

The Innocents

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WGAw & WGAe Registered

FADE IN:

EXT. GRAVEL PIT NEAR HARRISBURG - LATE JUNE, 1955 - DAY

It is a bright, warm day.

ROLL CREDITS

JERRY PETERMAN uses a high-powered rifle to accurately shoot cans and bottles placed on a dilapidated loading platform two hundred feet from where he is standing.

Jerry is a tall, sturdy, thirty-something veteran of World War II who has preserved his Marine persona. Each time he pulls the trigger he does so aggressively, his jaws clamped, his eyes sparking anger.

Jerry's twelve-year-old son, GREG PETERMAN, watches with rapt attention.

Greg is a miniature rendition of his father. His serious expression, blond buzz cut, white T-shirt, and olive drab slacks give him the look of an embryonic jar head.

Jerry shoots the last bottle and lowers the rifle. He stares at the shattered targets as he speaks.

JERRY PETERMAN

I got a surprise for you, boy.

Jerry leans his rifle against a fence, turns to Greg and tosses him car keys.

JERRY PETERMAN

Go open the trunk.

Greg walks purposefully toward a '51 Chevy and opens the trunk. He seems unsure what to do next.

JERRY PETERMAN

Don't just stand there, idiot. Bring it here.

With ritualistic gravity, Greg lifts a rifle wrapped in a blanket from the trunk and carries it to his father.

Jerry unwraps a .22 caliber bolt action rifle from the blanket and hands it to Greg, whose mouth drops and eyes open wide.

GREG PETERMAN

This is for me?

Jerry answers with a nod and a wry smile.

GREG PETERMAN (CONT'D)
Would it be all right, if maybe...could I
shoot it, Dad?

JERRY PETERMAN
(mocking)
Could I shoot it, Dad? You dumb jackass,
it's why I had you get it out of the
trunk. Give it here.

Greg hands the rifle to Jerry. Jerry lifts it and sights
something in the distance.

JERRY PETERMAN
Time you learned to shoot, boy.

Jerry lowers the rifle, ducks under the fence and moves
closer to the loading platform.

Greg follows.

When they stop, Jerry looks Greg square in the eye.

Greg responds like a raw recruit, stands at something close
to attention, and stares at his father's right ear.

JERRY PETERMAN
I'm going to tell you something, Son, and
you damn well better listen good. You are
never to touch this rifle unless I'm with
you. You got that?

GREG PETERMAN
Yes sir.

JERRY PETERMAN
Got what?

GREG PETERMAN
I shouldn't touch it unless you're with
me.

JERRY PETERMAN
You know I'm serious about this, don't
you?

GREG PETERMAN
Yes sir.

JERRY PETERMAN
And you know what's going to happen if I
ever catch you around this rifle on the
sly?

Greg gives Jerry a quick look, then nervously returns his focus to the right ear.

JERRY PETERMAN

Come on boy. What happens when you break a rule?

GREG PETERMAN

I...you'll...I get punished.

JERRY PETERMAN

Punished? I'll beat your ass. You understand? I'll warm that stinking backside of yours so bad you won't be able to sit down for a week. Any questions about what I'm saying?

GREG PETERMAN

No sir.

Jerry gives Greg a critical stare for a beat, and then he pulls a few .22 cartridges from his pocket and slips one into a slot on the underside of the grip.

JERRY PETERMAN

You load it just like that. Eight cartridges. Here.

Jerry hands Greg the rifle and then the remaining cartridges.

Greg looks at Jerry and is frozen by the import of the moment.

JERRY PETERMAN

Don't be eyeballing me, idiot. Put the ammo in the rifle.

Greg does as he is told.

END CREDITS

INT. NEW CUMBERLAND POLICE DEPT. OFFICE- TWO DAYS LATER - DAY

No lights are on in the office of KARL MEYERS, the New Cumberland Police Chief.

Meyers is forty-five, handsome in a military manner, prematurely gray, and a person not wont to smile. He is seated in a wooden swivel chair behind a gray metal desk, on which papers and pens are arranged in an orderly fashion.

Meyers is staring at the sunlit yard through half closed venetian blinds.

Meyers' gaze is distracted by a small, framed photo sitting on a credenza in front of the window. He picks up the frame and stares at it.

The photo is of nine year old SHIRLEY MEYERS, a beautiful, flaxen-haired girl with an irresistible smile. Her hair and clothes are in the style of the late Thirties.

Meyers, holding the frame in his lap, leans back in his chair and stares at the window.

MATCH FADE TO

EXT. BALTIMORE'S PATTERSON PARK - FLASHBACK, 1937 - DAY

Numerous FAMILIES enjoy a sunny day.

Karl Meyers wears the uniform of a Baltimore police officer.

LAURA MEYERS, a beautiful brunette and Meyers' wife, is leisurely swinging on a swing.

Shirley mugs for her father as he takes pictures with his new Kodak camera.

Shirley approaches Karl and assumes the pose of the framed photo.

Kodak camera's POV

Shirley's face nearly FILLS FRAME. FREEZE FRAME.

INT. NEW CUMBERLAND POLICE DEPT. OFFICE - BACK TO PRESENT

Karl Meyers slowly places the picture frame on the credenza.

MAX TRAVALIO (O.S.)
 (sympathetic)
 You still miss her after all these years?

Karl slowly turns around.

MAX TRAVALIO stands in the office doorway.

A smile tries to tease its way onto Karl's face and fails.

Travalio wears the uniform of a Pennsylvania State Trooper and carries his State Trooper's hat under his arm.

Karl stands and extends his hand.

KARL MEYERS
 I still miss her, Max. How've you been?

MAX TRAVALIO
 If it weren't for these damn J.D.s, my
 life would be a lot easier. You talk to
 the principal?

Karl takes his hat from a coat rack as he walks toward the
 door.

KARL MEYERS
 About a half hour ago. I think he'd agree
 with you. He's going to press charges
 when we catch whoever did it.

MAX TRAVALIO
 Damn J.D.s.

INT. NEW CUMBERLAND POLICE DEPT. ANTEROOM

SARAH, a thirty-year-old blond whose appearance is a five-and-
 dime emulation of a Hollywood starlet, busily types a form at
 a manual typewriter. She looks up as her boss enters.

Meyers and Travaglio walk without pause toward the front door.

SARAH
 Going out?

KARL MEYERS
 Going out. Be at the high school for
 about an hour checking out the vandalism.
 I'll radio you when I leave there.

SARAH
 OK Chief. (coy) Bye Max.

MAX TRAVALIO
 (mimics)
 Bye Sarah.

EXT. NEW CUMBERLAND POLICE DEPT. - MOMENTS LATER

Meyers and Travaglio walk down the outside steps to the
 parking area.

KARL MEYERS
 (mocking)
 Bye Max.

Both men laugh. Meyers gets into a black and white New
 Cumberland patrol car; Travaglio enters a Pennsylvania State
 Police car.

Both cars drive off.

INT. BASEMENT DEN IN PETERMAN HOME - A SHORT TIME LATER

The room is small. Furnishings are serviceable hand-me-downs. A Van Gogh print and paint-by-the-numbers paintings hang on the walls. A badly worn hooked-rug covers the floor.

Greg Peterman and twelve-year-old BARRY MOYER lounge on the floor. Both boys wear blue jeans and cowboy boots.

Barry fiddles with a toy tommy gun. He is a head taller than Greg but much thinner.

Nine-year-old PATSY MOYER sits primly on an overstuffed chair tending to a doll. Patsy is an endearingly beautiful and spunky child physically reminiscent of Shirley Meyers.

BARRY MOYER

I think you're a lying pecker. You ain't got no rifle.

GREG PETERMAN

I ain't no pecker.

BARRY MOYER

You're making it up 'cause I got this brand new tommy gun.

GREG PETERMAN

I don't care about no stupid toy.

BARRY MOYER

You're jealous.

Greg is annoyed. He rises to his knees.

GREG PETERMAN

Of what? The caps keep getting jammed.

BARRY MOYER

The pecker's jealous.

GREG PETERMAN

I'm not jealous of no piece of junk. Probably made in Japan.

Barry gets to his knees.

BARRY MOYER

You better take that back.

GREG PETERMAN

What? That everybody knows something made in Japan is a piece of junk?

Barry pushes Greg.

BARRY MOYER
Take it back.

Barry pushes Greg harder, and Greg pushes back.

Barry and Greg begin a spirited tussle on the floor.

Patsy smiles mischievously.

PATSY MOYER
Mrs. Peterman! Mrs. Peterman!

VIVIAN PETERMAN, thirty-two, tall and svelte, is a faded small town beauty with the long hairstyle of her youth.

Vivian enters and collars each boy.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
That's enough! Stop it!

The boys separate.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
That's the third time today you boys have been after each other. I'm getting sick and tired of it. It's a beautiful day. Why aren't you outside playing?

Greg and Barry pout. Patsy grins.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Look, I'm not going to put up with any more of this.
(to Greg)
One more time and Barry is going home, and you are going to spend the rest of the day in your room.

Greg's and Barry's postures soften.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Why don't you go outside?

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian enters and approaches an ancient wringer clothes washer that agitates a load of her husband's shirts.

The small, cinder block room is crowded by a furnace, a large galvanized sink, a new Kenmore drier and rough shelves containing myriad household products.

Vivian turns off the washer, stares at its contents for a moment, and then stares into space.

Vivian shakes herself back to the present, reaches into the washer, pulls out a shirt, and feeds it through the wringer.

INT. DEN - CONTINUOUS

Greg is sitting on the floor, and Barry is draped across a chair. Patsy plays with her doll.

The boys speak in near whispers.

BARRY MOYER
I still think you're lying.

GREG PETERMAN
I'm not lying, damn it.

PATSY MOYER
Ooooh, I'm telling.

BARRY MOYER
Shut up and go home, penis brain.

PATSY MOYER
Now I'm really telling.

BARRY MOYER
Go ahead and tell.

PATSY MOYER
I will.

BARRY MOYER
You won't because you're afraid to say
penis to Mom.

PATSY MOYER
Am not.

BARRY MOYER
Are too.

PATSY MOYER
Am not!

BARRY MOYER
Say it. (beat) See, you can't even say
it. You can't say penis.

Patsy looks daggers at Barry. She stands.

PATSY MOYER
I'm not saying it here, but I'll tell
Mommy. I'm going to tell her right now.

BARRY MOYER
You won't leave because you're in love
with Greg.

Greg whips a pillow at Barry. Patsy starts to cry.

GREG PETERMAN
Shut up, stupid!

Patsy runs out of the room. Barry yells after her.

BARRY MOYER
Cry baby!

Barry starts fiddling with the Tommy Gun.

BARRY MOYER
Prove to me you're not a liar. Show me
the rifle.

GREG PETERMAN
My dad said I can't touch it unless he's
with me.

BARRY MOYER
Then it ain't your gun.

GREG PETERMAN
Is too.

BARRY MOYER
Is not.

GREG PETERMAN
Is too.

BARRY MOYER
Then show me.

GREG PETERMAN
I can't.

BARRY MOYER
Then you're either a liar or a big pussy.

Greg stands and walks to Barry. Barry remains draped across
the chair.

Barry aims the Tommy Gun at Greg.

GREG PETERMAN
I ain't no pussy.

BARRY MOYER
Then why can't I see it? Your father
ain't even here, so what're you worried
about? You're just a pussy.

Greg jumps Barry and they wrestle. Greg manages to twist Barry's arm into an arm lock. The boys' voices remain at a near whisper.

GREG PETERMAN
Say I ain't no pussy.

Barry doesn't respond. Greg pushes harder on the arm lock.

Barry is in pain.

GREG PETERMAN
Say it. Say I ain't no pussy.

BARRY MOYER
(clenched teeth)
You ain't...no pussy.

Greg lets go. Barry rolls away and massages his shoulder. He looks defiantly at Greg.

BARRY MOYER
But you're still a liar.

GREG PETERMAN
I ain't no damn liar, you son of a bitch,
and I'll prove it.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE LAUNDRY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vivian is passing shirts through the wringer. She sees the boys as they pass by the open laundry room door.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
You boys going outside?

GREG PETERMAN
We're going to my room to play soldiers.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Why don't you go outside?

GREG PETERMAN
Too hot.

As the boys exit, Vivian offers a caution.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Please clean them up when you're done.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM

VIVIAN PETERMAN
(loud)
You know how your father hates it when
your room is messy.

Vivian passes shirts through the wringer.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Greg and Barry sneak into the room.

Greg removes his rifle from behind the sliding doors of the
room's only closet.

Barry yanks it from him, lifts it, and takes aim at Greg.

BARRY MOYER
Holy moley. We've got to go shoot this
thing.

GREG PETERMAN
My father would kill me.

BARRY MOYER
He won't find out.

GREG PETERMAN
How do you know? He always finds out
everything. Everything!

Greg yanks the rifle from Barry and places it back into the
closet.

BARRY MOYER
I won't call you a pussy anymore.

GREG PETERMAN
Big deal.

Greg starts to exit the room.

BARRY MOYER
Wait a minute, will you? I'll trade you
something for a chance to shoot it.

Greg pauses.

GREG PETERMAN
Like what?

Barry fishes into the pocket of his jeans and pulls out a stiletto style switchblade with a four inch blade that he holds just beyond Greg's reach.

GREG PETERMAN
(excited)
Is it real?

BARRY MOYER
(mocking)
Is it real?

Barry pushes a button and the knife snaps open.

Greg's eyes narrow in concentration.

GREG PETERMAN
Where did you get it?

BARRY MOYER
From my brother's drawer.

GREG PETERMAN
Are you crazy? Vaughn will kill you.

BARRY MOYER
I took it a week ago, and he doesn't even know it. It's an old one.

GREG PETERMAN
If he goes looking for it, he's going to know it.

BARRY MOYER
Don't worry about it. Come on. The knife for a chance to shoot the rifle.

Barry hands the knife to Greg.

Greg closes and opens the knife a few times and then looks at Barry for a long beat.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian Peterman is preparing a casserole.

Barry enters and passes through.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Going home?

BARRY MOYER
Yup.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
What's Greg doing?

BARRY MOYER
Don't know. See you later.

DOOR SLAM marks Barry's exit from the house.

EXT. PETERMAN'S FRONT YARD

The split-level house is the last on a cul-de-sac in a development of modest and nearly identical new homes, each surrounded by ragged lawns and minimal landscaping.

The development has encroached on an old growth forest, the border of which forms the boundary to the Petermans' side yard. Greg's bedroom is on the forest side of the house.

Barry appears from the side of the house and crosses the front yard at a run.

EXT. PETERMAN'S SIDE YARD

Barry arrives below Greg's upper level bedroom window.

Greg opens the window.

Barry looks around to see if anyone is watching.

BARRY MOYER
Hurry up!

Greg lowers the rifle by holding on to the end of the barrel. Barry can just reach the butt.

BARRY MOYER
Got it.

Greg lets go of the rifle.

Barry loses control of the rifle, and it hits the ground.

GREG PETERMAN
Damn you!

BARRY MOYER
Sorry.

As Barry picks up the gun, Greg exits the window and hangs from the sill for a beat before letting go.

Greg hits the ground, somersaults backwards, gets to his feet, grabs the rifle from Barry, and runs to a narrow trail leading into the forest.

Barry follows.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

The neighboring house is behind the Petermans'.

Patsy Moyer swings on a swing set in the neighbor's backyard. She sees Greg and Barry running into the woods.

Patsy hops off the swing and runs after them.

INT. PETERMAN'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Vivian washes a bowl in the kitchen sink. Through the kitchen window, she watches Patsy running through the backyard.

Vivian rinses the bowl, places it on a drain board, dries her hands on a hand towel hanging from a cabinet handle, puts a glass lid on the casserole, and places the casserole in the wall oven.

Vivian removes her apron and hangs it on a hook.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
(loud)
Greg?

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian ascends the six steps to the upper level of the house.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Greg?

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian turns on the water in the tub and then exits.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE GREG'S ROOM

Vivian approaches the room.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Gregory?

INT. GREG'S ROOM

Vivian opens the door. A crease forms on her brow as she surveys the room.

She closes the open window and exits.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian slides open the closet door on the side where the gun had been and retrieves a robe. She closes the door.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The tub is full of bubbles, the water is turned off, and the room is illuminated by the light coming through closed venetian blinds.

Vivian stands in front of a large mirror hanging above a vanity.

Vivian's worn, housewife aura dissipates as she peels off her jersey top and shorts and clowns into the mirror with an exaggerated, sexy pout.

Vivian pulls her hair back into a ponytail, and her playful expression becomes serious. She stares for a beat.

Vivian continues to stare as she lets her hair fall. She sensually removes her panties and bra.

Vivian stares at her reflection as she lifts her breasts. Her expression conveys the beginnings of arousal.

Vivian leans close to the mirror and stares into the reflection of her eyes for a moment.

Vivian walks toward the bath and climbs into it slowly.

Vivian lies beneath bubbles with her head lying against the back of the tub. After a few seconds, her eyes close and in a few seconds more her mouth opens, her head tilts back, and her body stiffens.

Seconds later, her body relaxes, her eyes open, and she slowly begins to rub her arms and upper body. She smiles slightly.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

A New Cumberland patrol car is traveling southbound.

INT. NEW CUMBERLAND PATROL CAR

Karl Meyers picks up the two way radio mike and speaks into it.

KARL MEYERS
Sarah, it's Karl. Over.

SARAH (RADIO)
Hey Chief.

KARL MEYERS
Over.

SARAH (RADIO)
Easy.

KARL MEYERS
Stop fooling around. I'm going to patrol
for the rest of the afternoon and then
head home. Ray's on tonight. I might stop
at Finkelstein's just to let them know
I'm alive and well. Over.

SARAH (RADIO)
Easy.

Meyers nearly smiles as he puts the mike back in place.

The West Shore theater is seen through the windshield a block
ahead. The marquee reads: *Shane*, Alan Ladd and Jean Arthur.

MATCH FADE TO

INT. BALTIMORE CITY PATROL CAR - FLASHBACK, 1939 - DAY

The Rialto Theater is seen through the windshield a block
ahead. The marquee reads, *Gone With the Wind*, Clark Gable,
Vivian Leigh, Olivia de Havilland, and Leslie Howard.

Meyers is in uniform.

A crowd of MOVIEGOERS exits the theater.

EXT. RIALTO THEATER

Laura and Shirley Meyers exit with the crowd. Both appear to
be in high spirits. A bus is stopped to their left.

INT. PATROL CAR

Meyers opens the window and waves; Laura waves back.

EXT. RIALTO THEATER

Laura and Shirley enter the street. Laura looks only to her
right.

HORN BLASTS

TIRES SCREECH

Laura's face flashes terrorized recognition.

CUT TO BLACK

SCREAM

THUDS OF TWO BODIES STRUCK BY A CAR

EXT. CLEARING IN OLD GROWTH FOREST - BACK TO PRESENT

The clearing borders a slow moving stream. An earthen bank six feet high rings the clearing, and the forest forms a wall around the clearing on top of the bank. Roots of trees growing at the top of the bank are exposed.

Greg aims at one of the roots and fires the rifle. A cloud of dirt explodes near the root.

EXT. OLD GROWTH FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Patsy is off the trail and surrounded by forest. Her lower lip quivers, and she is about to cry.

RIFLE POP!

Patsy clamors toward the sound.

POP!

EXT. CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Barry shoots at the bank, lowers the rifle, pulls back the bolt and ejects the shell, raises the rifle, and aims.

Barry pulls the trigger, but the gun doesn't fire.

Barry startles Greg by pointing the rifle at him.

GREG PETERMAN

Asshole!

BARRY MOYER

Take it easy, peckerhead. It's empty.
Load it up.

Greg grabs the gun and pulls back the bolt.

GREG PETERMAN

I ain't no peckerhead.

Greg rams the bolt into place.

Greg points the gun at Barry, who jumps back in mock fear.

Greg pulls the trigger.

BANG!

A bullet strikes Barry mid-torso, and he falls backward. He screams and writhes on the ground.

Greg is frozen in place.

GREG PETERMAN
Oh my God. Oh my God.

EXT. EDGE OF CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Patsy stands in the shadows and stares, her face a mask of shock.

Patsy's POV: Greg drops the rifle and drops to his knees beside Barry.

EXT. CLEARING

Barry writhes and yells and clutches his belly.

BARRY MOYER
It hurts! It hurts! Oh God! It hurts!

Greg grabs Barry and unsuccessfully attempts to restrain him.

GREG PETERMAN
Barry...please...Someone's going to hear you. Please stop yelling.

BARRY MOYER
Oh God! Oh God!

GREG PETERMAN
(screams)
Shut up!

Greg stands up quickly, grabs the rifle, rams the butt into Barry's face, and knocks him out.

Greg stands over Barry and stares at him. Greg's expression changes from wild-eyed aggression to unabated fear.

GREG PETERMAN
Oh, no. Oh no. He's going to kill me.
He's going to kill me.

Greg paces frantically.

GREG PETERMAN

What am I going to do? He's going to kill me. What am I going to do?

Greg puts his hands in his pockets, feels something there, and freezes for a beat. He pulls the stiletto from his pocket and stares at it.

Greg walks to Barry and drops to his knees. His eyes are devoid of emotion.

Greg opens the switchblade, lifts it above his head, and pauses for a beat.

Greg drives the blade toward Barry's abdomen.

INT. PETERMAN' KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian enters wearing high heels, a full-skirted dress, and faux pearl earrings and necklace. Her long hair is pulled back into a ponytail tied with a ribbon; she wears make-up.

Vivian writes a quick note on a small note pad, tears the note from the pad, places it conspicuously on the kitchen table and exits.

EXT. CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

The summer bright day has become overcast.

Greg stands and stares blankly at a bullet he holds between forefinger and thumb. His hands, the bullet, the stiletto, his shirt, and his pants are covered with gore.

Greg drops the bullet and walks to the stream.

DISTANT THUNDER

Greg washes the blood from his hands and the knife. He walks toward the rifle, which lies on the ground near Barry's body.

Greg ignores the body as he pockets the knife and picks up the rifle.

Greg takes a step toward the forest and stops. His blank expression breaks into deep grief. He drops to the ground, sits and sobs.

DISTANT THUNDER.

EXT. DEVELOPMENT STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian walks briskly along the sidewalk.

DISTANT THUNDER.

Vivian looks skyward and picks up her pace.

EXT. OLD GROWTH FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Greg walks quickly on a path through the woods. The path is fifty feet from and parallels a jeep track. Greg carries the rifle casually. His blank eyes look toward the ground.

SMOKER'S HACKING COUGH

Greg stops, his eyes on high alert.

TOMMY BRODE stands at the edge of the jeep track and urinates against a tree.

Brode wears a dirty white T-shirt and gray slacks. A lit cigarette hangs from his mouth. His hair is black, his skin is tanned, and he is extraordinarily thin.

A branch CRACKS.

Brode turns toward the sound.

Greg hides in the undergrowth.

Brode does not see Greg but stares in his direction as he zips up his fly, takes a drag on the cigarette and hacks.

Brode walks away on the jeep track.

Greg gets up, and holding the rifle, he disappears into the woods at a run.

EXT. EDGE OF CLEARING - CONTINUOUS

Barry's body lies in the grass.

THUNDER

SLOW PAN from Barry's body to the edge of the woods where a catatonic Patsy sits nearly hidden in the undergrowth.

EXT. PETERMAN HOME - A SHORT TIME LATER

Greg stands at the forest edge, stares at his house for a beat, and leans the rifle behind a tree.

Greg goes to a slightly open basement window in a window well. He opens the window further and wriggles inside.

INT. DEN

Greg pauses and listens. He exits on tiptoe.

INT. STAIRWELL - MOMENTS LATER

Greg peers cautiously over the edge of the steps. He stands and sneaks up stairs. As he passes the kitchen, he sees Vivian's note.

INT. KITCHEN

Greg retrieves the note, reads it and bolts upstairs.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Greg quickly strips off his shirt and pants, puts on similar replacements, pulls an old army blanket from the shelf in his closet, opens the window, and throws the blanket outside.

EXT. PETERMAN HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Greg retrieves the blanket, takes it into the woods, and wraps the rifle in it.

Greg calmly walks toward the back door of the house carrying the wrapped rifle.

INT. ENTRY HALL OF MOYER HOME - CONTINUOUS

ALICE MOYER enters carrying a grocery bag. She is an attractive woman whose appearance testifies to her devotion to the Fifties' task of keeping up with fashion.

ALICE MOYER
(loud)
Patsy? Barry?

INT. KITCHEN

Alice enters, places the grocery bag on the kitchen table, and exits.

INT. ENTRY HALL

Alice looks down a hallway of the ranch house.

ALICE MOYER
Patsy? Barry?

Alice exits via the front door and leaves it open.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A dozen crumpled tissues marked with blood and dirt surround Greg.

Greg inspects the rifle and exits with it.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Greg carefully places the rifle in the closet and exits.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Greg bundles the tissues in his soiled clothes and exits with the bundle.

EXT. NEIGHBOR'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Vivian walks to the sidewalk in front of the house. The Neighbor Lady stands inside the front door.

Vivian looks at the woman, smiles and waves. The woman reciprocates. Vivian walks away.

EXT. PETERMAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Greg exits with the bundle via the back door and approaches two large, galvanized trash cans.

Greg looks to see if anyone is watching. He takes the lid off a trash can, removes two grocery bags full of trash, places the soiled clothes into the can, replaces the bags and the lid, and goes back inside the house.

INT. MOYER'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Alice Moyer places the last of four grocery bags on the kitchen table. She exits.

INT. HALLWAY IN MOYER HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Alice looks into Patsy's room and then into Barry's room.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Greg gives his room the once-over. He spies the stiletto on the night stand next to his bed.

Greg retrieves the knife and puts it under his undershirts.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian enters.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
 (loud, sing-song)
 Greg.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Greg exits via the back-door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DOOR SLAM

Vivian walks toward the kitchen.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
 Greg? Is that you?

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian goes to the window and looks outside.

EXT. FOREST - CONTINUOUS

Greg hides behind a large tree. He is breathing heavily and there is fear in his eyes.

INT. MOYER HOME ENTRY HALL - CONTINUOUS

HARRY MOYER enters through the front door carrying a thin and battered valise. He is an owlish man who wears an inexpensive and plain business suit, white shirt, dark tie, black rimmed glasses, fedora, and sensible shoes.

Harry is the fashion antithesis of his status conscious wife.

HARRY MOYER
 (calls out)
 I'm home.

Alice Moyer enters from the kitchen.

ALICE MOYER
 How was your day?

Harry kisses her perfunctorily and drops his valise on a narrow accent table.

HARRY MOYER
 Good. Where are the kids?

ALICE MOYER
 God only knows where Vaughn is. Barry and Patsy should have been home an hour ago.

Alice picks up the valise. Harry puts his hat on the top shelf of a guest closet near the front door.

ALICE MOYER
Barry was watching Patsy because I went shopping. I told him to be home by four.

HARRY MOYER
It's after five.

Alice heads down a hallway carrying the valise.

ALICE MOYER
I'll give them another fifteen minutes, then I'll give Vivian a call.

Harry picks up a stack of mail from the table and begins sorting through it.

ALICE MOYER (O.S.)
They're probably still at the Petermans'.

INT. PETERMAN'S LIVING ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

Vivian is curled up on the sofa reading LIFE magazine.

PHONE RINGS

INT. KITCHEN

Vivian answers the phone.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Hello. (beat) Patsy left about two, I guess. Barry left a little later.

INT. MOYER'S KITCHEN

Alice Moyer is on the phone.

ALICE MOYER
Barry is in big trouble. If you see them, send them home.

INT. PETERMAN'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Vivian hangs up the phone and checks the casserole in the oven. She retrieves a head of iceberg lettuce and a tomato from the refrigerator and starts to make a salad.

Jerry Peterman, wearing a loosened tie and white shirt open at the collar, enters the kitchen and retrieves a bottle of Schmidt's beer from the refrigerator.

Vivian gives Jerry a fleeting glance.

Jerry drinks his beer and stares at Vivian as she puts the finishing touches on dinner.

JERRY PETERMAN
What the hell did you do to your hair?

VIVIAN PETERMAN
I thought you'd like something different.

JERRY PETERMAN
Mistake. I hate it.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
You really don't like it?

JERRY PETERMAN
Take it out.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
It might grow on you.

JERRY PETERMAN
(yells)
Get rid of it!

Vivian's eyes begin to fill with tears but she keeps her composure, unties the bow and tosses her head to shake out her hair.

JERRY PETERMAN
The only God damned thing you have to worry about all day is make sure that little son of a bitch does what he's supposed to do, not invent some horse shit hairdo. How much trouble can it be to keep the little son of a bitch in line? (beat) How hard can it be?

Vivian sets the table.

JERRY PETERMAN
Hey!

Jerry grabs Vivian's arm and yanks her around to face him.

JERRY PETERMAN
I asked you a question.

Defiance flashes in Vivian's eyes, and then she looks away.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
I need to finish setting the table.

JERRY PETERMAN

Fuck that!

Jerry retains his grip on Vivian as he sweeps the contents of the table onto the floor with the hand holding the beer. He drops the bottle on the floor and grabs Vivian's other arm.

Jerry bears down with his grip, but Vivian does not cry.

JERRY PETERMAN

Can you or can you not keep the little bastard in line?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

He's not a little bastard.

JERRY PETERMAN

Why do you stick up for the little shit? You can't be too tough on kids. They need to know their place.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

He's just a kid.

Jerry pushes her away.

JERRY PETERMAN

So what? If you don't stay on top of him, he's going to end up like that Moyer kid...What's his name?...Vaughn. A total J.D. If you can't keep him in line, by God I will.

Vivian watches Jerry pick up the beer bottle and drink the small amount remaining.

JERRY PETERMAN

Get this mess cleaned up.

Jerry presses the trash can pedal and the lid pops up.

JERRY PETERMAN

What the hell do you do all day? This God damn can is full.

EXT. REAR OF PETERMAN HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Greg Peterman is standing at the edge of the woods looking at the back of his house.

The sky is heavily overcast and about to rain. The SOUND of occasional THUNDER is very close.

Vivian comes out of the back door carrying a paper grocery bag full of trash and goes to the trash can.

Vivian cries as she lifts the lid of the trash can in which Greg has placed the bloody clothes. She stuffs the trash into the can and slams the lid on top.

Vivian regains control and hollers out into the evening air in the singsong call of mothers.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Greg. (beat) Greg.

Vivian turns toward the house.

GREG PETERMAN (O.S.)
Mom!

Greg runs to Vivian.

Vivian takes a few steps toward him. They throw their arms around each other.

Vivian lets go and looks at him with concern in her eyes.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Where have you been?

GREG PETERMAN
Oh, Mom. I been...

Greg starts to cry, and Vivian holds him again.

JERRY PETERMAN (O.S.)
What the hell is this?

Jerry INTO VIEW holding another bottle of beer. He walks toward them.

Vivian lets go of Greg and stands back.

JERRY PETERMAN
Where the hell have you been, boy?

Greg stands at attention.

JERRY PETERMAN
I asked you a question.

GREG PETERMAN
I been...in the woods.

JERRY PETERMAN
Doing what?

Greg looks at his mother for protection but there is none there. He looks back at his father.

JERRY PETERMAN
Lose your voice, pal? What were you doing
in the woods?

Greg cries despite what appears to be a valiant attempt not to. He remains at attention.

GREG PETERMAN
A man attacked Barry and me.

JERRY PETERMAN
What?

GREG PETERMAN
A man attacked us in the woods.

Vivian looks shocked but does not go to Greg.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Oh my god.

JERRY PETERMAN
Stop crying, boy! Where's Barry?

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Leave him alone.

JERRY PETERMAN
Shut up Vivian. (to Greg) Where's Barry?

When Greg does not answer, Jerry shakes Greg hard.

JERRY PETERMAN
God damn it, stop crying you little panty
waste! Where's Barry?

GREG PETERMAN
I don't know.

Greg runs to his mother, wraps his arms around her, and sobs.

Vivian sees fury in Jerry's face and gently pushes Greg away.

Greg cries silently as his body droops.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Karl Meyers' patrol car approaches Finkelstein's Pharmacy,
the first in a row of six small storefront businesses.

A small crowd of TEENAGERS, most of whom are smoking, hang out on the sidewalk and along the curb.

Most of the boys wear plaid short-sleeved shirts, cuffed slacks, and penny loafers. A few wear white T-shirts, and a half dozen wear light-weight pink jackets with "Cougars" written in script on the back.

The girls wear blouses, full skirts, bobby sox, and saddle shoes. Most have ponytails.

All parking spaces on the street are occupied.

A chopped, bright yellow rod with flames at the wheel wells is parked beside a fire hydrant in front of Finkelstein's.

Two convertibles are double parked. Their teenage OCCUPANTS talk to friends in the crowd.

INT. PATROL CAR

Meyers observes other cars having difficulty getting around the convertibles.

Myers flips the siren switch on and off.

WHOOO WHOOP

The drivers of the convertibles slowly drive away.

The crowd taunts Meyers in a relatively good-natured manner.

TEEN ONE

Try the horn.

TEEN TWO

The old folks' home is two blocks down.

TEEN THREE

Get that for Christmas?

TEEN FOUR

My dog's louder than that.

EXT. MAIN STREET - CONTINUOUS

The patrol car pulls into a gas station across the street from the row of shops and parks.

Meyers gets out of the car and casually crosses the street. He walks to the edge of the crowd and pauses. His demeanor is more friendly than confrontational.

KARL MEYERS

You know you kids shouldn't be smoking.

TEEN ONE

(smart ass)

He's going to tell us it's going to stunt our growth.

KARL MEYERS

Worse. You could end up looking like me.

The teens collectively groan and feign fright. A few drop their cigarettes and grind them out dramatically.

Meyers remains deadpan; the teens laugh.

Meyers sees DARLENE in the crowd and approaches her.

The crowd parts.

DARLENE

Hey Chief.

KARL MEYERS

Where's your boyfriend, gorgeous?

Darlene tries to ignore the compliment, but cannot resist a slight smile. She jerks her head toward Finkelstein's and then takes a long, defiant drag on her cigarette.

Meyers gives his head a slight shake and moves toward the pharmacy.

INT. FINKELSTEIN'S - MOMENTS LATER

The pharmacy is at a counter at the rear of the store; the main part of the long and narrow store is a soda fountain. Several old wooden booths run along one side of the room.

The fountain and IRA FINKELSTEIN, an elderly man of appreciable energy wearing a white uniform, are behind a stool-lined counter that runs along the other wall.

The booths and stools are all occupied by TEENAGERS.

BILL WAXMAN and VAUGHN MOYER are the only two teens wearing leather jackets, jeans, and black combat boots. They are sitting in a booth with two FRIENDS.

Meyers enters to a small chorus of groans.

VAUGHN MOYER

(louder than groans)

Copper.

Meyers approaches Waxman's booth and ignores Moyer.

KARL MEYERS
We got ourselves a little problem, Wax.

BILL WAXMAN
What's up Chief?

KARL MEYERS
Fire hydrant?

VAUGHN MOYER
Ain't no fire.

KARL MEYERS
Full of yourself today, hey Vaughn?

VAUGHN MOYER
(to his friends)
At least I ain't full of shit.

Lightning quick, Meyers grabs the back of Vaughn's neck, slams his face into a banana split, and holds it there.

Vaughn struggles but cannot extricate himself from Meyers' grip. Meyers appears calm.

KARL MEYERS
Fire hydrant?

BILL WAXMAN
I'll move it right now.

KARL MEYERS
Thanks, Wax.

Meyers lets go of Vaughn.

Vaughn jerks his head up quickly and gasps for air.

KARL MEYERS
Enjoy the rest of your sundae.

Everyone is silent as Meyers walks toward the door.

Vaughn goes after Meyers, but Waxman and others hold him back. It is a struggle for everyone in the room not to laugh.

Finkelstein brings Vaughn a wet dish towel to wipe his face.

Vaughn angrily wipes his face with the towel as he watches Meyers exit. Waxman follows Meyers.

EXT. NEW CUMBERLAND RESIDENTIAL STREET - A SHORT TIME LATER

Karl Meyers parallel parks the police car in front of his house.

The house is positioned at the end of ten identical row houses dating from the early part of the century. Each has its own porch. A narrow strip of flowers or grass is between the porches and the sidewalk.

Meyers' elderly next door neighbor, CHESTER, sits on a porch swing and watches Meyers park.

Meyers exits the car and approaches his house.

CHESTER

Afternoon, Chief. Nice job parking the car. Better than yesterday.

KARL MEYERS

Afternoon, Chester.

Meyers opens his unlocked door.

INT. MEYERS' LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Meyers picks up a few pieces of mail from the floor.

CHESTER THE CAT saunters to Meyers and rubs against his legs.

KARL MEYERS

Afternoon, Chester.

The cat saunters through the open door to the porch.

Meyers closes the door with his foot and walks across the small room, illuminated by light coming through partially closed venetian blinds, to an ornately carved upright cabinet.

Meyers places the mail on top of the cabinet and opens the doors. An extensive stock of liquor is inside.

Meyers removes a tumbler and a bottle of bourbon, pours himself two fingers, replaces the bottle, downs the drink with one swallow, and then stares at the blank wall.

INT. PETERMAN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

The room is illuminated by two dim lamps. Intermittently, lightning FLASHES behind drawn curtains a beat before THUNDER is heard.

ROARING WIND and DRIVING RAIN is in the background.

Officer RAY BRADY stands in the center of the room, staring at Greg. Brady is uniformed. Greg sits next to Vivian on the sofa. Jerry Peterman intermittently glares at him as he paces behind Brady.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Jerry Peterman goes to the door and opens it. Myers enters and nods at Peterman. He is wearing a holstered service revolver and a light gray windbreaker over civies. Myers looks at Brady.

KARL MEYERS

What's going on, Ray.

RAY BRADY

The boy here was just telling us he was in the woods with the other boy.

Myers looks around the room. His eyes settle on Vivian. She returns the look with barely-masked appetite in her eyes.

Meyers stares at Greg; Greg fidgets, twists the fabric of his pants, and does not look at Meyers.

KARL MEYERS

So go ahead, boy. What were the two of you doing in the woods?

GREG PETERMAN

We were playing war, sir. Just playing war. You know, throwing dirt bombs and stuff.

RAY BRADY

What was Patsy doing when you were just playing war?

KARL MEYERS

Patsy?

RAY BRADY

The other boy's sister.

GREG PETERMAN

Patsy wasn't with us.

RAY BRADY

Her mother said she was supposed to be.

GREG PETERMAN

Well she wasn't.

KARL MEYERS

(to Jerry)

Shouldn't the Moyers be here by now?

JERRY PETERMAN
How the hell should I know?

Meyers glares at Jerry for a beat and then stares at Greg.

KARL MEYERS
So you were playing war. Then what happened?

GREG PETERMAN
All of a sudden this man ran out of the woods. Yelling like...like he was crazy or something. We both started running.

KARL MEYERS
Running.

GREG PETERMAN
Uh huh. But he caught Barry and...and threw him down.

KARL MEYERS
Then what?

GREG PETERMAN
He hit Barry.

KARL MEYERS
He hit him?

GREG PETERMAN
He hit him...with a branch.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Oh my God.

KARL MEYERS
He hit him with a branch.

GREG PETERMAN
Uh huh, and then...

Greg cries.

KARL MEYERS
And then what?

GREG PETERMAN
He...stabbed him.

Greg, crying, shows the motion he used to stab Barry

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Oh my God.

Jerry grabs Greg by the arm, yanks him to his feet, and pulls him to the stairs leading to the upper level.

JERRY PETERMAN
God damn it, boy. Stop crying!

Meyers and Brady look at each other.

Vivian stands and touches Meyers' arm. She gives Meyers a look that would melt concrete; her voice is almost sultry.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
You'll have to excuse him. Sometimes he forgets he's not on Iwo Jima, and Greg suffers for it.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Greg is standing at his familiar position of attention, trying not to cry. Jerry's voice is a near whisper, but he spits out the words with fury.

JERRY PETERMAN
You better straighten up and stop crying, or I'll give you something to cry about. Those men see you acting like a God damn girl, they're going to think I'm raising a God damn pansy. Answer those questions like a man. So help me God, if you act like a damned panty waste, I'll beat the living tar out of you when they're gone.

Jerry shoves Greg to the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Greg descends the stairs with Jerry close behind.

Meyers looks at Jerry, who glares back. Meyers stares at Greg.

KARL MEYERS
Everything O.K.?

JERRY PETERMAN
He's fine.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
He asked Greg.

JERRY PETERMAN
Shut your fat mouth. Nobody asked you.

Meyers and Brady stare at Jerry for a beat; he glares back.

KARL MEYERS
 (to Greg)
 You saw the man stab Barry?

Greg rapidly nods his head.

KARL MEYERS
 Can you show us where this happened? Can
 you do that?

Greg anxiously looks from person to person.

GREG PETERMAN
 (screams)
 No!

Greg runs upstairs. Jerry follows.

Meyers takes a step toward the stairs, but Vivian stops him
 with a touch on his arm.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
 I know where they go. I'll take you.

Alice and Harry Moyer burst through the front door.

ALICE MOYER
 Where are my children?

EXT. OLD GROWTH FOREST TRAIL - A SHORT TIME LATER

It is dark. Rain is coming down in sheets.

Vivian, wearing a grey raincoat and clear plastic rain hat,
 walks carefully along a trail. She shines a flashlight ahead
 but visibility is poor.

Meyers is close behind with a second flashlight, followed by
 Harry Moyer, and then Ray Brady with another flashlight.

Meyers and Brady wear yellow slickers and uniform hats under
 clear plastic hat covers. Moyer carries an umbrella that
 keeps getting caught on surrounding branches.

EXT. EDGE OF CLEARING - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian shines her light in a slow arc across the clearing.

Two pin pricks of light reflect the beam, and Vivian swings
 the light back to them.

Meyers directs his flashlight toward the initial pair of
 reflections, which are joined by three more pair.

Brady adds his flashlight beam.

The rain lessens suddenly.

Four feral dogs stand over something lying in the clearing.

Meyers yells, and the dogs take off.

KARL MEYERS
(to Vivian)
Stay here.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
I'm coming.

Meyers moves ahead of Vivian. Vivian and the others follow a few paces behind but not in file. As they near where the dogs had been standing, the group slows.

Karl stops dead.

KARL MEYERS
(to himself)
Jesus Christ. (loud) Don't anybody come
any closer.

The other three come closer, Vivian more quickly.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Oh my God.

Meyers turns to shield her, and Vivian buries her face in his slicker. He puts his arms around her.

Harry Moyer SCREAMS.

Barry's MAULED BODY INTO VIEW.

HARRY MOYER
That's my boy! Oh God, that's my boy!

Moyer drops to his knees.

KARL MEYERS
(to Brady)
Get him out of here.

Brady forcibly gets Moyer to his feet.

RAY BRADY
We've got to go back, Harry.

HARRY MOYER
 (defiant)
 That's my boy.

RAY BRADY
 The Chief's got this under control. We've
 got to go back.

Brady starts pulling Moyer toward the trail. Meyers pushes Vivian away, but she stares at the body.

KARL MEYERS
 (to Brady)
 You're going to have to tell his mother.

Brady stops and turns toward Meyers.

RAY BRADY
 God damn it.

KARL MEYERS
 You've got to do it, Ray. He's in no
 shape to do it, and I'm staying here with
 the body. I don't want those dogs coming
 back here. I'm going to look around until
 you come back.

RAY BRADY
 All right. (beat) Christ.

KARL MEYERS
 Alert the State Police and the Coroner.
 And get Shugharts out of bed. We're going
 to need him.

RAY BRADY
 Christ.

The rain stops. Everything has a sheen in the flashlight beams.

Brady moves Moyer toward the trail.

KARL MEYERS
 You've got to go back with them.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
 I want to stay.

KARL MEYERS
 There's no point.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
He's back there.

Meyers appears confused.

KARL MEYERS
I don't want you walking back alone.
You've got to go now.

Brady and Moyer disappear into the woods.

Vivian looks into Meyers' eyes.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
I'm staying here with you.

Meyers opens his mouth to speak but does not.

He walks to the corpse and shines his flashlight at the area around the body, kneels, and shines the beam on a brutal bruise on Barry's forehead.

Vivian approaches the body.

Meyers moves the beam to the boy's mutilated torso.

Vivian doubles over and vomits.

Meyers gets up to assist Vivian, but she signals for him to keep his distance.

Meyers shines the flashlight in a slow arc around the edge of the clearing.

A pair of pin prick reflections flash.

Meyers pulls his gun from beneath his slicker and returns the flashlight beam back to the reflections.

The beam reveals Patsy Moyer sitting in the undergrowth, drenched and catatonic.

INT. PETERMAN'S LIVING ROOM - 11 P.M., SAME DAY

No one is in the room.

DOOR BELL CHIMES

SOUND OF A BEDROOM DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING

DOOR BELL CHIMES

Vivian pads down the stairs in her slippers and robe. Her hair is wrapped in a towel. She opens the front door.

Meyers and Travaglio enter. Travaglio is in uniform. Meyers is still wearing his jacket and civies. They are damp.

KARL MEYERS
 Sorry to disturb you. This is Lieutenant
 Travaglio. Max...Vivian Peterman.

MAX TRAVALIO
 Ma'am.

KARL MEYERS
 Sorry about this, but I didn't want to
 wait until tomorrow.

Jerry Peterman descends the stairs in his robe and PJs. He
 too is wearing slippers. Jerry frowns.

KARL MEYERS
 Mr. Peterman...Lieutenant Travaglio.

Jerry and Travaglio shake hands.

JERRY PETERMAN
 What's going on?

MAX TRAVALIO
 Just some questions.

INTERCUT

INT. GREG'S ROOM

Greg stands in his darkened room with his ear to the door.
 There is worry in his eyes.

JERRY PETERMAN
 Let's get this over with.

MAX TRAVALIO
 The little girl must have seen
 everything.

Greg's eyes convey panic. He clutches at his PJs.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
 Has she said anything yet?

MAX TRAVALIO
 She's not responding at all. The Doc
 called it catalepsy. She just lays there
 and stares into space.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
 It's so sad.

JERRY PETERMAN
 She going to come out of it?

Greg holds his breath. His eyes are wide open.

KARL MEYERS (O.S.)
Sometimes this lasts for a long time.
Maybe the rest of her life.

Greg exhales. He closes his eyes and clenches his fists.

INT. LIVING ROOM

VIVIAN PETERMAN
The poor Moyers.

JERRY PETERMAN
I told you to keep them out of those
woods. I never did like that damn kid.

KARL MEYERS
That damn kid had his guts ripped out by
a pack of dogs. He didn't deserve that,
whether you liked him or not.

Jerry takes a step toward Meyers.

JERRY PETERMAN
You got a reason to be here this time of
night other than to spread bad news? I'm
missing my beauty sleep.

Meyers and Jerry eyeball each other.

MAX TRAVALIO
Just a few questions, Mr. Peterman; then
we'll be on our way.

Meyers turns away. Jerry sits down.

JERRY PETERMAN
(to Travaglio)
Let's hear them.

MAX TRAVALIO
(to Vivian)
What time did the boys leave the house?

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Actually, I don't know when Greg left.
(beat) It's strange.

KARL MEYERS
Strange?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

When Barry left he told me he was going home.

MAX TRAVALIO

The boys didn't leave together?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

No. I went upstairs, I don't know, a few minutes later, and Greg wasn't there.

KARL MEYERS

You didn't see him go out?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

No, but I did see Patsy now that I think of it. She was in the backyard just before I went upstairs.

MAX TRAVALIO

(to Meyers)

We have to talk to the boy.

JERRY PETERMAN

This can't wait until morning?

Meyers stares at Jerry but does not speak. Vivian stands.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(softly)

I'll get him.

Vivian exits quickly and mounts the stairs.

Jerry stands, Meyers paces, Travalio watches them.

Vivian returns with Greg. He sits beside his mother and looks at Travalio. Greg yawns and acts as though he just woke up.

MAX TRAVALIO

Greg, we need to ask you some more questions, OK?

Greg nods without taking his eyes from Travalio.

MAX TRAVALIO

Let's start with when you first saw the man. Tell me what happened.

GREG PETERMAN

Like I said before, sir, he ran out of the woods and grabbed us.

KARL MEYERS
What did you say?

GREG PETERMAN
(alarmed)
He...grabbed us.

KARL MEYERS
He grabbed both of you?

EXT. JEEP TRACK IN OLD GROWTH FOREST - CONTINUOUS

A New Cumberland patrol car moves slowly along the track, which is bordered by dense woods. Ahead, parked in a place where the track widens is a '48 Plymouth coupe.

The patrol car slowly comes to a stop with the coupe in the bright glare of the car's high beams.

Ray Brady and part-time police officer BILL SHUGHARTS slowly get out of the police car. Shugharts, a large, awkward man, shines a flashlight into the woods.

Brady has a flashlight and moves slowly toward the coupe.

INT. PETERMAN'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jerry sits on the steps. Meyers paces. Vivian and Greg sit as before. Travaglio stands a few feet from Greg.

GREG PETERMAN
(to Travaglio)
He looked like...like you.

MAX TRAVALIO
Like me. What do you mean, like me? Dark hair? Dark eyes? As tall as me?

GREG PETERMAN
Not as tall.

MAX TRAVALIO
But dark.

GREG PETERMAN
Yeah, dark.

MAX TRAVALIO
And taller than me?

GREG PETERMAN
I said not as tall.
(points at Meyers)
Like him.

MAX TRAVALIO
Skinny? Fat? What was he wearing?

GREG PETERMAN
He was...he was...skinny. Real skinny and
he was wearing a...an undershirt.

KARL MEYERS
Just an undershirt?

GREG PETERMAN
And pants. Gray pants.

EXT. DIRT LANE - CONTINUOUS

Ray Brady shines his flashlight into the coupe where Tommy Brode is lying on the seat sound asleep.

Brode senses the light shining on his face, begins to stir, and then wakes in a fright.

INT. PETERMAN'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jerry paces. Meyers sits beside Greg. Vivian and Travaglio stand.

KARL MEYERS
All right, one more time.

JERRY PETERMAN
The boy already told you everything
twice. Enough is Enough!

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Jerry, I don't think...

JERRY PETERMAN
That's right. You don't think. Keep your
fat mouth shut.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
You shouldn't talk to me like that.

Jerry takes a step toward Vivian, but Meyers moves between them.

Jerry stops and they eyeball each other.

KARL MEYERS
I think you need a time out, Bucko.

Jerry stares for a beat and then storms out of the house.

DOOR SLAMS

Meyers and Travaglio make eye contact for a beat.

Meyers looks at Vivian. She returns the look without blinking.

KARL MEYERS
Mind if I use your phone?

VIVIAN PETERMAN
You're welcome to it...or anything else
you might want.

INT. NEW CUMBERLAND POLICE DEPT. ANTEROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Sarah sleeps at her desk; her head rests on her folded arms.

PHONE RINGS.

Sarah struggles to wake up; her voice sounds sleepy.

SARAH
Yeah? (beat) Sorry, Chief. I guess I fell
asleep. (yawns). Uh huh.

Sarah takes notes as she listens to Meyers.

SARAH
Uh huh, very thin. (beat) T-shirt, gray
slacks. (beat) Uh huh.

Brady and Shugharts enter with Tommy Brode.

Sarah does a double-take when she sees Brode.

SARAH
(into phone)
I think you better talk to Ray.

INT. PETERMAN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Travaglio stands. Vivian sits beside Greg.

MAX TRAVALIO
You saw the man hit Barry with the
branch.

GREG PETERMAN
Right after he grabbed us.

MAX TRAVALIO
How could he hit Barry when he had a hold
of both of you?

GREG PETERMAN
He did it...after I got away.

MAX TRAVALIO
You ran away.

GREG PETERMAN
Fast.

KARL MEYERS (O.S.)
How did you see him hit Barry if you were running away?

Meyers INTO FRAME.

GREG PETERMAN
I...I stopped...I stopped to see if...if Barry got away. I turned around to see if he got away.

Greg appears panicked and turns to Vivian who holds him. Her eyes beg Meyers to leave Greg alone.

KARL MEYERS
They found a man that meets your description asleep in his car a short distance from where Barry was killed. I'm going to need you to tell me if he's the man.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Not tonight?

KARL MEYERS
Why wait?

Vivian gently extricates herself from Greg, who flops back on the sofa and quietly cries.

Vivian walks to Meyers, softly touches his arm, and ushers him toward the kitchen. They speak in the doorway.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
It's late. Won't tomorrow be soon enough? First thing? We'll have him wherever he needs to be. I'm afraid of what this is doing to him. Look at him. It's too much.

They both look at Greg and then back at each other.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Look, I...we want to cooperate. You can come here anytime...anytime...
(Vivian touches his chest with
(MORE)

VIVIAN PETERMAN (cont'd)
 the fingertips of one hand)
 but maybe this once it can wait until
 morning.

Meyers stares into Vivian's eyes, his face impassive but for a single twitch in his left eye.

INT. STATE POLICE CAR - A SHORT TIME LATER

Travalio drives. Meyers is alongside.

It is raining with intermittent LIGHTNING and THUNDER.

KARL MEYERS
 The kid's defensive. Something about his
 story is screwy. He didn't say anything
 about getting grabbed earlier tonight.

MAX TRAVALIO
 Ease up. Today was the worst day of his
 life. Hell, it's going to be the worst
 day if he lives to be a hundred.

KARL MEYERS
 But he's fuzzy on the details.

MAX TRAVALIO
 He gives us a description that matches a
 guy we find a quarter mile away. That's
 not fuzzy. (beat) I'll tell you what else
 isn't fuzzy. The Missus has a line on
 you.

Meyers looks at Travalio and then out of the side window with no change in his impassive expression.

Travalio looks at Meyers, back at the road, and smiles.

INT. PETERMAN MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian is in bed under the covers with her back to Jerry, who hangs up his robe in the closet.

Something about the position of the .22 rifle appears to catch Jerry's attention. He picks it up.

JERRY PETERMAN
 You move this today?

VIVIAN PETERMAN
 Move what?

JERRY PETERMAN
 This God damn rifle.

Vivian turns over to look at the rifle.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

No.

Jerry pulls back the bolt and sniffs the chamber.

JERRY PETERMAN

That little shit fired this.

Jerry puts the rifle back and walks to the door.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Greg sleeps soundly in the dark room.

Jerry enters and turns on the overhead light.

JERRY PETERMAN

(yells)

Get the hell out of bed, boy.

Greg struggles out of the covers and staggers to attention.

JERRY PETERMAN

You touch that twenty-two?

GREG PETERMAN

I...I...just looked at it.

Jerry grabs Greg's pajama tops and hoists him off the ground. With a GROWL, he heaves Greg across his bed into the wall.

Greg drops to the floor but quickly scrambles to attention. He is wide-eyed and his lower lip quivers.

Jerry moves around the bed as Vivian enters.

JERRY PETERMAN

You did more than look at it, boy. That rifle's been fired.

GREG PETERMAN

It wasn't me.

JERRY PETERMAN

Then who the hell was it, your mom?

GREG PETERMAN

I didn't do it. Honest. I didn't do it.

JERRY PETERMAN

(roaring rage)

Don't lie to me you little shit!

Jerry slaps Greg's face and knocks him down.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Jerry! My God!

JERRY PETERMAN
Shut up! (to Greg) Get up. (screams) GET
UP!

Greg gets up slowly. He does not make eye contact with Jerry, but his eyes, though brim full, convey defiant anger.

JERRY PETERMAN
You're lucky it's late. I'm too God
damned tired to beat your stinking butt,
but I promise you this. The rifle is
gone.

Greg looks directly at Jerry.

GREG PETERMAN
That's not fair!

Vivian's eyes open wide and she slaps a hand across her mouth.

Jerry looks contemptuously at Greg for a beat and then laughs.

JERRY PETERMAN
You make me sick to my stomach.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Jerry!

Jerry goes to Vivian and speaks into her ear.

JERRY PETERMAN
What's the matter? Got a bug up your ass?
Don't think I don't know you got that
bastard police chief on your mind.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
That's not true.

Jerry backs away and smirks.

JERRY PETERMAN
You're wasting your time. No man who *is* a
man would want that tired body of yours.
It went south a long time ago.

Vivian responds with tears.

Jerry storms out.

DOOR SLAMS

INT. NEW CUMBERLAND POLICE DEPT. JAIL - MOMENTS LATER

The jail is a single holding cell in an otherwise empty room. The cell is a cage of iron bars, eight by eight by seven feet high. There is a small cot and a toilet but no sink. The only light is a bare bulb overhead.

Tommy Brode sits on the cot, his shoulders slumped, his face forlorn.

Meyers and Travaglio stand outside the cell.

KARL MEYERS

What were you doing back there? That road goes nowhere.

TOMMY BRODE

Like I told you, I was tired. I ain't got no money to...

KARL MEYERS

There was over four hundred dollars under the spare tire.

Brode sits up.

TOMMY BRODE

You ain't got no right.

MAX TRAVALIO

You're the one who's got no rights. You just lied. Do I need to come in there and convince you not to lie again?

TOMMY BRODE

All right. I lied. Big deal. But the rest is the truth. I needed to get some sleep. I didn't want to spend my money on no motel.

KARL MEYERS

I think you're hiding something.

TOMMY BRODE

No sir, Chief. No sir. I was just sleeping. Why won't you tell me why I'm in here. Can't be no law against sleeping in a car.

Travaglio and Meyers look at each other and then at Brode.

MAX TRAVALIO

A little boy got himself murdered less than a quarter mile from where you were sleeping.

TOMMY BRODE

Oh Jesus Christ.

KARL MEYERS

A witness gave us a description that fits you.

TOMMY BRODE

Oh Jesus Christ. It weren't me, I swear it. (whines) I swear. It weren't me.

KARL MEYERS

We'll see what the boy says tomorrow morning. You're going to want to be real pretty when he gets here, so you'd best get some sleep.

Brode stands and grabs the bars of the cell.

TOMMY BRODE

It weren't me, Chief. Honest to God!

Travalio and Meyers exit.

TOMMY BRODE

Please, Chief! It weren't me. I swear it!

INT. NEW CUMBERLAND POLICE DEPT. JAIL - THE NEXT MORNING

Greg enters with Meyers and Travalio. Greg stops when he sees Brode sitting on the cot in his cell.

Brode bolts up and grabs the bars.

TOMMY BRODE

Say it ain't me, boy. You know it ain't me.

KARL MEYERS

Shut up!

TOMMY BRODE

Damn it, Chief. I didn't do nothing. Ain't that right, boy?

KARL MEYERS

I said shut up!

Brode shuts up, but he doesn't take his eyes off of Greg, who looks away.

KARL MEYERS
Take a good look.

Greg glances quickly at Brode and then looks away.

KARL MEYERS
Well?

TOMMY BRODE
Come on, boy. Tell the truth. You know it ain't me!

KARL MEYERS
Is he the man you saw?

Greg nods.

KARL MEYERS
I want more than a nod. If he's the man, I want you to tell me.

TOMMY BRODE
Oh Jesus Christ.

Greg glances at Brode and then looks at Meyers.

GREG PETERMAN
He's the one.

TOMMY BRODE
That's a God damned lie you little son-of-a-bitch. I get out of here, I'm going to find you.

Meyers shoves Greg toward the door.

KARL MEYERS
Go wait with your mother.

TOMMY BRODE
Damn it!

Meyers walks to the holding cell, grabs a fist full of Brode's shirt, and yanks Brode's face against the bars.

Brode's face contorts in pain.

KARL MEYERS
What makes you think you're going to get out of here?

Meyers pushes Brode away, looks at him contemptuously, and exits.

INT. MEYERS' OFFICE - LATER

Tommy Brode sits on a wood office chair opposite Meyers who sits at his desk.

Travalio prowls.

MAX TRAVALIO
God damn it, Tommy. The boy identified you.

TOMMY BRODE
It don't matter 'cause I didn't do it.

MAX TRAVALIO
Where were you at around one o'clock yesterday afternoon?

Travalio moves behind Brode.

TOMMY BRODE
Ah, man. I already told you.

Travalio slams Brode's head down onto the desk and then pulls his head back by his hair.

MAX TRAVALIO
Tell me again.

Brode is woozy. A slight trickle of blood exits his nose.

TOMMY BRODE
I was driving.

MAX TRAVALIO
Driving where?

TOMMY BRODE
I just left Lancaster.

Travalio lets go of Brode's hair with a shove and then calmly lights a cigarette.

Brode wipes the blood from his nose with his hand, looks at it, and then at Travalio.

MAX TRAVALIO
I think you're a lying sack of shit. The Chief and I need to talk, so you're going back in the tank.

Brode leans forward, crosses his arms on the desk and drops his head onto his arms.

TOMMY BRODE
I didn't kill no little boy.

INT. MEYERS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Travalio sits in the wood chair; Meyers sits at his desk. Both are smoking.

KARL MEYERS
I think he's telling the truth.

MAX TRAVALIO
Are you crazy?

KARL MEYERS
I can just feel it.

MAX TRAVALIO
I don't know how they did it when you were on the force in Baltimore, but in Pennsylvania, feelings aren't allowed.

Meyers nearly smiles.

DR. SMALLWOOD takes a few steps into the office. He is in his sixties, wears a monacle and a three piece, pin-striped suit.

Meyers and Travalio stand and shake Smallwood's hand.

MAX TRAVALIO
Hello, Doc.

DR. SMALLWOOD
Thought you'd want to know the probable cause of death was the blow to the head.

KARL MEYERS
Could it have been from a branch?

DR. SMALLWOOD
Possible. I can't rule out stabbing based upon what the boy claims, but there's no evidence of it. The dogs tore the poor boy to shreds.

KARL MEYERS
I had a hell of a time trying to sleep. I kept seeing them all night.

MAX TRAVALIO

The boy identified the suspect this morning.

DR. SMALLWOOD

You can wrap this up quickly then?

KARL MEYERS

I have this feeling we missed something.

Meyers drives his cigarette into the sand in an upright ashtray next to the desk. He looks at Travaglio for a beat.

KARL MEYERS

Brode didn't do it.

Travaglio and Smallwood watch Meyers exit.

EXT. CLEARING IN OLD GROWTH FOREST - LATER

There is a heavy mist and total silence. Meyers scans the clearing as he takes a drag on a cigarette.

Meyers drops the butt.

The butt HISSES when it hits the wet grass.

Meyers looks down and sees something in the grass.

Meyers gets on his haunches and picks up a .22 shell. He drops it into his jacket pocket and slowly duck walks through the grass looking for more.

Vivian's legs INTO VIEW in front of Meyers.

Meyers starts at the sight of them and slowly stands.

Vivian's hair and house dress are damp from the mist. The damp material clings and reveals the shape of her body.

They stand at arm's length and stare into each other's eyes.

After a beat, Vivian grabs Meyers jacket, pulls him to her, and kisses him.

Meyers doesn't respond for a beat, but then decisively extricates himself from Vivian's arms.

Vivian looks at him for a beat with hurt in her eyes and then runs off.

Meyers watches her leave, his expression impassive.

INT. NEW CUMBERLAND POLICE DEPT. ANTEROOM - LATER

Bill Shugharts sits in Sarah's usual place. Shugharts speaks with apparent self-importance to veteran reporter MELVIN SMITH, a weasel-like man with a high, whining voice.

BILL SHUGHARTS

We do have someone in custody. I nabbed him.

Meyers enters and looks skeptically at Shugharts.

KARL MEYERS

Nabbed who? Where's Sarah?

BILL SHUGHARTS

(flustered)

Well, you see Chief, she called in, Chief...I was just telling Mr. Smith...

MELVIN SMITH

He was telling me you've got yourself quite a case going. Heard something about it from a friend. Couldn't quite believe it, so I thought I'd hear it from the horse's mouth.

KARL MEYERS

You heard it from a horse's ass. Leave me alone.

Meyers glares at Shugharts and walks toward his office.

MELVIN SMITH

He is a card, isn't he Bill? It's just that I've got this information that's going to go to press, and I want to be sure I've got all the facts straight.

Meyers stops and turns around.

KARL MEYERS

Since when has that been a priority?

MELVIN SMITH

That's a quick wit you've got there, Chief. I'd laugh if I wasn't thinking about a boy accosted by a wild man in the woods. Great stuff. Beat him and stabbed him, right Bill?

BILL SHUGHARTS

Well, I wouldn't exactly say that for sure.

MELVIN SMITH

What would you say exactly? Of course you *did* say exactly...

(reads notes)

...the guy beat him with a branch the size of a baseball bat, and then he tore into him with a knife.

(to Meyers)

My editor is going to love the part about the dogs. Bill seemed a little vague on that part, Chief. Maybe you could clarify that one for me.

Meyers glares at Shugharts, who turns his attention to paperwork on his desk.

Meyers puts his hand on Smith's shoulder in a friendly manner and moves him toward the door.

KARL MEYERS

I think you ought to go easy on this. We don't want people unnecessarily worried. I'm sure you understand the power of the pen.

MELVIN SMITH

I understand perfectly, perfectly.

KARL MEYERS

The coroner will make a statement that the cause of death was a blow to the head. Sorry it's not more dramatic.

The two men are at the door. Meyers opens it and gently pushes Smith outside. Smith stands just outside the door.

MELVIN SMITH

No evidence because of the dogs, right? Come on, Chief. I heard the other kid claimed the Moyer boy was slashed.

KARL MEYERS

Anything's possible, but...

MELVIN SMITH

So it is possible. A slasher. That'll get me front page!

Melvin runs toward his car.

KARL MEYERS

(yells)

That's not what I said!

Meyers SLAMS the door and glares at Shugharts.

KARL MEYERS
I'm surrounded by God damned morons!

Meyers enters his office and SLAMS the office door; Shugharts flinches.

INT. OFFICE

Meyers places his hat on the coat rack and approaches the photo of his daughter.

Photo from Meyers' POV

MATCH FADE TO

EXT. PATTERSON PARK, BALTIMORE - FLASHBACK - 1937 - DAY

Meyers' POV

Shirley Meyers runs away in SLOW MOTION, her blond hair streaming back. She looks toward Meyers with pure joy and abandon.

EXT. MOYER HOME - RETURN TO PRESENT - EVENING

It is raining lightly. Alice Moyer, holding an umbrella, opens the rear door of the Moyer sedan. Harry Moyer leans inside and retrieves Patsy.

Harry carries her to the front door as Alice holds the umbrella over them. Alice opens the front door, and Harry enters the house with Patsy.

INT. PATSY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Patsy is under the covers in her bed. Her eyes are open but blank.

Alice leans over the bed, kisses Patsy's forehead, and waits for a response which does not come.

INT. MEYERS' OFFICE - MIDNIGHT

Tommy Brode sits across the desk from Meyers, who smokes. Meyers' expression is cold and distant.

Travalio sits next to Brode and drinks coffee. Brode appears exhausted.

TOMMY BRODE
I can prove...prove...I didn't do
anything to that boy.

MAX TRAVALIO
 Prove it to me, Tommy. I dare you.

Brode looks at Meyers and then Travaglio. He speaks to Travaglio like Meyers is not in the room.

TOMMY BRODE
 When you say it happened, I was in Mount Joy at an Atlantic station.

MAX TRAVALIO
 Weak, Tommy. If filling the tank is your alibi, how come you've been holding out?

TOMMY BRODE
 I was robbing the place. No way that guy won't remember me.

Travaglio sits back and looks at Meyers.

Meyers slowly stands up and walks toward the door.

KARL MEYERS
 I'll meet you at the Peterman's. Seven o'clock tomorrow morning.

Meyers stops in the doorway, pulls the .22 shell from his pocket and looks at it. He tosses it to Travaglio.

KARL MEYERS
 Found that in the clearing.

Meyers and Travaglio make eye contact. Meyers exits.

EXT. PORCH OF MEYERS' HOME - A SHORT TIME LATER

The rain continues. Chester the cat waits by the door.

Chester rubs against Meyers' legs as he unlocks the door.

Chester scoots inside when the door is opened.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The room is illuminated only by the front porch light. Meyers walks to the liquor cabinet, pours two fingers of bourbon, knocks it back, and pours another one.

Meyers carries the drink to a console record player. He turns it on, waits a beat for it to warm up, and places the needle arm onto a spinning record.

Billy Eckstine's rendition of "Laura" plays.

Meyers takes his drink to a large overstuffed chair and sits.

Chester bounds onto his lap and settles.

Meyers takes a swallow of the bourbon, puts his head back, and closes his eyes.

INT. PETERMAN'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

"Laura" plays softly on a record player.

Vivian sits on the sofa in the dark room. The outline of Vivian's head and shoulders are seen against the faint light of a street light in the picture window behind her.

Vivian's face is seen in the glow of a cigarette as she takes a slow drag. She blows the smoke toward the ceiling.

INT. PETERMAN'S LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Rain is visible through the picture window.

Vivian wears a simple night shift and sleeps on the sofa.

Greg comes downstairs in his pajamas. He pauses to look at Vivian and then turns toward the kitchen.

DOORBELL CHIME

Vivian awakens with a start.

Greg stops and looks at Vivian. Vivian looks at him and then looks between the picture window drapes.

Vivian jumps up.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Give me a minute before you answer the door.

Vivian runs upstairs.

After a beat, Greg opens the door. Travaglio and Meyers, both in uniform, stand on the front stoop.

Meyers holds up a wet morning paper so Greg can see the headline that reads, SLASHER IN CUSTODY.

KARL MEYERS

Mind if we come in?

Greg nervously stands back. The men enter.

KARL MEYERS
The man you identified was somewhere else
at the time you said he was killing your
buddy.

Meyers and Travaglio stare at Greg.

GREG PETERMAN
I...I...didn't get a real good look at
him...I...

KARL MEYERS
When?

GREG PETERMAN
When?

KARL MEYERS
When didn't you get a good look at him?

GREG PETERMAN
Well...

KARL MEYERS
In the woods?

GREG PETERMAN
I didn't...

KARL MEYERS
Which is it, Boy? The line up or the
woods?

GREG PETERMAN
I don't know.

KARL MEYERS
You're not making sense. The Coroner said
there wasn't any evidence of stab wounds.
No stab wounds, Greg.

Vivian comes down the stairs. She has combed her hair and put
on a robe; she appears worried.

Greg fidgets and looks around the room but focuses on
nothing.

Travaglio pulls the .22 shell from his pocket and holds it up.

MAX TRAVALIO
The Chief found that next to where those
dogs were chewing on your best friend.
You own a twenty-two?

JERRY PETERMAN (O.S.)
 What the hell's going on?

Jerry pads down the steps in his robe, pajamas, and slippers.

MAX TRAVALIO
 I was just asking if Greg owns a twenty-two.

JERRY PETERMAN
 What about it?

KARL MEYERS
 Does he?

JERRY PETERMAN
 You got no business coming here like this.

Travalio holds up the shell casing.

Jerry looks angrily at Greg who sulks.

JERRY PETERMAN
 I got a twenty-two...for target practice.
 I also got a thirty-ought-six and a
 twelve gauge. There a law against it?

Meyers looks at Jerry for a beat and then addresses Greg in a kinder tone than usual.

KARL MEYERS
 I don't know what happened in those woods
 but you do, and I have a feeling there
 wasn't a wild man chasing you and Barry.

GREG PETERMAN
 There *was* a man.

KARL MEYERS
 (to Greg)
 Maybe it didn't happen quite the way you
 said.

GREG PETERMAN
 It did. Just like I said.

JERRY PETERMAN
 Leave the boy alone.

KARL MEYERS
 (to Greg)
 Maybe there was an accident.

JERRY PETERMAN
Leave the boy alone!

Jerry grabs Meyers' arm and yanks him back.

Meyers grabs Jerry's collar; Jerry grabs Meyers' collar. They eyeball each other.

KARL MEYERS
Max. The kid.

MAX TRAVALIO
(to Greg)
Get upstairs.

Greg runs upstairs.

Meyers and Jerry glare at each other for a tense beat. Meyers pushes Jerry hard and both men let go of each other.

KARL MEYERS
Something happened in that woods that had nothing to do with a stranger with a knife. I can feel it. You better believe I'm going to find out what happened.

Meyers and Jerry glare at each other for a beat before Meyers and Travaglio exit.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vivian stands at the window. Greg has his arms around her waist and cries, but he appears angry. Vivian strokes Greg's hair as she watches Meyers and Travaglio get into Travaglio's State Police car.

EXT. MAIN STREET - A SHORT TIME LATER

A State Police car slowly drives through the rain. Traffic is almost nonexistent.

INT. STATE POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Travaglio drives. Meyers is his passenger.

The rain stops.

Travaglio leans forward and looks toward the sky.

MAX TRAVALIO
Son of a bitch. It's about time. I hate rain.

Travaglio glances at Meyers.

MAX TRAVALIO
Why not believe the kid? What twelve-year-old could hold on to a story like that?

KARL MEYERS
He's holding on?

MAX TRAVALIO
So he screwed up the ID. The kid's a wreck, but he's sticking to his basic story. Why would he if it didn't happen at least something like he said?

KARL MEYERS
He would if he had a good enough reason.

MAX TRAVALIO
Like what?

KARL MEYERS
How'd you like to have a miserable bastard like that for a father?

MAX TRAVALIO
(laughs)
I did.

KARL MEYERS
So did I. That's why I feel he's holding something back.

MAX TRAVALIO
There's that feeling business again. It ain't in the manual.

KARL MEYERS
The town never issued me one. (beat) What if those two kids are out playing in the woods, just being kids? They're wrestling around like boys do. Barry falls and hits his head on something.

MAX TRAVALIO
That's not enough to have a kid invent a story like this.

KARL MEYERS
What if they have the twenty-two out there. Maybe they were shooting the damn thing, and Greg is afraid his Dad's going to find out.

MAX TRAVALIO

Why would he invent the stabbing? He had no way of knowing those dogs would tear the boy up.

Meyers takes off his hat and runs his hand through his hair.

KARL MEYERS

Damn it, I don't know.

MAX TRAVALIO

One thing I hate about this job is getting to the point where you don't believe anyone. Christ, Karl. He's a kid. We have to assume there's a nut out there because there just might be one.

KARL MEYERS

Damn it to hell. (beat) Let's get some coffee, then you can drop me at home. I'm going to drive over and see Patsy.

MAX TRAVALIO

I'll light a couple candles for the kid when I'm at church tomorrow.

KARL MEYERS

Going over the case again might be a better use of your time.

MAX TRAVALIO

A little church doesn't hurt. Might even help.

KARL MEYERS

Afraid I won't make it to heaven?

MAX TRAVALIO

I figure, What the hell? Why take chances?

Meyers sees a beautiful young mother walking on the sidewalk hand-in-hand with an equally beautiful young daughter.

KARL MEYERS

I'm not worried about it. If there is a God, he owes me one.

INT. GREG'S ROOM, PETERMAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Greg lies on his bed on his stomach. He's wearing a T-shirt and briefs. His face is turned away from the door and is tear-streaked. A mouthful of pillowcase is clenched angrily in his teeth.

Jerry Peterman INTO VIEW standing in the doorway holding a belt. He looks at his son for a beat, exits, and SLAMS the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian sits on the sofa, hugs a pillow, and stares at the floor.

Jerry enters; Vivian ignores him.

Jerry looks at Vivian as he buckles his belt. He stands next to her.

JERRY PETERMAN

I suppose you have a problem with discipline?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I have a problem with beating children.

JERRY PETERMAN

My Dad used to strap me once a week when I was Greg's age. Didn't hurt me at all.

Vivian looks at Jerry skeptically.

JERRY PETERMAN

Made me tough.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

You need to be tough when you're twelve?

JERRY PETERMAN

Spare the rod, spoil the child. He's got to understand discipline. It kept me alive. Some guys didn't have it. They panicked. Stood up and ran. They got cut down. All of them.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Greg lies on his back in bed and listens.

JERRY PETERMAN (O.S.)

So yeah. If you're not tough at twelve, how are you going to be tough when you're twenty?

INT. LIVING ROOM

VIVIAN PETERMAN

He's not twenty. Let him be a little boy.

JERRY PETERMAN

The cops don't seem to think so. They find a damn twenty-two shell...could have been anybody's. The bastards don't believe him.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I think they do.

JERRY PETERMAN

What the hell do you know? They're not even buying the idea there's a lunatic out there. What do they think? The Moyer kid hit himself over the head?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

The Chief is just trying to do his job.

JERRY PETERMAN

You've gone sweet on him, haven't you?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

What?

JERRY PETERMAN

You've gone sweet on that moron who calls himself a police chief.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I have not. But I do think he's a gentleman.

JERRY PETERMAN

I think I'm going to puke. You're the moron if you think anybody, including that tired old fossil, would be interested in you.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Why are you so mean to me?

JERRY PETERMAN

Telling the truth isn't being mean. The boy isn't the only one in this house needs to get tough.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I don't think...

JERRY PETERMAN

You *don't* think, so stop interrupting me. It's a damn shame, but I don't think the chief is going to believe the boy until another kid gets his guts ripped out.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Don't even think that.

INT. GREG'S ROOM

Greg stands close to the door and listens.

JERRY PETERMAN (O.S.)
I'll say what I want. It's going to take
some poor little kid ending up like Barry
before the cops will believe the boy.

Greg leans against the door and closes his eyes.

INT. PATSY'S ROOM - LATER

The blinds are drawn in the darkened room.

Patsy Moyer lies on her back on top of the covers. She is
awake. She wears a pretty lace and print dress; her hair is
combed and adorned with a bow.

Meyers sits on the edge of the bed. Alice and Harry Moyer
watch Meyers from the hallway.

Meyers brushes his fingertips across Patsy's cheek and then
kisses Patsy's forehead.

ALICE MOYER
Who would have ever thought a man like
that would have such a tender heart.

HARRY MOYER
He must know what we're going through.

Alice looks at Harry questioningly.

INT. BRETHERN CHURCH SANCTUARY - NEXT MORNING

PASTOR BAUGHER, wearing a plain dark blue suit, stands to the
side of the single pulpit and looks out on the CONGREGATION
of two hundred, which is standing.

Baugher raises his arms in a broad V, tilts his face upward,
and closes his eyes.

PASTOR BAUGHER
May the Lord bless and keep you; may He
make his face to shine upon you, and be
gracious unto you. May the Lord lift up
his countenance upon you, and give you
peace. (beat) Amen.

The ORGANIST plays a recessional.

Pastor Baugher walks solemnly toward the back of the church, followed by a double file of CHOIR MEMBERS. When the last of the choir reaches the back of the small sanctuary, the congregation begins a friendly BABBLE.

Jerry, Vivian and Greg Peterman exit the second row.

People gather around the Petermans in a supportive manner.

Jerry, metamorphosed into the consummate churchman, shakes hands with several men. Vivian smiles a melancholy smile.

A few women pat Greg's back and smile at him. Greg remains appropriately silent but glares at his father.

Standing in the group around the Petermans are neighbors SUSAN and WILL PRESTON and their nine-year-old son SAMMY.

MEMBER ONE

Do the police have any idea who did it?

Sammy Preston, standing beside his father and ignored within the small crowd, flashes the finger at Greg.

JERRY PETERMAN

Apparently not. I'm not sure they're working on this as hard as they should.

Greg glares at Sammy who again gives Greg the finger.

Jerry sees Sammy's antics out of the corner of his eye, but does not respond.

WILL PRESTON

I find that hard to believe. What's their problem?

JERRY PETERMAN

I'm not sure, but I'll tell you this. They've been treating my son like he's made it all up.

MEMBER TWO

That's terrible.

JERRY PETERMAN

It has me almost as upset as I am over what happened to the Moyer boy.

Jerry sees Sammy flash the finger again and gives Sammy a quick but threatening glare.

Sammy disappears behind his father.

WILL PRESTON

We ought to do something about this.
We've got a lunatic out there. What if
what happened to the Moyer boy, God
forbid, happens to another child?

JERRY PETERMAN

If that happened, the police would have
to answer for not taking my boy
seriously, and I, for one, will see to it
somebody pays.

There is a general muttering of assent as the group breaks
up.

Jerry and Greg both glare at a cowering Sammy.

EXT. MAIN STREET - LATER.

Karl Meyers drives his police car slowly down the street.

FAMILIES in their Sunday best are walking along the sidewalk.
Traffic is very light. Meyers looks at a family of three with
a young daughter, then back at the street.

MATCH FADE TO

INT. JOHNS HOPKINS HOSPITAL CHILDREN'S WARD - FLASHBACK -
1937 - NIGHT

KARL MEYERS' POV

Shirley Meyers is lying under the covers in a hospital bed.
Her face is badly bruised and her eyes stare vacantly at the
ceiling.

KARL MEYERS (O.S.)

(as though from a distance)
Sweetheart, it's Daddy. Can you hear me,
Sweetheart? Can you hear me? Sweetheart,
please, please say something.

A car horn BLARES.

EXT. MAIN STREET - RETURN TO PRESENT

Bill Waxman's coupe passes Meyers' patrol car in the opposite
direction. Vaughn Moyer is in the seat behind Waxman.

Waxman waves in a friendly manner to Meyers, who gives a
brief wave in return.

Vaughn gives Meyers an unmistakable look of contempt as he
passes.

INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

In the rear view mirror, Meyers watches Moyer give him the finger. The Chief makes a quick U-turn but just as quickly pulls to the curb and stops. He appears deep in thought.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF MEYERS' HOUSE - A SHORT TIME LATER

Meyers mounts the few steps to his front porch.

Chester the cat is pacing in front of Meyers' door. Chester the neighbor is rocking on his porch.

CHESTER

Afternoon, Chief. Took you a couple extra tries today. Try coming back at a forty-five degree angle.

KARL MEYERS

Afternoon, Chester.

Meyers unlocks his door and enters. The cat scurries inside.

INT. LIVING ROOM

The blinds are drawn and the house is dark.

Meyers climbs the stairs to the second floor.

INT. BEDROOM

Meyers enters, closes the venetian blinds, takes off his holster and places it on a dresser. He kicks off his shoes, lies on the bed, and stares at the ceiling.

INT. HALLWAY IN PRESTON HOME - EARLY NEXT MORNING

Susan Preston hums a pleasant tune as she walks down the hall toward Sammy's room. She pushes the door open and sees dark streaks around an open window.

SUSAN PRESTON

What in heaven's name?

Susan pushes the door open the rest of the way. Sammy's bloody body is lying on his blood-soaked bed.

Susan screams.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - LATER

Vivian closes the top drawer in a chest of drawers. She takes a small pile of undershirts off of the bed and opens the second drawer.

Vivian places the undershirts in the drawer and moves the stack, which results in the sound of METAL on WOOD.

Vivian stares into the drawer, reaches into the drawer under the undershirts and slowly extracts Vaughn's stiletto.

She presses the release. The blade snaps out, startles her, and she drops the knife.

Greg enters, sees the knife, and becomes highly agitated.

GREG PETERMAN
What are you doing?

VIVIAN PETERMAN
What am *I* doing? Where did you get that horrible thing?

GREG PETERMAN
I didn't put it there.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Don't lie to me unless you want your father to know about this.

GREG PETERMAN
OK, OK, but it's not mine.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Where did you get it?

Greg doesn't answer.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Gregory Peterman, you either tell me where that disgusting thing came from, or I'm going to call your father right now.

Greg nervously studies Vivian for a beat.

GREG PETERMAN
Barry gave it to me. He took it from Vaughn, and he was afraid Vaughn would find out he had it, so he gave it to me to hide it for him.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Why would Barry want such a horrible thing?

GREG PETERMAN
I don't know, Mom.

Vivian picks up the stiletto by the very end of the handle as if it were coated with poison.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
I'm throwing it away.

GREG PETERMAN
Mom! You can't! Please...It's the only thing...the only thing I have that was Barry's.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
What in the world are you going to do with it?

GREG PETERMAN
Nothing. Just leave it in my drawer.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
What if your father finds it?

GREG PETERMAN
He never looks in there. Please. It's the only thing I have to remember Barry.

Vivian stares into Greg's eyes for a beat, and he returns the look without flinching.

Vivian closes the blade and returns the knife to the drawer.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
I'm going to have to think about this, and while I do, don't take it out of the drawer. If your father finds out, we're both going to be in big trouble.

GREG PETERMAN
He won't find out.

Greg goes to his mother and hugs her.

GREG PETERMAN
I love you, Mom.

Vivian stares vacantly.

INT. HARRISBURG HOSPITAL MORGUE LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Travalio and Meyers stand silently and smoke.

DR. HARRY WILKERSON, the Chief Coroner for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania enters. He is wearing surgical greens and a black rubber bib apron. He pulls off the apron and a surgical cap and tosses them in a laundry hamper.

DR. WILKERSON
Gentlemen.

Travalio offers Wilkerson a cigarette.

Wilkerson takes it, accepts a light from Meyers, and takes a deep drag.

DR. WILKERSON
Interesting.

MAX TRAVALIO
Interesting?

DR. WILKERSON
Interesting. The Moyer boy was attacked with a knife.

Travalio appears surprised; Meyers not.

KARL MEYERS
Mathews said there was absolutely no evidence of it.

DR. WILKERSON
I don't mean to demean the good doctor's opinion, but frankly, the man has spent most of his life looking at death by natural causes and accidents. He missed slight incisions on the back wall of the abdominal cavity.

Travalio sits on a bench as Dr. Wilkerson sheds his surgical greens.

DR. WILKERSON
The incisions were of varying length, running anterior to posterior and not very deep, but they were fairly obvious, perhaps because I was looking for something. It would have taken a very sharp knife with a long blade to have made them. It would take someone who was very intent on doing damage to do that.

KARL MEYERS
What about the Preston boy?

DR. WILKERSON
Very different wounds. His were straight stabs. Classic puncture wounds.

Wilkerson pantomimes the motion.

MAX TRAVALIO

Could the same knife have done both?

DR. WILKERSON

Possible, but there's no way to be sure. Because there isn't any evidence of a serious struggle by either boy...no skin under their fingernails, no defensive wounds of the hands...both boys may have been incapacitated before they were cut. I do concur with Dr. Mathews' assessment of a blunt force injury to the Moyer boy's head that would have rendered him unconscious, but it's likely it was the stab wounds that were fatal. The probable cause of the Preston boy's death was suffocation, probably with a pillow.

MAX TRAVALIO

Christ, this guy is a total psycho.

DR. WILKERSON

You may actually be looking for two different individuals.

Wilkerson appears to delight in the apparent bafflement of Travaglio and Meyers.

INT. BATHROOM IN PETERMAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Vivian stands at the window, naked. She watches Greg through venetian blinds. He is struggling to cut the grass in the back yard with a push mower. Worry is in her eyes.

Vivian steps into a bubble bath and eases beneath the bubbles. She sits upright and uses a bath sponge to wash.

Vivian reclines, wrings the sponge, and wipes her face with it. Eyes closed, she attempts to rest, but creases of worry do not leave her face.

INT. HARRISBURG HOSPITAL MORGUE LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Wilkerson is dressed in suit pants and white shirt. He is standing in front of a full length mirror tying his tie. Meyers and Travaglio stand nearby and smoke.

DR. WILKERSON

Whoever slashed the Moyer boy was intent on doing serious damage, perhaps the result of a psychopath's rage. The Preston boy's wounds almost suggest the completion of a perfunctory task.

Wilkerson goes to a locker, retrieves his suit coat, and puts it on.

MAX TRAVALIO
That's the only reason you think there
may be two killers?

DR. WILKERSON
The Moyer boy was shot prior to the
stabbing.

Travalio and Meyers look at each other.

Wilkerson takes a black leather valise from the locker and closes the locker door.

KARL MEYERS
You're certain?

Wilkerson gives Meyers an imperious look and then walks to the locker room exit.

Meyers and Travalio follow.

MAX TRAVALIO
What makes you think he was shot?

Wilkerson stops at the exit and faces the two men.

DR. WILKERSON
There was an appreciable cavity in the
body of the first lumbar vertebra which
could only have been caused by a bullet,
probably small caliber. I don't believe
the bullet exited the body because the
damage indicates a direct hit.

MAX TRAVALIO
Small caliber?

DR. WILKERSON
You're both veterans. You've seen what a
high-powered bullet can do. There wasn't
that degree of damage. My report
appending that of Dr. Mathews will
reflect my opinion that Moyer was shot.
If untreated, he might have died from the
gunshot, but it wasn't the shot that was
the cause of death.

KARL MEYERS
Where's the bullet?

DR. WILKERSON

Because the vertebra took a direct hit, it should have been in the body. Since it isn't there, it seems to me the question of the bullet falls into the purview of detective work. Now if you'll excuse me, duty calls.

Travalio and Meyers watch Wilkerson exit.

INT. BUD'S DINER - EVENING - SAME DAY

Meyers sits at a booth next to a window eating a meat loaf special with mashed potatoes and corn.

A vanilla milk shake fills a large coke glass on the table; a metal blender canister holds the rest of the shake. A few CUSTOMERS are being attended to by two WAITRESSES in their fifties.

Travalio slides onto the seat opposite Meyers.

MAX TRAVALIO

The Prestons about crucified me.

Meyers takes another bite of dinner. Travalio waits for Meyers to answer, but Meyers keeps eating.

MAX TRAVALIO

We haven't been pressing the investigation, according to them, and get this. Peterman tells them this the day before their kid is killed.

KARL MEYERS

Our Mr. Peterman?

MAX TRAVALIO

A "wonderful Christian man" according to them.

KARL MEYERS

This is *Jerry Peterman* they're talking about?

MAX TRAVALIO

One and the same. He tells the Prestons we won't believe Greg until what happened to Barry happens again.

KARL MEYERS

He said that?

MAX TRAVALIO
According to the Prestons. They treated
me like I was the one who killed their
son.

Meyers takes a bite of dinner and looks out the window.

INT. PETERMAN LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jerry Peterman trots down the stairs to the living room level carrying Greg's .22 rifle and descends the adjacent stairs to the lower level.

INT. LAUNDRY ROOM

Vivian Peterman places folded clothes into a basket. She watches Jerry walk past the laundry room door carrying the rifle. She picks up the basket and walks to the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Vivian ascends to the living room level carrying the basket.

A car trunk SLAMS.

Vivian puts the basket on the floor and turns around as Jerry appears on the stairs without the rifle.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
What did you do with the rifle?

JERRY PETERMAN
That's none of your business.

Jerry starts up the stairs to the upper level.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
I think it is.

Jerry stops half way up and freezes.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
With everything that is going on, I think
I have a right to know what you're doing
with that rifle.

Jerry slowly turns and walks back down the steps toward Vivian. There is a slight and perverse smile on his face.

Jerry stops an arm's length away. After a beat, he slaps her face hard.

Vivian's knees buckle slightly, but she doesn't go down. There are angry tears in her eyes as she bolts past Jerry and down the stairs.

There is the SOUND of a DOOR OPENING and then a SLAM.

Jerry moves quickly toward the stairs and yells.

JERRY PETERMAN

Vivian!

Jerry trips over the laundry basket and takes a violent spill down the steps.

INT. BASEMENT

Jerry appears somewhat stunned but is otherwise uninjured.

A car engine REVS and TIRES SCREECH on the other side of the door into the garage.

Jerry gets to his feet and opens the door.

INT. GARAGE

Vivian backs down the short driveway at high speed into the street. The car stops with a SCREECH.

Jerry runs outside.

EXT. STREET

Jerry sprints toward the car, but it peels away.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry bounds up the stairs and sees the overturned clothes basket; the clothes are on the floor but are still somewhat folded.

Jerry picks up the basket in a rage, whips it across the room, and then throws clothing around the living room.

INT. BUD'S DINER - A SHORT TIME LATER

Meyers and Travalio sit in a booth and eat sundaes.

MAX TRAVALIO

It'll take a few days to hear about the fingerprints on the window, but the lab guy told me he wouldn't be surprised if they all belong to the Preston kid and his parents.

KARL MEYERS

What about the shoe print on the window sill?

MAX TRAVALIO

Keds, size 11. How the hell did he get blood on the sole of his shoe?

KARL MEYERS

He had to have been on the bed.

MAX TRAVALIO

Like what, standing on it?

KARL MEYERS

You tell me.

Travalio shrugs. Both men concentrate on the sundaes for a beat. Travalio speaks without looking up.

MAX TRAVALIO

What about the Coroner's suggestion the puncture wounds in the Preston kid might have been made by a stiletto?

KARL MEYERS

Wilkerson didn't say that.

MAX TRAVALIO

He *didn't* say it. It's in his report.

KARL MEYERS

Who wears Keds and carries a switchblade?

MAX TRAVALIO

James Dean?

KARL MEYERS

Close. A J.D. Might have been a neighbor. Two boys, same development, same M.O.

MAX TRAVALIO

Different in the fine points.

KARL MEYERS

There hasn't been a murder in this town in forty-two years. Do you really think we're looking for two killers?

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF BUD'S DINER - CONTINUOUS

The Peterman family car slowly cruises the dark street.

A State Police Car and a New Cumberland patrol car are parked side by side in front of Bud's.

INT. PETERMAN CAR

Vivian looks at the two cars as she slowly drives by.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF BUD'S DINER

The Peterman car completes a slow U-turn, returns to the diner, and parks in an open space next to the New Cumberland patrol car.

INT. BUD'S DINER - MOMENTS LATER

One of the waitresses slides two coffees in front of Travaglio and Travaglio and then exits.

MAX TRAVALIO
I was reading in Police Digest about this town...

Meyers raises an eyebrow as he sips his coffee. Travaglio loads his coffee with sugar.

MAX TRAVALIO
...where there were murders that looked the same, but it turned out a second guy copied what he read in the paper.

KARL MEYERS
Tell you what. I guess you could pick up a new copy of Police Digest tomorrow morning and see what other pearls of wisdom might be in there to help us, but I have a feeling it might be more productive to start at the high school and get the name of every male student who lives in Highland Estates...

MAX TRAVALIO
Karl.

KARL MEYERS
Then we should start checking where each one of them was on...

MAX TRAVALIO
Karl.

KARL MEYERS
What?

Vivian Peterman approaches the two men. Travaglio nods in her direction.

Meyers turns, sees Vivian, and quickly turns back.

KARL MEYERS
Christ.

MAX TRAVALIO
I'm out of here.

KARL MEYERS
(near pleading)
Max...

Travaglio gets up, puts on his hat, and touches his brim as he passes Vivian.

MAX TRAVALIO
Mrs. Peterman.

Vivian smiles slightly at Travaglio. There is some color and a slight swelling around her cheekbone. Vivian stops next to Meyers and forces a smile.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
May I?

Meyers nods and gestures that she should sit. He notices her face.

KARL MEYERS
I don't expect you bumped into a wall.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
It's the price a wife has to pay
sometimes.

KARL MEYERS
Hell of a price.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Tell me you never hit your wife.

KARL MEYERS
Never did.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
She must be wonderful.

KARL MEYERS
Was wonderful.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Was?

KARL MEYERS

She died a long time ago.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I'm sorry. (beat) You must be terribly lonely.

Meyers stares into her eyes as he takes a sip of coffee; Vivian stares back.

KARL MEYERS

Would you like something?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Yes.

KARL MEYERS

Coffee?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Nothing like that.

Meyers stares at her for a beat and then slides out of the booth.

KARL MEYERS

(to himself)

Christ, I can't do this.

Meyers goes to the cashier, hands over a bill and the check, doesn't wait for change, and exits the diner.

Vivian slowly gets to her feet and walks toward the door.

EXT. BUD'S DINER - MOMENTS LATER

Vivian walks down the steps of the diner.

Meyers is standing silhouetted in the darkness next to Vivian's car smoking a cigarette.

Vivian pauses and then walks toward him; Meyers drops the cigarette and waits for her.

They stand looking at each other until Vivian puts her arms around him and kisses him.

Meyers does not return the kiss at first but then embraces and kisses Vivian passionately.

INT. MEYERS' BEDROOM - LATER

Meyers and Vivian make love in the darkness. Their silhouettes move aggressively.

Vivian is on top of Meyers and has a wrenching orgasm.

After a few seconds, she kisses Meyers and resumes the dance.

Meyers comes.

INT. MEYERS' BEDROOM - LATER

In the darkened room, Vivian dresses quickly. She steals glances at Meyers, who is lying under a sheet with his back to her.

When she is finished dressing, Vivian looks at Meyers for a beat before exiting.

Meyers face into view. He stares impassively at the wall.

INT. LIVING ROOM, PETERMAN HOME - NEXT MORNING

DOORBELL CHIMES.

Vivian approaches the door. She has a slightly blackened eye, and a fat lip. She looks out the small diamond shaped window in the door, hangs her head for a beat, and then opens the door.

Meyers enters and Travaglio follows. Meyers eyes narrow at the sight of Vivian's new wounds. He looks a question at her.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Sometimes it's the price you have to pay.

(to Travaglio)

Good morning, Lieutenant.

Travaglio looks at Karl and back at Vivian with apparent concern.

MAX TRAVALIO

Morning, Mrs. Peterman. We have to talk to Greg.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

He's down in the garage, playing. Is this really necessary?

MAX TRAVALIO

It is.

KARL MEYERS
He may be in danger.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
(barely able to say the word)
Why?

Meyers runs his hand slowly down his face and then rubs his chin. He opens his mouth to speak but pauses for a beat.

KARL MEYERS
We'd like to talk to Greg.

Vivian's eyes bore into Meyers' eyes. He looks down.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
(yells)
Gregory!

Greg's head appears above the top step of the lower level stairs. When he sees who is in the room, he proceeds slowly.

KARL MEYERS
Have a seat, Greg.

Greg sits on the sofa. Meyers paces briefly before facing Greg. Meyers drops to his haunches and stares at Greg.

Greg looks away.

KARL MEYERS
I know you know who murdered Barry.

GREG PETERMAN
I...I...I don't know.

KARL MEYERS
I think you do.

Meyers sits next to Greg.

KARL MEYERS
The person used a switchblade. You know what that is don't you?

Greg shakes his head.

Vivian almost hides her surprise at Greg's denial. Meyers notices, looks at Travaglio, stands, moves back from Greg and stares at him.

Greg wilts.

KARL MEYERS
I think you do know what it is.

GREG PETERMAN
(nervously defiant)
I don't know.

Meyers kneels in front of Greg, who looks away.

KARL MEYERS
Look son, I think this guy is going to start worrying you're going to eventually tell. (beat) Look at me.

Greg looks at Meyers.

KARL MEYERS
I want to arrest the person who killed Barry before he does to you what he did to Sammy.

GREG PETERMAN
I told you I didn't do anything.

Meyers stands up, looks at Travaglio, and then at Greg.

KARL MEYERS
I never said you did.

Vivian moves between Meyers and Greg.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
I don't want him to have to answer any more questions.

KARL MEYERS
I think he knows who we're looking for. Don't stop this.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
You're hurting him, Karl. Please.

Meyers looks at Vivian for a beat and then at Travaglio.

Meyers walks to the door, pauses, and then turns toward Greg.

KARL MEYERS
You said you were playing war, but maybe you were doing something else, something with somebody besides Barry. Isn't that right? (beat) Maybe there was an accident...maybe an accident with a gun.

Greg stares ahead and responds by slightly shaking his head.

Meyers and Travaglio stare at Greg.

EXT. PETERMAN HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Meyers and Travaglio are walking to Travaglio's car.

MAX TRAVALIO
What the hell was that about?

KARL MEYERS
I just had this feeling there is
something going on that has nothing to do
with some lunatic preying on kids. Just a
feeling. I had to see what he'd say.

MAX TRAVALIO
He didn't say anything.

Meyers and Travaglio are standing on opposite sides of the
car.

KARL MEYERS
Sometimes silence says a lot.

They enter the car.

INT. STATE POLICE CAR

Travaglio starts the car.

MAX TRAVALIO
And just what exactly does it say?

KARL MEYERS
I have no idea.

Travaglio pulls the car away from the curb. He looks at
Meyers.

MAX TRAVALIO
When did she start calling you Karl?

Meyers gives a slight shrug of his shoulders and looks out of
the side window.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Greg is face down on his bed. Vivian is looking at him.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Barry's brother did it, didn't he?

Greg whips around to face his mother.

GREG PETERMAN
Vaughn wouldn't do that.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
He's threatened you, hasn't he?

GREG PETERMAN
No.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
What if he killed the Preston boy? He could do that to you.

GREG PETERMAN
Vaughn didn't do it. I know he didn't do it.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
You have his knife. You're keeping it for him, not for Barry. The police wouldn't expect you to have it, so he gave it to you.

Greg jumps from the bed and grabs Vivian's arms.

GREG PETERMAN
Mom, stop it, please!

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Promise me you're telling the truth.
Promise me.

Greg's voice wavers, but he does not turn his eyes away.

GREG PETERMAN
I promise.

INT. MOYER HOME ENTRY HALL - LATER

Alice Moyer opens the front door. Meyers stands outside. Alice appears genuinely pleased to see him.

ALICE MOYER
Good morning, Karl. It's so good of you to visit again.

KARL MEYERS
How is she doing?

ALICE MOYER
Still the same, sad to say, but I haven't given up hope.

KARL MEYERS
Good for you.

Alice turns and walks down the hall. Karl follows.

Karl and Alice walk past the kitchen doorway. Vaughn and Harry Moyer are seated in the kitchen finishing breakfast.

When Vaughn sees Meyers, he jumps to his feet.

VAUGHN MOYER
What the hell is he doing here?

HARRY MOYER
Watch your mouth.

Vaughn approaches the hall. Meyers stops.

Vaughn and Meyers eyeball each other.

ALICE MOYER
I'm sorry, Karl.

VAUGHN MOYER
I want to know why the hell he's here.

ALICE MOYER
He's here to see your sister.

VAUGHN MOYER
I don't like it.

ALICE MOYER
He cares more about your sister than you do. He's welcome here.

Vaughn glares at Meyers for a beat, looks at his mother, pushes past Meyers, and moves OUT OF VIEW.

Harry Moyer enters the hallway.

The front door SLAMS.

HARRY MOYER
Can't do anything with him, Chief. Damn sorry about that.

Meyers turns to Harry.

KARL MEYERS
Don't worry about it. The boy has a reason to be mad at me.

INT. PATSY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Patsy is awake but unresponsive.

Karl Meyers sits on the edge of Patsy's bed, holds her hand, and speaks with a father's gentleness.

KARL MEYERS
 What did you see, Angel? What did you see? What did you see that was so horrible?

Meyers gets up and walks to a window.

KARL MEYERS
 Horrible...So horrible that the sight of it drove you away. Was it the dogs?

Meyers moves to the bed.

KARL MEYERS
 The dogs were later, much later. (beat)
 Seeing your brother getting stabbed was enough wasn't it?

Meyers sits on the bed and takes Patsy's hand.

KARL MEYERS
 There's something inside you, Angel, something inside that has to come out. What is...Jesus Christ.

Meyers stands and looks at Patsy for a beat.

KARL MEYERS
 Something had to come out.

EXT. FOREST CLEARING MURDER SCENE - AFTERNOON - SAME DAY

Two NATIONAL GUARDSMEN in fatigues are slowly moving hand held mine sweepers back and forth across the grass. Travaglio is watching.

Meyers INTO VIEW.

KARL MEYERS
 Find anything?

MAX TRAVALIO
 You've got to be kidding. Everybody and their mother must come here to shoot. We've found every kind of dasing from twenty-twos to military issues, about two
 (MORE)

MAX TRAVALIO (cont'd)
bucks in change and enough bottle caps to
seal a couple cases of beer.

One of the Guardsmen puts down the sweeper, bends over and reaches into the grass. He is about to pick something up, but sees something else near it that he picks up.

MAX TRAVALIO
I'll lay money it's another damned bottle
cap.

The Guardsman holds up a small bullet for Travaglio and Meyers to see.

INT. STATE POLICE CRIME LAB - LATER

BILL MELROSE sits on a stool looking at a bullet with a dissecting scope. He wears a white lab coat over a white shirt and tie.

Meyers and Travaglio stand nearby.

BILL MELROSE
I'm almost positive it has dried blood on
it, so I doubt if it's a ricochet from
somebody target practicing. It could just
be squirrel blood.

Melrose slowly spins on the stool until he is facing the other officers.

BILL MELROSE
I just don't have any way of telling the
source of the blood. The damn thing is
deformed, though.

KARL MEYERS
Like it struck bone.

BILL MELROSE
Or a rock after it went through a
squirrel.

KARL MEYERS
So it's a dead end.

BILL MELROSE
Hell no. There are good markings on the
back half of the slug. If you get me the
gun that fired it, I'll be able to get a
match.

Meyers appears deep in thought as he walks toward a door.

MAX TRAVALIO
Where are you going?

Meyers keeps walking.

KARL MEYERS
Going to take a drive. Got some thinking
to do.

MAX TRAVALIO
(calls out)
Supper at the diner before the funeral?

Meyers waves assent as he disappears through the doorway.

INT. PETERMAN HOME BATHROOM - EVENING - SAME DAY

Jerry Peterman, wrapped in a bath towel, looks into a mirror
as he shaves with shaving creme and a safety razor.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Vivian Peterman somberly pulls on a slip over her bra and
panties, goes to a dresser, and begins brushing her hair.

INT. GREG'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Greg Peterman, wearing a starched white shirt and suit pants,
is struggling to knot a tie as he looks into a small mirror
hanging on his wall.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Greg passes Jerry, who is still wrapped in the towel. Jerry
does not acknowledge Greg, but as Greg looks at Jerry, a very
slight, malignant smile appears on Greg's face.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Vivian, wearing a Sunday dress, applies makeup in front of
the mirror.

Jerry INTO VIEW. He drops the towel to the floor and
retrieves boxer shorts from a drawer next to Vivian.

Jerry and Vivian ignore each other.

Jerry OUT OF VIEW. SOUND of SLIDING CLOSET DOORS.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Greg applies butch wax and carefully combs his hair as he
observes himself in the mirror. When he appears satisfied

that his hair is perfect, he stops combing and stares into eyes that are no longer the eyes of a little boy.

INT. BUD'S DINER - LATER

Travalio, wearing his Sunday best, sits in a booth eating a meatloaf special.

The diner is nearly filled with CUSTOMERS serviced by the two older waitresses.

Meyers, also dressed in his Sunday best, INTO FRAME. He slides into the booth and gets the attention of a waitress.

Meyers orders his meal by pointing at Travalio's plate. Order placed, he turns to Travalio who has been studying him.

MAX TRAVALIO

Well?

KARL MEYERS

Got a warrant.

MAX TRAVALIO

For what?

KARL MEYERS

You don't think Peterman is going to turn over a gun without one, do you?

MAX TRAVALIO

Must've been a productive afternoon.

KARL MEYERS

The bastard has been antagonistic from the beginning. Wants us off his kid. It seems more than what you'd expect.

MAX TRAVALIO

Maybe.

KARL MEYERS

Like he knows Greg knows something.

MAX TRAVALIO

OK.

KARL MEYERS

I start thinking size 11 Keds, and I think, Peterman is a good sized son-of-a-bitch. Might wear a size 11.

MAX TRAVALIO
Now you're losing me. Peterman kills the
Preston kid?

KARL MEYERS
I called Peterman's boss. Peterman wasn't
at work when Barry was killed.

MAX TRAVALIO
Did we know that?

KARL MEYERS
We never asked. No reason to. Turns out
Peterman took the afternoon off that day.

MAX TRAVALIO
And?

KARL MEYERS
I think he calls in sick and goes into
the woods to do some target practice. By
coincidence, the boys head into the woods
at the same time to do whatever boys do
in the woods. Maybe they were playing
war. For some reason, Patsy tags along,
maybe keeping out of sight because she
wants to get some low down on her brother
so she can get him into trouble.

MAX TRAVALIO
Peterman accidentally shoots Barry?

KARL MEYERS
And then the guy panics. He decides to
fabricate a murder and get rid of the
evidence at the same time.

MAX TRAVALIO
The bullet?

KARL MEYERS
The bullet.

MAX TRAVALIO
Greg sees everything.

KARL MEYERS
His old man terrorizes him into going
along.

MAX TRAVALIO
And Patsy sees the whole thing, but they
don't know she's there.

Meyers looks at Travaglio and solemnly nods in agreement. The waitress delivers Meyers' dinner. Both men eat for a few seconds.

MAX TRAVALIO
It's plausible, but what about the
Preston kid?

KARL MEYERS
Peterman knows we think Greg's story is
suspect. He thinks we won't believe Greg
until another kid gets killed.

MAX TRAVALIO
So he repeats the crime.

KARL MEYERS
Badly.

MAX TRAVALIO
To prove there *is* a lunatic out there.

KARL MEYERS
(mouthful of food)
If I'm right, there is.

INT. ALEXANDER'S FUNERAL PARLOR - LATER

Sammy Preston is laid out for viewing surrounded by mounds of flowers. Vivian stands next to Susan and Will Preston.

A large number of MOURNERS, including Travaglio and Meyers pass by the casket. They offer condolences to the Prestons and move away. The Prestons' response is cold acknowledgment.

Meyers does not acknowledge Vivian. She glares at him.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry Peterman stands in the midst of a small GROUP of MEN. Greg stands sullenly behind his father.

JERRY PETERMAN
What do we have? Two yokels and a broken
down city cop. We may have to take things
into our own hands.

MOURNER ONE
I'd hate to be the guy if we caught him.

JERRY PETERMAN
We ought to do the same thing to him that
he did to those boys.

MOURNER TWO
Except slow.

Grunts among the men indicate agreement.

Meyers approaches the group. Their backs go up collectively.

KARL MEYERS
Gentlemen.

MOURNER TWO
Chief.

KARL MEYERS
(to Jerry)
Could I speak with you for a minute?

JERRY PETERMAN
I'm talking with my friends.

KARL MEYERS
What size shoe do you wear, Mr. Peterman?
A size 11?

JERRY PETERMAN
(laughs)
What does checking shoe sizes have to do
with solving a murder?

All of the men are silent and uncomfortable except for Mournner One.

MOURNER ONE
(laughs)
Maybe he got fired, and he's practicing
to sell shoes at Sear's.

No one responds. Mournner One stops laughing and squirms.

KARL MEYERS
(to Jerry)
I think it would be a good idea for us to
talk privately.

Meyers walks away. The men look at Jerry suspiciously.

JERRY PETERMAN
(to Greg)
Go in and stand with your mother.

Jerry follows Meyers out of the room.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Meyers stands just inside the entrance and lights a cigarette. No one else is in the foyer as Jerry approaches.

JERRY PETERMAN

What the hell was that about?

KARL MEYERS

I wanted to get your attention.

JERRY PETERMAN

Well, you got it, but you aren't going to have it for long, so don't waste my time.

KARL MEYERS

I'll tell you what, Peterman. I don't like your attitude. In fact, I don't like you. I don't like that you hit your wife and bully your kid. And to make matters worse, I think you know what happened to Barry Moyer and the Preston boy.

JERRY PETERMAN

You son-of-a-bitch. You don't believe my kid and now you're going to accuse *me* of something?

KARL MEYERS

Where were you the afternoon Barry Moyer was killed?

Jerry collects himself for a second and then launches a right cross.

Meyers ducks the punch, grabs Jerry's arm, spins him around, and jams on an arm lock.

Holding on to the arm with one hand and the collar of Peterman's suit coat with the other, Meyers moves Jerry toward a cloak room to the amazement of two ELDERLY WOMEN who enter the foyer.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR CLOAK ROOM

The room is empty of coats. Dozens of metal hangers are on the racks.

Meyers lets go of Peterman.

Jerry spins around and charges Meyers, tackles him around his middle, drives him into a wall and sends hangers flying.

Meyers pounds on Jerry's back with a free hand and struggles to get free.

INT. FOYER

CACOPHONY OF GROANS, SMACKS, THUDS, FLYING HANGERS

The elderly women take tentative steps toward the cloak room.

INT. CLOAK ROOM

Jerry and Meyers wrestle and alternately trade punches, all of which are missing or glancing until Meyers sends a powerful jab to Jerry's nose.

Jerry is physically stunned but remains on his feet. He wipes blood from his face and looks at it.

Meyers sees the elderly ladies peering inside and slams the door in their faces.

INT. FOYER

The elderly ladies walk away indignantly.

INT. CLOAK ROOM

KARL MEYERS

I'm not going to waste my time arresting you for this. This is between you and me.

JERRY PETERMAN

That was a damned lucky punch.

Meyers sets his jaw, starts to cock his fist, then relaxes.

KARL MEYERS

Let me make something very clear to you, scumbag. You ever touch me again...ever ...I'll break your fucking neck. Then I'll put you in jail.

There is defiance in Jerry's eyes for a beat, but then his head slumps forward. He pulls out a handkerchief and tries to stem the flow of blood from his nose.

KARL MEYERS

Where were you the afternoon Barry Moyer was killed?

JERRY PETERMAN

At work.

KARL MEYERS
That's a lie. I talked to your boss.

JERRY PETERMAN
I left early.

KARL MEYERS
Where did you go?

JERRY PETERMAN
Fishing.

KARL MEYERS
Some nice quiet trout stream. Not a soul
around.

JERRY PETERMAN
That's right.

KARL MEYERS
That's bullshit. I think you were out in
the woods with those boys. I think there
was a terrible accident, and Barry got
shot. You panicked and made it look like
a murder.

JERRY PETERMAN
You're out of your God damned mind.

KARL MEYERS
You forced your kid to lie, then you
killed the Preston boy because we weren't
buying the story.

JERRY PETERMAN
I can't believe you're saying this.

KARL MEYERS
Believe it. I've got a warrant to search
your house. I'll be there within the
hour, and I expect you to be there too.

JERRY PETERMAN
You got it wrong, all of it.

Meyers turns to leave, and Jerry grabs his sleeve. Meyers
snaps a look at Jerry's hand.

Jerry lets go like he received an electric jolt.

JERRY PETERMAN
Chief. Christ. You got it wrong.

Meyers gives Jerry a scathing look and then walks away.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR - MOMENTS LATER

Travalio approaches Greg, who sits in the front row of a dozen rows of chairs. Mourners continue to pay their respects. Travalio sits next to Greg.

MAX TRAVALIO
This has been a real tough time, hasn't it?

GREG PETERMAN
Yes sir.

MAX TRAVALIO
I bet you'll be happy when we finally catch the killer.

GREG PETERMAN
Yes sir.

MAX TRAVALIO
I think we're getting real close to catching him, did you know that?

Greg stands.

GREG PETERMAN
Excuse me, but I have to use the rest room.

Vivian Peterman watches her son exit and then makes eye contact with Travalio, who stands and slowly exits.

INT. FUNERAL PARLOR REST ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Greg is using one of two urinals.

Meyers enters, stands at the other, unzips and urinates.

KARL MEYERS
I know what happened. Just can't prove it yet. You've got a terrible secret to keep, and I hate to tell you this, but secrets always come out.

Greg finishes, moves quickly to the sink, and washes his hands.

KARL MEYERS
You could tell me now and be a hero.

Travalio enters and stands in the doorway. Greg pulls down on the continuous cloth hand towel to dry his hands. Meyers turns around and zips up.

KARL MEYERS

But maybe you won't have to. The doctor told me today Patsy is getting better.

Greg stops drying his hands and watches Meyers, who goes to the sink and washes his hands.

KARL MEYERS

In a couple of days she may be able to tell us exactly what happened to Barry.

Greg goes to the door but is blocked by Travaglio. Greg, his expression defiant, turns around and faces Meyers, who is drying his hands.

KARL MEYERS

I know you're afraid of what will happen if you tell, but I won't let anything happen to you.

Greg appears ready to respond, but instead he pushes past Travaglio and out of the rest room.

MAX TRAVALIO

He's getting close.

KARL MEYERS

A matter of time.

Travaglio and Meyers move toward the door.

MAX TRAVALIO

That's great news about Patsy.

KARL MEYERS

I lied.

INT. TOWNSHIP POLICE CAR - LATER

The car drives the Peterman's street. A thick fog engulfs the neighborhood.

Meyers pulls the car to the curb and sees Vivian's silhouette standing inside the front screen door.

Vivian, wearing the dress she wore to the viewing, opens the door and walks outside.

EXT. PETERMAN HOME

Meyers exits the car and meets Vivian halfway up the terraced concrete steps that gradually climb across the front of the house from the driveway to the front door.

Vivian's eyes convey anger and aggressiveness, but her voice does not rise in pitch or volume. It is her eyes which convey her feeling.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
What did you say to him?

KARL MEYERS
It's not your concern.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Not my concern? He says you accused him
of killing those boys.

Meyers studies Vivian for a moment.

KARL MEYERS
It's a possibility.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
It's *not* a possibility.

KARL MEYERS
I'm not going to debate this with you.
The facts will speak for themselves. I'm
either right on this, or I'm wrong, but
neither you nor I get to decide that.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
The facts will prove you're wrong.

KARL MEYERS
Where is this coming from?

VIVIAN PETERMAN
He's my husband.

KARL MEYERS
Was he your husband last night?

Vivian looks into Meyers' eyes with defiance and hers fill with tears.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
What am I supposed to do? I need him.

KARL MEYERS
You don't need someone who treats you
like he does.

Meyers touches Vivian's cheek to brush away a tear. She moves to him, and they embrace until Vivian reluctantly pushes him away.

Vivian decisively wipes tears from her cheeks and stands tall.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

He doesn't treat me badly all the time. And he provides for me. For me and for Greg. If something were to happen to him, what would happen to Greg and me? What would I do?

She pauses to allow Meyers to respond, but he does not.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Please, Karl. Please leave him alone. He couldn't have done it.

Meyers takes a deep breath, looks out at the street as he exhales, and then looks at Vivian.

KARL MEYERS

I have a warrant that gives me permission to search your house.

Vivian looks at Meyers through narrowed eyes for a beat before she turns and slowly walks up the steps.

Meyers follows.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Jerry Peterman sits on the sofa, leaning forward. His nose is red and swollen. He looks at Vivian expectantly and appears disappointed when she shakes her head slightly.

Vivian sits next to Jerry and holds his hand.

Meyers hands Jerry a folded document, and with his free hand, Jerry shakes it open, looks at the first few lines, and then looks at Meyers.

KARL MEYERS

It gives me the authority to turn this house upside down if I have to, but I want to be decent about this, so if you'll just cooperate, I'll be out of here quickly.

JERRY PETERMAN

Tell me what you want.

KARL MEYERS

You own a pair of Keds?

JERRY PETERMAN
Two pair, actually. One pair's pretty
beat up.

KARL MEYERS
I need to have both pairs.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
I'll get them.

Vivian heads downstairs to the lower level.

KARL MEYERS
Second thing I need is any and all twenty-
two caliber guns you may have.

JERRY PETERMAN
I only had one.

KARL MEYERS
Had?

JERRY PETERMAN
I sold it a few days ago.

Meyers' eyes pierce Jerry's.

Jerry appears more uneasy. He stands and pleads.

JERRY PETERMAN
It isn't how it looks. The boy was
messing with it. I warned him what would
happen. I just got rid of it to punish
him.

KARL MEYERS
Who'd you sell it to?

JERRY PETERMAN
Guy in Mechanicsburg. Owns the garage
where I get my car worked on. Bill
Smithers. Smithers' Garage. He bought it
off me for twenty-five bucks. I know he
still has it.

KARL MEYERS
I'm going to check it out, Jerry.

JERRY PETERMAN
I want you to, Chief. I didn't do
anything wrong. I want to cooperate.

Vivian ascends the steps with one beat up pair of Keds and a
worried look on her face.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Only one pair down there, Jerry.

Vivian hands the sneakers to Meyers, who turns them over and sees the tread is almost entirely worn off. Meyers looks at Jerry doubtfully.

Jerry drops back onto the sofa.

KARL MEYERS

Size eleven?

Jerry nods his head.

KARL MEYERS

The other pair newer?

JERRY PETERMAN

Only a couple of months old. I've hardly worn them. (to Vivian) You look in the laundry room?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I looked everywhere down there. I could have sworn I just saw them.

JERRY PETERMAN

I know this doesn't look good.

KARL MEYERS

Three strikes, Jerry.

JERRY PETERMAN

I'm not lying to you. I'll be damned if I know where the shoes are. I always put them in the same place.

KARL MEYERS

Barry Moyer was shot, possibly by a twenty-two. I've got a bloody bullet I need to match up with the gun that fired it, and you've gotten rid of the only twenty-two in the house.

JERRY PETERMAN

I told you where it is.

KARL MEYERS

There was a bloody foot print on the Preston kid's window sill. Size eleven Keds. (holds up old sneakers) No tread here to leave a print. The other pair? Miraculously gone.

Meyers pauses for a beat to let this sink in.

KARL MEYERS
And strike three? You lied to me about
where you were that afternoon.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Jerry?

JERRY PETERMAN
I went fishing.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Since when do you go fishing?

JERRY PETERMAN
I just started.

Vivian stands and stares defiantly at Jerry.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
I want to know what's going on here.

Jerry looks back and forth at Vivian and Meyers, clearly
trapped.

JERRY PETERMAN
All right. I didn't go fishing. But I'm
not going to say where I was.

KARL MEYERS
Suit yourself, Jerry.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
You were off with some woman, weren't
you?

Meyers' raised eyebrow acknowledges the irony of Vivian's
protest.

Jerry bows his head and shakes it slowly. He leans back.

JERRY PETERMAN
(to Meyers)
I wasn't doing anything illegal.

KARL MEYERS
If things keep going like this, and if
you were with somebody that afternoon, it
might save your neck. It's your choice.
Now or later.

JERRY PETERMAN

Where I was doesn't have anything to do with this.

KARL MEYERS

Tell you what. I'll give you one more chance. Is there a knife in this house like a stiletto? You know the kind I mean?

Vivian's expression changes. She sits down in a chair and appears worried. Jerry becomes defiant.

JERRY PETERMAN

What kind of sicko do you think I am? You really think I'd do something like that to those boys?

KARL MEYERS

That's not an answer.

JERRY PETERMAN

No, God damn it! No, there ain't no damn knives like that in this house.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

There is one.

JERRY PETERMAN

What the damn hell are you talking about?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(to Meyers)

I found it in one of Greg's drawers. A switchblade, he called it.

KARL MEYERS

Greg's?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

He said Barry gave it to him. It belongs to Vaughn. Barry's older brother.

KARL MEYERS

Greg said that?

JERRY PETERMAN

Why the hell didn't you tell me? You have no right to keep secrets from me.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

No right? You have no right to treat Greg the way you do. I didn't tell you because you would have beaten him.

JERRY PETERMAN

He deserves a beating if he brought that into my house.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Nobody deserves to be treated the way you treat him. He wants you to love him. He wants to look up to you, but you keep him at arm's length and beat him down. He's just a little boy, not a Marine!

Vivian composes herself in the silence that follows. She stands and walks quickly toward the stairs.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I'll get the knife.

Vivian climbs the steps.

Meyers looks at Jerry, who looks away. Meyers walks to the open front door and looks through the storm door at the fog.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (O.S.)

(alarmed)

He's not here.

INT. GREG'S ROOM

Vivian tears through clothes in the chest of drawers. Meyers enters followed by Jerry. The window on the side of the house is open.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(to Meyers)

It's not here.

Meyers goes to the open window, looks outside, and then turns to look at the Petermans. He appears lost in thought for a beat and then appears to have an insight.

KARL MEYERS

I told him Patsy was going to get better.

Meyers bolts for the door.

KARL MEYERS

Call the Moyers. Tell them to stay by Patsy until I get there.

INT. TOWNSHIP POLICE CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Meyers is driving too fast through the foggy development with his lights flashing.

MATCH FADE TO

EXT. RIALTO THEATER, BALTIMORE - FLASHBACK - 1939 - DAY

Laura Meyers is in the midst of the exiting crowd with Shirley in tow. Both are in high spirits.

INT. PATROL CAR - CONTINUOUS

A bus is stopped to the left of Laura and Shirley. Karl sees them as they near the curb. (Unlike the original scene) Karl waves for them to cross. Laura gestures the question, "should we cross?" Again, Karl waves for them to cross.

EXT. RIALTO THEATER - CONTINUOUS

Laura and Shirley start to cross the street, but (unlike the original scene) Laura, trusting her husband, does not look either way.

There is the SOUND of SCREECHING TIRES and a CAR HORN to her left.

In a split second, (unlike the original scene) Laura's face conveys her shock and disappointment at having been betrayed by her husband's judgment.

CUT TO BLACK

SOUND OF SCREAMS

THUDS OF A CAR STRIKING TWO BODIES

INT. TOWNSHIP POLICE CAR - RETURN TO PRESENT

Karl Meyers has stopped the car. His face is pained; a tear streaks his cheek.

INT. PETERMAN HOME KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Vivian is standing at the wall phone in the kitchen with the receiver to her ear.

BUSY SIGNAL

Vivian angrily depresses the switch hook and starts to dial a number again.

EXT. REAR OF MOYER HOME - CONTINUOUS

Greg Peterman's POV

Alice Moyer is seen through a screen door. She sits beside the kitchen table and talks into a telephone.

ALICE MOYER
(Fifties' long distance loud)
It is so good to hear your voice, Annie.

Greg moves toward the far corner of the house. Alice Moyer's voice fades as Greg moves away from her.

ALICE MOYER (O.S.)
Harry's away and I've been feeling
lonely. I can't believe you've called all
the way from California.

INT. TOWNSHIP POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Meyers slows the car as he approaches a corner, winds down his window to look at a street sign, and then does a U-turn in the empty intersection.

EXT. STREET

The police car heads back down the street into the fog.

EXT. SIDE OF MOYER HOME - CONTINUOUS

Greg stands in front of a window in Patsy's darkened room. The window is open and screened; sheer curtains inside the room are still in the absence of a breeze.

Greg wears his father's Keds over his own shoes, giving him a clownish appearance in contrast to the psychotic chill which is in his eyes.

Greg takes the stiletto from his pocket, switches it open, and carefully cuts away the screen. He waits for a beat.

Greg puts the knife back in his pocket and with difficulty climbs inside.

INT. PATSY'S ROOM

Patsy is in bed under the covers and is illuminated by indirect light from the hallway. Her eyes are open, and she is lying perfectly still.

APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS

Greg darts behind the bedroom door.

Alice Moyer enters, kisses Patsy's forehead, tucks the bedsheet around her and exits.

Greg emerges from behind the door and approaches the bed. He carefully pulls down the sheet and stares at her.

A TELEPHONE RINGS ONCE.

Greg gently pulls up Patsy's Pajama top to expose her belly, then pokes her belly with his finger. She does not respond.

Greg removes the stiletto from his pocket and opens it.

CAR SCREECHES TO A STOP.

Greg looks at the window and then turns back to Patsy. He places the knife on the bed next to Patsy and quickly pulls the pillow from beneath her head.

Gregg places the pillow over Patsy's face and begins to suffocate her. She does not resist.

WOMAN'S SHRIEK

Alice is in the doorway. Greg backs away from the bed quickly and takes a step toward the window. Patsy is still alive.

Alice lunges toward Greg and grabs his arm, but Greg jerks back causing Alice to lose her balance. Her head hits the corner of a dresser as she falls, unconscious, to the floor.

Greg looks at Alice and then leaps onto the bed, grabs the knife and raises it over his head with both hands.

KARL MEYERS (O.S.)
(bellows)
Freeze!

Greg freezes, his eyes on Patsy.

Meyers stands one step inside the door with his gun drawn and pointed at Greg's back.

Meyers moves closer to the bed.

Greg's hands drive the knife toward Patsy.

KARL MEYERS
(at the top of his lungs)
Stop!

Greg's hands stop. He looks at Meyers with an expression that is a cross between fear and determination.

Greg turns back to Patsy, raises the knife and drives it down.

Meyers launches himself toward Greg and tackles him just before the knife reaches Patsy.

Meyers lands on top of Greg on the floor. The knife is nearby, and Meyers sweeps it away with his hand.

Greg's expression changes from defiance to a stunned awareness of what he has done, and then to the tortured face of a twelve-year-old boy facing horrific consequences.

GREG PETERMAN

Please don't tell my father. I didn't mean for it to happen. I didn't want any of it to happen. Please don't tell my father.

INT. MOYER HOME ENTRY HALL - A SHORT TIME LATER

Vivian is IN VIEW in the living room, dabbing her eyes with a handkerchief. Jerry stands near her and stares out a window.

Greg sits on the sofa, distraught and sniffing.

Meyers stands inside the front door.

Travalio enters.

MAX TRAVALIO

Hell of a night out there.

KARL MEYERS

Can't see ten feet in front of you.

MAX TRAVALIO

Pea souper. Where's the kid?

Meyers nods toward the living room. Travalio moves to the doorway and nods somberly toward Vivian.

MAX TRAVALIO

Time to go.

Greg looks at his mother as he stands and tries to be brave despite his tears.

Vivian goes to him, hugs him, and cries.

Jerry, appearing downtrodden, goes to Greg and extends his hand as Travalio enters the room.

Greg backs away and looks at Jerry with hatred.

GREG PETERMAN
Get away from me.

JERRY PETERMAN
Son...

GREG PETERMAN
I hate you.

Jerry reaches toward Greg in a gesture of reconciliation, but Greg recoils.

GREG PETERMAN
No!

Travalio puts his hand on Greg's shoulder.

Jerry turns toward Vivian for help, but she turns away.

Greg gives Jerry a last contemptuous look before Travalio ushers him into the hallway.

MAX TRAVALIO
(to Meyers)
First thing tomorrow?

KARL MEYERS
First thing. (to Greg) Tell the truth. No need to lie any more, all right?

GREG PETERMAN
Yes sir.

Travalio and Greg exit. Jerry walks into the hall and watches his son walk toward the police car. Vivian stands next to Meyers.

Jerry turns and looks from Vivian to Meyers to Vivian. His expression begs for one of them to comfort him, but neither does. With bowed head, he turns and walks outside.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
I better go to him.

KARL MEYERS
For God's sake, Why?

VIVIAN PETERMAN
I'm his wife. He needs me.

KARL MEYERS
He doesn't love you.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Since when is that an issue in this world? It doesn't seem important when my little boy is going to have to answer for the things he's done.

KARL MEYERS

The Law demands accountability.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

For him, but who is going to hold me accountable?

KARL MEYERS

You until the day you die.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I can't face that by myself.

KARL MEYERS

Maybe...

Meyers cannot finish what he wants to say.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Maybe you could help me face it? I don't think so. You'd risk your life to pull someone from a burning house or throw yourself in front of a bullet to save a child, but you're not brave enough to risk your heart.

Meyers stares into Vivian's eyes.

KARL MEYERS

It's the price I've had to pay.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Living behind a wall of loneliness?

KARL MEYERS

I haven't lived there long enough.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

How long is your sentence? Isn't there a time to forgive yourself for whatever it is you've done?

KARL MEYERS

They're innocents...so fragile. One simple mistake, one slight oversight, and their lives are shattered. I've tried to find my way past the memories, and you'll try too, but nothing I do will ever make
(MORE)

KARL MEYERS (cont'd)
amends because the one I hurt wasn't able
to say it's OK. There's no one to forgive
me.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Except yourself.

KARL MEYERS
You're going to find out just how
impossible that is.

Vivian smiles a melancholy smile and kisses him on the cheek.
She pauses, her face inches from his, and stares into his
eyes.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
It's why I have to go to him. I'm not
brave enough to face that impossibility
alone.

Vivian kisses Meyers' lips gently, touches his cheek, and
quickly exits.

Meyers turns and walks down the hall.

INT. PATSY'S ROOM

Meyers enters and sits next to Patsy. She remains conscious
but unresponsive. Meyers gently strokes her face.

KARL MEYERS
(whispers)
Sweetheart, can you hear me? Can you hear
me? Sweetheart, it's not a secret
anymore.

PULL BACK SLOWLY until Meyers and Patsy are viewed from
increasing height.

Meyer's voice diminishes until it is lost in a CRESCENDO OF
WIND.

KARL MEYERS
Come back to us, Sweetheart. Your mommy
needs you. Don't break her heart. Come
back. She needs you. (beat) Can you hear
me, Sweetheart? Can you hear me?

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END.