

Burn after Reading

Original Screenplay by

Joel Coen and Ethan Coen

Copyright © 2005 By Joel Coen and Ethan Coen
Registered with Writers Guild of America

This draft: September 22, 2005

FADE IN

High in the air—so high we can see the curvature of the earth. The eastern seaboard stretches away, flecked with clouds.

As we dissolve in closer the picture bleaches of color. We are looking down at the city of Washington, D.C.

Dissolve closer still: a black-and-white aerial photograph of a neighborhood in suburban D.C. dominated by a sprawling building. Computer type quickly bleeps on:

C.I.A. Headquarters
Langley, Virginia

HALLWAY

We track at floor level, following the well shined shoes of someone walking down the well polished hallway.

OFFICE

We hear a door opening and a silver-haired man rises behind his desk. A nameplate on the desk identifies him as Palmer DeBakey Smith.

Palmer

Ozzie. Sit down.

Osbourne Cox, entering, is a middle-aged man in a striped shirt and bow tie.

Osbourne

Palmer. What's up.

Palmer

You know Peck, and Olson.

The two men, sitting on chairs facing the desk, nod at Osbourne, who is surprised to see them.

Osbourne

Peck, yes, hiya. Olson, by reputation. Hi, Osbourne Cox.

Olson

Yeah, hiyah.

Osbourne

Aren't you with... aren't you, uh...

Palmer jumps in:

Palmer

Yeah, that's right. Oz, look. There's no easy way to say this. We're taking you off the Balkans desk.

Osbourne

You're—what? Why?

Palmer

In fact we're moving you out of Sigint entirely.

Osbourne

... What? No discussion, just—you're out?

Palmer

Well, we're having the discussion now Oz. this doesn't have to be unpleasant.

Osbourne

Palmer, with all due respect—what the fuck are you talking about?

A beat.

... And why is Olson here?

Another uncomfortable beat.

Palmer

... Look, Ozzie—

Osbourne

What the fuck is this?! Is it my—I know it's not my work.

Palmer

Ozzie—

Osbourne

I'm a great fucking analyst! Is it—

Palmer

Oz, things are not going well. As you know.

Peck

You have a drinking problem.

Stunned silence. Ozzie turns to look at Peck.

At length:

Osbourne

I have a drinking problem.

Palmer

This doesn't have to be unpleasant. We found you something in State. It's a. uh...

He gropes, uncomfortable.

... It's a lower clearance level. Yes. But we're not, this isn't, we're not terminating you.

Osbourne
(quietly)

This is an assault.

Peck

Come on. Ozzie.

Osbourne

This is an assault. I have a drinking problem? Fuck you, Peck. you're a Mormon!

Peck

Ozzie—

Osbourne
Next to you we all have a drinking problem! Fuck you
guys! Whose ass didn't I kiss? Let's be honest!

Palmer nods at Olson.

Palmer
Okay, Olson—

Osbourne
Let's be fucking honest. . .

Osbourne gets to his feet, agitated.

. . . This is a crucifixion! This is political! Don't tell me
it's not!

He storms out the door.

. . . I have a drinking problem!

The door slams. Palmer Smith looks at Olson. Olson arches an eyebrow.

OSBOURNE

Bow tie loosened, he stands at a kitchen counter.

His shoulders twist as he does something below frame: we hear the crackle of ice cubes
wrenching loose in their tray.

Behind him we see the apartment door opening. Katie, an attractive middle-aged woman,
enters, taking her key out of the door, but—stops, surprised to see Osbourne.

Katie
You're home.

Osbourne continues making himself a drink.

Osbourne
Hang on to your hat, honey. I have some news. I—

Katie

Did you pick up the cheeses?

Osbourne

Huh?

Katie

Were they ready? I didn't know you were coming home this early.

Osbourne
(blank)

The cheeses.

Katie rolls her eyes.

Katie

I left a message for you to stop at Todaro's. The Magruders and the Pfarrers are coming over.

Osbourne

The Pfarrers? Ugh. I—what did Kathleen say?

Katie

What?

Osbourne

When you left the message?

Katie

She said. She would give you. The message.

Osbourne

Well she. I don't know. I guess we had bigger news today. My day didn't revolve arou—

Katie

So you didn't get the cheeses.

Osbourne

Well. since I didn't get the message, no. I didn't get the cheeses. But hang on to your hat, I—

Katie
 Oh for fuck's sake, Ozzie. you mean I have to go out again?
 All right, well, you better get dressed.

Osbourne
 Honey, we have to talk.

Katie
 Not right now. They'll be here in. what, less than an hour.

CHEESE PLATE

A hand hovers. hesitates.

Voice
 Is this a. uh, goat cheese?

Osbourne (off)
 Chevre. yes, that is a goat cheese.

Wider shows the cocktail party. meagerly attended but in full swing. Besides Osbourne and Katie there is Harry Pfarrer. (who has just inquired about the cheese) bearded. forties, rugged. his wife Sandy. and a shiny-faced young couple. Doug and Tina Magruder.

Osbourne holds a cocktail tumbler.

Harry
 Because I have lactose reflux. But I can—

Osbourne
 You're lactose intolerant?

Harry
 Yes, but I can—

Osbourne
 Or you have acid reflux? They're two different things.

Harry looks at him coldly.

Harry
 I know what they are.

Osbourne
Then you misspoke yourself. So I—

Harry
Thank you for correcting me.

Katie
You should try the chevre, Harry. It's very good.

Harry
Yeah. I can eat goat cheese.

He eats a piece, cupping one hand under his mouth.

... I was just explaining to your husband here, I have a condition—

Katie tries to separate the two men by including Doug Magruder.

Katie
Harry works with Senator Kravitz.

Doug Magruder
Oh yeah? I work with Nagle.

Katie
Harry's with the security detail.

Harry
Actually I work for the Treasury Department. I'm a federal marshall.

Osbourne
If you want he'll show you his great big gun.

Harry
Very amusing. The gun is actually no big deal. Twenty years in the marshall's service and I've never discharged my weapon.

Osbourne
Sounds like something you should be telling your

psychiatrist.

Harry
What? I don't have a psychiatrist.

Doug Magruder
Boy, I guess my job is pretty undramatic. I'm on the legislative side. What do you do Mrs. Pfarrer? Do you also carry a gun?

Harry laughs.

Harry
Sandy writes children's books.

Sandy
I write children's books—

Harry
Oliver The Cat Who... Who... argh—Who—

Choking on a piece of cheese. Coughing

...Who Lives In The Rotunda. Excuse me.

Tina
Those are wonderful! My nieces and nephews—

Harry
Yeah, it's a beloved series. You wouldn't believe her fan mail. Unghh. Are you sure this is goat cheese?

Katie
Why don't you let your wife tell them about her own books. Harry?

Harry
I'm sorry—was I—

Katie
Here, come in the kitchen, help me with the crudités.

KITCHEN

They enter.

Harry
Goddamnit. He knows, doesn't he.

He looks down at the floor. He stamps.

... Nice floors.

Katie
Knows what?

Harry is looking around the kitchen, taking in the fixtures. Absently:

Harry
About us, he knows about us. Little prick.

Katie
Don't be an ass. he doesn't know a thing.

Harry is staring down at the linoleum again.

Harry
What is that, forbo?

CAR

Night. Harry driving, his wife next to him.

A long beat.

Finally:

Harry
What a horse's ass.

Sandy
I don't know why we see them.

Harry shrugs.

Harry

Well, she's all right.

Sandy

She is a cold, stuck-up bitch.

Harry opens his mouth to reply. considers, doesn't.

They drive.

KATIE

She is staring. in front of a mirror. face covered in cold cream. one hand arrested on the way up to daub on more.

Katie

You quit?!

Osbourne is buttoning a pyjama top.

Osbourne

Uh-huh.

Katie

Well—thank you for letting me know!

Osbourne

I tried to tell you this afternoon.

Katie

You tried? You tried? And then—what, the aphasia kicked in?

Osbourne

Our guests came. We—

Katie

Why?! For fuck's sake. Ozzie!

Osbourne

I'm just—I don't know. I got so tired.

Katie

You're tired.

Osbourne

Tired of swimming against the current.

Katie

Uh-huh.

Osbourne

Independent thought is not only not valued there, they resist it, they fight it, the bureaucracy is positively—

Katie

Did you get a pension, or severance or something, or—

Osbourne

I didn't retire you know. I. I quit. I don't want their benefits.

Katie

But I suppose my benefits are all right, I suppose you can live with those, is that the idea?

Osbourne

It's not like that's the only way to make money.

Katie

Yes? Yes? What're you gonna do?

Osbourne

I'll do some consulting.

Katie

Consulting.

Osbourne

Yes, to help while I—I've always wanted to write.

Katie

Write. Write what.

Osbourne

I've been thinking about it. A book, a sort of, sort of memoir.

Katie stares at him in the mirror.

A beat.

She bursts into laughter.

THE BRIDGE

Of a small yacht. Osbourne stands at the wheel, a light wind in his face, as the boat sails under motor power.

After a beat he moves to the front of the boat.

An old man sits on a bench facing out into the wind on the prow. He has snowy hair and a stern Yankee face. He wears a tweed cap. He doesn't much react to Osbourne's approach.

Osbourne

You okay there, Dad?

The old man remains silent, staring. Osbourne sits next to him and idly tucks in the plaid blanket resting over the man's knees.

... Dad, I left my job at the Agency...

The old man stares out into the wind.

... I, uh... I'm sorry. Dad, government service is not what it was when you were in State. Things are different now. I don't know, maybe it's... it's... the Cold War ending: now it seems like it's all bureaucracy and no mission...

The old man stares out into the wind.

... I'm writing a memoir. I think it's going to be pretty explosive. But I don't think you'll disapprove. I don't think you'll disapprove. Katie has had trouble accepting it. But... sometimes there's a higher patriotism, Dad. So

we'll... Yes, change is hard. It's hard on Katie. But we'll be okay. We'll be okay. Life is change. This is good. We were all blocked up. Katie and me. This is, this is a blessing in disguise. I'll go into training, you know. Lay off the sauce. Like you did. You managed to do it. Finally. And then I can concentrate on, you know. New beginning. And this'll all have been for the best. Don't you think Dad?

The old man stares out into the wind.

Osbourne sniffles.

... Cold.

He taps the old man on the knee and rises.

... I guess we should head back.

LONG SHOT THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD OF A CAR.

The sailboat docked at the end of a marina. Osbourne is pushing the old man in a wheel chair down the pier away from the boat.

A Man's Voice (off)

We've seen this. . .

THE MAN

White hair, bushy eyebrows, a florid face. He is in a law-book lined conference room. He wears an expensive but conservative suit, suspenders, a white shirt with blue collar and cuffs. He is Bogus Terikhian.

Terikhian

... I know this kind of man. We've seen this.

Wider on the conference room shows that Katie Cox sits at the table, along with Terikhian, another lawyer, and an assistant.

... Mrs. Cox, you can't let this man take advantage of you. And he will. He will.

Katie

Yes. This is my fear. He's trying—he says—he's trying to pull himself together. but...

Terikhian

Look, sure. I—I'm obliged to tell you you should try to salvage things. And you should. People turn themselves around. Not unheard-of. But. You—you haven't broached the possibility of divorce yet?

Katie

No.

Terikhian

Well that's good. Because first you should get all his financials. Before he's forwarned. Because here's a man, here's a man, practiced in deceit, this is almost, you could say it's his job, practiced at hiding things, and there is no reason, it is not improper, there is no reason for you not to get a picture of the household finances. Paper files, computer files, whatever—this is your prerogative. You can be a spy too, madam. Do this before you put him on alert. Before the turtle can draw in his head and his, uh...

He waggles his hands, groping for the word.

... Feet.

He shrugs.

... And hopefully everything will work out. He will reform. But! If not: forwarned is forearmed.

COX HOUSE

Day.

Osbourne is splayed on an easy chair, wearing a bathrobe over pyjamas. He stares at the ceiling, motionless, arms outflung, like Marat in his bathtub.

A long still beat. A clock ticks.

Abruptly Osbourne raises one hand to speak into a microcassette recorder.

Osbourne

We were young and committed and there was nothing we couldn't do. We thought of the Agency less as . . . less as . . .

The thought, such as it was, peters out. Osbourne rises and wanders around the room, glassy-eyed.

He suddenly raises the microcassette again.

. . . The principles of George Kennan—a personal hero of mine—were what animated us. In fact they were what had originally inspired me to enter government service. Like the State Department's China Hands of yore, or, in a different forum, in a different venue, in a different medium, in, um, . . . "Murrow's Boys," the fabled—in a different—

He suddenly stops, head cocked, listening.

Faintly, a ringing phone.

STAIRWAY

At the cut Osbourne is thundering down a steep carpeted stairway leading to a basement. He inclines his head to clear the ceiling that juts over the bottom half of the stairwell.

The phone is louder here.

BASEMENT

A semi-finished basement with cheap paneling and a low dropped ceiling of water-stained Johnson-Armstrong tile. The ringing phone is on a cheap government-surplus desk set in a corner of the room. The answering machine, with Osbourne's voice, picks up:

Machine

You have reached The Cox Group. . .

Osbourne, robe flapping, shuffles hurriedly in his slippered feet toward the phone.

. . . We can't answer your call right now. Please leave a—

Osbourne
(heavy breathing)

Hello.

He eases into the chair, having swiped up the phone. A listening beat.

... Yes?... Oh, no... No, call her number... No, upstairs.
... No she's not, but leave it on her machine.

LIVING ROOM

Later.

We are looking over Osbourne's shoulder—he is still in his robe—as he sits hunched on an ottoman, looking at a daytime game show.

A few beats of the show.

Roaring laughter from the studio audience. Mild chuckle from Osbourne in the foreground.

LATER

Ticking clock. Osbourne paces with the microcassette recorder. He raises it with a thought, draws a breath, and then stops, and looks off.

The ticking grandfather clock: ornate hands on an ornate clockface. Two or three minutes to five.

Osbourne stares for a long beat.

OSBOURNE

Shoulders twisting as we hear ice clattering out of a tray.

He pours coke sizzling onto the ice.

He pauses for a long beat.

He takes a bottle of rum out of a cabinet.

He pours some into a hatch-marked shot glass.

He looks at it. The amber liquid tops the hatch mark. He conscientiously pours the overage back, murmuring:

Osbourne
Single...

He dumps the shot into the coke.

SAILBOAT

Evening. As before, the boat, docked at the end of the marina pier, is seen in long shot through the windshield of a car.

Closer on the boat. As water laps against pilings and the boat gently bobs and creaks, we hear, muffled, the sounds of a couple having sex. When it builds to climax we cut:

INSIDE

Minutes later. We hold on a door for a quiet beat, then we hear the gurgle of water, and then the door opens. Harry Pfarrer emerges from the small bathroom, buckling his belt.

In the bedroom which he emerges into Katie Cox is just finishing dressing.

Harry looks at his watch.

Harry
I should try to get a run in.

COX HOUSE

Evening. Katie is letting herself in.

Katie
Ozzie!

Quiet.

KITCHEN

Katie enters and sees a note on the counter paperweighted by a plate of used lime wedges:

Honey,

*At Fenninger's. Reunion committee dinner.
See you later.*

POTOMAC BRIDGE

Evening. Long-lens, hand-held, point-of-view seeming: Harry Pfarrer is jogging in his Treasury sweats.

Closer on him. Brow furrows. He spins, jogs backwards, looking.

His point-of-view: nothing unusual: traffic on the bridge, no pedestrians particularly close.

Harry, mildly puzzled, slows and stops. He turns again.

Point-of-view up the bridge: empty.

Harry starts jogging again.

COX BASEMENT

We are tracking toward the desk in the corner, at which Katie sits. She cracks open a CD case and loads the CD into Osbourne's computer. A suspense drone builds as we track in.

Katie starts typing, then suddenly stops. She holds still, listening for noises in the house. Nothing. She resumes typing.

We hear male voices beginning to swell in song. The voices continue after the suspense drone snaps off, at the cut to:

FENNINGER'S

A musty steakhouse. On the walls are hunting-scene prints and steel engravings of English country houses.

A placard resting on a chair outside the Georgian Room: CLOSED FOR PRIVATE PARTY.

From inside the room, male voices:

Voices

Tune every heart and every voice. . .

INSIDE THE GEORGIAN ROOM

A dozen middle-aged men around a long table, each holding high a glass.

Men

. . . Let every care withdraw.
Let all with one accord rejoice. . .

The men are sweaty, tie-loosened, dinner-stuffed and boozy.

. . . In praise of Old Nassau. . .

Close on Osbourne as a rotund middle-aged classmate fills his glass to brimming. The two sway unsteadily with the music..

. . . In praise of Old Nassau my boys.
Hoo-rah. hoo-rah. hoorah!

All swing their glasses side-to-side in rhythm:

. . . Her sons. . . shall give. . . while they. . . shall live. . .

Glasses are thrust high with a ringing finish:

. . . In praise of Old Nassau!

A WOMAN'S ASS

Bare. Pale. Middle-aged.

Someone with a marker is drawing on the flesh to illustrate:

Doctor (off)

We take all the chicken fat off your buttocks, here. . . and here. . . And the upper arms. And a little off your tummy. . .

The camera is arcing around a standing, naked, middle-aged woman, to reveal the doctor sitting on a stool in the examining room, facing her. He reaches forward again with the marker.

. . . And we do breast augmentation with a tiny incision here. . . and here.

Patient (off)

Uh-huh. And what about the thigh area?

Doctor

Well we can do liposuction there as well, but that area will respond to exercise. Buttocks and upper arms begin to store more fat when you get up around forty, the body just tells it to go there, but the thighs will respond to toning exercises.

Patient

Uh-huh. I know. I can work out on my arms til the cows come home, but. . .

Doctor

Uh-huh. And of course there are also genetic factors.

Patient

The Litzkes are big.

Doctor

Uh-huh, well everything's—

Patient

My mom had an ass that could pull a bus.

Doctor

Wow. Well that's a predispo—

Patient

Father's side too, although Dad tends to carry his weight in front of him.

Doctor

Uh-huh.

Patient

In the gut area. Deriere, not so much.

Doctor

Okay.

The continuing track around is also booming up to reveal the face of the patient, Linda Litzke.

Linda

And what about the face, you know, the window to the soul.

Doctor

Uh-huh! Uh-huh! Very well put. Well your eyes are one of your best features. But we can do something about the incipient crow's feet.

Linda

Baby crow's feet. Little chickling's feet. I mean chicks. Chickie chickie chickie.

Doctor

Ha-ha. yes. again. well put. You have a way with words. We cut here. . .

He marks.

. . . And we pull the skin tight, like stretching the skin over a drum. Not too tight, though. We don't want that "worked-on" look. You need sufficient slack for the face to remain expressive.

Linda

Yeah, I don't wanna look like Boris Karloff.

Doctor

Uh-huh! Heh-heh. so you don't want a sex change!

Linda

No. I'm all woman!

DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Doctor and patient, now dressed, sit on either side of a desk.

Doctor

So Linda, what we're talking about here is four different procedures. (ticks them off) The liposuction. . . The rhinoplasty. . . The facial tuck, which I would strongly recommend over the chemical peel—

Linda

Yeah. I don't want to get anything burned off.

Doctor

And why should you. With that lovely skin. And lastly, the breast augmentation. Now we can also do something about the vaccine scar—I don't know if you wear sleeveless dresses much—

Linda

Not with these ham hocks!

Doctor

Yes. well once they're nice and svelte. post-op. you—

Linda

Well I don't know. Is the vaccine thing—can you counsel me on this? I don't know, is it unsightly? I see it a lot, a bunch of people have it.

Doctor

Absolutely! Some women don't mind it at all! Personal taste!

HARDBODIES

Linda Litzke, in a Hardbodies polo shirt with "Linda" stitched on the breast, leans out of her semi-enclosed office on the gym floor.

Linda

Chad!

ON THE FLOOR

Chad Feldheimer, trainer, fortyish and well-muscled, has a gym patron up on a table and is helping him stretch a leg back.

Patron

Ow!

Chad

I'm sorry, was that too much?

Patron

I felt a straining... a tightness in the... in the front of my ass...

Chad

Well you're pretty tight. You have to feel it or—

Linda

(on the public address)

Chad Feldheimer. Office.

Chad

I'll be back in a minute. We'll work on opening those hips.

LINDA'S OFFICE

Linda is tapping at her computer as Chad enters.

Linda

I got a batch from ComeTogether dot com.

Chad perches on the desk, chewing gum as he gazes at the screen.

Chad
Oh wow. Any good?

Linda
I don't know yet, just looking... How do you open this?

Chad
Click on, uh... yeah...

Linda
Oh my god!

Chad
What?

Linda
Oh my God. what a loser!

She clicks.

... Loser!

She clicks. Chad is laughing. Linda scowls.

... Loser!... What is this! They should call this Mr. Saggy dot com.

Chad
Cripes.

Linda
Loser!

Chad
Did you have to send a picture?

Linda
No, only guys do. I submitted a verbal profile. turn-ons. turn-offs, et cetera. I'm really looking for someone with a sense of humor.

Chad
That guy—wait—that guy wasn't bad.

Him? Linda

No, before. Chad

Him? Linda

Yeah. He uh, he might not be a loser. Chad

How can you tell? Linda

That's a Brioni suit. Chad

Oh yeah? Linda

Shit yeah. Chad

Does he look like he has a sense of humor? Linda
(dubious)

He looks like his optometrist has a sense of humor. Chad

Linda slaps his arm.

... Huh-huh-huh. What does he do?

State Department. Linda

That's cool. Chad

Linda
His hair is. . . what is that?

Chad
Plugs.

GYM

Next day.

Linda is showing someone around the floor.

Linda
This is the cardio area. A lot of machines here so that, believe me, there's never a wait. What you're seeing now, this is our busiest time, and there's still a couple of open treadmills I see, three Stairmasters—I call it the Butt-Blaster—couple of LifeCycles—Hi, Chad.

Chad is working with a medicine ball and a heavy young woman.

Chad
Hi Linda. Did you call that guy?

Linda
Not yet! Chad is one of our trainers. I've just started internet dating and I got my first look at the. uh. . .

Customer
What service?

Linda
ComeTogether dot com?

Customer
Nice.

Linda
Have you used them?

Customer
No—two friends did and they're both hooked up. With

really special guys.

Linda

That's fantastic.

IN HER OFFICE

Linda is leaning forward at her desk, phone wedged between ear and shoulder, one hand up at her forehead.

After a long still beat:

Linda

Yes!

Another still beat.

... English!

Beat.

... Agent!

Beat.

... Agent! Agent!

Beat.

... Yes, hi, this is Linda Litzke. should I give you my account number? You have it up? Okay. I was informed that I needed pre-approval for these surgeries. and then. . . Yes. it was denied.

Listening, then:

... No, those are four different operations. . . It's very complicated; I'm reinventing myself, it's a whole new look so it isn't just one thing. however, it's all approved by my doctor. . . But—madam! This is not—my job involves, you know, public interface! This is not. . .

Her jaw sets. She controls her fury. Quieter:

... Yes I do understand. Could I speak to your supervisor please?

MINUTES LATER

We are on a long lens point-of-view, from several cubicles over, of Linda, now slumped at her desk, head in her arms. We faintly hear her sobbing.

Reverse shows Ted Treffon, middle-aged, balding, the soulful manager of Hardbodies. He looks at Linda, puzzled and a little alarmed. He tenses as if to rise but doesn't, and hovers uncomfortably, unsure of whether to intrude.

WASHINGTON MALL

Linda, dressed in a smart pant suit and holding a handbag is walking down the promenade.

Her moving POV passes over a couple in conversation, an old woman feeding the birds, a man in a business suit reading a newspaper.

She passes the man and turns around. He has looked up from the paper and is staring at her. He wears aviator-shaped glasses with clear plastic rims. He looks like he may have hair plugs.

Alan? Linda

Man
Are you, uh... Linda?

EXT CIRCLE THEATRE

A poster advertises *Tell Me That Again!* with Dermot Mulroney and Claire Danes.

INT THEATRE

On the screen, Dermot Mulroney, dressed in a tuxedo, cranes his head to look steeply up

and off.

Linda sits next to Alan in the half-empty theatre, nervously watching the screen.

Dermot (off)

First you tell me that you can't commit, then you—
WOULD YOU GET DOWN FROM THERE!

Linda laughs raucously, then catches herself and looks at Alan.

RESTAURANT

The couple sit across from each other at a small table. They pick at their food.

LINDA'S APARTMENT

The couple are making love in the dark room on a frilly comforter. Alan, still wearing his glasses, wheezes asthmatically.

LATER

Alan is snoring. After a long beat Linda gets up and puts on a robe. She bends down near the bed and picks something up out of Alan's trousers.

LIVING ROOM

She sits into a chair near the window in the dark room and opens Alan's wallet. A Discover card, driver's license, a condom. A photograph of Alan holding a large bluefish.

She unfolds a piece of notepaper. Written in a feminine hand in pencil:

Please pick up:

Plunge

Honey Nut Cheerios.

Linda

Oh for Pete's sake!

She catches herself, looks around.

The snoring, off, continues.

She looks out the window.

The lights of the freeway twinkle.

YACHT

We are in the bedroom. The boat rides gently at anchor.

Harry has an arm around Katie, in bed. Both stare at a point in space.

After a beat that is silent except for the faint sloshing of water against hull:

Harry

... and then, you know, you grow up. I guess that's what's happened with me. You just... people change. We married when I was, what, in my mid-twenties. A kid. We were kids. Twenties. You think it's forever. Then, you know, you're older—you begin to feel your mortality, you start to think, well, there's no more time for dishonesty. Subterfuge. You go. I'm not that person. The choices you made, you can't, just through inertia—

Katie

I'm thinking of divorcing Ozzie.

Harry doesn't react—a careful, studied non-reaction. After more sloshing:

Harry

... I'm just thinking, Whoa. I mean, frankly, I'm thinking, Whoa. I, I, I guess that's what I should be thinking about too. With Sandy.

Katie

That's what you were just saying.

Harry

Yes! Absolutely! And you should be getting rid of that bozo. No question about that. I agree.

Katie

So if I were divorced—

Harry

Well yes, if you were uh, you know, yes. Yes. I should settle things. With Sandy. Because of you and me. It just takes, courage, you know. To inflict that pain. Scary stuff. Scary stuff. You're a brave lady. Well, of course, it would be easier for you.

Katie

Why's that? I don't see that.

Harry

(chuckling)

Well you know, because he's such a dope. (sobers) But Sandy, she's... a good lady. A very special lady.

Katie

She's a cold, stuck-up bitch.

Harry

Well that's... a little—

Katie

You and I should sort things out. I've told you that this is not just frivolity.

Harry

No, that's understood. You've been very straight.

Katie

I thought I was loud and clear.

Harry

Absolutely. Not just fun and games.

Awkward beat. The sloshing of waves. Harry nods.

... Absolutely.

HOME DEPOT

Day. Harry Pfarrer pulls a length of metal tubing from a shelf. He sighs down it, examines the gauge, hefts it.

He slides it back in and pulls a length, wider gauge, from the shelf below.

EXTERIOR

Long lens, hand-held. point-of-view seeming: Harry is pushing a red shopping cart through the parking lot. Standing in the cart are lengths of metal tubing that he steadies with one hand as he pushes.

LINDA LITZKE'S CUBICLE

Linda has a hand cupped to her forehead and the phone pressed to one ear.

Linda
English! . . . Agent! . . . Agent! . . .

After a short beat she hits a button on the phone console and cradles the handset. From the speaker we hear:

Recorded Voice
—important to us. Please stay on the line for the next
available agent.

Music.

Linda listens for a moment, then abruptly lifts the handset and slams it back down.

TRACKING IN ON TED'S CUBICLE

Ted Treffon, the soulful manager of Hardbodies, stands with one hand on the back of his chair—which Chad occupies—and one hand on the desktop, looking over Chad's shoulder at a computer screen that Chad is scrolling down. Standing behind both men is a short Mexican Indian man, also in a Hardbodies uniform.

Chad
Holy shit. . .

Linda

Ted, can I talk to you about our Mickey Mouse health plan?

Ted continues to stare at the computer screen. it seems in mounting alarm. He responds absently to Linda:

Ted

Uh-huh. . . Hang on. . .

Chad

This is some heavy shit.

Linda

Is that my date list?

Chad

No. . . fuck. . .

Linda

You know. I'm trying to reinvent myself, and these procedures. which are so incredibly not cheap, this Micky Mouse HMO is saying they're not. they're. . . What is this?

She is looking at the screen.

Chad

I can't believe this. . . This is like. . . intelligence shit.

Ted

I am not comfortable with this.

Linda

What is it?

Chad

This is, like, I can't believe this shit I'm seeing.

Ted

Manolo found it.

Chad

Manolo found this, like, CD just lying in a locker. Locker floor. Ladies' locker room.

Manolo

Jus lie-eeen there.

Chad

And I'm like, whoa, someone's music or what, so I come in here and it's these files. man.

Ted

I am not touching this.

Chad

Like it's talking about SigInt, and signals and shit. Which. Signals means code, you know.

Manolo

It was jus lie-eeen there.

Chad

Talking about like, section heads here, and their names and shit. And then these other files are just, like, numbers. Arrayed. Numbers and dates and numbers. I think that's the shit, man. The raw intelligence.

Ted

I am not touching this. I want this out of here.

Chad

Wul. . . Throw it out?

Linda

You can't do that! You should put a note up in the ladies' locker room.

Chad

Put a note up? Highly classified shit found. Signals intelligence shit, CIA shit? Hello! Did you lose your secret CIA shit? I don't think so.

Ted

Look, you figure it out. I am not touching this. I want this out of Hardbodies. . .

As he backs out of the office:

... We're running a gym here!

Chad swivels around.

Chad

Look. Manolo. . .

He zippers his lip.

...you didn't find this.

Manolo

I found it on the floor there.

Chad

Yeah. I know. but—

Manolo

Right there on the floor there. Lie-eeen there.

CLOSE ON A REAR-VIEW MIRROR

A dark blue Ford Taurus, three or four car lengths back on a quiet Georgetown street.

Harry Pfarrer glances at the rear view mirror. Behind him we see the steel pipe from Home Depot laying across the top of the back seat of the station wagon.

SUBURBAN GEORGETOWN TOWNHOUSE

Harry is just getting out of the wagon which is parked in the driveway of the townhouse.

INSIDE

Harry is struggling through the front door with the length of pipe.

We hear his wife call down from upstairs:

Sandy

Harry? Is that you?

Harry

Yeah, yeah it's me.

He takes the pipe, opens the staircase door to the cellar. sets the pipe inside on the upper stair and closes the door.

THE CELLAR

Harry is at a workbench welding a length of trimmed pipe to a short piece of hardware clamped in a table vise.

His home shop is in a caged-off section of the basement. There is also some haphazard storage. One shelf holds stacked boxes labeled with magic marker: "Oliver in the Oval Office." "Yea and Nay for Oliver." "Point of Order. Oliver!"

Harry loosens the vise and takes out the piece of hardware. He drops it, a small bearing-mounted clip, onto a length of pipe held horizontal in another vise. He experimentally slides the clip along the length of pipe: it slides smoothly back and forth, perfectly balanced.

MONKEY DAVE'S

Linda Litzke and Ted Treffon, the soulful manager of Hardbodies, are at a table in the yuppie bar Monkey Dave's. To a waitress:

Linda

Absolut Saketini, please?

Ted

Just a Tab.

Linda

You know, it wouldn't cover all of it, but if I got some advance on my salary I could at least get the surgery ball rolling.

Ted

Whoa! There's a payroll company, you know. They don't

just advance people money. They just don't do that. I mean, I could say, yes, I'll authorize it, but that's not going to mean anything to them.

Linda

Well why do they have us on a cockamamie health plan? I need these surgeries, Ted!

Ted

You're a beautiful woman! You don't need—

Linda

Ted, I have gone just as far as I can go with this body! I—

Ted

I think it's a very beautiful—it's not a phoney-baloney Hollywood body—

Linda

That's right, Ted, I would be laughed out of Hollywood. I have very limited breasts and a gi-normous ass and I have this gut that swings back and forth in front of me like a shopping cart with a bent wheel—

Ted

Oh come on!

Linda

I am trying to get back in circulation. I have appetites and so forth, and, uh—

Ted

Well there's a lot of guys who'd like you just the way you are.

Linda

Yeah—losers!

Ted

Well, I don't know. Am I a loser? Lemme tell you something. I wasn't always a manager at Hardbodies. I, um...

He lapses into silence.

Linda

What's the matter, Ted?

He looks at her, appraising. He decides.

Ted

Let me show you something.

He reaches into his wallet. He pulls out a picture:

A snapshot of a soulful man in a dark robe and a high caftan standing on a curb in front of a large stone building.

Linda shrieks:

Linda

Omygod—is that you?!

Ted nods gravely.

Ted

Fourteen years. a Greek Orthodox priest. Congregation in Chevy Chase.

Linda

Well jeez, that's a good job!

Ted

Mm-hm.

Linda

What happened?

Ted

Well...

He looks at the picture for a sad beat, then shrugs. He stuffs it back in his wallet.

... It's a long story. Anyway, lotta ways I'm happier now.
My point is... my point is... it's a journey.

Linda

Well that's my point! I don't want to stay where I am! I want to find someone to share my journey!

Ted

Well, sometimes, you know, you don't look in your own back yard, you're never gonna see—

Linda

That's right! That's why I've started this internet dating!

Ted

Uh-huh, but I'm saying, maybe you don't have to, you know. . . to—

Linda

Look Ted, I know you can't authorize an advance on my salary but you can put in a request, can't you?

Ted

It's not going to do any good, Linda.

Linda

Ted, have you ever heard of the power of positive thinking?

LINDA'S APARTMENT

It is night. Linda sleeps in a darkened bedroom under the frilly comforter. We hear a distant banging. Finally the banging stops and a moment later the telephone rings.

Linda stirs, wakes and reaches for the bedside phone.

Linda

Hurrow—

She removes an appliance from her mouth.

Hello? . . . Where are you? . . . Okay. Just a second.

STAIRWELL

We hear a door being buzzed open. At the top of the staircase an apartment door opens and Linda appears in a robe.

HER POV

Down the steep staircase. Chad Feldheimer is walking up towards the landing dressed in a black lycra bicycle unitard with lime green flames. He holds a bike wheel in one hand and a plastic squirt-bottle in the other.

He looks up, foreshortened.

Chad

Omygod.

LINDA'S APARTMENT

Moments later.

Chad enters with his bicycle wheel and squirt bottle. Linda shuts the door behind him.

Chad

Omygod.

Linda

Chad, you know what time it is?

Chad

Uh-huh. So, like. I couldn't tell you this on your totally unsecure phone. but I know who the guy is.

He leans his wheel against the wall and sits on a low chair that brings his knees up near his chin. He looks smugly at Linda.

Linda

The guy?

Chad

The guy, the secret guy.

Linda

Is he high up?

A beat. Chad stares.

Chad

Um. I don't know if he's high up. Probably. I mean, I know his name, not like his rank.

Linda

What is it?

Chad

Osbourne. Cox.

Linda

Never heard of him.

Chad

Oh. like you're so plugged in to the intelligence community.

Linda

I'm just saying, to the layman—

Chad

Well I think like the quality of the intelligence dictates how high up he is.

Linda

Uh-huh.

Chad

Not what we know.

Linda

Uh-huh.

Chad

And I also got his—do you have any water? I gotta hydrate.

Linda

I have tapwater.

Chad

Are you kidding?

Linda
How did you find out who he is?

Chad
Sources.

Linda
What do you mean sources?

Chad
Do you have like Gatorade? Anything besides, like,
Maryland swamp water?

He rises and heads for the kitchen.

... You know how far this is from my place?

Linda
How do you know his name?

Chad
I have this geek friend, Ernie Gallegos? He does computer
stuff, hooks up people's computers and programs their
VCRs'n shit? So he examines the files and he pulls off the
digital watermark that tells what computer they were
created on. Fucking child's play for Ernie.

Linda
Uh-huh.

Chad opens the refrigerator and starts rummaging.

Chad
I also have his telephone number. That was a little harder.

Linda
Omygod!

Chad straightens up with a bottle of orange juice which he rolls across his forehead.

Chad
Shall we give him a tinkle?

Linda

Omygod, why?

Chad

Because he's gonna wanna know that his shit is secure. You know, he's gonna be relieved. He might even be so relieved he gives us a reward—I would be very fucking surprised if he did not.

Linda

Oh, wow.

Chad

Like, you know, the Good Samaritan tax. Which is not even a tax, really, since it's voluntary.

KITCHEN

Moments later. Chad is looking at a crumpled piece of note-paper and punching numbers into a wall phone. In the background we see Linda watching him from the living room couch.

A beat.

We hear the call ring through.

The click of the connection being made, and Chad silently gestures, with an upward sweep of his hand, for Linda to pick up her extension.

Chad

Hello?

OSBOURNE'S BEDROOM

He has the phone pressed groggily to his ear.

Osbourne

Hello?

Chad

Osbourne? Osbourne Cox?

Osbourne

Yes—uh—Who is this?

Chad

Are you... uh... Osbourne Cox?

Osbourne

Who is this? What time is it? Who are you?

Chad

I'm a Good Samaritan. I'm sorry I'm calling at such an hour, but I thought you might be worried.

Osbourne

Worried?

Chad

About the security. Of your shit.

A beat.

Osbourne

What on earth are you talking about? Who am I speaking to?

Katie stirs in bed.

Katie

Who is it?

Chad

Your files—your documents. I know these documents are sensitive. But I am perfectly happy to return to you your sensitive shit. At a time of your choosing.

Osbourne

What documents? What are you talking about?

Chad

... Osbourne Cox?

Osbourne
(explosive)

Yes! Yes, I'm Osbourne Cox! Who the fuck—

Chad

Settle down, Osbourne.

Katie

Who is that?

Osbourne

What documents are you talking about?

Chad

(referring to his note paper)

"The bureau chief in Belgrade we all called Slovak the Butcher. He had very little report with his staff, and his despatches were marked by—

Osbourne

Ra-por, very little rapport with his staff, you fucking moron! How did you get—

Chad

Don't blow a gasket, Osbourne. I have—

Osbourne

How did you get a hold of that!

Chad

It's not important where I—

Osbourne

You're in way over your fucking head! Who the fuck are you? You have no idea what you're doing!

Chad

Oh! Why so uptight, Osbourne Cox? I'm just a Good Samaritan: like, a traveler on the road who has happened upon—

Linda

We're going to return it, we just thought—

Chad

Linda, I'll do it!

Osbourne

Who's this?!

Katie

Ozzie. what is going on.

Linda

Like a Good Samaritan tax—

Osbourne

Who the fuck—

Chad

You know. this is a major inconvenience for us and we thought. you know. a reward—

Osbourne

So it's money! So it's money!

Chad

Well. yeah. uh... why not? I mean. this is not—am I out of line here?

Osbourne

All right, you two clowns listen to me very very carefully. I don't know who you are, but I warn you most emphatically—

Linda

You warn us? You warn us? You know what. Mr., Mr. Intelligence? We warn you! We'll call you back with our demands!

She slams down the phone.

Chad

Hello? We just—

Osbourne

Who, who—

Linda

Chad! Don't play his game!

Osbourne

Hello! Hello!

Chad

(into the phone as he hangs it up)

Sorry.

He walks back into the living room shaking his head.

... Geeze...

Linda

The nerve of that guy!

Chad

(sitting down on the couch)

... I am very fucking surprised he did not give us the reward.

THE COX BEDROOM

Osbourne sits on the edge of his bed in the dark room, shaking his head.

Katie

What in God's name is going on?

Osbourne

There's some clown—a couple of clowns—somehow got a hold of my memoir—

Katie

Your what?

Osbourne

Stole it or—I have no idea how they got it—

Katie

Your what?

Osbourne

My memoir. the book I'm writing.

Katie

Why in God's name would they think that's worth anything.

Osbourne

Well they—I... I've no idea how they got it.

LINDA'S APARTMENT

Chad paces. shaking his head.

Chad

But it doesn't sound like he's gonna play ball.

Linda

Oh, he'll play ball! We just have to let him know who's boss.

Chad

Well, that's—he sounds very senior. I think this is some senior guy who has screwed the pooch. big-time.

Linda

Yeah, that's why we got him, you know, we've caught him with his thing caught in a big fat wringer.

Chad

Yuh-huh.

Linda

And us in the driver's seat. This is our opportunity, like, you don't get many of these. You slip on the ice outside of, you know, a fancy restaurant.

Chad

Yuh-huh.

Linda
Or this happens.

Chad
Right.

Linda
And right now this has happened.

Chad
Yup. It sure has.

Linda
This could put a big dent in my surgeries.

Chad
Big time.

SANDY PFARRER

We are dutch on her as she leans down a staircase, one hand on its rail. calling to be heard over the buzz of a bandsaw:

Sandy
Honey!

No answer. The bandsaw whines higher, cutting through steel. Louder:

Honey!

The whine winds down.

Harry's Voice
Huh?

Sandy
My cab is here, I'm off. Mystery man.

Her point-of-view: down the stairs, oddly cropped by the angles of dropped ceiling and walls, we see Harry's lower body as he throws a drop over his project. He emerges from the shop cage and closes its mesh door and padlocks it.

... What is that thing?

Harry

Oh baby. Top secret.

He comes up the stairs, pushing goggles onto his forehead.

... You're gonna knock 'em dead.

He reaches the top of the stairs and kisses her.

... How many cities?

Sandy

Seattle. San Francisco. Los Angeles. Chicago.

He picks up her bag and they go out.

Harry

Why do they always have you do Seattle. Not a big market.

Sandy

I don't know. lots of independent bookstores. Rains all day.
what are people gonna do.

Harry

I can think of a couple of things.

Sandy

You can think of one thing.

OUTSIDE

They are walking to a black town car idling curbside.

Sandy

It better be the Peninsula. The money I make for them. Are
you gonna be okay?

Harry

I'll be sad. But I'll be okay.

Sandy

Not too sad..

Harry

Just the right amount.

He kisses her.

... I am crazy about you, baby.

He slams the car door after her. As the car pulls out his look travels with it and then lingers up the street, caught on:

A Ford Taurus, parked. dark.

Harry hesitates, then starts walking up the street towards the parked car.

After he has taken several steps the ignition is turned in the car. A shape briefly visible in the driver's seat is lost when the headlights flash on. The car pulls out from the curb into a U-turn and drives away.

Harry watches the tail lights recede.

CLOSE ON A THUMB AND FINGER

Twisting a gold cufflink like a worry bead. Wider shows the attorney Bogus Terikhian at a conference table in a book-lined room.

Bogus

Tony Bennett, Toni Morrison and Anne Bancroft. It was marvelous. First time I've attended the Kennedy Honors. Viveca Lindfors is a client. Old friend of Ann's. What an actress. Anyway...

He leans forward and presses a button on his phone console.

... Connie, could you bring in your copy of the Cox financials?

OUTER OFFICE

The secretary rummages through a gym bag that has the Hardbodies logo. There are gym clothes among the odds and ends. She picks up her handset.

Secretary

I thought I had it here on a disk—I'm sorry, I'll have to run another off my hard drive.

INNER OFFICE

Bogus is leaning back, expansive.

Bogus

Tony sang "I Left My Heart in San Francisco." Mr. Bennett.

He projects toward the phone:

Yeah. okay.

Back to Katie:

So. We've drawn up the papers and are prepared to execute service on Osbourne if you so elect. Mrs. Cox. Our missiles are pointed at his capital. so to speak, and we await only your word. But, be mindful, madam: once these missiles are launched, there is no recalling them. We are not picking daisies. We are declaring war, and hostilities will then impose their own logic. I think you understand what I'm saying.

Katie

It'll piss Ozzie off.

Bogus

Mm-hm.

Katie

Mr. Terikhian, I have given my husband second chances galore. There are limits to my charity.

Bogus

Of course. But since we are at the point of no return. I always urge my clients at this juncture to give it one more day of reflection.

Katie

Yes. Understood.

WASHINGTON MALL

Linda, dressed in a smart pant suit and holding a handbag is walking down the promenade.

Her moving POV passes over people relaxing in the park: a mother with a stroller, kids running with a ball. Her look settles on the bench that formerly held her first date, now occupied by:

A man spitting sunflower seeds. Harry Pfarrer.

The point-of-view arcs past him as Linda gives him the once-over.

She doubles back.

Linda

Harry? I'm Linda.

RESTAURANT

Harry and Linda eat with appetite as they talk.

Harry

Yeah. I did the whole bodyguard thing for years. My guy was in State, the Secretary in fact, so of course I traveled a lot.

Harry talks into his sleeve-cuff as if into a radio transmitter:

... "Ironside is leaving the building." We called him Iron Ass.

Linda cackles.

... Not to his face, of course. Not to his ass, either!

Linda cackles again: Harry smiles.

... Ah, he was okay. But, Personal Protection—that's a young man's game.

Linda

You wanna try this gnocchi. it's delicious.

Harry

Sure...

He reaches but hesitates.

... Doesn't have cheese, does it?

Linda

Nnn—I'm not sure.

Harry

Ah what the hell. Live dangerously.

He spears some and, through a mouthful:

... Can't always wear a condom.

Linda cackles.

Linda

That's right! Not always!

Harry

Anyway, I deal more with counterfeit now than PP. Personal Protection. Though I still carry the gun.

Linda

Omygod. really!

Harry

(still chewing, he shrugs)

It's no big deal. Never discharged it, twenty years service.

Security blanket now. I don't think about it—course, you're not supposed to think about it: in a situation where your man is threatened the training kicks in. Muscle memory. Reflex.—Those are outrageous.

He stabs another gnocchi off Linda's plate.

... Wanna swap?

Linda

No way!

LINDA'S APARTMENT

Linda is swinging the door open, leading Harry in.

Harry talks as he looks appraisingly around the apartment.

Harry

—but there was just a hell of a lot of political infighting, petty, petty, shit, and then basically the old man stepped on Goldberger's throat. Nice...

He is evaluating the place. He stamps on the floor.

... Wide-plank pine?

Linda

I guess.

Harry is taking off his coat.

Harry

Listen, full disclosure here Linda...

He holds up both hands and waggles the fingers.

... I'm not wearing a wedding ring but I am married. Took the ring off, what, eighteen months ago when we agreed to separate. Agreed to disagree. That's about the only thing we ever agreed on.

Linda cackles.

Linda
Thanks for telling me. I really do appreciate it, Harry.

Harry
Well, full transparency, the only way to—

As Linda passes he grabs and embraces her. Linda reacts to his gun in the shoulder holster:

Linda
That's not gonna go off, is it?

Harry
Well let's go in the other room and find out! Grrr!

TED TREFFON

The soulful manager of Hardbodies.

Ted
That's great. That sounds. . . exciting.

Wider shows Linda in the manager's cubicle.

Linda
He's very very communicative. Very accessible. He has a sense of humor. And he agrees one hundred percent about my surgeries.

Ted
Well, I—

Linda
He thinks my ass could be smaller. I mean, not in a mean way, he kidded about it—he's got a terrific sense of humor.

Ted
That's good, but. . . but. . . Linda, what do you really know about this guy?

Linda

I told you, he's in the Treasury Department and he—

Ted

But he could be one of these people who, you know, who cruises the internet—

Linda

Yeah, so am I!

A rattling knock. Linda looks over:

Chad Feldheimer, in his trainer's polo shirt, is knocking on the cubicle window. He gestures urgently for her to come out.

SERVICE ALLEY

Behind Hardbodies. Linda and Chad emerge from the health club through a heavy back door.

Linda

No, you can't go like that! You gotta wear a suit.

Chad

Well—you mean—go home and change?

Linda

Yeah!

Chad

I was gonna ride my bike. Do I have time?

RESTAURANT

Harry and Katie are at a downtown D.C. restaurant in the middle of lunch.

Katie

—which to my mind is all the more reason to lower the boom on Ozzie.

Harry
Mm.

Katie
That's it? "Mm"?

Harry
I'm just . . . wondering if it's the right time.

Katie
Of course it's the right time. Why wouldn't it be the right time. Does it threaten you?

Harry
No no. No, you and me are rock solid. That's why I, uh, I think we can afford to be big. We can think about Ozzie. whether maybe we should let him get himself together a little before you hammer him with, um—

Katie
Is that how you see me, "hammering" him?

Harry
Of course not, but—

Katie
Weren't those your words?

Harry
Yes, but—

Katie
I don't "hammer."

Harry
No, uh-huh, of course not. But, I'm saying—I'm no friend of the guy. You know that. I think he's an arrogant little geek. But for Christ sakes, you and me have all the time in the world, and he just lost his job—

Katie
He didn't lose it, he quit.

Harry

Yeah. Most of the people who "quit" in this town were fired.

Katie looks at Harry, reckoning. He returns her look with an open one.

... I feel sorry for the guy. And he'll be easier to deal with when he doesn't feel... cornered.

Katie

Maybe. As long as we're talking about Ozzie and not you.

Harry

Of course we're talking about Ozzie. Baby. I stand by you whatever you do. I adore you.

She nods, thinking, still gazing at him. Her cel phone chirps and she reaches into her purse.

Katie

Please get the check.

She flips open the phone.

... Yes?... Yes?... Is there blood in his stool?... Yes, soon.

She looks at her watch, rises.

Katie

It's after two. I have to get back to work.

Harry rises to kiss her.

Harry

I love you so much.

CLOSE ON A WATCH

Showing 2:20.

Wider shows Osbourne Cox, sitting in a car parked on a downtown street, consulting his

watch.

He looks up, irritated, and glances around. His look is arrested by:

The side-view mirror. It shows a man approaching on bicycle along the sidewalk wearing a suit and a bike helmet. The man dismounts several paces behind the parked car, locks his bike to a fence separating the sidewalk from a small park, and takes off his helmet. It is Chad.

He walks along the sidewalk to the car, opens the passenger door and sits in with his bike helmet clamped under one arm.

Chad

Osbourne Cox?

Osbourne

And you. I take it, are "Mr. Black"?

Chad

Yes I am. You have the money?

Osbourne

The fifty-thousand dollars.

Chad

That's what was agreed upon. Osbourne Cox.

Osbourne

All right. Let me explain something to you. "Mr. Black."
You know who I am: I know who you are.

Chad

(smug)

Perhaps. But appearances can be—deceptive.

Osbourne

Yeah. What you're engaged in is blackmail, which is a felony. That's for starters.

Chad

Appearances can be—deceptive. I am a mere Good Samar—

Osbourne

Secondly, the unauthorized dissemination of classified material is a federal crime. If you ever carried out your proposed threat, you would experience such a shitstorm of consequences, my friend, it would make your empty little head spin faster than your Schwinn bicycle over there.

Chad chuckles.

Chad

You think that's a Schwinn?

Osbourne

Now give me the fucking floppy or the CD or whatever the fuck you have it on, and I will—

Chad

As soon as you give me the money, dickwad! I'm not—
Huhgf!

Osbourne has punched him in the nose.

Chad stares at him, stunned.

His nose starts bleeding.

... You fuck!

Osbourne

Give it to me, fuck!

Chad

You fuck! You fucker!

He opens the car door and gets out, hand to his nose.

He slams the door.

As Chad goes over to his bike Osbourne leans across the front seat and cranks down the passenger window to bellow:

Osbourne

I know who you are, fucker!

He pulls out.

Chad

You're the fucker!

There is the honk of a car horn—not Osbourne's.

Chad looks, surprised. Linda is pulling up. Her passenger window rolls down.

Linda

Where's the money?

Chad

He hit me!

Linda

Where's the money?!

Chad

He didn't give it to me—

Linda

Oh, for—Get in!

Chad does.

Chad

That fucker!

He is thrown back against the seat as Linda floors it. Recovering:

... Hey—what're you—

Linda is coming up fast behind Osbourne's car in traffic.

Oh shit!

The crash of impact—ramming Osbourne.

OSBOURNE'S CAR

He recoils from the impact.

Osbourne
Holy fucking—you fucking morons!

The follow car is speeding up again—but it doesn't hit him. It swerves out, screeching, to pass, and Linda angrily flips him the finger as she speeds by.

LINDA'S CAR

Linda
That'll give him something to think about.

Chad is chuckling. Suddenly he sobers.

Chad
Wait, wait! We gotta go back!

Linda's jaw is set. The car is ripping through traffic.

Linda
I knew this would happen.

Chad
We gotta go back! My bike!

Linda
It's on to Plan B.

Chad
It's just a Kryptonite lock—you can open those fuckers with a Bic pen!

Linda
Heavens sakes—

Chad
Where we going? My bike!

Linda
Some people!

A skidding turn sends his weight against the door, and the car lurches to a halt.

Chad

... What is this?

Linda

Russian Embassy.

INTERIOR

Linda stands before a reception desk. Chad is just behind her, his shirt front spotted with blood and his head tipped back with one hand pressing a hankie to his nose. His bike helmet is clamped under his other arm.

Linda

I told Mr. Krapotkin I might be stopping by?

Chad

Is there a men's room?

MR. KRAPOTKIN'S OFFICE

Linda and Chad sit in. Chad with a moistened paper hand-towel now pressed to his nose.

Behind the desk sits a sixtyish Russian functionary with the beetle-browed sphynxlike look of the Brezhnev-era bureaucrat. This is Krapotkin.

Krapotkin

—Not exactly. I am assistant cultural attaché. The organs of state security are not allowed to function within the borders of your country.

Linda

... The organs of state security?

Krapotkin

Yes.

Linda

But if I had, oh, say, secrets of a highly, um, secrets that would interest the organs of state security. . .

She trails off, nodding encouragingly at Krapotkin. Krapotkin looks blankly back.

A long beat.

Krapotkin

Yes.

She rummages in her handbag and pulls out the diskette. She holds it aloft, wagging it for Krapotkin.

Krapotkin stares.

Linda sets the diskette on the table and slides it across.

Linda

... This is just a taste.

After a beat of looking at the proffered diskette, Krapotkin leans forward to take it. Linda smiles. Krapotkin turns the diskette over a couple of times, looks sadly up.

Krapotkin

May I ask the source of this. . .

Linda slowly shakes her head, eyes locked on Krapotkin.

Linda

No you may not.

Chad

Very high up.

Linda

Chad!

Chad

I'm just saying he's high up!

A large drop of blood has gathered at the tip of Chad's nose. It now drops onto his shirt.

Silence.

Finally:

Mac or PC? Krapotkin

Um. Mac. Linda

Could you wait please? Krapotkin

He rises.

Well— Linda

She looks anxiously at her watch.

... I have a date—

Krapotkin leaves.

When the door closes behind him:

The fish. Has bitten.

What? Oh, yeah. Yeah, he seems cool. Chad

A long beat. Linda looks at her watch.

Chad sighs.

... That fucker really hit me.

MANY MINUTES LATER

Chad is slumped back with his head tilted back. Linda looks at her watch.

The door opens. A man in a suit:

Could you accompany me please? Man

Linda

Well—okay. . .

HALLWAY

The three people—Linda, Chad, the man in the suit—walking. Linda gazes around; Chad has his head mostly back.

ANOTHER OFFICE

Vladimir Putin glares down from a framed photograph on the wall. Chad and Linda are sitting before yet another man, even blander than the first.

New Man

Can you tell me where this material comes from?

Linda makes a pantomime of zipping her lip.

The man looks at her impassively.

Chad

Name, rank and serial number.

His focus shifts to the man with the bloody nose:

New Man

Excuse me?

Chad

We, um. . . we know our rights.

The man stares at him. A beat.

Linda

This is just a taste.

The man's look swings back to the woman for another staring beat.

At length:

New Man

There is more material?

Linda

There's a lot more. But we need to be paid.

New Man

You are not ideological.

A beat.

Chad

I don't think so.

Linda

Look. I have a date.

New Man

Hm?

Linda holds up her watch and taps at it:

Linda

Date.

The man sighs.

New Man

... We will examine the material. How do I contact?

Linda

We work at the Hardbodies in Alexandria.

Chad

I'm at 1442 Westerly—

Linda

Chad. not your home address!

Beat.

New Man

So... I call Hardbodies, I ask for... Chad?

Or Linda. Linda

TED TREFFON

Point-of-view through a windshield approaching the soulful manager of Hardbodies who stands on the sidewalk in front of the gym. As he looks into the car pulling in he holds his arms out to either side, palms up: what the hell is going on?

HIS CUBICLE

Minutes later..

Ted
A line to check in, towels piling up.

Linda
I'm sorry.

Ted
Manolo running around like crazy—what happened to your nose?

Chad
I just—

Ted
This is not acceptable at Hardbodies. You two know better than that.

Linda
Yes we do. I'm sorry, Ted.

Ted
This is no way.

Chad
It was unavoidable. This won't happen again.

A considering beat.

Ted
But you won't tell me what's going on.

Linda
We can't. I . . . I . . . Ted. I know this is terrible, but—I have
to run. I have a date.

Ted looks at her dolefully.

Ted
You're changing, Linda.

He shakes his head.

. . . Very sad.

OSBOURNE'S CAR

Dusk. The car is parked in the driveway of the Cox townhouse, its back crumpled.

Reverse shows Katie, looking at it, furious, her jaw set.

INSIDE THE HOUSE

Katie marches in the door.

Katie
Ozzie! Goddamnit, Ozzie, what have you done to the car?!

Silence.

LIVING ROOM

Katie enters.

Katie
Ozzie!

Osbourne, lightly sheened by sweat, is in the easy chair in his robe, his microcassette recorder under the hand splayed across his chest. Amber fluid puddles a glass on the side table. Osbourne snores softly.

Katie's fury mounts. She visibly fights it down.

... All right. All right.

BATHROOM

In Harry Pfarrer's house. Harry stands before the mirror humming as he meticulously trims his eyebrow hair with a Hoffritz scissors.

We hear his phone ringing, then the answering machine:

Harry's Voice

Sandy and I aren't here to take your call. Please leave a message.

After a beep:

Katie's Voice

Can I see you please. Harry, please call me. I'm very upset.

Harry continues to hum, trimming his eyebrows. The machine beeps off.

Harry walks into the living room. He takes some as-yet-unfolded packing boxes and strews them with a studied randomness across the floor. As he does so we hear a cel phone chirp.

Harry fishes the phone out of his pocket and holds it at arm's length, squinting at the number. Still humming, he stuffs the phone back in his pocket.

STREET

Linda meets Harry with a kiss.

Linda

I'm sorry—am I late?

Harry
No no, doesn't start for five minutes.

He is escorting to a movie theater entrance.

... You haven't seen this, have you?

Linda
Oh! No, no I haven't.

Our follow-move brings in a lightbox displaying the one-sheet for *Tell Me That Again!* with Dermot Mulroney and Claire Danes.

As they tail out of frame:

Harry
I hear it's terrific.

AUDITORIUM

On the screen, Dermot Mulroney, dressed in a tuxedo, cranes his head to look steeply up and off.

Dermot
First you tell me that you can't commit, then you—
WOULD YOU GET DOWN FROM THERE!

Along with Linda, Harry laughs raucously, tossing popcorn into his mouth.

HARRY'S TOWNHOUSE

The door swings in and Harry and Linda enter. Harry refers to the boxes littering the floor:

Harry
Pardon our dust, I, uh—the ex is in the process of moving out. Damn! I told her I wanted to expedite this.

Linda
Uh-huh.

Harry

We, uh, you know you try to act like an adult.

Linda

Oh, it's never easy.

Harry

Oh! Come on downstairs. Do you like surprises?

Linda

Well, I'm very open to new experiences. . .

BASEMENT

The overhead light is switched on.

As Harry and Linda come down the stairs:

Harry

I gotta tell ya—I saw an ad for this in a gentleman's magazine—twelve hundred bucks. I take a look at this thing. I think. Jesus, you gotta be kidding—I'm a hobbyist. this is basically nothing but speed-rail, I could probably go to Home Depot and whip this up myself for, like, a hundred bucks. . .

He sweeps the drop-cloth off his project.

It looks like a rowing machine, though with a higher seat. Its function is obscure.

Linda

. . . What is it?

Harry

(smug)

What is it. You'sid down. feet in the stirrups. and. . .

He pushes the seat with his foot. It slides forward then back, forward and back, rocking. On its forward arc a dildo emerges from the center of the seat's pipe-track, angled toward the seat-bottom which is cleft to accommodate it.

A long beat as the seat squeaks back and forth, the dildo rhythmically bobbing up and down.

At length:

Omygod! Linda

Another couple of cycles.

... It's fantastic!

Harry
Isn't that somethin'? Hundred bucks all in if you don't
count my labor. And the, you know—cost of the dildo.
Those things are not cheap.

Uh-uh. Linda

Harry
But I lack the, uh, I'm not set up to mold hard rubber.

Both stare at the rocking love seat:

Squeak. Squeak. Squeak.

CLOSE ON OSBOURNE

Sitting in a bar booth, staring, incredulous.

Osbourne
... The Russians?

Across from him, a man of Osbourne's age.

Uh-huh. Man

Osbourne
The Russians?

Man
Uh-huh. Russian Embassy. yeah.

Osbourne stares.

Osbourne

... You're sure?

Man

Hey, the guy was not hard to follow. As you know.

Osbourne

Why the FUCK would they go to the Russians?!

The man responds only with a shrug and a commiserating head-shake.

... Why the FUCK...

Osbourne struggles to compose himself.

... I'm sorry. Thank you, Hal.

Man

Hey. No problemo.

He leans in, voice lowered.

... Ozzie, I hate to be the paranoid old spook, but those two guys seem very interested in you.

Osbourne looks.

... You haven't gone poofy on me, have ya Oz?

There are two men with drinks at a booth. At Osbourne's look one of them, who has been looking over, looks hastily away.

Osbourne
(sharply)

Can I help you?

The man meets his look again. He smiles, rises, ambles over.

Man

Sorry to stare. I just couldn't place the... You're Princeton,

aren't you? My year? '73?

Osbourne
(softening)

Yeah.

Man

I just didn't remember your...

Osbourne extends a hand.

Osbourne

Osbourne Cox.

Man

Thought so.

He smiles as he deposits a large manila envelope in Osbourne's extended hand.

... Served...

He nods toward his companion, watching from the booth.

... and witnessed. Have a good evening.

He walks off; his friend hastily knocks back the rest of his drink and rises to follow him.

Osbourne stares stupidly at the envelope in his hand.

Hal

Ouch.

THROUGH A WINDSHIELD

Night. Rain.

The car corners into a driveway and its headlights rake the front of the Cox townhouse, which is dark. A couple of pieces of luggage and several cardboard boxes are stacked on the stoop, most of them protected from the rain by the eave but some not.

Osbourne's Voice

What the fuck?

OUTSIDE

The car stops. Osbourne emerges, runs through the rain to the front stoop. Rain drums against cardboard.

Osbourne

What the fuck?

He puts his key in the lock and—it doesn't turn.

... Fucking...

He nudges a cardboard box with his toe.

He looks up at the dark house, squinting against the rain.

JAMBA JUICE

Linda and Chad sit at the counter. Linda drinking a large protein shake, Chad idly twirling a straw wrapper around one finger.

Chad

Why did you tell him we could get more stuff?

Linda

Well maybe we can.

Chad

That's all Manolo found! That was everything! What're we gonna tell Manolo to scoop some more secret shit off the locker room floor!

Linda

Hey!

Chad

What.

Linda

I don't like the snideness! And the negativity!

Chad
(abashed)

I'm sorry.

Linda
I'm just trying to work this thing! If I'm going to reinvent myself I need those surgeries. And those surgeries cost money! This is not just fun and games!

Chad
Yuh-huh. I'm sorry.

Linda
So let's figure this thing out!

Public Address
Chad, your Berry Blast is ready.

Linda
We know who he is

Chad
Right: Osbourne Cox.

Linda
So we can find out where he lives, right?

Chad
Um. I guess.

Linda
You should change. Into your suit.

Chad
Why?

Linda
So you don't look out of place in the neighborhood. There are certain elementary things.

Chad
His neighborhood?

Linda

Yes. We'll remove the laundry marks and labels. And you should not be carrying ID.

Chad

Uh-huh.

Linda

Deniability.

Chad

Okay.

Public Address

Chad, your Berry Blast is waiting.

LONG LENS POINT-OF-VIEW
COX TOWNHOUSE

A car is pulling into the driveway. Katie Cox emerges from the driver's side.

Reverse shows Chad, in his suit, watching from a parked car across the street.

Now Harry Pfarrer emerges from the passenger side wearing a brown pin-striped suit. Encumbered by something bulky he follows Katie up the walk.

It seems to be some kind of pillow or cushion under his arm, but very large, and wedge-shaped. Katie is letting herself in; Harry gives a furtive glance around—Chad sinks back in his car seat—before entering with the wedge-cushion.

The door closes.

Chad relaxes, straightens up. A beat. He looks idly around. He notices:

Another car, parked on the same side of the street, further up. Someone is just straightening from a slouch to become visible over the driver's headrest.

Chad looks, puzzled.

LATER

Chad is slurping the dregs of his Jamba Juice up a straw when a noise brings his look around:

The door to the townhouse is opening. Katie emerges, in a change of clothes. Harry follows in sweats.

They get into her car. It pulls out.

Chad watches it go up the street. He is about to open his door but pauses, seeing:

The parked car up the street. Katie's car having passed, it now pulls out and follows at a discreet distance. Both cars disappear.

Chad opens his door and gets out. He is crossing to the townhouse when he notices another car parked on the other side of the street. A man sits in the driver's seat, smoking.

BACK OF THE HOUSE

Chad corners the house. He gives an appraising look at each of the back windows as he walks by.

INSIDE

A minute later. A window pane is tapped once. . . twice. . . it breaks.

KATIE'S CAR

It pulls over at one end of the Potomac bridge that we have seen before. Harry emerges.

Harry
What's the odometer say?

Katie
Five.

Harry
About five or approximately five? I mean—about f—

Katie

For fuck's sake. Harry, it's five miles. Five point two.

Harry

Okay, fine—I gotta do at least five. Five and a deuce is okay.

Katie

I'm surprised you have any energy left.

Harry

You kiddin'—pull around the corner we'll do it again in back!

Katie

You are very coarse.

Harry

No, back of the car. I didn't mean a rear-entry. uh—

Katie

Ach. I'm late—

The car squeals away, leaving Harry on the shoulder.

TOWNHOUSE: UPSTAIRS

Chad opens doors off the upstairs hallway.

He pauses at one, looking in.

It is the bedroom. Bedclothes are rumpled. The wedge-cushion lies in the middle of the bed.

HARRY

Jogging.

He spins, jogs backward.

His point-of-view: a car, traveling slowly. Following?

Harry cuts across a park lawn.

TOWNHOUSE BASEMENT

Chad is looking at the computer.

He fishes a CD out of his suit pocket.

HARRY

Emerging from the park onto another street. He looks around and, satisfied that he has lost the tail, jogs on.

TOWNHOUSE

Chad is emerging from the basement. He is heading toward the front door when a shape materializes in the frosted glass window alongside the door.

Chad freezes.

There is scraping at the lock.

Chad quickly mounts the stairs.

SECOND FLOOR

Chad freezes, listening.

The downstairs door swings open. shut.

Footsteps.

A tread on the stairs: Chad scurries into the first open door.

BEDROOM

Chad eases into a closet. The footsteps mount the stairs. Chad leaves the door cracked.

His point-of-view: The open bedroom door gives him a view of a wedge of hallway and stairs. Harry arrives at the top of the stairs. He nudges back a drape on the window at the top of the steps. He looks down one way, then the other. He lets the drape fall back and seems to relax.

Harry enters the bedroom. He strips off his t-shirt and shorts and steps into the shower off the master bedroom, leaving the door open.

Chad peers through the crack in the closet door at the shower. Harry is rinsing off, humming "Born Free."

Chad gingerly reaches for the closet door but stops abruptly as we hear the shower turned off and the curtain whipped back. Harry emerges from the shower. He walks into the foreground pulling on his shorts and shrugging into a white dress shirt that was draped across a bureau.

Chad shrinks back into the closet as Harry approaches and stops suddenly, just outside the crack of the door.

Through the crack we see only the white of his shirt. Abruptly he turns his back to us and recedes into the room to pick something up off the floor.

Chad leans in ever so slightly to see but draws back again as Harry approaches.

Chad looks over to his right: On a hanger the brown pinstripe suit and slacks Harry was wearing when we saw him walk into the townhouse.

The closet door is thrown open.

Chad

Nuhhh!

Harry

AHHHHHHHHHHH!

Harry jerks up the gun which he's pulled from the shoulder holster in his other hand and—*BAM*—shoots Chad in the face.

The gun bucks. Unused to the recoil and still screaming, Harry staggers back and trips over the edge of the bed and drops the weapon.

He crabs briefly backward and then flips over and scrambles off on all fours. In the

hallway he rises and tramples down the stairs.

He stops at the bottom of the steps, panting. He looks back up the steps, trying to control his heavy breathing so that he can listen.

A long silence.

Harry

... Hello?

No answer.

He looks around.

KITCHEN

Harry enters. He opens a drawer, closes it, opens another.

FOYER

Harry enters from the kitchen and starts slowly mounting the stairs, a chopping knife in one hand.

Harry

... Hello?

SECOND FLOOR

Harry tops the stairs. He pauses, looking at:

The bedroom door, ajar.

Inside, his gun lies on the floor.

Harry takes cautious steps toward the door.

He pauses at the cracked door. Suddenly:

Harry

Hungh!

He plunges through the door and runs for the gun and scoops it, dropping the knife.

He stands and spins, panting.

His point-of-view: the closet. Its door ajar. Legs protrude into the room, as if Chad, hidden within, is sitting with his back against the closet wall contemplating his next move.

Harry walks cautiously over. With a bare foot he experimentally waggles one of Chad's feet. Limp.

Harry nudges the door.

... Hello?

It creaks fully open.

... Omygod. Omygod.

Chad's face is a chewed-up mess.

... Omygod who are you. You fucker. Omygod.

He gingerly crouches down.

... You fucker...

He tries to avert his eyes as he feels in Chad's suit pockets.

... Omygod, my god... Ungh...

He comes away with a wallet and hastily stands.

... Omygod...

Inside are a few dollars and nothing else: no credit cards, driver's license; empty.

... What the fuck...

He leans back in, trying not to look, but for some reason feeling obliged to return the wallet.

As he opens the suit coat to slip it back in the inside pocket he notices:

The suit label has been cut away. He fingers the raveled fringe.

... Oh my fuck. ...

He straightens up again.

... I killed a fucking spook. You fucker. ...

He gazes down at the body.

... What are you doing here, you fucker.

HALLWAY

We track at floor level, following the well shined shoes of someone walking down the well polished hallway.

DOOR

We are low, outside an office door. The shoes enter frame and the door is swung inward, away from us, to show Palmer DeBakey Smith seated behind his desk.

He looks up.

Palmer

Olson. What's up.

The door slams shut.

SAME DOOR

Some time later. Our camera position is higher.

At the cut the door swings open and Palmer Smith strides out, grim-faced.

HALLWAY

Tracking behind his shoes down a different piece of hallway.

ANOTHER DOOR

Palmer Smith's back enters and he swings the door open. A silver-haired man looks up from his desk.

Man

Palmer. What's up.

Palmer

Not quite certain, sir, but it's . . . messy.

He seats himself facing the desk. A desktop nameplate identifies his superior as Gardner McC. Chubb.

Palmer hands a folder across, grimacing.

. . . Kolyma-2 tells us that they have computer files from an ex-analyst of mine, Osbourne Cox.

Gardner Chubb

Kolyma-2?

Palmer

Our man in the Russian Embassy.

Gardner Chubb

Mm.

Palmer

It was brought to them by a woman who—

Gardner Chubb

The Russians?

Palmer

Yeah. It was brought in by Linda Lietzke, an associate of a guy named Harry Pfarrer. Picture's in the folder. With Pfarrer's.

Gardner Chubb

The Russians.

Palmer

Yeah.

Gardner Chubb

Who's Pfarrer?

Palmer

Treasury agent who's been, um, screwing Mrs. Cox. Must be how they got the files. Or maybe Ozzie knows about it, they all seem to be sleeping with each other.

Gardner Chubb

All right. Spare me.

Palmer

Yes sir. But this Treasury guy—it's gotten. . . complicated. He just shot somebody in Ozzie's house.

Gardner Chubb

Shot—your analyst?

Palmer shakes his head.

Palmer

Ozzie wasn't there. Our man surveying hears a gunshot, sees the Treasury guy wrestle something into his car, follows him: he dumps a body in the Chesapeake Bay.

Gardner Chubb

Well—what'd he do that for?

Palmer

Don't know sir.

Gardner Chubb

Oh for Christ sake. Anyone fish the body out?

Palmer

Mm-hm.

Gardner Chubb
Russian? American?

Palmer
Don't know. Scrubbed of ID.

Gardner Chubb
And this... Linda...?

Palmer
Linda Litzke.

Gardner Chubb
She's Treasury?

Palmer
No, um—we're... fuzzy on her.

Gardner Chubb is flipping bemusedly through the contents of the folder.

Gardner Chubb
Well—so—we don't really know what anyone is after.

Palmer
Not really, sir.

Gardner Chubb
This analyst, ex-analyst, uh... .

Palmer
Cox.

Gardner Chubb
Yeah. What's his clearance level.

Palmer
Three.

Gardner Chubb
Okay. Okay, no biggie...

He reaches the folder back to Palmer.

... for now just keep an eye on everyone, see what they do.

Palmer

Right, sir. And—we'll interface with the FBI on this, uh, dead body?

Gardner Chubb

No! No. We don't want those idiots blundering around in this. Burn the body. Get rid of it. And keep an eye on everyone, see what they do.

A HOPPING MAN IN A UNITARD

His hands are on his hips. He is darkly Mediterranean and very fit. He smiles into the camera as he hops in time to upbeat music, kicking a leg out on each beat.

Man

To the left! ... Repeat! ... To the right! ... Repeat! ... And in! ... And out! ... And higher! ... Repeat! ...

Wider shows that the man is on TV leading the viewer in exercise. The viewer, in this case, is Osbourne, on his boat. He follows along in his underwear in the cramped quarters belowdecks. Boxes and luggage are strewn about, half unpacked.

He pants as he exercises:

Osbourne

I'm bigger. ... I'm back. ... I'm better. ... I'm back. ... than ever. ... I'm back. ... fuckers. ... I'm back. ...

Man on TV

... And good! ... Repeat! ... Now bend! ... And bounce! ... And lower! ... Repeat! ... And up! ... And back! ... And up! ... Repeat!

LINDA

We are on a long lens point-of-view, from several cubicles over, of Linda slumped at her desk, head in her arms. We faintly hear her sobbing.

Reverse shows Ted Treffon, the soulful manager of Hardbodies, looking at her, unsettled.

CLOSE ON LINDA

We are in her cubicle now, her weeping bumping up at the cut.

A tap against the cubicle window brings her head up.

Ted Treffon opens the door.

Linda. You okay?

Ted

I'm fine. Ted. I'm sorry.

Linda

He sits at the chair alongside her desk.

You don't look fine.

Ted

No no, I'm... I'm...

Linda

You won't tell me what it's about. You never let me in, Linda.

Ted

Oh, I know you're trustworthy, I just... don't want to endanger other people with—I mean, it's a path I've chosen, it's not, you have to isolate, you know, a firewall.

Linda

Ted sighs.

Uh-huh. Well, I don't know what to think. You both go AWOL on Friday; today Chad doesn't bother to come in at all—

Ted

I know, Ted.

Linda

Ted
Linda, I can't run a gym this way.

Linda
I know, Ted.

Ted
I'm going to have to fire him.

Linda
No! No no no, Ted! Just, just. . .

Ted
What?

Linda
Give me twenty-four hours!

Ted
To what?

Linda
To, um. . . I don't know. twenty-four hours!

Ted
Linda—

Linda
Just give me twenty-four hours to solve this thing!

Ted
Linda. I have to tell you. A man was here earlier asking
about you.

Linda looks at Ted for a beat, thinking.

Linda
Foreigner?

Ted
Linda, are you in some kind of trouble? Is Chad running
from something?

Linda

Ted, we know what we're doing. Let me ask you this: did he know my name.

Ted

Whuh—yes, he was asking about you. Employment history, et cetera. Real jerk. I told him to get lost.

She takes his hand.

Linda

Thank you, Ted.

Ted swallows. He looks down.

Ted

Well, we...

Linda still has his hand. He tries to cover his reaction to the physical contact.

... we just don't give that out at Hardbodies.

The phone beeps. A voice comes through the intercom:

Voice

Linda, there's a Mr. Krapkin on line two.

Linda

Omygod!

She punches a button on the phone.

... Hello?

Voice

Linda?

Linda

Yes?

Voice

This is Ilan Krapotkin. Russian embassy. Returning your call.

Linda

Yes, yes!—hang on. Ted, I'm sorry. This is private.

Looking at her, Ted sighs, shakes his head sadly, rises and goes. Linda pushes the door of the cubicle shut with her foot.

... Hello. Is this a secure line, Mr. Krapotkin?

Beat.

Krapotkin

Heh-heh.

Another beat.

Linda

Mr. Krapotkin?

Krapotkin

Yes?

Linda

Is this a secure, uh—

Krapotkin

You are joking?

Linda

No! I—I'm terribly worried about my associate. My—
my—you know... Chad.

Krapotkin

Yes? Why is that?

Linda

Do you have him?

Krapotkin

Do we have him?

Linda

Is he—I don't know what the term is, did he, "go over"?

Krapotkin

Um...

Linda glances up. Outside her cubicle window Ted waits: at Linda's look he turns palms up: What's going on? Linda holds up a finger: one second.

Linda

Do you know where he is?

Krapotkin

Is he not... at Hardbodies?

Linda

No. I—look, can I come in and discuss this?

COX TOWNHOUSE

Harry Pfarrer stands at the kitchen counter chopping carrots. He is intensely focused and chops very, very quickly, producing slices in high volume.

Reverse shows Katie Cox in a chair in the living room, frozen in a look up, a file of papers forgotten in one hand as she gazes over her half-glasses at Harry. His chopping continues unabated.

After a long look and much chopping:

Katie

You seem distracted.

Harry

(still chopping)

Do I?

Katie

Very distracted. The last two days.

Harry

Nn. Work.

The chopping continues.

Katie's eyes shift down to the countertop, back up to Harry. Another beat.

Katie
... That's enough carrots, don't you think?

Harry
Huh?

Katie
For the salad?

The chopping stops.

Harry slaps the knife down. He stares at Katie, jaw grinding, for a beat.

Harry
You know: you're really a very negative person.

Katie
... What?

Through grit teeth:

Harry
I've tried. To ignore it. And stay upbeat.

Katie, unused to backtalk from Harry, is stunned. She returns in a manner as hard as his:

Katie
Harry: stop the foolishness.

Harry
Stop the foolishness?

Katie
Yes. And behave. You are not talking to one of your...

Her fingers form quotes:

... "shithole buddies."

Harry glares at her, vibrating with rage. Her look at him is equally hard.

Harry abruptly turns and stomps up the stairs.

Brief tromping on the second floor. Katie sits in puzzled suspense.

Footfalls descend the staircase.

Harry reappears at the foot of the stairs with his wedge-cushion tucked under an arm. He flings the front door open, goes out, slams it shut.

OUTSIDE

Harry stomps to his car in the driveway and flings in the cushion. He gets in, seething. After a beat he pulls out his cel phone and dials.

A ring.

Voice

Hello?

Harry

Honey. It's so good to hear your voice.

Voice

Something wrong. Harry?

Harry

No. Yes. Can you come home? Your baby needs you.

A beat.

... Can you please come home?

Voice

Harry, you know I—

Harry

I can show you your present. It's finished.

Voice

Oh Harry. I can't just leave the book tour.

Harry sags.

Harry

Yeah.

Voice

There are two days left. There's still Seattle.

Harry

Yeah.

Voice

I love you. Harry.

Harry

Okay. Yeah. Love you too.

He folds the phone. miserable.

As he pockets it his attention is caught by something in the side-view mirror:

The car parked across the street. A man's shape in the driver's seat.

Harry, jaw set, gets out of the car and starts down the drive.

The parked car starts.

Harry

Hey! Fuck!

The car tries to pull out but is closely hemmed in by the cars in front and back: it will take a couple moves.

Harry runs back to his own car. starts it, throws it into reverse and backs straight down the drive toward the frantically shuttling car.

He T-bones it.

Voice from within Car

Fucker!

Harry, amped, throws his car into drive, pulls halfway up the driveway.

Fucker! Fucker! Harry

He again throws the car into reverse.

The man in the other car abandons his attempt to pull out and scrambles frantically toward the passenger side.

Harry again smashes into the car.

The other man emerges from the far side. He flees down the sidewalk as fast as his weight will permit, pocket change jingling, yelling as he runs:

Fucker! Man

Harry runs after him, calling:

Harry
Who do you work for?! Who do you work for?!

Pounding footsteps.

... Tell me!

The overweight man does not have Harry's stamina: Harry closes, leaps, and tackles.

He crawls up the man's body, hand-over-hand, panting:

... Who do you work for? CIA? NSC?

The other man is panting much harder:

Tuchman Marsh! Man

This stops Harry. He isn't sure what he's heard.

What? Harry

Tuchman Marsh! Man

Harry
... Tuchman Marsh?

Man
Yes!

Harry
Your name is... Tuchman Marsh?

Man
Tuchman Marsh Hauptman Rodino!

Harry stares at the man underneath him. The gasping man explains:

... I work for them!

Harry
You... work for Tuchman Marsh.

Man
Yes!

Harry
Which is a law firm.

Man
No! A rock band! Yes, it's a law firm!

Harry
Well... why are you following me?

Man
Divorce action, numbnuts!

Harry is blindsided. He stares. He slowly sits up, digesting:

Harry
My... my wife hired you?!

The freed Tuchman Marsh man also sits up, still panting heavily.

Man

No. Your wife hired Tuchman Marsh. Tuchman Marsh hired me. I work for Tuchman Marsh.

Harry

You're—you're—a divorce detective.

Man

Not just. Credit, missing persons, whatever.

Harry

But this is divorce.

Man

("duh")

Well. . . yeah.

Harry rises and walks stiffly, zombie-like, up the street. The man watches him go.

After a few paces Harry stops and sits on the curb. He starts weeping.

The man, still breathing heavily, calls out:

. . . Jesus—grow up, man! It happens to everybody!

Harry's cel phone chirps. He fishes it out and unfolds it, sniveling.

Harry

Yeah?

Voice

Harry, it's Osbourne Cox.

Harry stares, trying to fit this in. Osbourne prompts, after a silent beat:

. . . Harry?

Harry

Yeah?

Osbourne

Harry, could I get your wife's number? This is Osbourne Cox. could I trouble you for your wife's—

Harry
You can't tell her anything she doesn't already know.
fucker.

Osbourne
What?

Harry again stares: maybe he has this figured wrong.

After a silence:

...Is this... Harry Pfarrer?

Harry
You want... Sandy's number?

Echoing up the street:

Man
Can I use your phone? To call a tow?

OSBOURNE'S BOAT

Osbourne paces the cramped cabin belowdecks. a phone to his ear. He is unshaven.
wearing a robe.

Filtered rings, then a connection:

Sandy's Voice
Hello?

Osbourne
Sandy?

Sandy
Yes?

Osbourne
Hi. it's Osbourne Cox. how are you. Hi.

Sandy

... Hi.

Osbourne

Hi. Sorry to call out of the blue but I have a, well, a publishing question and I thought you might be the person to ask. I have this manuscript, something to do with my professional experiences, not to go into too much detail but I think it's pretty explosive stuff and I think that it could merit a fairly wide readership handled properly and it isn't quite finished yet but there's a situation where I'm worried about it leaking now and maybe excerpts being published or on the internet, whatever, without my permission, and a lot of the impact being, um, blunted, so I'm actually anxious to bring it to market sooner than I'd planned—I mean, like now, in fact—so I was thinking, I know you, and you seem to do well, so I was wondering if you were happy with your publisher. The people you use.

A long beat.

Sandy

You've written a children's book?

Osbourne

No! No no. a. a kind of a memoir, but—doesn't your company have an adult arm? Or isn't it, uh, the children's arm? Of a regular publisher?

Sandy

Pappas & Swain do children's literature.

Osbourne

Uh-huh. I see. So they don't—okay... Are you well?

Sandy

Very well thank you. And you.

Osbourne

Yes. Good. Okay, well, thank you Sandy.

Sandy

Yes. Good talking to you.

Disconnect.

Osbourne

Bitch.

He yanks the rubber band off a bundle of mail.

RUSSIAN EMBASSY

Two pairs of footsteps echo down a long hallway as Linda Litzke is escorted by a solemn Russian staffer.

ANOTHER ROOM

A waiting room. A long beat: Linda sits waiting.

A door opens. Mr. Krapotkin emerges.

Linda stands to go to the inner office but Krapotkin motions her back down.

Krapotkin

Yes, madam. Can we help you?

Linda

What kind of Mickey Mouse embassy are you running?!
I've been waiting here for fifty-five minutes, and I'm—

Krapotkin

I am so sorry, madam. An urgent matter.

Linda

Well this could be urgent too, since, you know, Chad has
been missing for forty-eight hours now and—

Krapotkin

I don't know the whereabouts of Chad, madam.

Linda

Well he was gathering information for you when he—

Krapotkin
We're not interested in such "information". It was drivel.

Linda is dumbfounded.

A silent beat.

Linda
... Dribble!

Krapotkin fishes something from his pocket.

Krapotkin
Would you like your disk back?

Linda
... Dribble!

Krapotkin stands with the disk extended toward her.

Krapotkin
I'm so sorry I can't help you.

Linda recovers from her astonishment and is moved to outrage:

Linda
I'll tell you what's dribble! You listen to me. Mr. Krapkin!
I am—

HALLWAY AGAIN

Looking the opposite way.

We hear two pairs of footsteps. They approach for several beats and then Linda and her escort enter frame and recede, footsteps echoing. The staffer's hand is on Linda's elbow.

As we hold on their backs and they continue to walk. Linda jerks her arm away; the staffer regrabs it. She jerks away again.

Linda
Cut it out.

PFARRERS' HOUSE

We are looking at the exterior of the house in wide shot. Peaceful neighborhood. Birds chirp.

From inside the house, though, we can faintly hear sobs, punctuated by sounds of exertion. Each gasp of effort ends in a dull clang.

BASEMENT

The wracking sobs bump up loud at the cut inside.

Harry is weeping as he demolishes the love seat with a sledgehammer.

OSBOURNE'S BOAT

An exercise show plays on the TV, unwatched. Osbourne sits at a little table looking at a notice torn from a windowed envelope.

Osbourne

... What?

He brings the notice close, squints at it.

... What the fuck?

He quickly shuffles through the rest of the mail, pulls out another envelope, rips it open.

A MINUTE LATER

Osbourne paces, drink in hand, staring at another piece of mail.

Osbourne

What the fuck?

A MINUTE LATER

Osbourne is back at the table, drink half-consumed, listening at the phone.

Osbourne

... Yes... No... Yes. I want to know why the check for my slip fee was returned for insufficient funds. . . Slip fee. for docking my boat, the check was returned. . . No, m'dam, it's not zero. I have about forty thousand dollars in that account. . . When? . . . When? . . . But she can't do that—no, yes, technically it may be a joint account but she doesn't use it, it's not her money. . . No! No! What access, it's not possible! Without my permission? What about the, my, the, our savings account? My savings account? . . . I don't know the fucking number! You think I memorize the fucking numbers on my fucking bank accounts! Moron! . . . Hello?

HARDBODIES

Ted stares, horrified.

After a beat:

Ted

No-o-o-o-o way. No way. Whoa. No way, Linda. . .

She sits opposite him in his office. Ted shakes his head.

... No.

Linda

But Ted, I can't do it, I don't know anything about computers.

Ted

Linda, the whole thing is crazy. It was crazy the first time, and you want to do it again? Break into the man's house? And why would—why would—you said the Russians didn't even want this stuff!

Linda

My world is bigger than that, Ted. There's other people. There's the Chinese.

Ted
Linda, these surgeries—

Linda
It's not just the surgeries. Ted! It's not just the money! We
can use it as leverage! To get Chad back!

Ted
What do you mean "get him back"!

Linda
Information is power, Ted! Hel-lo!

Ted
What do you mean "get him back"! You don't know where
he is!

Linda
Somebody has him. And we can—

Ted
You ask the police to help you find missing people! And
you—

Linda
I can't take it! I can't take it! I can't take it! You know I
can't do that! We're operating off the map here, Ted! This
is way higher than the police, it's higher than that!

Ted
Linda, I—

Linda
I need a can-do person, Ted! I hate your negativity! I hate
all your reasons why not! I hate you! I hate you!

Weeping, she storms out.

Ted stares, shell-shocked.

A BAR

In close shot. Ted sits onto a bar stool.

Dim bar, tinkling piano.

Bartender's Voice
What'll it be.

Ted stares straight ahead. A long beat.

He finally focuses on the bartender, off. He swallows.

Another beat.

Ted
Seven & Seven.

LINDA'S APARTMENT

Night. Linda is asleep in her bedroom. The buzz of the in-house intercom.

Linda stirs, wakes and reaches for the bedside phone.

Linda
Hurry—

She removes an appliance from her mouth.

... Hello?

Filtered Voice
It's Harry.

LIVING ROOM

Minutes later. Harry is gazing off, slackjawed, haunted.

After a beat:

Harry
You think a marriage is... and then you...

The thought drifts off. A sad shake of the head.

Linda enters, handing him a drink. She sits opposite.

Linda
But this was a long time coming.

Harry looks up, surprised.

Harry
Was it?

He catches himself. His gaze wanders back to the haunted, empty spot.

... Well, yeah. ... right. ...

Linda
You're depressed, Harry.

Harry
(hollowly)
I am depressed. I gotta exercise. I haven't run in three days. ... butt-crunches. ... anything. ... Do you think I could stay here for a little while?

Linda starts quietly weeping.

This focuses Harry's attention. He looks at her as if just now noticing her.

... What? What's wrong, baby?

Linda
It can't always come from me, Harry! I'm not that strong!

Harry moves next to her and puts an arm around her.

Harry
What's wrong, baby? Harry's here.

Linda
You're not here for me! I need a can-do person! You're all. ... defeated!

Harry

I'm sorry, baby—

Linda

Chad is the only can-do person I know and he's gone,
Harry, he's gone.

Harry

I'll be good. I'll be better. I just need to exercise. Are
there pedestrian paths around here?

He squeezes her shoulder, takes a gulp of the drink.

... Who the fuck is Chad?

Linda

Could you help me find him? He's a friend from work.
You know law enforcement people, right? You could call,
unofficially?

Harry

Wait a minute, what's his name? What happened?

Linda

Chad Feldheimer. He just disappeared. He hasn't been at
work or at home for two days.

Harry

Okay.

Linda

He—

Harry

You know his social security number?

Linda

Huh? NO! I—

Harry

It's okay. That's okay. What's the last place you saw him?

Linda
(snuffling)

I don't know! He just disappeared! The last place I saw him was the Jamba Juice on K Street. And he's gone.

Harry squeezes her shoulder again.

Harry

Okay baby. We'll find your friend. Missing person. Piece of cake.

AN EPIGLOTTIS

Illuminated by a small light. It quavers. The tongue starts to rise and the mouth starts to close.

Woman's Voice

No. stay open. . .

Wider: a pediatric examining room decorated with colorful prints of cartoon characters and clowns.

Katie Cox, in a white smock, has a tongue depressor in a five-year-old's mouth and a light-sight in one hand. She withdraws both as the child finishes closing his mouth. The child's mother stands by.

Katie grasps the child by the upper arm.

. . . You have to let the doctor look in your mouth.

The child keeps his lips pressed together.

. . . Now you listen to me, young man. You do as I say or I'll ask your mother to leave the doctor's office and the two of us will sort out what's what.

The child looks at her fearfully.

The wall phone *bleeps*.

Katie rolls to it on her castored chair.

... Yes.

She listens briefly.

... With a patient.

She hangs up.

OSBOURNE'S BOAT

Osbourne, in dressing gown and pyjamas, is barking into the phone:

Osbourne

Yeah? The same patient she's been with YESTERDAY?
BULLSHIT!

Filtered Voice

Dr. Cox has suggested you call her attorney---

Osbourne

Yeah. RIGHT! Tell her I got the new fucking keys!

He slams down the phone.

BOAT DECK

The hatch is thrown open and Osbourne emerges from below. There is a large built-in toolbox just by the hatch. He yanks it open and pulls out a hatchet.

Osbourne

New keys. . .

DOCK

Osbourne strides grimly down the dock in his bathrobe, hatchet in hand.

"GOOD MORNING, SEATTLE"

Sandy Pfarrer is sitting in an armchair on a morning show living room set surrounded by a

dozen eight-year-olds sitting on the carpet. Hosts Del and Connie sit next to her in swivel chairs.

Sandy
(reading)

And it was just then—at that very moment—that Oliver sneezed—

Del

Can we just—I'm sorry to interrupt but we have to let the folks at home see this illustration! Can we just get a shot of that. . .

He is holding the book open, face out on his lap.

There—there it is. Oliver. Interrupting the fillibuster with—

Connie

That's wonderful!

Del

Wonderful! The book is "Point of Order. Oliver!" and the talented author is Sandra Pfarrer. We're gonna go to a station break and then be right back with Bud Fraighling, the Sultan of Salad, and Part Two of our special interview with Dermot Mulroney. So keep it where it is!

Del and Connie and Sandy all wear smiles that stay fixed for a beat too long. Then Del relaxes and turns to Sandy.

. . .Great segment.

Sandy

Thank you.

Del

Yeah, you know we thought it might be fun if you joined us with Bud Fraighling and help make the Fiesta Salad, when we move over.

Connie

Over on the kitchen set.

Sandy

That wasn't discussed.

Del

Oh, sure! No! Only if you want to! Your segment went great, we just thought—

Sandy

I'm sorry, I made plans.

Del

Okay, great!

Connie

Great to see you again, Sandra!

She gives them a cold smile as a technician finishes unclipping her lavalier and she leaves.

Connie looks at Del and mouths "Bitch."

COX TOWNHOUSE

Osbourne's crumple-backed car roars up. It cuts a corner of the lawn and squeals to a halt in the drive. Osbourne emerges, still in robe and pyjamas, with the hatchet.

He goes to the front door and bashes at the knob with the blunt end of the hatchet.

Osbourne

New. . . fucking. . . keys. . . How's this for access. . .

Hardware starts to fall off and jangle onto the stoop. Osbourne tries the sharp end of the hatchet a couple times, decides he prefers the blunt end.

. . . How's this for motherfucking access. . .

More things fall off. The knob wobbles in the door.

Osbourne pushes the door open.

HALLWAY

Sandy Pfarrer is accompanied by a bright young PR woman.

PR Woman

That was way out of line. We were so unbelievably clear with them: just an Oliver segment.

Sandy

It's fine.

PR Woman

Del and Connie are such putzes.

Sandy

It's fine. Thank you. We're finished.

PR Woman

Huh? Well, okay. Great, uh—

Sandy is already shutting the door on her, having entered her dressing room.

Inside a man lounges reading a magazine. He looks a little like Harry.

Sandy

Thought that would never be over.

The man rises and kisses her.

Man

Mmm. Me too.

Sandy

Let me scrub this crap off my face.

TOWNHOUSE KITCHEN

Osbourne opens a cabinet, muttering::

Osbourne

Just for starters. . .

He takes out liquor bottles and starts putting them in a packing case on the kitchen counter.

WASHINGTON MALL

People sit on benches eating lunches. Harry Pfarrer is on the bench where he and Linda met, once again spitting sunflower seeds.

Linda walks up. They greet each other with a kiss.

Harry
Hello there sunshine. You look great.

Linda
Well you seem better.

Harry does indeed seem more like his old self.

Harry
Yeah, I snuck in a little gym time this morning. And our exercise last night didn't hurt!

Shocked but secretly pleased:

Linda
Harry!

Harry
Boy, I am through banging my head against the wall. I am gonna start doing what's right for me.

Linda
That's how I believe, also. You have to do what's right for—

Harry
Yeah! Hell yeah! I mean I had a shock recently, and I realized you know, life is not infinite. No one's immortal.

Linda

No one's immortal.

Harry

You have to get from each day its full, uh, squeeze the juice from every day because there but for the grace of God—

Linda

Exactly. The important thing is to maintain a positive outlook. Always up. Always ebullient.

Harry

That's right. don't sweat the small stuff. . .

Linda chimes in:

Linda and Harry

. . . and it's all small stuff.

Harry reaches for Linda and she slides in closer to him on the bench. He puts an arm around her.

Harry

This is where we first met. Remember?

Linda

Of course I do.

Harry

You never know what the important days are. until. . . until. um. . .

The thought drifts away as his gaze fixes on something. With his look still fixed:

. . . I told myself I was gonna stop being paranoid, but. . . is that guy looking at us?

Linda follows his look.

On a bench a short distance away a middle-aged man with aviator glasses and hair plugs is staring at them.

Linda
(hastily)

No. no.

A slightly overweight woman stops tentatively in front of the man in the aviator glasses and they start to talk.

Linda turns to Harry.

... Have you found out anything about Chad?

Harry
Nothing yet. I've made a couple calls. I don't think it'll take long.

Linda
Really?

Harry
Oh yeah, there are so many data bases now it's a joke. . .

Relaxing now that he sees the man in aviator glasses engaged in conversation. Harry warms to his theme.

... Back when I was in PP there was still some art to finding people. Not any more. And now with the cel phones? Pretty soon they're gonna know where everyone is. Everyone. At any given moment. I mean it's almost the reality now. You would be amazed.

Linda
Uh-huh.

Harry
Did he—when you left the Jamba Juice—did Chad say anything about where he might be going?

Linda
Oh, I know where he was going.

Harry
Oh yeah?

Linda
A residence in Alexandria. On Hillsboro Drive.

Harry has stopped chewing. He is staring at her.

Linda feels obliged to fill the silence.

... 2055 Hillsboro.

Harry stares. Linda doesn't know what to make of his fixed stare.

... It's. um. The residence of a guy named Osbourne Cox.

Harry is beginning to look sick.

A long silence.

Then, quietly:

Harry
Who are you?

Now Linda stares, unsure of what to make of the question.

... WHO ARE YOU?

Linda's eyes widen. She is a little frightened.

People nearby turn to look. It is a scene.

... WHO DO YOU WORK FOR?

Harry reaches up. He grabs both shoulders and shakes her.

... WHO ARE YOU? REALLY?

Linda is at sea. She answers in a very small voice:

Linda
I'm ... just ... Linda Litzke.

Harry stares at her.

A long beat.

He leaps to his feet and looks around in a panic.

His point-of-view, sweeping the park. Nearby, the man with plugs, though talking with his date, is looking at him again. Farther away, a man sits in a sedan at curbside. Watching? Hard to say.

Harry turns and runs. Linda gapes.

... Harry!

COX TOWNHOUSE

Osbourne sets the packing box heavily down on a bureau in the upstairs bedroom. The box is a third loaded up with liquor bottles. It also holds a mixed drink which Osbourne now takes. The ice cubes clink as he sips, poking through things in the bureau.

One drawer holds scarves and accessories and a large case. He opens the case and starts dumping jewelry from it into the cardboard box.

Suddenly:

Osbourne

Ow! Fuck!

He yanks his hand back and shakes it. He looks at the ball of his thumb. He sucks it.

He carefully picks a brooch out of the jewelry case and flings it across the room.

He resumes dumping jewelry into his box.

He suddenly stops:

A faint knock. The front door.

Osbourne waits.

The knock repeats.

Another beat.

The front door creaks open.

Osbourne carefully sets down his drink. He steps quietly to the closet and pulls a small cedar chest off a high shelf.

WASHINGTON MALL

Linda flings open the door to her car parked on the street bordering the mall. She gets in and turns the ignition.

Pulling into traffic she checks her rear-view, and her look snags on:

A dark four-door sedan pulling out a few cars back. It falls in behind her. Its driver and sole occupant is a man in sunglasses. He reaches up and touches fingertips to one ear.

Linda frowns. She looks forward, glances again at the mirror.

Another dark car pulls into the lane next to the first. Its driver and sole occupant is also a man in sunglasses.

COX TOWNHOUSE

Downstairs. Osbourne rounds the corner from entryway to living room, a handgun at the ready. His drink is in his other hand. Ice cubes clink as he moves.

The living room is empty.

Osbourne advances cautiously. A quick sidelong look at the kitchen.

Empty.

He proceeds to the basement door.

LINDA DRIVING

She gives worried glances at her rear-view.

The light ahead turns yellow, red.

Cars ahead stop. Linda stops.

A rhythmic thudding sound. It almost makes her car vibrate.

She looks around. She rolls down her window, sticks her head out, looks up.

A black helicopter hovers overhead, rotors thudding. A black-clad body leans partway out. The person seems to be looking down.

Linda draws her head back in.

Linda

Oh for Pete's sake.

COX TOWNHOUSE

Osbourne is slowly descending the stairs, gun up, ice cubes clinking.

The basement comes slowly into view.

Someone stands behind his desk, at the computer.

Osbourne descends further. He stops on the bottom step and stares at Ted Treffon, the soulful manager of Hardbodies. Ted stares at him.

A long silence between the two men.

Then, quietly:

Osbourne

And you are... my wife's lover.

Ted

No.

Osbourne

Then what are you doing here.

Silence.

Osbourne takes the last step down. He advances slowly, gun trained on Ted.

Osbourne's look, holding on Ted, changes.

... I know you. You're the guy at the gym.

Ted licks his lips.

Ted
I'm not here representing Hardbodies.

Osbourne
I know what you represent. You represent the idiocy of today.

Ted shakes his head.

Ted
I don't represent that, either.

Osbourne
Oh yes. You're the guy when I went to ask about that moronic woman.

Ted
She's not—

Osbourne
You're in league with that moronic woman. You're part of a league of morons.

Ted
No.

Osbourne
Yes. You're one of the morons I've been fighting all my life. My whole fucking life. But guess what. Guess what. Today I win.

BANG.

Ted
Ah!

Ted is shot in the upper chest.

He grabs a three-hole punch from the desktop and flings it at Osbourne and charges.

Osbourne

Oh!

BANG—another shot goes off.

Ted barrels into Osbourne, knocking him over—

... Oooph!

—and goes on past him, lumbering up the stairs.

Osbourne gets to his feet.

... Stop! Intruder!

EXTERIOR

Ted staggers out of the house, a hand pressed to his chest. He has reached the front lawn when Osbourne emerges, robe flapping, pursuing with the hatchet.

Osbourne

Intruder!

He quickly catches up to Ted and whacks at him.

Ted

Oh!

Osbourne whacks him down. He keeps whacking at him.

CIA OFFICE

Gardner Chubb is behind his desk.

Gardner Chubb

Wait.

Palmer DeBakey Smith is seated across from him. He freezes.

A beat.

Cardner Chubb rubs his forehead.

... Wait a minute. Where's the treasury guy? Pfarrer?

Palmer

Right now?

Gardner Chubb

Right now.

Palmer

In a detention room at Washington Reagan.

Gardner Chubb

... Why?

Palmer

He was trying to board a flight to Venezuela. We had his name on a hoilist, the INS pulled him. Don't know why he was going to Venezuela.

Gardner Chubb

You don't know.

Palmer

No sir.

Gardner Chubb

We have no extradition with Venezuela.

Palmer

Oh. Uh-huh. Well—what should we do with him?

Gardner Chubb

For fuck's sake, put him on the next flight to Venezuela!

Palmer

Yes sir. Okay.

Gardner Chubb is weary.

Gardner Chubb
Okay. So the gym manager is dead.

Palmer
Yes sir.

Gardener Chubb
The body is—

Palmer
Gone. sir.

Gardener Chubb
Okay—

Palmer
But—there was a, uh... snag...

Gardner Chubb
What.

Palmer
Well. This analyst, Cox, was attacking the gym guy. It was broad daylight, on the street. Our man there didn't know what to do. He felt he had to step in.

Gardner Chubb
Yes?

Palmer
He. uh... He shot the analyst. He shot Cox.

Gardner Chubb
Good! Great! Is he dead?

Palmer
No sir.

Gardner Chubb grimaces.

... He's in coma. They're not sure whether he'll make it. They think, they're pretty sure he has no brain function.

Gardner Chubb

Okay. Okay. If he wakes up we'll worry about it then.
Jesus. what a clusterfuck. That's it then. No one else really
knows anything. Okay.

Palmer

Um. Well sir, there is...

Gardner Chubb

What.

Palmer

Um...

Gardner Chubb

What.

Palmer

There is the woman. The gym woman. Linda Litzke.

Gardner Chubb

Oh yeah. Fuck. Where is she.

Palmer

We picked her up. We have her.

Gardner Chubb

We have her?! To do what with? What's her deal. Can we.
uh...

Palmer

Well she, she. she says she'll play ball if we pay for some.
. I know this sounds odd—some surgeries she wants.
Cosmetic surgery. She says she'll sit on everything.

Gardner Chubb

How much.

Palmer

There were several procedures. All together they run to.
um—

Gardner Chubb

Pay it.

Palmer

Yes sir. Should I pay it out of, should it be from--

Gardner Chubb

One of the black accounts, I don't give a shit. The January fund. Whatever.

Palmer

Okay.

Gardner Chubb

Jesus. Jesus fucking Christ.

He shakes his head.

... What did we learn, Palmer.

Palmer

I don't know, sir.

Gardner Chubb

I don't fucking know either. I guess we learned not to do it again.

Palmer

Yes sir.

Gardner Chubb

Although I'm fucked if I know what we did.

Palmer

Yes sir. Hard to say.

We pull back from Gardner Chubb, shaking his head.

Gardner Chubb

Jesus. Jesus fucking Christ.

AERIAL SHOT OF CIA HEADQUARTERS

We pull up. back through the clouds, away.