

"THE INVISIBLE WOMAN"

Written By
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INSPIRED BY TRUE EVENTS

BLACK SCREEN

MUFFLED, WHISTLING GUSTS of WIND RUMBLE with building fury...
HARD CUT out of BLACK to REVEAL we are:

INT. 2003 FORD TAURUS STATION WAGON - DAY

We're LOOKING PAST EMPTY FRONT SEATS toward an ICY, FOGGING WINDSHIELD. HOLD FOCUS on TWO COFFEE CUPS in the holders below the dashboard; one cup still steams.

Outside, SNOW flurries swirl over an out of focus landscape. A BLURRY FIGURE in a yellow parka appears RUNNING toward us, ARMS FLAILING... The figure tears open the door, hurls a GARBAGE BAG into the passenger seat, and scrambles in...

Still seen only from behind, the figure is a WOMAN. She has BLEACHED BLONDE hair; her LARGE BLACK SUNGLASSES flash in the rearview as she starts the engine. She is HYPERVENTILATING.

The car screeches into a HARD, QUIVERING U-TURN, almost skidding out of control; but the woman keeps accelerating... until, finally, the car straightens out...

She checks the rearview, sees nothing. Waves of emotion start to surface; she fights to keep herself together:

WOMAN

(a roller-coaster)

Oh my God... Oh my God... Oh my

God...! Fuck. Fuck. Jesus!

(forces herself to calm)

Okay... Okay...

SUDDENLY something EXPLODES INSIDE THE CAR -- the WOMAN SCREAMS as CRIMSON RED (what appears to be BLOOD) SPLASHES across the windshield, and bits of PAPER FLY THROUGH THE AIR!

THICK RED SMOKE rapidly fills the interior! The woman grips the wheel for life, SOUNDING THE HORN...! AS OUR VIEW BLACKENS, we HEAR TIRES SCREECH and SKID -- !

WOMAN

HELLLLLLLP!!! HELLLLLLLL--

We hear a TERRIBLE SHUDDERING...! Then ALL AT ONCE everything STOPS. In total DARKNESS, we hear only the Woman's CHOKING GASPS for air; CUT TO:

EXT. QUIET SUBURBAN HIGHWAY - VERY HIGH ANGLE - DAY

The Taurus rests, cock-eyed, on the side of a snowy road.

The driver window lowers, and BILLOWING SMOKE ESCAPES as the Woman's head juts out, GASPING for air... CUT TO:

SHOTS OF THE REAR OF THE CAR:

Steaming exhaust chugs softly from the tailpipe past a NEW YORK LICENSE PLATE. We see TWO BUMPER STICKERS: one, A SMALL U.S. FLAG; the other says, "MY CHILD WAS STUDENT OF THE MONTH AT WANTAGH MIDDLE SCHOOL".

INSIDE THE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Hazy with smoke. We're CLOSE ON THE PLASTIC GARBAGE BAG in the passenger seat. A HOLE has been blown through it -- inside are red-drenched HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS...

The WOMAN'S HANDS dig frantically through fistfuls of crimson-soaked money; finally, she finds a SMALL EXPLODED PLASTIC CHARGE inside a half-empty PACKAGE OF RED DYE (a "DYE PACK"). FOR THE FIRST TIME WE CUT TO:

THE WOMAN'S FACE

She stares at the dye pack, stunned. The Woman is MID-30s, behind her sunglasses, a lost, former Long Island local beauty queen face (the right side of which is dripping red at the moment). We hear APPROACHING SIRENS --

The Woman looks in the rearview, sees POLICE CARS, roaring toward her; she fumbles for the ignition, but it's too late --

POLICE AND FBI OFFICERS

CHARGE out of their cars, wearing flak jackets, guns drawn!

AN FBI MAN

(thick New York accent)

Place! Your hands! On! The steering wheel!

Helpless, she complies -- an OFFICER rips open the door, hustles her out onto the ground! The SOUND FADES as we MOVE IN on her face, pressed to the pavement... she goes limp as they yank her hands behind her, slip on a restraint...

Finally, she lifts her head, LOOKING STRAIGHT AT US IN CLOSE UP, her eyes hidden behind her sunglasses -- at first she seems oddly calm, docile, maybe even relieved; then, from behind her lenses, TEARS begin to streak down her cheeks...

And we CUT TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

TWO BLACK AND WHITE MUGSHOTS OF THE WOMAN

Stark, unromanticized. The Woman stares expressionlessly, exhausted, mascara smeared, a haunting mix of rage and vulnerability in her eyes. We see her real, DARKER HAIR.

She holds a small black sign; it reads "NYS 97G2356 DOCS", and below that, the Woman's name: "ELMER, CAROL".
We CUT BACK TO BLACK.

SUPER: "SIX WEEKS EARLIER"; HOLD... then FADE IN ON:

A SIGN: "WELCOME TO WANTAGH. THE GATEWAY TO JONES BEACH."
An LIRR TRAIN car glides by on the elevated tracks above as the SUN RISES on a mid-November morning... We SEE:

A SERIES OF MOVING SHOTS

of suburban Wantagh, New York -- a post WWII, Levittown style, working-middle-class community on the South Shore of Long Island. We notice an EERIE LACK OF PEOPLE as we PASS:

The HARBOR, crowded by modest WATERFRONT HOMES... The PUBLIC POOL, closed for the season in the late sixties era WANTAGH PARK... FALL TREES surrounding Mill Pond; a small, MONUMENT beside the water lists the locals killed on September 11th...

WE MOVE down a NEIGHBORHOOD STREET of small HOMES built in the fifties. SCARECROWS, PUMPKINS, FALL LEAVES... SATELLITE DISHES. BASKETBALL HOOPS. AMERICAN FLAGS. We MOVE IN ON THE CORNER STREET SIGN; it reads: "WANTAGH PARK DRIVE".

CUT TO:

A RED ROBIN

We're looking down through tree branches. A FIGURE creeps INTO FRAME below us, pointing a DIGITAL CAMERA at the bird. It's CAROL ELMER, six weeks before we first met her, six weeks before she had an inkling of her fate.

She wears the same yellow parka we saw before; her breath mists in the morning chill. Before she can get a shot, the bird flits to another branch; frustrated, Carol readjusts --

As she moves, a STREAM OF SUNLIGHT suddenly reveals itself through the clouds, and a RAINBOW forms above the robin. The robin urgently flutters in place for a moment...

Carol's face fills with awe, attributing significance to this vision. She starts quickly snapping shots. The light retreats again, and the bird flies off. Carol lowers the camera. Her expression clouds over, a heavy, faraway look.
CUT WIDE TO SEE that she is:

IN HER FRONT YARD

For the first time, we notice that under her parka Carol wears a LIGHT BLUE, FLORAL NIGHTGOWN with matching blue SLIPPERS. She looks lost standing there, like a child. Finally, she resurfaces; suddenly checks her watch...

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Carol enters, sees her 11 year old son, CHRISTIAN face down, asleep in her bed. She hears the TAP running and approaches:

THE MASTER BATHROOM

GERRY, late-30s, sits on the closed toilet IN A SUIT, head lowered. There is an intensity to him, a physicality that seems in conflict with his business attire. He takes slow, deep breaths.

CAROL

...Gerry?

He turns, startled; he immediately becomes guarded.

CAROL

Are you...?

GERRY

I'm fine. I just got a little dizzy.

(then)

He's really gotta start sleeping in his own bed.

CAROL

I know, I'm sorry. I went in there, he was having nightmares again.

Finally, he gets up, turns off the tap. Doesn't look at her.

CAROL

You want some breakfast?

GERRY

I got a lotta interviews. I gotta get going.

She turns and steps back into the bedroom; Christian is now waking up. She smiles, worried he may have overheard them:

CAROL

Morning, sunshine. How bout a ham steak?

He smiles. Carol pulls him into a hug, whispers gratefully:

CAROL (CONT'D)
Mmmmmh. Such a good boy.

We hear a DOORBELL as we CUT TO:

EXT. NITA AND RAY PERICE'S HOME - MORNING

The front door opens revealing NITA, late 30s, in tight-fitting purple velour sweats. Not exactly delicate.

NITA
THEY'RE HERE! JOANIE? MICHAEL!
(then)
Sorry, we're running a little late, we had a little crisis this morning. Joanie got her period.

JOANIE (O.S.)
MOM! Oh my GOD!

REVEAL Carol on the doorstep; she strains a smile. Christian is next to her, clutching his battered FLUTE CASE.

CAROL
Should we just...

NITA
No, come in for a sec, we got coffee.

INT. NITA AND RAY PERICE'S KITCHEN - MORNING

They enter to find RAY PERICE, late 30s, wearing a gray POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE SWEATSHIRT; he reads Newsday, sips coffee. Ray has a neighborly crush on pretty Carol.
FAVOR CAROL as she struggles to seem engaged:

NITA
How bout a little danish? Christian?

CHRISTIAN
Yeah.

RAY
Morning!

CAROL
Hey, Ray. You off today?

RAY
Nah, I banged out early. They had to clear out the precinct for a briefing.

NITA
Carol? Some danish?

CAROL
Hm? Oh, I can't.

NITA
Carol, you're a rail.

CAROL
No, I'm gaining weight, I am. I've
been really bad.

NITA
Well you been under a lotta stress.
I'd be eating too.

RAY
Yeah, how's it going? Gerry find
anything yet?

CAROL
(trying to be up)
He's got some interviews today in the
city.

NITA
Jesus. What's it been? Six months?

RAY
It's the fucking economy. There's no
jobs out there.

NITA
Well try not to let it get you down,
okay? You don't wanna go through all
that again.

RAY
Nita...

NITA
What? She knows how I mean it -- that
was a bad time for her --

Carol looks a bit uncomfortable about all this, just as Nita
and Ray's son, MICHAEL, 11 enters with his TRUMPET CASE,
comes up to Christian who's eating his danish, says quietly:

MICHAEL
Hey, retard -- how's the skin flute?

CHRISTIAN
(sugar on his face)
Shut up.

MICHAEL
Make me, gay boy.

This finally engages Carol -- she takes any attack on her son in a deeply personal way:

CAROL
 Hey. I don't like that, Michael.

RAY
 Michael! What'd I fuckin' tell you?

NITA
 Ray. Language. C'mon.

RAY
He knows what I'm talking about.
 (to Michael)
 You better fuckin' stop. You hear me?

MICHAEL
 (pissed, frightened)
Okay.

CAROL
 (suddenly guilty)
 I'm sorry, I didn't mean to...

NITA
 JOANIE! C'MON! GET A MOVE ON!

Entering is JOANIE, 13, developing, embarrassed about it:

JOANIE
 I'm right here! Jesus!

EXT. NITA AND RAY PERICE'S HOME - MORNING

Carol and the kids pile into her 2003 Ford Taurus Wagon.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

Carol sits, staring ahead, waiting for the kids to settle. She drifts. The kids notice she isn't starting the car.

JOANIE
 ...Mrs. Elmer?

Carol snaps out of it, starts the car... CUT TO:

HOMEMADE GREETING CARDS

DIGITAL PHOTOS of NATURE SCENES pasted to folded cards. One of them, the RED ROBIN from Carol's front yard.

CLERK (V.O.)
Mm. Mm-hm. These're nice...

CUT WIDER TO REVEAL WE ARE:

INT. WANTAGH GIFT SHOP - DAY

Carol at the counter with a YOUNG CLERK. Carol watches her guardedly, a quiet urgency under the surface:

CAROL
Yeah? Coz I saw you have all those cards over there...

CLERK
Well, you really have to talk to Claudia -- she's the owner.

CAROL
Oh, okay. Do you think... could I just leave them for her? To look at?

CLERK
Sure. Why don't you gimme your number, Claudia'll call you...

The woman hands Carol a pen; she watches as Carol scribbles, notices a certain desperate intensity. Carol stops:

CAROL
Oh, you know, also? I saw that sign? In the window, about part time help? I mean I have a little boy, so I could only work certain hours but... Do you know anything about that?

CLERK
(feeling bad for her)
Uhh, you know, honestly? I think it's an old sign? I think she just... never took it down.

Carol nods for a moment, smiles; an urge to cry suddenly threatens, but she just suppresses it, goes back to writing.

CAROL (V.O.)
(hushed, searching)
Sometimes I feel like I'm... sinking. Like I'm just gonna go under, and nobody'll even notice.

INT. KING KULLEN SUPERMARKET - DAY

Carol stands in front of an IMPOSING ROW OF CEREAL BOXES. She searches intently through an old purple Le Sportsac velcro wallet, bulging with SUPERMARKET COUPONS...

CAROL (V.O.)
I mean there are times, I swear to God,
I feel like I'm just... invisible.

A SHOPPER bumps right into her, reaching for cereal; Carol's startled, feels impulsively guilty:

CAROL
Oh, I'm sorry...!

But the shopper just grabs a box and walks away as if Carol weren't there; Carol calls after him, suddenly offended:

CAROL
Excuse me!

But he never turns around.

THE CHECKOUT - MOMENTS LATER

Carol hands the CHECKER a stack of COUPONS; he takes them impersonally, as he scans her items. Carol looks at him, waiting for him to return a look; but he doesn't.

CAROL (V.O.)
And it's scary. Because if no one can
even see me, how am I ever gonna get
any help...?

Carol's eyes drift to the NY LOTTO sign on the check stand. Her eyes fix on it. She sees the GUM DISPLAY below it. She picks up a PACK. Checks to see if the Checker is looking; still no. Anxious, she slips the gum into her coat pocket.

EXT. KING KULLEN PARKING LOT - CAROL'S TAURUS - DAY

Carol loads the groceries into the back of her car. She looks up, spots something OFF CAMERA...

CAROL (V.O.)
I mean, I need help.

And finally we CUT to REVEAL her POV of A CATHOLIC CHURCH, across the street. We CUT TO:

INT. CATHOLIC CONFSSIONAL BOOTH - DAY

All CAROL'S VOICE OVER has come from here. Her eyes are red.

CAROL
Because I'm in trouble.

Long beat. Then Carol smiles, suddenly embarrassed. Beat. Her smiles fades. She glances toward the separating screen:

CAROL (CONT'D)
Hello?

The VOICE that stirs sounds elderly, maybe a bit feeble:

CONFESSOR (O.S.)
Yes. I'm here.

CAROL
I'm sorry.

CONFESSOR (O.S.)
Why are you sorry, child?

CAROL
I dunno... this is humiliating.

CONFESSOR (O.S.)
Sometimes it helps... to unburden your heart.

CAROL
I feel so alone.
(beat)
And I try, but sometimes I have such bad... thoughts. I'm not a very good person. I know that. Maybe that's why he's punishing me. God. Why he's abandoned me. But I have a family -- I have a son. And he's gonna be affected by this too.

CONFESSOR (O.S.)
By what, my child?

CAROL
By everything. By what's coming.
(sighs, frustrated)
I did something so... stupid. Why would God let this happen, why would he let me do that...?

Carol struggles quietly, but it's just too overwhelming.

CONFESSOR (O.S.)
You know, whatever it is, Jesus loves you.

CAROL
 (smiles, starts to tear)
 Please don't say that.

CONFESSOR (O.S.)
 Why not?

She wipes away her tears.

CAROL
 I don't know. It makes me angry...

INT. CAROL'S TAURUS - MOMENTS LATER

Carol searches frantically through one of the grocery bags, finding a small CAN OF PRINGLES. She pops the top, starts munching; finally starts to calm... we HOLD, then CUT TO:

INT. WANTAGH MIDDLE SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

Band practice. KIDS aged 11 to 14 play "GOD ONLY KNOWS".

Carol enters the back of the auditorium. She spots CHRISTIAN in the second string, flute section; he taps his foot a bit too vigorously, keeping time. She smiles, touched.

Carol notices THE BAND TEACHER, conducting with HIS BACK TO US. There's a raging intensity to his gestures, as if no one told him this is only a children's band.

As the slightly off-key musicians struggle to keep up with him, Carol becomes drawn in. Finally, he brings the band to a finish, and Carol, moved, spontaneously APPLAUDS.

CAROL
 Yayyy! Hurray!

They all look at her, surprised. In the trumpet section, Michael Perice smirks at Christian, who shrinks uncomfortably.

The band teacher turns, almost as if awakened from a trance. He smiles, embarrassed. He appears a lot less powerful now, as if the music had only temporarily animated some deeply hidden strength. In his late 30s, he has an out of place quality, a sense of starvation, of inner turmoil held in check, just under a surface of "niceness". He wears a tweed jacket and bow tie, giving him the look of a young college professor. This is MR. SHAW.

MR. SHAW
 Okay! Tomorrow! Please practice, people!

As the kids start to pack up, Mr. Shaw steps off the stage to meet Carol who approaches sheepishly:

CAROL

I'm sorry, they were just so... good.
You're great with them...

He seems pleased, not used to much appreciation, especially from such an attractive mother. There is an immediate, if awkward, chemistry between them:

MR. SHAW

Well... thank you. They, they work hard.

CAROL

I'm Christian Elmer's mom...

MR. SHAW

Oh, yes! Yes, we've, I'm sure we've...
Christian's a great kid. So... polite.
You must be a very good mother...

CAROL

(uncomfortable)

Oh no. I don't take credit for that.
That's him. I don't take any credit
for that.

She looks over at Christian, putting away his flute.

CAROL

He's a good boy.

MR. SHAW

You know, actually, Mrs. Elmer, I... I
was going to call you.

CAROL

(turns, concerned)

You were?

MR. SHAW

I was hoping you might have some time.
To come talk to me.

CAROL

...Is he okay?

MR. SHAW

I've just been... noticing a few
things. I think it might be helpful if
we talked. I have Friday morning...?
Maybe ten o'clock...?

Carol doesn't respond, still taking this in, nodding.

MR. SHAW

Mrs. Elmer. Are you...?

She looks at Christian, concerned -- then turns back, puts on a self-conscious smile; he smiles back, tentative:

MR. SHAW

Do you think you can make it Friday...?

CAROL

(colder to him now)

Yes. Okay. Sure. Thank you.

She heads off toward her son, and we HOLD on Mr. Shaw as he watches her go, a bit stunned by her sudden withdrawal...

INT. CAROL'S TAURUS - DAY

Carol and Christian drive in silence. Christian sits in the passenger seat, digging through one of the grocery bags. Carol steals a look at him, concerned...

CAROL

You know, I could hear you in there.
You were very good.

CHRISTIAN

(eyes/hands in bag)

You couldn't hear me.

CAROL

Honey, I could hear you, I could. You
have your own sound.

All at once, he puts down the bag, unbuckles his seat belt, starts to climb into the back. Carol notices --

CAROL

Sweetie, what're you...?

CHRISTIAN

(searching another bag)

I'm not very good anyway.

CAROL

Why do you say that? Don't say that.
That makes me sad.

He starts to lean his entire body precariously over into the storage area behind the seats.

CAROL
 (with growing anger)
 Is that what Mr. Shaw says...?

One of his feet suddenly hits the ceiling with a BANG, and he disappears completely into the back.

CAROL
 Hey! C'mon! You're making me nervous
 now. Get back over here.

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)
 I'm looking for my Pringles!

CAROL
 (beat, guilty)
 Sweetie, I... I didn't... I forgot
 your Pringles. Okay?

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)
 Awww! You forgot?!

CAROL
 I'll take you to the drive-thru, okay?
 Now come up here and put your seat belt
 on. Please?

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)
 How could you forget?

CAROL
 (sighs)
 Because, sweetie. I have a lot on my
 mind.

CUT TO:

"DID YOU FORGET?"

In BOLD TYPE on a page of a PHONE BILL. The PAGE LIFTS to reveal an ELECTRIC BILL; TIGHT on the words, "PAST DUE".

CAROL'S EYES stare down anxiously through inexpensive READING GLASSES; the bills are REFLECTED in the lenses. WE ARE:

INT. CAROL'S KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Carol's at the kitchen table, opening BILLS. Next to her, Christian eats fast food, staring at the TV.

Carol looks at the next letter in the stack -- from "RELIANT SAVINGS AND LOAN". SIGHS HEAVILY. She unconsciously steals one of Christian's french fries -- he reacts:

CHRISTIAN

Mom!

Startled, Carol turns. She smiles guiltily:

CAROL

(slaps her hand twice:)

Bad. Girl.

(then)

Go ahead, sweetie. Get them away from me. Please.

He takes the bag, sits on the floor right next to the TV.

Carol finally opens the Savings and Loan letter. And the blood suddenly drains from her face... CLOSE ON THE WORDS:

"NOTICE OF PROPERTY FORECLOSURE.
2161 WANTAGH PARK DRIVE.
OVERDUE BALANCE
MUST BE RECEIVED WITHIN NEXT 10 DAYS."

Carol involuntarily GASPS. Panicking, she gets up, moves to the phone, picks up the receiver. Her hands shake. She searches the letter for a phone number, can't find one; she abruptly hangs up, searches the other pages. Christian sees:

CHRISTIAN

...Mom? You okay, Mom?

Carol finds a number, grabs the phone again to dial when she HEARS the FRONT DOOR OPENING:

GERRY (O.S.)

Hello?!

Carol stiffens, hangs up the phone immediately.

CHRISTIAN

...Mom?

She rushes to the kitchen table, grabs all the bills --

GERRY (O.S.)

Where is everybody?! Hello?!

Frantically stuffs the bills into a drawer --

CAROL

(trying to hide her panic)

In here!

Carol turns just as Gerry enters. He's holding A BOUQUET OF FLOWERS under his arm, carrying A LARGE BROWN PAPER BAG.

She doesn't know what to make of it, coming down from her panic. Gerry smiles, speaks with gentle affection to Christian:

GERRY
 Hey, help me out here, willya pal?
 (indicates flowers)
 Grab these, and give 'em to your
 mother.

Christian gets up, brings her the flowers.

CAROL
 What's... goin' on?

Looking pleased, he finally says:

GERRY
 I think I got something.

Carol can't speak. She smiles, looks down at the floor, overwhelmed. Gerry puts down the bag, moves to her. She starts to quietly sob in his arms. Gerry looks at his son, reaches out his hand. The three of them huddle together.

CUT TO:

THE KITCHEN TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone excitedly eats Chinese food for a long beat. Then:

GERRY
 Jesus, they gave me all these fucking
tapes. Wait'll you see the pile.

CAROL
 Tapes? What for?

GERRY
 For training. I never done this before.
 I gotta follow their guy for like eight
 weeks -- I gotta pass some test.

This slows Carol's enthusiasm; worry starts to return.

CAROL
 Oh... Oh.

GERRY
 (sensing her change)
 What.

Carol tries to tread lightly, but her anxiety makes it hard:

CAROL
No, I... didn't realize. I thought you
had the job. I mean, do you?

GERRY
(furious, curt)
I'm gonna get the job. Okay?

CAROL
No, I'm not saying --

GERRY
Jesus!

CHRISTIAN
(suddenly worried)
No fighting!

CAROL
Gerry, I'm not saying you won't get it!
Really! I just wanted to know if--

GERRY
What?

CAROL
Nothing!
(then, tentative, trying
to sound positive)
I just... are they... gonna pay you?

He stares down at his plate in a building rage; something about the way he can't even look at her is frightening:

GERRY
You're unfucking believable. You know
that?

Carol starts to break down; she fights it:

CAROL
We need money, Gerry --

GERRY
Why do you have to shit on this?!
Mother fucker! I was feeling good!

CAROL
I'm sorry, I'm just scared, okay?!

GERRY

You're scared?! Why the fuck are you scared, Carol?!

Carol falls silent, glares at him, biting her tongue.

GERRY

Let's see you go out there! You get a job! Little Miss Fucking Perfect! Let's see that!

(then)

I can do this -- you don't think I can?!

CAROL

I didn't say that...!

GERRY

Mother FUCKER!

They sit there, all looking at their plates, the rage still hanging there. A long, painful silence. Finally, still unable to look up from his plate, Gerry speaks in a very quiet, but ferocious tone:

GERRY

I don't wanna hear how fuckin' scared you are, okay? Makes me think you're gonna go fuckin'... wacko on me again. Okay?

CLOSE ON CAROL. All bottled up, perfectly still.

GERRY (CONT'D)

You gonna go fuckin' wacko on me, Carol?

She doesn't respond, seeming hurt, enraged, humiliated.

GERRY

Because I don't think I could take it this time.

He lets that resonate, then slowly begins to eat; after a beat, starting to calm, he says with finality:

GERRY

Take the money. Outta the savings account. Like we been doing.

Christian looks at his mother, who still stares down at her plate. Finally, she slowly raises the fork to her mouth. After a moment, he does too, mimicking her; we CUT TO:

INT. RELIANT SAVINGS BANK - MORNING

Carol enters in a heightened state. She sees a passing thirtyish LOAN OFFICER, intercepts him:

CAROL
Excuse me? Jim...?

JIM
...Yes?

CAROL
Do you remember me? I made an investment with you about a year and a half ago? In bio-tech stocks...?

He grows colder, must've been a bad investment:

JIM
Oh yes. How are you? Mrs...?

CAROL
Elmer -- Can I talk to you? I got this. In the mail.

JIM
(takes notice, reads it)
I'm afraid this is very serious.
You're in default.

CAROL
(looking for mercy)
But I been making payments...!

JIM
You have -- ?

CAROL
Yes! I mean, not... the full balance -- but I been paying something every month. I have.

JIM
Mrs. Elmer. You're forty-four thousand dollars in arrears here.

CAROL
(hushed, desperate)
Look. Please. My husband's been out of work for six months. And that money I lost with the bio-tech? That was most of our savings. I need help! I mean, my husband doesn't even know about this. Any of this.

JIM

Your husband doesn't know you're about to lose the house?

CAROL

Oh no, he'd... no. I couldn't tell him that --

JIM

Mrs. Elmer --

CAROL

I know I've handled it badly -- I've handled it badly! But I didn't know it would get to this! You don't understand, my husband would leave me!

JIM

How is this even possible? Doesn't he ever check your balances, your investment statements?

CAROL

(offended)

No, I handle the household finances.

(then)

He doesn't even know I invested that money we lost -- I mean, he wouldn't approve, he's very conservative -- but I was doing it for my son! For college! Don't you remember, I came to you...?

JIM

(embarrassed)

No, I'm sorry, I --

CAROL

You said if I wanted to build something up for Christian, now was the time to start! You said we could get a higher return in the market...!

JIM

I did? I --

CAROL

(trying to be positive)

Can't you give us another loan? Just... something temporary?

JIM

I'm afraid you wouldn't qualify.

CAROL
Please -- I can't lose my house. I
can't...!

Feeling terrible for her, but wanting to extract himself, Jim struggles to figure out what to tell her. Finally:

JIM
Look, Mrs...?

CAROL
(with anticipation)
Elmer...

JIM
Mrs. Elmer. I really think you have to
talk to your husband about this.
I'm... very sorry.

ON CAROL. Her mind drifting away to keep from screaming as Jim walks away. Carol's eyes follow as he goes... He passes THE VAULT, where BRINKS GUARDS are carrying heavy BAGS OF CASH. Carol just stares at them, distraught... We CUT TO:

FRESHLY PRINTED NEW YORK LOTTO TICKETS

Popping out of the machine, one by one by one... we are:

INT. KING KULLEN SUPERMARKET - CHECKOUT STAND - DAY

Carol watches as the stack thickens. We hear an ENTHUSIASTIC TELEVISION VOICE; it seems like it might be in Carol's mind:

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
And tonight's winning lotto numbers
are...! 27...! 3...!

We are MOVING SLOWLY IN on Carol, deep in thought...

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
14...! 36...! 53...!

CUT TO:

A TELEVISION SCREEN

AS the winning New York Lotto numbers are announced:

NEWSCASTER
...and 9! Good luck!

We are:

INT. CAROL'S KITCHEN - TV AREA - NIGHT

Carol sits on the couch, watching numbly, holding the stack of tickets. After a long beat, we HEAR:

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)
Can I change the channel now?

REVEAL Christian on the floor looking up at his mother. She stands, not even looking at him:

CAROL
Go ahead, sweetie.

She heads to the cabinet beneath the kitchen sink, opens it, bends down, tosses the tickets into the trash.

As she gets back up, a LARGE SHARP KITCHEN KNIFE in the sink catches her eye. She LINGERS on it... just as Gerry enters with his TAPE RECORDER; the SOUND OF HIS MANAGEMENT TRAINING TAPES shakes Carol out of her gaze.

She turns to Gerry, but he doesn't even acknowledge her as he goes through a bowl of fruit, looking for a good banana. She stares at his back. Steels herself. Then she says quietly:

CAROL
...Gerry?

He just keeps examining the bananas until he notices the STACK OF CAROL'S GREETING CARDS, sitting on the counter.

GERRY
What's this?
(looking at cards)
Jesus, are you making these again? Do me a favor, don't waste your time on this shit, okay? It's like throwing money away.

Finally he looks at her. She just stares at him.

GERRY
What.

She shakes her head: "nothing". And he walks away.

Carol looks over at Christian, escaping into the TV. She watches her little boy, concerned, worried for his future... when she notices THE CARTOON ("BABY BUGGY BUNNY") on TV...

A FEROCIOUS ARMED DWARF IN A SUIT (BABY-FACED FINSTER) is HOLDING UP A BANK.

Carol watches with growing interest as the vicious little gangster grabs the loot in a HUGE BAG, and runs out of the bank, guns blazing! Once outside, as SIRENS and CARTOON COPS approach, Finster tosses the bag into a baby carriage, and jumps in, immediately donning the disguise and demeanor of a guileless infant. The cops race right on by...

EXTREMELY CLOSE ON CAROL as she takes this in, something building inside... We HOLD ON HER FOR A VERY LONG TIME. Then, we hear THUNDER as we CUT TO:

INT. CAROL'S TAURUS - MORNING

It's raining. Carol drives like a woman on a mission. REVEAL Christian, Michael, and Joanie sit in back. The windshield wipers beat rhythmically. Hypnotically.

EXT. WANTAGH MIDDLE SCHOOL - FRONT CURB - MORNING

The Taurus joins the other cars dropping off kids. Joanie, Christian, and Michael start to get out...

CAROL

Watches as they emerge into the rain, and start to run for campus -- suddenly, she lowers her window, yells out:

CAROL
Christian?!

He stops. She struggles a bit, a sense of urgency:

CAROL
I love you, sweetie!

CHRISTIAN
(thrown by her tone)
...I love you too, Mom!

He's getting wet, he turns to go, runs for class.

She rolls up the window, watches him disappear as if this may be the last time she'll ever see him... She lowers her head, and without really looking, she starts to pull away, almost hitting a MAN crossing in front of her!

She slams on the brakes. The man turns, startled -- it's Mr. Shaw. Frightened, he loses his balance, slips and falls. Carol gasps -- she quickly gets --

OUT OF THE CAR

rushes to his side to help.

He's dropped his coffee, papers and sheet music have spilled out of his briefcase onto the wet pavement. They fumble about, and have to yell over the sound of SPLATTERING RAIN:

CAROL

I'm... so sorry...!

MR. SHAW

No, don't -- don't worry...! That's -- here, that's okay -- I got it!

They stand, and he retrieves his umbrella, making sure to hold it up over her -- she hands him his briefcase:

MR. SHAW

Thank you...! So...! Am I still gonna see you later...?!

CAROL

(thrown)

What's that...?!

MR. SHAW

At ten o'clock...!

CAROL

(horrified)

Oh my God! Is that today...?!

He looks at her, tries to smile:

MR. SHAW

Yes...! It is!

CAROL

Oh no -- ! I totally -- I have an appointment today -- !

MR. SHAW

Oh! Well I could make it later -- twelve-thirty -- ?!

CAROL

Yeah, I... I really can't! I'm going all the way out to Riverhead -- it's like an hour away...!

MR. SHAW

(takes it personally)

Mrs. Elmer...! I'm sorry! I really do think it's important we talk! I mean, I know you're probably thinking, oh, it's only band -- !

CAROL

No! I know! Band is important -- !

MR. SHAW

I wouldn't even be asking if I wasn't really concerned about your son -- I'm very concerned...!

Carol stops, his tone deeply affecting her:

CAROL

...You are?

MR. SHAW

Yes!

CAROL

(hesitates, distraught)

Well maybe... maybe twelve-thirty then...?! I might be late!

MR. SHAW

(warming again)

Twelve-thirty...! Twelve-forty-five...! Don't worry...!

She nods, smiles apologetically, gratefully; he gallantly provides her with cover from the rain as she gets back:

INTO THE CAR

And slams the door, collecting herself. She's soaked. She turns, looks back out the window, watches Mr. Shaw as he waves, and heads away. She sighs, puts the car in gear...

CUT TO:

A LONG LENS SHOT THROUGH A GLASS DOOR

CAROL approaches through the POURING RAIN, her FACE HIDDEN UNDER AN UMBRELLA, giving the image a certain mysterious foreboding... We just HOLD as she marches closer, and closer, finally entering the door into CLOSE UP...

She lowers the umbrella to shake off water, and for the first time we see she is wearing the BLEACHED BLONDE WIG, and LARGE DARK SUNGLASSES we saw in the opening. She looks around, nervous, haunted... we CUT WIDE TO REVEAL WE ARE:

INT. RIVERHEAD BANK - DAY

A mid-morning lull, very few customers.

Carol orients herself for a moment, sees the DEPOSIT SLIP COUNTER. She walks briskly to it. Grabs a SLIP, turns it over... picks up a PEN...

CLOSE ON her hand, the nib of the pen hovering over the slip; the pen trembles. Then, all at once, she begins writing... "PLEASE PUT \$44,000 IN THE BAG. I HAVE A GUN."

THE TELLER LINE

It's empty. Carol enters, moves to the front. The TELLERS are all away from their windows, except for one who sits, writing. Carol steels herself, approaches...

She steps up close, hoping to keep things quiet. She leans in, waiting for the woman to acknowledge her; but the woman just keeps working, as if Carol isn't there. This throws Carol. Finally, anxious, her armor cracking, Carol says:

CAROL
Um. Excuse me --

TELLER
(casually annoyed, without
looking up)
My sign isn't on.

CAROL
Your -- ?

TELLER
(pointing)
My sign. I'm still processing a
transaction here.

Carol looks at the ELECTRONIC TELLER SIGN, flustered.

CAROL
Oh...

TELLER
(still looking down)
Please wait for the sign.

Thunder stolen, Carol hesitates, then slinks back to the front of the empty teller line. She waits, with building anxiety, looking at all the tellers -- no one seems to be in any hurry to get to their windows. A few joke with each other, and LAUGH. Carol glances up to see:

THE SECURITY CAMERA

Staring down at her from the ceiling. She turns away. This whole thing is starting to give her second thoughts.

CLOSE ON THE TELLER SIGN: Number seven lights up. Carol cranes over to see if that is the woman's number, but she is still writing... Annoyed, the woman looks up:

TELLER

Next person in line...?

Carol gives a quick, apologetic nod and smile. We HOLD on her as she hesitates, deciding whether or not to go through with this... She just stands there... Finally, we CUT TO:

INT. WANTAGH MIDDLE SCHOOL - BAND ROOM - DAY

We're PUSHING through THE REHEARSAL ROOM, past rows of plastic chairs and music stands, toward a TINY OFFICE -- Mr. Shaw is on the phone at his metal desk, a napkin in his shirt collar, a half-eaten meatball sandwich in front of him --

MR. SHAW (INTO PHONE)

(an old conversation)

...Well, I'll get some on the way home,
what do you need? No, just tell me...

Mr. Shaw looks up as CAROL STEPS INTO THE SHOT, this has been her POV. He looks caught -- his demeanor changes completely:

MR. SHAW (INTO PHONE)

(eyes averted, speaks LOW)

Hey -- okay, I gotta go... I gotta go.
Because. Okay, bye.

He stands, hangs up the phone, smiles embarrassed:

MR. SHAW

I wasn't sure if you were coming -- !
(tidying his desk)
Have a seat!

Carol looks around, awkward, about to sit when she hears a distant SIREN. She freezes, looks out the window...

MR. SHAW

Well, I guess I just... I wanted to
talk to you a bit, and ask you a few --
(she's not listening)
Mrs. Elmer -- are you...?

The siren fades -- Carol finally sits, tries to focus:

CAROL

Yes, sorry, yes...

MR. SHAW

Yeah, I just wanted to ask you, if everything was okay. At home.

CAROL

At... home?

MR. SHAW

Yes. With Christian.

CAROL

Oh...

MR. SHAW

He just seems very... distracted. I mean... if you don't mind my asking...?

CAROL

(growing concerned now)

Yes...?

MR. SHAW

(gently)

Is everything... okay with you and Mr. Elmer...?

Carol falls silent. She's becoming uncomfortable...

MR. SHAW

Because, I mean, kids are -- they can be very sensitive to...

(backpedals, seeing her discomfort)

I don't mean to pry... I'm sorry -- I hope I'm not --

CAROL

These questions are very personal...

MR. SHAW

I don't mean to offend you. Really. I have a great affection for your son. He's always been one of my favorites -- to be honest, he reminds me a lot of me when I was his age. But... I have to tell you...

(trying to say it kindly)

He's failing at the moment... He might not make band next semester...

Carol stops, stunned; the news is crushing...

MR. SHAW

Now I looked over his practice reports,
and I saw you signed them all, but it
just -- I mean, how much would you say
he practices?

Carol looks at him, so ashamed; then away... Finally, she
says quietly, dissolving:

CAROL

I don't... I don't know...

He starts to feel bad, like he's pressing her too hard...

MR. SHAW

Okay... Well... I understand. It's
not always easy... to...

Carol leans forward, hiding her head in her hands.

MR. SHAW

Mrs. Elmer...?

(no response)

I think maybe if Christian had a little
personal attention... I'd be happy to
recommend a tutor...

He watches as she turns red, a vein in her neck swelling.

MR. SHAW

(gently, at a loss)

Or I dunno... maybe I could...

Unable to fight it any longer, she starts to silently cry;
incredibly embarrassed, she starts to get up:

CAROL

I think... I have to go...

MR. SHAW

(rising)

Mrs. Elmer -- I'm, I'm so sorry... I
didn't mean to --

CAROL

I have to go. I have to go.

But with them both standing in the tiny space, it's too tight
for her to get by --

MR. SHAW

Sure... maybe we could do this another--

CAROL

Please don't look at me -- I have to
go...!

MR. SHAW

Okay -- no! I'm not, I'm not
looking...!

CAROL

(squeezing past)

Thank you...

But she suddenly feels she's forgotten something, turns to see her purse still under the chair. As she scrambles back toward it, reaching; Mr. Shaw notices and REACHES too --

MR. SHAW

Oh, here...!

Each of them gets a hold of a strap at the same time --

CAROL

No, I --!

Rattled, Mr. Shaw impulsively releases the strap, and the overstuffed purse SPILLS...! Carol is horrified as Mr. Shaw sees her PLATINUM WIG and STUFFED GARBAGE BAG drop to the floor between them. A thick stack of fifty dollar bills in a bank wrapper tumbles out...

AND EVERYTHING STOPS.

Mr. Shaw looks at the money, not knowing what to make of it. He looks at Carol. She averts her eyes, humiliated.

CAROL

(quietly)

I got it...

She kneels, calmly stuffs the money and wig back into the bag, as Mr. Shaw watches in complete silence. Finished, she remains on her knees, not looking at him for a beat. He stands there above her, heart racing... Then all at once, Carol gets up and heads out... He watches her go...

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darkness. Gerry sleeps with his back to Carol. She looks up at the ceiling, anxious... She turns to Gerry, stares...

CAROL

...Gerry?

Nothing. She slowly creeps out of bed, careful not to wake him... starts to silently slip on her robe...

INT. CAROL'S GARAGE - CAROL'S TAURUS - NIGHT

Carol digs under the front passenger seat. She unearths the garbage bag, gingerly, like it's a bomb. Bracing herself, she reaches in, pulls out a stack of cash -- newly minted FIFTIES. She flips through, there are about twenty...

She pulls out another -- these are FIVES -- the sight of them startles her a bit -- she flips through to see if they are all only fives -- they are...

She pulls out another stack -- these are ONES. Panicked, she pulls out another -- TENS... Another -- TWENTIES... Another... MORE TENS... MORE ONES... MORE FIVES...

Carol DUMPS the rest of the bag's contents onto the car floor -- looks at the pile of money in horror; there is probably no more than about fifteen hundred dollars there.

CLOSE ON CAROL, stunned...

HARD CUT TO:

A BLACK AND WHITE NEWSPAPER PHOTO OF CAROL

From the ROBBERY -- the moment she glanced up at the security camera. A look of anxiety only partially obscured by the wig and sunglasses. The headline reads: "PLATINUM HAired BANDIT ROBS RIVERHEAD BANK". We hear an OMINOUS SIZZLING; CUT TO:

A HAMSTEAK

Frying in a pan, starting to smoke...! CUT WIDER TO REVEAL:

CAROL in THE KITCHEN, hunched over the newspaper on the counter; she reads with dawning horror, engrossed... then:

GERRY (O.S.)

Jesus!

Carol turns, startled:

CAROL

What?

GERRY

(referring to hamsteak)
I think it's done...

CAROL

Oh -- I --

She grabs the pan, dumps the ham into the sink, just as Christian enters, planting himself in front of the TV --

CHRISTIAN

What's burning?

CAROL

Your mother's a dope, honey -- I burnt your hamsteak, I'll make you another--

Carol turns back to the counter -- the paper is now gone. She turns to see Gerry at the table, with the paper -- his back to us -- eyes on the paper, he says:

GERRY

I'll have one too...

Carol is terrified, watching him...

CAROL

...Hamsteak?

She stares suspended as Gerry continues to read. He seems to see something -- leans closer to get a better look... Carol holds her breath... he's frozen, a sliver of his face just visible as he reads -- has he seen it...? Finally, he just turns the page, unfazed. Carol breathes again. He turns, feeling her stare; remembers her question:

GERRY

Yeah. I'll have one too.

Carol nods. He turns back to the Newsday. AND WE CUT TO:

ANOTHER SET OF MAN'S EYES

His face hidden behind a NEWSDAY... He wears a NASSAU COUNTY P.D. BASEBALL CAP. The EYES lift from the paper, peer RIGHT AT US. They keep shifting down to the paper, and back up...

NITA (O.S.)

JOANIE! LET'S GO...!

The paper lowers: it's Ray Perice. He looks at Carol, who stands there in THE PERICE'S KITCHEN, trying not to look guilty. Christian's next to her, absorbed in a doughnut. Next to Ray, Michael finishes his cereal; Ray finally speaks:

RAY

I heard Gerry got something.

CAROL

Oh! He's in training, yeah.

NITA
Well that could be good, huh?

CAROL
...Yeah, yeah! We'll see...!

But Carol's eyes are drawn to the paper; she tries to smile:

CAROL
Oh hey -- what, what about that woman
in Riverhead? At the Liberty Savings?
Do you know anything about that?

RAY
(glances at story)
Probably some fuckin' junkie. Got
tired of giving blow jobs.

Michael looks at his father, grins. Nita hits his arm:

NITA
Ray!

RAY
What -- she asked! Jesus, chop off my
fuckin' head! I don't know...!

NITA
Sorry, Carol...

CAROL
No, I asked... I did.

NITA
Don't defend him. Please.

RAY
(aside to Michael, trying
not to smile)
What are you smiling about?

We hold tight on CAROL for a beat; then we HEAR:

RADIO ANNOUNCER
1010Wins headlines this hour...

CUT TO:

INT. CAROL'S TAURUS - MORNING

Carol drives, listening to news radio, on edge. She
struggles impatiently to hear over MICHAEL'S INTERMITTENT
GIGGLING from the back seat --

RADIO ANNOUNCER

...Eleventh hour negotiations continue as unions and city officials hope to fend off the looming transit strike...

IN BACK, Michael whispers, giggling in his sister's ear; Joanie, unamused, so over her brother, turns to Christian to kindly point out what is so amusing to Michael:

JOANIE

Christian. Your fly...

Mortified, Christian looks to down; he reaches to zip it as --

RADIO ANNOUNCER

Nassau County police need your help to find a woman who robbed a Riverhead bank...

Carol's eyes widen; she tries to hear as Michael SNORTS/LAUGHS LOUDLY, drowning it out -- Christian YELLS --

CHRISTIAN

Shut up -- !

And Carol finally loses it, EXPLODING:

CAROL

GodDAMMIT Michael -- I'm gonna come back there, I'm gonna break your fucking arm -- !

MICHAEL

-- I didn't do anything -- !

CAROL

-- MICHAEL...!

The car falls tensely silent at her outburst. Even Carol's surprised. A long silence...

EXT. WANTAGH MIDDLE SCHOOL - MORNING

The car joins the long caravan of parents' cars --

INSIDE

Michael unlocks the door to get the hell out --

CAROL

Wait till I get to the curb, please...!

As Carol pulls to a stop, he yanks open the sliding door and he jumps out. Joanie follows. Christian starts out too -- Carol softens, ashamed at losing control:

CAROL
Have a good day, sweetie...

He nods, keeps going, embarrassed, unable to meet her eyes. Carol watches him go, feels terrible... then, she notices:

THE LARGE SCHOOL ANNOUNCEMENT SIGN on the lawn -- it says: "WINTER CONCERT, DEC. 21 -- GRADES 6-8. THOMAS SHAW, MUSICAL DIRECTOR" Carol stares with building anxiety...

INT. WANTAGH MIDDLE SCHOOL - ADMIN HALLWAY - MORNING

Carol presses through the crowded hallway, not quite sure where she's going... She spots a TEACHER'S LOUNGE sign on a nondescript door; she sticks her head into --

THE TEACHER'S LOUNGE

Like seeing behind the curtain in The Wizard of Oz. TEACHERS smoke, eat pre-packaged food, sit in SCALED DOWN FURNITURE. It seems very undignified. All eyes turn to the civilian.

CAROL
I'm sorry... I'm looking for Mr. Shaw?

Mr. Shaw turns, looking almost as if he's been caught -- he's finishing a cigarette and coffee at one of the tables:

MR. SHAW
(rising, surprised)
Oh... hi...!

As Carol approaches, he quickly stubs out his cigarette, picks something up off the table, drops it on the chair, pushes it in to hide it -- Carol pretends she hasn't noticed:

CAROL
Hi -- I, I went to your room and one of the kids said you might still be --

MR. SHAW
Yeah, I'm running a little -- I got caught up in something here...

Carol tries to steal a look at what he hid on the chair --

CAROL
Oh! Well I don't wanna --

But Mr. Shaw blocks her view with his body --

MR. SHAW

No -- I still... have a minute...

Just then a MACHO, BURLY TEACHER (probably metal shop) interrupts from across the room as he enters -- it is clear he has absolutely no respect for Mr. Shaw:

BURLY TEACHER

Hey, Shaw...! Is that your Escort in my space...?!

MR. SHAW

(thrown, intimidated)

What? Oh -- there was someone in mine, I thought -- that wasn't you...?

BURLY TEACHER

No. Do me a favor -- don't park in my space, okay...?

MR. SHAW

(a flash of anger and humiliation repressed)

Okay. No. Sorry. I won't.

Turning red, he smiles at Carol, embarrassed; she smiles back.

MR. SHAW

Sorry, I... Where... were we...?

CAROL

(lowers her voice)

Well, I... I wanted to apologize. For yesterday.

MR. SHAW

(lowers voice too)

Oh, don't worry...!

CAROL

No, I was really...

MR. SHAW

Hey -- I'm sure you've got a lot... goin' on...

Carol looks at him -- does he know...? He's awkward:

MR. SHAW

I mean, right...?

She nods, noncommittal, wonders if she's in trouble...

CAROL
But I wanted to ask you, um... About
the tutoring...?

MR. SHAW
Oh, right -- !

CAROL
Does that offer still stand?

MR. SHAW
Sure. Absolutely.

CAROL
Because I really do think band is
important. For Christian.

MR. SHAW
No, I'd be happy to!

Carol nods, smiles, still unsatisfied. The BELL RINGS...

MR. SHAW
Well I should really... get back to my
kids -- but I'll call you...?

CAROL
Oh! Yes -- yes, thank you...!

She watches as he goes. Finally, unable to resist any
longer, she looks at what Mr. Shaw put on his chair -- It's
the NEWSDAY ARTICLE with her picture; Carol is appalled...

INT. CAROL'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Carol hurries up the stairs, arms filled with toys --

CHRISTIAN (O.S.)
Why do I have to...?!

CAROL
Because --!

She heads into:

CHRISTIAN'S ROOM

To find Christian in his bed, fully dressed; he pulls the
covers completely over his head:

CHRISTIAN
But nobody even asked me...!

DOORBELL. Carol immediately grows anxious:

CAROL

Okay -- he's here -- why don't you go down there and get it, sweetie?

CHRISTIAN

(motionless, under covers)
I'm sleeping...!

GERRY (O.S.)

Carol!? Who's that...?!

CAROL

-- I'll get it...!

She looks at the lump that is Christian under the covers --

CAROL

Sweetie. Please. C'mon.

As the DOORBELL rings again, we CUT TO:

THE FRONT DOOR

Which opens revealing Mr. Shaw. He smiles a bit uneasily, surprised to see GERRY, who stands there in WORK OUT CLOTHES. Gerry stares warily at Mr. Shaw in his bow tie and suit --

GERRY

Hey...

MR. SHAW

Hi... I'm... Tom Shaw?

CAROL

(hurrying down stairs)
Sorry, yes! This is, this is Christian's band teacher -- this is my husband, Gerry... Mr. Shaw is gonna tutor Christian...!

GERRY

Tutor -- ?

MR. SHAW

-- Yes, I -- your wife and I had a meeting --

CAROL

And Mr. Shaw was kind enough to offer his services. For free...!

GERRY

Oh yeah?

MR. SHAW
That's right. Yes.

Gerry nods. A weird beat for the three of them.

GERRY
Okay. Well...
(he turns to Carol)
I'm going for a run.

Carol nods. On his way out the door, Gerry gives Mr. Shaw a last, awkward glance; Mr. Shaw smiles uncomfortably. Carol shuts the door and now it's just the two of them standing there. Incredible tension. So much unsaid.

CAROL
I'll... get Christian.

The sound of amateur FLUTE playing begins, and we CUT TO:

CAROL'S POV OF THE LIVING ROOM - LATER

Carol, forming hamburger patties, spies FROM THE KITCHEN at Mr. Shaw as Christian plays "GOD ONLY KNOWS" beside him. Christian rushes, missing notes, rapidly tapping his foot. Following along on the sheet music, Mr. Shaw says gently:

MR. SHAW
Slower... Take it slower.

Carol watches with growing concern for her struggling son, as Mr. Shaw kindly repositions Christian's hands on the keys.

MR. SHAW
(whispers)
Slower.

Mr. Shaw's eyes lift, suddenly aware that Carol is watching. Carol looks away, back to her burgers. Beat. She looks back up; Mr. Shaw has turned away. Gathering courage, she wipes her hands, goes into:

THE LIVING ROOM

She hovers anxiously, nearby -- as Christian plays the last section, with fewer mistakes. The melody finally becomes briefly apparent, Carol smiles, touched.

MR. SHAW
There. See? You were starting to get it that time. Practice pages three to six, okay, sir...?

Christian nods, shrugs a shoulder, self-conscious.

CAROL

Go wash up, honey. We're gonna eat as soon as your father gets back.

He heads upstairs. Carol turns back to Mr. Shaw; they share a brief look, then he starts to pack up. An awkward beat...

CAROL

What was that piece? It's so... it's... pretty...

MR. SHAW

(smiles, embarrassed)
Oh! The Beach Boys.

CAROL

Really? I thought it was classical...!

MR. SHAW

Well, you know, sometimes I just... arrange a few pieces for me -- music I like.

He goes back to packing. Carol watches him; worried, her voice quiets vulnerably, becomes HUSHED:

CAROL

You know, don't you...?

MR. SHAW

...I'm sorry...?

CAROL

Please. I saw the newspaper on your chair yesterday... I just, I need to know...!

He looks at her, caught. The DOORBELL rings. She keeps looking at him; it's uncomfortable. The bell RINGS AGAIN.

MR. SHAW

...Do you need to get that?

She nods, still hanging. He watches as she starts for the door; but she stops as she spots THROUGH THE WINDOW SHEERS:

A NASSAU COUNTY SHERIFF'S CAR

In the driveway. Mr. Shaw follows her gaze, sees it too. He watches, frozen, as Carol, terrified, starts silently toward the door -- a RUSTLING starts on the other side -- is someone trying to get in -- ?!

Panicking, she steals a glance out the crescent window at the top of the door; there's something covering it -- a piece of paper -- she makes out backwards BLACK LETTERS: "N O T". Confused, Carol looks at the door... steels herself... Then, all at once, she pulls it open --

ON THE PORCH

Stand a CHUBBY MAN IN A SUIT, and a COUNTY SHERIFF. The Man is posting a STICKER-BACKED NOTICE to the glass storm door --

CAROL

Can I -- can I, help you...?!

MAN

Mrs... Elmer?

CAROL

Yes...?

He hands her an envelope -- Carol looks at it, steps outside to look at the SIGN on the door: "NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION".

CAROL

What, what is this -- ?

MAN

(starts his unhappy spiel)

Well I'm sure you're aware of the situation here. I been sent as a representative of the bank to inform you about the impending auction. In connection with your property.

CAROL

Auction -- ?

MAN

That's right. If you can't meet your, uh, your full, obligation by January third? The bank's gonna sell your home.

Carol is stunned. The Sheriff gives her a pitying look. The Man points to the envelope, not making eye-contact:

MAN

...It's all in there.

They go. Carol looks at the envelope. She opens it, starts to read it, numb.

Mr. Shaw approaches the doorway. She looks up, startled to see him there; humiliated, she smiles, averts her eyes.

She sees the notice on the door again, reaches up, yanks it down, then sits on one of her porch chairs, lowers her head into her hand, and starts to cry without a sound.

Mr. Shaw just stands there behind the glass door, watching her. Finally, unnerved, he steps quietly onto the porch...

MR. SHAW
...Mrs. Elmer...? Are you...?

But she doesn't even look up. She laughs gently through her tears, embarrassed, trying to gather herself. Suddenly, Mr. Shaw hears FOOTSTEPS -- he turns to see: GERRY, jogging up the front pathway, out of breath...

MR. SHAW
...Hey!

Carol quickly pulls herself together, standing --

GERRY
What's going on...?

MR. SHAW
Nothing -- I was just -- leaving --

CAROL
Yeah -- we just -- we just finished...!

GERRY
Oh.
(sees her red eyes)
What's wrong...?

CAROL
No, nothing -- I got something in my eye -- I don't know what...!

Gerry doesn't press it, glances warily at Mr. Shaw --

MR. SHAW
Well, I guess I should --

CAROL
Yes -- thank you, Mr. Shaw. Goodnight.

Mr. Shaw nods, starts down the stairs. He glances back, catches Carol's worried eye, sees she is holding the rolled up NOTICE behind her back, hiding it from Gerry...

INT. CAROL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Carol cooks hamburgers, her mind a million miles away, seeming quite alone. Gerry startles her as he enters:

GERRY
You think that guy's gay?

CAROL
...Who...?

GERRY
Christian's teacher.

He lets that hang there as he thinks about it; for some reason Carol finds herself growing mad, maybe offended:

CAROL
I... I really, have no idea...

GERRY
(notices burgers)
No cheese on mine, okay?

He starts his training tape, heads off. Annoyed, Carol takes cheese off a burger; the PHONE RINGS. Carol looks at it, nerves frayed: what now? She braces herself, sighs, answers:

CAROL
...Hello?

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
(quiet, secretive)
Hi... It's Tom. Shaw.

CAROL
...Hi...

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
I'm sorry, I don't mean to --

CAROL
-- No, what's... going on...?

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
I just... I wanted to know if you
were... okay?

Carol looks over at Gerry. A long pause. She doesn't know what to say -- what she can say...

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
...Hello?

CAROL
Hi...

She steps into the hall as far as the phone cord will allow --

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
I'm sorry -- I shouldn't have bothered
you --

CAROL
-- No, I...
(whispers vulnerably,
voice trembling)
Do you wanna... meet me...?

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
(a beat)
Meet you?

CAROL
Yeah. Is that -- ?

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
...When?

Just then Christian walks by, heading for the kitchen --
Carol waits for him to pass... Then:

CAROL
Um, I don't.. maybe... now? Like
twenty minutes?

No response.

CAROL
...Hello...?

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
Sorry. Yes. I'd like to. Meet you.
Now would be fine.

CAROL
You would?

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
Yes, yeah. I would.

INT. STARBUCK'S COFFEE - NIGHT

LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW at the PARKING LOT -- CAROL'S TAURUS
pulls up, HEADLIGHTS BLINDING US. She gets out and heads for
the entrance, LOOKING RIGHT TOWARD US -- we CUT TO REVEAL
that this has been MR. SHAW'S POV, waiting at a table. He
rises quickly as she enters. She's beside herself with
panic, can't look at him -- he tries to follow her lead:

MR. SHAW
Do you want something -- ?

CAROL
No, I... no. I can't stay very long --

MR. SHAW
(too quickly)
-- Okay.

She sits abruptly; he follows, watching her.

CAROL
I told Gerry I was going to get him
some cereal for tomorrow --

MR. SHAW
Sure -- well, whenever you have to --

CAROL
(hushed, finally cracking)
-- Are you gonna turn me in...?

MR. SHAW
...What?

CAROL
Because I'll lose my family --

MR. SHAW
No -- I --

CAROL
Please. I'll lose my family...!

MR. SHAW
No...! You just -- you looked so...
You looked like you were in trouble,
and I just...

He looks at her, sitting there, so distraught. It kills him.

MR. SHAW
Look, I'm... not gonna tell. Anyone.
Okay...?

Finally, she turns vulnerably to see if he means it; he does.
She looks down, nods, relieved, ashamed, her eyes flooding.

CAROL
Thank you...

MR. SHAW
Yeah, sure...
(then, watching, pained)
Are you gonna be okay...?

She nods again, getting herself together. She looks at him, grateful. A beat. She smiles:

CAROL
Please don't look at me like that.

MR. SHAW
...Like what? What am I -- ?

CAROL
I dunno -- I feel like you can see right through me... Like you can see what a terrible person I am.

MR. SHAW
I don't think you're a terrible person.

She looks at him, smiles, unconvinced. Her smile fades, she shakes her foot anxiously, checks her watch. He notices.

MR. SHAW
Look, do you... want me to go with you?

CAROL
(confused, vulnerable)
...What?

MR. SHAW
(kind)
To the store. For your cereal.

She looks at him, surprised, but somehow touched...

CAROL
...Okay.

INT. KING KULLEN SUPERMARKET - NIGHT

The two of them walk in heavy silence down a deserted aisle, Carol pushing an empty cart. They come to the cereal area, and Carol starts silently looking through the boxes, dispirited. Finally, Mr. Shaw speaks quietly, gently:

MR. SHAW
So they're gonna... take your house?

She stops, doesn't turn to look at him, just nods.

MR. SHAW
And your husband doesn't know...?

She looks at him.

CAROL

...No.

MR. SHAW

What about the money...?

CAROL

(a sad smile)

I didn't get enough.

MR. SHAW

(under his breath)

Oh my God...!

CAROL

(almost laughing)

I know, it's pathetic...

But her smile fades. He looks at her, feeling terrible:

MR. SHAW

...What're you gonna do?

CAROL

I don't know, I... I think maybe I gotta go... you know... I gotta go... do it again --

MR. SHAW

-- No...

She looks up at him, suddenly growing defensive, insecure:

CAROL

-- What? It wasn't that hard -- you just, you write a note -- !

MR. SHAW

No, I know, I'm just not sure that's --

CAROL

Sure it's what? What else can I do -- I'm in, I'm in trouble here -- !

MR. SHAW

I understand, but I really don't think you wanna --

CAROL

(quietly flaring)

There's no fucking choice, okay?! What choice do I have...?!

He falls silent again, suddenly glimpsing the depth of her turmoil, her desperate rage. She controls herself:

CAROL

I don't... there's no. Choice.

And that puts an end to it. Embarrassed at her outburst, she turns back to the shelves. She finally spots a box on the top shelf. It's out of her reach. She turns to Mr. Shaw, gestures, apologetic, but somewhat distant now:

CAROL

I'm sorry, could you...?

MR. SHAW

...What?

CAROL

He likes the granola.

He nods, hands her a box; she takes it, looks at it, not him.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

They walk to the car. Time to go...

MR. SHAW

I'm sorry. I don't think I've been much... help to you...

CAROL

No, you've been...
(shakes her head, ashamed)
I'm sorry I got so --

MR. SHAW

It's okay, you're upset.

She looks down, nods. Takes out her keys. She smiles, disappointed in how this turned out:

CAROL

What are you gonna do now?

MR. SHAW

...Now?
(smiles, knocking his
little life)
Nothing too dramatic. Guess I'll... go
get some food. On my way home.

CAROL

For just... for you? Or -- ?

MR. SHAW
 (grows a bit uneasy)
 What? Oh. Yeah. Just for me.

CAROL
 So you're not...? Married, or -- ?

MR. SHAW
Oh no, I'm... I'm not.

She nods. A charged moment between them. Then:

CAROL
 You know, it's funny... I think you're
 the only one who noticed me...

He looks at her, confused, but oddly moved by the statement.

CAROL
 In the paper.

He nods. But just keeps staring at her, deeply struck...

CAROL
 ...What...?

MR. SHAW
 You have the saddest eyes...

She smiles, her eyes turning red. She has to look away, about to cave in... He watches; then tentatively reaches out, touches her face. She closes her eyes, the tears really starting to come. She leans into his hand, needy, childlike. Finally, she lifts her head, opens her tear-filled eyes... A suspended moment as they look at each other -- and they KISS. At first gently; then with desperation... hunger...

Carol, suddenly pulls back, becoming self-aware, startling herself -- she says breathlessly:

CAROL
 I... I have to go...

Mr. Shaw looks at her, helpless, overwhelmed, the floodgates now open. After a beat, he barely utters, almost in shock:

MR. SHAW
 Yeah...

And she turns to go.

INT. CAROL'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Carol enters with the single grocery bag, puts down her keys, starts to take off her coat. Gerry appears.

GERRY

Hey.

Carol's startled. She recovers, nods hello. A cold edge to it. She starts to unpack the groceries. He watches her:

GERRY

Is something going on?

She turns to him, surprised, caught.

GERRY

Nita Perice's husband -- the cop -- just called.

CAROL

(heart skips a beat)
...Ray?

GERRY

Yeah, Ray... Apparently Nita's pretty upset... Did something happen with Michael?

CAROL

(relieved, remembering)
Oh God, I... Yeah. I lost my temper. Pretty... pretty bad.

GERRY

...Yeah? You feeling okay?

CAROL

(offended)
...Yeah.

GERRY

Okay. Just... checking.
(then)

I mean, I'm not surprised. That kid's a little shit.

CAROL

I better call her and apologize.

And she walks out of the kitchen; Gerry watches her go, wary.

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - CLOSET - NIGHT

Carol undresses. She stops, half-naked, lost in reverie... She lifts her hand unconsciously, touches her lips, in shock.

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Darkness. CLOSE ON Carol in bed, eyes wide open, mind racing... Finally, she looks at the cordless phone by the bed. She picks it up, careful not to wake Gerry, who sleeps beside her; she starts to climb out of bed...

CUT TO:

THE CALLER ID SCREEN

On the cordless handset. NAMES and NUMBERS SCROLL BY as it BEEPS. It finally stops on one: "TG SHAW"...

CLOSE ON CAROL

As she stares at it, hesitating, nervously munching Pringles. She's IN THE KITCHEN. She DIALS the number. Puts the phone to her ear, waits as it RINGS... Finally, a VOICE ANSWERS:

WOMAN'S VOICE
(half-asleep)
Hello...?

Carol is stunned. She doesn't say anything.

WOMAN'S VOICE
(growing annoyed, spooked)
Hello...?

Carol hangs up. Sits there, motionless, in the dark kitchen. Reaches for another chip.

INT. CAROL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The room is empty. Carol creeps anxiously in, wearing her bathrobe, holding an empty BLACK GARBAGE BAG. She glances quickly at the half-open bathroom door where we hear the echo of the shower and Gerry's tapes; she quickly heads --

INTO THE CLOSET

where she kneels down, unzips a small DUFFLE. She stuffs the bag inside, next to THE BLONDE WIG... She zips the duffle shut with a sharp yank...!

CUT TO:

THE ENTRY HALL BY FRONT DOOR

Family chaos. Christian stands in full snow gear as Carol slathers sunblock on his face. Gerry CLUNKS about in the other room --

GERRY (O.S.)
You got your gloves...?!

CHRISTIAN
Yeah!
(recoiling from lotion)
Ew...!

CAROL
I know, c'mon...

Gerry enters, also in full snow gear --

GERRY
Alright, let's get outta here --

CAROL
There. All done. Gimme a kiss.

Christian kisses his mother. They all bustle to the front door, grabbing, dropping, and piling on last bits of gear --

CAROL
What time'll you be back?

GERRY
(on the move)
I don't know --

Father and son head out -- Carol calls out after them:

CAROL
Well drive safe!

She watches them for a beat, shuts the door. Carol leans against it for support. Takes a deep breath. Finally turns and heads purposefully OUT OF FRAME...

We HOLD on the empty space. The DOORBELL RINGS. Beat.

We CUT TO REVEAL Carol stopped in the hall, turning back, frightened, still... It RINGS AGAIN. She goes to the door; opens it, revealing MR. SHAW. He looks troubled, haunted...

MR. SHAW
I waited till I saw them leave...

CAROL

What, you were...?
 (dawning horror)
 What are you doing...? I have a
family...

MR. SHAW

No, I know, I'm sorry, I just... you
called me...!
 (then, quiets)
Didn't you...?

CAROL

(guilty, poker-faced)
 What? No, I didn't --

MR. SHAW

You did --

CAROL

No -- I don't know what you're talking
 about -- !

MR. SHAW

Carol -- I have -- I have caller ID...!

She falls silent, caught. She looks at him, suddenly growing
 defensive, steely. She lowers her voice:

CAROL

What do you want from me?

MR. SHAW

...What?

CAROL

I wanna know what you want! What are
 you doing here...?!

MR. SHAW

(a beat, so wounded)
 I don't want anything...

CAROL

Well how do I know?! I don't know
 anything about you...! You know all
 these... horrible things about me --
 but I realize: I don't know anything
 about you! I don't even know if I can
trust you!

MR. SHAW

...What do you mean...?

CAROL
Who was that woman who answered your
phone?

MR. SHAW
...What?

CAROL
You said you weren't married...

He falls silent; she suddenly grows self-conscious:

CAROL
I mean, look: I know I'm one to talk...
but I asked you straight out, and you --

MR. SHAW
Carol. Please... I'm not married,
okay? I'm... my life is just... so...
uninteresting.

CAROL
Fine! Then tell me! Is she your
girlfriend, or...?

He looks at her, pained, hesitating --

CAROL
Okay -- you know what? This is -- I
can't do this now, okay -- ?

MR. SHAW
Wait -- can't I just --

CAROL
No! I'm on my way --

MR. SHAW
(reaching for her)
Carol, please -- !

CAROL
Stop! No! I have to go! I have to
GO!

Beat. He looks at her. Suddenly senses something.

MR. SHAW
Where?

CAROL
...What?

MR. SHAW
Where do you have to go...?

CAROL
...Out. I gotta --

MR. SHAW
What -- why can't you tell me -- ?

CAROL
I'm going, I'm going to the fucking
cleaners! Okay?! Jesus...!

He looks at her.

MR. SHAW
In Riverhead?

She stares at him, rage surging; says to him quietly, coldly:

CAROL
Stay away from my house.

She slams the door in his face. She waits there, emotions swirling, staring at the door, wondering if he'll ring again. Maybe even wanting him too... But he doesn't.

A HAUNTING MUSICAL DRONE BEGINS BUILDING, AND WE --

CUT TO:

THE HIGHWAY - NO SOUND

As seen THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD of Carol's Taurus; a HIGHWAY SIGN reads: "RIVERHEAD - 50 MILES". PAN TO REVEAL Carol at the wheel, a look of haunted determination on her face... She hits the turn signal --

EXT. CAROL'S TAURUS - CONTINUOUS - NO SOUND

Watching from behind. The TURN SIGNAL BLINKS; the car quickly changes lanes, moving in the lane for RIVERHEAD...

JUMP CUT:

SAME ANGLE - LATER - NO SOUND

The car speeds for a RIVERHEAD EXIT RAMP...

JUMP CUT:

SAME ANGLE - LATER - NO SOUND

The car heads down a Riverhead CITY STREET. It turns into the parking lot of a BANK. We finally PAN TO REVEAL we have been inside MR. SHAW'S CAR this whole time. He's at the wheel, desperately trying not to lose sight of Carol...

INT. CAROL'S TAURUS - MOMENTS LATER

Intense quiet. Carol wears the dark sunglasses and wig, finishes tying a white and red nylon scarf around her head, checking herself, expressionless, in the mirror.

Finally, deciding to go, she hits the automatic locks -- and suddenly the PASSENGER DOOR SQUEALS OPEN! Carol turns, SCREAMING AT THE TOP OF HER LUNGS in utter shock as Mr. Shaw climbs in, and slams the door behind him.

Carol turns forward, stares down, rocking toward her knees, battling to regain control of her breath...

MR. SHAW

You look... you look absurd.

Carol's eyes drift up to the dash; she becomes still, almost menacingly quiet, though her eyes dart wildly, and her breathing remains labored.

Beat. Neither one moves.

Then, all at once, Carol lunges for the duffle on the floor in front of Mr. Shaw, jerks back with it to get out -- but Mr. Shaw GRABS her wrist, YANKING her short --

Without warning, Carol snaps, furiously flailing at him to break free -- but she quickly loses control, starts hitting him harder and harder...! Stunned, he lets go -- puts his arms up to protect himself --

MR. SHAW

...Hey!!!

She gets in a good shot at his face --

MR. SHAW

JESUS CHRIST!!!

And suddenly she stops, turns forward again, still enraged, but exhausted; she tries to catch her breath again. Closes her mouth, breathes hard through her nose.

Mr. Shaw lowers his arms, in shock; without even looking, she hurls a last, hard blow at his shoulder; he grabs his arm:

MR. SHAW
YOU'RE OUTTA YOUR MIND!!!

CAROL
(quietly seething)
Don't. Say that.

MR. SHAW
Well look at you! This is so fucking stupid! I fucking hope you lose your house, you know that?!

CAROL
...Excuse me?

MR. SHAW
You act like this is the only fucking choice! But you know what?! If you lose that house and that sonuvabitch leaves you? You'll just -- you'll take your son, and you'll go on -- like a fucking person! You'll probably be better off -- I don't know your husband, but I know guys like him, I know what they're like...!

She glares at him; then:

CAROL
Who the fuck are you...?!

MR. SHAW
(stunned)
...What?

CAROL
What are you even doing here?! Jesus Christ! You followed me...?!
(voice trembling)
What?! Do?! You?! WANT?!

She turns away, crying; tries to get a hold of herself.

MR. SHAW
(softening)
I wanna help you...

CAROL
You don't. Even know me...

Another rush of emotion; losing control, she's infuriated:

CAROL
GodDAMMIT...!

She doubles over, covers her face, fighting desperately against herself. Affected, Mr. Shaw reaches for her... touches her back -- but she shrugs him off, struggling --

CAROL
Please don't...

Finally, she wills her emotions down, finishes her thought:

CAROL
Please don't be here... when I come out. Okay?

Without looking at him, she wipes away the tears; then leans down, picks up the duffel, and exits the car. He watches her go, at a complete loss, thoughts reeling...

After a beat, a CAR RUMBLES up into the space beside him. He turns -- it's a POLICE CAR. Mr. Shaw peers through the window as a BURLY COP gets out, and heads toward the bank...

INT. BANK - DAY

A slow moment. Carol spots an open TELLER, approaches her. The older, heavysset Teller looks at Carol absently:

TELLER
How're you?

Stone-faced, Carol slides the note to her. The Teller reads it, looks at Carol with dawning anxiety...

Carol places the black garbage bag on the counter, and stares back at her from behind the dark glasses...

EXT. PARKING LOT - IMMEDIATELY

Mr. Shaw SPRINTS for his car! He fumbles in his pockets for his keys, breathing hard; as he digs them out, CRUMPLED CREDIT CARD RECEIPTS and COINS spill all over the ground --

MR. SHAW
(on his knees)
Fuck-fuck-fuck...!

He scoops them all up, unlocks the door, scrambles in...

INT. BANK - IMMEDIATELY

Eyes on Carol, the Teller pulls out her drawer... starts putting money into the bag... As Carol waits, she turns, surprised to see --

The BURLY COP stepping to the head of the line behind her --

Panicking, she turns to the Teller who's still emptying the drawer -- but some of the bills are stuck in the separators; the woman is flustered, struggling to remove them...

CAROL

That's... that's -- fine...

The Teller looks up at her, frightened, confused; she holds up the bag, as if to say, "enough?"

CAROL

Yes. That'll... Yes...

INT. MR. SHAW'S CAR - IMMEDIATELY

We're LOOKING THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD as the car creeps slowly toward the BANK ENTRANCE -- Mr. Shaw is HYPERVENTILATING...

INT. BANK - IMMEDIATELY

The Teller starts to put the bag on the counter, but Carol, not wanting it to be seen, reaches across, GRABS it --

The Cop sees the tail end of the gesture -- notices the bulging bag, becomes alarmed as Carol heads for the exit; he exchanges a quick look with the terrified Teller who nods as subtly and quickly as she can -- just as Carol EXITS --

EXT. BANK - ENTRANCE - IMMEDIATELY

Carol emerges, picking up speed -- she's stunned to see MR. SHAW waiting there for her in his Escort --

MR. SHAW

Hurry! C'mon!

She starts for him as the Burly Cop steps out behind her --

BURLY COP

Hey -- ! Hey, YOU -- !

She dashes around to the passenger door -- the Cop heads straight for Mr. Shaw's open driver window, drawing his GUN --

BURLY COP

Where you think you're goin', mother fucker? Get outta the car...!

INSIDE THE CAR

Mr. Shaw turns to Carol who's not quite in yet -- their EYES MEET IN TERROR just as -- the Cop REACHES in, GRABS THE STEERING WHEEL with his free hand -- aiming the GUN in his other hand, right at Mr. Shaw's head!

BURLY COP

Get outta the car, mother fucker! You want me to beat the shit outta you?!

In a panic, Mr. Shaw starts to roll up the window -- he lifts his foot off the break, and the car drifts forward -- the Cop starts to jog with the car, his arm caught in the window --

BURLY COP

Are you fuckin' kiddin' me?!

Mr. Shaw frantically tries to pry the Cop's huge hand off the wheel -- Carol is freaking out --

CAROL

What are you doing -- ?!

MR. SHAW

He won't let go of the WHEEL...!

WHAM! The Cop SLAMS the butt of the gun against the outside of the window, trying to break it -- the GLASS SPIDERWEBS!

BURLY COP

You're dead, mother fucker! You hear me?!

Desperate, Mr. Shaw VICIOUSLY BITES into the Cop's hand! Carol is aghast. The Cop SLAMS the window again -- GLASS SPRAYS EVERYWHERE! He SMASHES the butt off the gun against the back of Mr. Shaw's head! Stunned, Mr. Shaw recoils, his foot involuntarily pressing the gas, and the car LURCHES forward -- !

The GUN suddenly comes free from the Cop's grasp, hitting the inside of the roof, and falling to the floor as -- all at once -- the BURLY COP IS YANKED UNDERNEATH THE CAR -- ! The car BOUNCES and CLUNKS SICKLY as it rolls over his body!

Mr. Shaw HITS THE BRAKES. The two of them sit there, frozen. They look at each other, catching their breath, afraid to speak. Mr. Shaw's eyes dart wildly... Then he hits the gas!

Carol turns slowly, looks out the back to see if she can see anything... But she can't... Finally, she turns forward again... Looks at her feet... Sees the GUN on the floor...

EXT. ROADSIDE MOTEL 6 - DAY

Mr. Shaw's car IDLES in the driveway by the MOTEL OFFICE.

INT. SHAW'S CAR - DAY

On pins and needles, Carol WATCHES Mr. Shaw who is twenty feet away in the TINY MANAGER'S OFFICE, getting a room. He looks around furtively, uncomfortably, unconsciously tapping a fresh pack of cigarettes on the counter.

Carol turns as A COUPLE exits a room on ground level. They look guilty, adjusting their business attire as they head to the man's Crown Victoria. As he opens the car door for her, he says something that makes the woman smile suggestively; her smile fades as she suddenly notices Carol watching; the man turns too -- Carol averts her eyes. We HOLD on her.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

An unlighted cigarette in his mouth, Mr. Shaw closes the drapes, agitated. Carol sits on the bed, clutching the bag of money to her chest like a security blanket. She finally looks down at it, pokes her hand inside, starts to count it.

Mr. Shaw turns on the TV: PORN BLARES. Embarrassed, he lowers it. He flips through the channels. Finds NY 1 NEWS. He glances anxiously at Carol:

MR. SHAW

How much, how much you get...?

CAROL

Looks like about eight hundred.

MR. SHAW

That's it...?

She nods, grim. Then:

CAROL

...What're we gonna do...?

MR. SHAW

I dunno -- we have to, we just have to wait here a while... Then we'll go back and get your car. And I guess I'm gonna have to do something with my car now...

(then, reliving it, in disbelief)

Jesus -- why'd he do that? He didn't have to do that -- fucking macho mother fucker! What was he trying to prove?! I've had problems with guys like that my whole fucking life -- it's like they have it out for me...!

Beat. Finally, Carol looks at him...

CAROL
What were you even doing there anyway?

MR. SHAW
(stunned)
...What?

CAROL
I told you to go...

MR. SHAW
You were in trouble! What was I
supposed to do -- drive away -- ?!

CAROL
Yes!

MR. SHAW
You'd be in jail now -- !

CAROL
You should've just left -- !

MR. SHAW
Well, I couldn't, okay?! I couldn't!

CAROL
Why not -- ?!

MR. SHAW
I don't know! I don't know what the
fuck's going on...! I mean ever since
the night we...!

He stops himself, suddenly overcome.

CAROL
...What?

MR. SHAW
(distracted, like a
furious boy)
Nothing! I mean obviously this all
hasn't affected you the way it affected
me! Obviously I'm alone in my
feelings! But we kissed, okay?! And
when I saw that cop go in there, I
suddenly thought something might happen
to you! Okay?! I thought you might,
run, I thought...

Raw, he averts his eyes. Carol falls silent, stunned.

SHAW

I didn't. Want something... to happen to you.

Finally, he looks back up. She stares at him, a nakedly embarrassed, childlike expression. She shrugs one shoulder, about to fall apart. Seeing that, he can't resist her any longer -- he moves in, and KISSES her... All restraint for both of them suddenly gives way...

Carol clutches Mr. Shaw's head in her fists with a building sexual ferocity, as he moves hungrily to her neck... pulls open her blouse, exposing one of her breasts -- he sucks on it voraciously, brutally, like a starving baby, and Carol shuts her eyes, cradling him to her chest, lost in surging emotion, instinct, need...

INT. MOTEL ROOM - LATER

It's getting dark, the TV flickers. Clothes everywhere.

Naked, Carol sits on the edge of the bed with the phone resting on her knees, pulled up close to her chest. She speaks into the phone with tentative vulnerability. Mr. Shaw, also naked, lies on the bed, watching her back.

CAROL

Honey? Hi. Is your, is your dad there? No? Where is he...? Oh. Well how was the snow? Yeah? That's g-- well mommy had a little trouble. With the car. And I had to wait for the auto club man, but it looks like they've got it running now, so... That's why I'm late, but I'm, I'm coming home now, okay? Yes, I'll make you something as soon as I get home. Whatever you like, sweetie. Okay. I love you. Bye-bye.

She hangs up, just sits there, staring forward... Mr. Shaw caresses her back. Unable to look at him, she finally whispers, guilty:

CAROL

Your wife must be wondering where you are...

He takes his hand away. Long beat; then quietly, he says...

MR. SHAW (CONT'D)

Look. The woman who answered the phone? When you called? That was my mother. Okay?

She turns.

MR. SHAW

Like I said -- I'm not married. I live with my mother.

CAROL

(long beat, stunned)
...Oh.

MR. SHAW

(smiles, uncomfortable)
I told you. My life is just... really uninteresting.

Carol just looks at him, trying to understand. Says gently:

CAROL

Is she sick, or...?

MR. SHAW

She's sort of agoraphobic. She doesn't really leave the house. She's been that way since I was a teenager.

CAROL

Oh my God...

MR. SHAW

Yeah... And if I didn't take care of her, who would? Certainly not my father -- he got outta there a long time ago. And my sister has kids, so... I've pretty much always had to take care of things anyway. It's... not that big a deal.

(long beat; smiles at her)

I mean it certainly isn't how I imagined my life was gonna be... But that's something I sorta stopped thinking about.

(looks down)

Til recently.

Carol looks at him, touched... pained for him...

CAROL

It... sounds like you've been very kind to her. You're a really good son...

MR. SHAW

(smiles, hating that)
...Yeah...

He turns away. Suddenly, his smiles fades, as he sees something. Carol follows his gaze...

ON THE TV:

A NY 1 NEWS REPORT on the robbery. Blurred black and white security camera SHOTS of Carol in disguise...

CAROL
(staring, breathless)
Oh my God...

They watch, transfixed, as the report cuts to FOOTAGE of the front of the bank, post robbery -- an AMBULANCE being loaded.

NY 1 REPORTER (V.O.)
...Authorities say the officer is in critical condition in a coma. At this point there are no suspects, but detectives are holding a bedside vigil in the hopes that the officer will soon regain consciousness...

A long beat. As they just stare. Finally, he says numbly:

MR. SHAW
Let's... we should go get the car.

EXT. SIDE STREET - MR. SHAW'S CAR - NIGHT

The car is parked across the street from the bank, headlights off. In the darkness, Carol and Mr. Shaw watch the parking lot, anxiously waiting for signs of anything suspicious...

Finally, Mr. Shaw quietly starts the engine; keeping the headlights off, he pulls the car slowly toward the lot...

INT. MR. SHAW'S CAR - NIGHT

As they glide up next to the car, everything seems quiet. Mr. Shaw shuts off the engine. Carol looks at him, sighs, readying to get out... Beat. He says kindly, quietly:

MR. SHAW
You know, if I could give you the money, I would. I just, I don't have it --

CAROL
(surprised, guiltily)
No -- I wouldn't even ask you to --

MR. SHAW
I know. But I would. I want you to know that...

Beat. He turns away, deep in thought; she just looks at him.

CAROL
Well... thank you...

MR. SHAW
(then, darkening)
I hope that cop never wakes up, to tell
you the truth. I hope he dies...
(beat; he looks at her)
I wanna help you. Will you let me help
you?

CAROL
...What?

MR. SHAW
Please. I'm in it now anyway.

CAROL
...What are you talking about -- ?

MR. SHAW
I wanna help you... It would, it would
mean a lot to me...

Beat. He reaches past her, pulls up the lock on her door.

MR. SHAW
Just... Call me tomorrow. Okay?

Reeling, she says nothing, starts to get out -- he stops her:

MR. SHAW
(kind)
Hey...

She turns back. He picks up the garbage bag of money off the floor -- she was about to forget it. Hands it to her. Embarrassed, she nods, taking it, and starts to get out. Then, she stops, emotional, looks at him, gives him a quick kiss on the cheek; he's stunned. She gets out...

INT. CAROL'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Carol stands in front of the bathroom mirror, wrapped in a towel. In a trance, she is rubbing lotion on her arms and shoulders when she notices something suddenly in the mirror... She slowly opens her towel and peers in shock to discover several DEEP RED MARKS on her chest... Hickeys.

An approaching voice suddenly comes from the bedroom:

GERRY (O.S.)
What'd they say was wrong?! The
battery...?!

Alarmed, Carol hurriedly re-wraps herself --

CAROL
Hunh?!

She grabs the lotion, and turns to hide herself just as Gerry enters. She puts one foot up on the side of the bathtub, bends down and starts rubbing lotion on her leg.

CAROL
 Oh. Yeah. The battery.

GERRY
 How much they charge you?

CAROL
 N - nothing... It was the triple A
 guy.

She glances up at him.

GERRY
 Oh.

She looks back down, continues moisturizing; but he keeps staring at her, so she tries to change the subject:

CAROL
 So where were you?

GERRY
 ...What?

CAROL
 When I called.

GERRY
 Oh. I ran into Ron. He got that new
 Nissan ZX. He let me drive it.

CAROL
 He did?

Gerry stands there, watching her in her towel as she rubs lotion over her thigh and calve. The image re-awakens something in him, arouses him -- a feeling that has been dormant for some time...

GERRY
 Yeah. It's gorgeous. The car.

He moves closer, and gently grasps her smooth, clean leg with his strong, car-grease stained hand. Surprised at the intimate gesture, Carol reacts quietly, uncomfortably:

CAROL

Hey...

GERRY

...What?

She looks up at him, then looks down guiltily again:

CAROL

I just took a shower...

He nods, retracts his hand, a bit wounded. He goes to the sink, silently starts to wash his hands. Carol steals a look at him as he does. Anxious, she gets up, sets the bottle of lotion back on the counter next to him, and heads for the door. In the mirror, Gerry watches her go...

EXT. NITA AND RAY PERICE'S HOME - MORNING

LOOKING THROUGH A CAR WINDOW as Carol walks up the front porch stairs, rings the bell. We CUT TO REVEAL CHRISTIAN watching her from the passenger seat of the car...

ON THE PORCH

Ray answers the door; Carol's surprised to see him:

CAROL

Oh -- hey, Ray...

RAY

(smiles, uneasy)

Hey.

CAROL

I was just... coming for Joanie and Michael.

He doesn't know quite how to deal with this situation -- it's the kind of thing he prefers to avoid:

RAY

Oh. Nita took 'em this morning...

CAROL

She did...?

RAY

Yeah, you know...

CAROL

(it dawns on her)

Oh no... I been meaning to call her -- you know I'm really sorry about what happened with Michael, I don't know what came over me... Nita's really upset, huh?

RAY

(yes, but he smiles)

She'll get over it. You know how she is. Be good if you called though...

Carol, upset with herself, awkwardly nods, turns to head back to the car -- feeling bad, Ray tries to lighten the mood, to reignite to his idle flirtation with her:

RAY

Hey -- did you see your bank robber hit again?

CAROL

...What?

RAY

The one from the paper. The blonde.

CAROL

Oh, no... I didn't...

RAY

Yeah. She and some guy hit another spot out near Riverhead. Put a guy I know in the hospital. He's in a coma.

CAROL

...Really? You're kidding...?

RAY

No -- buddy of mine. They fucked him up pretty good.

CAROL

Jesus, Ray -- I'm sorry...

RAY

(smiles, to impress her)

Yeah, well. We'll get 'em. You know... Doesn't take much to rob a bank, but... takes a little more to get away with it...

She nods, terrified, tries not to reveal anything.

RAY
 Alright. Call Nita.

Carol nods as he starts to shut the door, and we CUT TO:

INT. STARBUCK'S COFFEE - MORNING

Carol waits anxiously at the COFFEE PICK-UP COUNTER, as a COUNTER GUY makes her coffee. She absently shakes a packet of Equal back and forth. Her packet shaking slows when she hears a HUSHED VOICE:

MR. SHAW (O.S.)
 Can I get a House Blend? Grande?

Carol turns to see Mr. Shaw standing next to her at the counter just a few feet away, paying the COUNTER GIRL.

He turns, slipping his wallet into his pocket, and looks right at Carol -- we HOLD as they stare at each other significantly, unblinkingly, pregnantly; then SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CAROL'S TAURUS - DAY

It's EERILY QUIET; just an occasional GUST of WIND. The car is EMPTY. We're looking from the back toward the windshield in a shot that echoes the opening shot of the film. TWO STARBUCK'S COFFEE CUPS sit in the cup holders.

We HOLD in the stillness for a while...

Then, all of a sudden, the ELECTRIC LOCKS POP OPEN. We can see two OUT OF FOCUS figures running toward us through the windshield, getting closer, and closer...

Both doors screech open -- Mr. Shaw jumps in, immediately starting the engine -- Carol scrambles into the passenger seat clutching another black garbage bag -- they are both in NEW DISGUISES, Carol now wearing a RED WIG.

Before Carol can fully shut her door, the car squeals out onto the road -- ! Frantic, she finally gets it closed --

After a few moments, their breathing calms.

The SOUND STARTS TO FADE out, as we HEAR:

CAROL (V.O.)
 (hushed)
 Forgive me father, for I have sinned...

FLASHBACK TO:

CAROL AND MR. SHAW

in the new disguises, bursting out the doors of ANOTHER LONG ISLAND BANK (in WEST BABYLON) -- they are RUNNING together IN SLOW MOTION, side by side; the IMAGE suddenly FREEZES...

CAROL (V.O.)
It's been five weeks since my last
confession...

CUT TO:

CAROL

deep in thought, plagued; she is in the CONFSSIONAL BOOTH...

CAROL
And things have gotten so... I
dunno...

FLASH CUT TO:

A FAST MOTION POV THROUGH THE CAR WINDSHIELD

The streets race by SILENTLY with tremendous velocity -- objects seem to VIBRATE, to TREMBLE... We see an APPROACHING HIGHWAY SIGN: "WEST BABYLON - 45 MILES"...

CAROL (V.O.)
...Out of control...

FLASH BACK TO:

CAROL

In the confessional, quietly struggling:

CAROL
I feel like I'm just being swept along -
- I don't even know how it happened...

A quiet, intense beat. Then:

CONFESSOR (O.S.)
How what happened, child?

Startled out of her reverie, Carol looks up toward her confessor, hesitates, deciding whether or not to go on --

CUT TO:

MONEY

Being counted into piles on the CAR floor, in front of the passenger seat; Carol looks up from her counting toward MR. SHAW, who drives, eyes on the road. She STARES at him...

CAROL (V.O.)
How I started to feel this way...

Finally feeling her stare, Mr. Shaw turns to her --

CUT BACK TO:

CAROL

In the confessional. As she stares in thought, we start to HEAR QUIET, MUFFLED CRIES, a PASSIONATE MOANING... It's as if Carol is hearing it too --

FLASH CUT TO:

A BLURRY IMAGE OF CAROL AND MR. SHAW

Having sex in the TAURUS STATION WAGON; we're looking at them from outside, through FOGGED WINDOWS -- their muffled cries can be heard softly -- we only see them for AN INSTANT; then

FLASH BACK TO:

CAROL

In the confessional, still staring, quietly devastated...

CAROL
...about another man.

Another beat; then, she grows self-conscious, looks up toward her unseen confessor, pleading for understanding:

CAROL
I know it's wrong, but I just... this
has been such a... terrible time --

CUT TO:

FINGERS ON FLUTE KEYS (SLOW MOTION)

Mr. Shaw gently corrects Christian's HANDS as he plays... CHRISTMAS LIGHTS GLOW behind them. We PAN past NOTES on SHEET MUSIC...

CAROL
And he's been helping me... I don't
even really know why...

EXTREMELY TIGHT ON CAROL'S EYES WATCHING (SLOW MOTION)

CUT BACK TO:

THE FROZEN IMAGE OF CAROL AND MR. SHAW

Caught in mid-stride outside the WEST BABYLON BANK... running for their lives, side by side... partners in crime...

CAROL (V.O.)
 (an edge creeping in)
 I mean, to be honest, sometimes I wish he wouldn't... Because now, even when I'm not with him, I think about him...

Suddenly the IMAGE UNFREEZES, and as they continue running in SLOW MOTION, Mr. Shaw REACHES for Carol's HAND... HOLDS it... We MOVE in on the HANDS, desperately CLUTCHING each other...

CAROL (V.O.)
 And I don't know what to do.

CUT TO:

CAROL

In the confessional; she sits reeling. A beat, then:

CONFESSOR (V.O.)
 How many times have you... committed these... indiscretions...?

CAROL
 (in shock, trying to focus)
 Uh... We've... three times. So far.

CONFESSOR (V.O.)
 You have to think of your family, child.

CAROL
 I know, I just... didn't expect this.

CUT TO:

INT. STARBUCK'S COFFEE - MOVING SHOT - AFTERNOON

We ARE LOOKING THROUGH THE HUGE CHRISTMAS DECORATED WINDOW, INTO THE PARKING LOT, TRACKING with the TAURUS STATION WAGON as it stops out in front...

INT. CAROL'S TAURUS - AFTERNOON

Mr. Shaw shuts off the engine, leaves the keys in the ignition. He looks over at Carol, who stares off, a GARBAGE BAG of money partially open in her lap.

She turns to him, and he leans toward her, gives her a hug. He looks at her, about to get out -- but she looks down, something on her mind... He looks at the garbage bag of money in her lap; finally, says gently, intimately:

MR. SHAW
...How'd we do?

CAROL
...About two thousand.

He nods, looking at her, can tell she's upset; then:

MR. SHAW
We have two weeks, we're gonna make it.

She nods, still uneasy.

MR. SHAW
...You okay?

Finally she turns to him, stares at him pregnantly... He watches her, filling with emotion and desire... Finally:

MR. SHAW
(so quiet, like they've
done this before)
You wanna... Go to the park again?

She nods quickly, ashamed -- it's what she's been wanting to say all along... She looks at him and we --

SMASH CUT TO:

AN OVERHEAD SHOT - WANTAGH PARK - ABOVE THEIR CARS

Parked side by side in the deserted, wintery Wantagh Park parking lot. We CUT TO:

A MOVING SHOT - PUSHING IN ON THE TAURUS

We MOVE IN, LOOKING through the fogged windows in an image that mirrors what we saw in the montage -- inside, BLURRED, we can make out the SHAPES of Carol and Mr. Shaw having sex. Their MUFFLED CRIES grow louder as we move in closer...

TIME CUT TO:

INSIDE THE TAURUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Post sex. They huddle together, staring out the frosty windows at THE PARK. A long, contemplative pause. Finally:

CAROL

Have you ever noticed how empty this place is? When Christian was a little boy, I remember watching him climb to the top of that rocket. He was so excited. But I was terrified. I thought he might fall, and there'd be no one around to help us.

(beat, smiles sadly)

And it's pathetic. Coz this is one of the reasons we moved out here.

MR. SHAW

What is?

CAROL

The park. Gerry and I came out here right before Christian was born. His friend had a boat. It was the summer and there were just... so many families. It seemed like such a great place. But it wasn't what either of us were expecting, I don't think. It was so far away from everything. And Gerry had to take a job he really didn't like in the city. I dunno... We weren't really talking much anymore. And sometimes I couldn't... get out of bed. For days. I started to panic. One day as he was getting ready for work, I told him I thought I was drowning. And he really -- he didn't know what to do, he freaked out. He threatened to leave. And then he called the hospital and they came for me. I remember people on the block watching. It was so humiliating.

MR. SHAW

Jesus...

CAROL

I dunno, maybe he just didn't know what else to do with me, but... I knew I could never tell him. Anything. Again.

A beat. Suddenly self-conscious, she glances at him warily, then turns away. He watches her. Finally:

MR. SHAW
 (gently)
 What...?

CAROL
 I don't tell any of this. To anyone.

A beat.

MR. SHAW
 Are you worried you're telling me?

CAROL
 (smiles, self-conscious)
Yes! I'm worried you'll think I'm
crazy...

He looks at her, says gently:

MR. SHAW
 No.

She turns to him, glances at his eyes briefly, then away. He reaches down, takes her hand; she stares at it, squeezing it, tears suddenly filling her eyes. She says quietly, simply:

CAROL
 You know, when I first met him, I thought he had all the answers. I thought he was gonna save me. I think he did too.

CUT TO:

GERRY

SHADOWBOXING in the Elmer's BACK YARD at DUSK; he's fighting hard, his breath steaming around him. We can hear his MUFFLED GRUNTS as we watch from a distance. CUT TO REVEAL:

CAROL

watching behind the GLASS DOOR that leads from the kitchen to the yard. Her coat still on, holding groceries, she stares at Gerry with a deep melancholy. She turns, and we CUT TO:

INT. CAROL'S KITCHEN - DUSK

Spent, Carol unpacks the groceries on autopilot. She tosses a package of ground beef by the stove, reaches over, twists a burner knob, waiting for the gas to ignite. But it doesn't.

She tries it again. Nothing. With building anxiety, she tries each of the other burners without success.

Angry, she puts her hand to her forehead, breathing slowly, trying to keep it together. Just what she doesn't need.

Just then, Gerry enters; Carol stiffens, doesn't even look at him, braces herself for his reaction as she just blurts out:

CAROL
They shut off the gas.

GERRY
(still a bit in his head)
What?

CAROL
(defensive, mad)
I must've forgot to pay the bill, I don't know, I'm sorry.

She finally turns to him; but he doesn't really react.

CAROL
I'll have to call them tomorrow.

GERRY
(unfazed)
Okay.

CAROL
(thrown)
Okay...? Well I don't know what you want to do about dinner then.
(losing steam)
I mean... Should we get a pizza?

GERRY
Sure.

CAROL
(a beat, softening)
I'm sorry. Are you mad?

GERRY
No. Just call 'em tomorrow. Pizza sounds good.

Surprised by the fight that never came, she just nods; she goes to the phone, pulls out a stack of take out menus from a basket mounted on the wall. Starts sorting through them...

GERRY
Guess what.
(she turns)
I got the job. They got a position opening up beginning of February.

Carol is stunned, doesn't know what to think:

CAROL
Oh my God...

GERRY
(smiles)
I told you I'd get it.

CAROL
I don't know what to say... I'm...

Mechanically, she puts down the menus, moves to him, hugs him; we are TIGHT ON HER CONFLICTED FACE as she whispers:

CAROL
Congratulations...

GERRY (O.S.)
(quiet, intimate)
Yeah, so you can stop worrying.
Things'll finally be back to normal
around here, okay? Just a couple more
months...

As we SLOWLY ZOOM IN on her, we hear AN ECHOING, EERILY DISTANT BAND start to play "GOD ONLY KNOWS" as we CUT TO:

INT. WANTAGH MIDDLE SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The MIDDLE SCHOOL BAND PLAYS "GOD ONLY KNOWS" on the stage in front of a HUGE CHRISTMAS TREE. It's the WINTER CONCERT.

We find CAROL, in the audience staring off, lost...

Finally, she looks up, sees CHRISTIAN on stage, waiting anxiously for his entrance; conducting very seriously, MR. SHAW looks over, gently holds up his hand to keep Christian from coming in too soon. Then he nods, and Christian enters right on time. Mr. Shaw smiles approvingly, proudly. As he finishes his part, Christian smiles too, sweetly embarrassed by Mr. Shaw's attention, but also pleased with himself.

Having seen the interaction, Carol smiles sadly, touched.

AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

On the floor in front of the stage Carol spots Christian approaching in his suit. He looks at her with a bashful grin; the sight of him immediately raises her spirits:

CAROL
Sweetie, lemme get a picture...!

CHRISTIAN
 (appalled)
 No, Mom -- not right now...

CAROL
 (raising her camera)
C'mon! You look so handsome up there!

As Carol's camera FLASHES, Mr. Shaw approaches in his good suit, beaming in his post-concert glory:

MR. SHAW
 Great job on your entrances tonight,
 Christian, I was watching you...

Christian smiles, embarrassed. Carol turns:

CAROL
 Oh! Well you two worked so hard
 together... Thank you for all your
help --

MR. SHAW
 No -- it was... my pleasure...
 (then, looks around)
 So where's... where's Mr. Elmer
 tonight? Is he --

CAROL
 Oh -- Gerry had a seminar tonight. I
 promised Christian we could go to
 McDonald's...

MR. SHAW
 (nods, awkward)
 Oh!

A slight beat -- she senses he would like to come too --

CAROL
 But, actually, you know... you're
welcome to... come meet us if you --

MR. SHAW
 (really wants to)
 Oh no -- you guys have plans, I don't
 wanna --

CAROL
 -- No...! Why don't you join us...?

EXT. A LONG ISLAND MCDONALD'S - NIGHT

We're LOOKING THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW at the three of them --
WE HEAR JUST THE SOUND OF PASSING TRAFFIC AS WE WATCH THEIR
 FACES... In the silence between the cars, MUSIC PLAYS...

As they eat, Christian animatedly tells a story the way only a kid obsessed can. Carol and Mr. Shaw watch, amused. They steal glances at each other, but keep missing...

Finally, their eyes meet -- Carol smiles; a connection as they share this moment, the three of them. But even as Carol continues to smile, her eyes grow sad, maybe sensing something fleeting in all this...

She breaks their gaze, blinks down, pushing emotion away; but Mr. Shaw keeps staring, deeply affected. A veiled longing...

Suddenly, to her surprise, something Christian says makes her crack up; Carol loses it, playfully tossing a napkin at him.

Mr. Shaw, surprised by how hard she's laughing, turns to Christian, who is enjoying his mother's attention. Mr. Shaw puts on a smile, attempting to be a part of it all. He turns to Carol as she recovers, wiping away tears of laughter; he can't take his eyes off her... Finally, he starts to laugh.

We start to hear AN OMINOUS BELL TOLL... SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - MORNING

FAMILIES in SUITS and DRESSES stream in as the CHURCH BELL RINGS. We can hear the sound of CHRISTMAS MUSIC from inside.

IN THE CHURCH PARKING LOT

Carol, Gerry, and Christian are walking quickly toward the church. Carol notices the tag sticking out of the back of Christian's sweater --

CAROL

Oh sweetie, wait, c'mere...

He stops, and she kneels down, snaps the price tag off -- just as Michael Perice darts out from between two parked cars, chasing his LITTLE COUSIN -- Michael holds a small carton of chocolate milk, threatening playfully to spray a mouthful. The LARGE GROUP of the Perices follow --

NITA

Michael -- don't play with your milk --
 leave your cousin alone!

And Nita spots Carol, it's an awkward moment --

CAROL

Hi...!

But Nita is still angry, nods, but doesn't say hello -- the moment is not missed by Ray, who tries to cover:

RAY

Hey!

GERRY

Merry Christmas.

The Cousin lamely tries to push Michael away, but ends up tripping on his own feet as he backs away, almost falling -- this makes Michael snort involuntarily, sucking the milk up his nose; he immediately half-coughs, moans, losing control, spraying milk all over himself, his cousin, and Nita:

NITA

MICHAAAAAAAAAAEL!!!

RAY

Holy shit. See you guys later.

GERRY

Yeah, yeah. Go.

The Perice clan bustles away in total chaos, Nita and Ray vigorously scolding Michael. The Elmers follow a good distance behind. After a beat, as they walk:

GERRY

You never called her?

CAROL

I never called her.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH - MAIN HALL - DAY

Some of the last to arrive, the Elmers look through the packed pews for a place to sit as CHORAL SINGERS sing the last few stanzas of "O Come Let Us Adore Him".

Noticing some space, Carol approaches a COUPLE, gesturing to ask if she can squeeze in. As the Churchgoers rise, Carol lets her husband and son in the aisle ahead of her, and as she waits, she sees MR. SHAW, seated a few rows ahead, glancing back at her, attempting to be inconspicuous. He smiles subtly, kindly. Overwhelmed by the surprise, Carol just freezes.

The Churchgoers look at her, waiting for her to enter -- catching herself, she nods apologetically, and finally squeezes past, and sits next to Gerry.

As the MUSIC comes to an end, Gerry rests his hand gently on Carol's leg; she looks down at it... puts her hand on his...

But it is all too much for her, and as the PRIEST finally begins, Carol turns and whispers to her husband:

CAROL

I'll be -- I'll be right back...

Not thinking much of it, he retracts his hand, and she gets up, turns to the COUPLE again --

CAROL

I'm sorry...

They stand, and Carol starts to scuffle past, her feet echoing slightly in the quiet hall. Hearing the commotion, Mr. Shaw turns in time to see her turn briskly up the aisle -- he watches her go, concerned...

IN THE DESERTED CHURCH VESTIBULE

Carol paces slightly, trying to calm herself as the PRIEST'S VOICE ECHOES INDECIPHERABLY from the main hall. Another VOICE suddenly calls out to her quietly:

MR. SHAW (O.S.)

Hey.

Startled, Carol turns; she smiles, covering as he approaches:

CAROL

Hey. I didn't expect to see you...

MR. SHAW

Yeah, this is sort of the one day of the year I come.

(smiles)

I'm not a very good Catholic.

(then)

...Are you okay?

CAROL

I just had to... get some air.

MR. SHAW

You look really beautiful today.

CAROL

...Thank you...

Then, finally, still not looking at him, she says significantly:

CAROL
You know, Gerry got that job...

MR. SHAW
...He did?

CAROL
Yeah.

The implication starts to sink in:

MR. SHAW
Wow. When does he start...?

CAROL
February. I wanted to tell you the other day but...

MR. SHAW
(crushed, reeling)
I see.
(then, smiles, ironic)
Jesus -- they couldn't have started him this month, huh?

CAROL
I guess not...

MR. SHAW
Well... At least when this is over, you'll... never have to do it again, right?

Carol doesn't know what to say... Then:

MR. SHAW
You know, I'm sorry, I guess the truth is I knew you'd be here. I had to fight with my mother just to get out of the house this morning. But I didn't mean to... intrude.

CAROL
(quiet, vulnerable)
No, I wanted to see you...
(finally looks at him, her eyes red)
I love seeing you...

He looks at her, suddenly moved.

MR. SHAW
I love seeing you too.

He touches her hand. A sudden desperation between them. They start to KISS deeply, WHEN SUDDENLY they hear FOOTSTEPS and a door ECHO SHUT -- Carol breaks out of the kiss to see MICHAEL having just come out of the bathroom at the far end of the vestibule, his suit wet from cleaning off the milk; he looks at the two of them in stunned and frightened silence.

Mr. Shaw immediately takes a step back, turns to hide his face. In shock, Carol actually starts to smile slightly at Michael, maybe to make him think he hasn't just seen what he's seen... but he definitely has seen it.

Before anyone can say anything, Nita emerges from the bathroom, anxiously blotting herself and Michael's Little Cousin -- in a hurry, she grabs Michael's hand angrily, and hustles the three of them toward the mass, never even glancing in Carol and Mr. Shaw's direction.

Frozen, Carol just watches them go, her heart racing, that stupid smile fading as horror starts to set in...

EXT. NITA AND RAY PERICE'S HOME - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Nita answers the door, surprised to see Carol standing there:

CAROL

(smiles)

Am I interrupting...?

NITA

No... Ray's parents just got here, we were just gonna... sit down --

CAROL

Oh! Well, I don't wanna -- I just, I wanted to... apologize. For yelling at Michael that day.

NITA

Oh -- !

CAROL

I meant to come over sooner --

NITA

No! No, that's okay...

CAROL

No, it isn't, but -- things've been a little -- I don't know. Anyway. I'm really sorry.

(then, smiles)

I have a little...

(holds up a wrapped gift)

Peace offering. For Michael.

NITA
Oh, my God -- you didn't have to --

CAROL
No, I wanted to --

NITA
Well that was very, very nice. Here,
why don't you -- Michael...?!

She opens the door, letting Carol inside --

NITA
MICHAEL!

Michael appears at the top of the stairs, slowing slightly when he sees Carol, wondering if somehow he is in trouble...

CAROL
Hey, there...!

MICHAEL
...Hi.

CAROL
You know, Santa left something for you
at my house...

Santa? This woman makes him nervous:

MICHAEL
...What is it?

CAROL
Why don't you come open it...?

Uncomfortably, he does, all eyes on him; it's a HIGH-POWERED UZI-STYLE SQUIRT GUN RIFLE. Cool, but might it also be a threat...? Carol watches him warily; he's concerned...

NITA
Well what do you say...?

MICHAEL
...Thank you.

CAROL
Are we friends now?

MICHAEL
(nods, turns to his mom)
Can I go back up to my room now?

NITA

Michael!

CAROL

No! That's, that's okay!

NITA

(stern, to Michael)

Go in and say hi to your grandparents...

(as he does, to Carol)

Sorry.

(then)

So what have you been doing, anyway?
You look great...!

CAROL

...I do...?

NITA

(trying to figure it out)

Yeah, you look... great...

CAROL

Well, I don't know... thank you...

NITA

Whatever it is? Keep doing it.

CLOSE ON: Carol as she smiles awkwardly, nods:

CAROL

Merry Christmas.

INT. CAROL'S TAURUS - DAY

The next day. Mr. Shaw drives. Carol wears A BLACK WIG and SCARF; they both sport BIG SUNGLASSES, and BULKY WINTER PARKAS. Coffee cups steam in the holders.

They are silent; but then, as they speak, there is a new comfort between them, a familiarity -- like an old married couple, they don't even look at each other:

CAROL

I hate that fucking kid...

Beat.

MR. SHAW

I don't think he'll say anything.

Beat.

MR. SHAW

I don't...

CAROL

He's such a little creep...!

MR. SHAW

Who's he gonna tell...?

Beat; she seems less than convinced...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BROOKHAVEN BANK - MOMENTS LATER

Carol and Mr. Shaw stand frozen at an open window, as a TELLER fills a garbage bag. Carol stares off, fuming, unable to let go of her thoughts of Michael; it's as if the conversation from the previous scene is only momentarily on hold... Mr. Shaw looks at her, knowing what's on her mind, then glances furtively around the bank for any trouble...

A bit frightened of the angry looking Carol, the Teller holds out the bag of money tentatively. Carol looks up, snatches it, and starts furiously toward the door; Mr. Shaw follows...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. BROOKHAVEN BANK - FRONT DOORS - IMMEDIATELY

As they head out the doors, walk-running ridiculously fast into the mini-mall parking lot, Carol immediately launches right back into their conversation -- once again, they don't look at each other:

CAROL

I swear to God, if that fucking kid says ANYTHING --

MR. SHAW

Would you stop, please? Please...!

Suddenly, they HEAR and SEE A POLICE CAR rapidly approaching in the distance, LIGHTS BLAZING -- Carol slows, stunned; Mr. Shaw slows too -- he takes her arm urgently, protectively, eyes on the distant Police Car:

MR. SHAW

Let's uh... go this way... yeah?

And they start to head the other way as quickly and nonchalantly as possible when they spot TWO MORE DISTANT POLICE CARS coming that way! They stop in their tracks --

MR. SHAW
Okay. Don't. Panic.

He abruptly spins, puts his arm around her, leading them back toward the storefronts... like two very uptight shoppers...

CAROL
Oh God...!

MR. SHAW
Don't panic...!

And as the SIRENS gets louder, they HEAD STRAIGHT INTO:

INT. T.J. MAXX DEPARTMENT STORE - CONTINUOUS

An ominous quiet -- lazy MUZAK plays incongruously...

We TRACK WITH THEM as they move urgently, wordlessly through the AISLES, PICKING UP SPEED, moving FASTER and FASTER... CLOTHING RACKS WHIZZ BY in the f.g., OBSCURING THEM FROM VIEW -- but the CAMERA continues to ACCELERATE, and when Carol and Mr. Shaw REAPPEAR, they are RUNNING with us...!

We PAN with them as they race ahead of us -- Mr. Shaw grabs Carol's hand and pulls her, unseen --

INTO THE STOREROOM

We FOLLOW as they SPEED STEALTHILY past a fluorescent-lit blur of BOXES, WORKERS, MINI-FORKLIFTS -- no one even turns as they pass... Mr. Shaw pushes open a door; they spill out:

INTO THE ALLEY

where they are immediately confronted with the side of a a HUGE, PARKED EIGHTEEN WHEELER -- it has them completely boxed in. Without stopping, Mr. Shaw pulls Carol's arm:

MR. SHAW
Here -- c'mon...!

And they run along through the narrow space between the deserted truck and the building -- when SUDDENLY a LOUD, VICIOUS THWACK throws Mr. Shaw teetering off balance -- !

MR. SHAW
(grabbing his head)
SHIIIT -- !

CAROL
(so startled)
Jesus-FUCK!

Slowing a bit, Mr. Shaw looks back to see he just hit his head on a massive SIDE VIEW MIRROR on the truck's cab --

MR. SHAW
IT'S OK -- I'M... OK!!!

And they curve finally around the front of the truck, and dash up the alley, hand in hand...

Mr. Shaw spots an OPEN RUSTING METAL DOOR in the back of one of the buildings; HE LEADS CAROL INTO IT --

INT. DARK, NARROW, DINGY HALLWAY - IMMEDIATELY

Thrust so quickly into the dark space from the bright exterior, they have to slow down to let their eyes adjust -- they still wear their sunglasses, which, in the mad rush of adrenaline, they haven't thought yet to remove.

THEIR POV -- HANDHELD

As they move blindly toward a dim, RED GLOW at the other end of the hall, not knowing what they'll find, OUT OF BREATH...

MR. SHAW (O.S.)
...You... you still with me...?

CAROL (O.S.)
...Yeah...

We can hear the LOW, EERIE DIN of VOICES as we approach... Something CLATTERS underfoot, alarming them:

MR. SHAW (O.S.)
...Jesus Christ...

We finally come to the end of the hallway to discover -- somewhat surreally -- we are inside:

A SMALL POLYNESIAN THEMED 'TIKI' BAR/LOUNGE

Carol and Mr. Shaw stand there, disoriented, haunted, still totally out of breath, taking in their surroundings. There's SEA GRASS everywhere. GLOWING electric TORCHES bathe everything DEEP RED. SENIOR CITIZENS in SUITS and DRESSES mill about. A SIGN on an easel reads: "MASSAPEQUA SENIOR SINGLES HOLIDAY MIXER, 4 - 7:30. 'HAVE A BALL!'".

WAITRESS (O.S.)
(you're in my way)
Anywhere ya like.

They turn, startled, on edge. Mr. Shaw nods, stepping aside to let the WAITRESS pass -- Carol clings to him.

He looks around, spots a table in a dim corner -- he ushers her over and they sit cautiously, side by side on a bankette.

A dreamy 1960's CHA-CHA (XAVIER CUGAT'S PERFIDIA) starts to play -- and as ELDERLY COUPLES move to the TINY DANCE FLOOR, we START TO SLOWLY PUSH IN on Carol and Mr. Shaw...

Suddenly, BRIGHT, LATE AFTERNOON LIGHT spills into the room -- alarmed, Mr. Shaw cranes to look past the DANCERS toward the FRONT DOOR, which is slowly opening, OMINOUS SHADOWS creeping in... Preparing for the worst, Carol slides her arm under his, takes his hand... But it's just another ELDERLY COUPLE; the door shuts, restoring the room's other-worldly red hue.

Carol and Mr. Shaw take slow, deliberate breaths; we continue MOVING in on them... Mr. Shaw keeps an eye on the door; but Carol gradually starts to settle -- as if the mood of the music finally begins to affect her...

She looks at the elderly couples on the dance floor -- an odd, anachronistic, Lawrence Welk-like vision. Something about the sight of them affects her...

Mr. Shaw turns to her, sees her staring... He turns to look at the dancers, as if it is the first time he's really noticed them; taking it all in...

Finally, starting to relax, he leans toward Carol, utters something which she can't hear over the music. Pulled from her reverie, she leans closer to hear him...

CLOSE ON MR. SHAW'S LIPS

as he repeats himself, whispering intimately:

MR. SHAW

Almost there... we're almost there...

CLOSE ON CAROL

Her mind somewhere else. She nods for him, smiles as if reassured... But then gazes out at the dancers again.

CLOSE ON MR. SHAW

as he takes in her ambiguous expression -- suddenly he feels something, looks down to SEE --

A DROP OF BLOOD

has fallen on his hand. ANOTHER DROP FALLS onto the white paper on the tabletop...

He reaches up, touches his head. IT'S BLEEDING. Careful to let Carol not see, he surreptitiously picks up a napkin, presses it to his head -- just as Carol, still watching the dancers, finally leans over vulnerably, resting her head on Mr. Shaw's shoulder; he stiffens, then relaxes... and WE CUT:

WIDE

to see Carol and Mr. Shaw huddled together, Elderly People dancing all around them...

INT. CAROL'S HOUSE - TOP OF 2ND FLOOR STAIRCASE - DUSK

A darkened space. We can hear Carol, having just entered:

CAROL (O.S.)
Hello...?!

She appears at the top of the stairs, passes right by Christian's room -- then she turns back, looks inside:

HIS ROOM

He's sitting there in the waning light, playing idly with a toy car... Distracted, totally wiped out, she looks at him, musters up the energy to say a hopeful:

CAROL
Hey...

But he doesn't look at her.

CAROL
...Your father not home yet?

CHRISTIAN
(soft, still looking down)
He called. He said he's still there
and he's not gonna be home for dinner.

CAROL
Oh. You getting hungry?

He just shakes his head.

CAROL
Sweetie? What's wrong...?

No response. She walks in, moving closer... He starts to turn away from her... She doesn't understand why...

CAROL
Sweetie...?

We HEAR a door bell -- and CUT TO:

NITA'S FRONT DOOR

It swings open, revealing Nita. Carol is on her stoop.

CAROL
(controlling her rage)
Michael hit Christian.

NITA
...What?

We finally see Christian's face; he has a BLACK EYE -- CUT TO:

INT. NITA AND RAY PERICE'S KITCHEN - DUSK

Carol, Christian and Nita bustle in -- Nita sticks her head into the SUNROOM where a small GROUP OF MEN have gathered --

NITA
Ray -- do you know where Michael is?!

RAY (O.S.)
Hunh?

NITA
Come in here please...!

He gets up, enters, lowers his voice:

RAY
What -- we're working...!

NITA
Michael hit Christian!

Ray suddenly sees Carol and Christian standing there:

RAY
Oh, Jesus Christ --

NITA
Do you know where he is? Is he with Jesse?

RAY
I dunno -- call Ettore...!

Nita goes straight for the phone, picks it up.

CAROL
Sorry, Ray -- I don't mean to interrupt, I'm just really --

RAY

No -- no, you're right -- fuckin' kid
is outta control...!

NITA

(into phone)

Ettore? It's Nita Perice. Is my son
there...? Could you look...?

Ray looks at Christian, who stares at the floor, as Carol touches his head to comfort him -- although, at the moment, it may just be embarrassing him...

RAY

(whispers sympathetically)

How's he doin'? 'S he okay...?

Carol nods, about to speak when one of the MEN from the Sun Room sticks his head in the doorway -- he talks gingerly, trying not to intrude:

MAN

Hey Ray -- ya mind if I grab another
beer...?

Ray turns, and so does Carol who suddenly sees with shock that the man in the doorway is THE BURLY COP THAT MR. SHAW ran over. He looks quite frail, struggling with a CANE...

RAY

Sure, go ahead, help yourself...

The Burly Cop steps in towards the fridge, his gait unsure -- he hobbles right past Carol, who stands near the fridge, terrified, motionless, wanting to be invisible.

RAY

You okay there, Jimmy? You need me to--

MAN

Nah, I'm good, I got it...

Carol watches as, about two feet from her, he reaches into the fridge, grabs a beer... Finally, he looks at her, smiles, not recognizing her without the wig. She smiles back, has trouble keeping eye contact.

He heads back out. Carol looks like she's seen a ghost. She turns to Ray, pretends this is idle conversation -- they speak in HUSHED tones so Nita can hear on the phone:

CAROL

What're... what're you guys working
on...?

RAY

Hm?

(then, smiles)

Oh. Your lady bank robber.

CAROL

...Really?

RAY

Yeah -- everyone's goin' crazy. We're coordinating with the other precincts, gonna stake out banks all over the island next week. See if we can get lucky. She and he partner been hitting all ends of the island!

CAROL

Wow...

RAY

Yeah, we almost got her today in Massapequa.

CAROL

Oh...! Well that's good. Good luck...!

Just then, we hear the FRONT DOOR shut.

MICHAEL (O.S.)

Hello?!

RAY

Speak of the fuckin' devil...

NITA

MICHAEL! GET IN HERE!

(into phone)

Ettore? He just walked in...

Michael enters, realizing immediately he is in deep shit --

RAY

What'd you fuckin' do...?

MICHAEL

Nothing!

NITA

You hit Christian!

MICHAEL

He hit me first -- !

RAY
Oh come on --

MICHAEL
He did -- he hit me FIRST!

NITA
(not buying it)
Christian -- is that true -- did you
hit Michael...?

But Christian can't answer; the silence surprises everyone...

CAROL
...Honey...?

MICHAEL
See...?

The awkwardness in the room is palpable. Then:

RAY
You know what? I don't give a shit who
hit who first, okay? Okay?

Frightened, Michael falls silent.

RAY
Now go upstairs and get my belt.

MICHAEL
(meek)
Dad...

RAY
Do it. I'll be up in a few minutes.
(to Nita, 'can I go?')
Alright...?

Nita nods uncomfortably. And Ray heads back to the Sun Room. Carol watches as he sits next to the Burly Cop who says something to him quietly -- feeling her stare, he looks at her briefly, then continues talking to Ray...

EXT. WANTAGH PARK DRIVE - NIGHT

Carol and Christian walk in silence back toward their house. He is a few steps ahead of her, humiliated. She watches the back of his head for a moment, concerned...

CAROL
...Honey?

No response. Finally, she takes his arm --

CAROL
Hey. What's going on, what happened?

A long beat, he still can't bring himself to look at her.

CHRISTIAN
 (quiet)
 He said you were a whore.

CAROL
 ...what?

CHRISTIAN
 He said he saw you with Mr. Shaw, and
 you were a whore.

Carol stares at him, like she's been kicked in the chest:

CAROL
 Well he's... he's a little liar... You
 know that, right...?

He nods, unable to meet her gaze. He starts to walk again.
 Carol watches him go, her world caving in...

WE HEAR the sound of a FILTERED PHONE RINGING, then a WAVE OF
 STATIC -- and we CUT TO:

INT. CAROL'S GARAGE - NIGHT

In the dark, Carol sits inside the car with the windows
 rolled up -- she anxiously clutches her CORDLESS PHONE... A
 VOICE suddenly answers --

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
 Hello?

Carol WHISPERS into the phone, panicked, emotional, on the
 verge of falling apart -- WAVES OF STATIC SURGE PERIODICALLY
through the following:

CAROL
 I have to talk to you -- I'm so scared!

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
 What -- what happened?

CAROL
 I have to talk to you -- !

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
Okay -- I can meet you in like twenty
 minutes --

CAROL
What? No -- Can't I just come OVER???

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
 Come over here?

CAROL
PLEASE! I'm going outta my --

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
 (more SURGING STATIC)
What...? Why is this connection so --

CAROL
I HAVE TO COME OVER!

He falls silent, suddenly hearing her terror -- he relents:

MR. SHAW (V.O.)
 Okay. Okay.

AND WE CUT TO:

THE CORDLESS PHONE

It sits in the station wagon passenger seat, STREETLIGHT from above PASSING RAPIDLY OVER IT -- Carol never even bothered to put it back in the house before she left.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

We can see SNOW SWIRLING in the headlights.

CAROL drives, worried, urgently looking for Mr. Shaw's house. Finally, she spots A SMALL BRICK HOUSE, neat, but a little run-down. Mr. Shaw's car is in the driveway. She slows as she approaches... CUT TO:

BLACKNESS

It suddenly SWINGS OPEN, revealing CAROL on the PORCH:

CAROL
 I'm sorry, I just...

MR. SHAW
 No -- it's okay, it's okay. Come in...

She looks at him gratefully, steps urgently into:

INT. MR. SHAW'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Modest. Somewhat cramped. Inexpensive wood panelling. Much of the decor hasn't changed since the 1970s.

As she enters, Carol is suddenly confronted by the eyes of MR. SHAW'S MOTHER who stands in the kitchen doorway, looking a little disoriented in her robe and pajamas; Carol's thrown:

CAROL
...Oh. ...Hi.

But Mrs. Shaw just stands stiffly, staring, anxious about the intruder. Uncomfortable, Mr. Shaw turns to his mother:

MR. SHAW
Ma...? It's okay, Ma... It's okay.

He turns back to Carol:

MR. SHAW
C'mon...

Awkward, they start to head down the hallway -- Carol glances back to see Mrs. Shaw watching them silently as they go...

MR. SHAW
Ma?! I'm going outside to smoke,
okay?!

MRS. SHAW (O.S.)
You shouldn't smoke!

MR. SHAW
I know, Ma...!

As they hurry past, Carol catches a FLEETING GLANCE at OLD PHOTOS on the wall: IMAGES OF MR. SHAW AS A BOY...

EXT. MR. SHAW'S HOUSE - BACK PORCH - NIGHT

As they step out, Carol is still in a STATE; Mr. Shaw touches her arm, tries to comfort her -- they immediately begin talking, LOW, URGENT:

MR. SHAW
So what's going on...?

CAROL
-- I'm freaking out! That little
fucking Michael told Christian, and now
I don't know what's gonna happen -- I
told you he'd say something -- !

MR. SHAW
I'm sorry -- I didn't think he would!

CAROL

-- And then, when I went over to my neighbor's? There were all these cops, and I -- I saw that cop! He was there! I thought I was gonna have a heart attack --

MR. SHAW

-- What cop -- ?

CAROL

-- The COP! From the BANK!

MR. SHAW

The cop from the bank?!

CAROL

Yeah! They were all over there -- they're planning to do stake outs all over the island next week -- !

MR. SHAW

Because of us?!

CAROL

Yes!

MR. SHAW

(suddenly even more quiet)
Holy shit...!

CAROL

I know! What are we gonna do? We're gonna get caught...!

MR. SHAW

(horrified, thinking aloud)
Jesus... Well maybe we gotta... we gotta go out tomorrow and just keep going... till we get it all...

CAROL

Oh my God...

MR. SHAW

And maybe... Should I bring that... that fucking... gun...?

CAROL

What?!

MR. SHAW

I dunno -- for protection...! In case--

CAROL

No! Don't -- I don't want any guns...!

MR. SHAW

-- No, no... Okay... Sorry... I'm just...

(then, sighs, conceding)

Look. Maybe this is... Maybe we should wait... till things calm down.

CAROL

I know -- but the third is next Thursday! I'm gonna lose the house...!

She has to sit on the steps -- she drops her head into her hands, trying to get a hold of herself, suddenly breathless:

CAROL

Oh my God, I'm freaking out...!

He looks at her, struggling there for a moment... watches her... His demeanor begins to change... He looks pained... torn... Finally, he begins quietly, hesitantly:

MR. SHAW

Okay -- can I... can I tell you what I really think we should do...? Coz I been thinking about it.

(beat)

Can I tell you...?

Hearing this, she finally looks up at him, nods vulnerably...

CAROL

...Yeah...

His eyes shift for a moment, uncertainly; then, he braces himself. Says simply:

MR. SHAW

I think we should take the money we have, and just get outta here.

CAROL

...What?

MR. SHAW

We just, we gotta get outta here -- we'll go to Canada, somewhere...

She looks at him stunned, suddenly gets quietly upset:

CAROL

What are you talking about...? I can't, I can't do that...

MR. SHAW

(gentle)
Why not...?

CAROL

Because... What're you saying...? I have a family... Why do you think we've been doing this...?

MR. SHAW

No, I know, but Christian'll come with us, he'll...

Carol falls silent, turns away -- the shock is too much...

MR. SHAW

Carol, you don't understand, I care about you... Both of you... Like you were my own family...

CAROL

(crumbling)
Oh my God, please don't do this -- don't do this...!

MR. SHAW

What...? I love you --

CAROL

-- Stop!

MR. SHAW

-- Don't you love me -- ?

CAROL

Why are you doing this...?

MR. SHAW

Carol, I've been starving -- I can't go back to the way things were before -- I'll fucking kill myself... My whole fucking life has been a waste -- it's time I became a person, you know? I just...

(beat)

Go away with me... Please.

Hit hard, she starts to cry harder -- part of her so wanting to go with him, but it's too unbearable to even allow herself the thought; she fights herself, exasperated at her emotions:

CAROL

Fuck...!

He stops. Watches her as she struggles to recover. Finally, she wipes her tears away, still unable to look at him:

CAROL

You know, you can't go away, anyway...

MR. SHAW

What do you mean...?

CAROL

What about your mother?

MR. SHAW

(smiles, undeterred)

Let my fucking sister deal with this for once -- I don't care anymore, I really don't...

(then, simply, open)

I just... I wanna be with you.

Completely spent, she just sits there, shakes her head, overwhelmed; finally, starts to get up slowly, lost, sad:

CAROL

I have to go... Gerry's gonna be home soon...

He says nothing. Finally, she looks at him. He looks back, sad at how this turned out, completely at her mercy... he is on the verge of heartbreak:

MR. SHAW

Will you think about it...?

CAROL

I'll call you in the morning.

He smiles sadly, decides not to push:

MR. SHAW

Okay, I'll... I'll take that as a yes.

She smiles sadly too, looks away, then heads into the house.

The first section of "Alina" by Arvo Part begins to play... soft, simple notes on piano... And we CUT TO:

EXT. CAROL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The symbol of all Carol's troubles... A light snow drifts down around it. The windows are dark, the street peaceful, quiet. The MUSIC continues, and we SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

CAROL

In bed, eyes wide open, lost in thought. Gerry's asleep beside her, turned away. Suddenly, she senses something, turns to see Christian in the doorway, hugging his pillow, worried -- a bad dream.

Her face softens at the sight of him; she lifts the covers. He hurries toward his mother, climbs in to safety. She kindly shushes him so he won't wake his father.

She squeezes him tight, cradling him against her. She kisses the top of his head, smiles, comforted to have him so close. Her eyes well, go red.

FROM HIGH OVERHEAD

We watch the family, huddled under the covers. We HOLD; then DISSOLVE SLOWLY TO:

THE SAME SHOT -- MORNING

Carol and Gerry are gone, leaving Christian sleeping alone with his pillow. We can HEAR the SHOWER. The CORDLESS PHONE starts to RING...

Still in her nightgown, Carol steps quickly out of the closet -- wanting to silence the phone before it wakes Christian. She picks it up, clicks off the ringer. She looks at her son who stirs slightly, but doesn't wake.

Then she looks down at the CALLER ID on the phone -- it BLINKS REPEATEDLY IN SILENCE: "TG SHAW"

She watches mournfully as his flashing name beckons, but does not answer. Finally, his name disappears. She stares pained at the blank caller ID screen. Then she hears the SHOWER SHUT OFF. She turns anxiously toward the bathroom, then sets the phone onto the base, and heads quickly back:

INTO THE CLOSET

Where we SEE she's been packing her DUFFLE BAG. The blonde wig is inside. She ZIPS the bag SHUT.

The MUSIC STOPS.

EXT. STARBUCK'S COFFEE - MORNING

THROUGH THE LARGE PLATE GLASS WINDOW we can see Carol at the counter, ordering, the duffle hanging from her shoulder. It's dark out here, a storm is coming.

INSIDE

Carol takes her coffee, and heads over to the sugar counter. We are CLOSE on her, she looks TENSE. Outside, the WIND is quietly HOWLING. She picks up a bag of equal, shakes it anxiously, starts to tear it open.

The WIND SWELLS briefly as someone enters the front door. We STAY ON HER as she hears a VOICE at the counter:

MR. SHAW (O.S.)
Can I get a House Blend? Grande?

Her body sinks, she stops what she's doing, just stands there, unable to face him. We HOLD ON HER as footsteps approach. A FIGURE steps up beside her, starts reaching for Equal, napkins. Finally, we REVEAL MR. SHAW, staring down at the counter next to her; he whispers sweetly, hurt:

MR. SHAW
You didn't call me...

She lowers her head, ashamed, and we CUT TO:

INT. CAROL'S TAURUS - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

WE WATCH FROM BEHIND: Mr. Shaw in the driver's seat, Carol next to him. They both stare forward, painfully silent. The scene, their body language, it all has the air of a break-up about it. The air of goodbye. Finally, Carol speaks, quietly emotional, devastated:

CAROL
I just... I wish we could have met
some other way...

He looks at her, smiles sadly. Says very simply:

MR. SHAW
I don't think we ever would have.

She turns him, knows he's right. She lowers her head, and tears start to stream down her face. He watches her a beat; then reaches over to the ignition, turns on the engine.

CAROL
...What are you doing?

He looks at her:

MR. SHAW
 There's no way I'm letting you go
 alone.

Arvo Part's "Alina" begins again and we CUT TO:

A MOVING POV THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

We are pulling into a PARKING LOT, approaching a BANK...

CAROL AND MR. SHAW

Gaze warily out the windshield and windows, looking for signs of trouble... They peer into the parked cars... they glide right past the front of the bank, look briefly inside... everything looks normal.

They turn to each other, exchange nervous looks. This is the spot. As Mr. Shaw pulls back onto the street and starts to park, we CUT TO:

A LONG LENS SHOT THROUGH THE BANK DOORS

Snow falls. Now in disguise, Mr. Shaw and Carol approach us from a distance, marching silently, tensely, side by side. The breath steams out of their mouths in the cold.

As they get closer, Mr. Shaw unconsciously reaches for Carol's HAND, TAKES it... HOLD, until they enter

THE BANK

They move to THE TELLER LINE. MUSIC CONTINUES...

Mr. Shaw looks around the bank, scans the faces of the FEW CUSTOMERS... SEES an ELDERLY SECURITY GUARD who watches over the bank expressionlessly, bored...

Carol glances vacantly at the SECURITY CAMERA, when --

THE TELLER LIGHT

Blinks on. A Customer walks away from a window.

Mr. Shaw gently touches Carol's shoulder, alerting her. She turns to him, looks at the teller light, realizes it is time.

She steels herself, goes to the TELLER. She hands her the note and the garbage bag. The Teller reads it, looks at Carol, then back at Mr. Shaw. Worried, she takes the bag, opens her drawer, starts emptying it...

Carol glances back at Mr. Shaw, starting to look relieved, like this is almost over. He smiles, a bittersweet moment, then turns, keeping an eye on the people around the bank...

The Teller puts the bag of money on the counter in front of Carol; she turns, seeing it. She grabs it, says quietly:

CAROL

Thank you...

But the Elderly Security Guard sees the black garbage bag, and is suddenly alarmed as he realizes what's going on; he nervously pulls out his GUN, points it at Carol -- you get the sense he hasn't really had to do this much:

ELDERLY GUARD

Hey, hey, hey -- !

Carol turns just in time to see Mr. Shaw quickly pull out his GUN (the Burly Cop's Gun), and level it protectively:

MR. SHAW

Take it easy -- !

The Guard turns toward him, startled, terrified, and almost as a reflex, FIRES --

The bullet HITS MR. SHAW STRAIGHT IN THE HEAD, and he DROPS -- his gun goes off involuntarily, HITTING the GUARD in the LEG; the Guard CRUMPLES, MOANING in agony. Customers SCREAM.

This has all happened in barely an INSTANT.

Carol stands there FROZEN, in complete SHOCK, like a deer in the headlights. Unable to even make a sound, she just stares wide-eyed at Mr. Shaw on the ground, his open eyes TOTALLY LIFELESS, BLOOD POOLING around his head, the Police Revolver still in his limp hand. He is dead.

MUSIC STOPS.

Some of the Tellers step cautiously from behind the counter --

TELLER

Oh my God -- call nine-one-one!

The Teller's voice suddenly brings Carol back to reality -- she suddenly realizes the danger she is in as the Tellers start to tentatively converge. She takes a final glance at Mr. Shaw, then, in a TOTAL PANIC, she RUNS...!

We SEE HER REFLECTED AS SHE RUNS ON THE GLASS SURFACE OF:
THE LENS OF THE SECURITY CAMERA

Which looks down impassively over the horrible scene.

TELLER (O.S.)
SOMEBODY CALL 9-1-1!!!

And the SOUND GOES SILENT all at once as we SMASH CUT TO:

THE MOMENT OF THE SHOOTING REPEATED

As seen through the BLURRY, BLACK AND WHITE POV OF THE SECURITY CAMERA. One FRAME A SECOND. NO SOUND. (Like the kind of stark footage of violence on the local news.)

The TIME OF DAY is stamped on the corner of each FRAME:

Carol heading for the exit: 10:47:56... 10:47:57... The Guard pulls out his gun: 10:47:58... 10:47:59... Mr. Shaw pulls out the revolver: 10:48:00... The Guard turns: 10:48:01... He fires: 10:48:02... Mr. Shaw falls: 10:48:04.

We HOLD FOR A LONG, SILENT BEAT on one FINAL IMAGE: Mr. Shaw on the floor, dead... the time is 10:48:05.

Finally, "ALINA" STARTS TO PLAY one more time, and we --

CUT TO:

THE OPENING SHOT OF THE FILM.

LOOKING toward the STATION WAGON WINDSHIELD. Carol (OUT OF FOCUS) runs madly through the SWIRLING SNOW. The two coffee cups sit in the holders below the dashboard.

SOUND slowly returns: MUFFLED, WHISTLING WIND GUSTS...

Carol yanks open the door, scrambles in, hurling the bag of money into the passenger seat, starting the engine --

She hits the gas, screeching into a quivering U-TURN, almost losing control... She checks the rearview. As she drives, catching her breath, what has just happened finally begins to hit her in waves:

CAROL
Oh my God... Oh my God... Oh my
God...! Fuck. Fuck. Jesus!
(forcing herself to be
calm)
Okay... Okay...

And SUDDENLY the LOUD EXPLOSIVE CHARGE in the garbage bag goes off -- Carol SCREAMS as RED DYE SPRAYS EVERYWHERE!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. QUIET SUBURBAN HIGHWAY - WIDE SHOT - DAY

The TAURUS SWERVES OUT OF CONTROL, the HORN BLARES...! TIRES SMOKING and SCREECHING, the car struggles, finally coming to rest, cock-eyed, at the side of the road...!

After a moment, the driver window whirs down, and SMOKE ESCAPES into the cold air. We HOLD for a long beat...

INSIDE THE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Carol, in a panic, digs through the bag of red-dyed money -- finally, she finds the dye pack, and looks at it, stunned. SIRENS APPROACH.

Alarmed, she looks in the rearview, sees A GROUP OF POLICE CARS, roaring toward her, LIGHTS BLAZING; she starts to panic, fumbles for the ignition, but it's already too late --

POLICE AND FBI OFFICERS

CHARGE out of their cars, wearing flak jackets, guns drawn!

AN FBI MAN

Place! Your hands! On! The steering wheel!

Helpless, she complies -- an OFFICER suddenly rips open the door, hustles her out onto the ground! The SOUND begins to FADE OUT as we start to MOVE IN on her face, pressed to the pavement... she goes limp, puts up no fight at all as they yank her hands behind her, slip a restraint around them...

Finally, she lifts her head, LOOKING STRAIGHT TOWARD US IN CLOSE UP, her eyes hidden behind her sunglasses -- at first she seems oddly calm, docile, maybe even relieved; then, from behind her lenses, TEARS begin to streak down her cheeks...

Finally, we CUT TO what she is looking at:

RAY PERICE

Who stands alongside the other men about twenty feet away, his gun trained on Carol. As he suddenly realizes who it is, he lowers his gun slightly, stunned...

HIGH ANGLE

As they put Carol in a POLICE CAR, we DISSOLVE SLOWLY TO:

INT. NASSAU COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY HALLWAY - DAY

A FEMALE GUARD leads Carol, dressed in an orange prison jumpsuit, down the hall; Carol seems numb, barely listening as the Guard speaks without looking at her:

FEMALE GUARD

(rote, no affect)

Visiting hours are almost over, so you'll only have a few minutes. You are allowed three ten minute visits per week during official visiting hours only, Tuesday through Saturday. Please advise your visitors, there will be no visitations allowed during mealtimes or holidays.

Carol just nods as the Guard leads her into:

THE VISITING ROOM

A GLASS PARTITION bisects the room, TELEPHONES on either side. It's an overcast day, soft light pours in from small exterior windows high above. As Carol moves to sit she sees:

THROUGH THE GLASS

GERRY watching her, silently, at a complete loss -- he looks ruffled, like he's been up all night. CHRISTIAN sits beside him in his winter parka, staring at his feet.

Carol smiles, humiliated. Looks away.

FEMALE GUARD

You have five minutes.

Carol nods, self-conscious. And the Guard disappears. She looks up at Gerry. They slowly pick up the phones, so they can speak. Carol doesn't know what to say. Again, she just smiles -- hoping for mercy...

Finally, Gerry speaks, desperate for some explanation:

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)

(whispers, stunned)

What the fuck, Carol...? I mean...
what the fuck...?

She looks up at him, somehow hurt, no real way to answer:

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)

(like a little girl)

...What?

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
 (whispering)
 "What"?! Whattaya mean "what"?! Are
 you kidding? "WHAT"?!"

She just stares at him, suddenly growing quietly angry, something building... struggling with something, something she's wanted to say for a long time, but never could -- maybe it's the glass between them that gives her the courage; maybe she just has nothing left to lose...

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
 You know... sometimes, Gerry... I'm
 right in front of you. And you don't
 even see me.

He looks at her, totally thrown; says quietly, defensive:

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
 What the fuck are you talking about?

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
 You don't see me, Gerry...

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
 I don't see you...?!

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
No. You don't.

He watches her angrily, taking that in, looking for the meaning of that -- something briefly threatens to get through, but he immediately pushes it away:

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
 Okay. Honestly? I don't know what the
fuck you're talking about. Alright? I
 think you're... I think you're
 starting to go a little wacko now,
 okay? So just --

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
Don't! Do that.

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
 Do what -- don't go fucking crazy now --

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
 (fierce)
Don't! Don't you say that to me.
Anymore!

He stops, stunned by her forcefulness; then:

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
...Okay, Jesus. Take it easy --

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
(trembling with emotion, near
tears, but still strong)
Well I don't. Like it. I am right.
Here. Okay, Gerry!? Can you see me?!
I need you to see me! Do you...?

And for the first time... Maybe he does... He quiets, at a loss...

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
...What...? Yes, I... see you. Okay?

They just stare at each other for a very long beat. He's not sure how to proceed now... Then he starts to grow insecure, pissed... He starts to say quietly, with edge:

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
So what are you saying...? Did... did
he "see" you...?

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
(thrown, quiet)
...What?

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
This fucking guy!

Carol can't respond, she looks at Gerry, then looks down.

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
Do you have any idea how fucking
humiliating this is? It's all over the
news...!

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
(barely utters, still
can't look at him)
...I'm sorry.

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
Well, I don't understand -- what were
you doing?!

She can't even respond; it unnerves him. He become very quiet, as an unbearable thought flickers; he WHISPERS:

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
 What...? Did you... Did you love
 him...?

Carol's eyes fill with tears, her inability to answer the question answering it for her anyway -- she blinks up at him with a guilty, devastated smile, immediately blinks away. Gerry is devastated too. Finally, he has to just push it all away; he leans back in his chair, hurt:

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
 Ah, fuck...!

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
 ...I'm sorry, Gerry...

He just nods, withdrawing, trying to salvage his dignity. Then, finally, he says quietly:

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
 You have anything you want to say to
 your son...?

Carol looks over at Christian, who still won't look at her. It tears her apart:

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
 Is he doing okay...?

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
 (quiet, but with an edge)
 What do you think?

Finally, he softens a little, lowers the phone -- we HEAR THE CONVERSATION STILL SOFTLY THROUGH THE PHONE:

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
 (holding out phone)
 Here pal... your mom wants to say hi...

Carol watches as Christian just shakes his head.

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
 (to Christian)
 C'mon, pal, don't -- we don't have that
 much time...

CHRISTIAN (THROUGH PHONE)
 I don't wanna...

Getting emotional, Carol calls out futilely to him:

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
Christian...?!

But he won't take the phone.

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
Christian, talk to your mother...

CHRISTIAN
(still looking down,
upset)
No...!

Gerry turns to Carol, feeling terrible for her; puts the phone back to his ear, talks to Carol:

GERRY (THROUGH PHONE)
I don't -- what do you... what do you want me to do?

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
(smiling through tears)
Just... Could you just put the phone up next to his ear for me...?

He nods uncomfortably, sympathetically -- she watches with anticipation as he puts the phone by his son's ear.

CAROL (THROUGH PHONE)
(pleading)
Christian...? Honey...?

But Christian moves his head away:

CHRISTIAN (THROUGH PHONE)
No -- Don--

THE PHONE LINE SUDDENLY GOES DEAD. Alarmed, Carol speaks into the phone, BUT WE CAN'T HEAR HER:

CAROL (NO SOUND)
Hello?!

As a GUARD steps in behind, him, Gerry suddenly realizes their time is up. He puts the phone to his mouth -- BUT WE CAN'T HEAR HIM EITHER:

GERRY (NO SOUND)
Carol?

Realizing they can't hear each other, he just looks at her, left hanging, so many unresolved emotions. Finally, he hangs up the phone. Just sits there.

The Female Guard enters behind Carol, waiting for her. But Carol looks pleadingly at her son, waiting for him to look at her -- Gerry slowly stands. We watch her THROUGH THE GLASS, UNABLE TO HEAR HER AS SHE SAYS:

CAROL (NO SOUND)
Christian...?

She knocks urgently on the glass, tears streaming down her face -- but he never looks at her, as he takes his father's hand, starts with him toward the door...

The Female Guard comes up behind Carol, touches her arm -- she starts to stand, PLEADING SILENTLY:

CAROL (NO SOUND)
Wait -- I wanna talk to my son!
(turns back to glass)
Christian!

Then at the last moment, almost to the door, Christian suddenly weakens, turns to look at his mother -- seeing her -- he calls out to her silently, panicking, crying:

CHRISTIAN (NO SOUND)
Mom!

He lets go of his father's hand, and runs for the glass partition, presses his hands helplessly, pleadingly on the glass, tears streaming down his face. Carol instinctively moves back toward him -- the Female Guard takes pity on her, allows her this moment. She steps up to the glass, smiles at him, crying; they look at each other. She whispers to him:

CAROL (NO SOUND)
I love you, sweetie...

She takes HER HAND, PLACES IT ON THE GLASS, AGAINST HIS.

Then we CUT TO HER SIDE OF THE GLASS, FOCUSED ON THEIR HANDS on the glass, Christian looking at her, slightly out of focus -- because we are on her side, we CAN HEAR THIS ONE LINE FROM HER AS SHE UTTERS VERY QUIETLY TO HIM:

CAROL (O.S.)
I love you...

Finally, the Female Guard takes her arm. Gerry comes up, takes Christian's hand. He gives Carol a last look.

Then they all head for the exits, Carol walking slowly, watching her husband and son until they're gone. And finally, she goes too...

We are left in the EMPTY, SILENT ROOM. We SIT THERE.

Then, a RAY OF SUNLIGHT breaks through the clouds, and slowly begins to streak in through one of the exterior windows...

THE BEACH BOYS' "GOD ONLY KNOWS" begins to PLAY...

And we start to PUSH IN TOWARD the glass partition... closer and closer as --

The STREAK OF LIGHT WIDENS, finally ILLUMINATING what we are MOVING IN ON:

TWO HAND PRINTS

Pressing toward each other on the partition. A mother's and a son's, separated by the width of a pane of glass.

WE HOLD ON THEM, as the MUSIC PLAYS.

THEN CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.