, okay?

A hand reaches in and grabs a handful of shrimp. It’s Coop.

COOP
(mouth full of shrimp)
Good shrimp.

WILLIAM
Who invited you?

COOP
Your saucy wife.
(surveying crowd)
Lots of graphic designers. I like that.

Coop makes a diving-into-water gesture and exits. William
stands there smiling uncomfortably. Alex slips in next to
him. She beams.

WILLIAM
So when do we ask them to chip in rent
money?

ALEX
You just watch. This party is going to
completely change our social — and
professional — positions.

(continued)
WILLIAM
(seeing something)
Oh, Christ.

In Library

Mrs. Connelly is at the party (in her cheongsam), talking to a middle-aged Indian gentleman cradling a glass of wine.

On William and Alex

WILLIAM
And she’s talking to Bakshi! Well, that’s six imprints I’ll never be published on.

ALEX
Oh, this is the perfect opportunity to meet him!
(nudges William)
Go on. Get over there. Suck some butt. That’s what this is for.

She pushes William into the crowd. Forcing a smile, he sidles up next to Mrs. Connelly and BAKSHI.

MRS. CONNELLY
I couldn’t pray to a cow. Not with a straight face.
(Seeing William)
Oh, Billy! What a lovely party?

WILLIAM
Do you need something, Mrs. Connelly?

BAKSHI
Mrs. Connelly was just telling me what a wonderful novelist you are.

MRS. CONNELLY
Mr. Bakshi publishes novels. You two should talk.

Mrs. Connelly patters away, leaving William and Bakshi to smile at one another.

At the Entrance – A Little Later

Alex is talking to her PARENTS, real UPPER EAST SIDE TYPES.

(CONTINUED)
LEX’S MOTHER
I still wish you had consulted me first, but I do have to admit this is a lovely condo, dear.

ALEX
Thanks, Mom. That means a lot to —

LEX’S MOTHER
(looks around, wrinkles nose)
Please call me before you start decorating.

Alex gives her party smile a boost.

In the Library — Later
William is still talking to Bakshi (now drinking bourbon).

BAKSHI
You must let us publish your next novel.

WILLIAM
(laughs)
Okay.

BAKSHI
Promise you’ll call me before you start anything.

WILLIAM
Yeah, sure.

BAKSHI
“I promise.”

WILLIAM
I promise.

Mrs. Connelly patters up with an open copy of William’s book. She points to the page.

MRS. CONNELLY
Dear, I hate to criticize, but you misspelled this word. It’s C-O-M-I-N-G.

She hands the book to William and patters off.
(sharing joke, man to man)
It’s a slightly different word.

(looking at page)
Then it should have two “m”s.

In the Parlor

Alex is talking to Cammy, who is wearing a very little black dress.

CAMMY
Alex, this place is supercute.

ALEX
That’s what we were going for.

CAMMY
I never knew old could be so yummy.

ALEX
Would you like the tour, Cammy?

CAMMY
Of course!

Cammy hooks her arm into Alex’s and they proceed. Alex is about to point out a detail when Cammy suddenly lets go and presses up against an unsuspecting CHARLIE ROSE. She smiles as a CAMERA FLASH goes off, then returns to Alex.

CAMMY (CONT.)
I invited our photographer; I hope you don’t mind.

ALEX
(excited)
Our party’s going to be in “Cammy-Cam”?

CAMMY
Maybe.

Alex and Cammy exit frame, revealing Coop and Syn.

COOP
You work with Alex? What do you do?
S
YN
I test the sex tricks.

COOP
Great job!

In the Library — Continue

Bakshi, his hand raised, and is leading William in an oath.

BAKSHI
“I swear I will not accept any advance
before giving Bakshi a chance to match it.”

WILLIAM
(embarrassed, but doing it anyway)
I swear...

Cammy grabs William by the elbow as she and Alex sweep through.

CAMMY
Come, Will-yam.

William is yanked o.s. Bemused, Bakshi sips his drink.

In the Hallway — A Little Later

Alex and Cammy and William hold hands like kids on a field trip. The glass bricks have been replaced with beautiful antique stained glass.

ALEX
We got the stained glass from an old
Catholic Church that went out of business.

CAMMY
Pretty.

In the Bedroom — Continuous

Cammy is entranced. William stands, hands in pockets.

CAMMY
Super yummy.
(To Alex)
I assume you did all this.

ALEX
(squeezes William’s arm)
In consultation with William. You know, if you ever wanted to do a spread on this place. “The New Old” or something...

CAMMY
(nice bitch)
We usually only do the homes of more, celebrated, New Yorkers.

ALEX
Oh, I know. I was just, William said that sometimes you shoot celebrities in other people’s nicer apartments and pretend...

She trails off. Cammy stabs William with an icy smile.

WILLIAM
I guess that was a trade secret...

An awkward silence. Broken by:

Music (very loud): Theme from “Alfred Hitchcock Presents”

ALEX
Did I tell you this is a duplex? Would you like to see the second floor?

CAMMY
(magnanimous, for her)
Of course.

A LOW CREAKING is heard. They all turn to the corner of the room where the water stain is. A huge section of the ceiling PEELS down and dangles there.

ALEX
We’re getting that fixed.

Int. Building – Second Floor Landing – Moments Later

They’re outside Mrs. Connelly’s door. Alex KNOCKS loudly.
ALEX
Right now we have this sweet old tenant...

WILLIAM
She’s deaf as a post.

ALEX
Poor thing.

Cammy smiles at Alex, impatiently. Alex reaches into her pocket.

ALEX
I’ve got a key — Alex the Landlady — we’ll just peek in.

Alex quickly UNLOCKS three locks.

ALEX
Now, it’s a bit elderly person-y, but, I think you’ll see the potential.

Alex opens the door a crack, and ushers Cammy over. Cammy sticks her head in the door opening. Alex also peeks in.

Their POV

Mrs. Connelly, wielding a can of Mace™, baring her teeth.

Back to Scene

Cammy receives a FULL BLAST of Mace™, which also catches Alex in the face. Alex SCREAMS. Cammy, GAGGING and SCREAMING, staggers backward, and down the stairs.

Ext. Building — A Half Hour Later

An ambulance pulls out. A squad car is parked in front, lights flashing. Guests stream out, shaking their heads.

Int. Building — Second Floor Landing — Continuous

Officer Dan has his arm around Mrs. Connelly, who looks very much the victim. William sits on the landing, pressing a cold cloth to Alex’s face.

(CONTINUED)
OFFICER SANDRA

(lecturing them)
Being a landlord doesn’t give you the right to enter your tenant’s premises any time you feel like it.

ALEX

(teary, upset)
I wasn’t. I knocked!

WILLIAM
She used pepper spray! That’s illegal, right?

OFFICER DAN
I gave it to her. Do you have a problem with that?

WILLIAM
I’m just saying, it’s illegal.

OFFICER DAN
Your wife is the one who broke and entered, buddy. Mrs. Connelly, would you like to press charges?

WILLIAM
Her press charges?

Officer Dan nonchalantly kicks backward, HITTING William in the gut with his heel. William doubles over in PAIN.

OFFICER DAN

(matter-of-fact)
Quiet now.

MRS. CONNELLY
Oh, I couldn’t press charges. They’re such a nice young couple.

OFFICER DAN
That’s your decision. If you change your mind, give me a call. Is it warm enough for you in there?

MRS. CONNELLY
Oh, yes, it’s quite nice.
Office Dan leads Mrs. Connelly back into her apartment, as Alex SNIFLES and William MOANS.

Close on

The front page of the New York Post. There is a huge picture of Cammy trying to shield her face from a photographer. The headline reads, ‘BOY IS HER FACE RED’ The subhed reads, “Cammy Whammied by Pepper Granny”

Int. nyny Magazine – William’s Cubicle – Morning

William drops the paper on his desk with a SIGH. There is a yellow sticky on his computer. It reads, “See me – C X”

Int. nyny Magazine – Cammy’s Office – A little later

William enters. Cammy wears sunglasses and a trowel of make-up, but we can still see that her face is in bad shape. Her arm is in a sling. William sits, and smiles weakly.

CAMMY
Do you know how much this face cost?

WILLIAM
Whatever it was, it was worth it.

CAMMY
You are fired.

WILLIAM
Cammy, if I may, I think you’re overreacting...

Cammy removes her sunglasses; her eyes are swollen shut.

CAMMY
It’s not just this. You
(searching for right word)
suck. Your captions are too long and
nobody understands them and, oh, I
know, you’re a novelist. Well, I read
that, I tried to read that “novel” of
yours and
(searching)
Suck.

(Continued)
This is William’s moment of truth. He says nothing.

CAMMY
(casual flick of the wrist)
Out. Out damn spot.

Shell-shocked, William rises and walks away from Cammy. When he’s safely out of earshot:

WILLIAM
Fuck you.

Cammy, already on the phone, clearly does not hear him.

CAMMY
(whatever)
You, too.

Ext. Lower East Side — Sixth Street — Night

William and Alex sit in the window framed by Christmas lights. A neon sign above them reads, “NY Dehli.”

Int. NY Dehli — Continuous

A cheesy combo of traditional Indian kitsch and faux hip. A sitar-lead combo is playing an Indian-inflected “Mood Indigo.”

WILLIAM
(past happy into manic)
“Fuck you,” I said. “Fuck You!”

Other diners turn to look. (Alex self-consciously shields the half of face that was hit with the mace.)

ALEX
(deliberately lower level)
I’m not sure this was the best time to deploy your f-u.

WILLIAM
You don’t pick the time; the time picks you!

Alex can’t quite make sense of that remark.

(CONTINUED)
ILLIAM (CONT.)
Don’t worry, look: I’ll bang out the first two chapters and by the time my severance runs out we’ll have the advance money.

ALEX
You quit and they gave you severance?

WILLIAM
Just two weeks. The point is, we’re both living our dreams now: I’m a novelist and you live in really nice apartment!

William’s eyes seek affirmation. Alex bites her lip.

ALEX
I think you should ask for your job back.

WILLIAM
(reacting poorly)
I can’t do that! I’ve already said Fuck You! If I go back now I’ll be an indentured servant, an employee. I’ll have no free will!

ALEX
(almost a whisper)
It won’t be that bad.

WILLIAM
(he stands, acting it out)
Oh, bosslady, you want me to eat that big plate of shit? Right away, ma’am. Please, ma’am, can I eat some more shit, ma’am? Please, could you make it a big steaming bowl of raw, chunky shit?

INDIAN RESTAURANT OWNER
I am asking you to leave now.

Many of the restaurant’s patrons are no longer hungry.

(CONTINUED)
Ext. Building —
Morning — Establishing

Close on William and Alex

William cradles Alex’s face affectionately. (She is wearing a lot of make-up in an attempt to mask the mace injury.)

WILLIAM
Everything will be fine. Everything will be great.

Int. Apartment — Library — Continuous

William and Alex stand by the door. Alex is dressed for work; William is wearing an old T-shirt and underpants.

WILLIAM
Have a good day at work.

ALEX
(brave smile)
Write a good novel.

WILLIAM
I will.

They kiss. She exits. He adjusts his underpants.

Int. Apartment — Writer’s Nook — A Little Later

William (still in underwear) is talking on the phone.

WILLIAM
He might know me as “Billy.”

Intercut with:

Int. Fancy Publishing House — Continuous

Bakshi’s assistant is on the phone.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
Mr. Bakshi says he’s never heard of you.
W
ILLIAM
He said he wanted my second novel. He
made me promise...

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
Did he say this at a party?

WILLIAM
He came to a housewarming. At our
house.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
I’m sorry to tell you this, but Mr.
Bakshi is a terrible alcoholic. He
won’t remember you. You didn’t have sex
with him, did you?

WILLIAM
No.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
Good. No harm done then.

Int. Magazine — Mikey’s Office — Continuous

It’s a huge wood-paneled office. There’s: a moose head on
the wall with huge meerschaum sticking out of its mouth; an
expensively framed John Wayne Gacy clown painting; a Madame
Tussaud’s wax figure of Jane Fonda in her “Barbarella”
outfit; and the like.

The staff awaits Mikey’s arrival. Alex and Syn seem to be
the only female attendees. They chit-chat.

ALEX
It’s a bad time for us, financially,
but I feel like I need to encourage
William to pursue his dream so he can
grow out of it before we have children.

MIKEY (O.C.)
Sorry I’m late, troops.

Mikey walks Alex and Syn, completely naked. He sits down at
his large oak desk (a replica of JFK’s desk, with a ♂
replacing the presidential seal.)
MIKEY
I was masturbating in the shower this morning when I had this genius idea. The Naked and Drunk ish. We’re going to write and edit the next Man mag completely denuded and totally besotted.

REALLY FAT GUY
In theory, that’s intriguing--

MIKEY
It’s not up for a vote. Off with your togs, gentlemen!
(to Alex and Syn)
And ladies.

The male editors start to self-consciously undress.

Close on Alex

She can’t believe this is happening. She can’t afford to quit but she’s not about to...

Wider shot

Syn stands next to her, totally nude.

SYN
C’mon, it’ll be fun!

All the half-naked men stare at Alex.

Int. Apartment – Writer’s Nook – A Little Later

William (still in underwear) rolls a piece of paper into the typewriter. It comes out a little uneven. He pulls the paper out and puts in a fresh sheet. He smiles.

Sfx: Roaring vacuum cleaner

William frowns.

Int. Mrs. Connelly’s apartment – Front Parlor – Continuous

Mrs. Connelly is randomly vacuuming with an old Hoover, which is spewing out more dust than it could possibly take in.
William stares at the ceiling as the VACUUMING SOUND seems to get louder and louder.

Mrs. Connelly maneuvers the vacuum into the alcove above William’s writer’s nook. Satisfied, she patters away, leaving the vacuum RUNNING.

William sits, fuming, at the AIRPLANE ENGINE ROAR above him.

Mrs. Connelly sits in her chair, reading a copy of the Irish Times, oblivious to the noise.

Alex works hunched over her drafting table, naked. (We can’t really see anything) We hear the TINKLE of a bell. Mikey appears wearing a barmaid’s serving tray, on which are shot glasses and a bottle.

MIKEY
(a la the song, “Tequila”)
Tah-Kee-ee-la!

Mikey pours two shots; Syn walks over and grabs one, dutifully downing it. Alex waves Mikey off, keeping her arms close to her body.

MIKEY (CONT.)
(jovially threatening)
Bottoms up, employee!

SYN
Take your meds, Kendricks.

Alex picks up the glass. She throws back the shot, but does not:

MIKEY
Swallow!
CONTINUED:

Alex SWALLOWS.

MIKEY
I love when they swallow.

Mikey exits; we hear a bell TINKLE.

MIKEY (O.C.)
Tah-keeeeee-lah!

Int. Apartment — Writer’s Nook — Afternoon

William sits, staring at a blank page, as above him:

Music: Scratchy record of John McCormick singing “She Moved Through the Fair.”

He can’t take it anymore. He gets up and stalks out of the room, returning moments later with a broom. Standing in the center of the room, he BANGS on the ceiling viciously with the broom. A big hunk of plaster HITS him in the face.

As William turns to wipe the plaster from his eye, he sees:

Out the Window

Mrs. Connelly sits on bench across the street, feeding the birds.

Then he notices:

JOHN MCCRIMICK RECORD
(skipping)
Till our wedding day... till our wedding
day... till our wedding day

Int. Alex’s Magazine — Alex’s Workstation — Afternoon

Naked Alex is surrounded by several fleshy, flaccid male colleagues with urgent business.

NAKED MALE EDITOR
(handling her a slip of paper)
Here’s the head for that snake-eating story.

ALEX
(flare)
Wow. Nobody’s e-mail seems to be working.

(CONTINUED)
ASSORTED NAKED MALE EDITORS
Yeah/ I don’t know what’s going on/
Totally crashed/ Etc.

Int. Apartment — Writer’s Nook — Afternoon

It is blissfully silent. William swigs a beer and focuses his creative forces on the blank page in the typewriter. He stares in absolute silence for a full eighteen minutes.

At first he’s considering and rejecting ideas; then he starts to hit his thighs with his fists, as if to spur himself on; then he hits his temples with his fists; then it begins to dawn on him that he really doesn’t have any ideas; he slips into depression and finally into the expression of a dog begging to be shot.

SFX: A cascading cacophony of falling objects.

William’s face momentarily breaks out in relief, quickly converted into indignation about being interrupted.

Int. Building — Foyer — Moments Later

William bursts out the door (wearing a ratty robe over his underwear). He immediately steps on something sharp and YELPS. He looks down and sees garbage on the ground. His eyes follow the trail of greasy cans and bottles and bones up the stairs, ending in the image of Mrs. Connelly at the top of the stairs standing behind a tipped over kitchen trash can.

MRS. CONNELLY
Oh dear, I’ve spilt it. I’m so sorry; I shouldn’t even be trying to do this at my age. The last boy used to take out the garbage for me.

Mrs. Connelly turns and goes back into her apartment, systematically LOCKING her door. William is stupefied.

Ext. Building — Front Steps — Early Evening

Alex trudges up with steps. She’s had a bad day.

Int. Building — Foyer — Continuous

Alex is starting to remove her coat when she notices all the garbage on the stairs. She looks as if she might cry.

(CONTINUED)
On T.V.

A scene from “Double Indemnity.”

   FRED MACMURRAY
   (to Barbara Stanwick)
   This has got to be perfect, do you understand? Straight down the line.

Int. Apartment — Entranceway — Continuous

Alex walks in. She is about to mention the garbage on the stairs when she notices William, still in his underwear, sitting in the parlor, watching T.V.

Int. Parlor — Continuous

William is sullenly nursing a beer. (There are a few empties at his side.) Alex appears behind him.

   ALEX
   (evenly)
   How’s the novel going?

William doesn’t turn to acknowledge her.

   WILLIAM
   (points at ceiling)
   I can’t write here.

   ALEX
   So you’re just going to watch T.V.

   WILLIAM
   (glum rationalization)
   This is research. Nobody’s buying literary novels these days, so I’m gonna knock out a quick thriller for the cash. Hemingway did it; it’s not dishonorable.

   ALEX
   (worried)
   How much cash, do you think?
Sfx: Loud knocking at the door.

WILLIAM
(eyes fixed to T.V.)
If that’s grandmama, tell her to clean her shit off the stairs.

Int. Apartment – Entranceway – a Moment Later

The LOUD KNOCKING continues until Alex opens the door. It’s Officers Dan and Sandra.

OFFICER DAN
Have you no decency?

William strolls up with a tipsy swagger.

WILLIAM
Good thing you’re here, Officer Dan...

Officer Dan grabs William by the collar of his T-shirt and yanks him out the door.

Int. Building – Foyer – Continuous

Officer Dan drags William to the garbage-strewn stairs and pushes into it, much as one would drag a dog to rub his nose in his own shit.

OFFICER DAN
Pick it up.

William and Alex scurry to pick up the garbage.

OFFICER SANDRA
The Health Department will be by later to levy fines for this and whatever else they can find.

Alex looks up with an armful of garbage.

ALEX
Can I go get a trash bag?

OFFICER DAN
You’re lucky I don’t make you eat it.
William, half crawling on the stairs, glances up and sees Mrs. Connelly on the landing, kindly smiling down at him.

Ext. Building — Morning — Establishing

Int. Building — Foyer — Continuous

William and Alex exit the apartment together. (He lugs his manual typewriter under his arm.) They are not talking.

    MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)
    Miss Kendricks?

Mrs. Connelly is on the landing.

    MRS. CONNELLY
    Could you come up here a moment?

    WILLIAM
    (this is his cue)
    See you tonight, sweetie.

He kisses her cheek and darts out.

    ALEX
    I have to get to work, Mrs. Connelly. Can it wait until this evening?

    MRS. CONNELLY
    (ominously)
    I suppose.

Alex SIGHS, and trudges up the stairs.

    ALEX
    Yes, Mrs. Connelly?

    MRS. CONNELLY
    One of my lights is buzzing.

    ALEX
    I’m sure it’s nothing, Mrs. Connelly. Could you just turn off the light, just for a few hours, and I’ll look at just as soon as I get home?

    MRS. CONNELLY
    I’m afraid it might start a fire.
Alex DROPS her portfolio and trudges into the apartment.

**Ext. Brooklyn Public Library — Day**

**Int. Brooklyn Public Library — Reading Room — Continuous**

William sits at a reading table, setting up his typewriter. He’s getting some strange looks. He ROLLS some paper in, and starts TYPING. The sound ECHOES throughout the room. A key sticks. He pulls it out the key and starts TYPING again. A LIBRARIAN approaches him.

LIBRARIAN  
*not hushed at all*  
What is your damage?

**Int. Mrs. Connelly’s Apartment — Living Room — Day**

Alex stands tiptoe on a chair, removing an ornate light globe. Mrs. Connelly looks on.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Please don’t drop that. It’s glass.

ALEX  
I’m being careful, Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY  
I know you are, dear. It’s just that so many of the others weren’t very conscientious. Or very nice, for that matter.

ALEX  
*preoccupied*  
Oh, were there many others?

Alex removes the globe and tucks it under one arm. Over the following, she fiddles with the lightbulb, which is stuck.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Oh, oodles, over the years. Would you believe I’ve had ten landlords in just the last eight years?
ALEX

(realization sinking in)
Ten people have moved out of here in the last eight years?

MRS. CONNELLY
Well, they didn’t all move out. Mr. Myer took his own life. Poor dear had money problems.

Alex looks shocked, and then, somewhat synchronistically, she gets BADLY SHOCKED by the lightbulb she is holding. She falls out of frame and we hear a CRASH of glass.

MRS. CONNELLY
Oh, you broke it.

Ext. Prospect Park – Afternoon

It’s a chilly but sunny day. William has settled himself into a nice spot on a hilly slope of the park. (In the distance we see people walking dogs, etc.) He places the typewriter on his lap, rubs his hands together vigorously, and starts to TYPE. After a moment, a tennis ball flies over his head. He turns to follow the ball and is blindsided by a huge Labrador retriever.

GIGGLY FEMALE (O.C.)
Sorry!

Int. Building – Mrs. Connelly’s Doorway – Continuous

Alex, her hair frizzed out, is about to leave.

MRS. CONNELLY
One more thing, dear.

Alex closes her eyes and WHIMPERS.

Close on William

Typing industriously, like a real writer.
Int. Corner Bar — Continuous

William sits at a bar with not a few lowlifes. He slugs back a whiskey and signals to the barkeep for more.

Ext. 120 Prospect Park West — Night

A tipsy William clownishly takes the stairs three at a time.

Int. Apartment — Entranceway — Moments Later

William opens the door, grandly.

    WILLIAM
    (Desi Arnaz voice)
    Alex, I’m home!

William doesn’t see Alex. But he hears her QUIETLY SOBBING.

Int. Apartment — Bedroom — A Moment Later

William finds Alex sitting on the bed in sweats and a T-shirt. Her face his red and puffy, both from crying and from the pepper spray. William sits down next to her.

    WILLIAM
    What did she do this time?

    ALEX
    It’s what I did.

Alex’s Flashback

Alex kneels on the stairs, tapping with a hammer.

    ALEX (V.O.)
    I was fixing the stairs...

    WILLIAM (V.O.)
    What the hell’s wrong with the stairs?

Mrs. Connelly stands above Alex, supervising her work.

    MRS. CONNELLY
    I hope you’re tacking that carpeting down good.
ALEX
(carpet tacks in mouth)
That’s what I’m doing, Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY
It’s very loose. I could slip and fall down those stairs and break my neck.

Close on
Alex’s face, fantasizing.

Her fantasy
Mrs. Connelly, in her Oriental dress, takes one step down the stairs when the carpet-runner practically flies out from under her. She FLOPS CARTOONISHLY down the steps, end-over-end, as we hear over-the-top sounds of BONES SNAPPING.

Mrs. Connelly lies at the bottom of the steps, face down but with the rest of her body right side up.

Close on
Alex’s face as she smiles, causing the carpet tacks in her mouth to tilt up at a devilish angle.

Out of Flashback
Alex’s eyes are rimmed with tears.

ALEX
I can’t believe I did that!

WILLIAM
(confused)
What did you do? Did you push her down the stairs?

ALEX
No, but I imagined it! And I liked it!

She sobs on William’s shoulder.

ALEX (CONT.)
What’s wrong with me? I’m evil!

William hugs her reassuringly.
ILLIAM
Sweetie, sweetheart. After all that woman has done to us, there’d be something wrong with you if you didn’t want her dead.

ALEX
You?

A chunk of plaster FALLS from the hole William made earlier.

WILLIAM
(has given this some thought)
Look, I’m not saying she deserves to die, but she should be dead. She’s somewhere between 95 and 105 years old, at least 20 years more than she’s allotted. She’s living practically rent free, with two full-time servants — you and me truly — she’s got free medical care, which we as taxpayers are also providing, and what has she done for anybody? She drove her husband to drink himself into an early grave...

ALEX
She killed Mr. Myer, too.

WILLIAM
(registers slight confusion but not shock)
...and now she’s killing us with all these repairs and fines we can’t afford. She got you fired, and you know, not being able to quit my job is going to shorten my life. That’s life she’s stealing from me. And she’s just up there, blithely living our future. You know, in, uh, Eskimoland, she’d be on an ice floe. Bye bye, Mrs. Connelly! You’ve outlived your usefulness! Bye-bye!

Alex LAUGHS reflexively; she SMACKS William playfully.

ALEX
You’re awful, too.
W

ILLIAM
There’s nothing you can do about it, so you might as well dream.

Alex cuddles into William. They lie back on the bed together; he turns on the TV with the remote.

ALEX
I feel bad for her. She doesn’t have any family, just those brass band biddies for friends. Maybe she’s always calling us up there because she needs the company.

WILLIAM
Maybe she’s just a bitch.

Alex slaps his chest, LAUGHING. William sees something on the TV and turns up the volume with the remote.

On Screen

Behind the FEMALE NEWSCASTER is a mortise of a caduceus superimposed on a skull and crossbones. The mortise reads, “KILLER FLU?”

FEMALE NEWSCASTER
...accompanied by nausea and violent diarrhea. Health authorities are warning that this particular strain is particularly dangerous, and potentially deadly, to children under five and especially the elderly.

Back to Scene

In a wide shot, we see Alex and William watching this, silently. On the TV, the newscaster turns to the SPORTSCASTER.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER
Those Nets could have used a couple of last minute flu shots, eh, Hank?

SPORTSCASTER
(a little confused)
That’s right, Pepper! Let’s go to the—

(CONTINUED)
Alex takes the remote from William and clicks off the TV. She rolls into him and kisses him. He reaches and turns off the light with one hand as he cradles her face with the other.

ALEX (IN DARK)
Ooh. Don’t touch that side of the face.

WILLIAM (IN DARK)
Sorry.

Music (from above): “Hawaii 5-0” Theme

ALEX (IN DARK)
(giggling)
Book me, Danno.

WILLIAM (IN DARK)
(after a beat)
That doesn’t make sense.

ALEX (IN DARK)
(commanding)
Do it.

WILLIAM (IN DARK)
(loving)
Right away, ma’am.

Ext. Subway station — F stop — Morning

Alex has a jaunt to her step as she tries to merge with the others trying to get down the steps. She shove her around.

Int. Subway Platform — A Couple of Minutes Later

Alex waits for the train. Next to her NEW YORK WOMAN and her small child. Suddenly, the child PROJECTILE VOMITS onto the tracks. Alex turns to the mother, concerned.

ALEX
Oh, does he have that awful flu?

NEW YORK WOMAN
What the fuck does it look like?
Int. Tribeca Grill
— Afternoon

William and Coop have lunched and Coop is now reading through a sheaf of wrinkled, smudged typed pages. William examines Coop’s face seeking to divine his moment-by-moment reaction. (In the background, Harvey Weinstein sits at another table, amateurishly waving at the camera and mouthing, “This is my movie.”) At long last, Coop finishes. He takes an annoyingly long sip of cappuccino before speaking.

COOP
(re: sheaf)
Type this yourself?

WILLIAM
(nervous)
I was going for something, you know, hardboiled but stylish, like Hemingway in Nick Adams mode.

COOP
It’s more like something Snoopy would write.

William sits back in his chair, wounded. Coop shuffles through the pages.

COOP
I’m your friend so I have to be honest. It’s bad. But more than that, the real problem is, it’s “Double Indemnity.” I mean, instead of the husband, they kill an old lady, but other than that, it’s the same thing.

WILLIAM
It’s an homage.

COOP
I don’t think James Cain’s executors would see it that way.

WILLIAM
(a little pissy)
Look, I respect your opinion, but could you show it to your agent anyway?

(CONTINUED)
A waiter places the check on the table, much closer to William than Coop. William pretends not to see it for a long awkward second. Coop smiles and picks up the check.

**COOP**

*(magnanimous)*

Let’s split this.

### Int. Subway platform – F stop – Late Afternoon

William waits glumly for the train. One pulls up. He is dragged into the car with the crowd.

### Int. Subway Car – Moments Later

The train PULLS out. William is smashed in; he notices that the businessman behind him is rhythmically bumping into him. Then he sees:

### The Other End of the Car

It’s completely empty, save one very sick-looking businessman. The man leans over and VOMITS on the floor of the subway. He looks down, apparently annoyed that he got some on his shoe. Watching this, William makes a decision.

William worms his way through the crowd. He breaks free, and marches to the empty end of the car. He sits down next to the man. He draws a DEEP BREATH. His eyes water. He closes his eyes, tilts his head back, and BREATHE in again.

**Match Dissolve to:**

William’s face, gulping air in pain.

### Int. Apartment – Bathroom – 36 Hours Later

William CROUCHES on the toilet, bent over with cramps. The door suddenly OPENS and Alex lunges in.

**ALEX**

Ohgod.
Alex drops to her knees, pries William’s legs apart and VOMITS VIOLENTLY between them. After a beat, she pulls her head out and smiles at William weakly.

ALEX
Happy Thanksgiving.

Int. Building — Second Floor Landing — Hours Later

Alex and William lean on each other for support. Mrs. Connelly opens the door a crack. Alex leans in close.

ALEX
(a little breathy)
Hi, Mrs. Connelly. We were wondering if there was anything we could do for you.

WILLIAM
(hitting the ‘h’)
Happy Thanksgiving.

MRS. CONNELLY
You two look awful. Did you catch that horrible Chinese flu?

William and Alex act unconvincingly innocent.

WILLIAM
Oh, no, we’re fine.

MRS. CONNELLY
Good. But you should get a flu shot. Officer Dan took me to get one last week.

ALEX
We’ll do that. Well, Happy Thanksgiving.

MRS. CONNELLY
No, come in. I do have something for you to do.

She SLAMS the door, UNHOOKS the chain, and lets them in.

Int. Mrs. Connelly’s Apartment — Parlor — Continuous

(CONTINUED)
In front of her chair is a TV tray with the remains of a huge Thanksgiving feast.

MRS. CONNELLY
This lovely black lady brought me a whole turkey and a lovely dinner but I’m afraid some of the turkey bones didn’t go down the disposal.

Alex and William follow her into the kitchenette.

ALEX
You don’t have a disposal, Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY
Oh, I’m so silly. Where did I have a disposal once?

ALEX
You never had a disposal, Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY
(indicating sink)
Well, it should be taken care of. It’s very unsanitary.

WILLIAM
And it might start a fire.

MRS. CONNELLY
I was going to call a plumber.

ALEX
(mostly to herself)
Oh Christ. On Thanksgiving.

MRS. CONNELLY
Please don’t take the Lord’s name in vain in my house, Miss Kendricks.

Alex holds her tongue. William stares down into the sink, looking queasy.

His POV
It’s a brown, greasy mess with skin floating on the surface and glops of mashed potato and cranberry churning in it.

(continued)
Dissolve to Later

William’s lies under the sink, inexpertly STRUGGLING to loosen the elbow joint. The joint suddenly jars loose, and a sink full of watery goo pours onto William’s face.

Alex looks down into the sink. Through the open pipe she sees her husband’s gristle-covered face.

William looks up in terror. Through the open pipe he can see his imminently upchucking wife.

Alex’s head dips into the sink as she VOMITS. We hear it SPLASH out of the bottom of the pipe. William MOANS weakly.

Mrs. Connelly watches all this matter-of-factly.

MRS. CONNELLY
Let me get you some rags so you can clean that up.

She patters away.

Ext. Prospect Park – Day

Bundled-up kids play happily in the park.

Int. Apartment – Bedroom – Continuous

Alex and William both lay on the bed at odd angles, near death. The phone RINGS. Alex answers.

ALEX
What day is it?

Intercut with:

Int. * Magazine – Alex’s Workstation– Morning

Syn sits at Alex’s computer, naked. The really fat guy, also nude, walks sadly by.

SYN
It’s Wednesday. You gotta get in here, Lex. Mikey keeps asking where that sweet ass of yours is.

ALEX
Tell him my “sweet ass” is spewing hot diarrhea.
SYN
I’d come in. He’s really drunk, and he’s a real mean drunk.

MIKEY (O.C.)
Run, fatty!

Syn looks down the hall. We hear Mikey CACKLE as the Really Fat Guy scurries out just as a stapler hits him in the butt.

SYN
Get in here, woman. Your ass could save your ass.

Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Continuous

Alex tries to hang up the phone, but more or less drops it to the floor.

ALEX
Gotta go to work.

She starts to stand, but falls woozily back on the bed. They both stare up at the ceiling.

WILLIAM
Kill me.

ALEX
I can’t believe we tried to kill Mrs. Connelly.

WILLIAM
I don’t know what you’re talking about.

ALEX
You know full well. We thought, we, when you got sick, on purpose, you knew there was a chance...

WILLIAM
Well, if that’s what we were trying to do, we sure did a bad job of it.

Alex LAUGHS RUEFULLY. There is a very long beat.

(CONTINUED)
You know, if a person was gonna do something like that, they should, you know... Do it right.

Alex clasps William’s hand tightly. They close their eyes and go limp on the bed.

**Ext. Prospect Park – An Hour or So Later**

Alex and William walk slowly in the park, arm in arm, like the two very sick people they are.

**ALEX**
Wow, murder.

**WILLIAM**
It’s probably best that you not say that out loud in public.

**ALEX**
I just never thought of myself as an “mmmm”-er.

**WILLIAM**
Look, statistically she’s already dead. Nature has simply overlooked her. She’s been moseying off this mortal coil, and we’d be encouraging her to shuffle, like all responsible citizens do.

**ALEX**
How much Nyquil have you had?

**WILLIAM**
Not nearly enough.

(long beat)

She’s going to bankrupt us. We’re going to lose the apartment.

**ALEX**
Our home.

**WILLIAM**
She’s already killed one of her landlords. And she’s got her foot on our throats.
ALEX
Self-defense.

They walk in front of the playground. Alex stops to watch.

WILLIAM
We’re putting her on an ice floe, that’s all. To make room for future generations.

ALEX
(face lighting up)
For the children.

Alex hugs William. He hugs her back, and kisses her forehead. They watch the children play.

Int. © Magazine — Alex’s Workstation — Afternoon

A naked but inspired Alex sits at her desk, typing.

On her Computer Screen

A web page loads. It is very plain-looking site, called “HowToKill.com.” Below the title flashing red text reads, “For Entertainment Purposes Only”

Alex’s cursor scrolls quickly down a stacked, selectable list: co-workers, neighbors, neighbor’s pets, public officials, relatives… The cursor stops on senior citizens and CLICKS (next on the list is spouses).

On Alex

She takes a swig from a whisky bottle on her drafting table, and reads with interest.

Int. Mrs. Connelly’s Apartment — Kitchen — Simultaneous

William and Mrs. Connelly stare down at a small black object on the counter.

WILLIAM,
That’s not a mouse dropping. It’s a raisin.

(CONTINUED)
RS. CONNELLY  
(leaning in close)  
It doesn’t look like any raisin I’ve ever seen.

As Mrs. Connelly leans over, William briefly eyes a heavy skillet on the stove. Mrs. Connelly stands up.

MRS. CONNELLY (CONT.)  
It’s the leavings of a mouse.

WILLIAM  
(losing patience)  
It’s a raisin.

William matter-of-factly picks up the object and pops it in his mouth. He gets a very strange look on his face.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Oh, Billy, I should have told you. I sprayed it with Lysol.

Ext. East Village – Late Afternoon

A tiny blacked-out storefront with “ANARCHY” sloppily painted in red across the window. Alex, acting as suspicious as possible, exits with a bag full of books.

Int. Apartment – Bedroom – Saturday Afternoon

Sun streams in the window. We PAN over to the bed, where we see the titles of several pamphlets and books with type-only covers: “Art of the Kill,” “Amateur Assassination,” “50 Ways to Off Your Lover,” “Clean Kills,” etc.

Alex and William lazily lie on the bed, their legs overlapping, flipping through the books and trading them as if they were reading the Sunday New York Times together.

Music: “I’ll be Glad When You’re Dead (You Rascal You)” By Louis Armstrong

WILLIAM  
(re: book he’s reading)  
How about this?

He hands her the book (The title is simply, “KILL!, Vol. 5”). Alex scrunches up her face in disgust.
A
LEX
Too messy.
(been on her mind)
William, what about Officer Dan?

WILLIAM
(cocky)
I think we’re smarter than Officer Dan.

We hear the BRASS ENSEMBLE from above. Alex and William smile at each other and cozy closer together.

Int. Building – Second Floor Landing – The Next Day

Alex and William sit on the stairs, in crouched positions. Wearing yellow rubber gloves, they rapidly twist banisters back and forth. They’re both hopped up on adrenaline.

ALEX
She’s gone to the pharmacy, so we’ve got two hours.

WILLIAM
The pharmacy is two blocks away.

ALEX
She likes to recount the pills.

William twists a banister and it moves easily.

WILLIAM
These are loose.

ALEX
(diligently twisting)
I noticed it when I was tacking down the carpet. I’m surprised she hasn’t noticed it.

WILLIAM
It’s her own fault then.

Alex stands and backs up against Mrs. Connelly’s door.
ALEX
(miming it as she speaks)
Okay, little Mrs. Complainy pitter-pats out, holds on for support, ancient railing collapses, over she goes, Aaaaaahhh. Tragic. One paragraph in the New York Post.

William stands and puts his arm around Alex’s waist.

WILLIAM
You’re sexy when you’re evil.

They kiss. As they do so, the handrail starts to move, not out, but parallel with the stairs. The couple looks over just as the banisters start to collapse on one another like dominos, gathering speed as it rounds the corner. The final banisters bounce wildly on the wood flooring. Two bounce up and SMASH into Alex’s antique stain glass.

ALEX
(stifled scream)

WILLIAM
At least they weren’t that expensive. *(Beat)*
Right?

Ext. 120 Prospect Park West — A Couple Days Later

The street lamps are striped with red for the holidays.

Fish-Eye Lens

We watch Mrs. Connelly, in a black wool coat and wearing a small black hat with a semi-veil, as she pitter-pats toward the front door. She stops, and turns around as if she’s forgotten something.

WILLIAM (O.C.)
Jesus Christ!

Close on

William on the other side of her door, staring through the peephole impatiently.

(CONTINUED)
Mrs. Connelly walks a couple of steps back, then mentally satisfies herself that she hasn’t forgotten anything, turns and pitter-pats out.

William, in black jeans, turtleneck and gloves, turns and scurries back through the apartment, dodging furniture, until he gets to:

Alex, dressed black sweatsuit and wearing black gloves, is curled up inside the dumb waiter.

WILLIAM
She’s gone!

ALEX
Let’s do it!

William grabs the rope pulley and begins hauling Alex up. It’s a lot harder than he thought it would be. He GRUNTS as she is jerked up and out of view. William pulls one more time, and loses his grip.

Alex PLUMMETS past him, looking quite surprised. We hear a LOUD CRASH.

William runs out and opens the door leading to the basement. Alex staggers out, roughed up but not seriously injured.

WILLIAM
You okay?

ALEX
Yeah, yeah.
(reassessing plan)
We’ll let ourselves in with the key.

WILLIAM
No. We’re exposed! Abort!

(CONTINUED)
A
LEX
(pushing him)
Go go go!

William hesitates momentarily, then scurries up the stairs, commando style. (We see it has been rebuilt, probably at some expense, with lots of clamps still in place; also, cardboard covers the broken stained glass). Alex does a quick recon, and runs up after him.

**Int. Building — Second Floor Landing — Continuous**

William is crouching down in front of the lock, even though he is using the key. When the door opens, he clenches his fist like he’s accomplished something. Alex pushes him inside.

**Int. Mrs. Connelly’s Apartment — Continuous**

Alex shuts the door, quickly locks it; she’s all business.

ALEX
Okay, she’s going to be at the funeral for at least an hour; but let’s be out of here in thirty.

WILLIAM
Who died, anyway?

ALEX
The tuba player.

WILLIAM
God does answer prayers.

ALEX
(anxious)
Let’s move.

The two “break” and scurry in different directions. We follow William as he scampers about the parlor, looking for dangers he can create. He hops around commando-style.
Int. Mrs. Connelly’s Apartment — Bathroom — Continuous

Alex runs in and scans quickly. Seeing that the new tiles in the shower don’t match the old ones, she gets briefly heartsick. Then, remembering her mission, she starts going through all the bottles around Mrs. Connelly’s sink and on top of her toilet tank. It’s mostly beauty products. Alex picks up a large jar of face cream.

ALEX
Chanel? I can’t even afford Chanel.

Alex opens the medicine cabinet; there are dozens of prescription bottles inside.

ALEX
(grim)
Jackpot.

In the Parlor — Continuous

William fiddles with the brackets holding a very large, heavy bronze crucifix hanging from the wall. The crucifix drops down and BANGS him on the head, very, very hard.

In the Bathroom — Continuous

Alex swaps medications in bottles, as quickly as possible.

ALEX
Little white pills in with other little white pills, tragic mix-up.

She puts the medicine back in the cabinet. She looks in the shower, grimaces at the tiles again, and grabs a bottle of shampoo. She starts squirting some on the bottom of the tub.

ALEX (CONT.)
(shaking head)
So many accidents occur in the shower...

In the Parlor — Continuous

William is sliding the giant Pietà clock from earlier so that it teeters a bit on the mantle.
ALEX (O.C.)

(whispered shout)

No!

The clock starts to fall and William barely catches it. Alex walks up to the mantle and slides the clock back.

ALEX

If that falls on her, the irony — the media will be all over it.

WILLIAM

Good point.

ALEX

William, are you bleeding?

A trickle of blood runs down the middle of William’s forehead.

WILLIAM

Am I?

ALEX

Let’s not leave any of that in this apartment.

Holding the sides of his face, Alex bends William’s head down and licks the blood off his forehead.

ALEX

(all business)

Let’s get out of here.

SFX: Police Siren

Alex SHRIEKS. William jumps up and spins around. He sees:

WILLIAM

The bird.

It segues into a BUGLE CALL.

ALEX

(suddenly concerned)

Oh, who will take care of Mr. Fawkes?

(suddenly okay about it)

I guess we will.

(CONTINUED)
W
ILLIAM
(thinking out loud)
You know, remember when she said she couldn’t live without Mr. Fawkes?

ALEX
(hushed horror)
You monster.

WILLIAM
(backpedaling furiously)
I was just kidding. Kiddingkidding.

ALEX
It’s not funny.
(then all business again)
We’d better get out of here.

They scurry toward the door; William peels away from her.

WILLIAM
One more thing!

Int. Building — Second Floor Landing — A Few Moments Later

Alex peeks out of the door anxiously.

ALEX
(loud whisper)
Hurry up!

Int. Mrs. Connelly Apartment — Kitchen — Continuous

William lies on the floor next to stove, with the broiler door open. He BLOWS several times hard.

WILLIAM
And out goes the pilot.

He hops quickly to his feet, and turns the oven on.

WILLIAM
An hour at 375 should do it.

Alex sticks her head in the door.

ALEX
Did you blow out the pilot for the burners?
Just as he turns back toward the stove, William is instantly enveloped in a HUGE FIREBALL. It burns off in a flash, leaving his face sooty and his hair frazzled.

**Ext. D’Agastino’s on Seventh Avenue — Park Slope — Night**

There are Christmas decorations in the window.

**Close on**

A grocery shelf containing various burn ointments. Alex’s hand reaches in and takes several tubes of each.

**Int. D’Agastino’s — Continuous**

Alex walks down the aisle with her shopping basket (which noticeably contains a cartoon of eggnog). Even in relaxed moment like this, she is a little jittery, as if somebody might be watching her.

She notices something, and grabs a bottle of cleanser off the shelf, reading the back.

**Close on bottle**

It reads, “Warning: May Irritate Skin.”

Alex makes a DISMISSIVE SOUND and puts the bottle back. She quickly picks up another one.

**Close on bottle**

It reads, “Harmful or fatal if swallowed.”

Alex throws that one in her basket, which we now see also has several boxes of rat poison in it.

**Int. Apartment — Entranceway — A Half Hour Later**

Alex walks in WHISTLING.

    ALEX
    *(calling)*
    Sweetie?

    WILLIAM (O.C.)
    In here!
Int. Apartment —
Bedroom — A Moment Later

Alex finds William on a ladder in the middle of the room (where he earlier broke the plaster). He’s got his handyman book up there, and is diligently sawing away.

WILLIAM
I feel like Sylvester here.
*(does not-great impression)*
Sthufferin’ Sthuccotash, I’m gonna get that granny if ith the lasth thing I do!

He turns to Alex (and camera), LAUGHING oddly. His face looks badly sunburned and shiny from various unguents. There are tiny blisters on his forehead; his eyebrows are partially missing. All this, combined with his chipper demeanor, creates a fairly frightening effect.

Alex approaches and surveys the hole. In addition to the crude circle torn out of the ceiling, the support beams have been severed and the floorboards sawn into in several places.

ALEX
*(gentle criticism)*
Sweetie, aren’t the police going to know you sawed through the floor? I mean, they’re going to see the
*(gestures sawing, can’t think of the right word)*
Saw marks.

William holds up a big plastic bottle, spokesmodel-style.

WILLIAM
“Professional Strength Drano™, dissolves hair, bones and most organic materials.”

He pours some onto his fingers and starts slathering it over the “saw marks.”

WILLIAM (CONT.)
In a couple hours this is going to look like 30 years of dry rot.
ALEX
(impressed)
Wow, that is really — that’s like something out of a book.

WILLIAM
(excited by the thought)
You think I should save it for a book?
(reconsiders)
No, no, priorities.

William pours more onto his fingers, and starts to slather.

WILLIAM (CONT.)
Eat, my pretties.

A large glop of Drano lands in his eye.

WILLIAM (CONT.)
Jesus fuck!

VOICE (O.C.)
Hello?

William and Alex freeze. Coop walks into the bedroom.

COOP
The door was open...

William and Alex look as guilty as possible, particularly with William trying to madly blink out the Drano. Coop looks at the hole in the ceiling and LAUGHS.

COOP
That’s why I don’t own property.

ALEX
(catching on, laughs)
It’s just one repair after another.

WILLIAM
(blinking madly)
One repair after another.

COOP
Look, I stopped by to, well, see how you’re doing, but also I hear Esquire is looking for a good captions guy; I could—
LEX
William doesn’t write captions anymore.

William is surprised to hear her say that; he smiles.

COOP
That’s fine; I just—

Something catches Coop’s eye. On the bed are books and pamphlets with titles such as, “27 Simple Kills,” “How to Ice Anyone,” and “Don’t get Mad; Get Them Dead.”

William and Alex stare at Coop staring at the bed. Coop appears uncomfortable. After a beat, he turns to William.

COOP
Still trying to write that thriller, huh? Well, uh, good luck with that.

WILLIAM
Let me walk you out.

William stumbles off the ladder.

Int. Apartment — Entranceway — Continuous

William hustles Coop out.

WILLIAM
Coop, thanks for coming by. It really means a lot to me, and to Alex...

COOP
(looking at William’s face)
You know, they’re serious about that fifteen-minute limit under the sun lamp.

WILLIAM
(forced good-natured laugh)
“Vanity, thy name is Man.”

COOP
“Woman,” actually.

William opens the door and practically pushes Coop out.

WILLIAM
Right.

(CONTINUED)
He slams the door, and double-locks it.

**Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Later**

William and Alex sit on the bed. William stares straight ahead; Alex is looking up at the hole in the ceiling.

ALEX
You know, as long as we’re putting a hole in the ceiling, this might be a better place for a staircase. We could turn the two front rooms into a split level living-slash-entertainment area.

WILLIAM
*(more distracted than angry)*
I thought this was supposed to be my office.

ALEX
It could be that, too.

William exits. Alex doesn’t really notice.

ALEX
A den-slash-media room.

William returns, lugging the wooden pyramid. He places it right under the ceiling hole.

WILLIAM
A little insurance.

ALEX
*(upset)*
You can’t — that cost $600!

This is news to William. But he just shakes his head, amused.

WILLIAM
The best six hundred bucks we ever spent.

Alex appraises the scene, unhappily.

ALEX
It doesn’t look right there.

(CONTINUED)
W
ILLIAM
Function over form.

ALEX
Shouldn’t you maybe clean the ceiling debris out from under it?

WILLIAM
You’re thinking!

Alex kneels down; William tips the pyramid up and she sweeps the debris from under it.

WILLIAM
You are the evil genius.

ALEX
(laughs)
No, you are.

He tilts the pyramid back down. They kiss over the top, then look up. We follow their gaze to the hole, and then through the floor to:

Int. Mrs. Connelly’s Apartment — Parlor — Continuous

The “trap” lies a few feet between Mrs. Connelly’s chair and her TV set. We watch from the trap’s POV as Mrs. Connelly patters down the hall right at it. She stops inches from the trap and turns around.

Music from TV (Very Loud): “Quincy” Theme

The camera swings to follow Mrs. Connelly as she walks right by the trap, missing it by inches. She sits down, oblivious.

Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Continuous

William and Alex sit on the bed. William stares up at the hole, Alex down at the pyramid.

WILLIAM
Is that the theme from “Barnaby Jones”?

ALEX
(re: pyramid)
The police are going to know that piece doesn’t belong there.
WILLIAM

Not Barnaby Jones. This is going to drive me crazy.

ALEX

I don’t feel good about this. Could we move it about five feet that way?

WILLIAM

If we move it five feet that way, it won’t be under the hole.

Alex frowns. William hugs her.

WILLIAM

It’s only for a little while, honey. Then you can move it anywhere you little heart desires.

Dissolve to Much Later

William is nodding off; Alex has her arms around her knees and is rocking nervously. From above we hear:

WOMAN ON TV (VERY LOUD)

I thought our lack of intimacy was my husband’s fault, but you made me realize it was my hair. It was a ratty mess.

ALEX

(through gritted teeth)

I. Hate. That. There.

From above, we hear a chair leg SQUEAK on the floor.

WILLIAM

(jarred awake)

She’s getting up!

William and Alex watch the ceiling, listening as Mrs. Connelly’s PITTER-PATTING FOOTSTEPS seem to come right up to the trap but then again miss it by inches.

ALEX

Shit!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Int. Mrs. Connelly’s Apartment — Kitchenette — Continuous

She reaches behind an oatmeal box and pulls out a bottle of cheap scotch. She fills a small Magilla Gorilla jelly jar to the brim, and starts pattering back.

Trap’s POV

She stops at the precipice.

Int. Mrs. Connelly’s Apartment — Parlor — Continuous

She places her jelly jar full of whisky on top of the TV, and starts changing the channels. From the TV, we hear a quite loud PING-PONG MATCH accompanied by EXCITED JAPANESE COMMENTARY. The vibration caused by this causes the jelly jar to slide off and SHATTER on the ground.

MRS. CONNELLY
Oh, dear.

In William and Alex’s Bedroom

As he hears Mrs. Connelly PATTER away, William throws up his arms in EXASPERATION. Alex stares at the pyramid.

ALEX
Maybe if I just rotate it...

In Mrs. Connelly’s Parlor

Mrs. Connelly patters back from the kitchen with a sponge, dustpan and brush. She looks down and sees a lot of the broken glass is under the TV’s rolling cart.

In William and Alex’s Bedroom

Alex gets off the bed and starts to fiddle with the pyramid.

In Mrs. Connelly’s Parlor

Mrs. Connelly starts to push the TV cart away from the spill.

Trap’s POV

The rolling cart barrels right at it. We hear the WOOD CRACKING. We quickly switch to:
TV’s POV

The floors gives way, revealing Alex, looking up in surprise. The camera plummets towards her.

On the Gaping Hole in the Ceiling

Mrs. Connelly peers over the edge.

Her POV

Alex’s lower torso is pinned under the TV. She MOANS, dazed.

On Mrs. Connelly

Looking down.

  MRS. CONNELLY
  Goodness. I could’ve fallen through!

Ext. Building — The Next Morning

The police car is in front again.

Close on

Officer Sandra’s face.

  OFFICER SANDRA
  ("Let me get this straight")
  The television set fell through the floor and landed directly on your wife.

Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Continuous

William sits on the bed, trying to act casual. Officer Sandra is taking the report. Officer Dan stares at William.

  WILLIAM
  Some kind of a freak accident, huh?

  OFFICER DAN
  What the hell happened to your face?

  WILLIAM
  (practiced casual, too fast)
  Oh, I had one of those chemical peels. They burn off the top layer of skin. It makes you look years younger.
OFFICER DAN
You should sue whoever did that to you.
(pointing up)
You’re going to need to get that fixed right away. Mrs. Connelly said she nearly fell through there.

WILLIAM
We’re getting some estimates.

OFFICER DAN
Right away, Dr. Phibes. And you owe Mrs. Connelly a new TV.
(before William can respond)
A nice one.

We hear a METALLIC CLACKING O.C. Alex enters, carrying a tray. A jointed steel armature surrounds her whole leg like a scaffolding; metal pins go into her leg just above and below her knee and at hip level. Alex CLACKS over to the Officer Dan with great difficulty.

ALEX
I have to apologize for all the debris. Would you like a cookie?

Ext. Building — Evening — Establishing

Music: Vince Guaraldi’s “Christmas Time is Here,” sung by Kasey Chambers

Int. Apartment — Parlor — Continuous

Alex hands a SENIOR WORKMAN a check as a parade of workers tromp out with ladders and big tools.

ALEX
I know it’s getting late, but it would be great if you could clean up a little in there.
(off his blank stare)
Or you could come back in the morning.

SENIOR WORKMAN
We don’t clean up.

(Continued)
He exits. Alex joins William, who is decorating a Christmas tree. (It is next to spiral staircase, which is strung with lights and tinsel; the steps are being used to display dozens of Christmas cards.)

ALEX
Joke’s on him. Check’s going to bounce.

Alex removes an ornament William has just hung and repositions it.

WILLIAM
(thinking out loud)
So after Mrs. Connelly, “moves out,” we’ll have to sublet the upstairs until we can get back on our feet. We can probably get, what, fifteen-hundred?

ALEX
More. If we can get the smell out.

They both CHUCKLE, a little evilly. After a beat:

ALEX
You know, William, I think we’re being too smart for own good.

WILLIAM
Smart?

Alex reaches into a box and takes out a beautiful angel.

ALEX
We’re making everything overly complicated. Maybe it should just be something simple.

WILLIAM
Push her down the stairs, you mean.

William lifts Alex up, so she can place the angel at the top of the tree.

ALEX
That might not work.

WILLIAM
If it doesn’t, we carry her back up and push her down again.

(CONTINUED)
Alex turns off a lamp. The Christmas tree glows. The couple wrap their arms around each other, admiring it. They kiss.

**Int. Apartment – Entranceway – Very Late That Night**

William and Alex are again in their commando outfits. Alex looks out the peephole, holding a pillow.

> WILLIAM  
> I still think this is going to look suspicious.

> ALEX  
> Old people die in their sleep all the time. Especially with all the excitement she’s had lately.

> WILLIAM  
> *(realizing)*  
> Is that my pillow?

> ALEX  
> Mine’s too fluffy.

> WILLIAM  
> Why can’t we use one of her pillows?

> ALEX  
> I don’t want to leave face prints.

William CHUCKLES, and kisses the back of her neck. Alex puts a finger to his lips, and opens the door.

**Int. Building – Foyer – Continuous**

The two begin to “scurry” up the steps, except of course, Alex is limping wildly. As she goes up the steps, we hear a loud SQUEAK. They freeze. Alex signals it’s all right; She reaches into her pocket, pulls out a tiny can of oil and applies some to the joints of her leg brace. They continue up the stairs silently.

**Int. Mrs. Connelly’s Apartment – Doorway – Moments Later**

It’s completely dark. Two dark figures enter.

> WILLIAM  
> *(whisper)*  
> Which bedroom is she in?
ALEX
The cute one.
(after a long beat)
Second door down.

They creep toward the hallway when they hear the distinct sound of a MATCH BEING LIT. They turn quickly.

The flame hovers in the air above Mrs. Connelly’s chair. After a moment, the red tip of a cigarette glows, illuminating two seemingly disembodied eyes, staring sternly.

WILLIAM
(stifled scream)

ALEX
(thinking quickly)
Mrs. Connelly, we thought you might be cold, so we brought you an extra pillow.

They drop the pillow and run out.

Int. Building – Foyer – Continuous

They tear down the stairs. Alex turns toward the apartment, but William grabs her and pulls her toward the outside door.

Ext. Building – Front Stoop – Continuous

William and Alex half stumble down the stairs. Alex resists being pulled any further.

ALEX
What are you—?

William picks her up in his arms, and runs across the street.

WILLIAM
We are so fucked. We are so fucked. We are so fucked.

He reaches the other side, runs across the sidewalk, and DUMPS Alex over the stone wall leading into the park.
William dives over the wall after her.

**Ext. Prospect Park — Other Side of Fence — Continuous**

They lie on the ground. We can see their breaths.

**ALEX**

**(surprised, then pained noise)**

**WILLIAM**

She’s calling the police!

**ALEX**

You don’t know—

**WILLIAM**

She **always** calls the police!

**ALEX**

**(realizing he’s right)**

Fucking Officer Dan!

**WILLIAM**

**(whiny, panicked)**

We’re going to have to go on the lam. Where do you want to live? It can’t be Los Angeles. It’s got to be someplace like Bumblefuck, Idaho.

**ALEX**

**(taking control)**

I am not moving to Idaho. Now, calm down. Let’s just see if the police show up. If they do, we’ll hop the F to Coney Island and hide out there.

**WILLIAM**

**(takes two deep breaths)**

Okay. Good plan.

**Ext. Prospect Park — Viewed from Street Side — Continuous**

There is a beat of silence.
W
ILLIAM (FROM BEHIND WALL)
(joshingly quoting her)
"We thought you might be cold, so we
brought you an extra pillow"?

ALEX (FROM BEHIND WALL)
Better than you screaming.

They both CHUCKLE. A beat, then:

WILLIAM (FROM BEHIND WALL)
I’m freezing.

ALEX (FROM BEHIND WALL)
(suggestive)
Come here then.

Dissolve to:

Ext. Prospect Park — Viewed from Street Side — Dawn

Music: “I’ve Got My Love to Keep Me Warm,” by Beth Orton

Ext. Prospect Park — Other Side of Fence — Continuous

William and Alex are curled up together on the ground,
spooning. There is frost in their hair. Alex awakes.

Ext. Prospect Park — Street Side — a Few Moments Later

William climbs over the wall, and helps Alex over. They
start walking back toward their apartment, shivering.
Alex’s leg apparatus is CREAKING LOUDLY.

WILLIAM
I can’t feel my toes. They’re gone.

ALEX
Well, at least she didn’t call the
cops.

WILLIAM
Yet.

ALEX
(hardened)
Right. We can’t waste any time. From
now on, no more fooling around.
Alex, dressed to go outside, exits her apartment and closes the door. She checks a shopping list in her pocket. It reads, “Rope, Hammer, Nails (long), Small Ax.” She puts it in her pocket, and starts to CREAK toward the door.

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)
Miss Kendricks?

Alex stops, but does not turn to address Mrs. Connelly.

ALEX
Yes, Mrs. Connelly?

MRS. CONNELLY
Could you come up here a moment?

ALEX
(again without turning)
The second I get back from the hardware store, Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY
I’m afraid it can’t wait.

Alex pivots on her brace leg, and starts up the stairs. As she does, she surreptitiously slips her shopping list into her mouth.

Int. Building — Second Floor Landing

Alex walks up to Mrs. Connelly and smiles at her.

ALEX
(not opening mouth)
Hmmm?

MRS. CONNELLY
First of all, dear, thank you for the pillow last night. That was very sweet of you.

Alex isn’t quite sure what’s up.

ALEX
(with wad of paper in mouth)
You’re welcome.
But the other thing, I hope you won’t be mad. Officer Dan told me to buy a nice new TV and give you the bill, but when I ordered it, I didn’t realize it would be so expensive.

Alex peeks in Mrs. Connelly apartment. It’s a flat screen, cinema aspect-ratio HDTV plasma monitor.

MRS. CONNELLY (CONT.)
It gets a much better picture than my old TV. And it has a sleep timer, so if I fall asleep watching it, it’ll turn itself off.

ALEX
(swallowing paper)
That’s great.

Mrs. Connelly hands her the bill.

MRS. CONNELLY
They said they have easy financing.

ALEX
(big smile)
Enjoy your new TV, Mrs. Connelly.

Ext. Tompkins Square Park — Night

William skulks through the park in a long, down-filled coat. A man approaches him.

DEALER
Smoke. Smoke.

WILLIAM
(to dealer)

The dealer looks at him askance, and hurries off.

Ext. Brooklyn — Desolate Lot by the East River — Later

William stands with a GUN DEALER behind an old beat-up car.
GUN DEALER
Is this for protection or are you taking proactive measures?

WILLIAM
(very nervous)
What I need is a starter gun. I mean, a real gun, though, not a starter’s pistol.

GUN DEALER
I gotcha.

The dealer pops the trunk; it’s loaded with guns. William’s eyes widen and he emits a small EEP.

GUN DEALER
(suspicious)
You’re not going to shoot up a schoolyard, are you?

WILLIAM
No, no, nothing like that.
(beat)
Do I look like the kind of person who would shoot up a schoolyard?

GUN DEALER
You look a little crazy, yes.

WILLIAM
I’ve been under a lot of stress.

GUN DEALER
(looking closer)
Did somebody throw acid in your face?

WILLIAM
No, no. Cosmetic thing.

GUN DEALER
Acid in the face, you could probably swing self-defense. Okay, here we go.
(displaying gun)
Black Widow, your basic 22-caliber revolver. Five hundred dollars.

WILLIAM
$500? It cost half that on the Web!

(Continued)
UN DEALER
I offer more personalized service than on the Web. Now that comes fully loaded, but if you’re going on any kind of spree, you’re going to need more bullets.

WILLIAM
No, I’m sure whatever’s in there’s fine.
(reaching into pocket)
Cash, right?

The dealer gives him a “what do you think,” stare. William counts out almost all of his money and hands it over.

GUN DEALER
Thank you. Oh, one last thing: I’m a cop.

William drops to his knees, losing it.

WILLIAM
(wailing)
You don’t understand, we’ve haven’t slept in months! She crippled my wife! So many unauthorized repairs!

GUN DEALER
(laughs)
Lighten up, buddy. I’m just telling you so you know you’ve got a clean piece here. And also, so you know: if you do end up in the legal system, and there’s even a suggestion I might have been involved, you are dead, your wife is dead, your children are dead.

William stands up, SNIFFLING.

WILLIAM
We don’t have any children; we’re talking about it.
(off his look, soberly)
But I understand.

GUN DEALER
Don’t shoot anybody I wouldn’t shoot.
The dealer gets in the car.

    WILLIAM
    Listen, I know you’re going back to the city, but if you wouldn’t mind swinging by Park Slope...

    GUN DEALER
    I’m not a cab. End of the line.

    WILLIAM
    But you drove me out here! And, let’s face it, this is dicey neighborhood.

    GUN DEALER
    What’re you worried about? You’ve got a gun.

    (points)
    Did you piss yourself?

    WILLIAM
    (looking down)
    Yes, I guess I did.

Ext. Pretty Dicey Neighborhood — A While Later

William walks, constantly turning to face some unseen threat, pointing his gun from inside his jacket pocket. The locals are amused by him.

Music: “Dancing in the Dark (1931)” by Morcheeba

Int. Apartment — Parlor — A Couple of Hours Later

Alex is smoking a cigarette. The PHONE rings. Alex twitches, and quickly answers the phone.

    ALEX
    (almost a whisper)
    Hello?

Intercut with:

Int. MJ Magazine — Mikey’s Office — Continuous

Mikey sits behind his desk in Santa Claus costume drinking a lime green martini.
Music (in background): “Santa, Baby” by Neko Case

MIKEY
Sexy Lexie! You’re missing the XXX-mas party!

ALEX
Oh, sorry. I forgot.

Something’s going on under Mikey’s desk. Are those antlers?

MIKEY
Bad news, love. You’re sacked.

ALEX
(not surprised or upset)
Oh?

Those are definitely antlers, bobbing up and down.

MIKEY
I’d’ve told you in person, but you know, you just haven’t been around. And we’ve decided to go in a different direction, graphically.

Back in the apartment, a huddled William enters.

ALEX
(quickly hanging up)
Great. Merry Christmas!

Int. ♂ Magazine — Mikey’s Office — Continuous

Mikey looks at the phone, a little shocked. SYN appears from below his desk, wearing antlers and a little black nose.

SYN
How’d she take it?

MIKEY
Disappointingly well.

        (nodding head down)
On Dasher!

Syn smiles and dips back below the desk.

(CONTINUED)
Int. Apartment —
Parlor — Continuous

William takes the gun from his down coat and places it on the coffee table. They both stare down at it, with great moment. After a long silence, Alex picks the gun off the table.

ALEX
I don’t think I’ve ever even held a gu—

The gun GOES OFF. A huge explosion of fluffy down erupts from William’s crotch. A lamp SHATTERS behind him.

ALEX
The Tiffany!

Ext. Park Slope Hospital — Early Morning

Int. Hospital — Patient’s Room — Continuous

Alex sits by William’s side, tightly holding his hand, as his surgeon nonchalantly briefs him.

DOCTOR
Okay. It’s kind of mess down there.

ALEX
Will he still be able to have children?

WILLIAM
(to Alex, quite annoyed)
That’s your first question?

DOCTOR
Well, we won’t be able to really determine the damage until we can sort out what’s what. But even in the worst case scenario, I imagine we’d still be able to extract some sperm.

ALEX
Oh, thank God.

WILLIAM
What’s the worst case scenario?
DOCTOR

Let’s not focus on that just yet. And keep in mind that reconstructive surgery can do some amazing things; I mean, they can turn a woman into a man, so, well, there, that’s where we are.

Alex smiles bravely at William. This annoys him even more.

DOCTOR

Now, there’s two officers here who would like to talk to you.

Officer Sandra and Officer Dan stand behind the doctor.

OFFICER SANDRA

Ms. Payne, could I talk to you outside?

A little dazed, Alex exits with Officer Sandra.

OFFICER DAN

(to William, rote)

I’m sorry for your loss.

Int. Hospital — Hallway — Continuous

Officer Sandra and Alex sit on plastic chairs.

OFFICER SANDRA

(gently)

It’s been our experience that when a woman shoots her husband in the genitals, it’s usually not an accident. (before Alex can protest)

I know, I know, we’ve all been there. (meaningfully)

Believe me.

Int. Hospital — Patient’s Room — Continuous

Officer Dan is being less gentle with William.

OFFICER DAN

We know what’s going on here.

Panic flashes across William’s face.

(Continued)
ILLIAM
(not very chalant)
What’s going on here?

OFFICER DAN
The falling TV... the gun... Do you think I’m a fucking moron or something?

WILLIAM
No, I don’t think you’re a fucking moron.

William looks plenty worried.

Int. Hospital — Hallway — Continuous

Alex fends off Officer Sandra.

OFFICER SANDRA
A man finds a new cow, suddenly the old cow’s milk tastes a little sour.

ALEX
William hasn’t found a new cow.

OFFICER SANDRA
Just working late at the office then.

ALEX
He doesn’t work late. He doesn’t work.

OFFICER SANDRA
Do you know where he goes at night?

ALEX
He doesn’t go anywhere.

OFFICER SANDRA
Sounds like quite a prize.

Int. Hospital — Patient’s Room — Continuous

Officer Dan pumps William.

OFFICER DAN
Why don’t you tell me what going on here.
WILLIAM
You said you knew what was going on here.

OFFICER DAN
(Overly nice)
Yes, but if you tell me before she tells her, maybe we can prevent you from being fucked up the butt every day for the next five to eight years.

William recognizes the gravity of the situation.

Int. Hospital — Hallway — Continuous

Alex is venting a little.

ALEX
Look, William’s not... perfect. He’s immature, self-involved, broods a lot... You know, he’s a guy.

OFFICER SANDRA
Do you have a life insurance policy?

ALEX
You don’t honestly think my husband’s trying to kill me? I shot him, remember? By accident.

OFFICER SANDRA
TVs don’t just fall out of the sky, honey. We see this all the time: Couple gets married, they start to hate each, choose your weapons.

ALEX
(uneasy laugh)
My husband is not trying to kill me. Or anyone.

Int. Hospital — Patient’s Room — Continuous

Officer Dan plays good cop/bad cop by himself.

OFFICER DAN
You know she’s out there spilling her guts. Women always spill their guts.
William thinks about this: maybe she is.

OFFICER DAN (CONT.)
I understand. You love your wife. But she’s ratting you out.

William seizes upon the first part of that speech. His heart grows three times that day.

WILLIAM
I trust my wife.
(then quickly)
Could I see my wife, please?

Int. Hospital — Patient’s Room — A Few Moments Later

A disgruntled Officer Dan exits as Alex reenters. William looks at her warmly, and opens his arms to her. She sits on the bed, and lays her head on his chest.

WILLIAM
I didn’t rat you out, honey.

ALEX
Me neither.

It’s a heartwarming moment.

ALEX (CONT.)

(voice cracking)
I’m sorry I shot you in the penis.

WILLIAM

(patting her head)
I know. I know.

Ext. Times Square — Several Nights Later

William, a little hunched over, and Alex, limping to keep up, walk through bright, sanitized Times Square. And yet the tableau is strongly reminiscent of “Midnight Cowboy.”

Music: “Silver Bells” by Tom Waits

They hobble up to the Howard Johnson’s, and enter.
A desperate-looking William and Alex sit across from Coop, who is wolfing down fried clams.

COOP
Rosie, I was damn sorry to hear about your “accident.”

ALEX
It was an accident!

COOP
And a tragic one. But look on the bright side...

William and Alex don’t know what that would be.

COOP (CONT.)
It’s pretty Hemingwayesque.
(Off their looks)
Jake Barnes? Sun also Rises?

WILLIAM
Oh, yeah, right. That’s great.

COOP
(getting to the point)
Hey you guys, look, I’m happy to see you and all, but if this is about money, it’s just, I’d like to stay friends.

ALEX
We need to have somebody killed.

Coop isn’t sure he heard that.

WILLIAM
We thought you could recommend a hit man.

COOP
(excited, like a kid)
Really, no shit?
(leans over, hushed)
Who you gonna kill?
ALEX

We’d like to keep that confidential.

COOP

Hey, c’mon, this is Coop, your best friend! Is it a celebrity?
(half joking)
Tell me right now or I’m calling the police.

Coop glances over at two cops having coffee a couple of a booth away. He raises his hand to wave at them. William yanks Coop’s hand down. The two cops wave back.

WILLIAM
(low tones)
It’s Mrs. Connelly.

COOP
(getting giddy)
That sweet old lady? Ooh, that’s cold. Why do you need a hit man? Why don’t you just push her down the stairs?

ALEX
She’s not that easy to kill.

COOP
Hey, can I write about this?

WILLIAM AND ALEX
No!

COOP
I won’t use your names.

ALEX
No. Are you going to help us or not?

COOP
Yeah, of course. Well, see, most of the pros I know are in prison. Maybe Henry Hill. But you’d have to fly him in from New Mexico, and he’d be expensive...

WILLIAM
We have $950.

(Continued)
C
OOP

Oooh. Well, there is this one guy, Bob...

**Ext. East Village Avenue D — Seedy Bar — Day**

A neon sign above the bar reads, “Seedy Bar.”

**Int. Seedy Bar — Continuous**

It’s an old dark seedy bar that has been converted into an ironically seedy bar.

**Music: “Santa Claus is Coming to Town” by Frank Sinatra**

We PAN across several booths, where hipsters read and type on their laptops. BOB, a large but slightly older gentleman, sits in a booth between William and Alex. An iBook sits between them. Coop watches from the side, fascinated.

**On the Computer Screen**

Using Alex’s CGI design program, we enter Mrs. Connelly’s apartment (which she has recreated fairly well from memory) and turn toward the parlor.

ALEX (O.C.)
The door will be unlocked. Once you get in, okay, I realize this is horribly cluttered, but we’re going to go for a much cleaner, brighter look. For starters, those drapes won’t be there...

WILLIAM (O.C.)
Alex...

ALEX (O.C.)
*(Back to business)*
You might find her here.

The computer’s camera swivels toward Mrs. Connelly chair, which has a virtual little old lady sitting it.

**Back to Scene**

Alex expertly maneuvers her finger around the touch pad.

(CONTINUED)
ALEX
Or she might be in her bedroom, that’s down the hall, second door on the right...

Bob nods his head.

BOB
When do you want this done?

WILLIAM
As soon as possible.

ALEX
Tomorrow night?

BOB
That’s Christmas Eve. I like to spend Christmas Eve with my family.

WILLIAM
It’s Christmas Eve?
(to Alex, apologetic)
I didn’t get you anything.

Alex gives William and good-natured “forget about it” wave.

BOB
I could do it later, after the kids go to bed.

William and Alex nod their heads. That sounds good. Coop also nods his head, excitedly.

Ext. Building — Christmas Eve — Establishing

Music: “Oh, Holy Night” by Mazzy Star

Int. Apartment — Bedroom — Continuous

(In the middle of the room, a huge hydraulic contraption has been erected, apparently to keep the ceiling up.)

William and Alex lie in bed in the dark, staring at the ceiling for a long beat.

WILLIAM
I’m having second thoughts.

(CONTINUED)
ALEX
It was your idea! Ice floe?

WILLIAM
We both had the idea. I just said it first.

A beat.

ALEX
I never thought of myself as the kind of person who would hire an assassin to kill a little old lady.

Another beat.

WILLIAM
I feel bad about myself.

They lie there, contemplating what they’ve become. Suddenly, we hear a LOUD CRASHING O.C. William and Alex leap out of bed.

Int. Apartment — Library — A Moment Later

William rushes in, and reaches for a light switch. As he turns on the light, a crowbar SMASHES his hand. He SCREAMS.

In the light, we see Bob, whirling around with the crowbar, SMASHING everything. He sends the Christmas tree crashing to the ground in a sea of electrical sparks.

BOB
Ho, ho, ho, Merry Christmas!

Alex gawks in horror. The leaded glass bookshelves, the hutches, all the antiques, smashed.

ALEX
(screams)
What the fuck are you doing?!!!

Bob stops. Seeing them, he looks sheepish.

BOB
(drunk)
Making it look like a robbery.
(shields eyes with hand)
Wrong floor. Stupid Bob!

(CONTINUED)
(defensive)
I had a couple of drinks, okay? Have you ever killed anyone? It’s hard.

WILLIAM
(holding crushed hand)
Bob, let’s just call this thing off...

BOB
No, no. Deal’s deal.

Bob pulls a gun out of his waistband and staggers toward the door. William dives to tackle Bob, but ends up just clinging to the back of his legs. Bob drags William a few feet, the turns and SHOOTS him in the arm. William drops off.

Int. Building – Foyer – Continuous

Alex runs out, followed by William (holding his shoulder). Bob is already bounding up the stairs. He throws open Mrs. Connelly’s door, RIPPING the door chain off easily. He rushes in. Alex and William watch in horror as they hear:

MRS. CONNELLY
(Scream)

Bob staggers out of the door backwards. The praying hands sculpture has been plunged into his chest. A moment later, Mrs. Connelly runs out and LEAPS onto Bob like an ATTACKING BABOON. He falls against the railing, which collapses. They plunge together onto the stairs, and down to the floor.

Alex and William rush up. Bob is clearly dead, the gun in his open hand. Mrs. Connelly is MOANING in pain. The couple stares down at them.

WILLIAM
Oh, man, we’re screwed.

ALEX
(hysterical)
Finish her! Finish her!

WILLIAM
What!?

Alex bends down, pulls her pajama sleeve over her hand, and picks up the gun.

(CONTINUED)
A LEX
(a jumble of words)
He broke in. She stabbed him. He shot her. She stabbed him he shot her.

She presses the gun on William.

ALEX
Do it! Do it! Do it!

William looks down at Mrs. Connelly. On her forearm, written in blue, are a series of numbers.

WILLIAM
Hitler couldn’t kill her! What chance do we have!?

Alex looks down. She bends over, licks a finger and rubs it on the numbers. They smear off.

ALEX
That’s the number of the Park Slope police department.

She stands up and grabs the gun from William. She takes careful aim. She can’t do it, either. Her arms go limp.

ALEX (CONT.)
We suck.

William puts his arm around her shoulder.

ALEX (CONT.)
(sadly)
We’ll never be rich.

They hug. William’s face is to camera.

WILLIAM
I’ll go call an ambulance for Mrs. Connelly.
(winces)
And me, I guess.

Reverse angle:

A glow lights Alex’s face. She looks in horror at:

(continues)

(continued)
Through their apartment door

The Christmas tree is on fire. The fire catches the tinsel on the staircase, then zips up the railing in a pretty spiral effect. The whole staircase goes up in a ZVWOOP.

On William and Alex

The both watch, in fear and wonder. And then, terror.

In the doorway

A dark figure rises in front of the flames. It’s Mrs. Connelly. A SCREECH is heard. Mr. Fawkes swoops down and lands on Mrs. Connelly shoulder. Seen only in silhouette, she looks like some kind of sea hag pirate.

On William and Alex

Their moment of truth.

Ext. Building — A moment later

Alex holds open the door. William carries Mrs. Connelly out in his arms. He accidentally WHACKS her head on the door frame.

WILLIAM

Sorry, Mrs. Connelly.

We PULL OUT and UP as they hobble down the stairs. Once they get to the sidewalk:

WILLIAM

Where do we go now?

As we continue pulling out, Alex points in one direction and they start going that way. After a few steps, William stops and points in the opposite direction. They go that way.

Music: “Welcome Christmas” (The Whoville Song) By Love Spirals Downward

It begins to snow.

Dissolve to:

(CONTINUED)
Ext. Building —  
Spring — Day

Int. Apartment — Library — Continuous

Matthew leads another young couple through the apartment. It’s battered (and a lot of glass is missing) but it’s still pretty impressive.

MATTHEW
There’s a little fire damage, but under that you’ll find all the original wood. It’s a real handy man’s dream. But the bank is taking a loss on the property, so it’s going to go fast.

Int. Building — Foyer — A Moment Later

Matthew exits the apartment with the couple.

MATTHEW
Oh, and here’s Mrs. Connelly!

Mrs. Connelly has been making her way toward the stairs, leaning on a three-footed cane. She turns to the couple.

MRS. CONNELLY
Are you looking at the apartment? The young couple that was here before you, they were so nice. I wish they could have stayed.

Mrs. Connelly turns back toward the stairs, and stops.

MRS. CONNELLY
Oh, these stairs will be the death of me. If only I had one of those elevator chairs, that carry you up...

WIFE
That would be nice, but...

HUSBAND
(patronizing)
I imagine they’re quite expensive.

MRS. CONNELLY
Yes, I suppose you are right.

(Continued)
With great effort, she makes it up the first step. The couple share a knowing glance.

Close on

Mrs. Connelly’s shopping bag. On the top we see a pamphlet that reads, “American People With Disabilities Act: Know Your Rights!”

In an OLD FASHIONED SPECIAL EFFECT, a hand closes a book cover over this image. The book cover reads, “The Duplex: A True Novel.”

Int. East Village Barnes and Noble – Evening

A standing-room-only-audience, a mix of college students and older readers. As we pan across them, we see the young people are applauding much more enthusiastically. Finally we reach the celebrated author. It is Coop.

COOP
(as applause dies down)
I’ve got time for a couple questions.

Coop’s POV

A few angry-looking older people raise their hands. So do a couple of smug hipsters, obviously with questions designed to illuminate their critical faculties. And one cute coed in a red top.

On Coop

COOP
(pointing)
In the red top.
UTE COED
(flushed)
I loved your book, Mr. Cooper. I mean, really loved it. I can’t believe it’s true. It seemed so real.
(self-conscious laugh)
But my question: whatever happened to couple who owned the apartment?

COOP
(smiles, shrugs)
I dunno.

Cut to Black

Credits

Over Credits

Music: “I Found A Million Dollar Baby (At The Five And Ten Cents Store)” by Lucinda Williams

After about a minute:

Open on

Ext. Small Town in Idaho — Day

The town, a single block of a street, seems dwarfed by mountains in the background.

Super: Bumbulfuc, Idaho

Ext. Main Street — Continuous

We pan across several locally owned quaint establishments until we reach the middle of the street, which is occupied by an old fashioned “Five and Dime.”

Int. Five and Dime — Continuous

An OLD MAN is telling a story.

OLD MAN
And that bear looked me straight in eye, with something approaching respect. And I pulled the trigger.
The old man is telling the story to William (sporting a mountain man style-beard), who stands on the other side of the counter, bagging merchandise. The old man has one arm.

WILLIAM
  (genuine)
Wow. That is reat story, Mr. Klimpert.
Can I use it?

OLD MAN/MR. KLIMPET
Use it for what?

ALEX (O.C.)
That’ll be $18.75, Mrs. Klimpert.

Alex is running the register. Her hair is much longer and dyed black. She is also clearly pregnant.

MRS. KLIMPERT
Honey, that can’t be right.

Alex smiles patiently at the little old lady.

ALEX
Let’s just ring it up again, okay?

William, more amused than annoyed, hands Alex back the bag of merchandise. Alex takes a bar of soap and runs it over the scanner, as Mrs. Klimpert leans over to make sure the scanner isn’t pulling any tricks.

ALEX
Okay. That’s $1.19.

MRS. KLIMPERT
A dollar-nineteen for a bar of soap?
Who ever heard of such a thing?

ALEX
  (actually enjoying this)
I know, it’s awful.

As Alex methodically re-scans all the merchandise and William listens to another of the old man’s stories, we:
Fade to Black

Over remaining credits

Music: A duet of Cole Porter’s “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire,” by Drew Barrymore and Ben Stiller.

DREW
WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE?

BEN
I DON’T.

DREW
WITH FLASHY FLUNKIES EVERYWHERE...

BEN
I DON’T.

DREW
WHO WANTS THE BOTHER OF A COUNTRY ESTATE?

BEN
A COUNTRY ESTATE IS SOMETHING I’D HATE.

DREW
WHO WANTS FANCY FOREIGN CAR?

BEN
I DON’T.

DREW
WHO WANTS TO TIRE OF CAVIAR?

BEN
I DON’T.

DREW
WHO WANTS A MARBLE SWIMMING POOL, TOO?

BEN
I DON’T.

DREW
AND I DON’T, ’CAUSE ALL I WANT IS YOU.

BEN
’CAUSE ALL I WANT IS YOU...
CONTINUED:

Etc, until...

The End

(CONTINUED)