

AFLOAT

Pilot: "Beanie's Dogs"

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FADE IN:

EXT. BLUE MOUNTAIN - AUGUST DAY, 1955

A rotting buckboard rests at one end of a clearing on a level shelf of land halfway up Blue Mountain. The air is still. Knee-high grass covers the clearing. On the buckboard seat, four quart beer bottles glisten in the sun.

SOUNDS of occasional BUZZING of deerflies.

SOUND of a RIFLE SHOT; a bottle SHATTERS. The sequence is repeated three times in less than 10 seconds.

150 feet from the buckboard, 33-year-old JERRY PETERMAN holds an M-1 Garand to his shoulder and sights along the barrel.

Jerry wears a white T-shirt, olive workpants, black belt, and black combat boots. He is good-looking, clean-shaven and his light brown hair is cut into a short flattop. An arrogant smile appears on his face as he lowers the rifle.

Jerry's son, twelve-year-old GREG PETERMAN stands behind him. Greg is a tad shy of five feet tall and lean. His attire mirrors his father's: he looks like an embryonic jarhead.

Jerry turns to Greg; Greg comes to attention. Greg's voice is in the soprano pitch of a young boy.

GREG PETERMAN

Good shootin', sir.

JERRY PETERMAN

Damn right that was good shootin'.
Took out a lot of Japs with that kind
of shootin'.

GREG PETERMAN

Yes sir.

JERRY PETERMAN

Good eye and steady hands.

GREG PETERMAN

Yes sir.

Jerry extracts a small ring of keys from a pocket and tosses it to Greg, who catches it with both hands.

JERRY PETERMAN
Got a surprise for you, boy.

GREG PETERMAN
Sir?

JERRY PETERMAN
Go open the trunk.

Greg runs to a shining, black, 1950 Chrysler Windsor parked on a dirt track in the shade of an overarching canopy of trees. He unlocks, and with appreciable effort, lifts the trunk lid.

Greg looks into the trunk, then looks back at Jerry with a troubled expression.

JERRY PETERMAN
(annoyed)
In the blanket roll, pissant.

Greg unrolls a .22 caliber rifle from a battered army blanket. He turns, open-mouthed, and stares at Jerry.

JERRY PETERMAN
Come on, boy. I didn't plan on spending my day off watching you stand there with your mouth open catchin' flies. Bring it here!

Greg carries the rifle in both hands and trots to Jerry.

GREG PETERMAN
Would it be all right if maybe ...
could I shoot it, sir?

JERRY PETERMAN
(mocking falsetto)
Could I shoot it sir?

Jerry grabs the rifle.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)
Time you learned to shoot.

Jerry walks toward the buckboard. Greg doesn't follow. Jerry turns and angrily beckons the boy. Greg runs to catch up.

When Jerry halves the distance to the buckboard, Greg arrives at his side. Jerry hands Greg the rifle.

JERRY PETERMAN
I'm going to tell you something, and
you damn well better listen good.

Greg comes to attention and stares at Jerry's left ear.

GREG PETERMAN
(quick reply)
Yes SIR!

JERRY PETERMAN
You are never to touch this rifle
unless I'm with you. You got that?

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

JERRY PETERMAN
(leans toward Greg)
You know I'm serious about this.

GREG PETERMAN
(voice catches)
Yes sir.

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

Greg glances at his father's eyes.

JERRY PETERMAN
(surprised)
Are you eyeballing me boy?

Greg flinches, his eyes widen, and his lower lip quivers; he looks at distant treetops.

GREG PETERMAN
(whispers)
No sir.

JERRY PETERMAN
It's a damn good thing, you little
panty waste, because I don't want you
eyeballing me.

GREG PETERMAN
(fearful)
Yes sir.

JERRY PETERMAN
You touch this without my say so, I'll
warm that stinking backside of yours
so bad you won't be able to sit down
for a week. You understand me?

GREG PETERMAN

(gulps)
Yes sir!

Jerry stares at Greg for a beat, and then smirks.

JERRY PETERMAN

Wait there.

Jerry walks toward the buckboard. When Jerry is ten steps away, Greg raises the rifle and aims it with cold eyes at his father's back.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN, TWENTY MILES EAST OF THE DELAWARE BAY -
SPRING AFTERNOON, THE PRESENT

Ultima Thule sails over long ocean swells under full sail in fifteen knots of a northwest wind beneath clear blue skies.

ROLL CREDITS

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) Susquehanna Water Gap north of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
- B) Clearing along the Yellow Breeches near New Cumberland, PA
- C) The prairie west of Williston, North Dakota
- D) Port Townsend with the Puget Sound and snow-capped Cascades in the distance
- E) The Serenity (aka Ultima Thule) rounds Point Wilson seen from the gun emplacements at Fort Worden
- F) The snow-covered Elwha Valley in Olympic National Park
- G) The Serenity plows through high seas near Cape Flattery, Washington
- H) Aerial shot of Tahitian mountains and coastline
- I) Ultima Thule sails across the Tikehau Lagoon
- J) Inner Harbor, Baltimore, Maryland, 1970
- K) 1985 Midtown Manhattan from an Upper West Side penthouse
- L) Homes on Pilottown Road and canal, the present, Lewes, Delaware

END CREDITS

M) Ultima Thule, in the present with Billy Benton at the helm, diminishes in view as she sails under full sail toward the Atlantic's eastern horizon in fifteen knots of a northwest wind beneath clear blue skies

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEW CUMBERLAND (PA.) POLICE STATION - DAY, AUGUST, 1955

42-YEAR-OLD KARL MYERS leans back on a swivel chair. His feet cased in spit-polished black shoes are crossed and propped on the corner of a grey-green metal desk. Wearing a police chief's uniform that includes a tie, he tugs at his shirt collar.

A Venetian blind in the office's only window is closed and creates the ambiance of a catacomb. The only other light in the room is from a brown metal, fluorescent, draftsman's lamp clamped to the left edge of the desk.

A small black fan with oily and fuzz-covered blades is oscillating on the desk and blowing air toward Myers.

Myers' prematurely gray hair is close-cropped; his chiseled face is clean-shaven with no wrinkles but for crows feet at the corners of his eyes, which are ice-blue.

Three short stacks of paper, each held in place with a glass paperweight, are perpendicular to the front edge of the desk. Six pencils, freshly sharpened, are positioned one-half inch apart and parallel to the edge of a large desk blotter.

Myers closes his eyes for a beat, gives his head a shake, lifts his feet from the desk, and swings around to face the door into his office.

He takes the top sheet from the shortest stack of papers and stares at it for a few seconds. Clearly irritated, he slaps the page back on the pile.

Myers spins to a credenza along the wall behind him, picks up a silver frame holding a B&W photo. He stares at the 1939 photo of beaming, long-haired, nine-year-old Dorothy Myers.

SOUND of park SWING CHAINS in action.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PATTERSON PARK, BALTIMORE - FLASHBACK, SUMMER, 1939

Baltimore Harbor is visible in the distance.

A giggling, nine-year-old DOROTHY MYERS is on a park swing that is energetically pushed by 29-YEAR-OLD KARL MYERS. 29-YEAR-OLD LAURA BENTON MYERS, laughing, stands next to the swing.

DOROTHY MYERS

(joyful)

Push me HARDER, Daddy! PUSH me!

Laura shakes her shoulder-length hair away from her face and smiles alluringly at Myers.

MAX TRAVALIO (O.C.)

You still miss her, don't you Chief?

INT. NEW CUMBERLAND (PA.) POLICE STATION - DAY, AUGUST, 1955

Myers turns, stands, and with a wan smile shakes hands with Corporal MAX TRAVALIO of the Pennsylvania State Police.

KARL MYERS

Still. How've you been, Max?

Max is shorter, broader, and younger than Myers by a few years. He wears the standard issue Trooper uniform and carries a Trooper's campaign style hat under his arm.

MAX TRAVALIO

If it weren't for juvenile delinquents, my life would be a lot simpler. You talk with the Principal?

Myers moves briskly toward the office door.

KARL MYERS

About an hour ago. I think he'd agree.

Myers grabs his duty hat from a coat rack near the doorway, puts it on, and continues into a hallway.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)

(over his shoulder)

He'll press charges. Stupid kids.

Max follows Myers.

MAX TRAVALIO

And damned principals who don't lock down their buildings.

KARL MYERS

Small town, Max; it's a small town. Claims he flat out forgot.

MAX TRAVALIO
Absentminded principals, stupid kids,
and stray dogs.

Myers stops and turns toward Max.

KARL MYERS
You heard about that?

MAX TRAVALIO
(chuckles)
An old man living like a hermit with a
half-dozen, good-sized dogs, right?

KARL MYERS
Everybody called the guy Beanie. His
farm's in the township but his house
is in the borough, and he dies.

MAX TRAVALIO
(confirming)
In the house.

KARL MYERS
In the house, which means I get the
call when a neighbor discovers the
dogs got hungry.

Myers turns and continues toward the front office; Max follows.

MAX TRAVALIO
Jesus, so what I heard is true. You
put 'em down?

KARL MYERS
The neighbor lets 'em out before he
knows what happened, so they were long
gone by the time I got there.

MAX TRAVALIO
You townies have all the fun.

KARL MYERS
Some fun.

Myers enters the front office and approaches the receptionist,
SARAH HARDING, who sits at the only desk behind a counter,
chewing gum.

Sarah, a platinum blond who wears too much rouge, is applying
bright red polish to her fingernails that matches her lipstick,
and her mascara has been applied without subtlety.

Max walks to the front door, turns and pauses.

Myers stops and leans on the counter in front of Sarah's desk.

SARAH HARDING
(concentrates on nails)
Going out?

KARL MYERS
Late Lunch, then patrol for a while.
I'll check in after lunch.

SARAH HARDING
(nonchalant)
Okay, Chief.

Myers heads to the entrance; Max opens the door.

SARAH HARDING
(flirtatious)
Bye Max.

MAX TRAVALIO
(mimic of Sarah's voice)
Bye Sugar.

EXT. NEW CUMBERLAND PD - CONTINUOUS

Myers and Max step toward their patrol cars parked along the curb. Max's highway patrol Ford is brand new.

KARL MYERS
(nods at the Ford)
Like it?

MAX TRAVALIO
Big improvement.

Max stops and pulls a pack of Chesterfields from his shirt pocket; he extends it to Myers who waves it away.

MAX TRAVALIO (CONT'D)
Still kicking it?

KARL MYERS
Three months tomorrow.

Max extracts a Chesterfield from the pack, lights it with a lighter, and exhales a plume of smoke toward the sky.

MAX TRAVALIO
You have to be the only cop that
doesn't smoke, you know that?

KARL MYERS

I don't know that, and neither do you.

MAX TRAVALIO

You are an independent cuss.

Myers heads toward his car; Max heads to the Ford.

MAX TRAVALIO (CONT'D)

Where to for lunch?

KARL MYERS

The Lemoyne?

MAX TRAVALIO

Independent, but a man of habit.

Both men open the driver-side doors at the same time. Max enters first, but before he closes the door, Myers hollers:

KARL MYERS

(mimics Sarah's voice)

Bye Max.

Max laughs and flashes the bird at Myers; Myers smiles, enters his car. Doors shut. SOUND of ENGINES STARTING.

INT. PETERMAN SPLIT-LEVEL, LOWER LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Thirty-two-year-old VIVIAN PETERMAN, descends stairs and INTO VIEW. She is a natural beauty, wears a very short-sleeved white blouse, faded red shorts, white ankle socks and Keds; her auburn hair is in a pony-tail.

She hears the indecipherable SOUND of TWO BOYS TALKING to her right, and to her left she hears the SOUND of WATER SLOSHING in a Sears agitator/wringer washer.

Vivian stops in the doorway to a small utility room and stares blankly at the washing machine for a beat, then steps into the room, and closes the door.

The room is illuminated by diffused sunlight coming through a drawn blind over a solitary window. Vivian absently rubs the uppermost part of each arm where purplish bruises are visible. She closes her eyes, her face contorts, and she cries.

Not many feet away in a tiny den, nine-year-old PATSY MOYER sits on a club chair and reads a Golden Book. She wears blue Keds and a freshly-ironed, yellow sundress covered with tiny orange and white flowers.

Sitting cross-legged on a rug, Greg Peterman reads a Superman comic book; twelve-year-old BARRY MOYER pokes Greg in the ribs with the barrel of a toy Tommy gun.

Both boys wear worn khaki slacks, horizontally-striped T-shirts, and cowboy boots. They have identical buzz-cuts.

BARRY MOYER

You're a lyin' pussy. You ain't got no rifle.

Greg frowns but does not look up from the comic book.

GREG PETERMAN

I ain't no pussy.

BARRY MOYER

You just said you had a gun 'cause I got this brand new Tommy gun.

GREG PETERMAN

(does not look up)

I don't care about no stupid toy.

BARRY MOYER

You're just jealous.

Greg slaps the comic book onto the rug, gets to his knees and faces Barry.

GREG PETERMAN

Jealous of what? The stupid cap roll on that thing keeps gettin' jammed.

BARRY MOYER

(singsong)

The pussy's jealous.

GREG PETERMAN

I ain't jealous of no piece of junk.

PATSY MOYER

You're not supposed to say ain't.

GREG PETERMAN

(to Patsy)

Shut up, stupid.

(to Barry)

That thing's 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's chest hard with both hands.

BARRY MOYER

(loud)
Take it back!

Greg pushes Barry's chest, Barry pushes back harder, and Greg falls backward onto a brass bucket full of children's books. The bucket CLATTERS off a wall and dumps its contents.

Greg is up in a flash and puts a headlock on Barry. The boys wrestle with the intent of doing each other damage.

PATSY MOYER

(yells)
Mrs. Peterman!

Vivian appears a split second after Patsy's yell, grabs each boy by the back of his neck, and gives each a good shake.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(very angry)
That's enough! Stop it!

Vivian releases the boys with a shove. The boys drop to the rug and rub their necks. They do not look at each other or Vivian who stands with hands on hips and glowers at them.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)

That's the third time you boys've been
after each other, and I'm damned sick
and tired of it. Why aren't you
outside playing?

The boys exchange angry glances but neither respond. Patsy sits quietly and watches, smiling.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)

Well, I've had it, and I'm not going
to put up with any more of it.
(to Greg)
One more time and Barry is going home,
and you're going to spend the rest of
the day in your room. Understood?

The boys exchange another angry glance, but do not respond.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)

(yells)
IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?

The boys stare at Vivian with wide-open eyes and nod.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)
 Good! And goddamn it, I MEAN it!

Vivian stares at the boys with her hands on her hips for a beat and then spins on her heel and exits.

The boys stare in the direction Vivian has gone.

BARRY MOYER
 I still think you're lyin'.

GREG PETERMAN
 I ain't lyin', damn it!

PATSY MOYER
 Oooh, I'm telling you cussed.

BARRY MOYER
 (to Patsy)
 Shut up and go home, penis brain.

PATSY MOYER
 (indignant)
 Now I'm really telling.

Barry points the Tommy gun at her head.

BARRY MOYER
 Go ahead and tell.

Patsy appears ready to stand.

PATSY MOYER
 I will!

BARRY MOYER
 Aw, you won't say nothin' 'cause
 you're afraid to say penis to Mom.

PATSY MOYER
 (breaks into tears)
 I hate you.

Patsy runs from the room. Barry laughs and aims his Tommy gun at Greg.

BARRY MOYER
 I still say you're a liar.

Greg swats the barrel away.

GREG PETERMAN

Stop pointing that thing at me!

Greg grabs the barrel, yanks it from Barry, and tosses it onto the club chair.

GREG PETERMAN

I can't touch it unless Dad says okay.

BARRY MOYER

He's not even here! I just want to see it, but you don't want me to find out you're a liar.

In the utility room, Vivian passes a dress shirt through the wringer on the washer.

SOUND of boys' FOOTFALLS running up stairs.

Vivian opens the utility room door.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

You boys going outside?

SOUND of Greg's FOOTFALLS returning down the stairs.

Greg appears.

GREG PETERMAN

We're going to play in my room.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

But it's a sunny day.

GREG PETERMAN

We'll go out later.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Where's Patsy?

GREG PETERMAN

Dunno.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Isn't Barry supposed to watch her?

GREG PETERMAN

Nah, she just said that so she could bother us.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Put your toys away when you're done. You know your father hates a mess!

Greg runs upstairs. SOUND of FOOTFALLS running to upper level.
Vivian shakes her head and runs a shirt through the wringer.

INT. PETERMAN HOME, UPPER LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Greg pokes his head into the hallway from his bedroom, then slides across the hall floor in his stocking feet and beckons Barry into his parents' bedroom. Barry follows.

Greg directs a warning expression toward Barry and raises his forefinger to his mouth. Greg quietly opens the left sliding door of the only closet in the room.

Barry pushes past Greg and yanks the .22 from the closet.

GREG PETERMAN
What the hell are you doing?

Barry takes aim at Greg's head.

GREG PETERMAN (CONT'D)
(angry)
Are you nuts?

Greg swats the muzzle away from his head.

GREG PETERMAN (CONT'D)
(angry)
Give it to me!

Greg grabs the barrel, but Barry yanks it free, aims it at Greg's head and pulls the trigger. Greg stares open-mouthed at Barry, who lowers the rifle and looks wide-eyed at Greg.

BARRY MOYER
Holy moly! We gotta shoot this thing!

GREG PETERMAN
My father'd kill me.

BARRY MOYER
He won't find out.

GREG PETERMAN
He finds out everything!

Greg yanks the rifle from Barry and returns it to the closet. He grabs Barry's shirt front and begins to pull Barry toward the hall. Barry slaps his hand away.

BARRY MOYER

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

GREG PETERMAN

(skeptical curiosity)
Like what?

Barry pulls a stiletto-style switchblade from a pants pocket.

GREG PETERMAN

(astonished)
Is it real?

Barry pushes a small silver button on the handle and a four-inch blade flips out of the handle.

BARRY MOYER

Found it in my brother's drawer.

GREG PETERMAN

Are you crazy? Vaughn will kill you!

BARRY MOYER

He doesn't even know it's gone.

GREG PETERMAN

If he looks for it, he'll know.

BARRY MOYER

He won't look. He's got a new one with a longer blade. Come on, the switchblade for a chance to shoot it.

Greg stares at the knife; his eyes narrow, his breath quickens.

INT. PETERMAN HOME, MIDDLE/LIVING LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

In a very tiny but "modern" kitchen, Vivian stands in front of the counter next to the sink and pours Campbell's pork and beans from a can into a Corning casserole.

Vivian goes to the refrigerator, extracts a package of hotdogs, returns to the workspace, takes the franks from the package and cuts them into medallions, which she drops into the casserole.

SOUND of a boy's FEET THUNDERING down stairs.

Barry scoots to the back door, which is in the dining room.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(assertive but friendly)
Hold on there a minute, pardner.

Barry stops with his hand on the doorknob and looks at Vivian.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)
What's Greg doing?

BARRY MOYER
Don't know. See ya.

Barry is out the door at a run.

SOUND of SCREEN DOOR SLAMMING.

Vivian looks out the window and frowns.

EXT. PETERMANS' HOME - CONTINUOUS

Barry rounds the front corner of the home at a run and stops beneath an open window on the upper level.

From the window, Greg holds the muzzle of the rifle and lowers it to Barry. Greg loses his grip. Barry jumps back and the .22 lands butt-first. Barry picks it up and looks about furtively.

Greg emerges backwards from the window. He hangs on to the sill; his feet are five feet from the grass. Greg drops from the window and does a backward somersault after his feet touch the ground. He gets in Barry's face.

GREG PETERMAN
Why didn't you catch it?

BARRY MOYER
You weren't supposed to drop it!

GREG PETERMAN
It better not've gotten messed up!

BARRY MOYER
Or what?

GREG PETERMAN
I'll kick your ass.

BARRY MOYER
(smirks)
You and what army?

Greg pushes Barry away and grabs the rifle.

GREG PETERMAN
(to himself)
I won't need no army.

Greg examines the butt of the rifle, brushes off a bit of sod, looks at Barry and jerks his head toward an opening in a hedgerow at the edge of a dense woods that is fifteen feet from the house.

In a backyard behind the Petermans', Patsy Moyer swings on the neighbors' swing set; she sees Greg and Barry disappear into the hedgerow. Patsy leaps in a practiced way from the moving swing and runs toward where the boys entered the woods.

INT. PETERMANS' HOME, MIDDLE LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Vivian dries her hands on a tea towel buttoned onto a kitchen drawer pull. She places the casserole into a wall oven and sets the automatic timer. She closes the oven door and calls out.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
(motherly sing-song)
Gre-eg.

She looks toward the stairs leading to the upper level.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)
Greg?

Vivian hustles up the steps

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)
Greg!

INT. PETERMANS' HOME, UPPER LEVEL - CONTINUOUS

Vivian steps into Greg's room, which is in perfect order. She sees the open window and closes it.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
You're damned lucky your father isn't
home. You know how he hates flies.

INT. PETERMANS' HOME, UPPER LEVEL - 10 MINUTES LATER

Vivian enters an en suite bathroom wearing a worn white robe. She goes to the bathtub, closes the drain, turns on the hot water, and drops bath beads into the tub. The only light is coming through the drawn roller blind of the only window.

She stands in front of the mirror above the vanity and studies her reflection as she unties a ribbon and shakes out her ponytail. She stares into her eyes for a beat as though searching for something.

Vivian slips off her robe, hangs it on a hook on the door, and returns her attention to the mirror. Wearing only a bra and panties, she briefly examines the reflection of the bruises on her upper arms.

Watching her reflection, Vivian unhooks her bra, jerks her shoulders forward, and lets the bra fall to the floor. She rolls her panties past her thighs; they drop to the floor.

Vivian stands erect and again looks at her reflection as if searching for something. She turns and studies the reflection of her torso in profile, smiles seductively for a beat, then laughs, shakes her head, and looks away.

She settles into the tub beneath a layer of bubbles and turns off the water with her toes. She rests her head on the back edge of the tub. Her eyes close, her breath quickens, her mouth opens, and a pleased/pained frown appears on her brow.

EXT. BRIDGE STREET, NEW CUMBERLAND - CONTINUOUS

The New Cumberland police chief's car drives slowly south.

INTERCUT - INT. CHIEF'S CAR/INT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS

Myers grasps a two-way radio mic from the dashboard as he drives, presses a button on the mic and speaks into it.

KARL MYERS

Chief to base. Over.

Myers releases the button. Seconds pass; he presses the button.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)

(annoyed)

Chief to base. Over.

Sarah Harding sits behind her desk at the police station and puts the top on a bottle of fingernail polish. Seconds pass.

KARL MYERS (ON RADIO)

(really annoyed)

Sarah! Pick up the damned radio! Over!

Sarah blows on her freshly polished, bright red fingernails, presses a button on a desk stand mic, and speaks cheerfully.

SARAH HARDING

Hi Chief!

KARL MYERS
(annoyed)
Over!

SARAH HARDING
(smiling)
Easy. Sissy says that's how you like
your eggs and your women: over easy.

Sarah giggles and blows on her fingernails.

KARL MYERS
(restrained with difficulty)
The radio is for official
communications, Sarah, not stupid
chatter. I'm headed to Finkelstein's,
then home. Ray's on tonight. Over.

SARAH HARDING
Easy.

KARL MYERS
Enough!

SARAH HARDING
(faux conscientiousness)
Shouldn't that be "enough" over?

Myers stifles a smile and shakes his head.

KARL MYERS
There's a long line of women out there
who would love to have your job. Over.

SARAH HARDING
Now who's chattering?

Sarah pushes the mic away and blows on her nails.

I/E - CHIEF'S CAR/BRIDGE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Myers stares at the mic for a beat before speaking into it.

KARL MYERS
Over and out.

Myers returns the mic to the bracket on the dash as the car
nears the West Shore Theater. Myers stares at the marquee
listing DRUM BEAT, ALAN LADD, and AUDREY DALTON.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BALTIMORE - FLASHBACK, LATE AUTUMN, EARLY EVENING, 1939

On the street outside the Grand Theater, the sky is dark, a light rain is ending; the theater's lights are reflected by the wet surface of the street.

MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON, JAMES STEWART, and JEAN ARTHUR are posted on the marquee. A large box truck is parked along the curb to the right of the entrance to the theater.

A Baltimore Police Department squad car approaches from the left and stops opposite the theater. A crowd begins to emerge from the theater; in the front rank, hand-in-hand, Dorothy and Laura Benton Myers approach the curb. Both are beaming.

In the squad car, Myers beeps the horn. He smiles and waves to Laura and Dorothy through an open window. With their eyes focused on Myers, Laura and Dorothy run toward Myers.

SOUND of BLARING TAXI HORN and TIRES SLIDING on the wet street.

Laura's eyes fill with terror.

SOUND of a HORN BLAST from a 1950 Buick.

DISSOLVE TO:

I/E - CHIEF'S CAR/BRIDGE STREET - DAY, 1955

The Chief's car is stopped in front of the West Shore Theater. Myers looks into the rearview mirror and sees the reflection of an ELDERLY WOMAN wearing a dress hat who is peering at him between the steering wheel and dash of her 1950 Buick.

The woman smiles shyly and waves with a gloved hand.

KARL MYERS

(mutters)

Shit.

The Chief's car resumes its patrol south on Bridge Street.

EXT. DEEP WOODS, LOCATION ONE - CONTINUOUS

Greg and Barry move quickly on a path through the woods. Greg carries the rifle. The path at this location runs parallel to a soon to be paved subdivision road covered with crushed stone. The road and path are separated by forty feet of woods.

Approaching SOUND of CAR TIRES crunching over crushed stone.

Through the trees, the boys watch a 1948, green, Ford sedan approach. When the car stops opposite their position, Greg drops to his knees; Barry does the same.

TOMMY BRODE, short, swarthy, and scrawny, exits the Ford. He wears gray pants, a white T-shirt, and combat boots. Brode stretches, reaches through an open window, retrieves a pack of cigarettes from the dash, and uses a safety match to light up.

Greg slowly raises the rifle and takes aim at Brode.

BARRY MOYER

(whispers)

What the hell are you doing?

GREG PETERMAN

(whispers)

That Nazi ain't takin' us alive.

Barry laughs; Brode reacts by staring in the boys' direction. Greg smacks the back of Barry's head.

GREG PETERMAN (CONT'D)

(whispers)

Quiet, asshole.

Brode pushes aside branches and steps toward the boys' location. A branch slips his grasp, smacks his face, and knocks the cigarette from his mouth.

TOMMY BRODE

God DAMN it!

The boys struggle to keep from laughing out loud.

Brode picks up the fag and places it between his lips. He returns to the Ford, stops, looks up and down the road, and then urinates onto the ground next to the car.

Barry drops onto his back nearly overcome with laughter; Greg puts his hand over Barry's mouth to silence him.

Brode zips up, enters the driver's side of the car, and leaves the door open as the boys run along the path deeper into the woods.

SOUND of diminishing BOYS' LAUGHTER.

Brode hears the laughter, steps out of the car, and looks in the direction of the laughter. He takes a last drag on the fag, drops it to the ground, and grinds it out with his shoe.

EXT. DEEP WOODS, LOCATION TWO - CONTINUOUS

Patsy struggles through undergrowth having lost the path. She reaches a small opening covered by the canopy of old-growth oaks, hickories, and tulip poplars. Her expression reveals helplessness; she starts to whimper.

With a trembling lip, she takes a deep breath to tamp down the tears, and decisively forges ahead into the undergrowth.

SOUND of a RIFLE SHOT.

Patsy turns in the direction of the gunshot.

SOUND of a RIFLE SHOT.

Patsy appears relieved and heads in the direction of the shot.

SOUND of a RIFLE SHOT.

EXT. DEEP WOODS, LOCATION THREE - CONTINUOUS

Barry and Greg stand in a clearing with their backs to the slow-moving Yellow Breeches Creek, a muddy stream that is a boy's stone-throw wide. The boys stand in knee-high grass fifty feet from a ten foot scarp.

The scarp is one hundred feet from the creek and is topped by old growth forest and dense undergrowth. Greg sights the rifle at one of several large roots exposed on the scarp. His lips are pursed; he grunts loudly when he pulls the trigger.

The rifle fires. A puff of dirt explodes from the surface of the scarp two feet to the right of the sighted root.

GREG PETERMAN

Damn!

Greg hands Barry the rifle. Barry pulls back the bolt of the rifle, which ejects a shell, and then jams the bolt into place.

Barry's aim at a root on the scarp is quick; he pulls the trigger and the gun fires, but there is no corresponding sound from hitting the root or a puff of dirt on the scarp.

Greg bends over and guffaws.

GREG PETERMAN (CONT'D)

You can't even hit the damn dirt!

BARRY MOYER

Shut up, asshole!

GREG PETERMAN

What're you trying to hit, air?

Barry glares at Greg for a beat, and then takes aim at a root. He pulls the trigger, but the only SOUND is the METALLIC CLICK of the firing mechanism.

Greg laughs so hard he drops to his knees and rolls onto his side. Barry wheels and points the gun at Greg. Greg, instantly serious, scrambles to his feet.

GREG PETERMAN

What're you doin', asshole?

BARRY MOYER

Take it easy, chicken. It didn't fire 'cause it's empty. Load it up.

Greg grabs the rifle from his friend and pulls back the bolt. Greg glances at the empty chamber and then glares at Barry.

GREG PETERMAN

I ain't no chicken.

Greg looks at the empty chamber and rams the bolt home.

GREG PETERMAN (CONT'D)

(decisive)

I got to go back home.

BARRY MOYER

How're you going to get it back in the closet without your mom seeing you?

GREG PETERMAN

Me? How about WE?

BARRY MOYER

It's not MY gun.

GREG PETERMAN

Thanks a lot, asshole.

Greg holds the rifle at waist level and points it at Barry, who jumps back in mock fear. Greg laughs, pulls the trigger, and the gun fires. Barry falls to the ground, clutches his belly, and screams; his upper torso writhes, but his legs are still.

BARRY MOYER

(shrieks and repeats)

AAAAH, it HURTS! Oh GOD, it HURTS!
AAAAH, oh GOD!

Greg stands frozen in place with the rifle still pointed at where Barry had been standing; he stares at his friend in wide-eyed bewilderment. Blood spreads across Barry's shirt. Greg drops the rifle, straddles Barry, and shakes him.

GREG PETERMAN

(desperate)

Barry! Somebody's going to hear you!

BARRY MOYER (CONT'D)

(shrieks louder)

AAAAH it HURTS! Oh GOD, it HURTS!

Greg jumps to his feet. His panicked eyes scan the grass; he sees a piece of flood-deposited flotsam: an oak mop handle. He grabs the handle, raises it above his head, and brings it down across Barry's forehead with all his might.

Barry stops yelling and writhing the instant the mop handle strikes. A long gash across Barry's forehead oozes blood.

SOUND of a PRONOUNCED EXHALATION from Barry.

One of Barry's eye sockets fills with blood; the other eye stares blankly at the forest canopy. Greg's face becomes a mask of terror. He drops the mop handle and frantically paces.

GREG PETERMAN

(desperation)

Oh God, what am I going to DO? He's going to KILL me.

He pulls at the short hairs of his crewcut, tears stream down his cheeks, he struggles to breathe.

GREG PETERMAN (CONT'D)

He's going to KILL me. He will. He WILL! He's really going to KILL me!

Greg's left hand brushes against the outside of his left-hand trouser pocket and abruptly stops pacing. He slaps his left hand against the outside of the pocket and then reaches into the pocket and extracts the stiletto.

The sky is darkening; SOUND of DISTANT THUNDER.

Greg looks into the woods above the scarp for a beat and then stares at the knife for another beat.

Greg drops to his knees beside the corpse. Greg's cheeks are wet with tears, but his eyes are now cold and determined. He pulls up Barry's blood-soaked T-shirt and stares at a small, blood-filled hole in Barry's belly.

Rain pours down, partially obscuring Greg, who flips open the knife, lifts it over his head, stares at the hole for a beat, clenches his jaw, and drives the blade down.

SOUND of THUNDER CRASH simultaneous with FLASH of LIGHTNING.

CUT TO: WHITE

EXT. CEDAR WOODS DEVELOPMENT - CONTINUOUS

Vivian Peterman, her hair in a ponytail, steps quickly along a sidewalk in the new subdivision. She carries a closed umbrella and wears her newest heels and carries a matching patent leather handbag.

She wears a sky-blue swing skirt, white-collared blouse, nylons, faux pearl earrings, a matching single strand choker, and bright red lipstick.

A few large raindrops begin to spot the sidewalk ahead of Vivian. She puts up the umbrella before the drops reach her. LIGHTNING FLASHES and the SOUND of LOUD THUNDER CRACK startles her. She runs up a driveway to a carport attached to a house.

Pouring RAIN and HAIL SOUNDS on the carport roof. EDITH "EDIE" ESWORTH opens a screen door and pokes her head out. Edith is wearing a short-sleeved, sailor blouse, capris and black Keds. Her hair is in a ponytail and she wears full makeup.

EDITH ESWORTH

For heaven's sake, come inside!

Vivian closes the umbrella and enters the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN, ESWORTH HOME - CONTINUOUS

Diminished SOUND of HAIL and RAIN on the ROOF.

A tea cup containing a tea bag rests on a saucer next to the stove; a tea spoon is on the saucer.

EDITH ESWORTH

(sincerely friendly)

I just put on the kettle. Take a load off.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Thanks. I will.

Vivian sits on one of four chrome-legged kitchen chairs that surround a chrome-legged and Formica-topped kitchen table as Edith gets out another cup, saucer, and spoon.

FLASH OF LIGHTNING; simultaneous SOUND of THUNDER CLAP. As Edith looks out the window above the sink; the SOUND of HAIL on the roof STOPS, but the muffled SOUND of RAIN continues.

EDITH ESWORTH

It's really coming down, isn't it?

Edith extracts a cigarette from a pack on the counter and uses a lighter to light up.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

It's been a while since we've shared a cup, hasn't it?

Edith exhales a long plume of smoke as she sits at the table.

EDITH ESWORTH

Too long. Want a cigarette?

Edith slides a pack and lighter toward Vivian.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(smiles, waves it off)

No thanks. I haven't quit; just trying not to smoke too much.

EDITH ESWORTH

Just smoking at home then.

Vivian nods. Edith looks out the window, takes a drag, and turns back to Vivian as she exhales. Both smile.

EDITH ESWORTH

You look lovely, but of course you always do.

Vivian laughs off the comment; Edith takes another drag.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I was just at the McDermott's.

EDITH ESWORTH

Sharon's a sweetheart, isn't she?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

She is, and she asked if maybe the three of us could get together.

EDITH ESWORTH

I'd love to.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Next Thursday afternoon? If Sharon isn't free, you could still come over.

EDITH ESWORTH

Perfect.

Edith takes a quick drag, butts out the cigarette in an ashtray sitting on the table, and removes another from the pack.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Maybe I WILL have one of those.

Edith hands the cigarette to Vivian. A large bruise on Edith's upper arm is visible when Edith slides the lighter across the table. Edith notes that Vivian sees the bruise; they look into each other's eyes for a beat.

Edith chuckles uncomfortably. SOUND of TEAPOT WHISTLING.

Edith walks to the stove.

EDITH ESWORTH

I can't believe what a klutz I am. I was running to catch the phone, tripped on the edge of the dining room rug and landed against the edge of the server with my arm. Hurt like hell.

Edith pours hot water into the tea cups. As she carries them on their saucers to the table, she and Vivian lock eyes for a beat. Edith looks away as she sits.

Vivian reaches across the table and takes Edith's hand.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(intimate)
Edith...

Vivian releases Edith's hand and raises the sleeves of her own blouse to expose the bruises on her arms. Edith's eyes fill with tears.

A LIGHTNING FLASH and the SOUND of a deafening THUNDER CRACK startles both women. Edith and Vivian glance at one another, laugh nervously, and then look into their cups of tea.

EXT. DEEP WOODS, LOCATION THREE - CONTINUOUS

It is pouring rain. Greg, drenched, stands next to the corpse and stares at a small lead slug he rolls back and forth between his thumb and forefinger; the deluge washes blood from his hands and from the stiletto he holds in his other hand.

Greg closes his eyes and absently drops the bullet into the grass; he closes the stiletto and drops it into a pants pocket.

FLASH of LIGHTNING simultaneous with SOUND of THUNDER CRACK.

Greg walks to where the rifle lies on the ground next to the corpse. He stares at what he has done and extracts a damp box of .22 caliber cartridges from a pants pocket.

Greg angrily heaves the box toward the trees at the edge of the clearing. The box hits a root and breaks apart; bullets scatter into the grass. He looks for and locates the broomstick; he whips it into the creek. The broomstick floats downstream.

Greg drops to his knees by the corpse.

GREG PETERMAN

(wails)

I didn't DO this! I didn't, I DIDN'T!

With a few deep breaths, Greg gains some control and wipes tears from his cheeks.

FLASH of LIGHTNING; a split-second after is the SOUND of a THUNDER CRACK and the HISS of SMALL HAIL striking leaves and the creek surface.

Abruptly, Greg looks into the woods; his expression reflects a sudden insight.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DEEP WOODS LOCATION ONE - FLASHBACK

From Greg's POV, Tommy Brode lights up a cigarette.

EXT. DEEP WOODS, LOCATION THREE - CONTINUOUS

Greg's expression is wide-eyed and cold.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DEEP WOODS LOCATION ONE - FLASHBACK

From Greg's POV, Brode urinates at the edge of the road.

EXT. DEEP WOODS, LOCATION THREE - CONTINUOUS

FLASH of LIGHTNING; two seconds later, there is the SOUND of THUNDER. The hail ends, but the rain continues.

Greg's eyes narrow in concentration.

GREG PETERMAN

(barely audible)

I didn't do this.

Greg picks up the rifle and runs as fast as he can toward the path that leads back to his house.

I/E - MOYERS' KITCHEN/MOYERS' CARPORT - CONTINUOUS

ALICE MOYER looks out her kitchen window at the darkening sky with a mother's worried eyes. She wears a dress, nylons, heels, and a string of faux pearls; her hair is neatly coiffed.

FLASH of LIGHTNING; (beat) SOUND of THUNDER. The sky is as dark as an afternoon sky can be. Heavy rain begins to fall.

Alice goes to a door in the kitchen that leads to a carport; she exits to the carport, walks through a short passageway between the house proper and a carport shed, and stops under the carport roof overhang.

SOUND of LARGE RAIN DROPS hitting the carport roof. FLASH of LIGHTNING; a second passes before the SOUND of a THUNDER CRACK.

Alice scans the other backyards, looks at the sky for a beat, and then returns to the kitchen. She goes to the wall phone, dials a number, and waits.

FAINT SOUND from the earpiece of a PHONE RINGING. After several rings, Alice hangs up the phone, returns to the carport, and calls out in every mother's loud, singsong, supper call.

ALICE MOYER

BAR-ry! ... PAT-sy! ... BAR-ry!

Alice pauses for a beat, and then hurries back into the kitchen. She looks out her kitchen window at the downpour with a mother's worried eyes.

EXT. DEEP WOODS, LOCATION THREE - CONTINUOUS

SOUND of rain HISSING in the old growth canopy and on the surface of the creek. The rain washes the blood from Barry's lifeless face. There is the SOUND of a deafening THUNDER CRACK and simultaneous BLINDING FLASH of LIGHTNING.

CUT TO: WHITE

I/E - PETERMAN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

The SOUND of RAIN pounds on the roof of the house accompanied by the SOUND of WATER RUSHING down and out of rain gutters. VIEW is DIMINISHED by the deluge.

Greg holds the rifle against his body and runs from the woods to the back of the house. A small, white, picket enclosure containing two trash cans sits against the back wall beneath the kitchen window.

Greg opens a gate into the enclosure and places the rifle behind the cans. He goes to the back door, places his hand on the doorknob of the screen door for a beat, and then opens it. He steps into the house and restrains the door from slamming.

GREG PETERMAN

(yells)
Mom?

He listens for a beat.

GREG PETERMAN (CONT'D)

(yells louder)
MOM?

Greg listens again for a beat, then runs outside, retrieves the rifle, runs back into the house and into the kitchen. He sees a note in his mother's handwriting on the kitchen table; he slides to a stop and reads the note.

GREG PETERMAN (CONT'D)

(under his breath)
Four-o'clock.

Greg looks at the small clock on the wall oven and then runs downstairs with the rifle to the utility room, takes a towel/rag from the metal shelves, quickly rubs the rifle and his boots clean and dry, and then drops the towel to the floor.

Greg runs upstairs with the rifle, carefully replaces it in the master bedroom closet, closes the closet door, and runs into his bedroom.

SOUND of RAIN on the roof STOPS.

He pulls off his boots, shirt and pants and drops them on the floor; he grabs socks, a T-shirt and pair of pants from his dresser and slips them on.

Greg glances at an open dresser drawer. He pauses in thought for a beat, then retrieves the stiletto from the pants on the floor, and slides the knife under a pile of shirts in the drawer. He slams the drawer shut.

Greg runs out of the room with the dirty clothes, takes them into the bathroom and throws them into a clothes hamper.

He runs downstairs to the kitchen, yanks open the refrigerator, removes the glass milk bottle, pops the top, takes a long drink from the bottle, and returns the capped bottle to the refrigerator.

Greg takes a deep breath and smiles a smile of relief. He absently walks into the living room and sees, through the picture window, his mother approaching the house. He runs upstairs to his bedroom.

SOUND of FRONT DOOR OPENING.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (O.C.)

Greg? Are you home?

SOUND of DISTANT THUNDER.

As Vivian places her umbrella in a round stand by the front door, Greg thunders down the stairs.

GREG PETERMAN

Hi Mom.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Give me a hug.

Greg hugs Vivian and steps back. Vivian walks into the kitchen; Greg follows.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)

Did you get wet?

GREG PETERMAN

I did. I wanna wipe up the floor by the back door before Dad gets home.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Good Idea. Use a couple towels from down in the utility room.

Vivian puts her purse on the table, turns on the oven light, and looks at the casserole through the oven door window.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)

Where'd you put your clothes? They must be soaked.

Vivian gets a glass from a cabinet.

GREG PETERMAN

In the hamper.

Vivian pours water into the glass from the tap.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Barry and Patsy get home okay?

GREG PETERMAN
I guess so.

Greg heads to the lower level; Vivian takes a drink.

I/E - POLICE CAR/BRIDGE STREET - 30 MINUTES LATER

Myers drives his patrol car south on Bridge Street. The storm has passed, bright sun has returned, and the day is warm. The car's driver-side window is down, and Myers' left elbow rests in the open window as he drives with his right hand.

The patrol car approaches Finkelstein's Soda Fountain/Pharmacy, which is much more of a soda fountain than a pharmacy.

A homogenous group of twenty HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS mill about the still-wet sidewalk in front of Finkelstein's. Crew cuts, plaid shirts with rolled sleeves, cuffed slacks and penny loafers are de rigueur for most boys.

A few boys have longer hair slicked back into a "DA." These boys wear blue jeans with rolled cuffs, and white wringer T-shirts beneath shiny-pink silk jackets that have "Cougars" in large black script across the back.

The girls sport ponytails and white blouses, swing skirts or blue jeans, bobby sox and saddle shoes. Those who are not smoking are chewing gum.

The kids are either talking with someone or looking around with feigned nonchalance that masks adolescent energy and unease.

Nearby parking spots on Bridge Street are filled. A "chopped," bright yellow hot rod with painted flames at the front wheel wells is parked curb-side beside a fire hydrant in front of Finkelstein's.

Two bright-red Chevy convertibles are double-parked beside the yellow rod. Myers smiles and shakes his head at a halted row of sedans heading north that are blocked by the convertibles.

The patrol car drives to the next cross street, the rooftop red light of the patrol car turns on, and the car makes a U-turn. Cars move out of the way of the patrol car.

Myers stops behind the convertibles and gives the siren two whoops, which causes general mirth and shouts from the kids.

GIRL ONE

Try the horn!

BOY ONE

Get that for Christmas?

BOY TWO

Old folks home is two blocks down.

The crowd laughs. Myers raises an eyebrow, smiles, and gives the siren another whoop.

BOY ONE and BOY THREE wear Cougar jackets; they hustle to the convertibles and hop over the passenger side doors of the convertibles. Boy THREE smiles and waves at Myers, who nods.

The convertibles drive away with the SOUND of LOW-PITCHED RUMBLES from Lakes pipes. Myers drives to a gas station at the next intersection close by Finkelstein's and parks his car on the station lot.

EXT. BRIDGE STREET - CONTINUOUS

Myers exits the car and walks with a nonchalant air toward the crowd of teens who eye him with amused interest. He speaks with a conversational tone loud enough to be heard by the initial ranks of teens.

KARL MYERS

You kids shouldn't be smoking.

GIRL ONE

Why, because it'll stunt our growth?

Teens laugh.

KARL MYERS

(faux serious)

You could end up looking like me.

Teens laugh; some affect fright. GIRL TWO and GIRL THREE, who are standing directly in front of Myers, drop their cigarettes and grind them out in earnest with their saddle shoes, then they giggle.

Myers shakes his head slightly and smiles, and then proceeds through the crowd, which parts as he passes; he steps up to DARLENE RICHARDS.

Darlene is the nucleus of a small group of girls, two of whom are wearing oversized Cougars jackets. Darlene is attired as are the others but has an air about her that sets her apart.

KARL MYERS

(to Darlene)

Where's your boyfriend, Darlene?

Darlene's eyes lock into Myers' eyes with the maturity of a femme du monde twice her age. She smiles and takes a deep drag on a Camel, closes her eyes, and blows smoke skyward.

She again looks into Myers' eyes, smiles mischievously, and jerks her head toward the pharmacy.

KARL MYERS

Does that man of yours appreciate you?

DARLENE RICHARDS

(laughs)

He'd better. I'm one of a kind.

KARL MYERS

You are that, my friend.

The crowd makes way for Myers as he walks toward the pharmacy entrance.

INT. FINKELSTEIN'S - CONTINUOUS

Myers enters Finkelstein's. Every chair, each of the booth benches, each of the chromed swivel stools at the fountain counter, and every chair at a table are occupied by TEENAGE CUSTOMERS. Two white-uniformed SODA JERKS work the counter.

A small pharmacy counter is on Myers' right as he enters, behind which middle-aged FRANKLIN FINKELSTEIN stands in a white lab coat. Myers nods at Finkelstein as he passes.

KARL MYERS

Finkelstein.

FRANKLIN FINKELSTEIN

Chief.

BOY FOUR, seated at a far booth spies Myers.

BOY FOUR

(hollers, mock dread)

HEAT!

The teenagers groan with gusto. Myers ignores the reception and walks among the tables to one of the booths lining the wall opposite the pharmacy counter.

BILL "WAX" WAXMAN and BOY FIVE sit on the left side of the booth; VAUGHN MOYER and BOY SIX sit opposite them. Wax and Vaughn sit toward the outside of the booth.

Very large and as yet untouched sundaes are on the table in front of each teen; Vaughn's sundae is a banana split in a large, canoe-shaped glass dish.

Waxman's fair complexion and blue eyes are those of a boy, but a well-worn, leather biker's jacket, shining blond pompadour, and confident nonchalance belie the hard edge of someone others look up to.

Vaughn is wan and thin, an evil negative of Waxman, with a similar cut and comb of his black hair and wearing a similar jacket over a tense frame; his dark eyes shift and dart about the room as if he is looking for a place to hide.

KARL MYERS

Wax, we got ourselves a problem.

BILL WAXMAN

(sincerely respectful)

What's up Chief?

KARL MYERS

Fire hydrant?

VAUGHN MOYER

(smirks to booth mates)

Ain't no fire.

KARL MYERS

Full of yourself today, eh Vaughn?

VAUGHN MOYER

(sotto voce to booth mates)

At least I ain't full a shit.

Myers' right hand grabs the back of Vaughn's neck and rams his face into the banana split; Myers holds it there as Vaughn flails wildly. SILENCE falls over the entire room.

KARL MYERS

Fire hydrant?

Waxman jumps to his feet.

BILL WAXMAN

Got it.

Waxman heads to the exit.

KARL MYERS
 (calmly over his shoulder)
 Thanks Wax.

Myers releases Vaughn's neck; Vaughn jerks upright and gasps for breath. With ice cream, strawberry sauce and chocolate syrup dripping down his face, Vaughn looks like a Jackson Pollock facsimile. Myers scans the crowd for effect.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)
 (confidence sans arrogance)
 I will find out who trashed the gym.
 You copy that, Vaughn? Enjoy the rest
 of that banana split, my friend.

As Myers turns, Vaughn jumps up, but Boys Five and Six restrain him with difficulty; utensils and glasses go flying. At the SOUND of UTENSILS ET AL hitting the floor, Myers turns back and levels a cold stare at Vaughn for a beat.

Nearly everyone in the crowd struggles to keep from laughing. When Myers exits, the SOUND of EXCITED but INDECIPHERABLE CHATTER and LAUGHTER erupt.

INT. MOYER'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Alice Moyer paces her kitchen floor. At the SOUND of a CAR ENGINE in the carport, she rushes to the door and opens it; the SOUND of a CAR ENGINE ENDS. SOUND of a CAR DOOR OPENING and CLOSING.

Alice's expression conveys anxiety. She steps back from the door. HARRY MOYER enters; he is tall and spare, carries a small valise, and wears a pin-striped suit, white shirt and tie, black-rimmed glasses and a fedora.

When Harry looks at his wife, his end-of-workday, tired expression changes to one of alarm.

HARRY MOYER
 What's the matter?

Harry places his valise on a nearby counter as Alice goes to him; he puts his arms around her, and she cries.

HARRY MOYER (CONT'D)
 Alice, sweetheart, what's wrong?

ALICE MOYER
 I don't know where the children are.

Harry gently pushes Alice away and smiles.

HARRY MOYER

We never know where Vaughn is.

ALICE MOYER

That's not funny, Harry.

HARRY MOYER

You're right. I'm sure Barry and Patsy went to a neighbor's house to get out of the storm. Have you called anyone?

Harry takes off his fedora and places it on top of his valise. He goes to the refrigerator and extracts a bottle of beer. Anticipating him, Alice takes a bottle opener from a drawer and hands it to him.

HARRY MOYER (CONT'D)

Did you try what's her name?

Harry pops off the bottle cap, places the cap and opener on the counter, and takes a slug of beer.

ALICE MOYER

Who?

HARRY MOYER

Oh hell, I don't remember her name. The Peterman girl. Doesn't Barry hang out at their place a lot?

ALICE MOYER

I did call, but nobody answered.

HARRY MOYER

Would it make sense to try again?

Harry takes another slug of beer. Alice goes to the phone, lifts the receiver from the wall-mounted phone, and dials a number.

ALICE MOYER

And her name's Vivian.

INTERCUT - INT. MOYER'S HOME/INT. PETERMAN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Vivian sits on the living room sofa, smokes a cigarette and reads a LIFE magazine.

SOUND of PHONE RINGING.

Vivian drops the magazine onto the coffee table and butts out the cigarette in an ashtray. She goes to the kitchen and grabs the receiver from the wall-mounted phone. RINGING STOPS.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Hello?

ALICE MOYER

Hi, Vivian. Alice Moyer.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Alice, hello!

ALICE MOYER

Sorry to bother you at dinner time.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Not a bother at all. How are you?

ALICE MOYER

I'm fine, fine. I'm just calling to find out if my kids are at your place.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

They were but left hours ago.

ALICE MOYER

They were both there?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

They were, but Patsy left first.

ALICE MOYER

Barry was supposed to be watching her. That boy is in big trouble.

SOUND of Petermans' GARAGE DOOR OPENING.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I'm sorry, Alice.

ALICE MOYER

Not your worry, Vivian. Wait until I get my hands on that boy. Sorry to bother you. Talk to you soon.

INT. PETERMAN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Bye Alice.

SOUND of CAR ENGINE entering Petermans' garage. Vivian hangs up the phone. ENGINE SOUND ENDS.

Vivian takes a pitcher of cold water from the refrigerator and places it on the counter.

JERRY PETERMAN (O.C.)

What the hell is this?

SOUND of FOOTSTEPS on the stairs leading up from the lower level. Jerry appears in the doorway to the kitchen. He has hold of a sport coat that is draped over his shoulder; in his other hand, he holds a dirty towel.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

What's wrong, Honey?

Jerry drops the sport coat over the back of a chair and holds up the towel.

JERRY PETERMAN

Don't "Honey" me. What the hell's this filthy thing doing on the floor?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Greg wanted to clean up some dirty footprints. I guess he left it there.

Jerry approaches Vivian; his tone and posture are intimidating.

JERRY PETERMAN

You guess? You don't know?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(apprehensive)
I know.

JERRY PETERMAN

(yells)
THEN SAY YOU KNOW!

Jerry throws the towel downstairs.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)

Where is the little piece of shit?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

Jerry!

Jerry approaches Vivian.

JERRY PETERMAN

Goddamn it, I don't want to come home to a dirty house.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

It's just a towel, not the whole house, Dear.

Jerry leans his face toward Vivian; she looks away.

JERRY PETERMAN

If part of the house isn't clean, THE
WHOLE GODDAMNED HOUSE ISN'T CLEAN!

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(cowering whine)
I'm sorry.

JERRY PETERMAN

What kind of fucking response is that?
(mocking mimic)
"I'm sorry."

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(near tears)
I'll get you a beer.

Vivian reaches for the refrigerator handle. Jerry grabs her upper arm and pulls her away from the refrigerator.

JERRY PETERMAN

(barely controlled rage)
I can get my own fucking beer. Are you
responsible for this house and that
little piece of shit or what?

Vivian glances at Jerry's hand on her arm.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(gently pleading)
That hurts.

JERRY PETERMAN

(clenched teeth)
It's supposed to hurt.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(whimpers)
Why do you hate him so much?

JERRY PETERMAN

What's that have to do with anything?

Jerry jerks her arm; Vivian starts to cry.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

You're hurting me.

Jerry laughs as he releases her arm with a push.

JERRY PETERMAN
 (mocking mimic)
 "You're hurting me."
 (angry)
 Where's my beer?

Vivian removes a beer bottle from the refrigerator.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)
 I'll selling washing machines to
 annoying-as-hell women...

Vivian takes a bottle opener from a drawer.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)
 At least, trying to sell them...

Vivian opens the bottle and hands it Jerry.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)
 Working my ass off, and what are you
 doing all day?

Vivian hangs her head as she turns away and drops the bottle cap and opener onto the counter. Jerry grabs her arm and spins her around.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)
 WOMAN, I asked you a QUESTION!

VIVIAN PETERMAN
 (tearful acquiescence)
 What do you want me to say?

Jerry pushes Vivian away and jerks his hands above his shoulders; beer sloshes from the bottle onto the floor.

JERRY PETERMAN
 WHAT DO I WANT YOU TO SAY? JESUS
 FUCKING CHRIST! YOU'RE USELESS!

Vivian turns away and cries quietly as she takes utensils from a drawer and proceeds to add them to the table settings. Jerry takes a slug of beer as he watches Vivian.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)
 You know I hate pony tails.

Vivian focuses on setting the utensils.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
 I was hoping it'd grow on you.

JERRY PETERMAN

(scoffs)

Like a fungus.

Jerry takes another swig of beer. Vivian grabs the pitcher of water from the counter.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)

I don't know what you're trying to prove. You're no kid anymore. Looks stupid on somebody your age.

Vivian begins to fill water glasses on the table.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(hint of assertiveness)

I'm not the only woman my age that wears a ponytail.

In a flash, Jerry grabs the ponytail and yanks Vivian's head back. Water sloshes out of the pitcher. Through clenched teeth, Jerry whispers into Vivian's ear.

JERRY PETERMAN

Take it the fuck out.

Jerry releases the ponytail. Vivian's eyes fill with tears, but her expression is defiant. She places the pitcher on the table and angrily unties the bow holding her ponytail; she shakes out her hair and stares at Jerry who smirks.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)

What're you looking at?

Vivian glares at him for a beat and then turns toward the oven. Jerry grabs her arm, spins her around, and then releases her.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)

(vicious)

Why don't you ever answer me?

Vivian stares into his eyes with borderline defiance.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I need to get dinner on the table.

JERRY PETERMAN

FUCK THAT!

Jerry sweeps the contents of the table onto the floor.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)

There's no dinner until I have a chat with the little shit. Where is he?

Vivian sits in a chair and breaks down.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(sobbing)

He's not a little shit. Why are you so hard on him?

JERRY PETERMAN

(paces, rants)

You can't be too hard on boys, but you wouldn't know that because you never had bullets spittin' past your ears, seen men getting blown to bits.

Jerry stands over Vivian, who continues to sob.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)

You have to be hard on boys because someday they're going to be men.

Jerry stares at Vivian; his demeanor turns to disgust.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)

If I'm hard on him, it's because I have to make up for your being a damned lousy excuse for a mother.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(wails)

Oh Jerry!

Vivian looks at the floor and waves for Jerry to leave.

JERRY PETERMAN

You disgust me. I'm going to the Lemoyne. I want this mess cleaned up by the time I come home.

Jerry runs down to the lower level. Vivian places her arms on the table, rests her forehead on them, and sobs.

Greg stands with his ear to his bedroom door.

With SOUNDS of a DOOR SLAMMING and a GARAGE DOOR OPENING, Greg hustles to his room's front window. The SOUND of a CAR ENGINE diminishes as the Petermans' car exits the garage. Greg watches it drive away.

I/E - PATROL CAR/ ARGYLE STREET, HARRISBURG - CONTINUOUS

Karl Myers easily parallel parks his car in front of his tiny row house on Argyle Street.

Myers looks at his watch and then stares at nothing for a a few seconds. He takes a deep breath and exits the car.

He slowly mounts the four steps to the front porch of his home. CHESTER, Myers' very elderly neighbor, rocks in a rocking chair on the neighboring porch.

CHESTER
Evening Chief.

Myers picks up a newspaper lying in front of his door; he doesn't look at Chester.

KARL MYERS
Evening Chester.

Myers inserts a key into the front door and unlocks it.

CHESTER
Nice job parking the car today.

Myers opens the door; he does not look at Chester.

KARL MYERS
(strained patience)
Have a nice evening, Chester.

Myers enters the house.

CHESTER
(leans forward, louder)
Took four tries yesterday.

Before Myers closes the door, an orange cat bounds up to the porch and scoots inside.

INT. KARL MYERS' ROW HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Myers looks down at the cat and closes the door.

KARL MYERS
(to the cat)
Evening Chester.

Chester winds around Myers' legs as Myers stoops to pick up a few pieces of mail from the floor. He examines the return addresses on the envelopes and drops them onto a small mahogany table just inside the door.

Next to the table is an old wooden coat rack; a yellow slicker and a lightweight, gray jacket hang from the rack. Stairs climb to a second floor just beyond the coat rack. The only light is ambient daylight.

A sofa is on one wall and on the opposite wall is a credenza on top of which is an ornate silver tray and a telephone. The tray contains bottles of bourbon, whiskey and rye, all of which are no more than half full.

An ornate dining room table and six matching chairs crowd the center of the dining area.

Myers approaches the credenza, opens a door, and without looking, retrieves a tumbler. He places the tumbler on the tray, selects a bottle of Jack Daniels and pours two-fingers-worth into the tumbler.

He downs half the whiskey and grimaces slightly. After a beat, he downs the rest. He fills the glass almost brim full and carries it to the sofa. Myers sits on the right side of the sofa, leans back, and sips the whiskey.

Chester jumps onto the couch and climbs onto Myers' lap. Myers places the glass on a small end table. Chester puts his paws on Myers' chest and kneads it. Myers scratches the cat's head.

KARL MYERS

(to the cat)

Not much going on out there today, eh?

Chester butts Myers' chin with his head as he continues to knead Myers' chest; Myers strokes the cat.

KARL MYERS

Nothing much going on in here either,
my friend. As usual.

Chester walks a circle on Myers' lap, lies down and begins a "cat bath." Myers picks up the tumbler, takes a swallow of whiskey, and returns it to the end table. He closes his eyes and leans his head back against the sofa.

INT. LEMOYNE DINER - CONTINUOUS

Jerry Peterman sits on a rotating stool at the end of a solitary counter that runs the length of the diner. He finishes meatloaf, mashed potatoes and peas.

A dozen solitary MALE CUSTOMERS are sprinkled about the diner. A sixty-something, white-haired waitress attired in a black uniform dress, SOPHIE MACDONALD, efficiently and pleasantly attends to them.

GERTRUDE "GERTIE" MASONHEIMER emerges from the kitchen. She is a tall, thin, pretty, ponytailed woman in her early thirties, with a prominent bosom who wears a crisp gray uniform dress, small black apron, and white duty cap.

Gertie carries two platters and delivers them to customers in booths behind Jerry. Jerry sips from a cup of coffee, spins slightly on the stool, and glances at Gertie.

Gertie's and Jerry's eyes meet; he raises a finger, and she nods. Jerry spins back to the counter. Gertie grabs a coffee pot from a hotplate on a back counter and approaches Jerry. She raises the pot to him.

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

Want another?

JERRY PETERMAN

I do, Gertie.

Gertie fills Jerry's cup. Her hand rests near his right hand on the counter. Jerry's hand slides forward; his forefinger touches hers. Their eyes meet; she arches an eyebrow.

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

Piece of cake, Jerry?

JERRY PETERMAN

I'd like a piece ... of pie.

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

Apple?

JERRY PETERMAN

Cherry.

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

(low tone, flirty)

Oh, I think that's been gone for a long, long time.

Jerry glances to his left, then eyes Gertie.

JERRY PETERMAN

How about a piece of peach pie? It'll remind me of you: pretty as a peach.

Gertie smirks, turns, and takes a dish of peach pie from a refrigerated case on the back counter.

Jerry drinks his coffee. Gertie slides the pie in front of him.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)

(casual)

You working late tonight?

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

Sophie's closing. I'm going home early so I can wash my hair.

JERRY PETERMAN

I bet your hair's just fine once you
get rid of that ponytail.

Gertie glances at the nearest customer and then leans forward slightly across the counter.

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

You would know.

Gertie backs up, picks up a wet rag from a shelf beneath the counter and wipes the counter next to where Jerry sits.

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

(CONT'D)

You don't like ponytails, do you?

Gertie tosses the rag onto the shelf beneath the counter. She directs a look toward Jerry that appears to paralyze him.

She smirks and starts to move away, but Jerry grabs her hand. Gertie turns and stares at his hand; he releases it as if her hand was red-hot. He glances furtively to his left.

JERRY PETERMAN

I bet you're thirsty after a long day.

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

Thirsty for what?

JERRY PETERMAN

Maybe a beer or three.

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

We don't have beer here, Jerry.

JERRY PETERMAN

Come on, Gertie.

Gertie takes her order pad from a pocket of her apron, rips off a sheet, slaps it on the counter. She glances to her right and then leans toward Jerry.

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

(borderline annoyed)

I haven't seen you for a long time,
and you come in here asking me if I'm
thirsty. You've got some nerve.

Gertie walks away. Jerry watches as she grabs the coffee pot off the hotplate; she fills the cups of other customers. Jerry looks at the check, pulls two one-dollar bills from his wallet, places them on the counter, and walks to the cashier's station.

Sophie walks toward the station. As she returns the coffee pot to the hotplate, Gertie notices Sophie.

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

I got it, Sophie.

SOPHIE MACDONALD

Okay, honey.

Sophie walks into the kitchen. Gertie goes to the cashier's station. Jerry hands Gertie a ten-dollar bill and stares at her. Gertie does not look at him as she rings up the sale and extracts change from the cash drawer.

Their eyes meet when she puts the change into his hand.

JERRY PETERMAN

I'm thinking about going 'cross the river to Garrason's for a beer.

Jerry nods toward a large clock on the back wall.

JERRY PETERMAN (CONT'D)

And look; it's seven-thirty.

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

So what?

JERRY PETERMAN

Isn't that your quitting time?

GERTRUDE MASONHEIMER

And?

JERRY PETERMAN

Just sayin'.

Gertie stares into his eyes; an arch smile appears on her face.

EXT. PETERMAN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

SOUND of DISTANT THUNDER.

Greg and Vivian sit at the kitchen table. The faces of both appear careworn. The residue of Jerry's tantrum has been cleaned up.

The franks and beans casserole rests on a trivet on the table. Vivian spoons some of the contents onto their platters. Both stare at the franks and beans. Vivian reluctantly swallows a forkful and notices Greg has not picked up a utensil.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(gently)

Gregory, what's wrong?

Greg glances at Vivian, starts to cry, and bolts to his room. Vivian follows slowly. When she enters the room she sees Greg lying prone on his bed and whimpering into his pillow. She sits on the edge of his bed and strokes his back.

The only light in the room is ambient daylight.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)

Please tell me what's wrong.

Greg continues to whimper.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)

Did your father upset you?

Greg turns quickly around and stares at Vivian; his red eyes are now defiant. He shakes his head "no."

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)

Then what is it?

Greg stares at Vivian for a beat with fearful eyes, then sits up and hugs her.

GREG PETERMAN

(whispers into her ear)

Something awful happened in the woods.

INT. KARL MYERS' ROW HOUSE - 10 MINUTES LATER

SOUND of PHONE RINGING.

Myers is asleep on the sofa; the cat is sleeping on his lap. At the second ring, Myers lurches to his feet and sends Chester flying. Myers goes to the telephone, picks up the receiver, and puts it to his ear.

KARL MYERS

Uh huh ... Uh huh ... Address.

Myers looks at his wristwatch.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)

Be there in twenty minutes. Get as much information as you can.

Myers drops the receiver onto the cradle and moves quickly to the foot of the stairs. He grabs the wood ball at the top of the newel post as he begins up the stairs, two at a time.

Half-way up, he stops and grabs his forehead with his right hand; he takes a deep breath and climbs more deliberately. Myers goes into his small, pink-tiled bathroom and brushes his teeth, which he follows with a Listerine chaser.

He glances into the mirror, straightens his tie, and heads downstairs in a hurry. He opens the front door, sees it's raining, and puts on a slicker hanging from the coat rack as Chester does a figure eight around his legs.

KARL MYERS

(to the cat)

You're in charge, my friend.

Chester looks up and meows; Myers exits.

EXT. MYERS' ROUTE TO PETERMANS' HOME - 5 MINUTES LATER

A steady rain is falling in the dark night.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

- A) New Cumberland police car with lights flashing crossing the Market Street Bridge at 80 mph.
- B) SOUND of SIREN as traffic stops and the police car flies through the intersection at the end of the bridge.
- C) Police car speeds down Bridge Street with lights flashing.
- D) Police car turns into Cedar Woods subdivision.
- E) Police car pulls to a stop along the curb behind a Pennsylvania State Police car in front of the Petermans'.

The flashing light on Myers' car turns off. Myers exits the car and walks quickly to the front door. RAY BRADY'S face appears in the front door's small, diamond-shaped window.

INT. PETERMAN'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

Brady is a tall and spare, uniformed, New Cumberland police officer. He opens the front door and gives Myers a we-got-ourselves-a-real-case-here look. Myers glances at Brady and quickly scans the small living room.

Max Travaglio sits and leans forward in a club chair. Vivian sits and smokes at the left end of the sofa. Her posture and expression betray weariness. There are numerous butts in an ashtray on a coffee table in front of the sofa.

An open pack of Pall Malls and a silver lighter are next to the ashtray. Only one of four lamps in the room has been turned on. Look and LIFE magazines are strewn across the coffee table.

MAX TRAVALIO

Chief.

KARL MYERS

Corporal.

RAY BRADY

We got ourselves a real case here,
Chief.

Myers glares at Brady who takes a step back. Max stands.

MAX TRAVALIO

Chief, Vivian Peterman.

KARL MYERS

(nods at Vivian)
Mrs. Peterman. Karl Myers.

Vivian looks at Myers with indifference and takes a drag.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)

Are you the one who called this in?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I am.

MAX TRAVALIO

(to Myers)
Shugharts called me because you were off duty; I figured you needed to be here.

KARL MYERS

Appreciate it, Max. The other parents?

MAX TRAVALIO

Should be here any minute.

KARL MYERS

Ma'am, I'm wondering where I might put my slicker. Don't want to wet your carpet any more than I already have.

Vivian takes another drag, butts out the cigarette in the ashtray, exhales, and with a sigh, stands.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I'll put it with the others.

Myers takes off the slicker and hands it to Vivian, who has something of a fleeting awakening when their eyes meet. Myers' and the other two men study Vivian as she slowly strides to the stairs. When she disappears downstairs Myers turns to Max.

KARL MYERS

Tell me.

MAX TRAVALIO

She's out visiting a neighbor. When she gets back home, her boy says nothing. Two hours later, he breaks down at dinner; tells her he and a friend were attacked in the woods.

KARL MYERS

(incredulous, to himself)

Two hours?

(to Max)

In the woods where?

RAY BRADY

Right next to the house here, Chief.

KARL MYERS

It happened right next to the house, Ray? Like ten feet from the house?

Ray drops his head.

MAX TRAVALIO

The woods run to the Yellow Breeches. Boy claims it happened by the creek.

KARL MYERS

Where's his father?

SOUND of FOOTSTEPS on stairs. The men look toward the sound; Vivian appears and walks toward the sofa. As Vivian passes Myers, she gives him a look that conveys she doesn't think the whereabouts of her husband are any of his business.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

He went out for the evening.

She sits on the sofa, pulls a cigarette from the pack of Pall Malls, and lights it with the silver lighter.

KARL MYERS

(to Travaglio)

You talk to the boy?

MAX TRAVALIO

Got here five minutes before you.

KARL MYERS

So no, right?

RAY BRADY

I got here first and tried to talk to him, but he was too upset.

KARL MYERS

(to Vivian)

We're going to have to talk to him.

Vivian butts out her cigarette and heads upstairs. The eyes of the men follow her until she is out of view. Ray looks uncomfortable as hell and tugs at his uniform shirt collar; Max absently smokes a fag, and Myers paces.

At the SOUND of FOOTSTEPS from the upper level, the three men look toward the stairs. Greg appears, followed by Vivian. They descend to the living room. Greg appears nervous and looks everywhere but at the officers.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

This is Greg.

KARL MYERS

Greg, I'm Chief Myers.

Myers extends his hand; Greg looks at it for a beat before giving Myers a wet-fish handshake. Myers keeps his eyes on the boy as he gestures toward Max and Ray.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)

This is Corporal Travaglio; you've met Officer Brady.

Greg looks at his mother. Vivian looks at Greg with concern in her expression and guides him toward the sofa with her hand. They sit next to one another.

Vivian attempts to put her arm around the boy, but he frowns slightly and shifts away from her.

Vivian looks at Myers with raised eyebrows and reaches for the pack of cigarettes. She offers the pack to Myers who waves it off. Vivian extracts a cigarette, lights up, takes a drag, and looks at Greg as she exhales.

KARL MYERS

Can you tell me why you didn't tell your mother about this as soon as she came home?

Greg glances at Vivian but says nothing.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(to Myers)

I asked him the same thing, and he told me he didn't want to upset me, that he was scared.

Greg glances at her. His expression conveys betrayal.

KARL MYERS

(to Greg)

Why were ... why are you scared?

Greg glances up at Myers then quickly stares at the floor.

GREG PETERMAN

I dunno.

KARL MYERS

That's not true is it? When we're scared, deep down, we always know why.

SOUND of front SCREEN DOOR opening. The front door opens and Alice Moyer bursts into the room with the appearance of someone ready to dismantle the house.

ALICE MOYER

(screams)

WHERE ARE MY BABIES?

Harry Moyer is right behind Alice and restrains her. Greg bolts upstairs with Vivian right behind.

ALICE MOYER (CONT'D)

(wails)

WHERE ARE THEY?

From upper level, SOUND of DOOR SLAMMING followed by SOUND of POUNDING on a DOOR.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (O.C.)

(loud)

Gregory, open this door!

Alice looks frantic and turns to Harry. Harry wraps his arms around her.

ALICE MOYER

Harry, where are they? Why aren't they here.

From upper level, SOUND of POUNDING on a DOOR.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (O.C.)

Gregory!

Vivian comes down the stairs in a rush and approaches Myers; she appears resolute.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (CONT'D)

I know where it happened.

KARL MYERS

You know?

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I've been there a couple of times with Greg.

Harry guides a sobbing Alice to the sofa; she sits down and stares at the opposite wall. Her face is a mask of despair. Harry approaches Myers.

HARRY MOYER

What are we waiting for?

KARL MYERS

It'd be best if you stay here with your wife.

HARRY MOYER

I'm going, and I'll be damned if you're going to stop me.

Vivian pulls a gray raincoat and plastic hat from the closet next to the front door and puts them on.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

(sarcastic)

Is it just going to be Harry and me?

Myers looks at Max. Ray runs downstairs

KARL MYERS

We may need a few more men.

Ray returns with two slickers and hands one to Myers.

MAX TRAVALIO

I'll see how many Troopers are available.

(low tone)

Ambulance?

Myers nods "yes." Myers and Ray put on the slickers.

KARL MYERS

(to Ray)

I need you to come with me in case I need to get a message back to Max.

SOUND of DOORBELL.

Vivian opens the door; Edith Esworth stands on the porch.

EDITH ESWORTH
I saw the flashing lights.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
Thank God you're here. The Trooper
will explain.

Edith steps inside.

EDITH ESWORTH
Where are you going?

Vivian steps into the doorway.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
(over her shoulder)
To look for Alice's kids.

Vivian exits; Edith steps aside as Harry Moyer, Myers and Brady follow.

EXT. DEEP WOODS, LOCATION THREE - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

It is pouring rain. The SOUND of the HISS of RAIN on leaves drowns out all other sounds. The night is pitch black. Vivian points a police-issue flashlight onto a path; Myers, Harry, and Ray follow in that order.

Vivian's silhouette is framed in the circle of her flashlight beam against sheets of rain. She is several paces ahead of Myers who has a second flashlight aimed downward at the path. Harry trips over a root but does not fall.

HARRY MOYER
God DAMN son-of-a-BITCH.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
(shouts over rain)
NOT MUCH FARTHER!

Ray trips over a root and goes down onto his hands and knees. He gets up without comment and continues on.

VIVIAN PETERMAN
(shouts over her shoulder)
This is where it opens up!

The rain stops abruptly. The SOUND of WATER DROPS falling from vegetation fills the night. Vivian stops.

Myers stops on one side of Vivian; Harry on the other. Brady is beside but slightly behind Myers.

Beginning at the creek bank, Vivian does a slow pan of the clearing with her flashlight beam; Myers slow pans the clearing with his flashlight beginning at the scarp.

When the beams cross in the center of the clearing, a hundred feet from where the group is standing, the beams pass a pair of pinpricks of reddish light.

Myers and Vivian whip the beams back to the pinpricks, which are joined by five more pairs of tiny lights from the eyes of six, large, mixed-breed dogs. The dogs are drenched but their muzzles have a different sheen from the rest of their coats.

RAY BRADY

(awestruck)

Them's Beanie's dogs, Chief.

The dogs shuffle uneasily as they stare into the lights. Myers switches the flashlight to his left hand and draws his revolver with his right. He points the gun toward the dogs and cocks it. The dogs' ears perk up, and they stand stock still.

KARL MYERS

(shout)

HEY!

The dogs sprint away. The search party watches the dogs in the flashlight beams until the dogs disappear into the trees. Myers directs his flashlight beam to where the dogs had been standing. The grass is trampled down.

RAY BRADY

(spooked)

Them dogs was busy over something.

Myers does not holster his revolver; he focuses his flashlight and his gaze on the trampled grass.

KARL MYERS

You all stay where you are.

Myers steps toward the trampled grass. When Myers is twenty-feet away from Vivian, she shines her torch toward the trampled grass and follows.

VIVIAN PETERMAN

I'm coming with you.

HARRY MOYER

So am I.

Harry follows close behind Vivian. Brady stares into the black woods for a beat, and then he follows Harry.

RAY BRADY

(to himself)

I'll be damned if I'm going to stand here by myself.

Twenty feet from the center of the trampled grass, Myers stops.

KARL MYERS

(under his breath)

Jesus Christ.

Myers raises the hand that holds the revolver.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)

Don't any of you come any closer.

Vivian and Harry ignore the order and rush forward. Vivian stops beside Myers, screams, and throws herself on Myers. He holsters the revolver and holds her with one arm but keeps the flashlight and his focus on the trampled grass.

Harry runs to the center of the trampled grass. Myers releases Vivian and follows Harry, who drops to his knees.

HARRY MOYER

(wails)

MY BOY!

Myers reaches Harry and shines the flashlight on Barry's corpse. The limbs have been mauled; the abdominal cavity is empty.

Vivian slowly approaches; her flashlight beam is focused on the corpse. She is wide-eyed and horrified. Harry reaches out as if to pick Barry off the ground, but Myers grabs an arm and pulls him back.

KARL MYERS

(urgent)

You can't touch him!

HARRY MOYER

But that's my BOY!

Harry struggles; Myers uses every bit of his strength to haul Harry to his feet.

KARL MYERS

Get a grip, man.

Harry stops struggling. Brady nears the corpse, looks at it, and pukes into the grass.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ, Ray.

Myers releases Harry, who takes a step back. Vivian puts her arm around Harry. Neither take their eyes from the corpse.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)
(in command)
Mrs. Peterman, I need for you to take these two back to the house.

Vivian pauses for a beat, releases Harry, and directs her flashlight to where the path back leaves the clearing. She starts walking toward the path but stops when Myers speaks.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)
(to Brady)
Tell Max we're going to need the Coroner and lab guys and whoever the hell else they can throw at this.

Ray nods and wipes his mouth with the back of his hand. He takes Harry's arm and gently tugs on it.

RAY BRADY
Come on Harry.

Harry jerks his arm free.

HARRY MOYER
(yells at Brady)
BUT THAT'S MY BOY!

RAY BRADY
I know, Harry, I know, but there's nothing you can do now.

Harry looks toward the sky and wails. Myers goes to Harry and gives him a manly, one-armed hug. Harry quiets.

KARL MYERS
Listen to me. You're going to have to break this to his mother. Not all of it, not the ... Not all of it.

Harry stares at the corpse; he appears numb.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)
You need to tell her, understand?

Myers moves between Harry and the corpse, gently touches the smaller man's chin and lifts Harry's face so that he stares into Myers' eyes.

KARL MYERS (CONT'D)

Do you understand me?

Harry nods.

VIVIAN PETERMAN (O.C.)

Let's go.

Vivian walks toward the path. Ray takes Harry's arm; they follow Vivian. After two steps, Ray releases Harry's arm. Harry follows Vivian; Ray is in the rear. Myers watches the trio leave.

Moonlight emerges from behind the passing storm. Myers turns off his flashlight and slowly scans the clearing, woods and creek. His expression conveys a fearful appreciation of the primeval world of fang and claw.

Myers approaches the corpse and stares at it. The night could not be more still but for the residual drip of rain from leaves. The silence is broken by the SOUND of a BRANCH SNAPPING.

Myers spins around, drops the flashlight, unholsters his pistol, and holding it with two hands, points it in the direction of the sound.

Myers stoops down, feels for and finds the flashlight, stands, holds it against the revolver, and directs the beam toward where the branch snapped. Beanie's dogs are visible at the top of the scarp. There is a distant FLASH of LIGHTNING.

KARL MYERS

(shouts, gestures)

GIT!

The dogs run away as DISTANT THUNDER SOUNDS.

When the dogs disappear, Myers pans the top of the scarp, and two pinpricks of light appear. Myers quickly raises the pistol into firing position, holds the flashlight against the pistol, and returns the beam to the source of the pinpricks of light.

At the brink of the scarp, her body nearly hidden among the leaves of a small, leggy sassafras, the expressionless face of Patsy Moyer appears in the flashlight's beam.

END OF EPISODE