

Apt Pupil

by

Brandon Boyce

Based on the novel by:

Stephen King

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FADE IN:

Through the window of a moving vehicle, we see a series of small, middle-class houses. This could be any suburban street in America.

INT. CITY BUS - DAY

A boy is seated near the back of a moving bus. This is TODD BOWDEN, 15, as All-American as they come. He stares out at the other passengers indifferently. Then something catches his eye.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - SANTO DONATO - DAY

TITLE: SANTO DONATO, CA FEBRUARY 1984

Todd pedals his bike down a quiet street and pulls up to an unassuming bungalow set far back on its lot. This is the kind of house one would hardly notice driving through the peaceful suburban community of Santo Donato. Todd gets off his bike and heads up the front steps. On the way, he bends down to pick up the L.A. Times.

Two signs, in laminated plastic, are secured neatly above the door bell. The first reads: "ARTHUR DENKER". The second reads: "NO SOLICITORS, NO PEDDLERS, NO SALESMEN".

Todd RINGS the bell. Nothing. He looks at his watch. It is twelve past ten. He RINGS again, this time longer. Still nothing. Finally, Todd leans on the tiny button, staring at his watch as he does so. After more than a minute of SOLID RINGING, a voice is heard from within.

DUSSANDER (O.S.)

All right. All right. I'm coming. Let it go!

Todd lets go as a chain behind the heavy door starts to rattle. Then it opens. An old man stands behind the screen. He is KURT DUSSANDER, a.k.a. Arthur Denker. Mid-seventies. Standing there in his bathrobe and slippers, a cigarette smashed in his mouth, he looks like a cross between Boris Karloff and Albert Einstein. Dussander stares at Todd, who tries to speak, but suddenly cannot.

DUSSANDER

(continuing)

A boy. I don't need anything, boy. Can't you read? I thought all American boys could read. Don't be a nuisance, now. Good day.

The door begins to close. Todd waits till the last moment before speaking.

TODD

Don't forget your paper, Mr. Dussander.

The door stops. Dussander opens it slowly. He unlatches the screen and slips his fingers around the paper. Todd does not let go.

DUSSANDER

Give me my newspaper.

TODD

Sure thing, Mr. Dussander.

Dussander snatches the paper away and closes the screen door. Quickly, almost imperceptibly, the old man's eyes survey the area: across the street, up and down the sidewalk, the boy's bicycle.

DUSSANDER

My name is Denker. See?

(pointing)

Denker. Perhaps you cannot read after all.

What a pity. Good day.

As the front door closes, Todd speaks rapidly into the narrowing gap.

TODD

Bergen-Belsen, January '43 to June '43.

Auschwitz, June '43 to June '44. Then you went to Patin.

The door stops, still partly open.

TODD (CONT'D)

After the war, you escaped to Buenos Aires.

From 1950 to '52 you were in Cuba, and

then... From 1952 to '58... I don't know. No one does. But in 1965, you popped up in West Berlin, where they almost got you.

The door opens wider.

DUSSANDER

Listen, boy. I don't know what is the matter with you. But I don't have time for this game. Now, get out of here before I call the police.

TODD

Call them if you want.

DUSSANDER

Fine.

The heavy door slams shut.

TODD

It's okay by me Herr Kommandant. I'm sure the police would love to meet the "Blood-fiend of Patin."

In a flash the front door is open, so is the screen. Dussander is through the doorway and descending upon Todd with the rolled umbrella raised to strike him. Todd stumbles back against the porch rail.

DUSSANDER

You get away from this house, God damn you!
I'll beat you all the way home.

But Todd regains his composure quickly. He brushes himself off and levels his eyes at the old man who now hardly seems the threat he was a few seconds ago.

TODD

After 1965, no one saw you again... Until I did. Three weeks ago on the downtown bus. If you want to call the cops, go right ahead. I'll wait on the steps.

DUSSANDER

You'll do no such thing.

TODD

I won't? Listen, old man, if I want to start screaming right here, I will. If I want to ride down to the police station and bring the cops back myself, then I will. I will do what ever I want. Do you understand?

(pause)

But if you like, I could come in for a minute. We could talk.

Pause.

DUSSANDER

I'd be out of my mind to let an insane boy like you into my home.

Pause.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Is that what you want, to come into my home? So be it. There is no arguing with crazy people.

Dussander turns and steps back through the screen door. He stops at the threshold of the house and turns. He is holding the screen door open with one leg, the front door open with the other. He looks straight ahead. A moment later, Todd steps into the house.

INT. DUSSANDER'S HOUSE - DAY

Dussander's home is what you would expect of a single, poor, old man. Nothing fancy, nothing out of the ordinary. Todd looks around, perhaps half-expecting to find a Nazi flag or an oil painting of Der Fuehrer hanging above the mantle. But he doesn't, and moves into the living room where an old picture of a woman sits framed on an end table.

DUSSANDER

My wife. She died in 1955 of lung disease.
At that time I was working at the Menschler
Motor Works in Essen. I was heartbroken.

Todd's attention drifts away and his fingers slip over to a lampshade next to the photograph. He begins to feel it as though he were inspecting it for something.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Stop that!

Todd jumps back a little but then recovers.

TODD

Tell me, wasn't it Ilse Koch who made the
lampshades out of human skin?

DUSSANDER

Now I don't know what you're talking about.

TODD

Sure you do, Mr. Dussander.

DUSSANDER

Denker. Denker. Denker. You don't listen,
boy. The television has fried your brain.

Pause.

TODD

Your hands are shaking.

DUSSANDER

Yes, they're shaking. I'm old. We all
shake. You are most tiresome, and rude. Now

if you have a point I wish you'd come to it.

TODD

We're in no rush. If I thought you had plans, I'd say cancel them, but since I know you don't...

DUSSANDER

You know nothing of my business --

TODD

What business? You sit in that ugly chair and watch soap operas all day. Except on Friday afternoons when you walk down to the movie theater. And twice a week you take the bus downtown to do your shopping. You always use the express lane because you never have more than ten items.

DUSSANDER

You have been following me?

TODD

Of course, I followed you. You think I normally go around to peoples' houses and accuse them of being Nazi fugitives?

DUSSANDER

Perhaps for me you made an exception.

TODD

No, for you I had to be sure. For Kurt Dussander I had to be absolutely certain. ...Now, I am, and that's why I'm here.

Todd sits on the sofa.

DUSSANDER

Oh, yes, I see now. As I am this ex-Nazi fellow, as you say, then this must be the part where I offer you my hidden stash of gold, taken from the mouths of old Jewish men, of course, which I keep buried in the basement. Isn't that right, boy? Well, I'm afraid you're wasting your time. I have no money. If I did I might even give you some just to be done with this nonsense.

TODD

I don't need money. You don't have any anyway. At least, I don't think so. You

probably had to spend it all to sneak in the country. A good American passport is expensive on the black market, that I know.

DUSSANDER

Do you? Good for you.

TODD

Yes, I do. I know it all, Dussander. You're my One Great Interest.

DUSSANDER

Your what?

TODD

My One Great Interest. Well, not you personally, but, ...well, it's something I learned back in eighth grade. Our teacher, Miss Harmon, she said we'd have to find our One Great Interest in life. You know, the thing that would really grab us. Once we did that, everything would fall into place. Like hers, she said, wasn't teaching, but collecting nineteenth-century postcards. I guess there's no money in that, so she has to be a teacher. Anyway, she told us to start thinking about it. So I did, but nothing happened. Until the following summer, in Ronny Pegler's garage. That's where I found it.

INT. RONNY PEGLER'S GARAGE - DAY

Todd and RONNY, both 13, rummage through several large boxes in the corner of the garage. We see that the boxes are filled with old war magazines. Ronny tosses several of them to the ground as he digs for his dad's old copies of Penthouse. Ronny selects one Penthouse and rifles through it. He discards it a moment later.

RONNY

One of these has three girls doing it at *the same time*.

But the old war magazines catch Todd's attention. He picks one up curiously and carefully flips through the tattered pages. We see a few of the photographs: Nazi storm troopers, prisoners behind barbed wire, the ovens.

RONNY (CONT'D)

I got it! Check this out. ...Todd, look.

TODD

Hang on a sec.

As young Todd stares into this secret world, his voice comes in...

TODD (CONT'D)

It was all there... pictures of stuff I'd never seen, stuff they *never* put in the books anymore, especially the ones they give us to read. And here were *stacks* of them.

INT. DUSSANDER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Todd speaks excitedly. Dussander, very bored, clearly indulges him.

TODD

It... *grabbed* me. It was just like Miss Harmon said. I couldn't believe it. But there it was, the camps, the uniforms, the ...the way they saluted each other. But what am I telling you for? You know more about this stuff than anybody.

DUSSANDER

Yes, what are you telling me for?

TODD

(ignoring him)

Then last year I wrote my big term paper on Dachau. I got an A+. It was the only A+ she gave. I mean I always do real well. A's on everything. That's why I'm accelerated.

DUSSANDER

Accelerated?

TODD

You know, accelerated. I skipped two grades, second and ninth. I didn't need them. That's why I'm already a junior.

Dussander sits.

DUSSANDER

I see...

TODD

Some kids resent me for it. That's not important. Anyway, my paper really floored my history teacher. I guess because I got through all those books without throwing up. But I learned something. I learned that when you talk about the camps now, you have to remember to sound really disgusted. I mean, you can't just say what happened like the magazines did and leave it at that. If I tried that the teacher would have freaked and called my parents in.

INT. RONNY PEGLER'S GARAGE - DUSK

Todd sits on one of the boxes surrounded by dozens of the old magazines. The door to the house opens and Ronny, looking cross, pokes his head out.

RONNY

Todd, your mom's on the phone. She says you have to come home for dinner. ...Todd?

Todd, lost in the sea of old photographs, doesn't notice Ronny at first. Then he looks up at him. In his eyes is a glint of a darkness that we will come to know better.

TODD

What?

RONNY

(suddenly wary of Todd)

Your mom's on the phone.

ANGLE on Todd.

INT. DUSSANDER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

TODD

Nowadays you have to... soften it.

DUSSANDER

Why do I care about this?

TODD

Because, I don't want it softened.

Todd hops up and begins to pace the floor. Dussander stares at him blankly, unsure of where this is going.

DUSSANDER

I am sure you trouble your parents to no end.

TODD

Actually, I'm pretty low maintenance. That's what my dad says.

DUSSANDER

You told your parents about me, then?

TODD

You think I'm crazy?

DUSSANDER

I think you're crackers, but go on. I'm riveted.

Todd looks deep into Dussander's eyes. Dussander is uncomfortable. Slowly, Todd reaches out and brushes his finger against Dussander's hand. Dussander gets up.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Pause.

TODD

And then it happened... I was on my way to the library. It was raining...

FLASHBACK: INT. CITY BUS - DAY

Todd's voice narrates what we are seeing. Todd, seated near the back of the bus, watches Dussander climb aboard. Todd thinks nothing of it at first, but soon finds that he is unable to take his eyes off him. Todd is trying to place the old man's face in his mind...

TODD (V.O.)

You climbed on the bus and started this slow walk down the aisle. Just like you were examining a new batch of inmates. I don't think anybody gave you a second glance but me, but somehow ...people seemed to move out of your way. And under your arm you carried a rolled up umbrella. But what really did it, what really set me off was the coat. You were wearing this long black rain coat. My mind suddenly flipped back to a picture of you taken at Patin. You in your S.S. greatcoat with a riding crop under your arm.

INT. DUSSANDER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

TODD

It was incredible.

Dussander stares back at him flatly.

DUSSANDER

All of this... because of a rain coat?

TODD

Well, it wasn't *that* easy. I mean, I had to really check up on it. And every picture of you in those books is forty years old, at least. I went back to the library to find the picture. And then I matched it with the photos I took.

DUSSANDER

You took photographs of me?

TODD

Yeah, I got this little camera. Fits right in the palm of my hand.

DUSSANDER

(crunches cigarette into ashtray)

Clever boy.

TODD

But even then I couldn't be sure. I needed real proof. So I went to the mall and bought a fingerprint kit from the hobby shop and a book that tells you what you're supposed to look for and then dusted your mailbox while you were at the movies. Pretty smart, huh?

DUSSANDER

You... put dust on my mailbox? For fingerprints? You took photographs of me? What else did you do?... I don't believe any of this.

TODD

I already had a copy of your fingerprints. They're on your want sheet from the Israeli government. It's on database at UC Irvine. Can you believe that?

DUSSANDER

Bourbon.

He storms toward the kitchen and stops.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Would you care for a drink, boy?

TODD

Sure, you got a Coke?

DUSSANDER

No *Kok*.

TODD

Milk?

DUSSANDER

Milk.

Dussander disappears into the kitchen. Todd stands alone in the living room.

He lets out a long, nervous breath, showing for the first time the presence of something other than the cold confidence he has been putting up for Dussander. He knows he has crossed into dangerous territory from which there is no going back. But after a moment he composes himself; he has come this far. The sternness returns to his eyes. Todd is all business. He takes a breath, and then speaks loudly enough for Dussander to hear him in the kitchen.

TODD

It takes eight good matches, they're called compares, actually, for a fingerprint to get accepted in court.

DUSSANDER (O.S.)

Is that right?

FLASHBACK: EXT. DUSSANDER'S FRONT PORCH - DAY

Todd steps up onto the porch and looks around calmly. He pulls the powder and brush from his pocket and begins to examine the mailbox for prints.

TODD (V.O.)

Yeah, there were two sets of prints. The first I figured were the mailman's. Once I knew what I was looking for, yours were easy to spot.

INT. DUSSANDER'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

DUSSANDER (O.S.)

You should be a detective.

The SOUNDS of a refrigerator opening and closing come from the kitchen. Drinks being poured. Todd begins to move slowly toward the kitchen.

TODD

Maybe I will... Mom thinks I'd be good at it.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - DAY

He reaches the doorway just as Dussander turns around with the drinks.

TODD

I found fourteen compares.

Dussander approaches him carrying a tumbler of milk and a glass of bourbon. He hands the tumbler to Todd, who brings it up to his lips and hesitates.

TODD (CONT'D)

You have some.

DUSSANDER

Good *Gott*.

He snatches the cup and swallows twice.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

You see? It's milk, boy. From Dairylee Farms. On the carton is a picture of a smiling cow.

Todd pauses and then begins to drink.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

(more to himself than Todd)

...And two missing children.

(pause)

Boy what you have done, I have to explain this to you because clearly you don't understand, what you have done is a violation.

TODD

A violation?

DUSSANDER

Yes.

TODD

Kind of like those experiments with the decompression chamber. Now, that was a violation, Dussander.

DUSSANDER

That fucking name. Enough of that. I demand it.

TODD

You what?

DUSSANDER

I demand --

TODD

You demand nothing from me. Ever. Get it?

Pause.

DUSSANDER

Boy, I will tell you this once more, and for the last time. My name is Arthur Denker. It has never been anything else. It has never even been Americanized. If you must know, and apparently you must, I was named by my father who greatly admired the stories of Arthur Conan Doyle. I did serve in the reserves, I admit, and in the late thirties, when I was first married, I supported Hitler. I supported him most, I suppose, because for the first time in years there was work and there was tobacco. ...Would you like a cigarette?

TODD

No. My dad used to smoke. Mom made him quit. Now he's addicted to Nicorette... that's nicotine gum.

Dussander turns toward the counter and pulls a kitchen match from a cabinet. He lights his cigarette with his back to Todd.

DUSSANDER

Nicotine gum.

Dussander's eyes drift to the collection of kitchen knives neatly stuffed in their block on the counter in front of him. He lingers a moment, pulls deeply on the cigarette, then turns and continues.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Anyway, Hitler lost his mind at the end, directing phantom armies at the whim of his astrologer. He even gave his dog, Blondi, a death capsule. On May 2nd, 1945, my regiment surrendered to the Americans. I remember that a private named Gonzales gave me a chocolate bar. I wept.

Bored, Todd sinks into a chair at the table.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

I was interned at Essen where I was treated very well. We listened to the Nuremberg trials on the radio and when Goering committed suicide, I bought half a bottle of schnaps and got drunk. When I was released, I put wheels on cars at the Essen Motor Works until I retired in 1963. In 1967 I emigrated here, to California, and became a U.S. Citizen. I am as American as you are. I vote. No Buenos Aires, no Berlin, no koo-ba. *And that's it, my whole story. I hope you're satisfied. But if not, it's, as you say, tough shit for you. Now, you go. Enough of this.*

Dussander points to the door, but Todd remains motionless in his chair.

TODD

That was pretty good. So much to remember. But I guess it helps when you have forty years to practice your story.

DUSSANDER

Oh, to hell with this and to hell with you. I'm calling the police. Your father is going to beat your behind when he picks you up at the police station.

TODD

No. My parents don't believe in violence.

DUSSANDER

Well, they should start. I'm calling.

Dussander steps past Todd and picks up the receiver of the phone hanging on the wall above the table. The boy still sits motionless behind him. Dussander dials a "9", and then, with

more difficulty, a "1". He stands with his finger poised over the final "1". Tiny beads of sweat roll over his forehead. His shoulders drop. Todd stands up. Their faces are close together.

TODD

Hang up the phone.

DUSSANDER

This is unforgivable. Do you know the things you're accusing me of?

TODD

Do it.

Slowly, Dussander brings the receiver down onto its hook.

DUSSANDER

If you don't want money, what do you want?

TODD

I want to hear about it.

DUSSANDER

Hear about what?

TODD

The camps. Everything. The experiments. The examinations. All the stuff the writers are scared to put in their books because people will think they're sick. That's what I want, ...everything.

DUSSANDER

Everything?

TODD

Exactly. And you're going to tell it to me.

DUSSANDER

You're a monster.

TODD

According to history you're the monster.

DUSSANDER

How could you ask me to remember such things? I can barely remember to take my heart medicine.

TODD

You were there. You did those things. No

one can tell it better than you can. And you will tell it, starting today. Right now. If you don't, I'll tell everyone who you are. I swear it.

DUSSANDER

Why should I? Why should I do any of it?

TODD

Because you hung up the phone. That's why. ...And just so you know, just so there is no misunderstanding whatsoever. Everything I have on you, the compares, the want sheet, all the photographs, are all in an envelope under my mattress. I'm going to put it there every time I come to see you. If anything happens to me, if I should suddenly disappear, some one will find it. Believe me --

DUSSANDER

That's a foolish thing to do. What if your mother goes in your room anyway? What if she hires a maid?

TODD

You better hope she doesn't.

(looking at watch)

We're wasting time. Let's get started. I have to be home for dinner. Today I want to hear about the ovens. How you baked them after they were dead... and before.

Pause.

DUSSANDER

(to himself)

A boy... a boy...

TODD

But before we start, put your teeth in. You look better with your teeth.

EXT. DUSSANDER'S HOUSE - DUSK

It is later the same day. Todd emerges from the house. The setting sun tells us he has been inside for several hours. He picks up his bike and hops on. He stops. He turns to look up the street in both directions. No one. A moment later he pedals off down the street.

MAIN TITLES

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

TITLE: SEPTEMBER 1984

A typical high school image. Rows of students sit listening to a lecture from MR. PROXMIRE, fifties, as he weaves his way through the aisles.

PROXMIRE

But in 1902, Panama didn't exist. The country we know as Panama was part of Columbia.

As the teacher continues to lecture, the camera stops on JOEY, 17. On his desk is a folded note. He hands it across the aisle and motions for it to be sent to Todd a few rows over. The note moves across the room, avoiding the meandering teacher, on its way to Todd.

PROXMIRE (CONT'D)

Now the nations of the west knew they needed a canal through Central America. They were tired of waiting for their ships to sail around Cape Horn. This was the new century, the age of modernization. And the U.S. was at the forefront. Teddy Roosevelt was in the White House, looking for any chance to assert the might of America. When Columbia balked at the offer made by the U.S. and England, Roosevelt sent his naval war ships to sit off the coast of Panama, just sit there, where they could be seen from the coast.

The FEMALE STUDENT across the aisle from Todd now has the note. She whispers to him but he doesn't hear. Todd is trying to say awake with great difficulty.

The girl extends the note just as Proxmire passes. He stops, turns around, plucks the note from the girl's hand and heads for the front of the class.

PROXMIRE (CONT'D)

Finally Columbia gave up the territory for about a tenth of its original price. And as Roosevelt would say later, "The U.S. stole the Panama canal fair and square."

Without glancing at it, Proxmire crumples the note and drops it into the waste basket by his desk.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - LOCKER AREA - DAY

It is in between classes. The denizens of STUDENTS crowd around their lockers. Among them is Todd. He searches through his locker and selects a book. Suddenly the door SLAMS shut to reveal the face of Joey standing against the lockers. Todd, startled, jumps back.

JOEY

(laughs)

Take it easy, Jesus. It's just me, flinch-man.

TODD

(serious)

Don't do that.

JOEY

I got news for you. You're gonna like it.

TODD

Walk with me to French.

The two walk down the corridor.

JOEY

Someone likes you. Someone good.

TODD

Who?

JOEY

Well, I heard my sister talking on the phone with Lisa Herman, and... well --

TODD

You going to tell me who it is?

Two CHEERLEADERS pass them.

JOEY

(lowering voice)

You didn't hear it from me.

TODD

Fine.

JOEY

Becky Trask.

TODD

Was that so hard?

JOEY

So ask her out and the weekend after next you can double with me and Vanessa.

TODD

What about this weekend?

JOEY

I'm already planning on being grounded.

TODD

Grounded? What for?

JOEY

Where the hell you been? Report cards were sent out today. I know that never affects you...

They arrive at the door of Todd's classroom as the BELL SOUNDS.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Shit. Don't forget what I told you.

Joey runs off, leaving Todd looking after him.

EXT. DUSSANDER'S BACK PORCH - DAY

TITLE: OCTOBER 1984

It is late afternoon. Dussander sits in a rocking chair facing out into the backyard. Todd is in the lawn chair off to the side. He has just finished a McDonald's cheeseburger and is about to start another one. Dussander eats a Big Mac, washing it down with bourbon. A large cat keeps jumping onto Dussander's lap while he is eating. He brushes it away annoyed.

TODD

I've never seen anyone drink bourbon with McDonald's before. ...So, How did the stuff get to Patin?

DUSSANDER

*In railroad cars marked "Medical Supplies."
It came in long crates that looked like coffins.*

TODD

That's fitting. Was it always Zyklon-B?

The cat jumps into Dussander's lap again. He throws it down, this time harder.

DUSSANDER

No, from time to time we would be sent something else. Experimental gases. The High Command was always interested in improving efficiency. Once they sent us a gas code-named "Pegasus." A nerve gas. Thank God they never sent it again. It...

Todd sits up a little, leaning in.

TODD

It what?

DUSSANDER

It didn't work very well. It was quite boring.

TODD

Bullshit. You're lying. What did it do?

DUSSANDER

It killed them. What do you think it did, made them walk on water? It killed them.

The cat jumps up a third time. This time Dussander picks it up and tosses it a good six feet. The animal hits the ground and runs away.

TODD

Tell me.

(slurps on his Coke)

Tell me.

DUSSANDER

I won't. I refuse. Where are my cigarettes?

He finds the pack and fumbles a cigarette to his lips. He lights it. Todd watches calmly, giving the old man a moment to collect himself, and then...

TODD

What did it do?

DUSSANDER

It made them dance.

TODD

Dance?

DUSSANDER

Like Zyklon-B, it came in through the shower heads. After a few seconds the prisoners began to leap about. Some were screaming. Most of them were laughing. They began to vomit and to... to defecate helplessly.

TODD

*You mean they... they... shit themselves?
...Woah.*

But Dussander ignores him, staring out into the yard as he begins to remember more easily.

DUSSANDER

They began to twitch all over and make high, strange sounds in their throats. At last they collapsed and just lay there on the concrete, twitching and yodeling, with blood streaming from their noses. But I lied to you, boy. It didn't kill them. Either because it wasn't strong enough or because we couldn't bring ourselves to wait that long. I suppose it was that. I sent five men in with rifles to end their agonies. These were five men I trusted. It would have looked bad on my record to have wasted so many cartridges at a time when the Fuehrer had declared every cartridge a national resource. I was always given high marks for efficiency.

TODD

Yeah, I bet.

Dussander looks down at the remains of the meal in his lap. As if his own story has suddenly disgusted him, he balls the food up in its wrapper and shoves it into the paper bag.

DUSSANDER

How do you eat this crap everyday?

TODD

Why didn't you just do the job yourself? You carried a gun, didn't you?

DUSSANDER

(incredulous)

I was the commandant of the camp.

TODD

So you never killed anybody?

DUSSANDER

(getting frustrated)

The entire world was at war, boy. People died.

TODD

That's not a real answer. I'm asking about you.

DUSSANDER

Boy, I was a soldier in a position of power. You don't get to be there by selling ...girl scout's cookies.

TODD

I know what the SS was, Dussander. Who are you talking to? It was a bunch of dumb, rich kids who bought their way into the service so they wouldn't have to go fight on the front.

Dussander stares at Todd, wanting to say something. Todd shovels a few more fries into his mouth, then looks up and sees Dussander eyeing him.

DUSSANDER

That's enough for today, boy. I beg you. I'm tired.

TODD

Yeah, fine. That was good story though. You always tell them good, once I get you started.

ANGLE on Dussander.

DUSSANDER'S DREAM #1: EXT. OPEN FIELD - DAY

Dussander is asleep in his bed. A low groaning sound comes in very slowly. Dussander's eyes open. He sits up, looks around, sees that his bed is in the middle of a large open field. It is grassy, but certainly not beautiful. Something is wrong about this place.

He stands out of the bed, wearing pajamas. But it is cold. He takes the sheet and wraps himself in it. The groaning is getting louder, more human. We have never seen him frightened, until now. He steps a few paces from the bed. The groans have become low screams. There is no where to go. Slowly, as if he knows what he's going to see, he looks down at the ground. It's just grass. But the human voices are now wailing desperately.

His knees buckle, but he tries to fight it. He reaches his

knees and lowers his head toward the ground. The white sheet flows around him and blows off in a gust of wind. The screams are now at a feverish pitch. His ear is inches from the grass and his eyes, marked with unmistakable terror, are wide open as...

INT. DUSSANDER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dussander bolts upright in his bed.

EXT. OUTDOOR SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

RICHARD (DICK) BOWDEN, 38, is a taller, grayer version of his son. He stands over Todd's shoulder watching him shoot at a paper target. He still has on a tie from work, but the knot has been loosened and his shirt sleeves rolled up. Both Dick and Todd wear headphones and orange shooting glasses. Dick chews gum. They are alone on the range.

Todd fires a few rounds from his father's .30-.30. A strained tension exists between the two Bowdens.

DICK

You're tight. Don't hold your breath so long.

TODD

Forget it. I can't concentrate.

He pulls off his headphones in disgust and hands the rifle to his father. Dick takes it and begins to reload it for him.

DICK

I know your upset. So am I. So is your mother.

TODD

These honors classes... they aren't as easy as I thought they'd be. I totally admit it, I didn't prepare enough. I'm sorry.

DICK

Well, fine, but now is not the time to slack off. You got a chance to finish at the top of your class--

TODD

Nobody wants that more than I do, Dad.

DICK

Well you haven't been hitting the books very

much.

TODD

I know...

DICK

And seeing as you're not playing soccer this year it's not like you don't have enough time--

TODD

That still bothers you, doesn't it?

DICK

(with difficulty)

No, son. If you weren't enjoying it, then you shouldn't play.

TODD

I think it bothers you and you're not telling me.

Dick decides to take a shot himself. He readies himself and fires.

DICK

That was lousy. Here.

(gives the gun back to Todd)

I want to see your grades come up, buddy. That's all that bothers me. And if you say you need more time to study, then that's what we'll do. The first thing is to cut out all the time you spend reading to Mr. Denker. It's a nice thing to do, but it's not helping our school work a bit.

Dick is looking at his son, unsure if he has just seen a contortion of rage on his son's face. But Todd is cocking the rifle and...

DICK (CONT'D)

Hey, Todd. You still with me?

TODD

Yeah... no. Dad, don't do that. Please. Don't punish Mr. Denker for something that's my fault. I mean, he'd be lost without me--

DICK

He'll be fine without you. He was fine before and he'll be fine after. There's nothing wrong with wanting to help people, but you

gotta make sure you got yourself squared away first. That's what matters.

Todd turns to face his father, and speaks to him with a new seriousness.

TODD

Dad, am I like other kids?

DICK

Not by a long shot.

TODD

Then trust me on this. Don't lose faith in me because I blew a couple of exams. I will get my grades back up. In fact I've already started. Three days a week I go over to Freddy Tremain's for extra help. He's a wiz at trig. But please, Dad, whatever you do, don't punish a helpless old man for something that's my fault.

Pause.

DICK

Did you practice that in front of a mirror or something?

Todd smiles. Feeling his father caving in, he aims the rifle and squeezes off a round. Dick keeps his eyes on Todd as he shoots.

DICK (CONT'D)

Hey, he's not...?

TODD

(it takes him a second)

...No.

DICK

Just checking.

(thinks for a moment)

*All right... We'll give your way a shot. If you think you can do it, if you really do, and your serious, then... okay.
You really like the old guy, don't you?*

TODD

*I'm making a difference in somebody's life.
It's that simple.*

Todd aims the rifle down range and pulls the trigger. The gun jams. Todd tries to move the lever but it gets stuck.

DICK

Okay, okay.

(takes the rifle)

Don't ever force it. Watch.

Dick begins to methodically unjam the gun.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - DUSK

TITLE: NOVEMBER 1984

Dussander looks shabbier than in previous scenes. His clothes and hair reflect an increasing disregard for personal appearance. He goes to the basement door and, leaning carefully over the steps, retrieves a fresh bottle from his stash, stored precariously on some shelves leading down to the basement. He comes back to the counter and cracks the bottle open. Todd's irritated voice booms in from the living room.

TODD (O.S.)

Don't get too drunk. We still have a little while.

Dussander mumbles contemptuously and then speaks so Todd can hear him.

DUSSANDER

You don't have to do that, you know.

INT. DUSSANDER'S LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Todd has built a fire, probably the first fire Dussander's fireplace has seen in twenty years. The room is bathed in a warm orange glow as the winter sun sets outside. Todd uses the poker to adjust one of the logs.

TODD

Screw you. I'm doing this for me. This place is freezing.

Dussander comes back in with his drink and settles into his easy chair, which has been positioned in front of the hearth.

DUSSANDER

Yes, it must be fifty degrees outside. I'm sure to you it seems positively frigid.

TODD

Why didn't you pay your gas bill?

DUSSANDER

It slipped my mind. I will attend to it tomorrow.

TODD

Slipped your mind. I noticed it didn't slip your mind to stock up on a new case of bourbon.

DUSSANDER

Leave me alone.

Todd finishes with the fire and sits on the floor a few feet away.

TODD

All right, so finish your story, because I'm still not clear. You cook up this stew, and you bring the prisoner in, and you let them smell it, and suddenly they tell you everything?

DUSSANDER

Oh, don't misunderstand me. Certainly with a pistol pressed to their head, a prisoner would tell us everything we wanted to know, sometimes more. But mine was a much more ... elegant method. Remember, it had been months since they had smelled real potatoes simmering over an open flame, and boy, when that delicious odor hit their noses their mouths would drop and out would pour an account of every minor infraction their friends had committed, I mean it was magnificent...

TODD

And you let them eat the soup?

DUSSANDER

Oh, we never promised them the soup in exchange for information. We never mentioned it at all.

Pause. Todd is impressed.

TODD

Wow, that's really good, Dussander. I mean that's...

(pointing)

that's thinking.

Dussander does not respond. He gazes deeply into the fire.

DUSSANDER

...But, as the war pressed on, the time for such civilized measures became a luxury. I remember by April of '45, we had barely enough food to feed ourselves. The sound of the Russian mortars grew louder everyday, but still, the train cars from France and Poland kept coming. This was a time of desperation. The ovens burned day and night and still I knew we would not beat the arrival of the Russian forces. Many of my men, the cowardly ones, deserted during the night. But the men that remained, the same ones I had called upon so many times, ...continued the work. At first we thought a massive fire in the main building would serve our purpose. We could just crowd them in and pull a gas torch up to each of the windows. But with so many of them, we couldn't be sure the bodies would burn properly. We needed something ...certain. Then a young, bright soldier, I shall never forget his enthusiastic smile, pointed to a pair of bulldozers near the Western gate which had been used during construction. How perfectly simple it was. The bulldozers carved a narrow trench, four meters deep, down the center of the camp. For two hours they dug until I realized we may not have enough gas to finish the job. So the inmates were given shovels and told they were building a shelter from the incoming artillery. When they were done, I immediately called for a practice drill and three thousand naked bodies began to march into the trench. It took less than twenty minutes to get them in place. Quickly the bulldozers moved down the sides of the pit sending the piles of earth into the massive grave. Those who tried to free themselves were shot, of course, but very few cartridges were wasted that day. The machines were too fast. Back and forth they went... packing the dirt. One by one the tractors ran out of gas and my men had to scurry along with shovels. But by sunset... it was done. I gave the order to evacuate. In the distance

the plumes of Russian mortar fire rose like an approaching thundercloud. But I knew that no matter what happened, ...no one would ever forget what we did here.

Dussander stares into the fire. Todd, wide-eyed, is locked on Dussander when...

The PHONE RINGS.

They look at each other, a bit puzzled. Clearly, it does not ring very often, and when it does, Dussander cannot help but be apprehensive.

It rings again. Dussander gets up and moves toward the kitchen, Todd watches him go.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Hello?

(Pause. Then with apprehension)

Yes? ...No, no trouble at all. ...Yes.

...Yes, he's here. ...I see.

(his face softens)

...Really? ...No, no plans. ...Ah, lovely.

...My dear, I'd be delighted. ...Certainly.

...Of course I will. ...Yes, until then.

...All right. ...Good-bye.

He hangs up and turns to Todd with a odd grin.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

It seems I am to be your guest for Thanksgiving dinner.

INT. OLD TOYOTA CAR - ROADSIDE - NIGHT

Todd and Becky are in the backseat of Becky's car. They are on a date and have parked on the side of a road overlooking the lights of their town. At 16, BECKY TRASK, is an attractive girl who has recently discovered that boys like her and she likes them. They are kissing in the back seat. MUSIC plays on the stereo. Becky's blouse is unbuttoned. She stops kissing Todd.

BECKY

Is everything all right?

TODD

Yeah, I'm fine.

Becky smiles to herself, unconvinced.

BECKY

You're nervous. I think it's sweet.

TODD

No... No, I'm cool.

BECKY

Do you want me to do something else?

Todd just stares at her. He doesn't know what he wants. Becky decides for him. She slides down out of the frame. Todd is startled at first, but lets her. After a moment, he closes his eyes.

EXT. DUSSANDER'S BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Dussander sits in his rocking chair. A small blanket drapes across his lap. He smokes a cigarette and holds a near-empty glass. On the ground beside him, there is a small bowl.

DUSSANDER

Here kitty-kitty. Here kitty-kitty.

Out in the yard, the large cat emerges from the darkness and moves across the grass. It sees Dussander and, more importantly, the bowl next to him. We see that the bowl is filled with milk.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Come, puss-puss. That's right. I'll wait.

Dussander sits perfectly still. Cautiously, the cat moves toward the porch.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

That's right, puss-puss. You can smell it now, can't you?

The cat creeps to the edge of the steps. It takes them one at a time.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

That's right, kitty-kitty. That's right.

After a moment the cat edges up to the bowl. Its tail twitches nervously. Finally, it begins to lick up the milk. Dussander crunches the cigarette out in his empty glass. His movements are slow and patient. From under the blanket he pulls a pair of yellow rubber gloves. He begins to put them on. The cat jumps back for a moment. Dussander freezes. He waits the cat out. Soon the animal is back at the bowl. Dussander continues with

the gloves. He watches the cat's tail. As the animal gets comfortable, its tail flips under the rail of the rocking chair. Dussander slams the chair back. The CAT SHRIEKS. Dussander flips the blanket on top of the cat and wraps it into a tight, squirming, HISSING bundle. He stands out of the chair.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Gotcha.

INT. BECKY'S TOYOTA - ROADSIDE - NIGHT

It is later. Becky sits behind the wheel. Todd is next to her. A different song is on the RADIO. They sit for a moment in silence, clearly uncomfortable.

TODD

I'm sorry.

BECKY

It's all right. Maybe you'll be more in the mood later.

TODD

I don't know. That's never happened before.

Becky lights a joint. She takes a puff and exhales toward Todd.

TODD (CONT'D)

Can you blow that the other way?

BECKY

Maybe you don't like me.

TODD

No, I do.

BECKY

(exhaling out the window)

Maybe you don't like girls.

For a moment it is as though Todd's face were purple with rage. But a moment later the expression is gone. Todd turns away. Becky sees that her comment has hurt him.

BECKY (CONT'D)

That was a lousy thing for me to say. I'm sorry, honey.

She kisses him on the cheek. He nods reluctantly.

TODD

Let's just go home.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dussander bursts through the door with the bundle. A single paw emerges from the corner of the blanket and flails at Dussander, clawing him across the neck.

DUSSANDER

Oww, you mother-fucker.

They move across the room to the stove. With difficulty, Dussander pulls open the oven door, revealing the glowing red interior. The animal SCREAMS and claws at Dussander's neck and arms, escaping more and more from the blanket with every gyration of its body. With a mighty shove Dussander plunges the cat toward the opening, but the animal braces its paws on the edge of the stove. The two are deadlocked. But Dussander's hands are too close to the heat. He screams. His grip loosens just enough. With a desperate cry, the animal charges up Dussander's body, over his head, and leaps to the floor. Dussander dives after it.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Come here!

But the animal is too swift. In a second, it is atop the counter and out the open window above the sink. Although defeated and exhausted, Dussander cannot contain his excitement. His panting gives way to a twisted, hearty laugh.

TODD'S DAYDREAM: INT. EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

This is a 1940's laboratory. Todd is in his boxer shorts. Dussander is next to him, wearing a lab coat and his S.S. officers hat. Todd looks down on the examination table. A YOUNG GIRL, about 16, is held to the table with clamps. She is naked, staring at Todd. Behind the table is a glass window and behind that is another room where OTHER SCIENTISTS are monitoring equipment.

Over Dussander's methodical voice, Todd's dream shows flashes of what is being done: some sort of sexual experiment on the girl.

DUSSANDER

(to other scientists)

Test run eight-four. Electricity, sexual stimulus, metabolism. Based on the Thyssen theories of negative reinforcement.

Dreamlike SOUNDS and images pass before us: Todd's breathing, the girl's cry, electrical equipment, naked flesh, maybe Todd's, maybe the girl's.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Subject is a young Jewish girl, approximately sixteen years of age, no scars, no identifying marks, no known disabilities --

Inside the control room, a SCIENTIST monitors a volt meter, calling out the readings as Dussander yells for the voltage to be increased. As the meter rises, the girl SCREAMS more violently. Perhaps her eyes roll back, her tongue flutters in her mouth. Through all of this, the scientists call out and the record heart rate, blood pressure, brain activity, voltage, etc. Todd's eyes close. His breathing accelerates as does the motion of his hips until...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Todd snaps out of his daydream. His trigonometry class is having an examination. He sits at his desk, staring blankly at the paper before him. Most of the answer spaces are empty. He knows he is going to fail another test.

EXT. OUTDOOR SHOOTING RANGE - DAY

Todd is blasting away, rapid-firing the rifle down range at an unfortunate paper target. The protective headphones lay on the counter beside him, as does his backpack. He stops shooting when a voice snaps over the P.A. speaker next to him.

VOICE (O.S.)

You, on lane twelve. You need to have your headgear on at all times. (click) And no rapid firing.

Todd looks over at the man frowning at him from inside a small booth. Todd puts on the headgear, and after a moment, the man goes back to reading a newspaper. Todd looks up and down the range. One or two other shooters are concentrating on their targets. Todd quickly hoists his rifle up and aims it at the man in the booth. He snaps off a single dry round. Todd smiles weakly at the sound of the click. Unnoticed by anyone, he turns back toward the target, strangely comforted.

INT. DINING ROOM - BOWDEN HOUSE - DAY

Thanksgiving dinner. All the Bowden's are there, including

Dick's parents, VICTOR and AGNES. Dussander sits at the head of the table, Todd next to him. The family has finished dinner and is having coffee. Dick and his father smoke cigars. Todd's mother, MONICA BOWDEN, still pretty at 36, pours Dussander some more coffee.

MONICA

Todd loved that dog. A lot more than Dick did.

DICK

We all loved that dog.

AGNES

I remember when you had to put it down, Todd cried for two weeks. Just about broke my heart.

DUSSANDER

Excuse, me, Mrs. Bowden. Put it down? I've been here over twenty years but that's a new one.

VICTOR

Means put it to sleep, Victor.

Dussander still looks puzzled. He looks to Todd, but Victor jumps in.

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Well, it's how they kill it, Arthur. They do it all the time at the pound, ...sick dogs, dogs nobody wants.

MONICA

It's very humane.

DUSSANDER

I see.

Todd shoots him a fiery glare that the others don't notice.

MONICA

Some more pie?

DUSSANDER

As my departed wife used to say, 'One must never overdo the sublime.'

AGNES

It was delicious, Monica.

VICTOR

*Tell me, Arthur, if you don't mind me asking.
What did you do during the war?*

AGNES

Now don't get too personal, Victor.

A quick moment between Todd and Dussander.

DUSSANDER

*I was a student at the University until my
reserve unit was called in 1943.*

(notices Victor)

*But we were not a combat unit, thank God.
Mechanical engineers. Help me find my
cigarettes, Todd. Would you? In those days,
not even the call of higher learning could
exempt an able body from military service.*

*Dussander's cigarettes are right in front of him. Todd fetches
one and, bringing it to his own lips, lights it for him.*

MONICA

Todd Bowden!

DUSSANDER

(laughs knowingly)

*My dear, I do apologize. My hands are too
arthritic to strike a match, I'm afraid.
Your son has been good enough to help an old
man with his filthy habits.*

MONICA

Well...as long as you don't inhale.

TODD

Cigarettes are gross, Mom.

VICTOR

*Well, Victor, you were doing your part like
we all were, I suppose. Of course, if you
were in the Pacific Fleet I'd have to shoot
you.*

Everyone laughs, except Todd.

DICK

(to Dussander)

*My dad is very proud of the fact that the
Bowden men have hit every major conflict
since the Civil War.*

VICTOR

That's right. Dickie served two tours in Vietnam. Earned a bronze star and a purple heart.

DICK

It's one family tradition I'd like to put an end to. Todd and I blow a few caps down at the range every week. That's all the combat he needs.

TODD

(perking up, offended)
What's that supposed to mean?

DICK

Forget it.

DUSSANDER

(looking at Todd)
Perhaps your son would excel in combat.

MONICA

Todd could excel at anything. Right, honey?

Todd doesn't answer. His eyes are still on Dick. Dick notices him.

AGNES

(getting up, starts to clear some dishes)
Oh, let's don't even talk about this. I can't stand to think of you boys fighting another war.

DUSSANDER

The Purple Heart. You were injured?

TODD

He was knocked unconscious and woke up in a hospital.

A long pause. Dick is embarrassed and offended by Todd's stab. He puffs on his cigar. Agnes comes in from the kitchen and picks up some more dishes. Dick stands suddenly to help her.

DICK

Mom, let me get that for you.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Todd and Dussander walk together in silence. Todd is clearly in a bad mood. Dussander prods him.

DUSSANDER

You shouldn't be so hard on your father.

TODD

Why don't you mind your own business.

DUSSANDER

(amused at Todd's short fuse)

Boy, It's not so easy to raise children. Your father does the best he can, I'm sure. Having his own father there is bound to cause some anxiety on his part--

TODD

Oh, give me a frigging break, will you? Look who's talking to me, for Christ's sake. And what was that crap about the dog? If you were any more charming I was going to puke.

DUSSANDER

Heavens, boy, wasn't that precisely the point? I used the evening to our advantage.

TODD

Our advantage? Our advantage?

DUSSANDER

Certainly now they will offer no objections if you continue to come over and read to me.

TODD

You sure take a lot for granted. Do you think there's anybody forcing me to come over to your scuzzy house and watch you slop up booze all day? Do you?

DUSSANDER

Lower your voice. People will hear.

TODD

So what?

Dussander stops.

DUSSANDER

No, nobody forces you to come. In fact, you are welcome to stay away. Believe me, boy, I have no scruples about drinking alone. None at all.

They start walking again. Dussander turns up his driveway. Todd follows.

TODD

You know, if they found out what you are, they'd spit on you.

DUSSANDER

I am sure they would have nothing but revulsion for me. But what would they say about you, boy, when I told them you had known about me for nine months... and said nothing?

Dussander unlocks his door and steps in.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Come and see me if you please, and stay home if you don't. Good night, boy.

He closes the door.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - DAY

TITLE: DECEMBER 1984

Todd places a brightly wrapped Christmas present on the table in front of Dussander, who looks at it skeptically.

TODD

Go ahead, open it. Wait, I better pull down the shades, first.

DUSSANDER

What for?

TODD

Just to be safe.

DUSSANDER

(getting up)

To hell with this. You open it.

TODD

Oh, relax, old man. Sit down and open it.

Todd opens the refrigerator and pulls out a can of Coke. Dussander slowly sits back down.

DUSSANDER

You wrapped it yourself, I see.

He begins to remove the bow, and then the paper. He moves very cautiously, as if the package might explode at any moment.

Finally, he removes the lid and his expression shifts from one of fear to one of exasperation.

TODD

Merry Christmas!

We see that the box contains a replica of an officer's S.S. uniform, complete with hat and jackboots. Dussander reads the label.

DUSSANDER

Pete's Quality Costume Clothiers - Serving You Since 1976.

TODD

Go ahead, try it on.

DUSSANDER

Are you out of your mind, boy? What makes you think I would put something like that on?

TODD

I thought you'd like it --

DUSSANDER

Like it? My God, you're a bigger fool than I thought. Maybe I'll put it on and do a little shopping downtown. Is that what you thought? You stupid, boy.

TODD

Don't call me stupid.

DUSSANDER

You... You know, you are correct. I am the stupid one. For months I have suffered your indignities. I have exposed my past to you while watching you stuff your face with those wretched hamburgers. I have stocked my refrigerator with Coca Cola and ding dongs. All for you, I have done these things and I'm tired of it. But because I value my life and my freedom, what's left of it anyway, I do them. But I'll die before I put this thing on, you fucking piss-ant.

TODD

That's enough. You don't get to talk to me

like that.

Dussander bangs the table.

DUSSANDER

I should smash you.

TODD

Do it. Please.

(pause)

Indignities? What you've suffered with me is nothing compared to what the Israelis would do to you. Remember what happened to Eichmann? You forget that, I think. And, you know, that's my fault. I have let you forget. You have gotten comfortable with this situation. Well, don't you for one minute ever forget who holds the cards here. Don't you ever forget that envelope under my mattress. I tried to do this the nice way, I tried to do something to please you, but you don't want it. So fine, we'll do it the hard way. You will put this on because I want to see you in it. Now strip.

DUSSANDER

I hope you go to hell --

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - DAY

It is five minutes later. Dussander stands in the uniform. He looks at it indignantly.

DUSSANDER

The insignia is all wrong. The boots should be leather, not imitation.

TODD

That suit cost me over eighty bucks... with the boots.

DUSSANDER

And this material... what? Polyester?

TODD

Quiet. Straighten that hat.

Dussander ignores him.

TODD (CONT'D)

Straighten that hat, soldier!

DUSSANDER

Good Gott.

Dussander does what he is told.

TODD

Actung!

Slowly Dussander straightens up.

TODD (CONT'D)

Now, march... Do it!

Dussander begins to move his feet in place.

TODD (CONT'D)

That's it. March.

Dussander has gotten into a rhythm, marching faster in place.

TODD (CONT'D)

About face.

Dussander spins sharply on his heels. He continues to march.

TODD (CONT'D)

About face.

Dussander is stomping in place vigorously. He spins on command, facing Todd. He gives a Nazi salute. Todd watches him march for a moment. At first he enjoys the domination, but as Dussander gets caught up in the marching, Todd's expression changes.

TODD (CONT'D)

Okay, that's enough.

Dussander is still marching furiously.

TODD (CONT'D)

I said that's enough!

Suddenly Dussander stops. He collapses into a chair, exhausted. He sits there panting for a moment.

DUSSANDER

Boy... be careful. You play with fire.

DUSSANDER'S DREAM #2: INT. DUSSANDER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dussander wakes to a strange, faint rumble. He climbs out of bed and walks across his bedroom toward the source of the sound.

We follow him as he moves farther and farther away from his bed. Soon it is apparent that he is in a space much larger than his room. Yet he is still in darkness, as if his room has suddenly ended and continues into a black void.

But the rumble gets louder, more mechanical sounding. As the sound crescendoes we see what Dussander sees. A train car. Steam rises in the air as if the train has just come to a complete stop in the night.

Dussander stares at the boxcar coldly, and we realize that something is staring back at him. Eyes, dozens of them, glare back at him from between the slatted boards of the train. Some are low to the flooe, like those of children. Others are higher. Dussander snaps at them in German.

DUSSANDER

(in German)

Come out. ...Come out, now!

No one exits the train. Yet, the eyes seem to move around cautiously within the boxcar. Dussander is getting angry. His orders aren't being carried out. Suddenly the door of the train slides open. But still only the eyes are visible.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

(in German)

Line up in front of the train. Now!

Again, no one gets off. Enraged, Dussander takes a few steps toward the train. In a flash the eyes charge at him. But these are not the eyes of prisoners. These are wolves. Dussander can only cover his face with his arms as the snarling teeth descend upon him.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dussander wakes from his nightmare in a cold sweat. His pajamas are soaked. Disoriented and out of breath, he climbs out of bed and clicks on the light.

The closet. He stares at the closed closet door for a moment and then moves toward it slowly. He opens the door and runs his fingers across the assortment of shirts and jackets. His hand stops near the back.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BEDROOM - FIVE MINUTES LATER

Dussander is seated on the side of the bed smoking a cigarette. He is dressed, with the exception of the boots and hat, in the

SS uniform. He appears calmer, less agitated. He crunches out the cigarette and slips under the covers. He turns off the light. He closes his eyes. For the moment, he is at peace.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - LOCKER AREA - DAY

Todd stands facing his open locker. He is staring at his report card. Sweat collects on his forehead. He looks like he is about to explode. He wipes his brow with his sleeve and turns around to see if anyone notices him. TWO STUDENTS catch his eye. They are both Asian. They are smiling and pouring over each other's report cards. Todd zips open his backpack, giving us a quick glimpse of the disassembled rifle pieces inside. He throws the report card in and zips up the bag. Slinging the bag over his shoulder, he slams the locker shut and heads off down the hall.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - DAY

Todd is shooting baskets with Joey. It is after school. Todd wears a white T-shirt. Off to the side, we see the dress shirt he was wearing earlier and his school bag.

JOEY

So what are you going to do?

TODD

Fuck if I know.

Todd throws up a clumsy shot. It misses.

JOEY

You're throwing it flat. Let it roll off your fingers more.

TODD

(snapping at him)

I don't need a lesson.

Todd adjusts his grip on the ball anyway. He shoots again. No good.

JOEY

Your dad, man. I don't know. I mean, I'm a fuck up. My dad is used to this crap from me.

Todd does not respond to his friend's attempt at humor. He is slamming the ball around with great force. He bounces it hard off the back wall to give himself a rebound. He is mumbling to

himself.

JOEY

What?

TODD

What?

JOEY

You said something?

TODD

No.

JOEY

You're talking to yourself, Bowden. It's not the first time I've noticed it. What is going on with you?

TODD

Nothing, Joey. I fucked up. I'll fix it. I'll fix it.

JOEY

(hurt)

All right, man. Whatever you say. Look, I got to get to practice.

No response from Todd.

JOEY (CONT'D)

If you need to talk, you can call me. You know that. I'll see you around.

Joey walks off. Todd continues shooting the ball.

TODD

(mumbling)

You're talking to yourself, Bowden. You're talking to yourself, Bowden.

He throws up a shot. It is good.

TODD (CONT'D)

I'll fix it. I'll fix it.

A strange SQUAWKING sound is heard. Todd doesn't hear it at first, but as the sound grows louder Todd stops the ball and looks around. His eyes focus on the area near an open doorway. Sunlight streams into the empty gym. Todd walks closer, seeing that the sound is coming from an injured bird that has crawled in from outside. He goes up to it. The bird is black. Its

wing is damaged. It SQUAWKS loudly, looking up at Todd. Todd begins mumbling again. He starts to dribble the ball thoughtlessly. As his words become clearer, the bouncing gets harder.

TODD (CONT'D)

I'll fix it. I'll fix it. I'll fix it.

Todd is bouncing the ball very hard next to him. The bird continues to SCREAM. Slowly the ball drifts from beside Todd to in front of him, gaining force with every bounce. He brings it up to his face and with both hands throws it down with all his might. When it comes back up, it is smeared with blood. He throws it down again, this time it comes up with feathers smeared in the blood. The squawking has stopped. Blood splatters on Todd's shirt. His eyes close.

He stops the ball, looks around. No one has seen him. He notices his shirt. Calmly, he tears it off, wraps the ball in it, and tosses it in a nearby trash can.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

Todd pedals his bike through town, carrying a brown paper bag under one arm. He turns down Dussander's street. He stops in front of the house and heads for the front door.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - DAY

Dussander emerges from the basement just as Todd comes into the kitchen. Todd sniffs the air, frowns.

TODD

What the fuck happened in here?

DUSSANDER

Ah, boy... I burned my TV dinner, I'm afraid.

TODD

Something's come up. Sit down.

Dussander's studies Todd for a moment. Although Todd appears calm, his tone reflects a somber, business-like attitude.

DUSSANDER

I see.

(sits at table)

What seems to be the trouble?

Todd sets his grade card and the envelope on the table.

Dussander picks up the grade card and examines it.

DUSSANDER

Quarterly Progress Report.

(he reads silently)

You seem to have fallen on the rocks, my boy. One B, three C's and a D. Hardly the work of a "National Merit Scholar," or whatever you call yourself.

TODD

This isn't a joke, Dussander. I can't blame this on teachers or honors classes anymore.

DUSSANDER

Looks like you have a problem then.

TODD

I have a problem? You still don't get it. I'm out of excuses. Do you know what's going to happen when my dad sees that? He's going to hit the fucking roof. He'll get it all out of me. The truth, you...everything.

DUSSANDER

Boy, it's not my fault your grades have fallen.

TODD

Don't be so sure.

Dussander throws Todd a dismissive wave. He gets up to get a drink

DUSSANDER

Please, you don't spend that much time here. I hardly think--

TODD

(quickly, as if confessing something)

I can't study anymore.

Pause. Dussander looks at him oddly, a bit surprised. But then opens the cabinet and pulls out a glass, allowing Todd to continue.

TODD

(with difficulty)

I try. But it's... different now. I sit in front of my books and start thinking about... about corpses, and electrified fences and people getting strangled with piano wire. All that crap you tell me. The next thing I know it's after midnight. I sit in class

like a zombie, ...useless. But that's not the half of it. Check out the letter.

Dussander goes back to the table and picks up the envelope. He opens it.

DUSSANDER

(reading letter)

'Dear Mr. and Mrs. Bowden, this note is to suggest that we have a group conference concerning Todd's first semester grades. In light of his previous good work in this school, the sudden deterioration in his grades suggest a specific problem which should be addressed before his academic advancement is jeopardized permanently. Such a problem can often be solved by a frank and open discussion. I am ready to work out a time for us to meet. In a case such as this, earlier is usually better. Sincerely yours, Edward French.' Who is this Edward French, the headmaster?

TODD

French? Fuck no. He's a stupid guidance counselor.

DUSSANDER

Guidance counselor? What is that?

TODD

He guides and he counsels. You read the fucking note. Do you realize I could have to go to summer school? Me, in there with all those fuck-ups. I do not want to go to summer school.

DUSSANDER

Or to the reformatory.

TODD

What did you say?

DUSSANDER

Boy, ...you have a far greater problem than your school grades. Before you speak to me about what they will "get out of you", remember the facts. ...Seventy thousand people died at Patin. Have you forgotten that? To the world at large I am the most despicable of criminals, a monster. Do you

think I would stand aside and let you turn me in so easily? Without a fight? Is your American self-confidence so bloated that you have never once realized you are an accessory to my crimes. You have criminal knowledge of an illegal alien, and have not reported it. Don't you see that? And if I'm caught, I will tell the world all about you. When the reporters put their microphones in my face it will be your name I'll repeat over and over again. Todd Bowden, yes that's his name. How long?... oh, for months, almost a year. He wanted to know everything... That's how he put it, yes - everything.

TODD

They'd never believe you.

DUSSANDER

Perhaps, perhaps not. It's a gamble. How would you explain all those books you were reading to me? My eyes are not what they were but I can still read fine print. I can prove it.

TODD

So what? I'd say you tricked me.

DUSSANDER

Why would I do that?

TODD

For friendship, because you're lonely and had no one in your life. No jury would take your word over mine. A Nazi? Forget it. Just get it out of your head. You can't threaten me and you can't scare me. What you can do is find me a pencil.

DUSSANDER

A pencil, what for?

Todd sets the small paper bag on the table. Dussander opens it and removes a small bottle. The label reads: "ink eradicator." He also removes an x-acto knife and a few sheets of rub-off letters.

TODD

That will take care of the report card, I think. About that fucking letter, I don't know.

Todd sits down at the table. He takes the bottle from Dussander and examines the report card.

TODD (CONT'D)

Fuck... come on, a pencil. A sharp one.
With an eraser.

Dussander pauses. He knows Todd is right. Slowly, he goes to the counter and opens a drawer. He rummages through it as Todd sits with his back to him. Dussander picks out a pencil with an extremely sharp point. He holds it point out and approaches Todd. He gets closer, the point moves in toward the back of Todd's head. He holds the point inches from the boy's neck. He deliberates.

DUSSANDER

Will this do?

Todd grabs the pencil. Dussander turns toward the window. He thinks for a moment.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Tell me, does this French know your parents
in a social way?

TODD

Him? Fuck, no. They wouldn't mix with a
geek like him.

DUSSANDER

How about professionally? Has he ever called
them before?

TODD

No. I've never needed it. Why?

DUSSANDER

I have an idea. It will require you to make
one phone call.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - OFFICE WAITING AREA - DAY

Kurt Dussander, a.k.a. Arthur Denker, a.k.a. Victor Bowden, Todd's grandfather, sits outside an office marked, "Edward French - Guidance." Dussander looks the best he has ever looked. His hair is clean and combed. His face is shaved. And he is smartly dressed in his best blue suit. As he waits, he glances down at a piece of paper. We see that it is a "crib-sheet" of Todd's family tree. Several names appear on the sheet, connected to other names by lines and arrows. By each

name is one or two word description, such as "dead: cancer, 1981" or "divorced, Dallas, Tex." The door opens up. Dussander pockets the note. EDWARD FRENCH, 40's, stands in the doorway. He wears a turtle neck under his sportcoat.

FRENCH

Mr. Bowden?

DUSSANDER

Mr. French, a pleasure.

There is a bit of hesitation on French's part, but they shake hands. Dussander notices the shoes on French's feet, bright red converse high-tops.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

My, those are some... colorful shoes.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - FRENCH'S OFFICE - DAY

French makes his way around his desk. Dussander stands by the door.

FRENCH

To you, sir, I'm sure they seem quite out of the ordinary. But when it is your job to get confused sixteen year-olds to open up to you, you take whatever steps you need. Please have a seat.

They both sit.

DUSSANDER

And the shoes work?

FRENCH

They seem to help, believe it or not. Well, I thank you for coming down, Mr. Bowden, but I'll be frank with you...

DUSSANDER

Yes, please do.

FRENCH

The fact that you're here and not Todd's parents tells me a great deal.

DUSSANDER

I'm sure. My son and his wife asked me to come in and discuss this sorry business with you, Mr. French. Todd is a good boy, believe

me. This trouble with his grades is only temporary.

Dussander pulls out his cigarettes and then, thinking twice, puts them back.

FRENCH

It's all right.

(pulls an ashtray from desk
drawer)

There's no smoking on school grounds, but if it will make you more comfortable, I'll never tell.

DUSSANDER

A terrible habit, but thank you.

(lights up)

I suppose I should begin by informing you that my son and my daughter-in-law are having troubles at home. Rather bad troubles, I should think.

FRENCH

I appreciate your candor.

DUSSANDER

(leaning in)

The mother drinks.

FRENCH

Oh.

DUSSANDER

Yes. The boy has told me that he has come home on two occasions and has found her sprawled out on the kitchen table. He knows how my son feels about her drinking and so on these occasions he has put dinner in the oven himself and forced enough black coffee down his mother's throat so that she will at least be awake when Richard gets home.

FRENCH

That's bad. Has Mrs. Bowden thought about getting professional help for her problem?

DUSSANDER

The boy has tried to persuade her, but she is far too ashamed, I think. If she was given a little time... You understand?

FRENCH

Of course. Your son... Todd's father...

DUSSANDER

He is not without blame, believe me. The hours he works. The meals he has missed. They take a toll on a family. I was raised to believe that a man's family came before his work or anything else. I tried to teach my son that... but --

FRENCH

There's only so much we can teach our kids, Mr. Bowden. ...What about Monica's mother or father? Couldn't they talk to her?

DUSSANDER

Her mother, Sabrina, lives in a nursing home in Florida. I'm afraid after her husband died she lost her will to live.

FRENCH

Probably not the best person for Monica to speak to.

DUSSANDER

Indeed.

FRENCH

Mr. Bowden, I don't have to remind you, I'm sure, of Todd's stellar academic record. National Merit Scholar finalist, Academic All-Stars.

DUSSANDER

Yes. I keep his certificates on the wall of my store. I run a small bookstore in San Remo.

A hint of skepticism crosses French's eyes.

FRENCH

(glancing at folder on desk)

Yes, I see that. Anyway, Todd is, and I hate to phrase it this way, but he's one of the ones worth fighting for. He's a special kid, we both know that. But If Todd's grades don't improve drastically and quickly... he'll be opening a real nasty can of worms. Summer school would just be the beginning. His whole college acceptance schedule would

be thrown way off course. The good schools won't know what to make of him. I'm sure he'd hate that and so would you.

DUSSANDER

Of course.

FRENCH

So let's get to the bottom line, shall we? What I'm proposing is some family counselling at the Counselling Center downtown. Everything is in confidence, of course. A man in charge down there, Harry Shumacher, is a good friend of mine. I think Todd and his parents should go see him together. It might be difficult for Todd to go to his parents with this; I think you should do it. Maybe we can get everybody on track by the end of the next quarter. It will be tough, but not impossible.

DUSSANDER

I'm not sure that would be the best thing for the boy. The parents might resent him if I took them that proposal right now. Things are very delicate. To swing the scale too far in the wrong direction might cause more harm than good. The boy has promised to work harder in his studies. He is most concerned by the drop in his grades, more alarmed than you might expect. He has his mind set on attending Stanford or Berkeley next fall and does not wish to see his plans altered.

FRENCH

Yes, well --

DUSSANDER

Also, the parents would resent me. Monica already thinks I meddle too much in her affairs.

FRENCH

I have a great deal of experience in these matters, Mr. Bowden. And please understand that my interest in your son's marital problems begins and ends with the effect they are having on Todd. And right now I think they are having quite an effect. I really think counselling is in order here.

DUSSANDER

Allow me to make a counter proposal. You have, I believe, a system for warning parents of poor grades?

FRENCH

Yes, Interpretation of Progress cards. IOP cards. The kids call them flunk card. They only get them when their grades in a class fall below the seventy percent. That means a "D" or an "F". Why?

DUSSANDER

And they are sent out when?

FRENCH

Mid-quarter. That's about three weeks into the new marking period.

DUSSANDER

Allowing for Christmas break, the next time they are sent out will be in late January, correct?

FRENCH

Yes, that's right.

DUSSANDER

Good. Then what I suggest is this...

EXT. DUSSANDER'S BACK PORCH - DAY

Dussander still wears the blue suit. The tie has been loosened and top button undone. Todd still wears his backpack.

TODD

You what?

DUSSANDER

I told him you were getting back on track by your own accord. I gave him my word. If you get even one flunk card--

TODD

Are you out of your fucking mind? I'm going to get three or four flunk cards. I failed an economics test today, so there's another one.

DUSSANDER

Boy, it was the best I could do without

arousing suspicion.

TODD

I could have done better myself --

DUSSANDER

Well you didn't, did you? This is the way it is and now you are upset because the only way you can make things right is to work.

TODD

You're insane. I'm upset because it can't be done.

DUSSANDER

It can. And it will. You will work.

TODD

I don't take orders from you. Maybe you've forgotten --

DUSSANDER

(turning on him)

Listen, boy. Before today it was possible, just barely possible, that you could have denounced me and come out clean yourself. The way your nerves have been lately I don't think so, but never mind that. It was - at least technically possible. But now things have changed. Today I impersonated your grandfather, one Victor Bowden. And it was you who arranged the meeting. What would people make of that? If things come out now... perhaps you were right, your age and a good attorney might keep you out of jail, but you would be humiliated, boy, publicly. You would be infamous. Your parents too. Do you know what such a scandal would do to them? To you? Think about that.

Todd is stunned. He turns away, then back again, struggling for the right words.

TODD

You fucker.

DUSSANDER

It's a done deal, boy. If you don't like it, you can discuss it at family counselling.

TODD

God! I wish... I wish --

DUSSANDER

Never mind your wishes. Your wishes make me sick. All I want to hear is that you understand the situation.

Todd is furious. He sees there is no other way, but continues fighting.

TODD

Look, you gotta believe me. There is no way in hell that I can pull myself out of a half year slide in a couple of weeks. I wish I could, but we're just going to have to think of something else.

DUSSANDER

Boy, the time for discussion is over. This is the way it is. You are going to work. And I am going to be right here with you.

TODD

What are you talking about?

EXT. BIKE PATH - DAY

Todd is standing with his bike on a dirt path. He is looking out at something. The wind blows through his hair. A distant glimpse of some buildings off to the side tell us he is on a hill.

DUSSANDER (V.O.)

You are going to spend the rest of this quarter, all of your vacation and the first three weeks of January studying. During your free period you will study. During lunch, you will study. And after school and on weekends you will come here and do the same.

EXT. BIKE PATH - TUNNEL - DAY

Todd pedals his bike furiously toward the camera. He approaches a tunnel lined with corrugated metal below an overpass.

TODD (V.O.)

Not here, at home.

DUSSANDER (V.O.)

No. At home you will dawdle, you will talk on the telephone, watch TV. Here, I can make

sure that nothing distracts you from your studies.

Todd emerges from the tunnel.

DUSSANDER'S DREAM #3: EXT. PRISON YARD - NIGHT

Spotlights, like those from a guard tower, criss cross over a small compound surrounded by an electrified fence. Inside the pen, wolf-like dogs snarl and gnash their teeth. The spotlight catches the source of their aggravation...

Dussander, caught ghoulishly in the roving light, stands in uniform outside the pen. He is laughing. In his hand is his Luger. He fires through the fence, killing one of the dogs. They go wild. He laughs harder. He shoots again, and then again. It is like shooting fish in a barrel.

The light beam passes the pen to reveal that the dogs have transformed into human prisoners. They maneuver helplessly to avoid Dussander's bullets. But he fires faster, his laugh growing more extreme. His movements in between shots becomes a sort of dance. One prisoner flies against the fence in a pools of sparks. As Dussander's waltz reaches it's climax, one prisoner remains in the pen. He looks up. It is Todd. Angle on Dussander's toothy grin. The gun comes up...

INT. DUSSANDER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - IMMEDIATELY AFTER

Dussander wakes up. A CLANKING SOUND echoes from the street. Dussander looks like he could have been having a wonderful sex dream, but he turns his head toward the direction of the street. He clicks on the light. Dressed in the SS uniform, he gets up and moves toward the window.

Through the window, bathed in the glow of a street lamp, a derelict, who we will come to know as ARCHIE, rummages through Dussander's trashcans. Under his arm are a few of the empty bourbon bottles.

INT. BECKY'S TOYOTA - NIGHT

The car pulls into the driveway of Todd's house. Becky is smoking a joint and blowing the smoke out the window. They both look a little tipsy, as if they have been to a party. She holds the joint up to Todd. He contemplates, then takes it. Todd's first toke of marijuana isn't very small. Becky looks on, surprised. She reaches out for the joint and Todd waves her off. He pulls again, this time ingesting a huge hit. He holds

it, then exhales. He gives the roach back to Becky.

TODD

Their light is still on. I'll get out on your side. Don't say anything.

Becky gets out. Todd slides over and does the same. She crushes the joint out on the pavement and puts the rest in her purse.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dussander watches Archie collect the cans and bottles. There is something about Archie that makes Dussander wonder if he has seen him before. Archie looks up, right into Dussander's window, as if he were expecting him to be there. The two stare at one another for a long moment. Suddenly Dussander is aware that he is dressed in the SS uniform.

He quickly steps back from the window. His breathing is short and erratic as he waits in the shadows for Archie to finish. After a long moment, the noise from the street stops. We hear only the faint steps of Archie walking away.

INT. TODD'S BEDROOM - BOWDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Todd and Becky's lips are locked in a passionate kiss. In their exuberance they fall onto the bed. As they try to undress and kiss at the same time, Becky begins to moan. Todd brings his fingers to his lips.

TODD

Shhh.

Their clothes tumble off around them.

TODD (CONT'D)

Don't move.

He slides off her and opens the drawer by his bed. He pulls out a condom. By now she is naked. Todd slips out of his underwear and falls on top of her. The RADIO plays in the b.g. as Todd begins to grind away with his hips. She moans softly with delight.

The CAMERA MOVES off of them to reveal a man in a lab coat setting up a volt meter. This is one of the scientists from Todd's laboratory nightmare. The CAMERA continues TO PAN across the bedroom, showing the other scientists preparing for the electricity experiment. The CAMERA STOPS on Dussander,

clipboard in hand, observing everything carefully.

Todd releases with a final thrust. Becky is *MOANING* in a series of high, fast yelps. Todd lies still on her body. Becky is speechless, still quivering from the unusually intense love making.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The bedroom is dark except for the glowing tip of a cigarette. Dussander is in bed, wide awake...

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - DAY

TITLE: JANUARY 1985

Todd sits alone at the table, eating while he studies. Dussander crosses the frame behind him, drink in hand. Todd is noticeably annoyed by Dussander's presence.

EXT. BIKE PATH - TUNNEL - DUSK

It is raining. Todd is riding fast. He wears a raincoat with the hood up. He talks to himself loudly, but we can't make out what he is saying. He enters the tunnel.

The muddy run-off inside the tunnel catches Todd by surprise. He loses control of the bike and falls into the mud.

TODD

Fuck.

Todd gets up and tries to free his bike, but the mud and water do not make the job easy. He is almost finished when a gruff voice catches his attention.

ARCHIE (O.S.)

Hey, kid, you having some trouble?

Todd looks up and sees a figure moving toward him in the shadows of the tunnel. Todd quickly pulls out a pocket knife. He flicks open the blade and hides it behind his leg.

TODD

No. I got it... thanks.

The figure steps closer. The light catches his face to reveal Archie. He is an unshaven, filthy mess, and when he speaks his words are slurred from years of steady drinking.

ARCHIE

*That case maybe you could loan me a dollar.
Help out a Vietnam vet? How 'bout it?*

Todd eyes the man cautiously. He looks around. No one is nearby. The constant din of the rain echoes within the confines of the tunnel.

TODD

I... I don't know... I don't think so.

Todd palms the knife out of sight and slowly approaches the bum.

ARCHIE

C'mon, you got something for me. I know you do.

TODD

Well, maybe... I have to check.

Todd's hands go into his pockets. He stops a few feet from the bum.

ARCHIE

See, I got to get up to L.A. Got a job waiting for me up there.

Todd moves closer. Close enough to touch the bum.

TODD

I thought I did have a couple of quarters...

The bum looks at him hopefully. Todd looks back at him, sizing him up, really noticing him for the first time.

ARCHIE

You know,

(his voice drops)

For a dollar I'll give you a blow job. Take you right up there where it's still dry. You never had so good, kid. You'll come your brains out.

Todd freezes for a moment. The bum is right in his face. Suddenly Todd throws a handful of change at the bum and sprints back to his bike. He hops on and is gone in a flash, leaving the bum there to pick up the scattered coins.

As Todd zips away, the hood is off his head. The rain begins to beat away the splattered mud from his face.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - HISTORY CLASS - DAY

Mr. Proxmire makes his way through the rows of desks. He is passing out papers.

PROXMIRE

Our illustrious administration, in its quest to make my job as difficult as possible, has decided that home room teachers are now responsible for handing IOP cards for all your classes. So for those of you getting flunk cards, you'll find them attached to last week's exam.

Moans erupt from the class. Todd sits motionless at his desk. The moment of truth. Proxmire passes him and places the exam face down on Todd's desk. Todd hesitates before turning it over. He is sweating.

He flips the paper over and glares at the small card clipped to the top of the paper. He picks up the card and reads it: "I'm sure glad I didn't have to give you one of these for real! Great improvement, Todd. -- Anne Leland." Todd cannot contain his delight. Nearby students stare curiously at the strange boy beaming over his flunk card.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - DAY

Dussander sits at the table. He holds the IOP card out at arm's length to read it. The bourbon bottle next to him is empty. Todd sits across from him.

DUSSANDER

Well, this calls for a celebration, no?

Dussander gets up and goes to the refrigerator.

TODD

Look, I guess I owe a lot of this to you. I'm not proud of it, but it's true.

DUSSANDER

(eyeing him cautiously)

Your gratitude humbles me.

(pause)

How about some Ritz crackers and Velveeta?

TODD

Sure, what the hell.

Dussander goes about his task, taking items from the cabinets,

etc. Todd watches all of this intently, but without expression.

DUSSANDER

I would have expected you to be doing back flips down the hallway after such good news. You are so quiet.

Todd does not respond.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Today, I think, I give you the day off from studying. How's that? How about one of my stories instead? I still have a few good ones saved up.

TODD

I don't care. Whatever you want.

Todd is wringing his hand together nervously under the table. Dussander places a box of crackers on the table and goes back to the counter.

DUSSANDER

Let's see. I could tell you about the special soap we made. Or there is always the story of how I escaped from Berlin after I was foolish enough to go back. That was a close one, I promise you.

TODD

Anything, really.

DUSSANDER

No, none of these I think. You don't seem to be in the mood.

Dussander slices open a pack of Velveeta and puts it on a plate.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

I think today I will tell you the story of an old man who was afraid. He was afraid of a certain young boy who was, in a queer way, his friend. The boy proved to be a very good student, but perhaps not in the way his mother or his teachers had envisioned. At first the old man disliked the boy intensely, but then he grew to... to enjoy the boy's company. Of course, there was still a great deal of distrust between them.

He puts a glass of Coke in front of Todd and goes back to the counter. He opens a drawer, takes something out, closes it.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Each knew something that other wanted to keep secret. But over time, the old man began to feel that things were changing. He felt his hold on the boy slipping away from him.

Dussander goes to the cellar door. His back is to Todd. He opens the door and clicks on the light. Todd stands up silently.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

So. One sleepless night the old man got out of bed and wrote down the story of his involvement with the boy. Everything he could remember, from the first day forward.

Todd has moved across the floor, careful not to let the floor creak under his steps. He is right upon Dussander. Dussander reaches out with one arm for a fresh bottle, grasping onto the railing with the other. His body hangs over the steep staircase.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

When he finished his hand was stinging from arthritis but he felt good for the first time in weeks. He felt safe.

He gets his balance again and turns to face Todd. Dussander holds the kitchen knife he was using earlier down at his side where Todd can see it. A tense silence passes between them.

Todd is frozen. Dussander steps past him and back into the kitchen. He closes the cellar door behind him.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

He climbed back into bed and slept until it was time for General Hospital.

Dussander sits back in his chair, cutting the seal on the fresh bottle.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

On the following day the old man put on his best suit and went down to one of the local banks and rented a safety deposit box. The bank officer explained to the old man that he would have a key and the bank would have a key. To open the box both keys would be needed. No one but the old man could use the old man's key without a signed, notarized

letter of permission from the old man
himself. With one exception.

Todd sinks into a chair across from Dussander and takes a sip of
Coke.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

That exception is made in the event of the
box-holder's death.

TODD

Then what?

DUSSANDER

Then the box is opened in the presence of a
bank official and a representative of the
Internal Revenue Service. The contents of
the box are inventoried. In this case they
will find only a twelve-page document. Non-
taxable... but highly interesting.

Todd understands what the old man has told him. He slams his
glass down on the table and jumps out of his chair.

TODD

You can't... you can't do that.

DUSSANDER

My boy, it is already done.

TODD

But... Christ! Look at you. You could go at
any time.

Todd stares at Dussander in disbelief. After a moment he storms
out the back door to the porch.

EXT. DUSSANDER'S BACK PORCH - DAY

Todd is leaning over the rail looking out at the yard when
Dussander steps onto the porch. He carries with him the bottle
of bourbon and a glass.

TODD

Then there is nothing for me.

DUSSANDER

But there is. As the years go by, as I get
closer to the grave, your hold on me will
become worth less and less. A man five, ten
years older than I worries more about his

ailing heart than being extradited to Israel. And there will come a day - if I live long enough - when I decide what you know no longer matters. Then, and only then, I will destroy my document.

TODD

But... but so many things can happen to you in between. Accidents. Sickness. You could slip in the shower, for Christ's sake...

Dussander shrugs and lights another cigarette. He begins to sing softly, then gets caught up in the song... Todd turns away, angry.

DUSSANDER

Que sera, sera... Whatever will be, will be... The future's not ours to see... Que sera, sera...

Pause. Dussander sees he has pressed Todd's button. He moves closer.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

My dear boy, I see you thinking about it, even now. It is in your eyes. Killing me. It would take only a flick of a knife. Or maybe push me down the steps, make it look like an accident? I am old. You are strong. You are angry. Good assets for killing. But there is something missing...

Dussander speaks with a near whisper in Todd's ear.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

To have some one in your control. To have them know that they are alive because you have not decided to the contrary. Do you have that power? Ask yourself. It is no easy question. I think you know that.

There is a long pregnant pause. Then Todd lets out a sigh, as if to dismiss what he has just heard. He turns to face Dussander.

TODD

You know this means we're through. You won't be seeing me around here anymore.

DUSSANDER

No, I suppose I won't.

TODD

I'm never coming here again.

DUSSANDER

And so it comes to an end. Here.

Dussander pours a splash of bourbon into the boy's glass.

TODD

What are you doing?

DUSSANDER

A drink. To our lives together, the beginning... and the end.

Todd picks up his glass.

TODD

I think you should fuck yourself.

He CLICKS his glass against Dussander's.

DUSSANDER

My boy, don't you see that we are fucking each other?

He drinks. Todd, reluctantly, does the same.

FADE TO BLACK.

EXT. MAIN STREET - SANTO DONATO - DAY

TITLE: APRIL 1985

Dussander, dressed smartly for a day out of the house, emerges from a matinee at the movie theater and strolls down the sidewalk, the umbrella under his arm. He stops at an empty bench and sits to wait for the bus.

Archie sits down next to him. At first Dussander doesn't pay attention to him, but Archie's behavior tells us that he is keenly aware of Dussander's presence. Dussander stares out into the street, but Archie fidgets about, his eyes roaming, and finally slides a little closer to Dussander. Dussander looks at him flatly. Archie grins. Dussander turns away, prepared to dismiss this odd behavior as that of a crazed derelict. Then Archie speaks...

ARCHIE

(leaning over)

I notice the kid don't come around no more.

Dussander doesn't respond. He catches Archie in a glance and

sees that he is staring at him.

DUSSANDER

What?

ARCHIE

Little blond-hair boy. ...What's the matter,
you ain't his friend no more?

Dussander is like stone, flashing the eyes of a man who is not
to be harassed. Finally...

DUSSANDER

You mistake me for somebody else. ...Pardon
me, my bus is coming.

Dussander stands, slightly rattled only to those who know him
well. He looks down the street for the bus. Archie doesn't
move. Rather, he inspects Dussander from head to toe, stopping
on the shoes.

ARCHIE

Damn... Cuban high heels. Nice ones, too.

The SQUEAL of brakes grows louder as the bus comes to rest in
front of Dussander. He has become perceptibly more nervous as
he waits for the passengers to exit. He climbs up the first
step.

ARCHIE

I ain't seen a pair like that since I was in
Havana.

(talking louder because of the
bus)

That's the only place you can get'em. Can't
get'em exported... Government don't let you.

The door closes behind Dussander. The bus pulls away. Through
the window of the bus Dussander watches Archie as he continues
his speech to no one.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

TITLE: MAY 1985

Todd sits nervously in a chair next to a tough, leather-clad
trouble maker. A SECRETARY sits behind a long desk. Her phone
beeps and she picks it up.

SECRETARY

Go in, Todd. They're waiting for you.

Todd approaches a door marked: "Dr. Carl N. Morgan - Principal."
He goes in.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Todd opens the office door. As his eyes scan the floor he notices a familiar pair of yellow high-tops. He looks up to see Ed French leaning against the wall. Seated at the desk is MORGAN, a thin, stern man, around 50. Todd's face shows a moment of trepidation, but he regains his composure almost instantly.

MORGAN

Have a seat, Todd.

Todd does as Morgan pours over Todd's files.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

I see from your record and from what Mr. French tells me that after a minor slip up last semester you're right back on course. Straight A's for the quarter so far. And I hear your little slip didn't bother the folks up at Stanford too much either.

FRENCH

A good break for you, Todd.

MORGAN

Looks like that little talk with your...

(looks at file)

grandfather... really helped. Well, we don't want to keep you too long.

(to French)

You tell him.

FRENCH

Well, it seems Sally Chong didn't do to well in A.P. biology.

MORGAN

She failed it.

FRENCH

I'm afraid so. She refused to take part in the fetal pig dissection. The teacher begged her to drop the class, but Sally thought she could pass anyway.

MORGAN

*Stubborn girl... What we're telling you, son,
is that because Sally Chang -*

FRENCH

Chong.

MORGAN

*Because Sally Chong wouldn't hack up a baby
pig, you snuck by her in the rankings. So if
you can keep your grades up for two more
months -- any reason that shouldn't happen?*

TODD

No.

MORGAN

*Then you'll make valedictorian, Todd.
Congratulations.*

FRENCH

Congratulations, Todd.

*French shakes Todd's hand, an uneasy moment passes between the
two of them.*

INT. HIGH SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

Todd comes out of Morgan's office. French follows him.

FRENCH

*Todd, you really should be proud of yourself.
To tell you the truth, I'm amazed you pulled
it off.*

TODD

Thanks, I guess.

He starts to walk away.

FRENCH

*I was glad to hear you made varsity baseball.
I spoke to the coach. He says your coming
along real well.*

TODD

Thanks.

FRENCH

It's turning out to be a good year for you.

TODD

Yeah.

He turns to go, but French stops him again.

FRENCH

Todd, wait.

He steps up to Todd and lowers his voice, as if he were hedging a touchy subject.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

Todd, you've got a lot of good things going on right now. You should be enjoying yourself.

TODD

I am.

French's looks says, "No, you're not."

FRENCH

How are things at home?

Todd realizes he is not going to get out of this easily.

TODD

Look, things with my parents were bad for a while. But they're doing a lot better. Thanks for your concern, really. I should get back to class.

He is pulling away from French as he speaks.

FRENCH

(unconvinced)

Okay, Todd. I know this isn't the place to talk about this. But my door is always open...

TODD

I know. Thanks.

Todd walks away.

FRENCH

And it's going to stay open.

But Todd does not turn around. French stares after him. The BELL RINGS, and Todd is swallowed by the stream of students emerging from the class rooms.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Todd is kneeling down at the bike rack. His backpack is on the ground next to him. He unlocks his bike and begins to coil the chain around his wrist when Joey walks by. He sees Todd and considers going by, but stops. We can tell they haven't spoken in a while.

JOEY

Hey there.

Todd looks up. He seems pleasant, but there is little warmth in his voice.

TODD

Hey.

Pause. They look at each other. Joey wants to talk. Todd slips the chain lock into a pocket on his backpack. Joey jingles his car keys anxiously.

JOEY

I... ah, I heard about Stanford. I heard a couple of weeks ago actually. ...Congrats.

TODD

Thanks.

JOEY

I got into school to. Long Beach. It's no Stanford, but...

Joey shrugs. It's an awkward moment. He walks closer.

TODD

No, no... that's good, Joe.

JOEY

Well, ...I just wanted to say hi. Here let me get that.

Joey reaches for Todd's backpack. He lifts it. The heaviness puzzles him. Todd takes it from him.

JOEY (CONT'D)

What do you have in there?

Todd stares at him stone-faced. Joey doesn't like Todd's expression. Todd takes the bag from him and puts it on.

TODD

You busy now?

JOEY

Uhh...

TODD

Come with me. Hop on.

JOEY

Hop on? I have a car now, Todd.

TODD

You can't drive where we're going.

EXT. DIRT PATH - DAY

Joey sits on the handle bars as Todd pedals over the rugged terrain. Joy looks scared, but appears to be enjoying the ride and the chance to be with his old friend.

The next shot shows Todd's bike laying on the ground. The wheels still turn slowly. The camera moves to reveal Todd and Joey standing on a rocky ledge. Orange Country sprawls out before them.

Under the cross-hairs of a telescopic sight, a truck, from the freeway below, zooms out of frame. The image vanishes. We see Joey looking through the scope which he holds in one hand.

JOEY

This is so cool.

TODD

Point it over here. That's the middle school. You can see right into our old class room.

JOEY

Oh yeah... But I still don't see what you need the rest of it for. Doesn't your Dad notice?

The hunting rifle, disassembled, sticks out of Todd's backpack on the ground.

TODD

He hasn't yet.

JOEY

Yet?... Jesus, Todd.

He is trying to joke, but the seriousness is clearly in his voice.

TODD

And over here, that's your dad's office. And there's the old drive-in.

Joey isn't looking through the scope anymore. He holds it out to Todd, watching him.

JOEY

Here. Take it.

Todd grabs the scope. But Joey doesn't let go. He finally locks Todd in a stare that he has been avoiding for months. He wants to say something. Todd takes the scope. He sees that Joey is serious. He takes a few steps toward the edge, toward the gun. He looks out.

TODD

It's such a rush, you know?... To be up here. Don't you feel it? So high above them they never know we're here. It's like an ant farm. We're the gods on Mt. Olympus, Joey. They can't see us, they can't hear us, but every so often we can make them feel us. Just so they never forget. Look...

He looks through the scope at the freeway. He picks out passing cars.

TODD (CONT'D)

There goes a future track star. There goes a judge. A mom and her two kids. A policeman. That one's a school teacher, that one's a drug dealer... You see, Joey, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter how smart you are ...or how many grades you skip. There's always someone who can take it all away. The right person snaps their fingers... and it's done.

Joey takes a few steps backward. Todd doesn't notice.

JOEY

Todd, I'm gonna go. I'm gonna... walk home.

Todd turns his head toward Joey, but it is as though no one is there. He looks away again.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Todd...

Pause. Todd looks again. But this time Joey is really gone. A slight chuckle escapes Todd's mouth.

EXT. DUSSANDER'S STREET - EVENING

TITLE: JUNE 1985

Dussander plods down the sidewalk with his sacks of groceries. He is a little more winded, moves a little slower than previously.

Suddenly Archie emerges from behind a group of trees. He moves quickly up to Dussander, catching him off guard.

ARCHIE

I can do that. I can help you carry those.

Dussander jumps back. Archie stops.

ARCHIE (CONT'D)

You don't gotta be afraid. I can carry those.

Dussander does not move. But slowly his face changes and we realize that he remembers Archie from the bus stop.

DUSSANDER

I don't need any help. ...Excuse me.

He starts off again. Archie follows.

ARCHIE

Hey, I ain't a bad guy. You don't gotta worry. I'm a veteran. I just want--

DUSSANDER

(snapping at him)

What? What do you want? Why do you bother me?

Archie is taken aback by the sudden viciousness.

ARCHIE

(plaintively)

You got a nice face.

DUSSANDER

No I don't.

ARCHIE

Look, we're practically neighbors. I stay right over there most nights.

(pointing across the street)

I see you walking down the street. I come up to help. It's called being neighborly.

They are nearing Dussander's yard.

DUSSANDER

Piss off.

Fed up with his belligerence, Archie strips the bags from Dussander's hands with ease. Dussander knows he is outmatched.

ARCHIE

Ain't no reason to be rude. You see, I know something about you. ...I know your a nice guy. I'm nice too, ...just like the kid.

Dussander looks up and down the street. No one is around.

DUSSANDER

I see.

ARCHIE

And I know you got some bourbon in these bags. I ain't ashamed to say I could use a drink about now. But I don't need no charity. If you want to invite me in, like a friend, we could have a nice drink.

DUSSANDER

A drink.

ARCHIE

That's what I'm saying.

Long pause.

DUSSANDER

You smell like a toilet.

ARCHIE

Maybe you let me use your shower. But first a drink. After that I'll do anything you say.

INT. DUSSANDER'S LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Dussander and Archie come through the front door. Archie scans the room.

ARCHIE

Yeah, this is nice. Real nice.

DUSSANDER

Let me take those.

(takes the bags)

Right this way.

Dussander moves toward the kitchen. Archie watches him walk away. A smile crosses his face as he follows him to the kitchen.

INT. LIVING ROOM - BOWDEN HOUSE - EVENING

Todd and his parents are together in the living room. Todd is studying for his trigonometry final. Monica sits at the couch addressing graduation announcements. Dick is at his desk, pouring over a pile of receipts.

MONICA

I guess your parents don't need a graduation announcement.

DICK

No.

TODD

Grandma and Grandpa aren't coming?

MONICA

(to Dick)

I thought you told him.

DICK

Christ, I forgot. Todd, my aunt Patty, Dad's sister, died on Wednesday. Mom and Dad have to drive up to Fresno to settle her estate. We can't ask Dad to drive six hours each way for graduation.

MONICA

If we ask them, they'll do it.

DICK

That's why. You understand, don't you, Todd?

Todd thinks for a moment, realizes something.

TODD

Of course, Dad. It's all right. Tell Grandpa I'll spend the week with him and Grandma when they get back.

MONICA

What about Mr. Denker? I almost forgot about him.

TODD

No, He won't want to come.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN & BASEMENT - EVENING

Archie, seated at the table with his back to Dussander, is in the middle of a sprawling monologue about his life to which Dussander half-listens. Dussander goes to the cabinets and takes out two glasses. He pours the drinks and sets the glasses on the table. Archie picks his up and is about to drink.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Ah-ah.

Dussander picks up his glass to toast Archie. Archie CLINKS his glass to Dussander's and downs the shot.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

I believe we need another bottle, my friend.

ARCHIE

Well if you're offering, I'm accepting.

Dussander goes to the cellar door to retrieve another bottle.

DUSSANDER

No trouble at all. Now where is my bottle opener? Ah, here it is.

Dussander pulls something out of a drawer. He goes to the table and stands right behind Archie.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Why don't you drink mine?

Archie picks up the glass and begins to drink, slower this time. Dussander pulls Archie's tattered hat off his head and sets it on the table. He then begins to stroke the matted knots of Archie's hair.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

You don't mind do you?

ARCHIE

No. I don't mind. ...Maybe in the morning - everything goes okay - you could let me have ten dollars.

DUSSANDER

Perhaps.

ARCHIE

Maybe even twenty.

DUSSANDER

Perhaps. We shall see.

Pause.

ARCHIE

You can relax, you know, I've done this before.

DUSSANDER

It's all right. So have I.

Dussander raises a meat fork up to the back of Archie's neck. He starts to plunge it in just as Archie turns back to look at him. The fork goes in crooked. Archie explodes from the chair, HOWLING, his arms flailing like those of a grizzly bear. With the fork protruding from his back, Archie tosses the table to the side. The empty bottle tumbles to the middle of the floor and shatters. Archie spins and slams a fist into Dussander's temple. Dussander collapses against the counter. Archie moves about wildly, trying to grab the fork and pummel Dussander at the same time. Blood is streaming freely from his wound.

Dussander grabs a frying pan from a rack of drying dishes on the counter. As Archie approaches, Dussander swings the pan into Archie's descending fist. Archie winces and staggers backward. He stomps down on the broken bottle and screams. His guard falls briefly. Dussander is upon him. He swings the pan, catching Archie squarely in the face.

Archie brings his hands up to his face, which now oozes with blood. Blinded by the blow, Archie charges Dussander, who crouches to the side, and as Archie passes, hurls himself into the man's back, sending him through the open door of the cellar. Archie flies down the stairs face-first, tumbling into the packed dirt floor like a derailed train. Dussander, exhausted and bloodied, exhales deeply. Looking down at the crumpled body below, he straightens his tie, brushes the hair from his face, and then surveys the kitchen.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

What a mess.

He rises slowly and brushes himself off before heading down the steps to finish the bum for good. After about three steps he stops abruptly. He appears puzzled, but after a moment the expression changes. A look of searing pain rushes across his face. Dussander brings his hand to his chest. He collapses on the stairs. He is having a heart attack and knows it.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

He looks down at Archie, up to the kitchen, then back down to the cellar. A moment of decision.

The stairs appear ten times longer in each direction than they did a minute ago. Getting to his feet, he turns slowly toward the kitchen. He starts up the steps at a painfully slow pace, counting with each step.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Ein... Zwei... Drei...

INT. LIVING ROOM - BOWDEN HOUSE - NIGHT - LATER

The same scene as before.

DICK

Monica... how long did we rent those jet skis in Hawaii?

MONICA

About two hours. Why?

DICK

This receipt says we had two jet skis for twenty-three hours a piece. The bill is fifteen hundred dollars. Didn't you look at the receipt before you signed it?

Todd doesn't look up from his textbook.

TODD

Way to go, Mom.

MONICA

That bill was written in Japanese. I told you that.

DICK

Numbers are numbers, Monica, in any language.

MONICA

That guy didn't speak a word of English. I told you not to rent from him.

The PHONE RINGS. Monica gets up to get it.

MONICA (CONT'D)

I'll get it.

DICK

That's not the point. You should always read the bill before you sign. I've told you that a hundred times.

(to Todd)

Fifteen hundred dollars.

TODD

Maybe it's in yen.

Pause. Dick looks at the bill.

DICK

Hey, maybe you're right.

Monica comes back into the room.

MONICA

Todd, it's Mr. Denker. He sounds excited about something. You better speak to him.

Todd rises from the couch. His mood shifts instantly.

TODD

(into phone)

Mr. Denker?

INTERCUT: between Todd in his living room and...

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dussander leaning against a wall in his blood-stained kitchen. The wall above Dussander read 6:50.

DUSSANDER

Come over right away, boy. I'm having a heart attack, a bad one, I think.

TODD

Gee, that sounds exciting, Mr. Denker, but I was studying for my trig final --

DUSSANDER

I understand that you cannot talk, but you can listen. I cannot call 911... at least not yet. There is quite a mess here. I need help... and that means you need help.

TODD

Well if you put it that way --

DUSSANDER

Tell your parents I've had a letter, an important letter, and I need you to read it to me.

TODD

Yeah, sure. I'll be right there.

DUSSANDER

Now we see what you are made of, boy.

Dussander hangs up the phone and falls into a chair.

INT. LIVING ROOM - BOWDEN HOUSE - NIGHT

TODD

Bye.

(hangs up)

I've got to run over to Mr. Denker's for a minute.

MONICA

Is everything all right?

TODD

Oh, he just got a letter from a nephew in Hamburg or Dusseldorf or one of those places.

DICK

I thought his family was killed in the war.

Todd zips up his jacket.

TODD

So did he. That's why he sounded excited. I shouldn't be too long. I'll take your car, Mom?

MONICA

I don't know, you have a final tomorrow.

TODD

I know, I was almost finished studying anyway.

DICK

Don't be gone too long, Todd.

TODD

See you in a bit.

He kisses Monica on the cheek. He is out the front door.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD VARIOUS STREETS - NIGHT

Todd's driving reflects his state of mind: erratic and out of control. He meets a police car at an intersection and almost runs a red light. The police car doesn't bother him, however, and a moment later he pulls the Honda up to Dussander's house.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Todd appears in the door of the kitchen. His face tells us that what he sees is ten times worse than whatever he expected. The room is a gruesome sight. Blood and broken glass are everywhere. The table has been knocked to the side. Dussander, barely conscious, slumps in a chair.

TODD

What the fuck...?

Todd moves to the center of the room, careful not to step in any blood. He doesn't know what to do. His attention falls on Dussander. Suddenly he rushes to him and begins to inspect his body carefully.

TODD (CONT'D)

Where are you bleeding?... wake up.

Dussander does not respond. Todd shakes him harder.

TODD (CONT'D)

Wake up, goddamnit!

Dussander stirs a little, aggravated.

TODD (CONT'D)

I thought you said you had a fucking heart attack.

DUSSANDER

It's not my blood, for Christ's sake.

Pause.

TODD

What did you say?

DUSSANDER

It was self-defense, boy. Go downstairs.
You'll see what needs to be done.

Dussander points to the open cellar door.

TODD

Fuck you. I'm not going down there. What happened? What did you do?

Dussander only stares back at him, then looks away, almost smiling through his incredible pain, as if to challenge Todd.

TODD (CONT'D)

What the hell is this?

Dussander does not respond. Todd stares at him for a moment, then moves toward the cellar.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Todd is half-way down the stairs when he freezes. Sprawled out on the ground below him is Archie, motionless. The meat fork still protrudes from his neck like an antenna.

TODD

Jesus Fucking Christ.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Suddenly Dussander is more awake than we realize. When he hears Todd discover the body, he slides his chair over to the cellar door and slams it shut. His face is red with pain as he pushes the dead bolt into place, locking Todd in the cellar.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BASEMENT & KITCHEN - NIGHT

Todd races up to the door. He tries the handle and then pounds on the door with his fist. The following conversation cuts back between Todd and Dussander on opposite sides of the door.

TODD

Open the fucking door! Right now. Right now!

Dussander shoves his chair under the doorknob. He drags the table against the door as he speaks. Todd is screaming on the other side and begins to kick at the door violently.

DUSSANDER

You give me no choice, boy.

TODD

What are you doing? Open the door.

DUSSANDER

If you won't help me, then I'll make you help me. If you don't, we are finished.

TODD

Fuck you, old man. This is your problem. I didn't do this. Open the door!

Todd pounds away at the door. Tears now stream down his cheeks. His relentless pounding has Dussander enraged. Dussander pounds back at the door to shut Todd up. It works.

DUSSANDER

Enough. Enough. Enough! If you don't stop screaming like a fucking school girl I'm going to...

A surge of pain from his chest silences him. He recovers, speaking slowly and deliberately.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

Now listen to me, boy, very carefully. If you don't help me, I'm going to die here. And if I die, there is no Stanford for you. There is no scholarship. There is jail. My document...

TODD

Fuck your document. I got nothing to do with this. Don't make it sound like I do. I came here, I saw this shit, and now I'm getting the fuck out of here. That's what I'm gonna tell the police.

DUSSANDER

Why not tell them the truth? Tell them I locked you in the cellar. Tell them I wouldn't let you out until you buried the body.

TODD

I'm not listening to this.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Todd runs down the stairs and leaps over Archie's body. Under the dim glow of a single naked bulb hanging from the ceiling, he searches for a way out. He crosses the dirt floor toward a tiny window high on the opposite wall.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

DUSSANDER

You must be at the window, yes? As you can see I had it barred a few years ago. A bad element started to move into the neighborhood, you know how it is.

TODD (O.S.)

Fuck.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Todd realizes he can't get through the bars. He turns around to find another option. In the obscured background, Archie begins to stir. Silent and bewildered, he feels the area around him and rises slowly to his knees. Todd doesn't see him and moves into a dark corner of the cellar, rummaging through the piles of cluttered junk for something to help him escape. He disappears for a moment into complete darkness and then emerges holding a shovel, a fresh confidence on his face. He holds it like a sledge hammer.

DUSSANDER (O.S.)

We are wasting time now, boy.

(switches to a loud whisper)

Come back to the door. You are not going to find anything down there to help you.

TODD

(to himself)

Oh really?

Todd runs toward the staircase and is only a few feet from Archie when he sees him. Todd, mortified, lets out a scream. This startles Archie, who cannot speak. He only gurgles a SICKENING WHINE, the fork still sticks out of his neck. Blood drips into his eyes from a gash above his forehead. Yet even on his knees, he is an imposing figure.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dussander, puzzled by the commotion, presses his ear against the door.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Archie blocks the stairs from Todd.

TODD

Get out of the way.

But Archie is too disoriented to move. Summoning all his courage, Todd pokes the shovel into him, as if to prod him out of the way.

But when the blade of the shovel touches him, Archie counters violently, grabbing the metal end and swinging it to the side. Todd holds tightly to the handle, an act which sends him flying across the cellar. The shovel stays with Archie, and now he wields it like it were a child's toy. He slashes it viciously through the air. Todd hides under the stairs, watching Archie duel with the shadows. Todd bumps into something. Archie hears him. Through the slats in the staircase we see Archie jabbing the shovel at Todd.

TODD

Stop it! Stop it!

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Alarmed, Dussander reaches for the lock, but hesitates, forever mindful of the chance of being duped. His ear goes back against the door.

DUSSANDER

What are you doing, boy? It's not going to work, whatever it is.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

Archie pushes the shovel in too far and can't retrieve it. Todd grabs the other end and pulls it through.

TODD

Fuck this.

Fed up, he comes around from under the stairs and confronts Archie. Archie sees him and takes a step toward him.

TODD (CONT'D)

I mean it get the fuck away from me.

Archie steps closer. Instantly, Todd tightens his grip on the shovel. He is no longer afraid. He swings the shovel at Archie's head striking him. Archie staggers back, stunned, but then charges forward. Todd strikes him again, this time with more force and anger. Todd lifts the shovel to strike again, but this time catches the ceiling light with the metal blade.

The glass shatters. The room goes black.

A second later we HEAR a SHARP, authoritative BLOW, followed quickly by another, then another.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dussander knows something is wrong. He slides the bolt back and slowly turns the handle. He opens the door slightly and speaks into the darkness.

DUSSANDER

Hello?

INT. DUSSANDER'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

A shaft of dull light from the kitchen cuts across the cellar floor, revealing Archie's slain body. An expanding pool of blood seeps out from his head. As the door upstairs opens wider, the light falls on Todd standing over Archie, the shovel still in his hands, his face spattered with blood.

The Todd we knew only a minute ago has been transformed. He stares up at Dussander, not with the eyes of a boy, but with those of a man. A man who can no longer be saved.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Quietly Dussander moves away from the door, leaving Todd alone with what he has done. He slides the furniture away from the door, knowing, as Todd does, that the two of them are now working together.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BASEMENT - LATER

Todd's face is suddenly illuminated as he screws a fresh light bulb into the dangling cord. He picks up the shovel. Archie's body still lies where it fell. Todd goes to the open area of the floor and with a forceful stomp, plunges the shovel into the dirt.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BASEMENT - NIGHT - LATER

Todd smacks the back of the shovel on the finished grave to pack the dirt, then smooths the area over to destroy any markings. He is sweaty, dirty, and tired. But his manner is cool and efficient as he concentrates intently on the matters at hand. He runs upstairs, hopping over the bloody spot where Archie's

body used to be.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Todd bursts through the door. He notices the old man in his chair. Dussander doesn't look good. Todd levels his eyes at him. His voice snaps with the authority of an S.S. commander.

TODD

Where's the fucking pinesol?

Dussander points to the cabinet under the sink. Todd throws the door open and pulls out bottles of cleaner.

TODD (CONT'D)

Rags. I need rags.

DUSSANDER

Cellar. Under the stairs.

Todd checks the clock, it is 9:25. He gets the bottle and a bucket and goes for the cellar.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

A SERIES OF SHOTS showing Todd cleaning up the mess. He is on the stairs sponging up the blood. Then we see him skimming the area where the pool of blood was with the shovel. The NEXT SHOT has him sprinkling fresh dirt over the same area. Then, on his knees, he carefully picks up bits of broken glass from the light bulb and drops them into a bucket. In the FINAL SHOT, Todd stands on the steps as his eyes comb the cellar. The shovel has been cleaned and replaced. The floor looks smooth and even. Satisfied, he goes upstairs.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

The table has been put back in its spot. Todd is in his boxer shorts. A SHOT of a washing machine, somewhere else in the house, shows us that Todd is cleaning his bloodied clothes. Now he is washing the dishes in the sink. The water in the sink is a murky pink. He pulls the meat fork from the suds and holds it up.

TODD

I ought to run this through your chest, you know that?

DUSSANDER

It couldn't hurt more than a heart attack.

He looks at the clock - 10:15.

TODD

Christ, my parents are going to freak.

DUSSANDER

Stay calm, boy. You are doing fine.

Todd dries the murder weapon and puts it away. For a moment he slows down, a hint of a smile suddenly comes over him. Dussander sees something is different about him.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

What are you thinking about?

The sound of Dussander's voice snaps Todd out of his funk. He is all business again.

TODD

Fuck off.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT - LATER

Todd is back in his clothes. He wears a white T-shirt. He brings a knife up to Dussander's neck and slices down his suit, still stained by Archie's blood.

TODD

Your pants are okay. The shoes... no.

Todd takes off Dussander's shoes and balls them up in the tattered suit.

TODD (CONT'D)

Put this on.

He holds up Dussander's bathrobe. The old man slips into it with difficulty as Todd dumps the bloodied clothing into a trash bag. Dussander looks at Todd's T-shirt.

DUSSANDER

Is that my undershirt?

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT - LATER

The blood and glass have been removed. Todd runs a mop over the floor. His job is almost over. Sweat pours down his face. The same for Dussander.

DUSSANDER

Hurry up, for God's sake.

TODD

Don't you die on me, you old bastard. Not now.

Todd puts the mop away. He surveys the room as before. Dussander does the same. There is a strange silence as the two of them look around the room for anything damning.

DUSSANDER

I think we're okay.

TODD

Me too.

DUSSANDER

Call an ambulance.

Todd turns to face Dussander. He brings his face up to his and speaks softly.

TODD

The key.

DUSSANDER

What are you talking about?

TODD

The safety deposit box. I want the key...

DUSSANDER

For God's sake, boy...

TODD

I want the key and I want to know where the bank is.

Dussander cannot argue.

DUSSANDER

Hillcrest Savings on Domingo Avenue. The key is behind the clock on the mantle piece.

INT. DUSSANDER'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Todd goes straight for the mantle. He moves the clock and finds the key.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Todd holds a blank piece of paper in front of Dussander and hands him a pen.

TODD

Sign this.

DUSSANDER

What for?

TODD

Sign it.

Dussander starts to scrawl his name across the paper.

TODD

No! At the bottom... neatly.

With great difficulty, Dussander does as he is told. Todd folds the paper and stuffs it into his pocket with the pen. He picks up the phone and dials.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

911 emergency. Do you need an ambulance?

TODD

Yes. It's my friend, Mr. Du--

Todd nearly bites his lip in half. Dussander notices the slip and cringes.

TODD (CONT'D)

Denker. He had a heart attack.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Is he conscious?

TODD

Yeah, he's awake. I'm really scared. The address is 9 --

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

We have the address here. The ambulance is on the way. It should take about ten minutes. I'll stay on the line with you --

TODD

No. I have to call my parents. Just send the ambulance --

He hangs up.

TODD (CONT'D)

It smells too clean in here.

Todd sees a pack of cigarettes on the table.

TODD (CONT'D)
(offering)
Cigarette?

Dussander is not amused. Todd lights two cigarettes and lets them burn down in the ashtray. He picks up the phone again and dials.

TODD (CONT'D)
Mommy, it's me. Let me talk to Dad.

MONICA (V.O.)
What is it?

TODD
Just let me talk to him.

MONICA (V.O.)
Hold on --

DICK (V.O.)
Todd, what's wrong.

TODD
Mr. Denker had a heart attack.

DICK (V.O.)
Jesus. Is he conscious?

TODD
Yeah, he's awake.

DICK (V.O.)
Thank God. Todd, call an ambulance.

TODD
I did. They're on the way.

DICK (V.O.)
All right, son. Don't touch him. I'll be there in five minutes.

TODD
Okay.

He hangs up. He sits down across from Dussander. The old man is near death, but through the slit of an eye he watches Todd. The stare between them is lethal. For a long moment this

continues until...

TODD (CONT'D)

Fuck!

DUSSANDER

What? What is it?

TODD

The letter. Where is the goddamn letter? I told my parents I came over to read you a letter from Germany.

DUSSANDER

A letter. Yes, we'll say it's from Willi Frankel --

TODD

We need a letter. I told them it was your nephew, I think.

DUSSANDER

My bedroom. Look in the dresser. Second, no third, drawer... from the top. There is a small wooden box. You will have to break it open. I lost the key. There are letters, very old ones. From a friend. All in German. None of them are signed or dated. A page or two will be fine.

Todd turns to go and stops.

TODD

Are you crazy? I don't read German, you numb fuck.

DUSSANDER

Why would Willi write me in English? If you were to read me the letter in German, I would understand even though you would not. Your pronunciation would be terrible, but I could manage --

TODD

All right. All right.

Todd dashes out of the room.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS - NIGHT

Dick's Porsche speeds along the same streets that Todd took two

hours earlier.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Todd bursts through the door and drops to his knees in front of the dresser. He yanks on the drawer. It comes half way out and stops.

TODD

Goddamn you, come out.

The drawer flies out, knocking Todd back. He digs through it, the contents of Dussander's fake lives spilling about the room. He finds the box at the bottom. As he expected, it is locked. Without a moment's hesitation, he slams the box down on the post of the bed frame. It doesn't open, but bits of the frame fly across the room.

On the third attempt the tiny box shatters. Todd freezes, cocks his head. Outside he hears the distinct ROAR and sputter of the Porsche engine. He grabs two pages of a letter. There is nothing he can do about the mess in the room. He closes the door on his way back to the kitchen.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT - LATER

Todd enters the kitchen and places the pages on the table just in time to look up and see Dick standing in the kitchen doorway.

TODD

Dad.

We hold on Dick for a moment as he takes it all in: Dussander, Todd, and the room. A hint of uncertainty crosses his face.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - NIGHT - LATER

A PARAMEDIC straps Dussander onto a stretcher. Todd is talking to the other one.

TODD

He started laughing at something in the letter. I don't know what it was, it's in German.

Dick sees the letter on the table and picks it up. Todd watches him. Without much of a thought, Dick puts the letter back on the table.

PARAMEDIC

Well, we'll take care of him now. We're going to take him to St. Luke's. It's a good thing you called when you did. You saved his life.

The medics wheel Dussander out.

DICK

You did real good, son.

(looking around the room, as if
searching for something)

You did real good...

Todd doesn't like Dick's apprehension. He grabs his father's hand and leads him out of the room.

TODD

C'mon. Let's make sure he gets checked in all right.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

TWO ORDERLIES push a gurney through the door. A man in his late thirties, DAVID KRAUSS, walks with them. A NURSE, following behind, addresses him.

NURSE

He needs to rest now. You can come back tomorrow after ten.

David approaches the gurney. Lying prone is BEN KRAUSS, 70. David kisses him on the forehead.

DAVID

I'll be back in the morning with the girls.

BEN

I can't wait to see them.

The orderlies lift Ben onto his bed.

NURSE

(to Ben)

The doctor will be in to see you in a few minutes.

BEN

Thank you.

The orderlies, the nurse and David leave the room. Ben notices his roommate in the next bed. It is Dussander, who has been

watching all of this quietly.

BEN (CONT'D)

My nephew, David.

Dussander smiles politely.

BEN (CONT'D)

His parents died when he was very young. He is like a son to me. I have no children of my own.

DUSSANDER

I see.

BEN

David is very protective of me. Of course, I don't mind. I enjoy his company. A few years ago he started working with me at the university. I teach chemistry. My name is Ben, by the way.

DUSSANDER

Arthur.

BEN

A pleasure, Arthur. What do you do?

DUSSANDER

I'm retired.

Pause.

BEN

These tubes in my arm. No one said they would itch like this.

DUSSANDER

You will find, in time, you don't notice.

Ben looks oddly at Dussander. The wheels of his memory slowly, very slowly, begin to turn.

BEN

Well, we'll see. Looks like I'll be here for a while. I didn't want to alarm my nephew just yet, but this break in my leg... well, we'll see what the doctor says.

DUSSANDER

Yes, of course. But for now, you must forgive me, my medication has made me drowsy.

Do not be offended if I fall asleep.

BEN

*Don't be offended if I keep talking anyway.
It beats wondering if I'm ever going to walk
again. I tell you, my friend, the ways of
God are not meant to be understood.*

*But Ben's words are lost on a sleeping man. He continues to
stare at Dussander.*

INT. DUSSANDER'S HOUSE - DAY

Todd comes through the front door, using his key to get in.

INT. DUSSANDER'S KITCHEN - DAY

*Todd grabs the letter off the table and stuffs it into a plastic
trash bag.*

INT. DUSSANDER'S BEDROOM - DAY

*Todd manages to get the drawer back into the dresser. He throws
all the remaining debris and bits of wood into the trash bag. He
goes to the closet and searches through the clothes. He
finds the S.S. uniform, now tattered from many night of fitful
sleep, and places it in the trash bag.*

INT. HILLCREST SAVINGS AND LOAN - DAY

*The BANK CLERK behind the counter is a fat, elderly woman,
pleasant-faced and not too sharp. Todd stands solemnly on the
other side of the counter. She stares hard at a piece of paper.
We see that it is a note: "Please allow my grandson, Todd, to
retrieve my insurance documents from my safety deposit box.
Thank you, Arthur Denker." It is Dussander's phony signature
at the bottom.*

TODD

He's really sick. ...Please.

*The woman looks up at Todd, the key in his hand, then back down
at the note.*

INT. BANK SAFE - DAY

*The woman inserts her key into the first lock and Todd does the
same in the second. A moment later he is holding the box in his*

hands.

BANK CLERK

I sure hope your granddaddy feels better.
You can bring that in here.

She escorts him to a small room where he can view the contents of the box. She leaves.

INT. BANK - SMALL ROOM - DAY

Todd puts the box on a table and opens it. It is nearly empty: a few old photographs, some financial records. There is no document. Todd is swept up in a wave of emotion-- anger, relief, contempt. He's been played like a fool, but is nonetheless grateful. Ultimately, he is so overwhelmed a laugh springs from his lips.

TODD

Son of a bitch.

He scoops out the contents of the box and puts them in his pocket.

INT. BANK SAFE - DAY

On the other side of the door, the clerk listens curiously to Todd's words. She pushes her ear against the door to hear more.

EXT. WOODED AREA - DUSK

Todd has dug a hole in a remote location. He empties the letters, the S.S. uniform, and the contents from the safety deposit box into the hole. A little lighter fluid. A match. Todd watches the evidence burn.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - LATER

Todd stands next to the bed holding a small clump of flowers. Dussander notices the bouquet.

DUSSANDER

You shouldn't have.

Todd is aware that Ben is listening, even though he is pretending not to. Todd goes to put the flowers in a glass of water. He sets the glass on the table by the bed.

TODD

They're from my mother.

He sits in the chair by the bed and lowers his voice.

TODD (CONT'D)

Here.

He flicks a tattered photo onto the bed. We recognize it as one from the safety deposit box. It is a black and white portrait of a woman and a small boy.

TODD (CONT'D)

Everything else I burned.

Dussander grins weakly.

DUSSANDER

I had to protect myself from you, boy.

Todd drags a screen over to prevent Ben from hearing. Long pause.

DUSSANDER (CONT'D)

I suspect that we shall never see each other again.

TODD

No, I don't think we will.

Dussander looks almost hurt to hear Todd say it. Pause.

TODD (CONT'D)

Well, I better go.

DUSSANDER

Wait, boy... There is something I want to ask you.

TODD

What?

Dussander waves him over with his finger. Reluctantly, Todd brings his ear an inch from Dussander's mouth.

DUSSANDER

...Was it like you thought?

Todd pulls his head back, stands up. He contemplates the question, ...confessing. He touches Dussander on the shoulder.

TODD

I should go.

He turns for the door.

DUSSANDER

Perhaps... perhaps I could persuade you to wait here just until I fall asleep. This medicine makes me quite woozy... please.

Todd resigns himself to stay. He picks up a magazine and begins to read, not even looking at Dussander.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - LATER

Todd emerges from behind the screen toward the door. Dussander is asleep.

BEN

Excuse me, young man.

Todd is startled.

BEN (CONT'D)

You're a fine boy to visit your grandfather like that.

TODD

Thanks. But he's just a friend.

BEN

Is that right? Well, you are a good friend to him. Tell me, is he bad off? He doesn't talk much.

TODD

The doctors say he'll be out soon.

BEN

That is good news, indeed. Tell me, from the way he speaks I'd guess he's been naturalized, like me. Is he?

Todd is starting to be wary of where this is going.

TODD

He's from Germany... From Essen. Do you know that town?

BEN

I was only in Germany once. I'm Polish. Originally, I mean, I'm from Radom. I wonder if he was in the war.

TODD

I really couldn't say.

BEN

It doesn't matter, I suppose. It was a long time ago, the war. Soon in this country we may have a president born after the war was over. How about that?

Todd starts to leave.

TODD

I'm sure you're right.

BEN

Your friend is lucky to have you. A great man once said, 'No man is an island entire of itself.'

TODD

John Donne. Take care, sir.

Todd heads for the door. He stops, turns back to Dussander's bed. He contemplates something... waking him. He decides against it.

TODD (CONT'D)

Good-bye.

BEN

Good-bye.

Todd exits. Ben sits quietly for a moment, thinking. He turns on the television-- "The Price is Right". We hear it over the following. Ben glances over at the screen which separates him from Dussander. Slowly his eyelids begin to get heavy. He starts to nod off. But as sleep begins to envelope him, his eyes suddenly fly open. A surge of terror burns across his face.

He sits up frightened. A single crutch stands next to the bed. He grabs it. He strips away his covers and the restraints on his leg, once or twice shoving his hand over his mouth to quell a painful scream. He gets to his feet awkwardly, hobbling, half-dragging his bad leg. Every step he takes is a study in agony.

ANGLE on the screen. It slides out of the way, revealing Ben staring down at the sleeping Dussander. In the pained struggle to keep silent, he brings his face right up to Dussander's, close enough to smell his breath.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - CONTINUING

Ben stumbles out of his room into the hall. The crutch falls to the ground. He slides against the wall toward the nurses' station. Tears stream down his face. As he clutches the wall, we glimpse the faded green numbers on his forearm.

He reaches the nurse's desk. She is on the phone. He grabs her by the shoulder and pulls her face up into his. She lets out a startled SCREAM. But Ben's emotion stops her from resisting. He is sobbing uncontrollably. Orderlies appear and pull him off of her. He collapses to the ground, consumed by grief.

BLACK.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Dussander slowly wakes up for the first time since his surgery. A large black man, DARREN, stands above him changing the IV bag. He notices Dussander is awake. Dussander's voice is low and hoarse from hours of sedation.

DUSSANDER

Where's the nurse?

DARREN

My name is Darren. I'll be taking care of you from now on. I'll tell the doctor you've woken up.

Darren finishes with the IV unit and goes to the door. Dussander watches him, a bit puzzled, but his eyes are closed again before Darren is out of the room.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - LATER

Dussander wakes up again. Something is different in his room. He looks to the table next to him. All his magazines are gone. He looks to the other side of the room. Ben is gone, his bed stripped of all linen. Finally he looks to the door. It is cracked open. Two men in suits are talking in the hallway. One we will come to know as Detective GETTY. The other is a subordinate. Dussander is clearly bothered by what he sees. He reaches over for the call button and rings it several times.

A moment later Darren comes in. Getty sees this and stops talking. He watches Dussander from the hall.

DARREN

Did you need something?

DUSSANDER

What is going on here? Where is Ben?

DARREN

Mr. Krauss has been moved. I'm going to give you something. It will help you sleep.

Darren readies Dussander's arm for an injection.

DUSSANDER

I don't want it. Who is that man?

Before Dussander can protest, Darren sticks him with the needle.

DARREN

Your surgery was a success. Just try to relax.

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

WEISKOPF (O.S.)

(in German)

Wake up. Wake up, old man.

Dussander's eyes open. The first thing he sees are three men, all in suits, standing over him.

DUSSANDER (in German)

Are you speaking to me?

The voice comes from WEISKOPF, 40's. His suit is dark gray, well tailored, probably European. He speaks eloquently despite an accent that shows roots of Europe and the Middle East.

WEISKOPF

(back in English)

No one else is here.

Dussander looks over at Ben's former bed.

WEISKOPF (CONT'D)

Mr. Krauss is recuperating elsewhere. Are you awake now, Dussander?

DUSSANDER

Yes, of course, but you seem to have me confused with someone else. My name is Arthur Denker. Perhaps you want a different room --

Weiskopf sits on the edge of the bed. Dussander notices the pin on his lapel. A small, silver Star of David.

WEISKOPF

My name is Weiskopf. You are Kurt Dussander.

DUSSANDER

I know no one by that name. Shall I ring for the nurse?

Dussander reaches for the Call button and stops in horror. He looks at his hands. His fingertips are smeared with black ink. He looks up at the men in disbelief.

WEISKOPF

The man in the next bed was Benjamin Krauss. He was imprisoned for ten months at Patin. You were responsible for the death of his wife and two daughters. His identification of you was quite specific. I'm sure his reward from my government will help offset the burden of his broken leg.

DUSSANDER

My name is Arthur Denker. I am an American--

WEISKOPF

Please don't bother. Your papers will not stand up to serious examination and you know it.

The detective, GETTY, snaps a few pictures of Dussander. The other man is FBI Special Agent DAN RICHLER.

RICHLER

We have all we need here, Isaac.

DUSSANDER

Who are you men? What are your names?

RICHLER

My name is Richler, FBI. This is Detective Getty from the Orange County Sheriff's Department.

WEISKOPF

And I think you know who I work for. When you get your strength back, you will be moved. Until then, this entire ward will be under surveillance. You can expect to be in Tel Aviv by the end of the summer.

The three men are out the door.

INT. TODD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Todd's room is dark as he lies on the floor, writing something on a pile of index cards. The only light comes from the hallway through the open door of the bedroom. Todd is deep in thought, but from the bits of shredded index cards we can tell the writing is not coming easily.

TODD

The road ahead reveals itself, uh, God, no.
The road ahead... grrrrr, The fucking road
ahead.

Monica appears in the doorway.

MONICA

Todd?

Todd doesn't notice her. He stares down at the card. Finally he looks up, as if it took her voice a few seconds to register in his mind. His response is hardly audible.

TODD

Huh?

MONICA

What are you doing there in the dark?

TODD

Oh, ...working.

Monica reaches in to his room to turn on the light. She touches the switch but then pulls her hand back. Todd is back at the note card. She looks at him oddly, worried, but then steps away from the door and goes downstairs.

Todd's lips are moving, as if he were speaking to himself. He pauses. Then, in a sudden gust of inspiration begins to write furiously. He finishes and stands up, catching his reflection in the mirror above his desk. In the eerie half-light, he stares at the ghost-like image of himself.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD (GRADUATION) - DAY

Todd, in cap and gown, is seeing his parents to their seats in the second row. Ed French comes up to Todd and puts his hand on his shoulder. Todd is startled.

TODD

Mr. French.

FRENCH

Hello, Todd. It's your big day, isn't it?

They shake hands. French sees Dick and Monica sitting behind Todd. Before Todd can stop him, he introduces himself.

FRENCH (CONT'D)

These must be your parents.

(extends hand)

Hi, Ed French. It's good to finally meet you.

Dick and Monica are the picture of happiness, hardly the dysfunctional drunkards that French believed them to be. They all shake hands.

DICK

Dick Bowden, nice to meet you. This is my wife, Monica.

MONICA

Are you one of Todd's teachers?

French is a bit puzzled.

FRENCH

No. I'm his guidance counsellor.

A WOMAN behind Monica taps her on the shoulder.

WOMAN

Monica, I thought that was you.

Monica turns away from French. Suddenly, the band strikes up opening notes to "Pomp and Circumstance."

TODD

(to French)

That's our cue.

FRENCH

(to Dick)

It was nice meeting you.

DICK

You too.

(to Todd)

Good luck, son.

FRENCH

I'll talk to you and your wife after the ceremony.

Todd and French dash off in different directions.

EXT. GRADUATION - DAY - LATER

Standing at the podium is a black, female graduate, TASHA LITTLE. She is reading the end of a poem by Emily Dickinson. Principal Morgan and Todd sit in chairs next to the podium. In the b.g. is the graduating class, Joey is among them. French sits among the faculty, who are lined up to the right of the podium.

TASHA

*Thy sacred emblems to partake -
Thy consecrated bread to take
And thine immortal wine!*

There is polite applause from the audience as she takes her seat and Morgan goes to the podium.

MORGAN

Thank you, Miss Little for that superb invocation.

Pause. More applause.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

And now it gives me great pleasure to introduce a young man who's academic achievement at this institution stands as testament to the power of hard work and determination. Todd had a tough time a few months ago, so by God, he buckled down, hit the books, and pulled himself through it.

Todd's eyes scan the crowd indifferently. He notices Becky, seated in the audience near some friends.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentlemen, students and faculty, here to deliver the student remembrance for the class of 1985, this year's valedictorian, Todd Bowden.

The crowd burst into applause.

EXT. DUSSANDER'S HOUSE - DAY

A half dozen police cars are in front of the house. One OFFICER is blocking off the entire yard with yellow tape. A news van pulls up.

EXT. GRADUATION - DAY - CONTINUING

Todd shakes Morgan's hand and takes the podium. The crowd quiets. Todd begins:

TODD

We all have dreams that we carry with us. Perhaps it is a dream of prosperity, or happiness. But now, so early in our lives, it seems that all we should ask for is to be at peace with the world, because only then can we be at peace with ourselves.

INT. DUSSANDER'S HOUSE - DAY

Weiskopf and Richler, both wearing rubber gloves, are carefully looking through the contents of Dussander's dresser. They pour over everything, placing some items in clear plastic bags. A few DEPUTIES are milling around. Richler picks up a small photograph of a young woman. Todd's voice comes in:

TODD (V.O.)

We learn from our education that we are the master's of our own destinies. We learn what it is that separates us from the others, why we are special.

RICHLER

What about this?

WEISKOPF

Yes. All photographs.

Detective Getty comes in.

GETTY

You boys better come down to the cellar. You're not going to believe this.

INT. DUSSANDER'S BASEMENT - DAY

Getty comes down the steps followed by Weiskopf and Richler. Weiskopf gazes across the cellar. Whatever he sees disturbs

him. He turns away and goes back up the stairs.

TODD (V.O.)

Each of us have unique talents and interests unlike those of anyone else. The challenge now, as we stand at the doorway to adulthood, is to channel our abilities into our goals.

Richler, moves to the rail and looks out, disgusted. He pulls a handkerchief from his pocket and covers his nose and mouth. A DEPUTY, wearing rubber gloves, carries the shovel up to him.

EXT. GRADUATION - DAY - CONTINUING

As Todd speaks, he notices his parents, Becky, various teachers. His eyes stop on Ed French, who is looking oddly at something in the crowd.

ANGLE ON FRENCH

French notices an elderly couple walking down the aisles of seated spectators as if they are looking for someone.

TODD (O.C.)

We forge our own paths. Our education is but a stepping stone to the world.

They are Victor and Agnes Bowden, looking for Dick and Monica. Todd sees them too. He pauses almost imperceptibly. He looks back at French.

TODD (CONT'D)

Our.. Our true destinies await us. There we become the...

Todd's grandparents come down the aisle to see Dick and Monica in the second row. They start to slide in, causing a slight ruckus. Dick is surprised to see his parents, but smiles and makes room for them. French watches all of this curiously.

TODD (CONT'D)

There we become the men and women that will make a difference. But we must take away from this place a sense of purpose for ourselves. We now begin to see the road ahead. It is a road from which we cannot veer.

A connection is made between French, Todd, and the Bowden family.

EXT. GRADUATION - DAY - LATER

Morgan is reading the last of the names as the graduates file past and collect their diplomas.

MORGAN

Andrew Woodman... Donald Young... Karmisha
Youngblood... David Zedek... Kyle Zuckerman.
The graduating class of 1985.

The crowd cheers as the graduates throw their caps into the air.
The band begins to play.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Now we invite all the friends and parents to
join the students and faculty in the main
courtyard for refreshments.

Todd, still pale, bolts off the stage. He reaches his parents.
French starts to walk down to the Bowdens. Todd goes up to his
mother.

MONICA

Honey.

TODD

Mom, I don't feel so good.

MONICA

What's wrong?

TODD

I don't know, I feel like I'm going to pass
out. Can we go home?

AGNES

You looked real good up there, Todd.

Todd ignores her.

DICK

Don't you want to see your buddies?

TODD

I want to go, Dad. Right now.

Todd and his family start off. As they leave the CAMERA MOVES
to show Ed French working his way through the crowd past the
spot where they had been standing.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

The following series of images appear under music:

The quiet wing of this hospital has transformed into a frenzied sea of reporters, cameramen, photographers, and police officers. Everyone is struggling for a glimpse of the infamous celebrity through the window that looks into Dussander's room. Inside, Weiskopf and Richler are speaking to the doctors. Getty stands to the side, instructing the DEPUTY who guards the door.

Through all of this Dussander lies like a fossil in his bed as the bodies whirl around him. Darren enters the room to change Dussander's IV bag.

Suddenly the door flies open and a young photographer dashes in, snapping pictures wildly. Getty and the other officers descend upon him. The camera flashes. Other photographers try to get in but are blocked. Pandemonium.

Yet Dussander seems oblivious to the commotion. His eyes are nothing more than glazed slits, his mouth hangs open. Darren runs toward the door to help. Dussander's eyes open slightly. There is life behind them after all. He turns his attention imperceptibly toward his IV bag...

The camera moves away from Dussander to the window. Outside in the parking lot, groups of protesters have gathered. Some hold candles. Others chant and wave signs. News reporters surround them.

INT. LIVING ROOM - BOWDEN HOUSE - DAY

ANGLE on a ticking wall clock.

Todd appears apprehensive as he sits down on the couch next to his mother. She puts her arm around him. He is pale and glassy-eyed. His parents don't look much better. Dick is especially nervous and stands off to the side, watching everyone intently. Richler and Weiskopf sit across the room in chairs.

RICHLER

Todd, my name is Dan Richler. I'm a special agent with the FBI. This is my associate, Dr. Weiskopf.

WEISKOPF

Hello.

DICK

What kind of doctor are you?

WEISKOPF

I'm a school teacher.

RICHLER

Dr. Weiskopf is a professor at the Judaic Institute in Munich. He is assisting the Israeli government in certain matters. He is here today, only as an observer.

A moment passes between Weiskopf and Todd.

RICHLER (CONT'D)

Thanks for calling us up, Mr. Bowden. You saved us the trouble of tracking through the 911 records.

DICK

Actually, it was Todd's idea to call. He thought... we thought there might be some way we could help your investigation.

RICHLER

Todd, if you wouldn't mind, I'd like to hear about your involvement with Dussander... but you knew him as Arthur Denker, right?

TODD

Yeah. I never knew of that other name till I saw it in the paper.

RICHLER

How did you know him?

Todd starts to rub his stomach.

TODD

I met him at the movies. Last summer. ...He asked me where to pick up the number seven bus. He said his eyes weren't too good. ...Will you excuse me for a minute?

He gets up before Richler can answer walks toward the stairs.

MONICA

You okay, honey?

TODD

I just gotta use the bathroom. I'll be right back.

He vanishes up the stairs. They all watch him go. Monica turns to Richler.

MONICA

He's not feeling well.

ANGLE on Dick.

MONICA (CONT'D)

Can I get you some coffee?

INT. BOWDEN HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

The faucet runs at full blast to hide the noise as Todd digs through the medicine cabinet and takes out a bottle of Pepto-Bismol. He takes off the cap and gulps down what is left in the bottle. He finishes and takes a few deep breaths.

As he turns around he catches his reflection in the mirror. An empty bottle in his hand, a bright pink ring around his lips, a few pink splotches down his shirt-- he looks totally ridiculous. Todd can't help but laugh.

INT. BOWDEN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The interview continues. The clock ticks on. Richler drinks from a coffee cup. Todd is back in his seat.

RICHLER

Todd, let me tell you what we're really interested in here. You told the admitting nurse that Denker had a heart attack while you were reading him a letter.

TODD

That's right. I was. That's what I was doing there. It was in German but he insisted I try to read it anyway. Once or twice he got pissy about the pronunciation but I asked him what did he want from me. I don't speak German. Mr. Denker... Dussander... got really excited at one point. He yelled out, "Yes, that's what you would do all right." but I didn't know what he was talking about. Then he grabbed his chest.

RICHLER

And that's when you called the ambulance, right?

TODD

That's right.

RICHLER

Well, this is the part we can't figure out. The letter itself, Todd... do you remember what happened to it?

TODD

I guess it was still on the table. I couldn't swear to it, but --

DICK

Wait, I saw a letter. It was in German. I didn't think anything of it at the time. But, yeah, it was on Airmail stationery.

RICHLER

Then it should still be there. This is our problem.

DICK

It isn't?

RICHLER

No.

MONICA

Maybe somebody broke in.

RICHLER

Why would somebody break into his house simply to steal a letter? ...Unless... there was someone... someone right here in Santo Donato who would want to protect him for some reason. Maybe a close friend, or even another fugitive. I know it sounds like a bunch of Robert Ludlum stuff, but when Dussander was taken to the hospital, we think our Mr. X scooted over to the house and swiped the letter.

TODD

That doesn't make sense.

RICHLER

Why not, Todd?

TODD

Well, if Denk... if he had an old Nazi buddy in town, why didn't he come over himself and read the letter to him? If you could have heard the way he corrected me at every word--

RICHLER

A good point. Except maybe this other fellow is in a wheelchair, or blind.

TODD

Guys that are blind don't normally go scooting out to steal letters.

RICHLER

(smiling)

True. Did Dussander have any friends that you knew of?

TODD

No, not really.

RICHLER

How about phone calls?

Pause.

TODD

No, I heard his phone ring maybe five or six times in all the time I knew him. It was never anything out of the ordinary. Salesmen. Wrong numbers.

RICHLER

Did you ever hear him speak German on those occasions?

TODD

No. He hardly ever spoke German. He always said he would teach me someday, but he never got around to it.

WEISKOPF

Did he ever talk about his past?

Todd looks at Weiskopf. This is the first question he has asked and Todd is more wary of him than of Richler. Todd shrugs innocently.

TODD

Not really. Little bits, I guess.

MONICA

Well, don't you remember what he told us at Thanksgiving?

Todd looks at her.

MONICA (CONT'D)

He said he was in college--

DICK

(shutting her up)

Monica. They don't care what we know, they care what Todd knows.

Silence. Richler notices the tension in the room. He looks at Weiskopf. Finally, he speaks to Dick.

RICHLER

Look, I'm sure this whole thing has come as a terrible shock. I think we've done enough for the day.

He and Weiskopf stand. Dick is almost surprised that they are leaving so soon.

WEISKOPF

Thank you, Todd. Mr. and Mrs. Bowden.

Weiskopf nods good-bye.

DICK

Wait a minute... Agent Richler, before you go-- Todd's not a suspect in this, is he? I mean he's just talking to you, right?

RICHLER

That's right.

DICK

Because Todd always thought he was helping that old man. We didn't know any of this before today.

RICHLER

Mr. Bowden, you and Todd have nothing to worry about. I assure you. Your son has been a great service to us. Thank you, Todd. For now that's all we need. Our next step is to turn that house upside down. We're bringing in some special teams to look through everything. We may come up with something. We'll be in touch if we need you.

They are almost to the door, when Richler stops.

RICHLER (CONT'D)

Oh, Todd, by the way....

(casually, pulls a photo out of a

folder he is carrying)
Have you ever seen this man before?

He holds the photo up to Todd. It is a picture of Archie in military dress, probably a blow-up of his military ID. Todd stares at it for a moment. His face shows no reaction.

TODD
No.

RICHLER
Okay, thanks.

He smiles. Weiskopf opens the door and the two men leave.

INT. BOWDEN HOUSE - TODD'S BEDROOM - DAY

From his window Todd sees Richler and Weiskopf talking by their gray sedan.

TODD
You'll be back, won't you boys? Won't you, Special agent Jackoff. You and the sheeny professor. ...I know, let's show him an old army picture, that'll screw him up. ...Fuck you. Fuck-You.

INT. BOWDEN HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Dick is half-way up the stairs when he hears yelling coming from Todd's room. He pauses a moment. Most of Todd's words aren't clear, but the profanity sure is...

INT. BOWDEN HOUSE - TODD'S BEDROOM - DAY

After a moment, the sedan pulls away. Todd turns away from the window and we see that he is holding the barrel of the rifle in one hand and the scope in the other.

He takes a few breaths, tries to calm down. A burst of nervous laughter slips out of him.

There is a KNOCK at the door. Two seconds later Dick comes in.

DICK'S POV: Todd stands in the middle of his room. The gun pieces are nowhere in sight.

DICK
Everything all right, son?

TODD

Yeah... fine.

DICK

You sure?

TODD

I'm fine, Dad.

DICK

Your mother and I feel terrible... like we...

TODD

It's not your fault.

Dick grabs his son and pulls him close. Todd doesn't know how to respond. For Dick, it is like hugging a phone pole. He knows something is terribly wrong. Todd stands stiff in his father's arms until he releases him.

DICK

You know we love you, don't you?

TODD

I know, Dad.

He smiles at his father, comfortingly. Dick is not comforted.

DICK

Look, ahh, your mother and I are going to go down and talk to our lawyer. I don't want you to worry about a thing. It's just a precaution. I don't trust these cops. We're not going to be gone long.

TODD

Don't worry about me, I'll be fine.

DICK

Your old man is on top of things, all right? I am going to take care of this.

TODD

I know, Dad.

Dick kisses Todd's forehead. He turns to leave and stops.

DICK

This afternoon, if you're up for it, we'll go do something. How 'bout it?

TODD

Sure.

Dick tries to smile and goes out, the door, leaving Todd alone.

EXT. BOWDEN HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

The garage door opens and Dick backs the Porsche into the street. Monica is with him. Todd, from the upstairs window, watches them go.

INT. BOWDEN HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Todd is near the end of his rope, trying to hold himself together. We see him splashing water on his face in the bathroom. He gazes into the mirror, transfixed by the ghost-like image reflected back at him. Todd pounds his fist against the sink. He can stand it no longer. He darts out of the bathroom.

EXT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE - DAY

Todd drives his mother's Honda wagon towards the entrance of the hospital and for the first time witnesses the scope of Dussander's discovery. News vans are everywhere. The protesters have grown in number. A line of cars wait for admittance into the parking lot. A policeman stands a few feet away from Todd, directing cars in, turning others away. He is moving toward Todd. Horns honk around him. Todd sees that more police officers are standing by the door of the hospital. The nearby policeman notices Todd and walks closer. Todd doesn't wait. He pulls the car out of line and drives off.

INT. HONDA WAGON - DAY

Todd holds the steering wheel with a white-knuckled grip. His face is sweaty and flushed. He rocks back and forth as he tries to reassure himself...

TODD

We're okay. We're okay. We're o-kay.

He is almost calm when he nears his house. But it doesn't last. He sees something he can hardly believe.

TODD (CONT'D)

You got to be fucking kidding me.

EXT. BOWDEN HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

An old Volvo is parked on the street in front of the house. Standing on the porch, sneakers and all, is Ed French. Todd pulls into the driveway and gets out. French has a cautious air about him as he walks toward Todd.

FRENCH

Hello, Todd.

TODD

Mr. French, what brings you to the wild side of town?

The two of them are standing on opposite sides of the car. French pulls a folded newspaper page from his pocket. He starts to move around the car toward Todd, but Todd circles the other way, keeping the car in between himself and French.

FRENCH

Todd... I found something troubling in the morning news. Are your parents home?

TODD

No.

FRENCH

I know the man in this picture is the man who came to see me.

TODD

It's sort of a bad time right now. Why don't you go home?

FRENCH

I will. But first I need a couple of things explained to me.

INT. HOSPITAL - OUTSIDE DUSSANDER'S ROOM - DAY

Richler is speaking to the reporters. Cameras and lights are in his face. His words are low, serving as a backdrop, but we can tell that he is telling them of the plans to relocate Dussander. Weiskopf stands close by...

FRENCH (V.O.)

Todd, why don't you tell me what happened?

EXT. BOWDEN HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

While Todd almost seems to be enjoying this odd dance around the

car, French does not.

TODD

You know, Mr. French, sometimes one thing just leads to another and before you know it... things get out of control.

FRENCH

I'm afraid that's not much of an answer, Todd. When do you expect your parents home?

TODD

I don't know, Ed. You want to come in and wait? I'll put on a pot of tea. We'll talk about old times.

FRENCH

I think you might need some help, Todd. That's why I'm here.

INT. HOSPITAL - DUSSANDER'S ROOM - DAY

Dussander is alone in the room as Richler addresses the reporters outside. His eyes open wide and his movements are the liveliest they have been since he was discovered. He reaches over to his IV unit and begins to disconnect the tube from the bag...

TODD (V.O.)

You know? You're right. I do need help. I really do.

EXT. BOWDEN HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Todd becomes more animated, more threatening with every word. Somehow it is as though French is now retreating from Todd as they circle the car.

FRENCH

Let me help you, Todd. I want to. You're too smart to do anything crazy.

TODD

Can I ask you something, Ed? You don't mind if I call you Ed, now that I'm out of your fucking school, do you?

FRENCH

What?

TODD

You know all this crap you see on TV about forensics... hairs and fibers, that stuff? How much of it do think is true and how much is just bullshit?

French is puzzled by the question. He has no answer.

TODD (CONT'D)

Oh, how would you know? You're a fucking guidance counsellor.

French stops.

FRENCH

Todd, this is silly. Why don't we go inside?

INT. HOSPITAL - DUSSANDER'S ROOM - DAY

Liquid spills onto the floor as the tube comes loose from the bag. Dussander sits back and pulls the free end of the tube up to his mouth. His lips wrap around it and his face tightens as he begins to blow....

EXT. BOWDEN HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Todd starts moving again. French does the same.

TODD

Here's a little factoid for ya. I'll bet you didn't know this one. Hairs fall out of your head all the time. But it's even worse when you're nervous. And you know what? I've been real fucking high-strung lately.

Todd comes around the rear of the car and stops at the door to the back seat. He opens it.

FRENCH

Listen, Todd... Please.

Todd bends down to get something from the back seat. His voice is muffled from the inside of the car.

TODD

That's how it all happened, you know. One thing lead to another and before I knew it...

Todd pops back up holding the rifle, fully assembled and aimed at French's chest.

TODD (CONT'D)

...you showed up in my driveway, wearing those same fucking sneakers.

FRENCH

Whoa. To--

Todd rapid-fires. French's chest explodes red as his lifeless body sails back onto the grass. In the front yard, a dozen birds evacuate a tree in a panicked exodus. Todd swoons back on his heels, overcome by something. But it isn't pain, rather, it's a rush of pleasure. A laugh slips out.

INT. HOSPITAL - DUSSANDER'S ROOM - DAY

Dussander takes the tube from his mouth and lets it fall to the floor. The camera moves along the tube and stops at Dussander's arm, where it ends. He lies back in his bed and waits...

EXT. BOWDEN HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Todd regains his balance. French stares wide-eyed as Todd steps up to him, the muzzle aimed at French's head. Todd grins widely. For the first time he looks ...happy.

A single round obliterates half of French's skull. Todd chokes back a giggle like a drunk chokes back a belch.

INT. HOSPITAL - DUSSANDER'S ROOM - DAY

Dussander lurches up in the bed in a spastic, contortive fit as the air embolism reaches his heart. His arm flails against the IV unit, sending it crashing to the floor. The monitors next to him reflect a drastic turn in his condition. The door flies open and a pair of nurses charge in through the swarm of journalists. Richler and Weiskopf run in and the eager cameramen follow. The room is bathed in flash explosions as the nurses try to subdue Dussander.

INT. BOWDEN HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

Todd throws open a cabinet door above the workbench and eyes the boxes and boxes of ammunition. He lets out a beautifully wicked laugh as he dumps all of the cartons into his backpack. He leaves the cabinet door open as he slips the bag over his shoulder.

EXT. BOWDEN HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - STREET - DAY

Todd zooms out of the garage on his bike, the rifle slung over one shoulder, the backpack over the other. He zips past French's body and out into the street. In the distance, we hear the faint, but rising wail of sirens.

A front door or two slams shut as Todd passes. Suddenly he cuts up between two houses. A man standing in his back yard sees Todd and freezes. Todd ignores him. He steers the bike through the yard and picks up the dirt path he has used so many times before.

INT. HOSPITAL - DUSSANDER'S ROOM - DAY

From above we see Dussander's eyes, wide open, motionless. Yet the expression on his face is one of odd satisfaction. A doctor pounds on his chest, barks orders. The trauma team prepares the defibrillator, but we know they are too late...

EXT. DIRT PATH - DAY

Todd rides fast over the dry, rocky ground. The wind streaks back his hair. His excitement is as palpable as the grin dancing across his face.

An aerial shot follows him as he angles the bike off the trail and up a steep embankment. As the camera moves ahead of him, we see the crest of the hill, and beyond it...

The freeway, teeming with rush-hour traffic.

BLACK.