

"THE POSTMAN ALWAYS RINGS TWICE"

by

David Mamet

from the novel by

James M. Cain

FADE IN:

1

EXT. ROADSIDE - FALSE DAWN

A covered truck, vintage 1928, speeding down a highway. On the opposite side of the road, FRANK CHAMBERS, seen from the back, carrying a small bag. A roughly dressed, well-built, handsome man in his late thirties, he watches the truck round a curve and disappear.

The sound of a new car approaching round the same curve. The beams of its headlights precede it.

Frank turns to face the car, begins walking backwards, and sticks out his thumb.

2

EXT. TWIN OAKS - GAS STATION - DAY

Frank standing by a 1932 Sedan, an airhose dinging. A SALESMAN, who has been filling his tires, straightens up and returns the hose back to its holder. There is no attendant in sight, as he starts back for the car.

FRANK

Wanna get somethin' to eat?

SALESMAN

Na, I had somethin' last night
it ruint my appetite.

The Salesman starts walking back to the car, checks his pocket watch.

SALESMAN

Besides...I gotta get on down
the road.

FRANK

Okay. Thanks for the ride.

The salesman nods.

FRANK

(as an afterthought)

Hey, come on up, I'll buy you
bromo, cup of tea.

(a beat)

Come on.

SALESMAN

(impressed by the
generosity)

Okay. I can only stay a minute
though.

They start to walk towards the Twin Oaks Diner, a converted house which stands on the same property as the station. The hanging sign in front says: "GAS. EAT. SATISFACTION GUARANTEED."

3

INT. TWIN OAKS TAVERN - DAY

As Frank and the Salesman push through the screen door, NICK PAPADAKIS, the proprietor, a burly Greek of 51, descends a staircase, buttoning his shirt as he comes. He bustles to the door.

NICK
Okay...okay...we open.

Frank slides past him as the Salesman heads for the counter.

FRANK
(looking back at
the Greek)
Where's the john?

Nick points. Frank keeps walking.

FRANK
A bromo for my friend. Gimme
a small steak, two eggs on top,
potatoes, juice...huh?

NICK
Yeh. Right away.

FRANK
A side of toast.
(to Driver)
You take care of that stomach
now...

The Greek is at the counter now, starting to whip up the bromo.

4

INT. TWIN OAKS WASHROOM

Frank is at the sink, shirt off, hair wet. He is drying his chest at the towel rack. He runs his fingers through his hair to comb it; takes his shirt down from the hook behind the door. He moistens his fingers at the sink and draws his collar several times through the wet fingers. He takes a pack of Camels out of his jacket. It's empty. Carefully, Frank replaces it in his shirt pocket.

Then, Frank opens the door a crack, peers out.

ANGLE - POV

The Salesman, just rising from his seat and heading from the door.

SALESMAN

Okay, then.

NICK

Yes, sir.

ANGLE/

Frank closes the door, takes another look at his face in the mirror. Checks his gums, runs his finger around his teeth. Finished, he opens the door.

ANGLE

Frank comes back into the restaurant. Smiling, he sits a cup of coffee and his toast on the counter. Nick is a few steps away.

NICK

We have you steak read' in
a minute.

FRANK

(looking around)

Where's my buddy?

NICK

He lef'.

FRANK

(dumbfounded)

He left...Whadda ya talking
about...?

Before even finishing the sentence Frank bolts from the stool and runs outside to look for the man.

ANGLE - POV NICK

Frank in the parking lot, gazes dejectedly down the road, then turns and starts back into the Twin Oaks.

FRANK

(to himself)

Sonofabitch...

ANGLE - THE COUNTER

Frank sits at the counter, picks up his toast, lets it drop.

NICK

Whatsamatt? You okay?

Frank shakes his head.

FRANK
The guy drove off on me.
(a beat)
How can you understand that?

Nick and Frank shake heads in sympathy. Frank takes a half-hearted bite of food.

Nick comes over and nudges the plate toward him (Meaning: "Eat, you'll feel better.")

Frank starts to butter his toast. The steak appears in the service cutout. Nick takes it and places it in front of Frank. Frank takes a bite of steak.

FRANK
Thank you.

He mutters to himself, picks up his small bag and searches through it.

FRANK
Uh oh...

NICK
Yeh?

FRANK
He took my wallet...I left it in my raincoat in the car...
I can't even pay for this.

A pause.

NICK
Hm.

FRANK
No. You understand? I can't pay you for the breakfast.

NICK
Where you going, anyway?

FRANK
(eating)
Into L.A.

NICK
Why?

FRANK

I was going for this job...
(shakes his head)

The whole thing's in the wallet.
The guy's number, everything.

NICK

What kind a job?

FRANK

Machinist.

Nick looks more closely at Frank, as if inspecting him.

NICK

Ah huh...

Nick gestures: "Back in a moment." Crosses toward the kitchen.

ANGLE

CORA, obliquely seen, at the kitchen work area. Nick comes into the doorway.

NICK

You watch this.

CORA

What?

NICK

You watch. I get a new man for the cars.

Nick gestures: "Watch." (Meaning: "Watch and I'll show you how to do this.")

ANGLE - DINING ROOM

Frank eating. Nick returns, sits down in his previous position.

NICK

How is a food?

FRANK

Very good. Great.

A beat.

NICK

(extending hand)

Nick Papadakis.

FRANK
(half rising, shakes hands)
Frank Chambers.

Frank sits down again. They assess each other. The ball is in Nick's court.

NICK
(after a beat)
I need a mechanic.

FRANK
Here?

NICK
Yeh. You any good with cars?

FRANK
Uh, yeh. I'll tell you, Nick,
I've got these friends down in L.A...

A beat.

NICK
Uh huh...

FRANK
I got to go down to L.A.

Nick hurt, shrugs.

FRANK
But thank you. Really...and for the meal. It was delicious.

NICK
She make de meal.

Nick gestures back to the kitchen.

ANGLE - POV

Cora in the kitchen, seen through the door. Her back to the camera. She is putting dishes in the sink. She wipes sweat off her brow with her upper arm. Her blouse falls open showing her breast.

ANGLE

Frank looking at Cora, Nick, behind him, having turned back to his work. Frank is entranced. HOLD.

FRANK
The food...delicious.

Cora turns to look at Frank. This is the first anyone has seen of her face. She is very beautiful, unusual looking. Very intense. She looks at Frank for a moment, as if focusing, wondering what he is talking about, then she nods, and goes back to her washing.

ANGLE

Frank and Nick. Frank pats his pocket, takes out empty Camel pack, hunts around for a cigarette.

FRANK

Just as a question, tell me something, Nick, how much would you pay a guy?

Frank finds packet of cigs empty, crumples it in disgust and throws it on the table. Nick offers Frank one of his own cigarettes.

FRANK

Thank you.

NICK

(to Cora)

How much we pay de las' guy?

CORA

Eight dollars.

NICK

Yeah. Eight dollars, room and board, and you say you like my wife's cooking.

FRANK

Your wife?

NICK

(gesturing proudly
at Cora)

Yeh!

Frank thinks for a second. Decides. Slaps the table.

FRANK

Tell you what. I'm going to try to track my guy down in L.A. If that doesn't pan out, I'll head back here and take you up on it.

NICK

(a little hurt)

Well, okay, if we still got it.

4

FRANK
And I'll send you the money
back in any case, eh? For
the breakfast.

Getting up and clearing out.

FRANK
(to Cora in
kitchen)
Goodbye, now...!

As Frank reaches the screen door, a CAR pulls to a stop outside, and an OLD COUPLE exit the car headed for the diner.

5

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Frank standing by the side of the road. The Twin Oaks down the road a bit.

A Chevy passes Frank and is heard slowing and stopping.

ANGLE

Frank, and the car 40 feet beyond him. He starts to walk toward the car. The Driver leans across and opens the passenger door. Frank turns back, looks for a moment at the Twin Oaks, then looks back to the car.

6

OMITTED

6A

INT. TWIN OAKS - GARAGE - DAY

Nick comes through the door to the side room, followed by Frank. The sparsely furnished room has a cot and a chair and a light bulb hanging. Nick carries Frank's bag, puts it on the bed. His manner indicates the ever-smart businessman -- he knew all the time that Frank would take the job.

NICK
We get you a sheet and a blanket.

FRANK
Thank you.

Nick reaches down a pair of coveralls ("Phil") from the wall and hands them to Frank.

NICK
Here! They're clean.

FRANK
Thank you.

6A Nick gives Frank a perfunctory nod ("anything for those people who treat me correctly.") and turns to go.

7 ANGLE - EXT. GARAGE - DAY

Frank, his shirtsleeves rolled up, near the door of the garage, working a tire off its rim. A car is heard pulling into the station. Frank makes a motion to the driver (indicating "I'm coming!"). The car is an old pick-up truck, the DRIVER, a daddy in a Hawaiian shirt, is on vacation. His young, plump, unattractive WIFE sits next to him. TWO KIDS in the back, adn an assortment of beach gear.

Frank drops the tire and starts toward the car.

PICK-UP DRIVER
How far to the beach?

FRANK
(pointing down the road)
"Bout an hour.

PICK-UP DRIVER
Okay. Fill 'er up.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A cat by the screen door. Cora takes clean dishes from a sink rack and crosses to shelve them. The drone of Nick and an INSURANCE SALESMAN is heard in the next room. Cora turns to look at them disgustedly as she passes the service window.

8A INT. DINER - DAY

Nick and the Insurance Salesman seated at the counter.
(Note: Dialogue here will overlap Scene 8B - Frank and Cora)

NICK
(professorial)
Ah, Ah, I hadda las'year.

SALESMAN
No. Last year you had fire, no theft, no liability.

NICK
An' why I nedda now?

SALESMAN
You should have had it then.
Suppose a customer comes in and there's... a spot of grease on the floor, alright?

NICK
No, I'm sorry. No grease
onna floor.

SALESMAN
I'm saying just suppose...

NICK
No, suppose something else...

SALESMAN
Alright: Suppose it's raining...

NICK
Alright.

SALESMAN
Good. A man comes in here...and the
floor is slick. There's nothing you
can do about it, mop it every ten minutes,
it still gets wet... He's sitting down...
He slips.

NICK
Goddamn it.

SALESMAN
That's right. And he sues you.

NICK
Is his fault.

SALESMAN
You're damn right. But who pays.
You. And that's why we have liability
insurance...to protect you. It's
only sense. It's self-protection.
Western Equitable protects over two
thousand small businessmen in
Southern California with this program
I am going to show you.

NICK
What program?

SALESMAN
Your maximum/minimum. Now: what does
this mean?

NICK
What does it mean?

SALESMAN

I'm going to tell you. The maximum coverage for the minimum premium. Now, every representative is going to tell you he can do that for you. Can he? I don't think so. No. Let's look at some figures here. Alright. Fire, theft, liability. Your major area of danger...

8B

INT. KITCHEN - DAY (NOTE: Scene overlaps 8A above)

Cora is stacking cans in the storage area. She hears a noise and looks up.

ANGLE - POV

Frank is standing on the other side of the screen.

ANGLE

Cora and Frank beyond the screen:

CORA

What are you doing here?

A beat.

FRANK

I want some hand soap.

CORA

Go use the john.

FRANK

(he displays grease covered hands)

I'm gonna get it filthy.

CORA

Well, I don't have any hand soap.

She moves over to the sink.

Frank opens the screen door and comes in.

CORA

I'll have him get some when he goes in the next time.

FRANK

Sorry to bother you.

CORA

(conciliatory)

Do you want a cup of coffee?

FRANK
Thank you.

Cora goes to stove to get coffee.

ANGLE - POV FRANK

Nick and the Salesman seen through the cutout.

CORA (V.O.)
You want milk?

ANGLE

Frank and Cora. Cora holding the cup of coffee.

FRANK
This is a very nice place
you've got, Mrs. Pakadupis.

Cora nods. Just about what she expected.

CORA
Papadakis.

FRANK
Yeah. I'm sorry. Papadakis.
What are you...Greek?

CORA
Do I look Greek to you?

FRANK
No, ma'am.

Cora nods ("That's correct.")

FRANK
What would you like me to call
you?

CORA
I guess you can call me 'Cora'.

She lifts up coffee and starts to bring it to him.

INT. UPSTAIRS STUDY - NIGHT

Nick and Frank are in the Greek's sitting room, a bottle
of wine and glasses in front of them. Cora is ironing
in the storage area, near some packing cases. The cat is
on the seat next to Nick. Nick ignores the animal.

NICK

A man...a man need to have a home...
(IN GREEK, T.K.: The home is the
center of the universe.)...
(in English)

A man have got to have a home.

Nick notices the cat, shoos it off the chair.

NICK

Yeah, yeah, you travel, eh?
Alright. A time come, an
then...eh?

Nick gestures meaning: "I don't need to finish this thought. You know what I'm talking about." He pours out the last of a bottle into Frank's glass.

NICK

(to Cora)
Give a man some wine.

CORA

It's in the cupboard if he wants it.

NICK

(oblivious to
her response)

Eh, Frank. I know you
travelling man, eh? I
was too. I' been everyplace.
I speak six language.

(to Cora)
Go get de wine.

Cora, nodding to herself, goes to the cupboard near Nick. NICK'S VOICE can be overheard, repeating the same Greek phrase. Cora reaches down on a lower shelf for the wine. Takes out a bottle of retsina.

ANGLE

Frank surreptitiously watching her.

ANGLE

Cora puts wine bottle on table.

NICK

You know what that is?

CORA

What?

FRANK

Thank you.

NICK
(again, he repeats
the Greek phrase)
Eh? You know what that means?

CORA
No.

Cora returns to her ironing. Nick nods, (meaning: "What can you expect?")

NICK
Frank, never mock a man talk funny. I talk English better than she talk Greek. Eh?

Nick pours more wine for himself and Frank.

FRANK
Thank you.

ANGLE - POV FRANK

Cora at the ironing board, rubbing her temples, very tired and with more work to do.

ANGLE

Frank, turning back, listening to Nick, Cora in b.g.

NICK
Frank...dis country...eh...?
Is no...
(gropes for the word)
Ideas here.
(holds up a finger)
Opportunity...yeah! Dey got.
But no happiness.

Nick grows sullen.

NICK
You don' know what I say.
Alright. Alright.

Nick lifts glass. Cora lifts her head and looks at Nick. She has heard this all before and, obviously, will have to hear it all again.

NICK
What we drink to?

Nick gestures to Frank.

FRANK
To friendship!

0

EXT. THE GARAGE - NIGHT

The window of Frank's room. Dust blowing against the window. He is standing behind the window in a dark room, looking up at something across the way. A record of Greek music is heard playing faintly.

ANGLE - POV

The exterior of the Twin Oaks. The upstairs window of Nick and Cora, lit. Cora in a flimsy nightdress lounging in the window seat, reading a magazine. Nick enters the frame of the window dressed in a flashy dressing gown, singing along, rather well, with the record. He's slicking his hair back. He stops singing and says something to Cora. She turns to him.

A THWACKING SOUND is heard.

ANGLE

Frank turns his head to identify the sound.

ANGLE - POV

The Twin Oaks sign swinging wildly in the wind.

ANGLE

Frank looking at the sign. He turns his eyes back to Cora's room.

ANGLE - POV

Nick and Cora's room, now dark.

11

EXT. ROADSIDE IN FRONT OF TWIN OAKS - DAY

Frank and Nick gazing down at something in the dirt.

NICK
Goddamn sonofabitch thief.

FRANK
Get a new one. I'd go get
a new one.

ANGLE

Frank and Nick, the blown-down "TWIN OAKS" sign at their feet.

NICK
I am get a new one, and
that sonofabitch hang it the
first time, he pay for it.

FRANK

You know what I'd get?
Neon. Something a little flashy...
pull some business in.

NICK

(uncomprehending)

Neon.

FRANK

A neon sign. You know... the
skinny colored...things.

NICK

Ah...neon.

Nick makes a line with his hand (meaning: "I knew what you were talking about all the time.")

NICK

(sadly)

They all try to cheat a foreigner.

Nick makes a gesture (meaning: "But I am more than equal to them, and they only cheat themselves.")

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Cora standing by the work table making bread. Frank enters from the diner, carrying dishes, puts them down on the sink.

CORA

Thank you.

Frank nods, goes out to the diner, comes back with more dishes.

CORA

When will he be back?

FRANK

He didn't tell me.

Cora nods, moves to the tap, near Frank, fills a glass with water, drinks.

FRANK

Hot today.

Some of the water spills on her blouse, making it a bit transparent.

ANGLE

Frank looking at her breasts. Cora notices this, turns away, puts the glass down with a gesture (meaning: "Well,

back to work"), and returns to the bread.

A door is heard being rattled in the front of the restaurant.

ANGLE - POV

A WOMAN trying to get in the front door of the tavern. We see that a sign has been turned to read: "CLOSED".

ANGLE - CORA AND FRANK

CORA
Is that door locked?

FRANK
Hm...I must have locked it.

Cora starts into the front of the restaurant, followed by Frank. The Woman is seen getting back into her car outside as Frank and Cora enter the room.

CORA
That's money down the drain,
now, isn't it?

Cora turns and goes back toward the kitchen.

FRANK
I suppose it is, yeah. If you want to look at it that way.

CORA
It's not your money, either.
Is it?

FRANK
No.

Cora stops.

CORA
Go open it.

A beat.

CORA
Did you hear me?

Frank moves to her and starts to embrace her.

CORA
What???

12

He kisses her hard, pushes her against the door frame between the kitchen and the diner. Cora thrusts her hands down the back of his jeans and starts pulling him to her.

CORA
Come on...

ANGLE

They are still embracing. He carries her into the kitchen, sweeps several loaves of bread off the work table, puts her up on the table, and starts to get on top of her.

CORA
Wait.

She brushes all the bread and utensils off onto the floor.

CORA
Yes. Come on. Yes.

16 &
16A

OMITTED

16B

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

Frank is leaning against a tree. The Twin Oaks can be seen in the background, down the hill. The lake is also visible in the b.g. Frank is staring intently ahead.

ANGLE

Revealing Cora, seated on a tree stump six feet away from him, happy, a mug of coffee in her hand, smoking.

FRANK
Can I ask you a question?
What are you doing with this guy ,
anyway?

CORA
(self-protective)
What do you care?

FRANK
(after a shrug)
I'm just asking you...I mean,
we spend some time together...
you say some things to me...
that's fine... and then at
night, you go upstairs with him.

16B

CORA
I'm married to him.

FRANK
That's what I'm asking you.

CORA
I go upstairs with him. It doesn't mean a thing to me.

FRANK
It means something to me
is what I'm saying.

Cora sighs. After a beat:

CORA
I won a beauty pageant. I came out here on the Super Chief. Guys took my picture.
(a beat)
Two weeks later I was working on a hash house.

FRANK
Uh huh...

CORA
I used to go out after work with guys. You understand?

FRANK
Yeah.

CORA
I spent two years in that place, Frank.
(a beat)
One day the boss's cousin ast me would I marry him.

FRANK
What are you telling me, Cora,
you can't take care of yourself?

Frank starts away from her down the hill. As he turns away:

FRANK
You're breaking my heart.

7 EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

Nick, dressed as an entrepreneur, going for a day in town. He gets into his car, which is standing, door open, motor running, in front of the Tavern. Cora is saying goodbye to him. Nick gets in.

ANGLE

Frank sitting out in front of the garage. Nick driving toward him slowly, waving.

NICK
'Neon!'...I see you tomorrow.

Frank returns Nick's wave.

18

INT. GARAGE - DAY

In his dirty work clothes, Frank sits on the bed, playing a game of solitaire. A SOUND at the door. He looks up to see Cora, standing in the door between the garage and Frank's room. She closes the door behind her.

CORA
(warmly)
What do you want to do
this afternoon?

FRANK
I'm doing it.

Continues his hand of solitaire.

CORA
You want some company?
(a beat)
You want some company?

Frank lays down his cards.

FRANK
You want to be with me?
Is that what you're saying...?

A beat.

CORA
Yes.

Frank rises, crosses to the door, near Cora, opens it.

FRANK
Good. Go pack a bag, we're going to
Chicago.
(a beat)
D'you hear me. Go on. We're getting
out of here.

Frank exits the garage room. Hold for a moment on Cora in the doorway, very surprised.

18

EXT. GARAGE - DAY - LATER

Frank dressed in a cheap suit, a small suitcase by his side, smoking a cigarette, looking at the back of the Twin Oaks.

Cora rounds the corner, dressed well for travelling, carrying a suitcase.

19

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Frank and Cora walk down the road. A car whizzes by them. Slowly, she takes his hand. He smiles. Another approaching car is heard.

They turn to hitch a ride. Frank moves in front of her.

FRANK

Lemme stand first, or else it looks cheap.

20

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Frank and Cora walking purposefully down the street Frank holding Cora's hand.

As they pass an alley, a soup kitchen is set up: many men are standing in line. One man is looking their way, impassively.

ANGLE - POV - SOUP KITCHEN MAN

Frank and Cora passing the mouth of the alley. Happy, well-gotten up, Cora's skirt blowing. She looks at them disdainfully.

ANGLE

Past the alley, Frank and Cora walking down the street.

CORA

I used to work near here.

(a beat)

You got a cigarette?

21

EXT. CITY STREET - BUS STATION - DAY

Frank and Cora coming into the seedy bus station. He is holding her arm, they look almost married. Standing by their pick-up truck, A FARM COUPLE is seeing off their YOUNG SON. He is dressed to go off to the Army, it is an uncomfortable scene.

INT. BUS STATION - DAY

Cora and Frank come through the door into the bus station. It is sparsely populated. An OLD COLORED WOMAN and her

22
YOUNG DAUGHTER, who is crying. The COLORED WOMAN remonstrates her. A young, emaciated, frightened FARM GIRL sits primly with her suitcase on the seat next to her. A FAT ARMY SERGEANT is eating a candy bar and reading a comic book.

They walk up to the TICKET SELLER WINDOW.

FRANK
(under his breath)
How much money you got?

CORA
(proud)
A hundred ten dollars...
it's all mine. I saved it.

TICKET SELLER
Yes sir.

FRANK
Two to Chicago. How much?

TICKET SELLER
Fifty-one-fifty.

Frank gestures to Cora to give him some money. She digs in purse.

FRANK
When's the next bus?

TICKET SELLER
Right there.

He points to announcement board behind Frank.

ANGLE - POV

THE BOARD. Glendale Lv. 5:28
 Barstow Lv. 6:11
 San Fran. Lv. 6:48
 Chicago Lv. 7:23

ANGLE

Frank handing the money to the seller.

TICKET SELLER
Thank you.
(stamps tickets,
gives change to Frank)
Have a good trip.

Frank and Cora walking away from the window.

They find a spot and sit down.

3

INT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

Frank and Cora have been waiting over an hour.

FRANK
You want something to read?

CORA
Sure.

Frank gets up and starts toward the magazine rack. As he approaches the rack, he hears off the screen: "Little Joe. We're looking for a four." He turns to find the sound.

ANGLE - POV

Four men outside the alley shooting craps: A SAILOR, A SALESMAN, A TOWN BOY (young, black), A TRAVELLER. An OLD BLACK MAN looks silently on.

SAILOR
No dice.

TRAVELLER
(enraged)
What!?

SAILOR
No dice. House?

SALESMAN
Shoot again.

TRAVELLER
The fuck...

TOWN BOY
Didn't cross that line...

ANGLE

Frank looks on at the crap game. He turns back, distracted, to the magazines.

TRAVELLER (V.O.)
We're looking for a four.

ANGLE

Cora sitting on the bench. Frank carrying magazines, approaching her.

CORA
(happy)

What are we going to do when we get
there?

Frank hands her the magazines.

FRANK
We're gonna drop the stuff
off...

CORA
Yeah...?

FRANK
...we're gonna take a nap...

CORA
...uh huh...

FRANK
I'm gonna make a call or two,
and then we're gonna meet some people.
Lemme have a couple bucks.

CORA
What?

FRANK
Gimme a couple bucks. It's
alright. I'll be right back...
Just let me have a couple bucks.

Reluctantly, she goes into her purse, gives him some
money.

24 EXT. BEHIND BUS STATION - NIGHT

Frank comes through door. The crap game. The Salesman
shooting.

SALESMAN
A nine. Four ways nine.

FRANK
(putting down money)
No nine.

SAILOR
How much?

FRANK
Five.

SAILOR
Shoot.

ANGLE - BUS STATION

Cora sitting at her bench.

ANGLE - BEHIND BUS STATION

Frank rises from the game.

FRANK

Don't touch the money.

As Frank walks away.

SAILOR

Okay--no nine. Who wants it?
Five bucks.

TRAVELLER

I got it.

ANGLE - BUS STATION

Frank, excited, preoccupied, coming through the door back into the bus station. Cora, sitting, her hat off, reading a magazine, another on the bench next to her.

FRANK

Gimme some money.

CORA

Frank...

FRANK

We're getting lucky. Those guys
don't know craps from wheat or something...
Come on.

CORA

I'm not giving it to you.

A beat.

FRANK

What?

CORA

I...Frank...I can't go out there
broke, Frank...I...

FRANK

Come on...I...no,no,no,
I got a bet to cover, eh?
Come on. I got no time to talk.

A beat.

CORA

No. I don't know how you can
do this...Frank...

FRANK

Will you, for chrissake...

CORA

No! I am not going out there broke.
I saved that money...

Frank breaks away from her and goes to the ticket window.
Cora sees where he is going and comes after him.

CORA

What are you doing?

FRANK

Two for San Francisco.

He holds up tickets.

FRANK

I'm trading these in.

CLERK

San Francisco...

He consults charts.

CORA

Wait...wait...we're goin' to Chicago.

FRANK

Not anymore. You wanna give
me money?

CORA

No.

CLERK

And that is thirty-seven dollars
change to you.

Hands tickets.

FRANK

Thank you.

Frank starts toward game.

CORA

But, but, no, you said your friends
are in Chicago.

4

FRANK
Hey, hey, I got friends in
Chicago, I got friends in Duluth.
Now I'm gonna show you something.
Siddown.

Frank disappears through door into the crap game.

SHOOTER
Alright.

FRANK
Are we ready now, huh? Anybody
else?

ANGLE

Cora standing alone and dejected in the bus station.

25

EXT. REAR OF BUS STATION - NIGHT

The crap game. Frank raking in money on the ground in front of him.

FRANK
And that is to the winner.
Shooting Ten.
(lays down some money)
Who wants some?

SAILOR
Take two.

FRANK
Two the man says.

SALESMAN
Three.

FRANK
Three..alright. Five left.
Come on, Who wants some?
Alright. I'm shooting. Five.

FRANK
A seven. A sure winner.
(he takes the money in)
Phew. I musta stepped in something
today,...cause I sure got lucky.
Whew!
(he drops dice)
Men...
(starts off)

SAILOR
Where you going?

5

FRANK

Thought I'd get back to my wife and kid,
I left them there to play this fiendish
game.

SAILOR

You leavin' with the money?

FRANK

Well I won it.

SAILOR

Hey...I want a shot to get it
back.

A beat. The Sailor pushes Frank slightly.

FRANK

Fuck you, Captain. I'm leavin'
now.

The Sailor goes into his pocket, as if to draw a knife or
a razor or something.

FRANK

Well, you bes' come out with a
battleship, Jim, if you wanna go
around with me. You see? I won
this money.

Frank fronts off to him, waiting to see if he'll want to
make the first move. The Sailor does not choose to.

FRANK

Huh...? ...alright?

(a beat)

Good meeting with you.

Frank backs away, and re-enters the bus station. No
Cora, no bags, no magazines. He traverses the station
looking for her. The place is near empty. He walks on.

26

EXT. BUS STATION - NIGHT

Frank exiting, can't find her. He looks both ways. Now
he's left alone, dejected.

27

EXT. TWO LANE ROAD - NEXT MORNING

A car heads down the road. It's very early morning.

8

EXT. ROADSIDE NEAR TWIN OAKS - DAY

The car stops, engine running. Frank Chambers gets out
of the passenger seat, slams door, begins to walk
determinedly toward the diner. The car drives off.

28

ANGLE - POV

The front door. As Frank moves toward it, and Nick comes out wiping his hands on his apron, he fixes his gaze on Frank and walks toward him as if for a confrontation.

NICK
You son of a bitch...You no good son of a bitch...eh?

Frank and Nick a pace away from each other.

NICK
Eh? You go to tom cat...

Nick makes a Greek "penis" sign, making a fist and grasping his forearm. Nick smiles, throws his arm around Frank's shoulder, and begins to walk into the restaurant.

NICK
Eh? I'm stupid.
(whispering to Frank)
Any time you need to go into town
you tell me. Eh? You know...maybe
some time...

Nick mimes that perhaps he and Frank might go into town together. Nick playfully slaps Frank on the cheek.

NICK
You hungry, eh? I bet you hungry.

Nick leers at Frank. Clasps his arm around his shoulder. They walk into the diner.

29

INT. DINER - DAY

Behind the counter, Cora has stopped work and is looking at Frank confused and wistful.

NICK
(to Cora)
You make him something strong.

Nick going back into kitchen. As Frank sits at the counter:

CORA
Hello, Frank.

FRANK
Hello, Cora.

Cora nods and starts back into the kitchen with some plates.

30

EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

Later that day, Nick directs the efforts of the CREW which

is lowering the NEW TWIN OAKS SIGN into the ground. A crane, a lot of "Hold it. Back it up. Etc."

Frank working out in front of the garage, a car pulls up for service.

31

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Cora at the work table, looking out of the window.

ANGLE - POV

Frank is filling up a customer's gas tank.
Cora puts down her work and goes to the back door.

32

EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

Frank, wiping his hands, as the car pulls away. He begins to walk toward back of Twin Oaks. The sign is now standing, ONE OF THE SIGN MEN near the controls, Nick beaming up proudly at the sign.

NICK
(gestures triumphantly)
Hokay, you try him.

The Sign Man throws the switch. Nothing happens. Nick turns angrily to him.

NICK
Hey...hey...

SIGN MAN
That's okay.

The Sign Man starts to walk toward the fusebox, mounted on the kitchen side of the building, second story.

NICK
Hey, waddya think you...?

SIGN MAN
It's okay. It's not the sign. We'll have it in a second. It's the hookup.

Frank passes the Sign Man, who is pointing out the fusebox.

33

EXT. REAR TWIN OAKS - DAY

Cora hanging up laundry. Frank rounds the corner. She looks at him a moment. He comes over to her.

He takes an envelope from the pocket of his coveralls, hands it to her. She hesitates, then takes it. Nick can be seen in the background loudly exclaiming in Greek:

73
("Yes! Yes! It's going to last a thousand years."),
as the neon sign flickers to life.

Cora opens the envelope. It is full of five dollar bills, probably a hundred and fifty dollars.

CORA
He would have found us anyway.

Frank takes the envelope and stuffs it into the pocket of her dress.

CORA
He would have followed us, and he would have found us, Frank. You don't know him.

(a beat)
He's a son of a bitch. It's not you, Frank. It's him. I swear. I'm sorry I ran out on you.

She grabs him.

CORA
(a bit hysterical)
What are we going to do? I got to have you, Frank. If he was gone... if it was only you and me...

She starts kissing him passionately. Frank pushes her away, not having any.

CORA
If it was only us...

FRANK
That's very convenient.

Sadly, Cora takes a few steps away. Nick is seen in the background, walking backwards, staring up at the sign.

NICK
Yes. Yes. Good!

He throws up his arms in approval. He looks around for someone to share his triumph. He sees Cora.

NICK
(jubilant)
Hey! Come here.

33 Cora turns away. She shakes her head sadly ("Grow up, Nick").

A beat. She doesn't respond. Nick repeats his command.

NICK
(very angry)
Come here!

Another beat. Like a beaten dog, Cora turns and slowly walks toward Nick.

ANGLE ON FRANK

Taking all of this in.

34 EXT. FRONT OF TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

The new sign, fully illuminated, Nick Papadakis, smoking a cigar, standing out in the parking area looking proudly at it. He turns.

ANGLE - POV

Frank Chambers, smoking a cigarette, sitting near the garage, also looking at the sign.

ANGLE - FRANK AND NICK

Nick salutes Frank ("See what man may accomplish...?") Frank returns the salute ("Nick, you are a great man.") Nick walks back into the building.

ANGLE - FRANK

Frank quits the step, gets up slowly, reaches back into the garage door and comes out with an empty sugar bag. Holding the sugar bag, Frank gets up and starts to walk towards the garage area. He glances up at Nick's window.

ANGLE - POV

Through the lighted window, Frank can see Nick entering his room. Nick is singing a Greek popular song.

5 INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Frank sorts through a sectioned box of ball bearings. He selects some and empties them into the sugar bag. He lifts a piece of twine from the work area, takes a small claspknife from his jeans pocket, cuts the twine, and ties the end of the sugar bag. Nick can still be heard singing.

5A

EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

35A

Frank, holding the sugar bag, rounding the corner toward the back of the Twin Oaks. Cora is standing there.

FRANK
(softly)
Alright?

She nods. He hands her the sugar bag.

FRANK
Twice for danger.

She nods.

FRANK
And the door?

CORA
Locked from the inside.

FRANK
And then down the ladder
and that's it.

CORA
Do you love me, Frank?

FRANK
Yeah. You know I do.
(a beat)
Everything's going to be alright.

CORA
Don't tell me that.

A beat. Cora tries to smile at Frank, turns, goes to the back entrance to the kitchen.

ANGLE

Frank jogging across the yard to the back of the garage. He grabs a ladder laying on the ground.

36

INT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Cora is stealthily climbing the stairs to the apartment. Nick is heard singing.

37

EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Gingerly, silently, Frank puts the ladder up against the bathroom window sill.

38

INT. TWIN OAKS - POV CORA - NIGHT

The top of the staircase, the bedroom door ajar.

ANGLE

From the bedroom door, across the bedroom, the open bathroom door, Nick just seen in the bathtub, singing, soaping himself.

ANGLE

Cora, holding the sugar bag, comes into the bedroom.

39

EXT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Frank, smoking a cigarette, lounged up against Nick's car. He glances up at bathroom window.

40

INT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Through the crack between the door and the wall Cora watches Nick bathe. She starts to move into the bathroom.

41

EXT. GARAGE - NIGHT

Frank glancing up at window. He hears an engine, he turns.

ANGLE POV

A MOTORCYCLE COP comes up the road, slows as he goes past the Twin Oaks, turns and starts coming back.

ANGLE - POV

The bathroom window.

ANGLE

The Cop on his cycle next to Frank.

COP

Yo!

Frank nods.

COP

You know I had to stop here,
didn't you ...? But she is a
beauty.

The Cop turns and looks at new sign.

COP

How long you had her?

FRANK
Just today.

A low plaintive moan is heard from the direction of the house. Frank and the Cop turn, look towards the roof of the house.

COP
Whuzzat?

FRANK
Sounds like the cat...

They turn, spy the cat moving on the roof, near the ladder.

FRANK
Yeah. There!

COP
...just like babies crying
sometime, don't they?

FRANK
Yes they do.

The Cop takes his cycle of the kickstand. He's having a good time, shooting the breeze.

COP
(reluctant to leave)
Waal...I suppose I'm goin' to work.

FRANK
We all got to.

A beat.

COP
That's for sure.
(sighs)
You take care, now!

FRANK
Yessir!

Frank waves. Cop puts cycle in gear, and drives off.

As the cycle disappears down the road, Frank springs for the car, honks horn twice. He hears a GREAT ELECTRICAL SIZZLE, and the sign and all the lights in the Twin Oaks go out.

2

INT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Frank bursting in through the back door and running up the stairs in the dark. At the top of the stairs:

FRANK
(whispers)
Cora...?

No answer. Frank goes into the bathroom. Cora is just seen, outlined against the window, standing next to the tub.

CORA
I hit him.

Nick is unconscious, under the water in the tub. Frank starts pulling him out, the ball bearings are scattered on the floor.

FRANK
Oh my God...

CORA
What happened, Frank?
I hit him and it went dark...

FRANK
(pulling Nick out of the tub)
Get an ambulance. Come on.
Come on, the cop saw everything.

CORA
What cop? What cop? Oh
Christ...

FRANK
Get on the phone, you hear me...?

CORA
We're gonna die for this... I knew
we were...

Frank slaps her.

FRANK
You hear me...

The throws her out of the room and starts ministering to Nick, who is now sprawled half-in, half-out of the tub.

FRANK
Nick...Nick... hey, wake up.
Wake up, Nick.

42

Frank reaches over and pulls the plug.

FRANK

I'm talking to you, Nicholas.
Wake up! Wake up, you fuckin'
wheeze.

Frank starts slapping Nick.

43

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

A door at the end of the corridor. It opens and an OLD DOCTOR comes out reading a chart. A moment, then a DOCTOR comes out leading Cora.

ANGLE

The corridor, Frank, sitting down a hall near the Nurses' station. At the station, the same Motorcycle Cop looks up in thought, sees Frank, gazes at him wonderingly.

Cora appears next to Frank. Frank stands up.

44

INT. NICK'S AUTO - NIGHT

Frank driving, Cora riding, both grim-faced. A beat in silence.

CORA

I mean, what are we? That we thought we could kill a man...?

FRANK

Alright.

CORA

Yeah, we were just lucky that he doesn't know what hit him, all he knows is that it went dark... if he'da turned around they would have hanged us for it, Frank.

Frank glances in the rear-view mirror.

ANGLE - POV - FRANK

The mirror empty.

CORA

And something put that cop there, Frank. I thank God we've been saved from this. It was an act of God those lights went out.

4 Frank nods angrily, (meaning: "Just shut up.")

ANGLE - POV FRANK

Now in the rear-view mirror, Frank can see a police motorcycle trailing them. Cora, notices and starts to turn in her seat. Frank puts a hand on her.

FRANK
Don't look back.

5 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Frank's car, followed by the Motorcycle Cop, pulling into the parking lot. Frank gets out of the car. The cop moves to Frank, stops in front of him, dismounts and points toward the Twin Oaks.

COP
What's that ladder doing there?

Frank is apparently surprised at the ladder.

FRANK
I don't know.

The cop crosses to inspect the ladder, Frank, a respectful distance away. The Cop glances at Frank, unbuttons holster, takes out a flashlight, turns it on, and starts to climb. Frank looks at Cora, still in the car.

The cop climbs the ladder.

COP
(at the second story)
Commere.

Frank walks over to the ladder, looks up. Cop takes out his nightstick, pokes it at something, which falls with a thud at Frank's feet.

The CAT in the dirt, dead from electric shock. The Cop clammers back down. He and Frank walk back toward the cycle.

COP
You got the cover off the fusebox up there. Son of a gun stepped right on it, killed him deader'n hell.

FRANK
How about that...I guess somebody left the cover off.

COP
It looks like that...

Frank and the Cop are now at his cycle. In the background, Cora is getting out of the car.

COP
I'm sorry about your husband, Ma'am.

CORA
Thank you.

Cop revs up the cycle, touches the brim of his hat, drives off.

46 INT. CORA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Cora in bed, waking up. She looks around the room, looks down at Frank, sleeping. She leans back, content. The telephone downstairs begins to ring. She gets out of bed, naked.

Frank, waking up, sees Cora walking to the closet. She is hurrying now, putting on a man's bathrobe. As she exits, she gives Frank a big smile, which he returns.

ANGLE

Frank sitting up in bed. The telephone downstairs stops. He looks around the room: the window, the bureau with photographs of men in Greek costume, the Victrola, Cora's vanity table -- curling irons, powder puff, cigarettes -- the open closet with rows of the Greek's shoes in it.

Frank swing out of bed. He goes over to the closet and closes the door on the shoes. He gets back into bed.

Cora comes back into the room.

CORA
He's gonna be okay.

She smiles. She drops her robe as he makes room for her under the sheets, holding then up. She starts to slip into bed.

CORA
He's gonna be inside the hospital
a week.

4 OMITTED

7A

EXT. LAKE - DAY

Frank and Cora are out in a rowboat in the middle of the water. Frank is at the oars. The tone is private and relaxed.

CORA

He said: 'I understand you are going to play the trumpet.'

FRANK

Were you?

CORA

No. I can't play the trumpet.

FRANK

So what did you say?

CORA

I didn't say a thing. So he says, 'Why don't you come over to my room tonight and I can have a preview?'

FRANK

And did you go?

CORA

What do you think?

FRANK

I bet you went.

CORA

I didn't go. The next day, though, I see him say 'I'm gonna do a dance today, but if you want I could come over to the hotel after and then play the trumpet?'

FRANK

So what did he do?

CORA

He gave me the first prize for the talent competition.

FRANK

And then did you go to the hotel?

CORA

What do you think?

FRANK
I think you didn't go.

CORA
I didn't go.

FRANK
(after a beat)
What was first prize.

CORA
(laughing)
A trip to L.A.

48

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Dressed to go to the hospital, Cora comes out of the bathroom, setting down the hairbrush. Frank is standing by the door to the stairs. She goes to him and he kisses her. She picks up her hat and a small suitcase off the bed and starts for the door.

FRANK
Give him my love.

Cora nods, stops in the doorway.

CORA
Shit!

She puts the suitcase on the bed, opens it, goes hurriedly to the bureau, and takes down a small framed picture of a woman in a traditional Greek dress, puts it in the suitcase and hurries out of the room.

FRANK
(grinning)
You come back soon. I've got something I want to show you.

CORA
(leaving, grinning)
Look after the place.

49

EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

Frank is sitting happily on the porch of the Twin Oaks, his straight-backed chair leaned up against the wall, thumbing through a deck of cards, making up his own sort of solitaire, smoking. Faintly, he hears what sounds like a bicycle bell and looks up toward the road. He sees a BOY SCOUT on a bicycle rounding the bend and proceeding down the highway. The Boy Scout waves. Frank waves. As he goes back to his solitaire, his eye is

caught by several other BOY SCOUTS rounding the bend on bicycles. MORE BOY SCOUTS follow. Frank watches, they stream past the Twin Oaks.. A WHISTLE is heard three times, the lead Boy Scout turns and the group veers off the road adn back to the area of the Twin Oaks. They head toward the diner and Frank.

50 INT. DINER - DAY

Frank in the kitchen furiously making 40 tuna fish sandwiches. FORTY BOY SCOUTS, happy, perhaps having a food fight, seen through the cut-out.

The door to the kitchen SLAMS. Frank turns around. Cora, returned from the hospital, stands in the door, taken aback by what she see in the restaurant.

FRANK
Cut pie. Little portions.

51 EXT. OPEN AIR VEGETABLE MARKET - SHED - DAY

CLOSE on Cora's face deep in concentration. She taps her teeth rhythmically with a pencil. Thinking hard, she comes to a decision.

ANGLE

Cora standing in a shaded area of a vegetable market beside a crate of avocados. She lowers the pencil and makes a notation in her notebook. She nods to herself, continues wlaking out of the penumbra of the shed and into the sunlight. Frank is seen surveying the scene, eating an apple. Cora walks into the next partition of the shed. Frank follows her.

51A EXT. MUSIC STORE - DAY

Frank and Cora on the street. Cora looking into the window of the music store at a display of records. Frank looking at Cora. Cora decides and walks into the store. Frank follows.

52 INT. MUSIC STORE - DAY

Frank and Cora at the counter, looking at records.

CORA
I think I'm gonna buy this. I like this. It's music. All that stuff he has is foreign, something... What do you think? What kind of music do you like ?

FRANK
I hate music.

CORA
You do?

FRANK
Yeah.

CORA
Why?

FRANK
It doesn't mean anything.

ANGLE - RECORD BOOTH

Frank and Cora listening to AVALON. Happy, both enthusiastically shuffling through records. Frank finds a record he likes, shows it to Cora.

FRANK
Huh?

CORA
Yeah.

FRANK
Put it on.

AN IRATE WOMAN is standing outside the booth trying to get in. She motions to FLOORWALKER, who is seen coming over as Cora puts on "Gee, Baby, Ain't I Good to You?" Frank and Cora begin to move in time to the record as Floorwalker knocks on glass. Frank looks up, nods, makes Shhhing gesture, floorwalker knocks again.

ANGLE - EXT. MUSIC BOOTH

Frank reluctantly opening door.

FLOORWALKER
There are people waiting to use the booth.

FRANK
There are people using the booth.
What are we, pigs that go 'oink'?
We're buying records.

FLOORWALKER
You're monopolizing the booth.

FRANK
(to floorwalker)
You've got some records here that are defective. We're culling 'em out for you.
(to Cora)

Show 'em that one.

She holds up record.

CORA
It's scratched.

FRANK
And there you are. We're both concerned about one thing, here: Purity; Tempo, Purity and Sound. And now excuse us, we'll see you on the way out. Thank you...

He closes the door on the Floorwalker. After a beat, the confused Floorwalker turns and walks away. Frank and Cora are seen inside the booth, laughing.

53

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Frank and Cora in bed, bunched up at the headboard under the bedclothes. She is wearing a flannel night gown, he is wearing a nightshirt. He has his arm around her. They are both staring straight ahead, unmoving. They have been that way for awhile.

CORA
(shakes her head)
I don't want to make love tonight.

FRANK
It's our last night.

CORA
I don't want to make love tonight.

FRANK
Neither do I.

She leans over, Kisses him tenderly on the cheek. He holds on to her and she nestles into his chest. A moment, then she pulls away gently. They lay there quietly. Then:

FRANK
Oh, Christ...

He rips her slip off and rolls onto her ardently.

EXT. GREEK HALL - NIGHT (ONE WEEK LATER)

Frank, dressed in a suit, on the balcony of the Greek Hall, looking in the window. Through the half-parted drapes, we see GREEK COUPLES dancing. Frank moves down the promenade

54

to an open door. CAMERA MOVES behind him and over his shoulder. The Hall is full of Greeks dancing.

The dance stops. They stop and applaud musicians.

Cora is seen, dancing with a plump older Greek, near the door.

55

INT. GREEK HALL - NIGHT

Frank walks in through door, over to Cora. He takes her arm.

FRANK
I want to talk to you.

Cora shakes her head no.

FRANK
(to her partner)
Excuse me.

He pulls her over to a far corner of the hall, both of them giving forced smiles to inquisitive GREEKS as they pass. The BAND plays a fanfare. GEORGIOS, a contemporary of Nick's, bangs with a fork on his glass. The Hall quiets a bit.

GEORGIOS
(in Greek)
...And what about a few words from
Nick Papadakis, eh?
(a beat)
...who is one lucky American!

Laughter, scattered applause.

ANGLE - CORNER OF GREEK HALL

FRANK
What is this? Okay, okay,
what's going on here?

In the background, Nick comes up and is embraced by Georgiou.

CORA
I can't talk about it now.

FRANK
You can't talk about it now?
It's four days you can't talk.

NICK (V.O.)
(in Greek)
Thank you, thank you all...
Where is my wife?

CORA

Yeah, yeah, you don't understand...
I...I can't do it anymore. You understand?

A Greek man interrupts their conversation and gestures that they should join Nick up front.

FRANK

Yeah. Okay. We're...you know.
Talking.

(to Cora in undertone)

What does that mean, you can't do it
anymore. What can't you do?

NICK (V.O.)

(in Greek)

Where is my people?

CORA

(breaking free)

It's over, Frank.

He holds on to her.

FRANK

You're talking garbage...

CORA

Let me go.

SEVERAL GREEKS now have come up to them. Very good-naturedly, they hustle Cora and Frank up to the front of the room.

FRANK

(sarcastic)

It's over are you telling me...?

ANGLE - FRONT OF THE HALL

The crowd shoves Frank and Cora forward. They smile bravely.

NICK

(in Greek)

This is my family. This is my wife, and this is the man who saved my life!

Everyone starts to applaud, as Cora and Frank are pushed towards Nick.

NICK

(in English)

This is the man who saved my life! I found this man!

Nick starts to sing an appropriate song, the GREEKS join in, as Cora and Frank are deposited next to him.

(Omitted: 56 & 57, incorporated into 55)

58

EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

The area between the tavern and the garage.

Nick and Cora's window is lit. Nick mumbling the same Greek song. Cora passes the window, Nick's arm reaches out and clutches her to him. The shade is lowered.

ANGLE

Revealing Frank standing behind the gas station, looking up at the window.

59

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nick is seated on the bed, royally drunk, pompous. Cora is pulling off his shoe.

NICK
(in Greek)
My feet are beautiful.
(in English)
Say it...

CORA
Nick...

NICK
Say it.

Cora repeats an approximation of the phrase.

NICK
(repeats phrase in Greek)
No! Say it. Say it.

She succeeds in getting his shoe off, turns to face him. He grabs her wrist. She submits, starts to repeat phrase. He laughs and pulls her down on top of him.

60

INT. FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Frank's small bag, open on the bed, some clothes in it. Frank enters the room, takes his jacket down off a hook, opens a dresser drawer, checking, it is empty. Closes bag.

EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Frank walking in the space between the tavern and the garage. He climbs the steps to the front porch of the restaurant. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS him to the front door.

52 INT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Frank opens the door and enters the restaurant. He moves very softly to the foot of the staircase and stops. He can hear the bed creaking upstairs.

A beat. He puts down his suitcase near the stairs, crosses to the cash register, takes off his jacket, and drapes it over the cash register to muffle it. He opens the register, takes out two five-dollar bills, pockets them. He takes his jacket and a pencil, hunts for paper. Does not find it. Frank moves quietly back into the kitchen.

In the kitchen, Frank spies an order form, picks it up, and turns it over. He begins to write using the work-table for a desk. He hears a noise, turns.

Cora is standing in the doorway from the restaurant to the kitchen holding Frank's suitcase. A moment, then:

CORA
Where are you going?

FRANK
You're the guy's wife, you told
me that.

Beat.

CORA
You were going to leave me.

FRANK
What am I supposed...

CORA
(shaking her head)
...All my life, all my life...

FRANK
(overlaps)
...to do at night...count the
forks?

CORA
You're all the goddamn same.
A bunch of shits...you'd leave me in
the night.

Frank walks toward her to comfort her, shows her the note.

FRANK
I'm writing you this...

CORA
Get away from me. What are you,
writing me a thank you note? Fuck
you. Fuck you. The lot of you...
all of my goddamn life.

She starts crying.

FRANK
Cora. Look. Live here. Live
here with the guy. You took your shot,
you can't cut it out there, fine.
Live here with the man.

CORA
(overriding him)
He wants to have a baby...He says we're
gonna have a baby now. He's changed.
The accident's changed him, and I'm
supposed to have his kid.

(a beat)
How can I do that, Frank? For
Chrissakes, I'm s'posed to have his
baby, Frank.

(a beat)
I couldn't have his baby...the only
one that I could have a baby by
is you.

(a beat)
And now you're leaving me...

He goes to her and comforts her.

FRANK
Shhsh. Cora. Shhhsh. Okay...

CORA
Don't leave me, Frank.

FRANK
Shhhhsh.

CORA
Say that you won't leave me.

FRANK
Okay. Everything will be fine.
Shhhhsh.

63

EXT. TWIN OAKS - DUSK (A FEW DAYS LATER)

Nick leaning up against his car, dressed nattily. He gestures at the Twin Oaks.

NICK

Thissa shit, you unnerstand?
This nothing. Greasy Spoon.
Restaurant. Eh? But we fix
it up. Eh? You an me. That why
I like you, Frank. The world is full
of bums...The whole world. Day
late and dollar short.

Nick winks and nods, leans in the car. Frank sitting in the back seat, dressed well.

NICK

That's what I'm saying with
this place we go tonight. The
owner, eh, this wop, he don't know
anything, the business disappear.
"Is the Depression"...Eh? De Weak
man, eh? The weak man! We wait for him,
six month more, I think, we buy him out.
For nothing. Do you understand?

(CONTINUED)

63

CONTINUED:

Nick looks up to see Cora, dressed for an evening out, coming through the doors of the Twin Oaks. She waves, and then remembers something she had forgotten, turns back into the Twin Oaks.

NICK

An maybe then, we make you
manager. This place. An
 we go down the road.

He gestures ("I'm not promising, but all things are possible.")

NICK

Good. Now we go watch
 some other poor sonofabitch
 work.

Cora returns to the b.g. carrying a jug of wine.

FRANK

She looks very nice tonight.

NICK

Yeh. You think she look good,
 now, you see her in one year.

Nick mimes Cora having a belly. He nods ("I am the King of the Universe.")

NICK

That's right.

As Cora comes up to the car, Nick claps his hands ("Aha!") holds open the door for her. She sits down, Nick slams the door. Cora takes a deep breath, looks back to catch Frank out of the corner of her eye. Nick opens the passenger door, Cora turns her head to look at him.

(omitted) 64*

65

INT. CAR - NIGHT (DRIVING)

Nick in the passenger seat, Frank in the back seat, Cora driving. Nick and Frank are singing "Mandy." Frnak passes a bottle of whiskey to Nick.

CORA

We gotta get some gas.

NICK

(drunkenly)

We gotta get it, then we
need it, eh, Frank?

(CONTINUED)

65

CONTINUED:

FRANK

Yeah.

NICK

Ya, okay. We get it!

66

EXT. GAS STATION - NIGHT

An illuminated sign advertises the small station, different in style from the Twin Oaks. The car slows, pulls in, as an ATTENDANT comes out of the station.

The car stops at the pumps, Nick opens his door and Frank pushes out past him.

NICK

(drunkenly)

Franka, Franka, Franka...

FRANK

Gotta go.

Frank stumbles off to the washroom, the Attendant comes up to Cora.

CORA

Fill it up.

ATTENDANT

You going far?

NICK

(overenunciating)

A trip. A change of scene.
Something different.

Cora gets out of the car while the Attendant fills the tank. She looks in the car and sees Nick, his head back on the seat, slumped.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORA
You alright, Nick? ...Nick...?

NICK
Yaa.

He reaches across and takes hold of her dress through the window very drunkenly.

NICK
My Cora...

Cora pulls back. She and the Attendant exchange a glance. A door slams. Cora turns and sees Frank coming out of the washroom, weaving back toward the car. The gas pump rings off.

ATTENDANT
That's it.

Cora takes some change from her purse. Frank brushes past her and starts opening driver's door.

CORA
What do you think you're doing?

FRANK
I'm gonna drive.

CORA
Drive? You can't walk.

FRANK
I'm gonna drive home.

CORA
Get in the back.

(CONTINUED)

She starts directing him into the back seat. He resists.

FRANK

No, you nuts... You nutty...?
I wanna drive!

The Attendant starts helping her.

ATTENDANT

Get in the back, mister.

NICK

(waking)

Frank...

ATTENDANT

You don't want to drive tonight.

CORA

(holding up the
seat)

You'll be home in a little
while, Frank. Get in.

Guided by the Attendant and Cora, Frank drunkenly climbs into the back. Cora gets into the driver's seat. The Attendant closes the door. He shrugs at Cora. She nods.

ATTENDANT

You drive safely now!

FRANK

I'm goin' sing...

CORA

(to Attendant)

Yeah. I will.

Frank starts to sing "Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee". The car drives off and the Attendant starts back to the station.

INT. THE CAR - NIGHT (DRIVING)

Cora driving, Frank slumped in the back seat, looking drunk and sick, Nick in the front seat, drinking from the jug of wine. He drunkenly turns to look at Cora. Her hair is blowing in the wind, she's looking very beautiful. Nick moistens his finger with the wine, reaches over to rub it on her lips. Cora hits his hand.

CORA

C'mon, Nick.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NICK
(nods)
Ah, Frank...Frank, is
nothing like to have a
wife.

As Nick shakes his head appreciatively, the car strains uphill in second gear. Nick reaches over to Cora and delicately, as with calipers, takes her nipple through her dress in two fingers.

CORA
Cut it out!

Nick indicates Frank in the back seat ("Don't worry about him.")

NICK
He's drunk.

The car lurches, and the engine whines. Cora looks to the dashboard.

CORA
Shit.

NICK
(angrily)
What? Don't talk like that.

Cora grimaces.

68 EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

The car comes around a long stretch of curvy road, and lands at the shoulder.

69 ANGLE - The car. Shot from the outside.

Everybody is still for a moment. No one knowing quite what the next move is. Frank is slumped over with his hat down in the back. Cora is just grasping the wheel, fatigued from the long drive. Nick pauses in his drinking and, finally, says:

NICK
Wake 'em up..

Cora turns to the back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORA
Frank...Frank.

FRANK
(barely can be
heard, muttering)
Whassa matter?

Cora gets up and out of the driver's seat.

70

OMITTED

71

EXT./INT. CAR - NIGHT

CORA
Wake up. The car's stopped.
Wake up. Fix it.

Nick meanwhile, has started to sing AVALON.

NICK
"I lef' my love in Avalon-
beside the bay..."

Cora repeats.

CORA
Frank. Get out of the car.

Cora turns hopelessly towards Nick, gesturing that Frank is too drunk to move. Nick shrugs.

NICK
Ah, what de hell. I fix it!

Nick starts to get out of the door.

ANGLE

Frank reaches under the seat, pulls out a wrench, and bangs Nick across the skull. Nick slumps to the right. Cora, outside the car, turns in and speaks to Frank.

CORA
Is he dead?

Frank hesitates a moment, and hits Nick again. After a second, he looks toward her philosophically, meaning:
"Well, I guess that's what it's like to kill someone..."

72

OMITTED

74

EXT. THE CAR - NIGHT

Frank exits the car and turns to Cora.

FRANK

Get in.

He repeats until she does.

Frank walks to the edge of the shoulder of the road and looks down. He turns back to Cora.

FRANK

It's too steep here. Drive.

ANGLE

From behind we see the car with its headlights on following Frank as he scrutinizes the shoulder of the road for a better place.

Frank motions to Cora to turn the car sharply towards the drop. He then quickly races along the side of the car to the back and brushes his footprints off the shoulder with his hat. Frank stops, looks out.

ANGLE - FRANK'S POV

A highway way in the distance with some traffic barely seen crossing towards us.

ANGLE - FRANK

He now brushes his footprints as he walks back to the car and Cora, now standing outside. He grabs a wine bottle from the back seat.

FRANK

You ready?

Cora nods. Frank starts to push the car over the embankment.

CORA

Wait!

She reaches into the passenger side of the car and pulls out her purse.

FRANK

Come on, goddamit...

(CONTINUED)

74

CONTINUED:

She helps him push the car over the edge. They watch it go.

75

ANGLE - EXT. HILLSIDE NIGHT

The car bouncing down the hill.

ANGLE - FRANK AND CORA

Watching it.

ANGLE

The car finally stops.

A beat.

76

ANGLE - EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD NIGHT

Cora and Frank, dishevelled, standing alone on the hill. They start to move.

FRANK

We can't have your high heels
going down.

Cora takes off her shoes. Frank helps Cora down over the edge.

77

ANGLE - EXT. HILLSIDE GULLY - NIGHT

The car has landed on a large rock forty feet down from the road. The hillside is extremely steep. We can see that it extends way beyond where the car landed. The lights of the car are still on. Frank and Cora scramble down the hill and arrive at the car.

Frank pulls the cork out of the wine, turns the bottle on to Nick - the front seat, and his own clothing. This empties half the bottle. He drinks the rest and hands Cora the bottle.

FRANK

Hit me. C'mon, hit me!

She hits him with the bottle which opens a cut over his left eye.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK
Alright. You know I gotta
do this.

CORA
I know.

As he speaks, he begins to bruise her and to tear her clothing.

FRANK
You don't know what happened.

CORA
No.

FRANK
The car went over. You got
thrown out.

CORA
Right.

He hits her on the face.

FRANK
I love you, Cora. You got
this on the dash.

He hits her on the shoulder, she staggers back up against the car. She reaches down and rips her own stockings.

There is a fraction of a pause.

They look at each other and then instantly go toward one another and start kissing violently. The sexual energy is mutual.

FRANK
Huh?

CORA
Yeah.

FRANK
Huh?

CORA
Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

77

CONTINUED:

We HEAR the faint sound of a car engine way, way in the distance. Cora raises her head to see, but Frank pulls her down. They can't stop making love.

WIDE ANGLE

Frank and Cora having intercourse by the side of the wrecked car.

ANGLE

In the distance a car begins to approach, perhaps only five minutes away.

78

ANGLE - EXT. HILLSIDE GULLY - NIGHT

Frank and Cora, exhausted. Cora rearranging her clothes.

FRANK
Nothin' they do can break you...

CORA
No.

FRANK
If you hold to your story.

CORA
I will, Frank.

FRANK
Because the story's true.

CORA
I know it is.

FRANK
As long as we both hold to it.

He holds her. She looks at him lovingly.

FRANK
Good...

He kisses her. He nods to her (meaning "You're gonna do it.") She starts up the hill.

(CONTINUED)

78

CONTINUED:

ANGLE - FRANK'S POV

Frank watching Cora climb up the hill.

ANGLE

Cora near the top of the hill, almost on the road. Frank waves at her.

79

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - NIGHT

Cora gazing down the road for the approaching car. She looks down at Frank beginning to enter car. Cora looks back to the road.

ANGLE - GULLY. FRANK BY THE WRECKED CAR

Frank tries to enter the back door. It is jammed. He can't move it. He sees a huge limb on the other side, covering the right side rear seat door. He goes to the front and opens the door. Nick's arm flops down. Frank disgustedly brushes it away. He climbs into the car. His motion causes the car to start to move.

ANGLE - THE CAR FROM A LITTLE BELOW

The car starts to move.

ANGLE - FRONT WINDOW OF THE CAR

Frank is trapped inside. The whole car begins to turn. Nick, tumbling, dead, onto Frank as the car turns 360 degrees

ANGLE

The car slides towards the camera.

ANGLE - EXT. NEAR THE TOP OF THE HILL

Cora hears the car screeching off the rock and rolling down the hill.

CORA

Frank!!

80

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD -- NIGHT (LATER)

Flashlights play off the wrecked car as men crawl about the area of the wreck.

On the road above, there is now an ambulance, two police cars, a tow truck just pulling up. Cora, dazed, stands with a policeman in the foreground. A body, covered head-to-toe with a blanket (Nick) is stretched out on the roadside. Another body (Frank) is being loaded into the ambulance. Cora looks at this as a SERGEANT comes up to ask her questions.

Another car approaches and is slowed to a stop. Inside a YOUNG MARRIED COUPLE. They wait as the ambulance rear doors are slammed and the engine turns over. The ambulance starts off, its siren wailing.

81

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

A MALE NURSE enters a semi-private hospital room. He crosses to a gurney bed which holds a very banged up body. He releases the wheel locks and starts to wheel the body out of the room. We do not see the patient's face.

At the door to the room, there is a POLICEMAN, standing at a sort of attention. DISTRICT ATTORNEY SACKETT and his younger aide MORTENSON are just to one side. They watch the body being run by them, then proceed inside the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Heavily bandaged on his ribcage, drugged and in a half-doze, Frank looks up as they enter. Sackett and Mortenson have a brief whispered conference at the doorway. Mortenson nods, backs off and Sackett approaches Frank. He holds a legal file folder under one arm. Mortenson looks on, impassive, from a corner of the room.

SACKETT

How are you today?

FRANK

I'm fine.

SACKETT

You ever been in San Francisco?

FRANK

Yeah.

SACKETT

In Buffalo...?

FRANK

Wait a minute who are you,

SACKETT

You know who I am.

(he flips open
the file)

You did time in San Francisco.
Theft. In Buffalo, Armed
Robbery, reduced to Attempted
Assault...Moline. Did
thirteen months. Assault upon
a Railroad Investigator.

FRANK

(the drugs
start to show)

Well, they say, you ought to
see the other guy.

SACKETT

That's very funny.

FRANK

...uh, could we talk some
other time, they gave me
something, and ...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SACKETT
(to Mortenson)
Thank you.

(back to Frank.)
We have the hospital report on
Mr. Papadakis that time he
unfortunately fell in his bath.

FRANK
He was a good man. He was very
good to me.

Sackett nods to himself, as if he were expecting this response.

SACKETT
You plead to a lesser charge,
I'll see what I can do for you.
If you plead innocent and make me
try you for homicide, you're going
to hang.

Sackett glances down at his papers.

FRANK
Mister, I don't get you.

SACKETT
Mmmmm.

FRANK
What are you saying? I had
something to do with the accident?
I wasn't even driving.

SACKETT
You weren't even driving.

FRANK
No.

SACKETT
You were too drunk to drive, you
were too drunk to walk, we've got
a witness at the filling station,
yes, yes, yes. Who do you think
you're dealing with? Take a good
look at me, Frank.

(a beat)
I know you killed him.
(a beat)
If you do not cooperate with me...
I'm going to try you for your crime,
and I am going to see you die.

(a beat)
I want you to confess.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Why...come on...why would I want
to kill him?

SACKETT

For the woman. Does that sound
familiar?

FRANK

(after a beat)

I...why would I kill for that?

SACKETT

Buddy, I saw her. I might kill
for it.

FRANK

But wait...But if I was already
getting it?

SACKETT

You admit you were laying her?

FRANK

Did I say that?

SACKETT

It makes no difference, Frank.
The jury thinks you were. Forget
the girl. They'll hang you for
the money.

A beat.

FRANK

What money?

SACKETT

The insurance.

A beat.

FRANK

What insurance?

SACKETT

(as to a child)

His ten thousand dollar life
insurance policy. Issued on
Nick Papadakis by Pacific Reliance
just slightly before his murder.
His wife the sole beneficiary.

(CONTINUED)

Sackett signals Mortenson, who shows the Pacific Reliance file to Frank.

SACKETT
Does it look familiar?

Frank in chair, sighs, as if he had just had a violent blow to the stomach.

SACKETT
Don't ever play around with an insurance company. They don't like losing.

FRANK
Mister, I swear on my mother's grave...If I am lying may she burn in hell, this is the first that I have ever heard of an insurance policy.

SACKETT
Confess.

A beat.

FRANK
I didn't do it.

SACKETT
Someone killed him, Frank.

FRANK
I didn't kill him.

SACKETT
She did?

A beat.

FRANK
I didn't say that.

SACKETT
Either she did or you did it together. Which is it?
Which is it, Frank?

FRANK
Look at me, would I do this to myself? Would I bang myself up like this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SACKETT
You killed him.

FRANK
Mister. I swear on everything
I hold holy that I never harmed
that man.

SACKETT
Prove it to me. Unless you can
you're going to die.

FRANK
How can I prove it? Look, I
loved the guy. What do I have
to do?

Sackett considers for a second, then hands a blue-backed paper to Frank.

SACKETT
I want you to sign this.

Frank takes the paper.

FRANK
What is it?

SACKETT
It is the only thing that will
convince me and the jury of your
innocence. The only thing. If
you are innocent, read it and
sign it.

Frank lowers his eyes to the paper. Sackett crosses to the door, gestures to Mortenson. They leave the room.

ANGLE - CORRIDOR

Sackett and his aide pass the cop, stop in the hall a few paces down.

MORTENSON
(beaming)
Now we have both of them, sir.

SACKETT
(cold)
We will, my friend.

(CONTINUED)

81

CONTINUED:

Sackett turns and walks down the corridor. Over his shoulder, to the policeman guard:

SACKETT
See if he wants anything.

82

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Frank stares at the form, dejectedly. After a beat, the Policeman enters.

POLICEMAN
You're 'spose to get dressed.

Frank nods.

POLICEMAN
They're gonna move you...
You got a lawyer?

Frank shakes his head. No lawyer.

POLICEMAN
Okay, I got a guy for you.
(a beat)
You want anything to eat?

83

INT. CELL BLOCK - DAY

That afternoon, Frank is now napping, bandaged, on his bunk in a cell. He hears a GUARD SHOUT "CHAMBERS!", and doors opening down the corridor. He opens his eyes, looking miserable.

The Guard opens his cell door. Katz steps in and sits down.

KATZ
My name is Katz. I'm
representing you and Mrs.
Papadakis.

Frank nods miserably. Katz takes out a notepad.

KATZ
You two are going to be arraigned
tomorrow. Until then...look
at me...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Frank looks up.

KATZ

Until then, anyone asks you anything you say 'Talk to the lawyer.' You understand, Frank?

FRANK

(beaten, defected)

Do you want me to tell you about the accident?

Katz, unhearing, produces a document from his briefcase.

KATZ

No.

FRANK

I sweat we didn't know about that life insurance.

KATZ

(after a beat)

What life in...

FRANK

(interrupting)

...I got three cracked ribs and...

KATZ

...Surance?

FRANK

A concussion, Mister, would I do...

KATZ

What life insurance?

FRANK

...this to myself? His life insurance policy.

Katz makes a hurried note in a spiral book, checks his pocket watch, gets up, ready to leave. He pulls out the complaint form.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATZ

Alright. Frank, did you
sign this? ...Did You?

Frank nods, reluctantly. He signed.

KATZ

(rising)

Don't sign anything else.
You understand?...I'm
going to see what I can do.

FRANK

Are you going to see Cora?

KATZ

Yes.

Hurriedly, Katz puts paper back in briefcase, looks to the corridor for guard.

FRANK

Tell her I didn't mean it.

INT. COURTROOM CORRIDOR - DAY

Katz, examining notepad, distracted, coming down the corridor. At the Courtroom door, Sackett is talking in hushed tones to Mortenson, going over last-minute notes. Katz stops for a moment. He looks at them, comes over.

KATZ

Mister Sackett, my name is
Robert Katz, I'm representing...

Sackett, imperious, nods (meaning: "Yes. I know you. I know everything.") There is a very awkward silence.

KATZ

I, uh, I always...I followed
your work.

No response. Katz shrugs (meaning "What do I say next?") He moves away. Sackett continues talking to Mortenson.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

An evidence table. A tagged 4x4 board, several depositions, Cora's purse. The BAILIFF putting a tagged, broken wine jug down on the table.

(CONTINUED)

BARLOW (V.O.)
...was broken in the act, as
it...

INSURANCE INVESTIGATOR BARLOW, well-fed, smug, fifty-five, in the stand. Sackett interrogates him. At the defense table, Katz sits with Cora. A MATRON stands nearby and Frank is in a wheelchair set up next to the defense table. Mortenson is at the prosecution table. The Courtroom is pretty well packed, REPORTERS and PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS sprinkled among the COURTHOUSE REGULARS.

BARLOW
...was used to strike the
victim on the head, which
caused his death.

SACKETT
In your opinion could the
victim's injuries have
been caused by the over-
turning car?

BARLOW
No.

KATZ
Object. This man is not a
doctor.

SACKETT
This man, your honor, is an
acknowledged expert in the
field of insurance fraud,
and...

KATZ
(interrupting)
This man is an interested
party. If my clients were
to be convicted his company
would save...

JUDGE
...Mr. Katz...

KATZ
...Ten thousand dollars...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUDGE
...Mr. Katz...!

KATZ
He has a vested interest in
the case. I strenuously
object, and request that
his entire testimony be
stricken...

JUDGE
Overruled.

SACKETT
Let me ask you again. Mr.
Barlow, in your years as a
claims investigator have you
ever seen evidence of similar
injuries sustained as the
result of an automobile
accident.

BARLOW
Never. I have not.

SACKETT
In your opinion, then, a
crime has been committed.

(The next three lines occur simultaneously.)

KATZ
Object!

BARLOW
Most absolutely. Absolutely.

SACKETT
Thank you, I'm done.

He makes a "Hands Off" gesture to the Judge. Barlow looks up at the JUDGE who nods that, yes, he may step down.

As Barlow passes, Katz confers with Cora. Behind them, Sackett picks up a document.

SACKETT
At this time I will introduce
a complaint and request for
damages sworn by Frank Chambers,
against Mrs. Cora Papadakis.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CORA
(overlapping)
WHAT!!?

SACKETT
For injuries sustained in
a car under her control...

Cora turns to Frank, who turns his head away. She starts to rise as she speaks, and must be subdued by Katz and the Matron.

CORA
What...?

Katz gestures to Cora and to Frank (It's alright. I'm prepared for this. This is nothing to be worried about.)

KATZ
Your Honor, I object to
this complaint. Under the
California Vehicle Act 141
3/4th...Chambers has no
right of recovery...

Cora is livid. The Matron holds her back. Frank looks away in shame. She is weeping, ejaculating "All my God-damn life..."; "You son of a bitch... The whole lot of you..." (Her angry protests will continue through the rest of the scene.)

SACKETT
(interrupts)
...unless the accident was
the result of...

KATZ
...may I finish?

SACKETT
...lawful misconduct on the
part...

KATZ
...Your Honor, that is just
what is at issue here.

(CONTINUED)

Frank turns and looks at Cora -- he wants to punish himself. She glares at him.

KATZ

This supposed complaint, absent adjudication on the matter now before this court can have no bearing.

JUDGE

Overruled. Enter the complaint.

Incredulous, Katz takes a casebook up to the bench.

KATZ

You cannot enter the complaint. It was extorted from a man, a seriously injured man under the influence of...

JUDGE

Enter the complaint.

KATZ

Drugs and extraordinary...

JUDGE

I've ruled on this. Will you proceed.

Cora quiets down a bit as Katz gives her "I know what I'm doing" gestures.

KATZ

Your honor, under these, um, under the circumstances of this ruling I have no alternative but to withdraw my plea of 'Not Guilty' and to plead Mrs. Papadakis guilty - as charged.

Cora is once again on her feet.

CORA

You shit. Who are you working for? The State?

Uproar in the courtroom. Sackett, the humanitarian, on his feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SACKETT
Adjourn? Adjourn, your honor?

JUDGE
(gestures to Bailiff)
Court is adjourned until...

BAILIFF
Clear the court...

The Judge starts to descend the bench.

BAILIFF
Tomorrow morning, ten A.M...

His voice is drowned out by questions from Reporters who have rushed up to interrogate Katz, Cora, Frank, Sackett. Photographers snap Flash Pictures in the room. The Matron struggles to remove Cora. A Policeman tries to clear a way for Frank's wheelchair.

85A

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

IN A SERIES OF SHOTS. Chaos in the hallway as Frank and Cora are escorted past reporters, photographers and the random curious. Katz tries to restrain his clients.

FRANK
(to Katz)
You swine, you burn an innocent man. I'm going to see you dead, you understand?

KATZ
Please don't say anything here.
We're going to a meeting room...

REPORTER ONE
(overlapping)
Mister Katz, you pled them guilty to the first degree...?

REPORTER TWO
Are you attempting to bargain the plea...?

KATZ
No comment.

REPORTER THREE
Mrs. Papdakis, did you kill your husband?

(CONTINUED)

85A

CONTINUED:

KATZ
Don't answer anything.

CORA
(raving)
...Every last one of you.

FRANK
(to Cora)
They made me sign it, Cora. I
was drugged. I swear to God.
The guy works for the D.A. They
betrayed us in here.

KATZ
(pushing them forward)
Excuse me, excuse me...Can I get
some help here?

86

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Somewhere in the Courthouse building. Katz stands by the door, exhausted, smoking a cigarette with the manner of a man who has just heard terrible news. Cora paces, nodding tense. Frank stares ahead from his wheelchair. He just heard his own death sentence. Katz flicks a long ash.

(CONTINUED)

KATZ
(to Cora)
You're making a terrible
mistake.

CORA
Just shut up.

Katz shrugs, opens the door with resignation.

ANGLE - CORRIDOR & DAYROOM

KENNEDY, a bulky ex-cop in a shabby suit can be seen in a dayroom across the hall. He rises and crosses the hall and enters the conference room.

ANGLE - CONFERENCE ROOM

Katz gestures to the typewriter set up on the conference table. Kennedy walks to the table, opens his briefcase, removes his notary stamps and paper. He puts paper in carriage and tests the return. He's ready.

CORA
This is my statement:

Katz looks away. Frank starts to rise from the wheelchair, looks to Cora. She looks right through him. He settles back down in the chair. Cora continues, eerily calm.

CORA
We did it all. Frank Chambers and I planned it and killed my husband...

Kennedy, surprisingly fast on the keys, types out her words.

INT. WOMEN'S CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

The Matron walks her rounds on dark cell block.

ANGLE POV

A bank of cells with WOMEN in it, most of them asleep. ONE WOMAN is smoking.

MATRON
(very soft, passing)
Sit up or put it out.

WOMAN in cell starts slowly to sit up. Matron keeps walking past woman asleep in bunks. Cora seated at the end of her bunk, woman facing the wall, her back to the camera. The next cell is empty, mattress turned back. In the next cell, a woman asleep.

88

INT. CELLBLOCK - NIGHT

Frank alone on his bunk in his cell. Leaning up against the support chains in the lower bunk. Staring ahead, unblinking. He starts to cough. Coughs violently a couple of times, unmoving. Continues to sit.

89A

LOBBY OF PACIFIC RELIANCE BUILDING - NIGHT

Katz and ART BEEMAN, a portly gentleman in his 50's entering the ornate marble lobby. The darkened hall is deserted. They turn into the stairway and start climbing the stairs.

89B

INT. SECOND FLOOR PACIFIC RELIANCE BUILDING - NIGHT

Katz and Beeman at the top of the stairs. They walk towards doors marked PACIFIC RELIANCE--CLAIMS DEPT. Katz reaches in overcoat pocket, takes out a pack of cigarettes, offers one to Beeman.

KATZ
I'll be back for you in five minutes.

Beeman takes cigarette. Katz enters through the Claims Department doors.

INT. PACIFIC RELIANCE BUILDING - NIGHT

The Claims Department room is huge: 40 empty desks. At one desk with its Emeralite lit, Barlow is sitting at his chair, his overcoat still on, his hat on the desk, figuring in a book.

KATZ
(walking over to Barlow)
I appreciate...

Barlow looks up.

BARLOW
(pre-emptorily)
...okay. What is it. They're guilty.

KATZ
Well, that's yet to be...

BARLOW
...you pled 'em guilty, what do you want from me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATZ

I can turn around and plead 'em
innocent, I've got 48 hours.

BARLOW

You know they did it.

KATZ

Do I ? What has Sackett goy?
He's got your testimony.

BARLOW

You're goddamn right he has.

KATZ

Ace Claims Investigator. 1931
State of California v. Palazzio.
You testified insurance fraud.
Palazzio convicted went away two
years, reversed on appeal, he sues
Pacific for twelve grand and wins.

BARLOW

The jury in that case...

KATZ

...Exactly. You never know what a
jury will do. Do you? Sackett's
got nothing here. He made you carry
the whole thing. If I get them
acquitted...

BARLOW

He's got the murder weapon.

KATZ

Does he? I got a professor from San
Francisco coming down here...an expert
to swear...

BARLOW

Yeah, yeah, yeah. They tried to
kill him once before.

KATZ

That's very interesting you should
think that. March fifth there was a
party...I've got a fucking Greek army's
going to tromp in here and swear that
Papadakis threw his arms around Chambers
and said 'This is the man who saved my
life.' I think you got it backwards.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARLOW
(after a beat)
Off the record...

KATZ
...sure.

BARLOW
...you aren't going to sit there
and tell me that you think they're
innocent?

KATZ
That is precisely what I'm telling
you, and that's what I'm telling
the jury. The prosecution's got
no case. All that they got is you.
And what are you doing? Huh?...and
I am talking to poor people out there --
all Sackett's got is some insurance
company trying to do a widow out of
her husband's insurance.

(a beat)
And they got a very attractive grief-
stricken young woman on the stand on
the one hand, and on the other hand,
all they got is you, pal, trying to
save your big insurance company ten
grand. We'll see. What do you
think?

BARLOW
I think they're going to burn 'em.

KATZ
And if they don't, you've cost your
company ten grand. ...And there
goes your Christmas Bonus...
You wanna take the chance? I'm gonna
show you a way that you don't have to
take a chance.

Katz walks back to the door, calls out "Okay."

ANGLE - Beeman enters.

KATZ
This is Art Beeman, Claims
Department, Western Equitable.

(CONTINUED)

BEEMAN

Glad to...

KATZ

...Tell him.

BEEMAN

(nervously)

My company issued a 25 thousand dollar liability policy, home, business, auto, to Mr. Nick Papadakis, just slightly before his death. The policy...

KATZ

(impatient)

Frank Chambers was a passenger in the car. He sustained various lacerations, a concussion, and severe back trauma, which will, I am advised, impair for the rest of his life his ability to walk. If she was trying to kill her husband, and, in the process, made my man, an employee and a passenger in her car, a cripple for life. I am going to go into court and sue

(he indicates Beeman)

Western Equitable for 25 grand, and I am going to win.

(a beat)

And so here's what he's prepared to do:

BEEMAN

...would you excuse us, please...

KATZ

I would.

Katz nods graciously, leaves room.

89A

INT. HALLWAY JUST OUTSIDE THE DOOR - NIGHT

Katz lights up a cigarette, leans back, listening to Beeman an Barlow.

BEEMAN

Western's in an unprotected posture, here...

BARLOW

...you're saying that you'd reimburse...

(CONTINUED)

89A

CONTINUED:

Katz smiles.

BEEMAN

Precisely. If you were prepared...
we'd pay the ten thousand death
bene...

90

INT. CELLBLOCK - DAY (San Pedro Jail - 7th floor)

A GUARD, carrying a metal-tipped walking cane, passes the rank of cells, stops at Frank's cell and raps on the bars.

ANGLE

Frank, inside the cell, shifts to a sitting position on his bunk. The Guard opens up the cell door.

GUARD

(handing Frank
the cane)

You can walk.

Frank rises, a trifle unsteady, balances on the cane, takes a tentative step forward. It hurts, but he can walk.

ANGLE

The Guard escorts Frank down the rank of cells to the cell-block entrance, signals ANOTHER GUARD and the cellblock door is opened to let them pass.

91

INT. JAILHOUSE CORRIDOR - DAY (San Pedro Jail - 7th floor)

Frank and the Guard pass through another door that has been opened for them, and near the main barred entrance to the jail cellblocks. A buzzer is sounded from the GUARD BOOTH and they cross to the guard booth area.

Katz is there, leaning against the wall. He has a manila envelope, which he holds out to Frank.

Frank looks past him. He doesn't want to talk to this shyster.

KATZ

I already signed for them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A beat. Frank looks confused, and then the guard who has escorted him nods to Katz and backs away, toward the cell-block. Frank takes the envelope.

KATZ

They never had a thing. They bluffed you, buddy. Sackett bluffed you. Gets you to sign a complaint against the woman, uses the complaint to get her to confess and you both walk the plank.

Frank has opened up the envelope and discovered his personal effects.

KATZ

That's right, my boy, you're going home.

A NEW GUARD nears them, he has a package of Frank's clothes, and nods to Katz.

KATZ

They'll get you dressed.

INT. CORRIDOR & RECEPTION AREA - DAY (San Pedro 3rd floor)

Katz opens a frosted glass door that leads from a corridor to a waiting reception area. He holds the door open for Frank who follows a few steps behind. We pick up Katz in mid-explanation...Frank is now in civilian clothes. Signs on the door indicate no admittance without authorization (for the area Frank and Katz are coming from.)

KATZ

...Mrs Papadakis was found guilty of Involuntary Manslaughter, sentenced to six months probation. The charges against you have been dismissed.

They now enter a waiting area where prisoners' families wait for word, where lawyers check at a counter as to the charges made on their clients. A mix of legal personnel and the kind of people who have friends or relatives in jail. There is a POLICEMAN by the door. Katz hands in a pass slip, and continues to walk Frank along, at a pace slightly faster than is comfortable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK
(still uncomprehending)
She's free?

KATZ
That is correct.

FRANK
But...

KATZ
But what?

FRANK
But she confessed.

KATZ
Yes. Luckily, though, she
confessed to my assistant,
Kennedy.

Frank looks quizzical.

KATZ
The red-headed guy. You
probably thought he was a
cop.

Katz opens a brown door on the corridor and he and Frank
disappear into a staircase.

92B

INT. MARBLE STAIRCASE - DAY (San Pedro 2nd floor, back
Lobby Stairs)

We pick up Katz and Frank on the last few steps coming
down to the lobby area of the court/jail building.

KATZ
She was a little miffed at you.
I thought it might be a good
idea for her to get it off her
chest before they locked her up.

They have reached the foot of the stairs. Frank is ready
to turn back into the lobby crowd nearby, but Katz holds him
back.

KATZ
I thought we'd go down the back
way, Frank. Avoid the crowd.

He turns with Frank and they head down another flight of
stairs, past a window, and disappear from frame.

INT. - COURTHOUSE GARAGE - DAY (San Pedro first floor,
garage)

This cavernous, high-ceiling room is fairly crowded with police and official VEHICLES, possibly a LIMOUSINE for high-ranking politicians. COPS lounge, smoking, near their MOTORCYCLES. A MECHANIC works on a car, a BLACK MAN polishes the limo to a high sheen.

We pick up Katz and Frank, coming down steep stairs in the back of the garage. Katz is talking energetically, Frank has lost most of his initial confusion.

KATZ

...The best part was the insurance. Their Mr. Barlow, their expert, stands up in court and says he made a grave mistake, the whole thing was an auto accident.

(he smiles)

Isn't that goofy?

Frank and Katz reach the bottom of the stairs, and start to thread their way through the parked autos, headed towards a set of large closed doors to the front.

FRANK

Where's Cora?

KATZ

(nodding at the doors ahead)

Right outside with Kennedy.

They pass a side door and as they pass, Sackett comes through that door, Mortenson a few paces behind. Sackett is intense, overheated in his emotion.

SACKETT

I knew I'd find you here...

KATZ

(cutting him off)

Congratulations.

SACKETT

(continuing, ignoring Katz's irony)

...sneaking out...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KATZ
That's right.

SACKETT
You'd best sneak out.
(targeting on
Frank)
The file stays open, Chambers.
You hear me? You and the woman
too. You put yourself above the
law...you kill...

FRANK
You cannot talk to me like that.
I been inside a court of law.

SACKETT
And you'll be back, my friend.
I know you. You hear me? I
will be seeing you again.

Mortenson, fearing that things could get out of hand,
places an admonitory arm on his boss. Sackett shakes
him off.

SACKETT
(to Frank)
Spit on the side walk and you'll
die in jail.

KATZ
(to Sackett, quietly)
Learn to lose.

Sackett swivels around fast and walks away. A beat as Katz
and Frank watch him stalk back towards the side door. Then,
as they continue walking, Katz makes a gesture to Frank
("That's it. All over.") They reach the door.

FRANK
Um...Thank you.

KATZ
Okay.

FRANK
You took our part.

KATZ
And you made me ten thousand
dollars.

(CONTINUED)

92C

CONTINUED:

He pulls the cord that opens the garage door to the outside.

KATZ
It's been swell.

Outside light floods in. Katz turns and walks away.

93

EXT. COURTHOUSE GARAGE - DAY

Frank steps out into the sunlight, turns and sees a taxi-cab parked ten yards away.

Kennedy gets out of the front seat, opens the rear door. Cora can be seen in the rear seat, turning to look at Frank.

ANGLE

Frank walks to the cab. Kennedy installs him in the rear seat and slams the door. The cab starts to pull away.

94

EXT. COURTHOUSE STREET - DAY

The taxicab pulls out into traffic near the courthouse.

95A

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

The taxicab drives through open farm country. MIGRANT WORKERS can be seen, working the fields near the road.

95

INT. TAXICAB - DAY

Frank and Cora, in the back seat of the taxicab. They sit, not speaking for a while. Then:

CORA
(flatly)
I had to pay him the insurance
money...the lawyer.

FRANK
I know.

A beat.

CORA
I didn't even know he had an
insurance policy.

Frank nods sympathetically.

CORA
I can't leave the state for six
months. I got to call them every
week.

(a beat, then lamely,
trying out the foreign
phrase)
I'm gonna have a record.

Frank turns to her.

FRANK
I'm sorry that I turned on you,
Cora.

She looks out the window.

96

(OMITTED)

97

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (NOTE: FRANK & CORA IN NEW WARDROBE)

The open door of Nick's closet. Frank comes into the frame and drops a box on the floor.

Frank throws the Greek's shoes into the box. The closet is half-empty, boxes of the Greek's junk near the door. A bottle of whiskey and a glass on the sideboard.

(CONTINUED)

97

CONTINUED:

Cora comes into the room holding a glass of whiskey. Goes to the mirror, starts taking down the little pictures Nick had stuck in the mirror. Frank straightens up with the box, carries it to the door and sets it down. He goes to the sideboard and pours himself a drink, swallows it.

He picks up several articles off the dresser and throws them in the box. He picks up a silver hand mirror, tosses it in the box.

CORA
That's mine!

98A

EXT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

The parking area is more crowded than we have seen before: Five passenger cars, a truck. A couple preparing to leave; another car pulls in.

98

INT. DINER - DAY - A MONTH LATER

The diner fairly full. Cora hustling at the counter, a hubbub of happy, curious customers all around. Cora puts down a check in front of a WORKING MAN.

CORA
That's thirty cents.

He starts paying the check. TWO MIDDLE-AGED WOMEN down the counter furtively look at Cora. They are just overheard.

WOMAN ONE
She doesn't look that old.

WOMAN TWO
Well, that's her. I saw her picture.

WOMAN ONE
(after a beat)
How old do you think she is?

Cora picks up the man's change, smiles to herself.

CORA
(to the man)
Thank you, come again.

WORKING MAN
Sure will.

As Cora picks up his plates, a CUSTOMER in a corner booth.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CUSTOMER
You got that chicken?

CORA
Coming up!

She starts back to the kitchen with the plates.

99

(OMITTED)

99A

EXT. BEHIND THE TWIN OAKS - DAY

Frank is lounged up against a tree, drinking from a quart bottle of milk, smoking a cigarette. Cora comes out through the back kitchen door, harried, upset.

CORA
You think you could get in
and help out, huh?

FRANK
You're doing fine. You're
making a fortune.

CORA
I'm doin' fine. I'd be doin'
better if you'd go do some
work.

FRANK
Waht are you killing yourself
for? We're leaving here in a
couple of months. That's what
you said, right?... We're
leaving here when your probation's
up.

CORA
If you want to go, Frank, you can
leave now. If you want to stay
here, you can work.

Cora glares at him. Frank turns his eyes away. Cora turns and starts back for the kitchen. Frank takes a slug of milk from the bottle. Cora snaps at him.

CORA
And will you use a glass? I'm
sorry, what are you, an animal?

100

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

P91

The room is stripped of all artifacts of life with Nick. Cora has made a partial attempt to decorate the room to her taste. Cora lies on the bed in her slip, Frank sits at the head of the bed, near the nighttable, turned away from her, drinking whiskey.

FRANK

(dead tone)

What you going to do with the
money?

CORA

I'm gonna get a new car.

(a beat)

What the hell do you care
what I'm gonna do?

Frank takes another swig. He stares at her, sets his drink down. Suddenly grabs her under her neck, pulls her under him. She doesn't want to look at him. He uses both hands to pull her head up. Cora spits at him.

As if this were now customary, Frank wipes the spit off his face with her slip. Then slaps her.

Cora stares back at him, insolent. They continue the process of love-making.

101A

EXT. TWIN OAKS - MORNING (Three weeks later)

A POSTAL DELIVERY TRUCK is just pulling away from the mailbox, across the road from the diner. Cora is seen, walking back from the mailbox. She holds a brown-paper wrapped package, and she's smiling.

101

INT. TWIN OAKS - MORNING

At the counter, Cora tears open the package. Inside it is a cardboard box. She opens the box hurriedly. It is full of matchbooks. She takes one out, surveys it. It reads "TWIN OAKS TAVERN, Route 138, Sunland, California." Cora examines it in triumph. Behind her, the restaurant is empty.

102

(OMITTED)

103

(OMITTED)

104

(OMITTED)

104A

INT. TWIN OAKS - DAY (SIX WEEKS LATER)

There have been significant changes in the decor, new prices posted, some advertisements changed. Cora is behind the counter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There are TWO OLD MEN in a booth and a SINGLE MAN with coffee at the counter. Cora grabs some fresh menus from behind the counter, starts to cross to the side door. She turns and calls to the customers inside:

CORA
Be right back if you need something.

She exits the side door.

105

EXT. TWIN OAKS PATIO - DAY

As Cora comes out the door, we see the area next to the restaurant has been converted into a DINING PATIO. EIGHT PEOPLE are eating at two trestle tables. Cora checks an order with a table of three, then surveys the rest of the clientele.

Cora notices an ELDERLY GENTLEMAN IN A SHABBY SUIT, looking intensely at her. He comes over to her.

GENTLEMAN
I've been looking for you.

CORA
(smiling, the
businesswoman)
Well, you found me.

GENTLEMAN
I saw your picture in the paper.

CORA
Join the club.

She winks and starts away.

CORA
You grab yourself a menu and
I'll be right back.

GENTLEMAN
You know, I knew you since you
were a little girl.

She stops.

GENTLEMAN
I knew it was you. But I didn't
want to call. I knew they had
lost track of you. I get the Courier,
still and I read about your mother,
I was pretty sure you didn't know.
So I came out.
(smiles sadly)

(CONTINUED)

105

GENTLEMAN
(Continued)
You don't remember me, but I
remember you.

106

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Frank and Cora exit Cora's new car. They approach a rural bus, passengers loading:

FRANK
You want me to call the probation people?

CORA
Don't call them. I'll be back next week at the latest.

FRANK
I'm sure she'll be alright.

Cora nods, but without feeling. Frank picks up her suitcase, they walk to the door of the bus.

FRANK
Let me know.

CORA
I will.

They kiss perfunctorily. Frank hands bag up to her as she climbs the stairs. Frank waves.

SCENES 107 & 108 OMITTED

109

INT. TWIN OAKS - STAIRCASE AND BEDROOM - NIGHT

Frank drunkenly climbing the stairs to his and Cora's room. He comes into the room, dishevelled, bed unmade, clothing all over from Cora's hurried packing. He slowly looks around the room.

(CONTINUED)

0

INT. TWIN OAKS GARAGE - MORNING

Frank in bed. He hears HONKING, wakes up, reaches over to table next to bed, takes cigarette from pack. As he sits up, we see that he is in his old garage room. The honking continues. Frank opens door to REVEAL a covered truck, and a TRUCK DRIVER (GOEBEL) standing outside the cab, leaning on the horn. He pulls down the shade again. Lights cigarette. Takes pull on pint bottle. Honking continues, more frantic. Frank angrily gets up, goes to door.

111

EXT. GARAGE - MORNING

Frank in doorway. Goebel at pumps.

FRANK
We're closed.

Frank starts back into his room.

GOEBEL
Gimme a break, come on, gimme
a break. What's it to you, a
minute?

Frank hesitates, Goebel presses his case.

GOEBEL
I got a long way to go, fella.
Huh?

FRANK
(turning back to him)
Where are you going?

GOEBEL
San Diego.

112A

EXT. MAIN HIGHWAY - DAY

The covered truck passes through unfamiliar California countryside, headed south.

112 -

INT. COVERED TRUCK - DAY

Goebel driving, Frank riding, his small travelling bag on his lap. There is a huge THUMP from the back of the truck. A beat, another huge THUMP. Frank glances at Goebel to see if this is out-of-the-ordinary. Goebel does not react. Frank shrugs minutely. A beat. There is a large GROWL and another THUMP.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK
(off-handedly)
What have you got in there?
If you don't mind me asking?

GOEBEL
Cats.

Frank nods. (Meaning: "Of course, how silly of me.")

112A EXT. MAIN HIGHWAY - DAY

The covered truck clatters southward.

113 EXT. CIRCUS SITE - SMALL TOWN - DAY

MADGE ALLEN, lion tamer, strides through the "backyard" (performer's area) of a small one-ring truck circus. The RINGMASTER walks alongside her. In the b.g., we see the circus bustling with the activity of striking the show, preparing to move to a new location. An ELEPHANT in harness is used to work, other SHOW ANIMALS are tethered or caged. PERFORMERS are in rest period, some of them practicing their act, clowns stripping out of costume and makeup.

Madge and the Ringmaster pass a desk set-up, where a FOREMAN is paying off day labor ROUSTABOUTS -- most of them grimy winos. CIRCUS TRUCKS, some with posters mounted on the side, are preparing to move out.

MADGE
It's shit, it's shit you
understand. It's not me.
It's the cats.

RINGMASTER
(European accent)
Well, it looks like you.
The audience is sleeping in your act.

MADGE
(completely sarcastic)
Oh, yeah, yeah, you're an expert.
Cause you go in with them each day.

They have now come upon Goebel's truck, parked, with its rear gate down. Goebel and Frank, assisted by a RELUCTANT WORKMAN, are unloading a cage with a SLEEPY LION inside it.

(CONTINUED)

113

Another TWO CAGED CATS are set down near the side of the truck. All three lions are inactive in the extreme. Madge stops, surveys the cats. Goebel produces a manifest.

MADGE
What are these?

GOEBEL
Three cats.

She cracks her whip at one caged animal. And screams at it. The cat does not react.

MADGE
Uh huh. What are they, drugged?

GOEBEL
They're tired.

MADGE
They're very tired.
(to Ringmaster)
These cats are drugged. No.
No. I tell you they will not perform.
I will not get in a ring with them.
Take them away.

The Ringmaster pulls Madge off to the side. Goebel and Frank look on.

RINGMASTER
What is it you need?

MADGE
I told you. I need cats.

RINGMASTER
Where do you get them?

MADGE
Guitarrez.

RINGMASTER
Where are they?

MADGE
Mexico.

RINGMASTER
You get your cats. Join back up in
Tuscon on the 12th. Do it. Good...
Anything else that you need?

(CONTINUED)

MADGE
Of course. A driver.

The Ringmaster starts to walk off. Goebel realizes what it means. Goebel follows the Ringmaster, importuning the man for his money.

ANGLE - GOEBEL AND RINGMASTER (Note: Dialogue to overlap with Angle that follows.)

GOEBEL
Hey, can I talk to you for a minute, please.

RINGMASTER
Take the cats away. I'm sorry.

GOEBEL
I got to get paid for...

RINGMASTER
Shoot me or sue me.

GOEBEL
Hey, c'mon. Fair is fair.

ANGLE - FRANK AND MADGE

Madge prods the animal listlessly. They growl back, listlessly. She walks away in disgust. Frank follows her.

FRANK
You're right, you know.

MADGE
What?

FRANK
I drove fifty miles with those cats. They didn't meow once.

MADGE
Uh huh.

Madge reaches her trailer. She opens the door. At the foot of the steps is a small cage with a baby LION CUB inside. Frank bends down and starts playing with the cub.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK

Now this is a fine looking animal.

MADGE

He's dying. He'll be dead in a week.
What the fuck do you know?

Madge glares at Frank, turns and enters her trailer.

14A EXT. CIRCUS SITE - NIGHT

The rest of the circus has moved on. Madge's trailer is now alone on the lot, hooked up to a towing car.

14 INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

Frank and Madge, both naked, cramped in the trailer bed, entwined in sheets, obviously having finished intercourse. Lion-taming paraphenalia clutters the trailer and floor: whips, a rifle, much leather. The trailer walls are covered with animal act photos.

MADGE

...son of a bitch, the puma's climbing up his back. He's screamin'
'Shoot!' I had to shoot him. Best cat that I ever had.

She reaches for a cigarette from the side of the bed. Frank digs in his pants pocket from the floor, comes out with a TWIN OAKS MATCHBOOK, lights her cigarette and lets the matchbook fall on the side of the bed.

MADGE

You never turn your back on them.
No.

Frank starts to massage her sexually.

MADGE

I'll teach you all of it.
You'll like Mexico.

FRANK

I've been there.

(CONTINUED)

114 Frank manipulates Madge. Her tone of voice indicates that she is sexually aroused, but there is no response from her body. She just lays there, as if she were willing her body to respond, but she knows that it is a lost cause.

MADGE

Uh...Yes. That's very good.
That's good, Frank. That's what I love. That's what I have to have.

He starts to mount her.

MADGE

No, I'm not going to lie to you.
I love you. Ah. You stupid shit.
We're going down there, I'm going to buy you a hat...Oh, yeah, I'll do it for you. A big white one.

Frank is pumping away. Madge is still lying there.

MADGE

Oh yes. Oh Christ. And I don't give a fuck. You know I mean it.
(she raises herself up,
looks around)
Where's the clock?

She spots the clock and, satisfied, resumes her recumbent position.

MADGE

Do that to me if you can. Oh yes. You're going to drive. I have to think. Oh yes. Do that.

115 EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Frank in the parking lot of the bus station, lounging up against the convertible. The bus pulls in.

ANGLE

Cora, dressed in mourning, descends the bus.

FRANK
I'm sorry, Cora.

(CONTINUED)

5

CORA
 (shrugs)
 She was old.

Frank takes her suitcase.

116

ANGLE - PARKING AREA

Frank and Cora walking to the convertible.

FRANK
 Let's get a drink.

CORA
 I quit it. I'm not drinkin'
 anymore.

They reach the convertible. Frank puts her suitcase in the back seat. She walks around and opens her door, as he returns to the driver's side.

CORA
 I been thinking 'bout a
 lot of things, Frank.
 (a beat)
 Take me home.

117A

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The convertible on the road.

117

INT. CONVERTIBLE - DAY (DRIVING)

Frank and Cora, both staring straight ahead. Frank driving. Cora turns to face him. Looks intently at him a moment, resolves:

CORA
 I'm going to have our baby.

A beat. Frank does not respond.

CORA
 I'm going to have a baby...
 Tell me you want it.

Frank is impassive for a moment, then begins to grin.

FRANK
 (surprised at
 himself)
 I do want it.

CORA
 (making sure)
Tell me that you do.

17
 FRANK
 (happy)
 I do.

She impulsively grabs his arm, the car swerves a bit, toward the center line. A car is approaching, which can be seen through the front windshield.

FRANK
 Whoa, hold on, there.

Frank gets the car back under control. She begins kissing him.

FRANK
 ...gonna have a little kid...
 Hey, what the hell...

He kisses her while driving.

117A INT. TWIN OAKS - DAY

Frank coming down the stairs, having just carried up the suitcases, Cora coming into the Twin Oaks. They look at each other, shyly, like old lovers who are coming together for the first time in a long time. Cora sits on a stool at the counter, decisively, as if to say: "we're here now, let's talk." Frank walks over and stands by the end of the counter.

FRANK
 We lost some business...

CORA
 (nothing could be
 less important to her)
 I don't care.

FRANK
 I closed the place up, I
 went up to Frisco for a week...

CORA
 I don't care, Frank.

Cora composes herself, resolves:

CORA
 I been wrong. I been so wrong.
 I been a hateful bitch, and that's
 the truth.

FRANK
 No...

(CONTINUED)

117A Cora starts to cry.

CORA

(emphatically)

Yeah. Yeah, I've been making our
life hell. I know it.

(a beat)

I'm gonna change...Because we got each
other, we got everything.

(a beat)

I want you to forgive me. Frank?
I want you to forgive me, Frank.

He comes slowly over to her. They kiss rather formally,
then separate. Cora's face is beatific, she is at peace.

118 OMITTED

118A INT. CORA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (A WEEK LATER)

Frank and Cora, naked, are finished making love. A
HONK is heard. Then another HONK. Frank looks out the
window.

118B EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

A dark sedan pulls up and a bulky figure climbs out and
starts to approach the diner.

118C INT. TWIN OAKS - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Frank in robe descends stairs. Cora is behind him.

CORA

Just tell whoever it is
we're not open.

FRANK

He's gonna honk all night.

ANGLE - FRONT DOOR

Frank opens door. Kennedy appears, not immediately
recognizable.

(CONTINUED)

118C

FRANK
Sorry mister...Can't you see it
says closed.

Kennedy steps into the Twin Oaks.

KENNEDY
It's Mister Kennedy, remember
me?

A pause. Kennedy closes the door behind him, takes off his hat.

KENNEDY
So, how are you doing?

FRANK
Uh huh...how's Katz?

KENNEDY
Yeah. I'm not working for him anymore.

FRANK
Mmm.

Cora gets up slowly and comes in the back of the counter.

FRANK
What are you doing now?

KENNEDY
I'm not doing anything.
(a beat)
That's why I came by...I
thought that maybe you could
help me out.

FRANK
In what way?...What do you need
...a couple bucks?

Frank starts to go in pocket.

KENNEDY
No, no, no, no, hey, look...

FRANK
Because I know a guy gets
short sometimes.

(CONTINUED)

KENNEDY

Do you remember that confession
I typed up that time?

FRANK

That charade you fellas put on?

KENNEDY

That's right. When I left Katz
I took the liberty to take it
with me from his files.

FRANK

Ah ha...

KENNEDY

I thought the two of you might like
it.

A beat.

Cora moves closer to Frank.

FRANK

(magnanimously)
What do you want, a hundred?

He walks over to cash register, rings it open.

FRANK

Huh?

KENNEDY

I want ten grand.

FRANK

You're crazy, Bozo...you're
insane.

CORA

Katz took it. All the
insurance money.

KENNEDY

(nods)
I don't care. I just want
the money. Get it for me. Sell the
place, bring me ten or I mail the
confession off to Sackett...The End.

Frank springs at him.

(CONTINUED)

FRANK
You son of a bitch...

18C Kennedy pulls a .45 automatic from his belt, jacks a shell into it and levels it at Frank.

CORA
Frank!

Frank freezes.

KENNEDY
Don't start with me.

FRANK
Listen to me, alright. Fine
I want that paper back.

KENNEDY
That's what I'm telling you,
you bring me what I told you
and you get the paper.

ANGLE

Cora's hand down below the counter, feeling. A meat tenderizer, a wooden-handled block of studded metal, lies next to a pile of dirty dishes.

FRANK (V.O.)
I can't make the whole thing.

After searching for a second, Cora's hand finds the meat tenderizer. She lifts it and puts it on the counter, so that Frank's body hides it from Kennedy.

KENNEDY
(rising)
That's alright. I'll be back next week. You've got till then.

Kennedy goes back to the door, leveling the gun. Behind him, it is pitch dark outside. As Kennedy reaches the door:

CORA
(a soft whisper to
get Frank's attention)
Hsssst!

Frank reaches behind him for the tenderizer.

(CONTINUED)

18C

KENNEDY
Mrs. Papadakis...Frank...I'm
going to see you later.

Kennedy turns and exits. Frank moves quickly after him.

POV - FROM THE ENTRANCE

As Kennedy walks away, nearing the signpost, Frank flips on the neon TWIN OAKS SIGN, which blazes.

119

EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Kennedy out in front, startled by the sign. Frank rushes out brandishing the tenderizer. Kennedy turns and fires.

Frank comes in low, swings up, hits Kennedy in the gut with the tenderizer. Kennedy goes down hard. Frank grabs the gun, heaves it back toward the diner. He falls on Kennedy and starts battering him.

FRANK
...are you kidding me...?

As Cora stands at the door, holding the gun, Frank drags Kennedy toward her.

(Note: The fight will be extended.)

(CONTINUED)

120

INT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Frank props Kennedy in a booth, pulls on the overhead light, sits down across from Kennedy.

Cora locks the door. She then starts pulling down the shades near the booth.

FRANK
Where's the paper.

Frank shakes Kennedy, and Kennedy starts coughing.

Frank hits Kennedy in the face with his fist. Cora watches from behind the counter, the gun by her hand. She reaches for a Coke from the cooler, opens it. Her eyes never leave Kennedy.

KENNEDY
I can't tell you.

Cora takes a pack of cigarettes from dress pocket. Lights one, takes a swig of Coke. Frank grabs Kennedy by hair and mashes his face into the table. Kennedy starts to cry.

FRANK
Where is the paper?

KENNEDY
In a bank.

FRANK
Which one?...which one?

In the background, Cora opens another Coke, brings it around to Frank. Frank hauls Kennedy up and slams him down on a stool.

FRANK
You slimy stupid mick, I'll break your back. You'll never walk again...fuck with my family...?

Frank hits Kennedy. Cora lays the Coke down on the table beside him.

FRANK
Which bank?

Frank takes a drink from the Coke bottle.

KENNEDY
Glendale Trust.

121

EXT. TWIN OAKS - MORNING

Kennedy is slumped at the wheel of his car.

ANGLE

Frank and Cora come out of the Twin Oaks.

FRANK

I'll be back as soon as I can.

Cora kisses him. He starts for Kennedy's car. Stops.

FRANK

Anything you want from town?

CORA

No.

Frank continues to Kennedy's car. Gets in the passenger seat. Cora hands him the .45, which he lays on his lap. She hands him the keys, which he passes on to a cowed Kennedy. Cora smiles.

FRANK

Let's go, pal.

Cora watches them drive off. She turns the "CLOSED" sign to "OPEN" and starts to carry a stanchion advertisement out to the road.

122 EXT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

A Taxi pulls in, and Frank gets out and pays the Driver. Then he notices the TWIN OAKS is closed, shuttered tight.

As the cab drives away, Frank goes to the door. It is locked.

FRANK

Cora... Cora...?

Frank lets himself in with his key.

INT. TWIN OAKS - DINER - NIGHT

Frank entering.

FRANK
(softly)
Cora...?

Frank surveys lunchroom, moves stealthily into kitchen. The back door is closed, locked, Frank surveys windows. An empty pint bottle of booze is on the sink. Frank looks up the darkened staircase. He draws his gun.

FRANK
Cora...?

Frank, quietly advances up the stairs, pressing himself into the wall. He cocks the gun as he climbs.

ANGLE - THE LANDING

Frank at top of stairs, bedroom door half-open, looks through crack in door, sees nothing. With his foot, he opens the door. As he does we HEAR the very small growl of a lion cub.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

The door swings open. The growl is repeated. Frank explores the room, sees the baby LION from Mexico leashed to the leg the dresser.

In the far corner, seated on a chair, legs under her, wrapped in blanket, is Cora, holding a cigarette, its smoke rising. She is immobile, a one-third full bottle and a dirty glass with a finger of whiskey are on the table next to her. After a long moment:

CORA
Your friend came by.

Frank stands in the doorway, says nothing.

CORA
You son of a bitch.

Frank is still for a moment. Then, abashed, ashamed, Frank starts toward her.

CORA
Don't do that. Don't come
near me...

(CONTINUED)

24

CONTINUED:

He stops. The cub fidgets slightly and emits another very small growl.

CORA

We're scum, Frank. You and I. I knew it when I first met you, and we will never change.

She pours herself another drink. Frank throws the gun on the bed and sits, listlessly, on a chair.

CORA

We are nothing but two tramps...
We're killers...we don't deserve to live.

Frank takes papers from jacket pocket and tosses them on the bed next to the gun.

CORA

What's that?

FRANK

Your confession.

Cora nods to herself, gets up, picks up the confession and gives it a desultory look. She picks up the gun, idly, as one might unconsciously pick up an object on a coffee table.

CORA

I don't need it... I never needed it. They can't do any thing to me. They tried me once and they can't touch me now.

She starts toward the door to the stairs.

CORA

(over her shoulder)
But they can try you, Frank.

She continues walking.

125

INT. TWIN OAKS - NIGHT

Cora descending the stairs, Frank coming after her.

FRANK

Where are you going?

CORA

To call some people.

She moves towards the phone. Frank follows her. Cora reaches the phone. Frank stops eight feet away. She turns, points the gun at him, as she dials. Frank takes step toward her. She raises the gun a bit. Frank takes another step, she keeps dialing. He is two feet away.

CORA

Hello?

Frank steps into her. Slaps her in the mouth. She drops the phone and the gun and breaks into profound sobs. A beat. A man's voice heard faintly over the telephone: "Hello? Hello? ... Hello?" Frank reaches down, picks up gun, hangs up phone. Cora continues sobbing as if she would never stop. Frank shakes his head, confused. Cora continues sobbing. Impulsively, like a man in great pain punching a wall, Frank fires the gun in the direction away from Cora. He takes a step toward her, she cowers. He is reaching for the phone, pulls the cord out of the wall, smashes the receiver to the floor, and stalks away.

ANGLE

Frank walks to a booth on the far side of the restaurant. He plops down into the booth. Cora is fixed as if catatonic, where she was, near the phone, still sobbing. Suddenly she stops crying in as instant. Everything is quiet. Hold.

126

(OMITTED)

127

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Cora, huddled, clothed, up in the covers against the headboard, unmoving. A half-empty whiskey bottle and a half-full glass on the table next to her.

Frank is sitting by the door. Looking at her, unmoving.

128

INT. NICK'S BEDROOM - DAWN

Frank and Cora -- positions unchanged. Cora gets up, stiff, stretches, starts tentatively toward the door.

CORA
I'm cold.

Frank stands as she passes him. She starts out the door.

ANGLE - POV - FRANK

Cora, holding the guilt around her, goes down the stairs. Turns toward the kitchen.

129

INT. TWIN OAKS KITCHEN - DAY

Frank is sipping a cup of coffee. He puts it down, as if punctuating his having made a decision. He starts toward the back door.

130

EXT. BACK OF TWIN OAKS - DAY

Cora sits on the step, huddled in her blanket. Frank comes out of the back door and stands near her.

FRANK
I want to marry you.

CORA
You just want to harm me.

FRANK
No...

CORA
...you only want to shut me
up...

FRANK
(pulls her to him)
I wanted to, I would have
shut you up. I want to marry
you. Today.

Cora pulls loose of Frank, stares for a second at him, brushes the hair out of her eyes. She shakes her head.

FRANK
Yes!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She shakes her head again. Frank pulls her to him, starts kissing her. She finally responds. After a moment of embrace, she pulls away.

FRANK

What?

CORA

We can't get married in one day. It takes three days.

FRANK

(surprised, touched,
starts laughing
deeply)

Then we'll go take the test.
We'll start.

He gets up, starts to open the door to go inside.

CORA

Is that what you want to do?

FRANK

Yes.

Cora looks around her, then, looks up at Frank. She gives him her hand. He helps her up.

131 EXT. LOCAL COURTHOUSE - DAY

Frank and Cora dressed in Sunday clothes, coming out of a small judicial building. Their Convertible is at the foot of the steps, top down. Cora stops on the steps. Frank continues down a step or two. He realizes she has stopped and looks back. He sees her frightened, alone on the steps. He turns and walks back to her, holds out his hand. She looks at him for a beat, takes his hand.

(CONTINUED)

32

EXT. COURTHOUSE STREET - DAY

Frank and Cora at the car. He holds open passenger door, she gets in. He starts around to the other side.

132A

INT. CONVERTIBLE - DAY (FRANK & CORA DRIVING)

CORA

(happily)

You got to hold their heads
up. You know why?

FRANK

Uh huh.

CORA

Because their necks are weak.

133A

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Cora lounging against the parked car, pleasant country in the background. She is eating a peach. She walks to the rear of the car, revealing Frank in the final process of changing a rear tire.

CORA

(happily)

Maybe we ought to sell the
place...

She reaches in, gets another peach.

FRANK

I don't mind the restaurant.

Cora looks down at Frank as he tightens the last lug. She offers him the peach.

CORA

(teasing)

It's not the restaurant.
It's the garage I'm worried
about. You sure as hell
don't know anything about
cars.

She laughs.

Frank rises, takes the peach, wipes his hands on his pants.

(CONTINUED)

133A

CONTINUED:

FRANK
Yeah, well I never had your
advantages.

CORA
You want a sandwich?

Frank moves to the seat of the car. Cora goes to the jack.

ANGLE

on Frank as he reaches into the car. Cora gives a heave on the jack to lower it.

FRANK
We bring a beer along?

CORA (V.O.)
(softly)
Oh.

FRANK
(turning to Cora)
We bring that beer along?

He looks and sees Cora in pain standing by the jack.

FRANK
What is it?

CORA
I'm okay.

FRANK
What...?

CORA
I think I strained something.
I'm okay.

FRANK
Get into the car.

CORA
No. I'm fine.

133
hru
140

(OMITTED)

141A

EXT. CAR - DAY

Driveby - Car coming directly at CAMERA, urgently.

141

INT. CAR - DAY (DRIVING)

Frank is driving, his attention divided between his concern for Cora's immediate status and his sense of precaution (taking her to the hospital). He is helping her on with her coat.

FRANK

There.

CORA

I just want to go home,
really Frank.

FRANK

No. We're gonna get you
looked at.

CORA

It's just that I heard
sometimes you can pull
something.

FRANK

That's what I mean.

CORA

I think it's we're tired.
I didn't sleep that whole
night. I even was gonna
call Sackett.

Frank smiles.

141A

EXT. CAR -- FAST RUN-BY

141AA

INT. CAR - DAY (DRIVING)

CORA

I feel just fine now. I do.

FRANK

(looking at her)

Yeah...You look good. But
we're gonna stop off, anyway,
I mean it ain't us. It's
Phil I'm worried about.

CORA

Phyllis.

(CONTINUED)

141AA

CONTINUED:

Frank reaches up and raises the collar on her coat. It looks prettier to him. Cora moves closer to him, puts her head on his shoulder.

CORA

Oh Frank, will you always
take care of me?

FRANK

What do you think.

She kisses him. It directs his attention for the wrong moment. A TRUCK APPROACHES and the accident ensues.

142

EXT. BEACH ROAD - DAY

IN A SERIES OF SHOTS:

A Car Crash. The Two Cars and the Truck. Cora Is Thrown
Violently Some Twenty Feet From the Car.

143

EXT. BEACH ROAD - AFTERMATH - DAY

The end of the car crash, the two cars demolished, the truck run up against the wall, Cora's body lying broken, dead in the road.

ANGLE

Frank emerging from the wrecked convertible, battered but ambulatory. He can barely stand. He searches for Cora and finds her body twenty feet ahead.

ANGLE ON FRANK

He walks towards her, and kneels at her body, which is sprawled out on the roadside. He looks at her for a long time.

A POLICE SIREN is heard. Frank rises to his feet, starts to walk in the other direction. He can hardly walk.

THE END