

THE BRUTALIST

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FINAL SHOOTING DRAFT
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A black and white montage of architectural elements; a flurry of shapes, curves, angles, and shadows.

INSERT TITLE:

OVERTURE

CUE: The sonic boom of a ship's hull impacting against the waves; each redundant crash gives way to a romantic orchestral swell...

1

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM IN VAS COUNTY - MORNING LIGHT

1

NOTE: Ocean waves fight the diegetic audio for duration of scene.

CLOSE ON -

A haunted and brutalized young woman, **ZSÓFIA**, is isolated in the frame. A vast European landscape can be viewed through the casement windows behind her.

BORDER OFFICER (O.S.)
(Hungarian)
Your escort is right outside. She tells us that you are her niece. Are you her niece? Is she your aunt? Where is your mother? Is she alive? Do you know? Do you understand me when I speak? Do you prefer English or Czech?

No response.

BORDER OFFICER (CONT'D)
If you are from Budapest as the lady says, may you please state the name and street number of your former place of residence for the record? There's a pen and piece of paper in front of you... If you prefer not to speak to us, we suggest you write it down along with your family name, and we will take it upon ourselves to try and confirm this. Do you remember that address?

No response.

BORDER OFFICER (CONT'D)
Is it possible the woman outside is not related to you at all, but simply an ally you made along the way who is trying to help you? You bear little resemblance to one another. We will not punish her for trying to help an innocent young woman. We want to help you get home. Your true home. What is your true home? Help us to help you get home.

CUE: DIEGETIC AUDIO FADES OUT...

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)
(Hungarian)
*László, I am alive. Attila tells me
that you, too, are alive and en
route to him from Bremerhaven.
Rejoice!*

CUE: Violins shriek.

CROSS DISSOLVE:

2

INT. SHIP - LOWER DECK - DUSK

2

It's dark but slowly our eyes adjust like a developing photograph hung to dry from a chemical bath.

A SERIES OF ANGLES -

Guided by the ocean's current beneath them; slumbering men, women, and children rock back and forth in their bunk beds.

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)
(Hungarian)
*I cried out in ecstasy to have news
of you. Zsófia is with me though
she is frail, strange and quite
ill. We anxiously await our being
repatriated, but recently she has
not been herself which has, in
turn, roused unnecessary suspicions
with local officials.*

CLOSE, ULTRA-BOWED LENS ON -

LÁSZLÓ TOTH, malnourished with a badly broken nose. He has the face of an emigrant.

A door opens off-screen and light pours in. Several bodies wipe the frame. A fellow **HUNGARIAN REFUGEE** shakes **LÁSZLÓ** by his shoulder. **LÁSZLÓ** slaps his hand in response, shooting upwards violently.

HUNGARIAN REFUGEE
(Hungarian)
Documents...

LÁSZLÓ regains composure, wipes sleep from his eye. The light blooming from off-screen is transcendent.

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)
(Hungarian)
*Fortunately, a few Soviet boys have
taken a liking to us. They pity
your poor niece especially who has
grown fuller, even lovelier, since
you last set eyes on her. These
lonesome young servicemen are
ostensibly entranced by such a
radiant creature's commitment to
absolute silence.*

LÁSZLÓ searches for his things in a panic. He looks to the man off-screen.

LÁSZLÓ
(Hungarian)
WHERE ARE MY THINGS?

HUNGARIAN REFUGEE (O.S.)
(Hungarian)
WHAT?

LÁSZLÓ
(Hungarian)
IT IS NOT AMUSING TO ME! WHERE IS
MY LUGGAGE?!

LÁSZLÓ pushes the man off-screen who breaks into a fit of laughter.

HUNGARIAN REFUGEE
(Hungarian)
Oh, stop it! Don't look at me that way, old man! It's tucked there under the mattress!

LÁSZLÓ ducks down to find a large canvas bag and pulls it out.

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)
(Hungarian)
The Soviets have helped us relocate to a nearby shelter for displaced persons near Vas. They encourage us to "enjoy our freedoms," but I am reminded of Goethe; "None are more hopelessly enslaved than those who falsely believe themselves free!" I make no mistake, we are not yet free.

HUNGARIAN REFUGEE
(Hungarian)
Hurry László, or we'll be last in the queue.

LÁSZLÓ and the refugee fight their way through the crowded space towards the increasingly overwhelming sunlight, throwing off our camera's white balance.

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)
(Hungarian)
You, like myself, must be envisioning so many terribly awful, awful things but it is better that your thoughts not get the best of you.

They squeeze through a narrow doorway and up three flights of stairs.

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)
*It is neither better, nor worse
 than you might imagine. I have kept
 myself mostly to myself. More
 importantly, I have defended Zsófia
 from unwanted advances.*

The ferocious energy builds to a crescendo.

4

EXT. SHIP DECK - CONTINUOUS

4

The two men reach the top of the stairwell to the upper deck where dozens of immigrants take their place.

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)
*Below is the address I am told for
 mail in Vas. Please write to me at
 once when you have received this.*

The camera whip-pans over and up to the Statue of Liberty at a peculiar LOW-ANGLE.

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)
(Hungarian)
*I am certain now that there is
 nothing left for us here. Go to
 America and I will follow you.*

LÁSZLÓ and the man beside him squeeze each other by the arm.

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)
Faithfully, Erzsébet.

CUE: Strings and tympany reach a climax.

INSERT TITLE:

PART ONE
THE ENIGMA OF ARRIVAL
1947-1952

5

INT. HIAS CENTER BASEMENT - NIGHT

5

TWO HIAS REPRESENTATIVES (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) wearing unassuming dark coats and hats address a room crowded with Jewish émigré wearing numbered cards around their necks. One representative speaks in English, the other translates simultaneously over the speech in Yiddish.

HIAS REPRESENTATIVE
(English)

-for those of you who do not speak English, please engage myself or any of my colleagues located at the back so we may inform you about our orientation and language programs which are provided in this very room - 425 Lafayette - remember that address. Additionally, classes and daily meetings are held where many of you will be staying tonight over at the Hotel Marseilles located on 103rd and Broadway.

It's difficult to discern LÁSZLÓ amongst the other faces in the crowd.

HIAS REPRESENTATIVE (CONT'D)
(English)

And for those of you of which none of the aforementioned details apply and who are immediately departing for other destinations in the morning, please see me about your \$25 travel-aid.

One HIAS REPRESENTATIVE holds up and demonstrates a travel voucher.

HIAS REPRESENTATIVE (CONT'D)
These vouchers are redeemable for both trains and participating bus services.

CUE: Mourful solo piano plays over all of the following until otherwise noted.

6

EXT. NYC EAST RIVER DOCKS - NIGHT

6

LONG LENS ON -

A foghorn blows over a slow pan across a few girls talking amongst themselves while vying for some local business.

7

INT. BROTHEL - LATER

7

A woman performs intense oral sex on the HUNGARIAN REFUGEE who leans against an armoire in the background. In the foreground, a **PROSTITUTE** knelt on the floor tries to arouse LÁSZLÓ, though his penis remains flaccid in her grip.

HIAS REPRESENTATIVE 2
(Yiddish)

-for those of you who do not speak English, please engage myself or any of my colleagues located at the back so we may inform you about our orientation and language programs which are provided in this room - 425 Lafayette - remember that address. Additionally, classes and daily meetings are held where many of you will be staying tonight over at the Hotel Marseilles located on 103rd and Broadway.

PROSTITUTE
Don't you think I'm beautiful?

LÁSZLÓ appears stoic, uncomfortable, or perhaps somewhat conflicted.

LÁSZLÓ
I do-

PROSTITUTE
Which parts of me do you find most beautiful? Is there a part of me you would especially like to touch or look at?

LÁSZLÓ
-all parts.

PROSTITUTE
(affects seduction)
Stop it. I don't find all the parts of you beautiful. There are some parts of you which I like very much.

HUNGARIAN REFUGEE (O.S.)
Fuck her!

LÁSZLÓ's girl is annoyed at his friend's outburst.

PROSTITUTE
Can you tell your friend to be polite?

LÁSZLÓ shouts back in Hungarian.

LÁSZLÓ
(Hungarian)
Keep your mouth shut.

PROSTITUTE
Which parts do you find ugly?

She's moved to LÁSZLÓ's neck to try kissing him romantically.
Still, no response.

PROSTITUTE (CONT'D)
My breasts?

LÁSZLÓ
No, they are beautiful.

PROSTITUTE
My legs? Are they too thin?

LÁSZLÓ struggles to find the correct adjective in English.

LÁSZLÓ
You are- well-proportioned.

He squeezes her thighs below frame.

PROSTITUTE

Well-proportioned? Well, I think
that just made my day.

She presses harder now against him.

PROSTITUTE (CONT'D)

My arse; is that what you like? You
think it's beautiful?

LÁSZLÓ

Very... It's the space above your
brow for me which is the problem-

She stops, taken aback.

PROSTITUTE

What?

LÁSZLÓ

That's something I do not like.

PROSTITUTE

(without affect)

Your face is ugly.

LÁSZLÓ

(despondent)

I know it is.

INT. BROTHEL HALLWAY - LATER

The **MADAME** waits for LÁSZLÓ as he exits the room.

MADAME

We have boys if you prefer.
Brothers with dark skin but
handsome. We can call for them.

LÁSZLÓ

No, thank you.

MADAME

Stay awhile. We have a movie on
tonight.

LÁSZLÓ

Excuse me?

MADAME

We have a special movie on the
projector downstairs. Comes free of
charge with a glass of champagne.

INT. BROTHEL BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

A gramophone blasts classical music which fights the still
persistent non-diegetic solo piano.

LÁSZLÓ enters a makeshift home cinema holding a glass of champagne where some silent pornography (circa 1930) is being projected.

10 **EXT. CHINATOWN - DAWN**

10

LONG LENS ON -

LÁSZLÓ and the HUNGARIAN REFUGEE run for their lives to catch a departing bus. The two drunks bang on its door and the bus stops. They embrace each other like brothers and LÁSZLÓ steps on-board leaving his friend behind him.

11 **EXT. BUS - DAY**

11

CUE: Stravinsky continues.

ULTRA-WIDE LOW ANGLE ON -

Asphalt rushes at us. The midday gloom hangs heavy.

A SERIES OF ANGLES ON -

- A sign reads, "WELCOME TO PHILADELPHIA - Enjoy Our Past, Experience Our Future!"

- driving view of Philadelphia City Hall (constructed 1901)

- driving view of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (constructed 1928)

- driving view of the first International style skyscraper, the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society building (constructed 1932)

- driving view of Pennsylvania Station, 30th Street (constructed 1933)

12 **INT. BUS - LATER**

12

LÁSZLÓ rests his head against the frosted window.

LÁSZLÓ'S VIEW FROM BUS WINDOW -

A heavy snow comes down on LÁSZLÓ's cousin, ATTILA, who stands amongst a group of on-lookers awaiting visitors expectedly.

13 **EXT. BUS / DOWNTOWN PHILADELPHIA - MOMENTS LATER**

13

ATTILA holds his blood relative in an intense embrace.

ATTILA
Cousin.

LÁSZLÓ
Cousin.

ATTILA
Erzsébet is alive.

LÁSZLÓ's knees buckle, deeply moved.

LÁSZLÓ
What did you say?

ATTILA switches to Hungarian.

ATTILA
(Hungarian)
*I have a letter from her - your
Erzsébet is alive and she is with
little Zsófia.*

LÁSZLÓ lets out a deep emotional wail and holds his blood relative tight in his arms.

14

INT. FURNITURE SHOWROOM - LATER

14

TRACK WITH -

ATTILA and his young American wife, AUDREY, show LÁSZLÓ around the shop. ATTILA rambles nervously.

ATTILA
It's a combination of things. Most popular is the cabinetry which we do ourselves, custom-to-order. The lamps too. Some pieces we've found and restored. Audrey does the displays.

LÁSZLÓ nods, still visibly moved by the news of his wife. Not betraying much enthusiasm, he turns to AUDREY.

LÁSZLÓ
He speaks like an American from the television now-

AUDREY
(demure, posh, defiant)
Well, we don't have a television but he's been here since before I was born and still doesn't sound like any American I've ever met.

ATTILA
Eight years ago, we tried opening something similar in Manhattan but we lasted just two months.

AUDREY
We couldn't compete with the name brands.

ATTILA

Newlyweds come in with an issue of
Better Homes and Gardens and say,
 "We'd like that table next to the
 perfume ad."

He exhales demonstratively.

ATTILA (CONT'D)

We'd say to them, "well, we can
 make you something like that." And
 they say, "no sir, we want exactly
that!" Turns out that we don't like
 New York at all. No charm, right
 Audrey?

She nods.

ATTILA (CONT'D)

Every little urchin you come across
 - seller, buyer, delivery boy - is
 running a hustle.

ATTILA arrives at a door at the back, and sorts through a
 ring of keys without looking at LÁSZLÓ.

AUDREY

I'm from Connecticut myself. Do you
 know it?

Before LÁSZLÓ can respond...

ATTILA

Audrey, of course he doesn't know
 it. He just got here.

ATTILA opens the door and flips on a light. The bedroom set-up
 is makeshift and austere.

ATTILA (CONT'D)

I cleared out some space for you in
 the back. Audrey made you a bed.
 There's just the cot and the lamp
 for now but feel free to take
 anything you want from the
 showroom.

LÁSZLÓ

That's all I need.

Anxious and embarrassed, ATTILA continues on yammering.

ATTILA

For the employee restroom, you just
 exit the front door, and walk
 around back where I parked the car.
 There's a staircase there, it takes
 you up to our apartment. If you
 need anything just knock.

The three of them don't bother stepping inside so ATTILA
 shuts the door and leads them around the shop's interior
 perimeter.

AUDREY

You know, we know somebody, who can take a look at your nose.

LÁSZLÓ

I thought- maybe no one would notice.

LÁSZLÓ smiles a little, having tried to make a joke with almost no inflection.

AUDREY

What happened, if you don't mind my asking?

ATTILA shoots her a look. LÁSZLÓ struggles a bit with the language speaking slowly, methodically.

LÁSZLÓ

(anecdotal)

I jumped from a rail car. A few moments later there was a loud cracking sound so I thought I had been shot in the head- but I had merely run into the branch of a tree. No one was running after me.

AUDREY and ATTILA aren't sure how to respond.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)

I take something for the pain but I would like to have it looked at. Thank you.

AUDREY

I'll give Kenneth a call.

ATTILA puts his arm around LÁSZLÓ and guides him away from AUDREY to an office area in the showroom's back corner.

ATTILA

Come and take a seat at my desk.

ATTILA takes the boss' chair. LÁSZLÓ sits across from him like it's a job interview.

ATTILA (CONT'D)

Is it smaller than you expected?

LÁSZLÓ

What?

ATTILA

The shop.

LÁSZLÓ

No, not at all. I had no expectation.

LÁSZLÓ analyzes ATTILA's business cards which read: **MILLER & SONS.**

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
Who is Miller?

ATTILA
I am Miller.

LÁSZLÓ
You are Molnár.

ATTILA
Not anymore.

LÁSZLÓ
No Miller, No Sons.

ATTILA
(shrugs)
Folks here like a family business-

ATTILA offers LÁSZLÓ a cigarette.

ATTILA (CONT'D)
So, what do you think?

LÁSZLÓ
Of the furniture?

ATTILA
Well, I meant of everything so far -
Philadelphia - but sure the pieces
on the floor also...

LÁSZLÓ
(blunt)
They are not so beautiful.

ATTILA looks a little hurt but saves face.

ATTILA
That's what you're here for,
Maestro.

ATTILA lights his cigarette.

ATTILA (CONT'D)
Next month, I can put you on the
payroll. You're welcome to eat with
us upstairs on Sundays.

LÁSZLÓ
You and your wife have done quite
enough.

ATTILA
Don't mention it.

LÁSZLÓ
No, I do mention- thank you,
Attila.

LÁSZLÓ motions to AUDREY.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
(Yiddish)
Gentile? (Goy?)

ATTILA nods.

ATTILA
She's Catholic.

Corrects himself.

ATTILA (CONT'D)
We are Catholic.

15

INT. FURNITURE SHOWROOM - BACKROOM - NIGHT

15

CLOSE ON -

Under the glow of lamp light, ERZSÉBET's letter in Hungarian reads...

László, I am alive. Attila tells me that you, too, are alive and en route to him from Bremerhaven. Rejoice! I cried out in ecstasy to have news of you...

The note trembles in LÁSZLÓ's withering hands. Off-screen, he can be heard again weeping. He strokes the text lovingly and murmurs its text to himself. He sets the note down and begins sketching the first lines of an architectural drawing.

LÁSZLÓ
(murmurs)
Erzsébet...

CUE: Solo piano concludes.

FADE TO BLACK.

16

EXT. OLD CITY CHURCH SOUP KITCHEN - MORNING

16

A new season has arrived. Pigeons are everywhere and rain drizzles down on a long queue of impoverished families waiting on line for food. We pan across to LÁSZLÓ who stands solo amongst the families in line. **His nose has healed somewhat.**

A man in uniform stands ahead of LÁSZLÓ playing "I Spy" with his little boy. He will come to be known later as **GORDON**.

GORDON
It's your turn now, William.

The boy, **WILLIAM**, has his eyes locked on LÁSZLÓ.

WILLIAM
I spy- with my eye- something-
blue.

GORDON turns around and regards LÁSZLÓ.

GORDON
Is it this gentleman's coat?

LÁSZLÓ
He is clever- there is some blue in it.

LÁSZLÓ grins in acknowledgement. A volunteer shouts out...

VOLUNTEER (O.S.)
Kitchen's closed, folks! Get back early tomorrow.

The crowd hollers with disappointment.

GORDON
Wait, hold on! I got a kid here!

The disgruntled VOLUNTEER shouts back.

VOLUNTEER
We're fresh out! Come see me early tomorrow and I'll make sure he gets a plate.

LÁSZLÓ joins in.

LÁSZLÓ
(shouts)
You must have a slice of bread- he's only a little boy!

VOLUNTEER
How many more times do you all want me to say it?! There's nothing left here!

GORDON regards LÁSZLÓ.

GORDON
Thank you-

LÁSZLÓ
Will he be all right-?

GORDON
There's somewhere else we can try tonight.

LÁSZLÓ
Let him sleep tomorrow. I can be here early to- hold a place.

LÁSZLÓ holds a leather strap for balance in a packed tram car. He regards a woman's purse in front of him. After a moment, she exits.

LÁSZLÓ shifts around as a new group of pedestrians come aboard. Two well-dressed businessmen enter and stand to his left. The train begins to move. With each sharp turn, the passengers lean with the train.

LÁSZLÓ's left hand enters the business man's coat pocket but quickly recedes with nothing in its grasp. His expression is grave, debased. He makes a decision and slowly re-positions himself to the other side of the two men.

LÁSZLÓ
Excuse me.

He waits for the tram to make another sharp turn, and as it does....

LÁSZLÓ's right hand enters the businessman's coat pocket. He quickly pulls it back with something in his grip.

LÁSZLÓ hesitates to look down and see the fruit of his labor.

CLOSE ON -

He opens his hand to reveal a soiled tissue.

18

INT. THE CONGREGATION MIKVEH ISRAEL - LATER

18

LÁSZLÓ sits for a service, a kippah atop his crown.

CHAZZAN (O.S.)
(Hebrew)
We will hallow and adore You as the sweet words of the assembly of the holy Seraphim who thrice repeat "holy" unto You, as it is written by Your prophet: And they call one to another and Say...

LÁSZLÓ
(Hebrew)
Holy, holy, holy is the L-rd of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory.

19

INT. THE CONGREGATION MIKVEH ISRAEL - LATER

19

LONG LENS ON -

LÁSZLÓ approaches **RABBI ZUNZ** in a greeting processional.

LÁSZLÓ
Boker tov. Rabbi Zunz-?

RABBI ZUNZ
Yes?

LÁSZLÓ
 (discreet)
 My niece and wife- I have learned
 the two are stuck at the Austrian
 boundary-

RABBI ZUNZ understands.

RABBI ZUNZ
 Wait not many minutes for me and we
 can speak after. Mikveh Israel can
 try and help but from here it is
 very difficult, as you know-

LÁSZLÓ nods graciously and extends a hand in thanks.

20

INT./ EXT. WORKSHOP/ FOUNDRY - DAY

20

A SERIES OF ANGLES ON -

LÁSZLÓ's meticulous process as he constructs a chaise lounge and 2 tubular metal Bauhaus style chairs.

- Sparks illuminate LÁSZLÓ's face as he presides over two men welding a few pieces of metal together in a garage. ATTILA assists them.
- LÁSZLÓ feverishly pencils a drawing.
- Pan up an elegant S-shaped plank of soft wood.
- Inside, with the precision of a tailor, LÁSZLÓ measures a strip of leather for the chair back.
- ATTILA pulls the leather down, and the two stand back to observe the object which appears somehow incomplete.
- Pan across other masterful drawings which are carelessly strewn about.

The flow of work and ideas for a wide variety of different objects appears infinite.

21

EXT. FURNITURE SHOWROOM - LATER

21

AUDREY observes LÁSZLÓ's two finished chairs and a functional utilitarian shelving unit in the shop front display. She paces back and forth on the sidewalk.

AUDREY
 Well, I'm not sure what to do with
 them is all.

She bites her lip.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
 What do you think I should pair
 them with?

LÁSZLÓ
Leave it-

AUDREY
How?

LÁSZLÓ
Leave it like that.

AUDREY reaches a conclusion.

AUDREY
They look like tricycles.

LÁSZLÓ looks a little puzzled.

LÁSZLÓ
What's that?

AUDREY
A bike for kids.

22

EXT. EMPLOYEE RESTROOM - MORNING

22

LÁSZLÓ shaves himself with a straight blade. As he does, he charmingly practices an embellished American accent in the mirror.

LÁSZLÓ
(emphasizing his R's)
Peter Piper picked a peck of
pickled peppers. Did Peter Piper
pick a peck of pickled peppers? If
Peter Piper picked a peck of
pickled peppers, where's the peck
of pickled peppers Peter Piper
picked?

23

EXT. FURNITURE SHOWROOM - MOMENTS LATER

23

LÁSZLÓ exits the bathroom with a towel around his neck and WE TRACK with him down the sidewalk. When he reaches the front of the building, as he rounds the corner, he bumps into ATTILA who grabs him by the arm.

ATTILA
Get over here.

We follow behind them urgently...

ATTILA (CONT'D)
We have an important customer
inside; furnished him a two-story
office space downtown on the cheap
last year. He's interested in us
doing some built-in work at a
residence.

24

INT. FURNITURE SHOWROOM - MOMENTS LATER

24

HARRY LEE VAN BUREN, 30s, handsome, smokes in an office chair towards the back of the shop. ATTILA hurries back to his desk. LÁSZLÓ, still holding a razor blade, follows behind him.

ATTILA
Mr. Van Buren, this is my cousin,
László.

LÁSZLÓ nods.

HARRY LEE
Please - that's what people call my
father. Call me Harry.

ATTILA
(to LÁSZLÓ)
*Harry would like some shelving
units installed over at his
family's property in Doylestown.*

HARRY addresses the blade in LÁSZLÓ's hand.

HARRY LEE
Sorry to interrupt.

HARRY LEE (CONT'D)
*I hoped someone might follow me out
there to take a look at my father's
study. My sister and I'd like to
surprise him by turning it into a
proper library.*

LÁSZLÓ
How do you mean?

HARRY LEE
*-place is in complete disarray; a
whole mess of books and paperwork
so I guess we'd just like some tall
shelves and cabinetry installed?
Maybe make him a ladder with little
wheels on it, you know, like you'd
see in a real library? He's a
voracious reader.*

ATTILA
*We can make you something like
that. Let me have Audrey come down
to keep an eye on the place. I'll
pull the van around.*

HARRY LEE
Fantastic.

25

EXT. COUNTY ROADS - LATER

25

ULTRA-WIDE LOW ANGLE ON -

Asphalt rushes at us. The road bends and curves.

26

EXT. ATTILA'S BEDFORD VAN - CONTINUOUS

26

In the front windshield's reflection we view HARRY LEE's sports car as it speeds with thrilling abandon down the local county roads.

ATTILA

They've got something like nine hundred acres out here, I'm not kidding. A few buildings downtown too- one of them's a department store.

LÁSZLÓ

They pay you well?

ATTILA

On the last job, they paid okay. They took on a lot of pieces though. Kept adding to the order. Even at a discount, it adds up...

ATTILA references HARRY LEE's sports car.

ATTILA (CONT'D)

His old man got flush adapting production techniques to expedite the manufacturing of cargo ships during the war.

ATTILA struggles to keep up in his van.

ATTILA (CONT'D)

(shouting at the window)

Christ, is this guy trying to shake us? Does he think he's in a drag race? Come on, already!

27

EXT. VAN BUREN GATES - LATER

27

HARRY LEE opens a gate and waves them past.

HARRY LEE

(shouts)

Stay left until you see the main house. You can park wherever you'd like.

ATTILA turns his clumsy green Bedford through the front gates.

28

EXT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - MOMENTS LATER

28

ANGLE ON -

The view of the striking estate framed by a tree-lined driveway.

CUE: The score is ominous and it hums.

29

INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

29

We are tight on LÁSZLÓ as he moves through the house. He's led by his cousin and HARRY LEE. LÁSZLÓ takes note of various modernist sculptures on pedestals around the entryway.

HARRY LEE

I do appreciate you coming out here on such short notice, gentlemen. Father's away only until next Friday so I was anxious to pin this down.

ATTILA

It's no inconvenience for us, chief.

They turn a corner and ATTILA shoots a glance at LÁSZLÓ.

ATTILA (CONT'D)

It's your lucky day too cause my cousin here is a licensed architect, and a specialist in renovations... He's even designed a library before, back at home. I mean, a whole city library.

HARRY LEE

What city is that?

LÁSZLÓ speaks...

LÁSZLÓ

Budapest.

HARRY LEE

(cheerful)

I see. Never been.

30

INT. VAN BUREN'S STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

30

HARRY LEE pushes a door open to reveal a dark, octagonal-shaped study framed by heavy curtains drawn to cover the floor-to-ceiling windows.

Only a small shaft of light is allowed in through the corbel glass dome above. Hardbound books are stacked on and scattered across Van Buren's desk, floor space, and the existing two meter high bookshelves.

HARRY LEE pulls a curtain aside flooding the room with light. Particulate floats all around him.

HARRY LEE

Don't mind the mess.

LÁSZLÓ and ATTILA observe the space.

HARRY LEE (CONT'D)
 I'm thinking... Shelves up to the ceiling, and some good reading lamps. Perhaps some wall fixtures that extend? Father always keeps the curtains drawn.

LÁSZLÓ
 -to protect the books from the sunlight. We are south-facing here.

HARRY LEE
 Sure.

ATTILA
 What's your budget?

HARRY LEE
 What's your estimate?

LÁSZLÓ
 Depends on the materials.

HARRY LEE
 Well, make it of reasonable quality. Maybe a nice place for him to sit and read, as well? A good chair or bench for him against the window?

LÁSZLÓ regards the stained-glass dome above. There is an ugly diagonal crack across it.

LÁSZLÓ
 Would you like us to replace that?

HARRY LEE
 If there's time, why not? A branch fell on it during that nasty storm last summer; a tropical depression they called it.

HARRY LEE stops to think, arrives at a number...

HARRY LEE (CONT'D)
 Keep it below six or seven hundred dollars, can you? My sister and I are splitting it. I don't want any unexpected add-ons.

ATTILA masks his enthusiasm.

ATTILA
 Don't worry, we'll come in on-budget. You want this all done by next Friday, you said?

HARRY LEE
 Thursday night, preferably. I can't be here during the week but the staff can let you in, and if anything comes up, have them ring me at the office.

LÁSZLÓ
 (firm)
 To be finished on Thursday, we need
 extra hands. Including materials
 and glass, eight hundred dollars.

31

INT. ATTILA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

31

CUE: Dinah Shore's "Buttons and Bows" plays on the gramophone.

LÁSZLÓ sits at a small kitchen table backed up against the wall. The overhead lamp makes a dark shadow across his face. He watches ATTILA who is wildly drunk, dancing with his tipsy wife, AUDREY. He convincingly mouths the lyrics to "Buttons and Bows" which makes AUDREY laugh.

ATTILA
 Dance with us! Come on! Cut a rug.

LÁSZLÓ
 No, thank you.

ATTILA pulls open his sweaty collar, grabs an apron, wrapping it around his waist like a dress and continues mouthing Dinah's lyrics.

ATTILA
 Don't be a spoiled-sport!

LÁSZLÓ
 (smiles)
 I'm not sure what that is but no
 thank you.

CUE: The track comes to an end.

ATTILA
 (to Audrey)
 Flip it for the other side-

ATTILA catches his breath.

ATTILA (CONT'D)
 You should have seen him talking up
 the price today! I was ready to
 settle at 450.

LÁSZLÓ
 I wasn't doing that. I was just
 telling him how much it will cost.

To AUDREY...

ATTILA
 I thought he was about to blow it
 for us!

To LÁSZLÓ...

ATTILA (CONT'D)
 I did! I honestly did! I thought
 you were going to completely blow
 it but you held your ground. That's
 what makes you a professional.

LÁSZLÓ appears embarrassed.

LÁSZLÓ
 Hopefully, it's not only that-

ATTILA turns to AUDREY, playfully turning the screws on her.

ATTILA
 You know, László's bride was a goy,
 too, when they met, but she
 converted for him-

AUDREY rolls her eyes.

AUDREY
 I should put a muzzle on you.

A new track comes on.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
 Oh! This is my favorite.

ATTILA
 Dance with her, László!

AUDREY looks a little embarrassed.

AUDREY
 He doesn't want to.

ATTILA
 (drunk and antagonizing)
 Don't keep her waiting, cousin.
 It's her favorite song.

ATTILA's tone has darkened the atmosphere. LÁSZLÓ finally stands and approaches AUDREY.

HANDHELD ON -

LÁSZLÓ takes AUDREY by the waist and they sway back and forth. There's a palpable erotic tension.

AUDREY
 You're awfully skinny, aren't you?

LÁSZLÓ nods, still swaying rhythmically.

ATTILA
 See! It's like riding a bike.

ATTILA wraps his arms around them both and the three sway and sway.

AUDREY longs for LÁSZLÓ.

32

INT. ATTILA'S APARTMENT - LATER

32

ATTILA's passed out on the bed.

The bathroom door is open. LÁSZLÓ is hunched over the bathtub pissing into it. He sweats profusely.

A NEW ANGLE reveals AUDREY smoking a cigarette watching him.

AUDREY
(deadpan)
You missed the toilet.

LÁSZLÓ finishes and stumbles out.

LÁSZLÓ
What-

AUDREY
(murmurs)
Better than the carpet, I suppose.

BEAT.

AUDREY (CONT'D)
When do you expect your wife might join you, Mr. Toth-? There isn't room for two in that storage space, I'll tell you.

LÁSZLÓ
I wish I knew, Audrey. Thank you for the dinner.

An awkward beat passes between them.

AUDREY
Attila's shown me some magazine pictures of the projects you did at your firm. You're not what I expected from what I read about you.

He leans against the door frame, practically trying to crawl out.

LÁSZLÓ
I'm not what I expected-

AUDREY
I'm sure you could get a job, a better job, at a firm here.

LÁSZLÓ
I then-

He breathes.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
-would be working- *for someone.*

AUDREY
Better than sleeping in a storage closet.

LONG BEAT. LÁSZLÓ understands.

LÁSZLÓ
I'll look for somewhere else to
stay. Thank you again for the
dinner.

LÁSZLÓ opens the door and exits.

INT. VAN BUREN'S STUDY - DAY

33

ATTILA and LÁSZLÓ remove the existing Art Deco shelving units from their place.

34 EXT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - DUSK

34

Next to a two meter tall pile of debris, ATTILA and LÁSZLÓ craft new units for installation.

INT. VAN BUREN'S STUDY - EVENING

35

A SERIES OF ANGLES -

The room is empty. The walls are stripped. The curtains are gone. Alone, LASZLÓ sweeps the floor clean with a broom. He stops at the center and regards the space.

36 INT. VAN BUREN'S STUDY - NEW DAY

36

BIRDS-EYE VIEW ON-

LÁSZLÓ stands at the center of the room. He is surrounded by a few **Hired Men** (one is recognizable from the Old City Church Soup Kitchen, **GORDON**). Each of them are supporting a large plywood plate.

LÁSZLÓ One - two - three!

The men simultaneously lift the plates, standing them up to completely enclose the room in an octagonal shape. At the central point of action, it mimics a flower blooming.

The windows now sealed in darkness, save for the sole shaft of light let through the stained-glass dome above.

CLOSE ON -

The rouge tinted light illuminates LÁSZLÓ's expression as he gazes up at it.

37

INT. VAN BUREN'S STUDY - NEW DAY

37

LÁSZLÓ speaks to GORDON and ATTILA.

LÁSZLÓ
Set each panel to 45°.

GORDON mimics LÁSZLÓ's instruction.

GORDON
Like this?

LÁSZLÓ
Yes, that's right. That looks right, doesn't it? The books shall fan outwards, you see?

LÁSZLÓ demonstrates with his hands passionately.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
Like so.

ATTILA
All in the same direction?

LÁSZLÓ
The long panels, yes. The shelves themselves, however, can vary in height to accommodate the larger volumes our client had been stacking on the floor.

38

EXT. VAN BUREN ESTATE ROOF - DAY

38

HANDHELD ON -

LÁSZLÓ, ATTILA, GORDON, and the other hired hands work on the Victorian gabled roof above Van Buren's study. Amongst a cobweb of ropes and a makeshift pulley system, the men pull the rope taut, painstakingly lifting the detached glass dome from the roof of the study with a short crane arm.

LÁSZLÓ directs GORDON who, in turn, directs the rest of the group.

LÁSZLÓ
Slowly, Gordon. One steady movement.

GORDON
(shouts)
Slowly, boys!

The men operate the pulley system successfully lifting the dome head from its place.

LÁSZLÓ
 (muttering)
 Left, Gordon. Left. And steady.

GORDON
 (shouts)
All right, good! Now left. (Beat)
To the left!

One man manually pushes the base of the crane arm employing excessive strength, and it suddenly swings out too fast, hovering over the driveway.

GROUP
Hey, christ, watch out!

The group overcorrect the crane's movement causing the dome frame to swing back, gaining velocity, in their direction. The dome hits the corner gutter hard, knocking out one large panel from its frame.

ANGLE ON -

It shatters in the driveway below.

BACK TO -

LÁSZLÓ
 No!

LÁSZLÓ scrambles across the shingled roof towards the dome which is stuck at an awkward tilt on the southeast corner of the mansion.

GORDON
 (shouts)
 I said to be careful, goddammit!

LÁSZLÓ
 (shouts re: crane arm)
 Get a hold of that thing!

The group is frozen, spooked. ATTILA calls out...

ATTILA
 Everyone all right down there?

Hired Man
 (defensive)
 -the glass was already broken.

ANGLE ON -

LÁSZLÓ crawls on all fours to the very edge of the roof where the dome frame is stuck.

ATTILA
 (shouts)
 CAREFUL, LÁSZLÓ!

LÁSZLÓ tries to dislodge the heavy dome frame which grinds against the guttering.

LÁSZLÓ begins to kick at it over and over again. Its an increasingly reckless gesture. Finally, after three kicks, he successfully dislodges the dome from the gutter which causes it to CRASH to the ground. He breathes heavy-

LÁSZLÓ
We have a piece of gutter to
replace now, as well!

39

INT. VAN BUREN'S STUDY - DAY

39

STRAIGHT UP ON -

The men outside replace the stained-glass with a flat, clear circular disk. The image recalls a solar eclipse.

BIRDS-EYE VIEW -

An intense spherical shaft of light illuminates the center of the room. The bookshelves are now complete, remarkable for their geometry. There is no furniture in the room apart from a visually-arresting chaise lounge which LÁSZLÓ pushes into the very midpoint of sunlight.

40

INT. VAN BUREN'S STUDY - DUSK

40

LÁSZLÓ and ATTILA pull protective linens from the painted wall of shelves. Half the room is now filled with Van Buren's collection of precious tomes. Several modern lamps on scissored extenders poke out in various directions.

41

EXT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - SAME TIME

41

GORDON picks up fragments of stained-glass from the driveway. The massive dome frame is plunked down beside him.

After some time, the headlights of an automobile blind GORDON from off-screen as he looks up...

42

INT. VAN BUREN'S STUDY - MOMENTS LATER

42

The esteemed and handsome, **HARRISON LEE VAN BUREN SR.**, enters the room in a miserly fury. ATTILA and LÁSZLÓ stand frozen, initially dumbfounded by the intrusion.

VAN BUREN
What's this? What is all this? Who
has authorized you to come into my
home and tear everything apart?

ATTILA blinks.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
Who the hell are you?

ATTILA
Uh... Excuse us, sir. This was all
supposed to be a surprise.
(MORE)

ATTILA (CONT'D)
 Your son, Harry, told us not to
 expect you until tomorrow-

VAN BUREN
 (shouting)
 It is a Goddamned surprise! My
 mother, an ailing woman, is sitting
 outside on the driveway too
 frightened to come inside!

ATTILA
 We are sorry to have frightened
 her.

VAN BUREN
 -we brought her here for some peace
 and respite only to discover a
 strange Negro man roaming around
 our property.

ATTILA
 Sir, your son asked us here to redo
 your study into a library.

VAN BUREN
 A library?

VAN BUREN looks around.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 The room- it's gutted.

ATTILA
 We were just putting everything
 back in its place.

VAN BUREN
 You've turned it all inside out.
 How the hell do you know its proper
 place?

LÁSZLÓ finally interjects...

LÁSZLÓ
 We have taken excellent care of
 your things, Mr. Van Buren.

VAN BUREN turns to LÁSZLÓ with a daring expression, provoked
 by his calm.

VAN BUREN
 And who the hell are you?

LÁSZLÓ
 László Toth-

ATTILA
 László is a licensed architect. He
 supervised the renovation. And I-
 I've done business with your son
 before. I have a furniture shop,
Miller and Son's, down in
 Kensington.

VAN BUREN stares, fixated on LÁSZLÓ. The two have an immediate, adversarial connection.

LÁSZLÓ

May I show you around the space, sir? Our work lamps aren't doing the work we've done here any justice.

VAN BUREN

Your Negro is waiting for you outside the gates so I suggest you pack your things up and leave. I'll confirm all this with my son in the morning. My mother is sick! She needs to be let inside to sleep.

LÁSZLÓ

We are finished. That's quite all right.

CUE: A low rumble overtakes the soundtrack.

CROSS DISSOLVE:

43

INT. FURNITURE SHOWROOM - BACKROOM - MORNING

43

LÁSZLÓ snores in a deep sleep, physically exhausted. After a few moments, ATTILA shakes LÁSZLÓ awake.

ATTILA

Wake up.

LÁSZLÓ jolts up in fearful defense, but quickly re-gathers himself.

ATTILA (CONT'D)

That's a hell of a way to greet the day.

ATTILA lights a cigarette on the edge of his cot.

ATTILA (CONT'D)

Harry Lee called.

LÁSZLÓ sits up against the wall, trying to maintain some dignity though caught off-guard.

ATTILA (CONT'D)

He says he won't pay.

LÁSZLÓ

For the materials?

ATTILA

(calm)

He says we damaged the property and I'm lucky if he doesn't take me to court.

LÁSZLÓ doesn't respond. ATTILA remains calm but his voice quivers with emotion.

ATTILA (CONT'D)
 You've got nothing to say to that?
 What are you going to do about it?

ATTILA speaks for a moment in Hungarian.

ATTILA (CONT'D)
 (Hungarian)
I take you into my home. Into my place of business, László, and this is how you thank me?

LÁSZLÓ is again silent.

ATTILA (CONT'D)
 You run my clients out the door?
 You make a pass at my wife? She told me! Of course, she told me.
 What did you expect?

Silence.

ATTILA (CONT'D)
 Hell, what did I expect? You couldn't keep your hands to yourself even when we were kids. Listen up, I won't tell Erzsi this time. I know you've been through a lot. That's what I told Audrey, too. I'm not going to hurt you, but I can't help you anymore either, got it?

LÁSZLÓ breathes, defiant.

FADE TO BLACK.

44

EXT. OLD CITY CHURCH - MORNING

44

Winter has come again. The bell tolls. HOLD, HOLD...

LÁSZLÓ (V.O.)
 (in HUNGARIAN)
 ERZSÉBET,
I CAN BE REACHED BY MAIL AT A NEW ADDRESS... I WAIT FOR YOU. I WAIT AND WAIT. DO YOU NEED MONEY? WHAT DO YOU NEED?
YOURS, LÁSZLÓ.

45

INT. OLD CITY CHURCH - SAME

45

HOMELESS MEN sweep the floor of the shelter.

46

INT. OLD CITY CHURCH BASEMENT - SAME

46

The muffled ring of the bell... Homeless families in bunks begin to rise from their beds.

ANGLE ON -

LÁSZLÓ wakes in a bunk clutching a duffle bag that contains his few possessions. **His beard has grown out.**

ANGLE ON -

GORDON and his son sleep through the ruckus in the bunk across from LÁSZLÓ.

LÁSZLÓ
Gordon-

GORDON stirs awake.

47

INT. OLD CITY CHURCH BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

47

GORDON is now dressed in functional garments for the day's work. He gently tries to wake his little boy who wants to sleep some more.

GORDON
(whispers)
We got to go. I let you sleep in.
Time to get up.

A NUN approaches GORDON.

NUN
Has Mr. Toth already gone? I'd like
a word.

48

INT. OLD CITY CHURCH BASEMENT LAVATORIES - MOMENTS LATER

48

STEADICAM ON -

GORDON moves down the hallway and shoulders open the bathroom door.

GORDON
László!

The door opens to reveal LÁSZLÓ fiddling to stuff a syringe and some barbiturate powder back in its pouch.

LÁSZLÓ
It's for my injury.

GORDON blinks.

GORDON
Sister Elizabeth is asking for you.

LÁSZLÓ
I will be right there.

GORDON nods to the junk.

GORDON
Do me a favor and hold off on that
until we punch out.

49

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - MORNING

49

On a second-story high beam, LÁSZLÓ spots GORDON, pulling his safety leash taut as GORDON leans to wrench several bolts below frame. GORDON laughs wildly...

LÁSZLÓ
She asked me for my- participation.

GORDON
Like what? They want you to help
out-

LÁSZLÓ
I already help- out. She wants me
to attend the service on Sundays;
collect donations.

GORDON looks back at him, takes a break.

GORDON
And what did you say to her?

LÁSZLÓ
I said that I would think about it.

GORDON
That seems fair, no?

LÁSZLÓ shrugs.

LÁSZLÓ
I go to- somewhere else.

GORDON leans down again.

GORDON
Why not ask for a place to stay
wherever it is that you do go!?

LÁSZLÓ
I do not permit my people from home
to see me as a beggar. Never.

GORDON playfully sings, in retort.

GORDON
(sings)
A rose must remain with the sun and
the rain Or its lovely promise
won't come true
To Each His Own, To Each His Own
And my own is you-

CUE: To Each His Own by Eddy Howard overtakes the soundtrack.

LÁSZLÓ laughs.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Give me a few inches.

LÁSZLÓ cautiously releases six inches of rope. As he does, he notices an conspicuous black Cadillac Towncar approaching the yard.

50

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - MOMENTS LATER

50

LÁSZLÓ shovels aggregate into a cement mixer. GORDON enters from off-screen.

GORDON
(casual)
There's a son of a bitch here to
see you.

LÁSZLÓ furrows his brow and looks beyond GORDON to see HARRISON VAN BUREN SR. on approach from some distance.

VAN BUREN
László Toth! Is that you?!

VAN BUREN appears overjoyed, ecstatic. LÁSZLÓ courteously stands to receive him, stoic.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
I've been looking for you!

LÁSZLÓ shares a dubious glance with GORDON.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
No wonder you couldn't be found!
You've grown a beard!

LÁSZLÓ blinks.

LÁSZLÓ
What can I do for you, sir?

VAN BUREN catches his breath in the cold.

VAN BUREN
I'd like to take you for lunch.

LÁSZLÓ
We don't break for another 2 hours.

VAN BUREN
 Point out your manager. Let me
 educate him.

51

INT. DINER - AFTERNOON

51

A waitress pours coffee for the two of them and exits. VAN BUREN pulls out an edition of **LOOK Magazine** placing it in front of LÁSZLÓ.

VAN BUREN
 Have you seen that?

LÁSZLÓ squints, shakes his head.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 Well, I can assure you that
 everyone else has... Flip to page
 19.

LÁSZLÓ handles the magazine like a foreign object.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 Where did you study?

LÁSZLÓ
 (muttering)
 Bauhaus in Dessau.

VAN BUREN
 Bauhaus! How marvelous.

ULTRA-CLOSE ON -

A two-page spread on "**HARRISON LEE VAN BUREN - THE FORWARD-THINKER.**"

The large black and white photograph depicts VAN BUREN seated in LÁSZLÓ's chaise lounge illuminated by the spherical window above him.

A second smaller image depicts VAN BUREN standing against the unusual, conceptual shelving units; books fan out around him.

VAN BUREN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Read the caption below the
 photographs.

The caption reads: "*Here, Mr. Van Buren is pictured in his striking, modern at-home-library; entirely suitable for the forward-thinking man.*"

CAMERA PANS TO NEXT BLOCK OF TEXT -

"He established the Van Buren Shipyards, which built Liberty ships during World War II, after which he formed Van Buren Aluminum and Van Buren Steel.

Van Buren is involved in various large-scale construction projects such as civic centers and dams, and is invested in real estate around the globe."

BACK TO -

VAN BUREN who sips his coffee.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
So, what do you think?

LÁSZLÓ
Looks good.

VAN BUREN
Damn right, it does! Why didn't you defend yourself when I came after you all like a bat out of hell? I am ashamed of my behavior! I called that American cousin of yours-

Corrects him.

LÁSZLÓ
Attila.

VAN BUREN
Yes, that's right. First, I apologized then lauded him with praise, however, he quite honorably redirected me to you!

VAN BUREN wags a finger at LÁSZLÓ.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
I've since done my homework...

VAN BUREN pulls out an open folder and places it in front of LÁSZLÓ.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
These are yours, yes?

LÁSZLÓ leafs through the images in the folder and nods.

LÁSZLÓ
Yes.

VAN BUREN
All of them?

LÁSZLÓ
Yes.

LÁSZLÓ begins to tear up, emotional.

VAN BUREN
I'm sorry, have I upset you?

LÁSZLÓ
No. May I keep these?

VAN BUREN
Of course you may.

LÁSZLÓ

I didn't realize these images were
still available, much less of any
consequence...

VAN BUREN

They are very artistic.

LÁSZLÓ

Better in the real life.

VAN BUREN

You could have elaborated a bit
more on your background! You didn't
do yourself any favors back there.

LÁSZLÓ

It was difficult to interject
amidst all the shouting-

VAN BUREN smiles.

VAN BUREN

I am ashamed. Really, I am. I acted
a fool. My mother was dying - and
it's not an excuse - but she died
that very weekend at the house.

LÁSZLÓ

I am sorry to hear-

VAN BUREN

Tell me - why is an accomplished
foreign architect working
construction in Philadelphia of all
places? What is that you're working
on anyway? A bowling alley?!

LÁSZLÓ chooses his words carefully.

LÁSZLÓ

The Reich- rejected myself and my
colleagues for our type of work for
it was deemed not *Germanic* in-
character.

LÁSZLÓ exhales, gravely.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)

I don't wish to be rude but I only
have time for the coffee. You were
unprepared for what you saw. That
is understandable. I am glad you've
come to appreciate it.

VAN BUREN

I don't just appreciate it Mr.
Toth; I cherish it.

VAN BUREN ignores LÁSZLÓ's wish to leave.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

(waxes)

I hate surprises. My fatheaded son
should have known better, but
listen, I haven't come here to
boast or to grieve, I've come to
pay you the monies you are owed.

VAN BUREN hands him an envelope for dramatic effect.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

For what it's worth, it was not my
suggestion that you and partners
should not be paid. I only found
out about all that after the fact.

LÁSZLÓ

We damaged some guttering which we
planned to replace. There was a
misunderstanding.

VAN BUREN

Enough of that. Take the money.

LÁSZLÓ

(nods)

Thank you.

VAN BUREN

I'd stash that in your
undergarments or inside of a shoe.

LÁSZLÓ takes the envelope and starts to slide out of the
booth but VAN BUREN takes his hand.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

I'd like you to come and see it...
In the daylight.

LÁSZLÓ

I've seen it.

VAN BUREN

I'd like you to come and enjoy it,
rather.

LÁSZLÓ

All right.

VAN BUREN

Wonderful. I can send a car for you
on Sunday morning if you aren't too
busy. Write me down your address?

LÁSZLÓ writes it down.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

I've found our conversation
persuasive and intellectually
stimulating.

LÁSZLÓ looks at him, incredulous.

52

INT. JAZZ BAR - NIGHT

52

ULTRA-BOWED LENS ON-

GORDON and LÁSZLÓ cheer on a raucous set. Their features are wild and exaggerated like a George Grosz drawing.

53

INT. JAZZ BAR BATHROOM - LATER

53

SFX: Someone pounds on the door outside.

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW ON -

LÁSZLÓ and GORDON prep a spoon and dropper.

LÁSZLÓ
(shouts)
-going to be some minutes!

LÁSZLÓ, already very intoxicated...

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
Have we been in here long?

GORDON
They can wait...

GORDON puts a leather pouch in his mouth and lets it unroll to his chest.

GORDON (CONT'D)
(through gritted teeth)
Pull that out.

LÁSZLÓ pulls out an antiquated looking syringe.

LÁSZLÓ
Jesus, Gordon.

The coconspirators laugh, having a great time. GORDON spits the pouch from his mouth and LASZLÓ extends the spoon to GORDON.

54

INT. JAZZ BAR - LATER

54

CUE: The live music plays in ultra slow-motion.

LONG LENS ON -

The two of them are now accompanied by some attractive looking strangers. A woman kisses at LÁSZLÓ's neck but he tries to focus on the music.

WE PAN DOWN to see GORDON blatantly fingering his new girlfriend who sits on a bar stool.

BAR MANAGER (O.S.)
(shouting)
HEY! HEY! GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE!

LÁSZLÓ and GORDON are slow to respond.

BAR MANAGER (CONT'D)
(shouting)
Get the hell out or I'll beat the
shit out of you two.

LÁSZLÓ comically vomits on himself where he stands.

BAR MANAGER (CONT'D)
OH, HOLY HELL. I'm gonna kill that
son of a bitch!

55 **EXT. JAZZ BAR - MOMENTS LATER**

55

The BAR MANAGER and a bouncer beat the hell out of LÁSZLÓ who laughs madly. STEAM RISES from the sewer grates.

ANGLE ON -

The **crack** of LÁSZLÓ's nose re-breaking.

LÁSZLÓ
My nose! Damn it.

56 **EXT. OLD CITY CHURCH - MORNING**

56

LÁSZLÓ exits, his face battered and nose swollen. He lights a cigarette then after a beat, notices VAN BUREN's Town Car parked on the corner with the motor running.

57 **INT. AUTOMOBILE - LATER**

57

CLOSE ON -

LÁSZLÓ sits in the backseat of the Towncar taking in the fresh country air through an open window. He tries to pull himself together.

DRIVER (O.S.)
There's a pressed shirt and jacket
hanging to your left, Mr. Toth.

58 **INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE DINING ROOM - LATER**

58

A **Christmas party is in full-swing**. LÁSZLÓ is shown into a dining area where a group of thirty aristocrats have gathered for pre-luncheon cocktails by one end of the table.

VAN BUREN
Ah! There you are! The man of the
hour!

LÁSZLÓ's smashed face peers out of an oversized penguin suit. VAN BUREN approaches him, concerned.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
(hushed)
What's happened to your face?

LÁSZLÓ
Fell off a beam.

VAN BUREN's son, HARRY LEE, comes up behind his father.

HARRY LEE
Everyone's famished.

VAN BUREN
Harry, you remember each other,
don't you?

HARRY LEE
I do, yes. Good afternoon.

LÁSZLÓ nods. HARRY LEE's sister, MAGGIE LEE, comes up behind her brother.

MAGGIE LEE
Daddy, the kitchen's asking if we
could please go ahead and take our
seats.

VAN BUREN
This is Harry's twin sister,
Maggie.

MAGGIE LEE
Hello, Mr. Toth. We love the
library.

LÁSZLÓ
Thank you.

VAN BUREN
(to the crowd)
All right, everyone, let's eat.

LÁSZLÓ, who looks a mess, sits in a corner chair between a middle-aged couple, MICHAEL and MICHELLE HOFFMAN, and VAN BUREN who now sits at the head of the table. VAN BUREN brags...

VAN BUREN
He won't tout his own
accomplishments but Mr. Toth's work
is celebrated throughout much of
Western and Central Europe. There
have been many features about him
in the architecture journals if you
follow that sort of thing.

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
What was your focus?

LÁSZLÓ eats somewhat ravenously.

LÁSZLÓ
Theaters, synagogues- Restorations.
Some, quite unusual.

MICHELLE HOFFMAN
Are you married, Mr. Toth?

LÁSZLÓ stops eating. It pains him to speak of it.

LÁSZLÓ
Yes, but my wife, she- she is still
in Europe.

MICHELLE HOFFMAN
Why is that?

LÁSZLÓ
We were separated. Forcibly.

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
Where is it you come from, if you
don't mind my asking? I can't place
the accent.

LÁSZLÓ
The city of Budapest.

MICHAEL asides, explaining to his wife...

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
Ravaged during the war- just
terrible.

MICHELLE HOFFMAN
Oh my, what was it like, the war?
We hear some stories here that make
one's toes curl.

LÁSZLÓ
I would not know where to begin,
Mrs. Hoffman.

MICHELLE HOFFMAN
Do you plan on returning to Europe?

LÁSZLÓ
She tries to come now, here, to
join me- but the situation is
difficult.

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
With Roosevelt gone now that should
make things easier.

LÁSZLÓ
He is gone, but everyone is still
frightened that people like me are
a threat to your national defense-

MICHELLE HOFFMAN
When you say 'people,' you mean
Jews? We're Jewish.

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
(explains dryly)
Michelle converted.

LÁSZLÓ asides...

LÁSZLÓ
As did my Erzsébet. It required a
great deal of commitment and study,
and yet, few at home recognized her
for it.

LÁSZLÓ japes.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
A pity the National Socialists
couldn't see it their way.

LÁSZLÓ shrugs off the trauma, as he returns to the track of
their dinner conversation.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
But not only Jewish. Foreign
people. I was fortunate to depart
from Bremerhaven when I did.
Truman's order facilitated the
transfer of my group. Others were
not so lucky.

VAN BUREN finally joins in the conversation.

VAN BUREN
That sounds very painful, László.
We are terribly sorry for you.
Michael is my friend and attorney-
in that order.

He turns to MICHAEL.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
Michael, is this a process your
firm might help to expedite?

MICHAEL turns to LÁSZLÓ.

LÁSZLÓ
I'm afraid that it's not so simple.
My wife cannot leave my niece
behind because she is young,
motherless, and very sick.

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
 It's just the two of them? I'd be glad to make an inquiry on your behalf. You know, there's something called The Displaced Persons Act that's recently gone into effect. It will allow some 200,000 European persons admission for permanent residence. You can read about it in the paper now.

VAN BUREN
 He won't boast but Michael's firm represents the office of the Vice President.

LÁSZLÓ
 -president?

VAN BUREN
 Of the United States!

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
 Come see me in our Philadelphia office on Monday.

MICHAEL reaches into his pocket and hands LÁSZLÓ a business card.

MICHAEL HOFFMAN (CONT'D)
 Telephone this line, and my assistant can arrange. She'll tell you what we'll need you both to provide.

MICHELLE places her hand on LÁSZLÓ's.

MICHELLE HOFFMAN
 Michael can help you.

MICHAEL nods, empathetic.

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
 (Hebrew)
Bevakasha.

A SERVER pours wine in VAN BUREN's glass.

VAN BUREN
 (to SERVER)
 We'll take coffee in the study.

CUE: The score broods then gives way to an elegiac piano theme.

ULTRA-WIDE ANGLE ON -

The light is extraordinarily beautiful. It looks like a Saul Leiter picture.

The aristocrats all chat amongst themselves sipping coffees and cognac.

NEW ANGLE ON -

LÁSZLÓ and VAN BUREN are deep in-conversation sitting in two chairs the main foyer whiles guests observe the library nearby.

VAN BUREN
 (longing, drunk lucidity)
 I was married once and she gave me
 two beautiful children.
 Nevertheless, my mother Margaret
 and the twins demanded my attention-
 every minute of my scarce personal
 time. Things became awkward between
 my ex-wife and Margaret so we
 separated amicably...

VAN BUREN lights a cigar. He might be drunk.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 Margaret raised me on her own in
 Rochester. Just the two of us. Her
 parents had disowned her for "a
child out of wedlock," so she was
 my only real family, other than the
 twins later on in life, of
 course...

VAN BUREN speaks rhythmically, hypnotically.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 I'll tell you, shortly before they
 died, my mother's parents - I
 hesitate to call them my
grandparents - they reached out to
 Margaret and me after reading an
 article on the reported success of
 my first company.

VAN BUREN asides...

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 In actual fact, we weren't doing
 all that well at the time and would
 soon shutter our doors, but this
 was not yet public knowledge.

VAN BUREN takes a sip of his drink.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 -you might have concluded from our
 prior interactions, I am blunt, not
 hyperbolic or particularly
 sentimental, but my mother was
 defenseless to their chumminess.
 She argued that 'they could very
 well be sick or dying,' and perhaps
 "they really needed the money..." I
 didn't like seeing Margaret, an
 ordinarily pragmatic person,
 reduced to such bromidic
 assumptions but I agreed to meet
 them in-person;
 (MORE)

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 in part, to appease her, as well as
 to satisfy the curiosities of my
 lineage.

A PARTY GUEST comes over and interjects...

PARTY GUEST
 It's very clever, isn't it? The way
 the space seems to envelop you.

VAN BUREN
 I think so, yes.

PARTY GUEST
 It reminds me of a short story I
 read about a never-ending library,
 a labyrinth. Are you working on
 anything at present, Mr. Toth?

LÁSZLÓ
 A bowling alley.

The PARTY GUEST furrows his brow.

VAN BUREN
 Pardon me, but I was just in the
 middle of telling our friend a
 story.

PARTY GUEST
 Oh, not at all. Excuse me.

The PARTY GUEST moves on.

LÁSZLÓ
 You agreed to see them?

VAN BUREN nods.

VAN BUREN
 We exchanged pleasantries over the
 telephone and I offered to visit
 them at their modest apartment
 residence in a neighboring town.

VAN BUREN asides...

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 I laughed to realize they'd been so
 nearby all those years!

Back to the body of the story...

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 On the drive over, I had time to
 think and finally arrived at a
 figure I felt comfortable offering
 the two of them - seeing that they
 were, whether I liked it or not,
 our only living relatives...
 (MORE)

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

I was received hospitably so I swiftly moved to explain that I had made them out a cheque for the amount of \$25,000. When I handed it over, they appeared relieved but perhaps a little disappointed at the figure. They were courteous and thanked me, all the same.

VAN BUREN pauses for effect.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

I was quite uncomfortable but before hurrying off I asked them a question; "**what will you do with all that money?**" They rambled on about miracles or some such thing. For a moment, everything in their immediate line of view seemed solvable, achievable! They would finally be *all right*. What a thoughtful grandson I was!

VAN BUREN smiles.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

Upon departure, before I had reached the edge of their front lawn, the two of them ran out after me shouting! - "You've forgotten your signature, Harrison!"

VAN BUREN exhales demonstratively.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

I summoned the courage to be frank and speak to them as adults. I had not *forgotten*, I said, but was ultimately not compelled to sign due to the blunder of their response! *If only they'd been sick or dying as my mother had previously suggested, how glad I would have been to ease their troubles - but they appeared perfectly healthy to me!*

VAN BUREN sighs.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

They took it as such a shock that for a moment I thought that that might kill them *right there on the front lawn* - but the two just wept and came apart like beggars... It was all much more disturbing than I'd imagined it in my head so on the condition that they let Margaret alone from then on, I struck them a separate cheque for the amount of \$500 and signed.

BEAT.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
*That is how much I loved my mother,
 Mr. Toth. We did things for each
 other!*

LÁSZLÓ
 (deadpan)
*What could they expect after the
 way they had treated you both.*

VAN BUREN
*Yes, yes, that's exactly how I see
 it.*

LÁSZLÓ blinks.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
*So, answer me one question; why
 architecture?*

LÁSZLÓ
Is it a test?

VAN BUREN
Not at all.

LÁSZLÓ smiles through the pain of his broken nose.

LÁSZLÓ
 (matter-of-fact)
*Nothing can be of its own
 explanation- is there a better
 description of a cube than that of
 its construction? You know, some
 years ago, in March, a stranger
 knocked at the classroom door of
 the university where I frequently
 lectured. At once, all that was
 familiar and important to us was
 gone. We were too well-known at
 home. I thought my reputation might
 help to protect us but- it was the
 opposite. There was no way to
 remain anonymous; nowhere for my
 family to go.*

LÁSZLÓ sighs and changes course.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
*There was a war on, and yet it is
 my understanding that many of the
 sites of my projects have survived
 and are still there in the city.*

He smiles again and continues, choosing his words carefully.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
*When the terrible recollections of
 what happened in Europe have ceased
 to humiliate us, I expect them to
 serve instead as a political
 stimulus, sparking the upheavals
 that so frequently occur in the
 cycles of peoplehood.*
 (MORE)

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
 I already anticipate a communal
 rhetoric of anger and fear; a whole
 river of such frivolities may flow
 un-dammed, but my buildings were
 devised to endure such erosion of
 the Danube's shoreline.

VAN BUREN is intoxicated by LÁSZLÓ's response.

VAN BUREN
 What a poetic reply! You must have
 been a beloved professor! I've said
 it before but I do find our
 conversations intellectually
 stimulating.

WE PAN UP with VAN BUREN as he rises from his chair to address the room.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 Everyone, take your brandy and join
 me outside! I have a fantastic
 surprise.

61

EXT. FOREST TRAIL/ VISTA - TWILIGHT

61

WIDE ON -

Ghostly silhouettes march across a footbridge near the estate.

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
 Where in the hell are you taking
 us, Harrison?! It's freezing out
 here.

MICHELLE HOFFMAN
 (laughs)
 Try doing this in heels, Michael!

VAN BUREN
 Don't be impatient! It isn't far.

ULTRA-WIDE ON -

They march on for some time up a hillside, murmuring amongst themselves.

NEW ANGLE ON -

The path finally opens to a majestic clearing. A large pond reflects moonlight and the hillside hovering above it.

VAN BUREN stops, and turns to his guests. He catches his breath. He is **visibly intoxicated**.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 As you all know, these last years
 have been especially hard on Harry,
 Maggie, and myself.

ANGLE ON -

HARRY and MAGGIE give each other a squeeze, a little embarrassed.

MAGGIE LEE
Daddy, it's very cold out here.
Shouldn't we go back inside?

BACK TO -

VAN BUREN stumbles but regains composure.

VAN BUREN
Quiet for a moment, Maggie... I brought you all here this evening, not to glance over my shoulder towards the past, but to invite you to look forward with me towards the future!

He points...

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
On the other side of that hill is Doylestown. It is on this site near our own family plot that we plan to build a center for the community in honor of Margaret Lee Van Buren!

HARRY LEE looks distressed at the announcement.

MICHELLE HOFFMAN
Oh Harrison! How lovely!

The aristocrats clap a little. VAN BUREN continues...

VAN BUREN
This shall be a sacred enough space that her soul might inhabit it! A place for gathering, learning, and reflection-

He places his hand on LÁSZLÓ's shoulder.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
-and Mr. Toth, I want you to build this for her, something boundless, something new.

LÁSZLÓ blinks.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
It's a shock to you I see! I'm delighted! I thought you might see it coming!

LÁSZLÓ
No-

VAN BUREN throws his arm around him and starts walking him back in the direction they came.

VAN BUREN

It is no coincidence that fate
brought us together on the eve of
my mother's death! I am good at
reading the signs.

LÁSZLÓ

I- I am not sure of what the
commission entails, sir.

VAN BUREN

We can discuss the details at home.
You'll be well-compensated and
provided a place here on the
property to stay and work. Residing
here will allow you the time and
space to properly conceive of it.
Your family, should they arrive,
are welcome here, too. What do you
say?

LÁSZLÓ

I would like to draw something and
present it to you.

VAN BUREN

(changes gears)
You'd prefer to win the commission?
Fine, then do that. It's cold.
Let's return inside.

62

INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE FOYER - NIGHT

62

A grandfather clock ticks. The guests have gone. LÁSZLÓ waits
on a bench under a lamp near the front door. HARRY LEE and
MAGGIE LEE can be heard having a hushed argument somewhere in
the house.

LÁSZLÓ

(calls through the house)
Excuse me!

No response.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)

I wonder if someone can take me to
the train station before it gets
too late!

HARRY LEE (O.S.)

(shouts back)
Just a moment please!

A SERVANT enters the foyer with the dirtied table cloth from
lunch. LÁSZLÓ approaches her in the hallway.

LÁSZLÓ

Excuse me, sorry. A driver brought
me here. I don't recall his name-

She doesn't speak English.

SERVANT
Sorry, sorry-

LÁSZLÓ
I need to get back. Can someone possibly contact the man who brought me here this afternoon?

SERVANT
Just a minute please...

HARRY LEE enters from behind.

HARRY LEE
Mr. Toth, I'm sorry to have kept you waiting.

LÁSZLÓ turns to HARRY LEE.

HARRY LEE (CONT'D)
Harrison's gone to bed but he wishes you a good night.

Beat.

HARRY LEE (CONT'D)
Listen, I am terribly sorry for my father's theatrics. It must have caught you off-guard-

LÁSZLÓ
(nervous)
That's all right...

HARRY LEE
He often makes decisions without consulting the rest of us.

LÁSZLÓ
I did not take any of it- to heart-

HARRY LEE
Oh, but you *should*. You should, you see. My father would like us to hire you.

It begins to set in for LÁSZLÓ that the offer might be sincere.

LÁSZLÓ
(rambles)
-but I have no infrastructure here.

HARRY LEE
That's why he's asked me to oversee and assist you in this endeavor.

LÁSZLÓ
I have no idea of the parameters.

HARRY LEE

Once I have distilled the essence
of father's outburst I will try and
make some economic sense of it.

MAGGIE LEE enters.

MAGGIE LEE

We've quite a full house this
evening so I took the liberty of
making up a place for you in the
guest house. We can have your
things sent for in the morning.

63

INT. GUEST HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

63

SFX: Knock, knock, knock.

ANGLE ON -

The view of the estate from the guest house window.

NEW ANGLE ON -

LÁSZLÓ wakes in a new environment, fully clothed atop some
freshly ironed linens. Next to him, are all of his
belongings, fetched and delivered whilst he slept. He quickly
sorts through his bag to find his sketchbook.

SFX: Another round of rapping at the door...

64

INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - BEDROOM - LATER

64

A SERVANT mutters something in the hallway then LÁSZLÓ cracks
the door to HARRISON's sleeping chambers.

LÁSZLÓ (O.S.)
You rang for me, sir?

VAN BUREN (O.S.)
Come in, László! I've had a vision!

LÁSZLÓ enters with sketches in-hand.

LÁSZLÓ
I have some sketches, also-
something I have been working on
which might be applicable here, if
you care to look-

A NEW ANGLE reveals VAN BUREN, still in bed, an absolute
wreck. He wears a sleep mask over his eyes.

VAN BUREN
Stop! Stop! In a moment! My eyes
are bleary! Take a seat!

VAN BUREN sits up in bed and pushes the sleep mask up to his forehead. He then drops something into a glass of water causing it to fizz.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
Pardon my appearance, I'll call for breakfast. I have some carpenters in the forehead causing a terrible ringing in my ears so you must bear with me-

LÁSZLÓ sits in a chair next to the bed.

LÁSZLÓ
I can come back-

VAN BUREN
Shh. Shh. Before I lose it. Dreams slip away.

LÁSZLÓ laughs.

LÁSZLÓ
Yes, I know.

VAN BUREN speaks methodically.

VAN BUREN
Doylestown is beautiful but not a cultural place, you know?

LÁSZLÓ
Sure.

VAN BUREN
But it could be. If there were an auditorium, it could host a theater festival.

LÁSZLÓ
Sure.

VAN BUREN
In the off-season, of course, the local students could access it.

LÁSZLÓ
Yes.

VAN BUREN
And what do you think of a gymnasium? I practiced wrestling as a teenager and I have fond memories of my mother accompanying me to matches in the neighboring towns.

LÁSZLÓ
Perhaps a swimming pool?

VAN BUREN shuts this down.

VAN BUREN
I can't swim.

LÁSZLÓ remains poker-faced.

LÁSZLÓ
And perhaps it's too expensive-

VAN BUREN pats LÁSZLÓ's chest affectionately.

VAN BUREN
(shudders)
Don't talk to me about money.

65

INT. HARRY LEE'S PHILADELPHIA OFFICE - DAY

65

MICHAEL HOFFMAN sits next to HARRY LEE red-lining a contract.

HARRY LEE
Don't talk to him about money. I've spoken to our friends at the Bucks County Mayor's office who are warm to accessing local and state funding opportunities, on behalf of our project, if we are willing to designate a "specific and meaningful" component of the center for Christian congregation.

LÁSZLÓ
It's a community center for all people. What do they want? A prayer room?

HARRY LEE
I am under the impression they are expecting something more specific and meaningful than that for their earmark. This, and pending their approval of the overall proposal, of course.

LÁSZLÓ laughs a bit then realizes HARRY LEE is serious about this casual new addition.

LÁSZLÓ
An auditorium, a gymnasium, a library-

HARRY LEE
(corrects)
Father described it as more of a reading room for the public...

LÁSZLÓ doubles down.

LÁSZLÓ
-a library, and a chapel? It's four builds, not one.

HARRY LEE

It's ambitious. Thought you'd like that... I've put in a call to our frequent contractor, Leslie Woodrow. We first worked with Leslie as one of our Ship Engineering Officers but he's supervised several important construction projects for us since-including these offices. My father is allocating a sum of 850,000 dollars for this project which to me seems very reasonable, if not exorbitant. If Leslie agrees to come on-board, I'll have him start a budget for us right away.

MICHAEL HOFFMAN

This allocation of 850,000 is inclusive of fees for yourself and Leslie... Also, we've gone ahead and made arrangements to start securing you a license here in Pennsylvania-

CUE: Mourful solo piano reprises over the following sequence.

66

EXT. COUNTRY ROADS - AFTERNOON

66

LONG LENS ON -

LÁSZLÓ rides a bicycle into town.

LÁSZLÓ (V.O.)

(in HUNGARIAN)

*Erzsébet,
I have become acquainted with an influential American attorney who says he can help you and Zsófia with your situation.*

67

INT. GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

67

CLOSE ON -

LÁSZLÓ writes a letter to his wife.

LÁSZLÓ (V.O.)

Is there somewhere we might find a photograph of you and Zsófia pictured together?

68

EXT. DOYLESTOWN - AFTERNOON

68

LÁSZLÓ view as he would observe the community from his bicycle.

- SCHOOL CHILDREN exit a YELLOW BUS in ULTRA SLOW-MOTION.

- A small family gather for a wedding photo outside of a local church; St. Anthony's.

- Some teens play American football in a local park in ULTRA SLOW-MOTION.

LÁSZLÓ (V.O.)
Anything linking her to you? I have reached out to colleagues who sometimes attended parties at the house. I am waiting on return.

69

EXT. VISTA - DUSK

69

The sunrise... LÁSZLÓ peacefully sketches the hillside as he snacks on a healthful breakfast.

70

EXT. VISTA - MORNING

70

LÁSZLÓ walks the landscape's perimeter counting each click as he pushes along a Surveyor's Wheel. GORDON takes notes beside him.

LÁSZLÓ (V.O.)
Whomever comes to mind, write to them and explain its urgency. Anything tying her to you, and you to me, can be of great assistance to Mr. Hoffman. I have enclosed a list of items and information requested by his office. Please fill out what you can of these documents and return these originals to me at once.

LÁSZLÓ
 194, 195, 196, 197, 198....

LÁSZLÓ (V.O.)
Here: some good fortune may have fallen upon me. In an unexpected turn of events I have been offered an intriguing opportunity; a second chance.

LÁSZLÓ
 204, 205, 206, 207...

LÁSZLÓ (V.O.)
I can feel you nearer to me now than ever before.

LÁSZLÓ
 213, 214, 215.

LÁSZLÓ looks out over Doylestown.

LÁSZLÓ (V.O.)
Your love, László

He begins a new calculation and begins to step off in a new direction.

LÁSZLÓ
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,...

71

INT. VAN BUREN GUEST HOUSE / DRAWING ROOM - DAY

71

SFX: A bell chimes three times.

CLOSE ON -

"*Margaret Lee Van Buren Center for Activity and Creation*" is scribbled crudely at the top of the coal sketch. The semi-abstract drawing gives little indication of what the recreation center will actually look like when fully-realized. The illustration is more akin to a Jerry Hopper lithograph than a traditional architectural drawing.

LÁSZLÓ removes the sheet of paper to reveal another modular section of the structure, then a third, and fourth.

72

INT. VAN BUREN GUEST HOUSE / DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

72

The living room has been transformed into a makeshift office space. By the window stands a drawing table adjusted to LÁSZLÓ's height. Paper, wooden blocks, and other materials are strewn about the room. The shades are removed from the standing lamps for better luminance.

LÁSZLÓ stands hunched over the dining room table constructing a detailed architectural model.

A SERIES OF ANGLES -

- The model: A trapezoidal structure, the centerpiece, sits atop the small hill overlooking the lake and a miniature of Doylestown on the other side.
- A cluster of buildings; sloping and irregular triangles surround the trapezoid; together they form a perfect rectangle.
- The sharp points of the model rooftops protrude out and up towards the sky.
- LÁSZLÓ carefully finishes by placing a small bell tower made of bent copper parallel to the model's main structure.

73

EXT. VAN BUREN ESTATE FOYER - DAY

73

LÁSZLÓ and two servants awkwardly navigate the large-scale model across the estate's horizon line.

74

INT. VAN BUREN'S STUDY - LATER

74

LÁSZLÓ stands at the center of VAN BUREN's study demonstrating his finished model which takes up much of the room. HARRY LEE, MAGGIE LEE and **LESLIE WOODROW** (heavy-set and above-average in height) all observe, fascinated.

VAN BUREN sits behind them all getting a haircut leafing through pages and pages of LÁSZLÓ's drawings.

LÁSZLÓ

The total area is 648 Square Meters, including a sizable condensate system for harvesting rainwater for the boilers below grade.

LÁSZLÓ points, gathers himself.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)

Narrow openings at the top, as you see here and here, are skylights that can also be viewed as demarcations of units of space on either side of the entrance hall. Each unit is convertible and multi-functional with removable panels that hinge open and close. When these rooms are combined they support a total occupancy of 500 persons on each side. Bespoke systems for seating and storage allow for conference, gymnasium, auditorium. These rooms of more standard size are pre-cast concrete. The chapel at the heart of the building, however, is a perfect sphere, like a grain silo, so we'd cast on-site.

LÁSZLÓ stammers nervously.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)

The main tower from the ground is 20 meters tall-

VAN BUREN swats his BARBER's hand away, annoyed.

VAN BUREN
I can't see!

HARRY clears his father's vantage point.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

Harry, what do you think about the
gymnasium off to the side like
that? I had imagined it
differently.

HARRY LEE

It all looks like an army barracks.

Everyone waits for VAN BUREN's reaction with bated breath.

VAN BUREN

Perhaps that's because you never
enlisted, Harry. I think it's all a
great surprise. Carry on, László.

LÁSZLÓ appears a bit insecure. He moves now to a different
model that demonstrates the chapel's interior.

LÁSZLÓ

The Chapel's interior is more
generous in its expression; the
vernacular concrete contrasted by
an altarpiece of marble from the
mountains of Carrara will serve as
the institute's centerpiece.

LÁSZLÓ gestures to the next model.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)

And see, let me demonstrate...
Morning, midday, dusk.

ULTRA CLOSE ON -

LÁSZLÓ turns on a small flashlight and holds it at a high
angle close to the model through three entry points of light,
MAGGIE LEE, HARRY LEE and VAN BUREN lean down to look inside.
The light forms a pattern on the floor.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)

As the sun moves, east to west...
Located at the base of the towers,
wooden beams unite to form a symbol
of the cross upon the altarpiece.

MAGGIE LEE

Oh, how wonderful! The town is sure
to be over the moon when they see
you've kept faith and values at the
forefront of your design.

VAN BUREN

Extraordinary. Your grandmother loved marble. Maggie will you call for some coffee?

MAGGIE LEE

I think it's beautiful, Mr. Toth.

She exits. VAN BUREN looks at HARRY LEE.

LESLIE points at the towers on the right and left.

LESLIE WOODROW

(scoffs)

What's the height of those things? Six or seven meters also? And did I understand you correctly? 108 meters of surface area for the facade?! That's eleven square feet, If we can afford these materials at all, Mr. Van Buren, Sylacauga Marble ships out of Talladega County and that *might* be possible if I manage to swing some favors but I can't make any promises.

LÁSZLÓ

Afford these materials? The concrete is sturdy and cheap.

LESLIE speaks frankly.

LESLIE WOODROW

The concrete- it's not very attractive. Perhaps you'd like to split the difference on materials?

LÁSZLÓ

Fortunately, the building's aesthetic is not yours to resolve, Mr. Woodrow. And Sylacauga marble is white like a sheet of paper; it's nothing. What I have here is blue and grey with softer veining.

VAN BUREN

I prefer the Italian, I think. It's more suitable, no?

LESLIE WOODROW

I have to do some research but-

LÁSZLÓ

I know someone talented, an Italian mason whom I have commissioned before.

LESLIE is visibly frustrated.

VAN BUREN

There's one detail before I forget; the name. I'd like to place it somewhere more visible. What do you think?

LÁSZLÓ nods, lights a cigarette. MAGGIE LEE enters again followed by two maids with trays of coffee.

MAGGIE LEE

(to the maids)

On the table over there.

MAGGIE LEE hands her father a cup and turns to LÁSZLÓ.

MAGGIE LEE (CONT'D)

Sugar?

LÁSZLÓ

Black.

LESLIE's eyes widen.

LESLIE WOODROW

Sir, is this really what you imagined? Am I missing something? When Harry called, he described this to me as a personal project. If this is what we ultimately settle on, something of this scale, the timeline would need to be considerably adjusted.

VAN BUREN

I'd rather be alive at 18% than dead at the prime rate, Leslie.

VAN BUREN winks at LESLIE.

LÁSZLÓ

We will not exceed our allocation.

VAN BUREN

Harry, where are we in our discussions with the Mayor's office?

HARRY LEE
They are waiting on us.

VAN BUREN
Push things along and see where we land with them.

75

INT. GUEST HOUSE - MORNING

75

SFX: BANG, BANG, BANG at the door.

LÁSZLÓ and GORDON lie in the same bed, strung out. A needle is still stuck in LÁSZLÓ's arm. He unties his arm and rips out the needle causing his arm to bleed all over the bed.

LÁSZLÓ
Shit.

SFX: BANG, BANG, BANG, again.

LÁSZLÓ shoots up in a panic. He looks over at GORDON.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
Get up.

LÁSZLÓ pulls off a pillow case and wraps it around his elbow.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
(shouts)
Coming!

76

EXT. GUEST HOUSE DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

76

LESLIE stands there impatient. After a beat, LÁSZLÓ opens the door.

LÁSZLÓ
Morning Leslie.

LESLIE WOODROW
Don't tell me you're just now getting up?

LÁSZLÓ
Two minutes, and I am ready.

LESLIE WOODROW
I'll give you three if you use it to rinse off.

LÁSZLÓ
Three.

LESLIE WOODROW
Let me inside so I can get the model on the truck.

77

INT. MAYOR KINNEY'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

77

LÁSZLÓ, LESLIE, and GORDON clumsily carry in the oversized model before MAYOR KINNEY, HARRY LEE and a group of other LOCAL OFFICIALS.

HARRY LEE
The Mayor hasn't got all day,
Leslie.

MAYOR KINNEY
We're fine, Harry! Will your father be joining us, as well?

Turns to MAYOR KINNEY...

HARRY LEE
He's overseas on business but he sends his regards. This is a project he's very passionate about, and a priority for us. He asked if he could telephone you to talk through it all tomorrow - at your convenience, of course?

MAYOR KINNEY
Well, sure, Sylvia in my office can set for just about any time tomorrow afternoon.

HARRY LEE
It will have to be in the morning due to the time difference.

MAYOR KINNEY
(sycophantic)
Morning then is fine- just fine.

HARRY LEE and LESLIE are doing most of the talking, trying to cover for LÁSZLÓ and GORDON's bad state.

HARRY LEE
They only need two minutes to set this all up.

LESLIE WOODROW
We'll get this set down and start right away for ya.

The three men set the model on the table and it sadly bends down over the sides.

LESLIE WOODROW (CONT'D)
You got a stool or something they can use to extend?

MAYOR KINNEY
No.

LESLIE WOODROW
All right, then we'll go ahead and get started.

A small figurine falls from the base of the model. LÁSZLÓ bends to the ground, sweating and catching his breath.

LÁSZLÓ
Apologies...

He puts the figurine back in place, uncharacteristically loose-limbed.

MAYOR KINNEY
(re: model)
This is- different.

HARRY LEE
Very modern, yes.

MAYOR KINNEY
All right, well, walk us through what you have in mind.

LÁSZLÓ exhales, pulls himself together.

78

INT. TOWN HALL - EVENING

78

LÁSZLÓ, in formal dress, makes a speech in front of a scattered audience. Forty or so townspeople are in attendance.

LÁSZLÓ
Construction phase alone will create upwards of eighty local jobs. Carpenters, painters- upwards of one hundred and fifty upon completion, at which point, the facilities will need to be permanently staffed.

A TOWNSPERSON interjects...

TOWNSPERSON (O.S.)
(calls out)
When are you going to answer the questions in the box?

LÁSZLÓ pauses, thinks, chooses his words carefully so as not to offend. He spots VAN BUREN in the crowd. VAN BUREN nods, encouragingly.

LÁSZLÓ
Yes, I- I would like also to address some of the written concerns and comments which were submitted to us anonymously ahead of tonight's discussion; questions probing my personal background, heritage, and ideological persuasion, if you will.

LÁSZLÓ clears his throat.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)

As a foreign person and newcomer to Doylestown, I have observed your community with a great interest. Your town is not dissimilar to the one where I myself was raised. Your Christian church, not so different from the temple of my youth. I see your St. Anthony's decaying facade. Your school's gymnasium too slight for the size of its student body. I see a community in need and this is my only persuasion of relevance... Mr. Van Buren, a generous patron and practicing Protestant, and I-will build a place where you will be drawn to congregate and inspired to worship. You may rest assured that we will honor the traditions of Doylestown long established before I ever set foot here.

LÁSZLÓ pours himself a glass of water, takes a deliberate sip.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)

I am determined to know and draw from your history and kneel upon its shoulders. Where does the structural fabric of a building appear with greater clarity than in the buildings of one's forefathers? To know and understand its nature, I have analyzed the purposes for which we build. I have examined every function which appears and determined its character. I have made its character the basis for my conception. I see the spiritual and intellectual environment of your town; The Margaret Lee Van Buren Center for Creation and Activity, will be its manifestation; a new landmark. A landmark which proclaims not only "I am new," but, "I am part of the new whole."

A SECOND TOWNSPERSON speaks up...

TOWNSPERSON 2
Excuse me, Mr...?

LÁSZLÓ
Toth.

TOWNSPERSON 2
Mr. Toth, none of us here are familiar with this type of model. Can you take us through your plans for the Recreation Center in Layman's terms? And yes; we are all keen to see what you have in mind for the chapel, especially.

LÁSZLÓ
I've had discussions with your Father Graham which informed for me the floor plan...

LÁSZLÓ looks at GORDON and LESLIE.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
Can you pass me the flashlight?

GORDON has it at the ready. LÁSZLÓ moves the piece of model to an overhead projector and demonstrates.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
Here, we have the chapel interior.
A space suitable for 115 persons.
At dawn...

LÁSZLÓ shines the flashlight through the southeast facing glass which casts a long *Sign of the Cross* onto the stark marble altar piece.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
At sunset...

LÁSZLÓ shines a light down through the slits lined with copper creating an enchanting glow. The audience is audibly impressed.

PUSH IN ON VAN BUREN who is situated in the very back of the room like a proud parent.

CUE: The score booms and swells... Tympany patterns.

79

EXT. LUMBER YARD/ STEEL MANUFACTURER/ MARBLE QUARRY - VARIOUS TIMES OF DAY

Materials for the construction of the The Margaret Lee Van Buren Center for Creation and Activity are prepared around the globe.

A SERIES OF ANGLES -

- Over dramatic vistas, the sun sets.
- Steel is fabricated.
- Wood is cut and piled.
- Concrete is mixed.
- Chunks of marble are crudely sawn off in titanic fragments.

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)
(in HUNGARIAN)
László! It has taken some months to obtain the items which Mr. Hoffman requested since receiving your letter. I was at first at a loss but suddenly thought to contact our upstairs neighbor in Buda, Mrs. Horváth! She was able to provide me with several family photographs that clearly picture you, myself, and Zsófia with her mother on our wedding day!

(MORE)

ERZSÉBET (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The poor dear thought us dead all these years so had kept them on her mantle in memoriam. Zsófia could have only been thirteen years of age at the time but her face and expression are unmistakable. I have included all but one in case this letter does not reach you. I will keep it near my breast, our family tree against my heart. László, does this mean we might meet again soon?

*Yours,
Erzsébet*

The final image in the montage is a photograph of LÁSZLÓ and ERZSÉBET's wedding day. Their entire family is present. They look beautiful and happy, frozen in time.

FADE IN TITLE:

INTERMISSION

5:00 - 0:00

A yearning, nostalgic piece for piano plays over the photograph as a timer counts down from five minutes.

INSERT TITLE
OVER BLACK:

PART TWO *THE HARD CORE OF BEAUTY* 1953-1960

80

EXT. 30TH STREET STATION PLATFORM - MORNING

80

LÁSZLÓ, MICHAEL and MICHELLE HOFFMAN, and MAGGIE LEE wait with flowers and balloons at the end of the platform.

LÁSZLÓ is visibly nervous. He's dressed up and shaved clean.

MICHELLE HOFFMAN
Right or left?

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
On the right.

MICHELLE HOFFMAN
Could they have walked past us?

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
 My associate in New York confirmed
 they made it on.

MAGGIE LEE
 (points)
 There at the end, some passengers
 are still coming off.

LÁSZLÓ
 I see Zsófia.

He shouts and starts to move. We track left.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
 (shouting)
 Zsófia!

MEDIUM ON -

TWO PASSENGERS awkwardly lift ERZSÉBET's wheelchair down and over the train steps.

PASSENGER
 You got her?

The PASSENGER on the left nods.

ERZSÉBET
 Thank you, gentlemen. We'll send
 someone for the luggage. Thank you.

LÁSZLÓ (O.S.)
 (shouting from some
 distance)
 Zsófia!

CLOSE ON -

ZSÓFIA, a transcendent beauty, scans the platform and begins pushing ERZSÉBET in a wheelchair along the platform.

WE TRACK RIGHT with ERZSÉBET in profile who begins to cry at the sound of LÁSZLÓ's voice. She's older than the wedding photo seen prior. Her face is agonized and gaunt but her expression betrays some optimism.

TRACK LEFT with LÁSZLÓ as his brow furrows with concern. THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO SWING LEFT with LÁSZLÓ until they share the frame. He bends to his wife.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
 (Hungarian)
 What's happened?

ERZSÉBET smiles through her tears.

ERZSÉBET
 (Hungarian)
 I'm sorry I didn't tell you.

LÁSZLÓ
(Hungarian)
What happened?

ERZSÉBET
(Hungarian)
It might not be permanent-

LÁSZLÓ
(Hungarian)
Someone hurt you?

She cries, shakes her head.

ERZSÉBET
(Hungarian)
It's osteoporosis from the famine-

He embraces her madly, kisses her, weeps.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
(cries)
I can dye my hair. I know it's ugly.

LÁSZLÓ
Shh.

ERZSÉBET
(Hungarian)
Where's Attila?

He switches to English.

LÁSZLÓ
I didn't want him to be disappointed if for any reason you were delayed.

He looks up at ZSÓFIA and bounces up to embrace her.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
(Hungarian)
Zsófia, dear.

He reverts again to English.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
Welcome to America.

LÁSZLÓ, MICHAEL and MICHELLE HOFFMAN, MAGGIE LEE, and HARRY LEE all take their seats around VAN BUREN who settles at the head of the table. ERZSÉBET and ZSÓFIA hold court. Everyone appears rightfully enchanted.

VAN BUREN
How wonderful it is to finally make your acquaintance!
(MORE)

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

I admit there was a period of time
when we thought he had made you up!
Isn't it fascinating to meet the
significant others of great artists
and thinkers?

ERZSÉBET

Thank you for taking care of my
László.

VAN BUREN

As persons of unique privilege, I
have always thought that it is our
duty to nurture the defining
talents of our epoch. I possess no
such talent whatsoever! Truth be
told, I am terribly emulous of
individuals like him.

ERZSÉBET

That mustn't be true, Mr. Van
Buren. It seems you've done quite
all right for yourself.

HARRY LEE

Father is digging for compliments.
Don't indulge him.

Beat.

ERZSÉBET

The property is beautiful.

MAGGIE LEE

Isn't it?

VAN BUREN

Erzsébet- pardon me, am I
pronouncing that correctly?

ERZSÉBET

Oh, that's fine, just fine. Feel
free to call me Elizabeth if you
prefer it.

VAN BUREN

Your English is impressive.

ERZSÉBET

Thank you. I attended University in
England!

VAN BUREN

Where?

ERZSÉBET

Oxford to study English. I returned
home for Communications.

VAN BUREN

Did you do anything with it?

ERZSÉBET
Oh yes. I wrote for a popular
national paper at home; *Magyar
Nemzet*.

VAN BUREN
A journalist?

HARRY LEE
Cultural?

ERZSÉBET
Foreign affairs.

ERZSÉBET turns to LÁSZLÓ.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
Haven't you told them anything
about me?

ERZSÉBET sees that LÁSZLÓ doesn't appreciate the joke.

CLOSE ON -

She squeezes LÁSZLÓ's hand.

BACK TO -

VAN BUREN
Perhaps you can help your poor
husband to sound less like he
shines shoes for a wage.

She smiles but doesn't like the joke.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
(to LÁSZLÓ)
How long have you been here now?
Four or five years, László?! No
more excuses.

VAN BUREN flips a small coin at LÁSZLÓ which LÁSZLÓ dodges.
VAN BUREN laughs.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
All right, I got carried away! Pass
that back to me, will you?

LÁSZLÓ passes it back. VAN BUREN holds it up demonstratively.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
A penny saved...

HARRY LEE addresses ZSÓFIA.

HARRY LEE
Sofia, is it?

LÁSZLÓ
(corrects)
Zsófia.

HARRY LEE
 (pointedly)
 Zs-ófia... Are you planning for
 school?

No response. A palpable awkwardness washes over the room.
 ERZSEBET finally interjects...

ERZSÉBET
 She is, yes, but we haven't
 explored her options.

HARRY LEE
 Does she understand English?

ERZSÉBET
 Oh yes. She understands very well.

ERZSÉBET chooses not to elaborate. They eat in silence.

VAN BUREN
 (smiles)
 "The woman behind the man."

82

INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - FOYER - LATER

82

LÁSZLÓ pushes ERZSÉBET to the front door. As they are about to leave, VAN BUREN halts their exit.

VAN BUREN
 László, may I have a word?

ZSÓFIA takes over for LÁSZLÓ and pushes ERZSÉBET out the door. The two men meet at the room's most central point.

LÁSZLÓ
 Yes, sir?

VAN BUREN
 On Leslie's recommendation, we
 shared your plans with another
 architect. Just to get a second
 opinion - for safety reasons, as
 well.

LÁSZLÓ
 Who?

VAN BUREN
 Someone we worked with on the
 department store downtown. I forgot
 his name.

VAN BUREN passes him a file.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
 Listen, they're just little
 adjustments, here and there. Places
 they thought we could save a penny.

LÁSZLÓ
Leslie is a bastard.

VAN BUREN
He is. That's what we pay him for.

83

INT. GUEST HOUSE - HALLWAY/ ZSÓFIA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

83

LÁSZLÓ takes ZSÓFIA down a corridor and opens the door revealing a rather childish arrangement he's made on the bed.

LÁSZLÓ
(Hungarian)
I'm sorry. I remembered you as a little girl.

ZSÓFIA touches his face and shoulder to comfort him and steps inside.

LÁSZLÓ references a small framed picture of a woman.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
(Hungarian)
Look at your mother. My sister was beautiful, wasn't she? Even while she was ill, she was so beautiful.

ZSÓFIA nods.

84

INT. GUEST HOUSE CORRIDOR - LATER

84

LÁSZLÓ rolls ERZSÉBET down the hall to their room. Inside, he can heard struggling to lift her into bed.

LÁSZLÓ (O.S.)
1, 2, 3-

She laughs adoringly.

85

INT. GUEST HOUSE BEDROOM - LATER

85

ERZSÉBET and LÁSZLÓ lie catatonic in bed. It's very dark.

ERZSÉBET
(Hungarian)
Are you angry?

Silence.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
László, are you angry with me?

He replies in English, petulant.

LÁSZLÓ
 If you'd like to start a row with
 me, I might as well work out my
 English-

She replies in English.

ERZSÉBET
 Stop it. Your English is perfectly
 all right. It was an unimaginative
 joke he made about you shining
 shoes.

LÁSZLÓ
 Tomorrow, I'll take you to see
 someone. A specialist.

ERZSÉBET
 Don't be angry with me.

LÁSZLÓ sulks..

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
 Do you not want to be with me
 anymore?

LÁSZLÓ
 Stop this nonsense.

ERZSÉBET
 Do you think I look older?

LÁSZLÓ
 We are older.

ERZSÉBET
 Can't you say anything kind to me?

LÁSZLÓ
 I love you, you cow.

ERZSÉBET smiles and kisses him.

ERZSÉBET
 (Hungarian, whispers)
 You can touch me.

LÁSZLÓ
 I don't want to hurt you-
 physically.

ERZSÉBET
 You won't... I had dreams- every
 night, I dreamt I was with you.

She touches him under the sheets.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
 I know what you've done, László,
 and it's all right...

LÁSZLÓ
What are you talking about?

ERZSÉBET
(whispers)
László, I know. I know. I know everything. You see, I became sick. Very sick. I could hardly breathe. I yearned to be with you and it made me sick. I almost died. Between life and death, I began having fantasies about you but I realized they were not fantasies at all, but *visions!* I was with you. All the time I was with you.

She licks her palm, jerks him off, whispers in his ear.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
László, I know what you've done. I'm not jealous because I was with you the all the time. I know everything that has happened to you, and I am here now and I will never leave you.

LÁSZLÓ breaks down. His voice cracks in heaving sobs.

LÁSZLÓ
Oh god! MY LOVE. MY LOVE! I CANNOT BEAR IT!

ERZSÉBET
You can. Shh... You can. We have a new life. A new language. We can start again.

86

INT. GUEST HOUSE - CORRIDOR/ BATHROOM - MORNING

86

LÁSZLÓ walks down the corridor and opens the door to discover ZSÓFIA guiding ERZSÉBET's knee to her chest who lies nude in the tub wearing a hair net. They both flush with embarrassment at the sight of LÁSZLÓ. ERZSÉBET laughs as she tries to cover up.

LÁSZLÓ
Sorry.

He quickly steps back the way he came.

ERZSÉBET (O.S.)
Maggie Lee lent me some hair product!

87

INT. GUEST HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

87

LÁSZLÓ takes a coffee in his kitchenette reviewing VAN BUREN's file. He furrows his brow.

ERZSÉBET (O.S.)
 (calls out)
 László, are you there?

He regards ZSÓFIA exercising her aunt in the bathtub through the door ajar.

LÁSZLÓ
 (calls back)
 I am.

ERZSÉBET (O.S.)
 (calls out)
 The model is beautiful, darling! So beautiful.

LÁSZLÓ regards the model.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
 We're taking a bus into the city
 this afternoon to visit Attila. The
 stop is very nearby! Would you like
 to come?

LÁSZLÓ
 I have something this afternoon.

88

INT. GUEST HOUSE - BATHROOM - SAME

88

ERZSÉBET smiles at ZSÓFIA, full of joy.

ERZSÉBET
 I've missed him. Just hearing him
 mill about in the other room.
 It's...

ERZSÉBET searches for the right word.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
 Fantastic.

89

INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - LOUNGE - LATER

89

VAN BUREN observes the front yard from the quietude of his private quarters. He watches...

LONG LENS ON -

ZSÓFIA and ERZSÉBET explore the property. ZSÓFIA pushes ERZSÉBET's wheelchair through the estate's hedge maze. ERZSÉBET says something to make ZSÓFIA crack a smile.

90

EXT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - DRIVEWAY - LATER

90

WE TRACK RIGHT with ZSÓFIA and ERZSÉBET who have put on something more formal for their outing into town. ZSÓFIA pushes ERZSÉBET at a steady clip.

ERZSÉBET
Perhaps we should see about some
language classes this afternoon?
You could take the bus in on your
own...

ZSÓFIA hardly reacts.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
I am *positive* it is the last place
you would like to be but it's good
for you and I can brief the
instructor or whomever about your
situation. Listening to me babble
on will only get you so far.

After some time, VAN BUREN's town car pulls up beside them.
He rolls the window down...

VAN BUREN
Where are you two headed?

ERZSÉBET
We're going into town.

VAN BUREN
Which town is that? We've got
several nearby, you know!

ERZSÉBET laughs pleasantly.

ERZSÉBET
Philadelphia. To visit family.

VAN BUREN
Ah, yes. The American cousin! The
city then! Us, as well.

ERZSÉBET corrects herself.

ERZSÉBET
Yes, the city.

VAN BUREN
(to ZSÓFIA)
Well, don't just stand there. Let
us give you and your Auntie a lift.

VAN BUREN opens the door to the backseat and steps out to
help move ERZSEBET inside.

VAN BUREN sits in the passenger side front seat. The two
ladies sit in the back.

VAN BUREN
I have a friend in New York, a
newspaper man. He's always on the
lookout for new talent. Shall I
mention you to him?

ERZSÉBET
Well, yes, of course. That is very kind of you, Mr. Van Buren.

ERZSÉBET thinks, hesitates, then...

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
Would that mean I would have to work out of New York?

VAN BUREN
In the beginning, perhaps... But you haven't got the job yet so let's not get ahead of ourselves.

ERZSÉBET
No, no, of course not. I did not mean it to be presumptuous!

The road is rough and the engine, loud.

VAN BUREN
What's that?

ERZSÉBET
(shouts to be heard)
I did not mean it to be presumptuous!

VAN BUREN accepts her acknowledgement and moves on.

VAN BUREN
In any event, you could commute there with me at the start. I'm there Monday to Friday.

ERZSÉBET
Well, sure, that could be fine. I'd have to speak with László though.

VAN BUREN
When we break ground, he will have his hands full, I can assure you!

VAN BUREN's intent is enigmatic.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
I enjoy showing friends around Manhattan. You mustn't have seen much on your way in.

ERZSÉBET
The Penn Station Terminal was very nice.

VAN BUREN
-a pity that it's become so full of tramps hassling women and children with their arms outstretched. They line up and extend from the walls as if integral to its very foundation like-

He searches for the apt metaphor.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
-like a haunted wall mural!

ERZSÉBET

Ah, perhaps that is why I felt so
at home. I'm a former bag lady
myself who does also enjoy the work
of the Dutch masters.

VAN BUREN

'Earthly Delights!' You pictured it
just as I meant it. Clever, clever.

ERZSÉBET looks at her niece with some trepidation about the conversation then digs deeper.

ERZSÉBET

"Integral to its foundation." You
sound like my husband. Although a
mural's decorative; nothing to do
with the foundation.

The jab doesn't seem to land. No response from VAN BUREN. They ride in silence for a moment. It's unclear whether or not he's taken offense.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
Where did you get your passion for
architecture?

VAN BUREN

Oh, we've done buildings before but
I'd hardly call them artistic. I
suppose it was because the cellar
was full.

ERZSÉBET

Pardon?

VAN BUREN

I collect books, butterflies, and
such. Above all though, Portuguese
Madeira. I take it every night
after supper.

He turns to her.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
I did the maths and if I were to
uncork a bottle seven days a week
for the next thirty years - the
maximum of my life expectancy - I
shouldn't need more than ten
thousand altogether. So once the
cellar was full, it was time I set
about in a new direction. Out of
the cellar and into the sky.

ERZSÉBET

If you drink a bottle of Madeira
every day, I shouldn't think you'd
last thirty years.

VAN BUREN
I always keep good company.

ERZSÉBET senses VAN BUREN asserting himself, flirting with her.

92 EXT. VISTA - CONSTRUCTION SITE - TRAILERS - DAY 92

WE TRACK FAST RIGHT with LÁSZLÓ who trembles with anger.

93 INT. VISTA - CONSTRUCTION SITE - OFFICE TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

LÁSZLÓ enters the trailer where LESLIE WOODROW is on a telephone call. **LÁSZLÓ throws the file at LESLIE's head...**

LESLIE WOODROW
I'm going to have to call you back.

LESLIE hangs up the phone.

LÁSZLÓ
How dare you.

LESLIE WOODROW
How dare I what?

LÁSZLÓ's accent is embellished when he is angry.

LÁSZLÓ
You go behind the back- and have them meet with another goddamned designer! Who in the hell is James T. Simpson? You're trying to get me sacked!

LESLIE WOODROW
I didn't tell him to meet with anyone. Of course, I didn't. You think I feel like working with you hating my guts for the next two godforsaken years?

LÁSZLÓ blinks.

LESLIE WOODROW (CONT'D)
Jim Simpson is a smart guy. He doesn't want to interfere at all.

LÁSZLÓ taps the document with his index finger.

LÁSZLÓ
I'm not making these changes.

LESLIE WOODROW
I'm afraid it's not up to you. The casts are already finished. We put in that order over a month ago. This is the first time you're hearing about it?

LÁSZLÓ
No one told me a damned thing.

LESLIE WOODROW
Harrison said he would talk it over
with you. I'm sorry you found out
this way. I really am.

LÁSZLÓ sits down and starts re-drawing the plans in a fever.

He makes new connections, new corridors, new ideas, with a few strokes of a pen then slams it down in front of LESLIE.

LÁSZLÓ
There. It's mine again. He cuts
three meters from the top, I add it
to the bottom!

LESLIE WOODROW
We can't afford all this! I'm
already over-budget this quarter!

LÁSZLÓ
Use what you need to of my fee.

LESLIE tries to reason with him.

LESLIE WOODROW
What's the difference between forty
and fifty feet, anyway?! The
ceilings are still plenty high!

LÁSZLÓ
Get it approved, Leslie.

LESLIE WOODROW
We have a walk-thru next week and
Jim is supposed to be there. Just
hear him out. You can state your
case to Harrison and Harry Lee. I
won't open my mouth, I swear it.

94

EXT. VISTA - CONSTRUCTION SITE - TRENCHES - MORNING

94

It's raining cats and dogs. Thunder, lightning, wind.

ULTRA-WIDE ANGLE TRACKING SHOT -

SEVEN MEN; LÁSZLÓ, VAN BUREN, HARRY LEE, LESLIE WOODROW,
MAYOR KINNEY, MICHAEL HOFFMAN, and JIM SIMPSON stand in the
newly dug out foundation; a corridor of dirt reminiscent of
the First War trenches.

They all hold out large canvas umbrellas to shield themselves
from the torrential downpour.

LÁSZLÓ
For the cantilevered floors- we
plan to use upside-down T-shaped
beams integrated into concrete
slabs down here.
(MORE)

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
 This will form both the ceiling of
 the space below and provide
 resistance against compression...

MAYOR KINNEY tries to make sense of the blueprints.

MAYOR KINNEY
 Which corridor are we in now?

LESLIE nervously tries to explain...

LESLIE WOODROW
 We're below ground here. It's a
 sort of- passageway between the
 main unit and the three mid-sized
 modular units to the south and
 southeast.

JIM SIMPSON reviews LÁSZLÓ's new plans...

JIM SIMPSON
 I don't see how any of this
 acknowledges my proposed cuts. We
 are just spinning our wheels out
 here. I took ten feet off the
 height of these damned things and
 now we are 30 feet underground?! I
 mean, what is- what are all these
 new connections between facilities?

LÁSZLÓ
 A better idea.

JIM SIMPSON
 What are they for? You put all
 these together and you've added on
 a quarter mile or so of tunnel to
 carve out on top of everything
 else!

LÁSZLÓ keeps his cool. He speaks to be heard but never shouts
 explaining himself to the group.

LÁSZLÓ
 We excavate the entire diameter of
 the tunnel system using a- full-
 face method.

JIM SIMPSON
 For what?! Why can't people just
 walk themselves directly across the
 courtyard?!

LÁSZLÓ
 Something inside for the people to
 discover.

LÁSZLÓ is starting to get as worked up as we have ever seen
 him.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
 And so it is one building and not
 four! For its harmony. You said it
 before, Mr. Van Buren!
 (MORE)

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
 You expected it to be one building,
 and now it is!

VAN BUREN nods, uncomfortable. JIM SIMPSON scoffs.

JIM SIMPSON
 I'll tell you- we are not going
 back inside until you look us in
 the eye and you tell us where you
 are willing to compromise?!

LÁSZLÓ seethes but remains calm.

LÁSZLÓ
 Jim, tell us again what you've
 built?

JIM SIMPSON
 I'll tell you about what I've
built, whatever-the-hell-your-name-
 is! A shopping center in New Hope,
 a hotel in Stamford Connecticut-

LESLIE INTERJECTS...

LESLIE WOODROW
 Now Jim, let me remind everyone
 that László has offered to
 personally off-set these costs-

JIM SIMPSON
 You brought me in here to tell you
 what it is that you do not need!
 You don't need this guy!

JIM SIMPSON points at LÁSZLÓ, accusingly.

JIM SIMPSON (CONT'D)
 This whole thing is just- bizarre,
 Leslie!

LESLIE WOODROW
 I really think you two might see
 eye-to-eye if you just spent a
 little more time getting to know
 each other. Honestly.

JIM throws his papers up in the air.

LÁSZLÓ
 Jim. Listen to me.

JIM SIMPSON
 I'm listening.

LÁSZLÓ
 Everything we see that is ugly-
 stupid, cruel, and ugly. Everything
 is your fault.

Taking a moment to fully digest the severity of LÁSZLÓ's
 sentiment, JIM SIMPSON replies with a violent push causing
 LÁSZLÓ to slip and fall in the mud.

VAN BUREN
Jim, you stop that right now!

JIM SIMPSON appears embarrassed.

JIM SIMPSON
I'm sorry-

VAN BUREN
Think it's time for you to head home, Jim. Thanks for your insight.

JIM SIMPSON walks away. VAN BUREN extends a hand to LÁSZLÓ.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
I trust you. I trust you, all right?

95

EXT. VISTA - CONSTRUCTION SITE - MOMENTS LATER

95

MAYOR KINNEY walks ahead of the group with VAN BUREN.

MAYOR KINNEY
Are you sure about this guy? I know Jim lost his temper but he had a few points back there, didn't he? My office is fielding complaints about the plans for this place on a daily basis, more or less! Jim's a Protestant! Gives folks peace of mind. People are worried it's going to ruin the hillside, Harrison.

VAN BUREN
We'll do something. A little event for the community. Get them on-side.

VAN BUREN's expression doesn't betray his intent.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
And Jim will stay on.

MAYOR KINNEY furrows his brow.

MAYOR KINNEY
Does Jim know that? I think he thinks he's fired.

VAN BUREN
I'll have Leslie telephone him tomorrow, and Jim can advise from afar.

VAN BUREN gestures to LÁSZLÓ behind them.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
It's better for morale this way, you see?

EXT. VISTA - AFTERNOON

The sun is shining. A small crowd has gathered for a ribbon cutting ceremony. VAN BUREN, HARRY LEE, and LÁSZLÓ pose for a photograph with MAYOR KINNEY. Following a round of pictures, VAN BUREN calls out...

VAN BUREN
Girls! Girls! Come in for a picture!

ERZSÉBET, ZSÓFIA, MAGGIE LEE enter from the side and gather around the core group. ERZSÉBET tugs at LÁSZLÓ's blazer and he obliges by kneeling down to her chair. She whispers in his ear...

ERZSÉBET
(Hungarian, whispers)
I'm proud of you. Make love to me tonight.

VAN BUREN holds up a shovel demonstratively.

VAN BUREN
All right everyone! On three...

EVERYONE
O-ne! T-wo!

Everyone but ZSÓFIA smiles.

VAN BUREN
And...

He pulls the shovel back.

EVERYONE
Three!

The shovel breaks the earth.

EXT. VISTA - WATERING HOLE - DUSK

CLOSE HANDHELD ON -

The sun is setting. Several party guests are swimming. It's exactly like a Renoir. Sun-drenched ZSÓFIA bathes sensually in the pond, her skin tightens with goosebumps. HARRY LEE swims up to greet her.

HARRY LEE
(cheerful)
*Rub-a-dub, three maids in a tub.
And who do you think were there?
The butcher, the baker, the
candlestick-maker-*

He takes some water in his mouth and spits it out.

HARRY LEE (CONT'D)
Invigorating, isn't it?

NEW ANGLE ON -

By the shore, ERZSÉBET lies on a towel near LÁSZLÓ, VAN BUREN, and MAGGIE LEE. All of them laugh madly; a joyous scene.

ERZSÉBET
(hysterical)
Did you ever manage to find the
place?

MAGGIE LEE
After driving around for hours in
the dark looking for this damned
camouflaged mailbox-

MAGGIE LEE laughs in anticipation of the punchline as she recounts the story.

MAGGIE LEE (CONT'D) VAN BUREN
-we walked in the door, and (interjects)
the table had just been It was well after ten o'clock-
cleared for dessert!

-and then what?!

MAGGIE LEE
I noticed something a little funny
about the other dinner guests.

ERZSÉBET
How so?!

MAGGIE LEE
They just all looked a bit pale in
the face, I reckon...

Even LÁSZLÓ can't help but grin now.

ERZSÉBET

VAN BUREN
Maggie, you're exaggerating.

MAGGIE LEE
I AM NOT, I swear it! They looked
exactly like that popular painting,
you know the one?

MAGGIE LEE imitates Edvard Munch's 'The Scream' causing another fit of laughter.

ERZSÉBET
Stop it! I can't breathe.

MAGGIE LEE
 Daddy kept apologizing to our
 hostess-

VAN BUREN
 For context, her husband is among
Van Buren Steel's most important
 private clients.

MAGGIE LEE
 Daddy tried to explain everything
 that had made us late as she
 prepared for us *what appeared to be*
 a delightful looking little trifle!

ERZSÉBET
 Was it awful?

MAGGIE LEE
 I kid you not; cow tallow and fruit
 pie!

ERZSÉBET
 (laughs)
 NO!

MAGGIE LEE
 -and poor daddy has such a sweet
 tooth! I didn't know how to warn
 him in front of everyone before he
 took a bite this big!

MAGGIE demonstrates the enormous slice with her index
 fingers.

ERZSÉBET
 (to VAN BUREN)
 NO!

VAN BUREN
 Indeed.

MAGGIE LEE
 He began gagging like a house cat!

She imitates a house cat gagging on a fur ball.

MAGGIE LEE (CONT'D)
 And all he could say to explain
 was...

MAGGIE LEE holds herself together for the finale.

MAGGIE LEE (CONT'D)
'Dear... I am allergic.' to which
 our concerned hostess replied,
'allergic to what?!', and he says...

VAN BUREN buries his face in hands.

MAGGIE LEE (CONT'D)
*'TO THAT. I am very allergic to
 whatever THAT is.'*

Everyone howls.

98

EXT. VISTA - LATER

98

LONG LENS ON -

ZSÓFIA and HARRY LEE come up from the water and stand beside VAN BUREN, MAGGIE LEE, and ERZSÉBET who is now situated back in her wheelchair.

NEW ANGLE ON -

LÁSZLÓ regards them but stands talking with GORDON and GORDON's son, WILLIAM (significantly older than when we last saw him). The three of them observe a small construction crew that carry futons above their heads which implies they'll be sleeping on-site.

WILLIAM points.

WILLIAM
Is that your crew?

GORDON
They'll sleep here.

WILLIAM
It's a lot of them. (Beat) What's that thing over there?

GORDON
On the left?

WILLIAM nods.

GORDON (CONT'D)
That's a motor grader. We used to do it with horses. Makes a flat surface to pour on.

LÁSZLÓ
We can take you down there in the morning if you are curious.

GORDON squeezes his son.

GORDON
What do you say we get you in one of them machines?

HARRY LEE (O.S.)
Big day, Mr. Toth!

HARRY LEE approaches the scene.

LÁSZLÓ
Yes.

HARRY LEE, drunk but not sloppy, puts an arm around LÁSZLÓ and WE TRÁCK with them as they walk off.

HARRY LEE

Leslie mentioned during our meeting last week with Jim that you're putting your fee back into the project. That seems a bit irresponsible given your situation, doesn't it? Will it even last you to the end of your commitment?

LÁSZLÓ is silent, then...

LÁSZLÓ

I will figure something out.

HARRY LEE

Have you discussed it with your wife?

LÁSZLÓ

She will be supportive.

HARRY LEE

Suit yourself but I wouldn't do it, and I know Leslie *certainly* wouldn't do it, so I didn't want you to think you'd be setting any sort of precedent.

LÁSZLÓ

I expect nothing from either of you.

BEAT.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)

How does that work exactly? The company paying themselves to finance?

HARRY LEE

Do you not think I deserve to be paid for the time and energy I devote to this project?

The question hangs in the air as they come to a stop.

HARRY LEE (CONT'D)

Might I make a suggestion?

LÁSZLÓ

You may.

HARRY LEE

Your niece has made several of our guests very uncomfortable. Perhaps you should have a talk with her.

LÁSZLÓ

About what?

HARRY LEE
 Don't get me wrong. She's very
 lovely to look at and as much as we
 all dream of having a bird that
 keeps her trap shut, it comes off
 like a rude affectation. I've tried
 to connect, make conversation. It
 goes nowhere.

LÁSZLÓ doesn't respond.

HARRY LEE (CONT'D)
 Oh, I see. It must run in the
 family.

No response.

HARRY LEE (CONT'D)
 I would like us to be friends...

LÁSZLÓ
 This is not- friendly, Harry.

HARRY LEE lets go, exasperated.

HARRY LEE
 I didn't say I'd like to slip my
 prick into her. Forget it! I've had
 too much to drink. I need a nap.

HARRY LEE begins to walk off and turns around to share a final sentiment.

HARRY LEE (CONT'D)
 (venomous)
We tolerate you.

LÁSZLÓ approaches ERZSÉBET, ZSÓFIA, and VAN BUREN.

LÁSZLÓ
 It's time for us to go.

VAN BUREN
 You don't want to join us for
 dinner at the house?

LÁSZLÓ
 We start early tomorrow. Thanks for
 the event.

VAN BUREN
 (to ERZSÉBET)
 Does he ever take a rest?

ERZSÉBET
 Never. Good night, Mr. Van Buren.

LÁSZLÓ turns ERZSÉBET in her chair and WE TRACK with them back towards the main property. ZSÓFIA follows...

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
What's the rush?

LÁSZLÓ
We can talk at the house.

ERZSÉBET
Can you slow down?

LÁSZLÓ
(matter-of-fact)
I am forfeiting the remainder of my
fee due to some expenses
unforeseen.

ERZSÉBET
So, that's what the son kept
alluding to.

LÁSZLÓ
Yes. He's a snake.

LÁSZLÓ regards ZSÓFIA just next to him.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
(Hungarian)
Don't go near him Zsófia.

ZSÓFIA nods, appreciative of her uncle's sentiment.

ERZSÉBET
All right, so what will that mean
for us?

LÁSZLÓ
I will figure something out.

ERZSÉBET
We will figure something out. I
suppose we can make due on my
salary.

LÁSZLÓ
-your salary?

ERZSÉBET's tone is playful though her voice does quiver with
some concern.

ERZSÉBET
Mr. Van Buren's helped me with a
job interview in New York City. I'm
sure once they meet me, they won't
be able to resist me.

GORDON
Thank you for the supper, Mrs.
Toth.

ERZSÉBET
I thought we might have our own
little party to celebrate all of
your hard work. You've come so far,
the both of you.

GORDON
Oh, it's not mine really.

ERZSÉBET
(pointedly)
That's not what László tells me. He
says he couldn't have done it
without you.

LÁSZLÓ looks a little embarrassed at the affection he's
expressed in private for his colleague and friend.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
Do you have a misses at home,
Gordon?

GORDON
(mournful)
William's mother, Augusta, passed
away in '43- she got sick and died
of a damned tooth infection of all
things.

ERZSÉBET directs her attention to WILLIAM.

ERZSÉBET
I am very sorry to hear that, and I
am terribly sorry for your loss.

GORDON
He's all right. He was too young
then to remember much, and I was
gone training two years in Arizona
before they shipped us all off to
Naples, Italy; 92nd Infantry
Division. They wouldn't let me back
home all that time, not once.
Augusta's sister looked after him
until I got back. Kept me alive
though, knowing he was waiting for
me.

GORDON puts a hand on his teenage son's back.

GORDON (CONT'D)
Kept me good and alive, thank
goodness.

ERZSÉBET blurts out.

ERZSÉBET
Zsofia's mother passed.

ZSÓFIA, previously emotive, turns to stone.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
 Losing a mother- it's an
 unfathomable loss, you see. To lose
 one's birth mother is to lose the
 very foundation on which we stand.

ERZSÉBET turns to WILLIAM...

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
 The mind may not know its loss but
 the heart does.

WILLIAM finally speaks for himself.

WILLIAM
 I remember her.

GORDON
 That's because I've told you so
 much about her. You were too small.

WILLIAM is defiant.

WILLIAM
 No, I remember Augusta. I just
 wanted to make it easier on you.

101

INT. GUEST HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

101

ERZSÉBET smokes leafing through her husband's drawings. After some time, LÁSZLÓ enters from behind her...

LÁSZLÓ
 What are you doing?

She doesn't turn around to regard him. She keeps observing what's in front of her.

ERZSÉBET
 Oh, I'm just looking at you.

LÁSZLÓ smiles, kisses the back of her neck.

LÁSZLÓ
 What do you think?

ERZSÉBET
 It's unusual. Even for you.

LÁSZLÓ
 You think so?

ERZSÉBET
 Many rooms are quite small. The
 ceilings are high...

LÁSZLÓ
 Yes. Inside, you must look upwards.

ERZSÉBET
So, which part of it are we paying
for?

LÁSZLÓ
The height of the ceilings. The
glass above.

102

EXT. VISTA - DAY

102

VARIOUS ANGLES OF MEN AT WORK. The vista has transformed into an active construction site on a grand scale. LÁSZLÓ and GORDON supervise as their crew lays the rest of the concrete foundation.

INT. THE CONGREGATION MIKVEH ISRAEL - MIKVEH

LÁSZLÓ, ERZSÉBET, ZSÓFIA, and MICHAEL & MICHELLE HOFFMAN file into a corridor towards the basement that's been set up for a makeshift service at Yom Kippur. ERZSÉBET laughs a bit at the banal functionality of their surroundings.

ERZSÉBET
The service is in here?

MICHELLE HOFFMAN nods.

MICHELLE HOFFMAN
(clarifies)
For the overflow.

ERZSÉBET
Because of the holiday?

MICHELLE HOFFMAN
The community is growing.

INT. THE CONGREGATION MIKVEH ISRAEL - LATER

LÁSZLÓ and MICHAEL HOFFMAN wear Talith reciting the Viddui, rhythmically pounding their chests in accordance with the prayer.

LÁSZLÓ AND MICHAEL
(chanting in Hebrew)
*We have stolen, slandered, sinned...
We were wicked, malicious, have
taken, and lied
We've been evil and given harmful
advice...*

LÁSZLÓ hits his chest with considerable force.

105

EXT. TRAIN DEPOT - MORNING

105

Crew men load monolithic slabs of pre-cast concrete onto a flat bed train car.

MEN
Careful, careful!

106

EXT. MEADOW - RAILROAD - EVENING

106

CUE: The score imitates the Hebrew Cantillation. It swells, magnificent.

LÁSZLÓ (O.S.)
(chanting in Hebrew)
We have deceived, mocked-

ULTRA-WIDE ON -

In the distance, a long train, made small by the landscape.
Peace and beauty.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
*Rebelled, against god, against
others,
We are spiteful.*

ANGLE ON -

The tracks rush at us on a wide-angle lens.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
*We have turned away,
Deliberately.*

BACK TO ULTRA-WIDE -

The train derails and explosions appear in the smoke from the steam engine... The event is catastrophic but we are so far away that it hardly makes a sound.

107

INT. GUEST HOUSE BEDROOM - NIGHT

107

ERZSÉBET wakes up in bed wailing. LÁSZLÓ is alert, terrified.

LÁSZLÓ
What's happening?!

ERZSÉBET
It's too much!

LÁSZLÓ
What's too much?!

She lets out another primal scream.

ERZSÉBET
The pain is too much. I need
Zsófia! She has my medication.

LÁSZLÓ stumbles out of bed and exits. ERZSÉBET writhes in the sheets.

108

INT. VISTA - CONSTRUCTION SITE - OFFICE TRAILER - DAY 108

LÁSZLÓ, HARRY LEE, VAN BUREN, and two ENGINEERS are huddled into the back of a makeshift office space on the lot. LESLIE WOODROW holds a telephone to his ear...

LESLIE WOODROW
I have everyone here with me now,
yes.

Beat.

LESLIE WOODROW (CONT'D)
I see. Well, please let us know if
there is anything at all we can do.
We are terribly sorry for the news.

Beat.

LESLIE WOODROW (CONT'D)
On tenterhooks at this end so give
me a ring here when you have
something.

LESLIE hangs up the phone.

LESLIE WOODROW (CONT'D)
A big section came undone, he
couldn't tell me which one for
certain, and it took seven freight
cars along with it.

VAN BUREN slams his hands on the desk.

VAN BUREN
(shouts)
How the hell did you find these
people, Leslie?!

HARRY LEE
Transpo company is our own, Dad-

VAN BUREN
WHAT?!

HARRY LEE
We sent our own guys to Charleston.

LESLIE WOODROW
The rail cars were ours too... It
was cheaper given all the back and
forth. It's well over a hundred
shipments, Harrison.

VAN BUREN
You don't utter another goddamned
word to the rail company until
Michael can advise.

LESLIE WOODROW
I'm hoping to have more answers for
you soon, sir.

LÁSZLÓ
How far is it? Can we see what can
be salvaged?

LESLIE WOODROW
The accident put two brakemen in
the hospital. It's a real mess out
there.

VAN BUREN
Send their families flowers for
Christ's sake-

Beat.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
Wait. Don't. Looks guilty.

HARRY LEE
I'll call Michael.

HARRY LEE exits.

LESLIE WOODROW
What would you like me to do in the
meantime?

VAN BUREN
With what?

LESLIE WOODROW
Our crew.

VAN BUREN
Let them go.

LÁSZLÓ looks sick.

LÁSZLÓ
Sir, you can't-

VAN BUREN
I CAN! YES! YES, I CAN!

VAN BUREN paces furiously.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
People are going to write about
this! I'm staring down the barrel
of the next two years of my
goddamned life, Mr. Toth! What if
one of them dies? What if both of
them die? Who's going to pay for
it? Are you going to pay for it?!

LESLIE WOODROW
László, in the interest of
transparency, before I came to
retrieve you, I had already advised
Mr. Van Buren to cut his losses-

VAN BUREN
Shut up, Leslie.

LESLIE swallows, humiliated. VAN BUREN exhales.

LÁSZLÓ
Sir, please.

VAN BUREN
Don't beg. It's unbecoming. You're welcome to stay here until you've found your footing elsewhere. I have a mess to clean up.

109

EXT. VISTA - CONSTRUCTION SITE - MOMENTS LATER

109

We track left fast with LÁSZLÓ and GORDON across the landscape.

LÁSZLÓ
I'm sorry, Gordon.

GORDON
Don't apologize to me.

LÁSZLÓ
I can give you some money while you look for something.

GORDON
I'll be fine.

LÁSZLÓ
(affirmative)
You have a kid. I'll give you something and you'll take it.

LÁSZLÓ stops in his tracks and looks at GORDON.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
You got any hop on you?

GORDON looks grave.

GORDON
None at all. I'm off it.

LÁSZLÓ
Good, good. That's good to hear.

110

INT. GUEST HOUSE - LATER

110

LÁSZLÓ smashes the model in a terrible fury. ERZSÉBET observes her husband's tantrum, unmoved.

ERZSÉBET
You're making me a mess to clean up.

He continues on...

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
 (shouts)
 STOP IT! You're acting like a
 child.

LÁSZLÓ
 It's over.

ERZSÉBET
 You have to march over there *right*
 now and get him excited again. Keep
 him engaged. You know how these
 rich fellows are. For him, it's
 like refurbishing a kitchen.

LÁSZLÓ
 Two people are in the hospital.

ERZSÉBET
 That's not your fault-

LÁSZLÓ
 Darling, it's over.

Silence.

FADE TO BLACK.

111 EXT. NEW YORK CITY'S MIDTOWN EAST (MURRAY HILL) - DAY 111

VIEW FROM THE EAST RIVER TOWARDS THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE SURROUNDING NEW YORK CITY SKYLINE.

CROSS DISSOLVE:

INT. MIDTOWN EAST STREET LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

WE PAN off sliding glass doors as MICHAEL HOFFMAN enters the lobby of the office building.

113 INT. RUDOLPH HEYWOOD & ASSOCIATES LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER 113

MICHAEL HOFFMAN approaches the firm's RECEPTIONIST.

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
 Looking for Rudolph Heywood and
 Associates.

RECEPTIONIST
 Beg your pardon, sir, but who is it
 that you're looking for?

MICHAEL HOFFMAN
 László. Toth. He draws there.

She reviews a form in front of her.

RECEPTIONIST

Could I ask you to spell that? Oh,
yes- I see him. Draftsmen are right
upstairs.

114

**INT. RUDOLPH HEYWOOD & ASSOCIATES DRAWING ROOM - MOMENTS 114
LATER**

WE STEADICAM up the stairs and across the space with MICHAEL HOFFMAN past thirty or so men with hair cut close to the scalp and short neckties all hunched over desks and easels.

PUSH IN ON LÁSZLÓ, who has aged and further decayed somewhat. He smokes a pipe at a drawing board. A green desk lamp highlights an inscrutable expression.

There's visible bruising, track marks, where his sleeves are rolled up.

115

INT. LÁSZLÓ AND ERZSÉBET'S TENEMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT 115

ERZSÉBET and LÁSZLÓ sit across from ZSÓFIA and her husband, BINYAMIN, an orthodox Jewish man. ZSÓFIA is five months pregnant and speaking again.

ZSÓFIA
(soft-spoken)
We have some news.

LÁSZLÓ
As do I.

ERZSÉBET
Oh, how exciting. What is it
László?

LÁSZLÓ
Please. Zsófia, go ahead.

ZSÓFIA
We are making Aliyah.

ERZSÉBET looks a little heartbroken.

ERZSÉBET
What?

ZSÓFIA
We are going to Jerusalem.

ERZSÉBET
Yes, I heard you.

ZSÓFIA
Binyamin has family there.

BINYAMIN
 My older brothers relocated with
 their families in 1950. They became
 citizens.

ERZSÉBET nods, considers this.

ERZSÉBET
 Life is difficult there. Have you
 thought this through?

ZSÓFIA
 It is our obligation.

LÁSZLÓ
 To whom?

ZSÓFIA
 Our repatriation is our liberation.

LÁSZLÓ swats at the air, starting to get worked up.

LÁSZLÓ
 Where will you live? Where will you
 work?

BINYAMIN
 We can stay with my brother's
 family when we first arrive.

ERZSÉBET silences LÁSZLÓ by resting her hand on his.

ERZSÉBET
 I was planning to help with the
 baby.

BINYAMIN
 My brother's wife can help, also.

ZSÓFIA
 I am Jewish. My child is Jewish.
 It's time for us to go home.

ERZSÉBET snaps.

ERZSÉBET
 Does it somehow make us less Jewish
 that we are here?

Silence.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
 Oh, I see, perhaps Binyamin did not
 recognize me to begin with-

ZSÓFIA
 He does.

Beat.

ERZSÉBET
I'm sorry.

ZSÓFIA
No, I am sorry.

ERZSÉBET
No, it's wonderful news and we
reacted badly out of self-interest.
We are simply...

ERZSÉBET's voice cracks and she begins to cry.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
-going to miss you.

ZSÓFIA
Well, we would like you to come.

ERZSÉBET wipes her tears away trying to pull herself together.

ERZSÉBET
Dear, we have jobs here.

ZSÓFIA
You can have a better job in
Israel.

ERZSÉBET
I like my job!

ZSÓFIA
A woman's column. It's beneath you.

ERZSÉBET
I write for a paper and I'm paid
for it! How many women my age could
make the same claim?

There's a heavy silence.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
(deadpan)
What's your news, László?

LÁSZLÓ
Harrison's asked me back.

ERZSÉBET looks up at him.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
Michael came by the office today.
Insurance monies came through. They
plan to forego the library to
compensate for legal expenses but
they want to complete the project.

ERZSÉBET
What about your job here at
Heywood?

Silence.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
You throw everything up in the air,
just like that?

ERZSÉBET sulks.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
I don't like that man.

LÁSZLÓ
You scarcely knew him.

ERZSÉBET
He dropped you as quickly as he
took you on.

Beat.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
You've already said yes, I take it?

No response.

LÁSZLÓ
He's in Roma on business and would
like me to join him to review
marbles for the altarpiece in
Carrara.

ERZSÉBET
See! I told you that for him it's
like doing a kitchen!

ERZSÉBET is embarrassed by their public dispute.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
Everyone is leaving me.

ZSÓFIA
No, it isn't true.

ERZSÉBET
Isn't it?

ZSÓFIA
No. Uncle László is leaving you
only a short time.

LÁSZLÓ
Some days.

ZSÓFIA
And I will visit and so will you.
We will find a way.

LÁSZLÓ
I can arrange to have you dropped
and picked up at the newspaper
while I'm gone.

ERZSÉBET
It's not just this trip. You'll be
at Doylestown again now... I'll be
fine on my own.

LÁSZLÓ
I will make arrangements.

116

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - BEDROOM - NIGHT

116

ERZSÉBET holds on to LÁSZLÓ for dear life.

ERZSÉBET
Promise you won't let it drive you
mad.

LÁSZLÓ
I promise.

117

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - BATHROOM - MORNING

117

In a small toiletry pouch with his shaving kit, LÁSZLÓ pulls out a small syringe and spoon. He makes an internal decision and dismantles the syringe, making it less recognizable at a glance. He tucks it back in the pouch for safe-keeping and places it in his luggage.

ERZSÉBET (O.S.)
It's time to go! You'll be late!

CROSS DISSOLVE:

118

EXT. CARRARA TOWN SQUARE - CAFE - DAY

118

A perfect portrait of VAN BUREN in a white suit.

ANGLE ON -

LÁSZLÓ and VAN BUREN sip coffees and smoke at an outdoor table, the sunlight is brilliant and white hot.

VAN BUREN
I must say, Mr. Toth, you look a
mess. I'd expect your Elizabeth to
be taking better care of you.

LÁSZLÓ
The years have been difficult.

VAN BUREN
For us all! For us all!

VAN BUREN regards his watch.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
Where in the hell is he?

LÁSZLÓ
I am sure he will be along any minute.

Beat.

VAN BUREN
This is why I never do business with Italians. They are the spics of Europe.

LÁSZLÓ points.

LÁSZLÓ
That's him.

ANGLE ON -

A middle-aged man, ORAZIO, on approach. He waves enthusiastically at LÁSZLÓ.

ORAZIO
(calls out)
Ciao amico Laz-o!

ORAZIO reaches him and embraces him.

LÁSZLÓ
Nice to see you.

He kisses LÁSZLÓ and extends his hand to VAN BUREN. ORAZIO is missing two fingers on his right hand so he offers him his left.

ORAZIO
Orazio, a pleasure to meet you. I will take a quick coffee and we will go.

VAN BUREN nods. ORAZIO heads inside the cafe.

VAN BUREN
What happened to his hand?

LÁSZLÓ
Dangerous work-

Dramatic skies frame a sea of white marble. Shapes that resemble small pueblos without entrances emerge from the rock. Channeling machines pillage the earth, excavating marble, Venato, Arabescato, and Cardoso stone. The air whistles. The sun bears down.

HANDHELD ON -

VAN BUREN, ORAZIO and LÁSZLÓ walk across the massive lower flatbed of the quarry. Colossal blocks of stone encircle them.

ORAZIO

You are tough, Mr. Laz-o, you know?
Not so many people I see anymore
from before the war.

VAN BUREN

I've worn the wrong shoes for this
trek. May, I take your arm László?

LÁSZLÓ takes VAN BUREN by the arm, steadyng him.

ORAZIO

Step where I step and you'll be all
right.

ORAZIO leads them further and further.

ORAZIO (CONT'D)

I'm not surprised to see you
though! Some people, you just knew
somehow they would be all right.
You are stubborn! I am stubborn
too. I am so stubborn, I never
leave it here! I traveled only once
in twenty years to Giulino, Azzano
to beat the corpse of Mussolini
with my own hands. Those of us
here, my colleagues, we are
anarchisti, the resistance. No one
knows the quarries like us. We led
members of the *Esercito Nazionale
Repubblicano* into the caves here,
captured them, dropped stones on
them.

They come upon a beautiful alcove of dark stone.

ORAZIO (CONT'D)

Here we are... It's beautiful, no?
The channeling will be done here in
one month. If you like it, we can
have it fixed and ready for you in
April.

VAN BUREN is once again enchanted. He walks all around it,
presses his cheek to it. It's sensual, fetishistic.

VAN BUREN

It's beautiful. Exactly as you
described, László.

ORAZIO

If you like, I tell the boys and we
bring it to my atelier when the
stone is cut.

LÁSZLÓ

We like it.

Surrounded by magnificent classical and modernistic sculptures in various stages of completion, a group of local artisans and masons drink copious amounts of digestivo at the back of the atelier and dance together. Everyone sings along in improper English.

EVERYONE

(sings)

You are my destiny
 you are that's what to me
 You are my happiness
 That's what you are
 You have my sweet caress
 You share my loneliness
 You're more than life to me
 That's what you are
 Heaven and heaven alone
 Can take your love from me....

ANGLE ON -

An entranced VAN BUREN observes LÁSZLÓ from the shadows.

LONG LENS ON -

LÁSZLÓ dances with girls and boys, exhilarated. He sings!

LÁSZLÓ

(sings)

'Cause I'd be a fool
 To ever leave you dear
 And a fool I'd never be
 You are my destiny
 You share my reverie
 You're more than life to me
 That's what you are.

LÁSZLÓ abruptly excuses himself from his dance partner and walks away from the group.

ANGLE ON -

VAN BUREN follows LÁSZLÓ with his eyes.

121

INT. ORAZIO'S ATELIER - LATER

121

VAN BUREN walks past a row of statues, looking for the toilet. He hears LÁSZLÓ breathing heavy and moves to investigate.

VAN BUREN

(calls out)

Mr. T-o-th, it's time we return to
 our quarters. Orazio has kindly
 offered us a place to sleep for the
 night.

VAN BUREN turns to discover LÁSZLÓ slouched against a wide marble column in a terrible state, an unspooled pouch of hop gear in his lap... His eyes have rolled back in his head. He's barely responsive.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
What have you done to yourself?

VAN BUREN slides his back down the column and sits next to him displaying a casual air.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
It's a shame seeing how your people treat themselves. If you resent your persecution, why then do you make of yourself such an easy target?

LÁSZLÓ cannot respond.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
If you act as a loafer living off handouts, a societal leech, how can you rightfully expect a different result? You have so much potential and yet you squander it.

LÁSZLÓ starts to vomit and VAN BUREN moves in behind him, pats him on the back.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
Get it out. Get it out, my friend.

Below frame, VAN BUREN fusses with his belt. LÁSZLÓ gags and coughs.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
It's all right, my boy. Get it out.

VAN BUREN systematically pulls down LÁSZLÓ's pants below frame. He spits, and thrusts.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
(whispers, slurs)
Who do you think you are? You think you're special? You think you float directly above everyone you encounter because you are beautiful? Because you are educated?

LONG LENS ON -

LÁSZLÓ's face is pressed against the ground. He's too strung out to defend himself. His eyes widen in terror.

VAN BUREN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You're a tramp. Shh. You're a lady of the night.

The assault is brief but clear.

FADE TO BLACK.

HANDHELD ON -

LÁSZLÓ walks and stumbles behind his abuser who ascends the quarry trail ahead of him. Never turning to face him, VAN BUREN recounts...

VAN BUREN
(calls out)
You were in quite a state last night. Orazio carried you to bed!

VAN BUREN hums Mina's "You are my destiny.'

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)
It's a 4 hour train to the airport in Fiumicino so you have time for a rest. I hope your stomach isn't too sensitive on aeroplanes!

123

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - KITCHEN - DAY

123

CLOSE ON -

ERZSÉBET composes a letter to her niece in an elegant script. A few banknotes sit in a pile to the side.

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)
*My dearest Zsófia!
Mazel tov! She is so beautiful -
your spitting image!*

124

EXT. VISTA - CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

124

ULTRA-FAST MOTION -

Back in Doylestown, much time has passed. The site is active, abuzz again.

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)
Don't be mad but your Uncle László insisted I enclose a few banknotes for you and Binyamin. We hope he won't be offended, and that it's not too difficult to change these into the local currency.

VARIOUS ANGLES ON -

- Cargo is unloaded.
- A cement mixer turns fresh concrete.
- Cement floors are polished.
- Grids of scaffolding are erected.
- Tarps are pulled over church pews in the rain.
- A large clock inside the institute ticks towards noon.

- A SLOW TILT and PAN across a cement dome.

125 INT. INSTITUTE STAIRWELL - CONSTRUCTION SITE - DUSK 125

SFX: DIEGETIC AUDIO IS MUTE.

WE STEADICAM with LÁSZLÓ and his nemesis, JIM SIMPSON, older now, marching up a staircase through the action on-site. LÁSZLÓ and JIM SIMPSON feverishly argue but ERZSÉBET's voice-over drowns out all diegetic audio.

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)

Here: I am so alone. Perhaps more alone than I have ever been. Your uncle has closed a door to me. The man I married is inside but the lock's combination, I cannot decipher...

126 EXT. VISTA - CONSTRUCTION SITE - DUSK 126

STEADICAM ON -

LÁSZLÓ walks with a lamp closely observing the freshly laid concrete for the cistern

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)

He no longer attends synagogue. When I ask him why, he will not reply. Perhaps his own narcissism will no longer allow him a relationship with our community.

LÁSZLÓ ascends a staircase and arrives out of the darkness to a picturesque sky to find...

ERZSÉBET (V.O.)

*Tell me how you are. How you really are. All our love and warmth to the three of you.
Erzsébet*

WE PAN to an exposed staircase on the horizon that leads to nowhere.

127 EXT. VISTA - CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY 127

LÁSZLÓ stands with a small group of employees explaining a nuanced architectural detail.

LÁSZLÓ
You see this, above us?

There's a four inch gap between flats allowing sunlight to seep through above them.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
 Measure the same distance of three
 or perhaps four inches between
 flats, and place each modular
 section apart by that same
 distance.

The CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR interjects...

CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR
 This isn't supposed to stay like
 this though. We just set it here
 for approximate placement.

LÁSZLÓ obsessively explains...

LÁSZLÓ
 I know it's not supposed to stay
 like this but keep it like this- I
 like it like this.

CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR
 What do we do with those gaps?

LÁSZLÓ
 We insert a thick sheet of glass
 between them to let the light in
 from above- give me some time to
 think about it and I come back to
 you.

LÁSZLÓ sees something in the distance which catches his attention.

ANGLE ON -

ERZSÉBET visits the site. GORDON, visibly older, pushes the chair.

LONG LENS ON -

A YOUNG EMPLOYEE does pull ups on some scaffolding that's set up around the base of the clock tower. The other young men above him count down.

CONSTRUCTION CREW
 (cheering him on)
Twenty! Nineteen! Eighteen!
Seventeen.

LÁSZLÓ comes upon them.

LÁSZLÓ
 (shouts)
 YOU ALL STOP THAT RIGHT NOW. WHAT'S
 YOUR NAME? Are you trying to pull
 the thing down and get them all
 killed?!

The YOUNG EMPLOYEE's response is inaudible.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
 Your childish show-boating puts
 everyone else here at risk! Are you
 thick?! Are you lame?! You report
 to the subcontractor. You tell him
 that you've been let go.

A concerned ERZSÉBET observes her husband shouting at the YOUNG EMPLOYEE. She looks up at Gordon.

ERZSÉBET
 Gordon, can you get him to stop
 shouting at everyone?

LONG LENS ON -

The YOUNG EMPLOYEE starts to walk off, seemingly mutters something under his breath. An infuriated LÁSZLÓ runs after the boy and kicks his behind. The gesture is equal parts absurd and harrowing.

GORDON intervenes...

GORDON
 What's the problem here?

LÁSZLÓ
 It's already taken care of.

GORDON
 You kicked that boy.

LÁSZLÓ
 Stay out of it, Gordon.

GORDON
 What's wrong with you?

LÁSZLÓ
 (shouts)
 Stay out of it, I said, or you can
 go with him!

GORDON
 (affirmative)
 You shout at me again and you'll be
 sorry.

LÁSZLÓ considers this, swallows, then doubles down...

LÁSZLÓ
 (shouts)
 You too! Get out of here.

LÁSZLÓ marches toward ERZSÉBET leaving GORDON behind him.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
 (calls out)
 Let's go home.

ERZSÉBET
 I only just arrived!

JIM SIMPSON enters the frame, on a mission, approaching LÁSZLÓ with a stack of paperwork.

JIM SIMPSON
Mr. Toth, you and I need to talk
through these May/June cost
reports.

LÁSZLÓ throws a hand up in the air to block out the nuisance.

LÁSZLÓ
Not today, Jim!

JIM SIMPSON
You can't just walk away every time
I step into a room, Mr. Toth!

LÁSZLÓ is maniacally defiant.

LÁSZLÓ
Honey, have I introduced you to Jim
Simpson? Jim is the boss' lap dog
and *Architectural Consultant Extraordinaire*! He designed a hotel
in Stamford.

ERZSÉBET
László, that's enough!

LÁSZLÓ
There must be an unpaid parking
meter around here somewhere, Jimmy!
Be vigilant! Keep your eyes peeled!

128

INT. AUTOMOBILE - EVENING

128

LÁSZLÓ and ERZSÉBET are en route back to Manhattan. There is a palpable tension between them. LÁSZLÓ breaks the silence.

LÁSZLÓ
(cold)
What is it?

ERZSÉBET
It was unnecessary how you treated
that boy is all.

LÁSZLÓ
Their safety is my priority.

ERZSÉBET
(despondent)
And Gordon, don't even get me
started.

ERZSÉBET thinks, continues...

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
It is not what you said to that
young man, it is how.

LÁSZLÓ
Would you like us to wait around
another few years for another
lawsuit to resolve itself? I am
SICK of it. Do you hear me?!

Beat.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
I finish THIS or WE are finished.

ERZSÉBET shouts.

ERZSÉBET
Speak for yourself! I am NOT
finished. Living with you is
impossible. You've become a selfish
old bastard right before my very
eyes!

LÁSZLÓ
Don't say something you'll regret
in the morning.

ERZSÉBET hits him hard causing the car to swerve.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
You want to kill us?

ERZSÉBET
I'd get out of the car and march
all the way back to Manhattan if I
could, you egotistic scoundrel.
There is NO REASON for me to be
here. I am here for you! I could do
my ridiculous job ANYWHERE! Do you
think I went to university to write
about lipsticks! Shame on you.

LÁSZLÓ
WE CAME BECAUSE IT WAS OUR ONLY
OPTION! Attila was here-

ERZSÉBET
WHO YOU REFUSE TO SEE!

LÁSZLÓ
Ask him about that. Did he tell you
that he kicked me to the street
like a dog?

She is silent.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
His bitch wife accused me of making
a pass at her.

ERZSÉBET
You would never do that.

LÁSZLÓ
I did NOT do that.

ERZSÉBET
Why would she say such a thing?

LÁSZLÓ
Because they do not want us here.

ERZSÉBET
Of course Attila wants us here.

LÁSZLÓ
Not Attila.

ERZSÉBET
Who do you mean?

LÁSZLÓ
The people here, they do not want
us here. Audrey, Attila's Catholic
wife DOES NOT WANT US HERE. We are
nothing. Worse than nothing.

ERZSÉBET weeps.

ERZSÉBET
You poor man. My poor husband.
What's been robbed of you-

129

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - BEDROOM - NIGHT

129

ERZSÉBET howls in pain, a recurring night terror.

ERZSÉBET
(cries out)
Zsófia!

LÁSZLÓ tries to calm her.

LÁSZLÓ
She's gone, darling. She isn't
here. You must calm yourself.
You've worked yourself up is all.

ERZSÉBET
I am in pain. I am close to death.

LÁSZLÓ
You are not. I am so sorry I upset
you.

ERZSÉBET weeps trembles. It's like an exorcism.

ERZSÉBET
Get me my pills, it's too much.

130

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

130

HANDHELD ON -

The energy is frantic. She's wailing in the other room. He rifles through the medicine cabinet, opens her pill box. A half a pill drops out of an otherwise empty bottle.

LÁSZLÓ
(calls out)
There is only a pill, cut in halves! Do you keep some in your purse?

She cries out again in pain.

131

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

131

LÁSZLÓ enters.

LÁSZLÓ
There is only half. Do you keep more in your purse?

ERZSÉBET shakes her head.

ERZSÉBET
(weeps)
What will I do? The pain won't stop coming.

132

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

132

BIRD'S-EYE VIEW ON -

LÁSZLÓ re-enters. He pulls down his toiletry pouch from the top of the medicine cabinet. He pulls out a spoon and dropper.

133

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

133

ERZSÉBET writhes on the bed. LÁSZLÓ enters.

LÁSZLÓ
I found something.

She can't respond. He sits beside her and prepares a vein.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
It's what they gave me on the boat for my broken face-

He makes the injection.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
Shh. You'll feel better soon, just listen to my voice, dear.

A trance-like calm comes over her. He then prepares himself a dose.

CROSS DISSOLVE:

134 INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - BEDROOM - MORNING 134

LÁSZLÓ lies in his wife's arms like a child. The light is beautiful. He looks up at her. She's like an angel.

ERZSÉBET
(whispers)
Do you have more?

135 INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - KITCHEN - LATER 135

LÁSZLÓ closes the blinds to keep out the harsh afternoon sunlight.

136 INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - BEDROOM - LATER 136

The room is very dark. The two of them make love. A cock, an elbow, an arched back. An intense, physical dream.

LÁSZLÓ
(Hungarian)
I love you.

ERZSÉBET
Keep going. Harder.

Score for Piano gives the sequence warmth, a strange feeling.

137 INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - BEDROOM - LATER 137

She's completely out of it, moans.

ERZSÉBET
Toilet-

LÁSZLÓ stands starts to scoop her in his arms.

JUMP CUT TO:

138 INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 138

He clumsily finishes placing her on the toilet seat.

LÁSZLÓ
I'll wait outside. Tell me when you
need me.

JUMP CUT TO:

139 INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER 139

LÁSZLÓ leans against the wall. After a moment...

LÁSZLÓ
Darling, have you finished?

No response. After a beat, he knocks...

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
Can I come in?

He opens the door... ERZSÉBET is foaming at the mouth.

HARD CUT TO:

140

EXT. MANHATTAN HOSPITAL - NIGHT

140

LÁSZLÓ runs carrying his wife like a rag doll.

LÁSZLÓ
HELP! Someone help me! My wife is
dying!

A smoking nurse rushes to his aid.

LÁSZLÓ (CONT'D)
Please help her, she's dying.

NURSE
She's breathing.

In his current state, he's like a child mourning a parental loss.

LÁSZLÓ
I know my wife. She is dying.

NURSE
(calls out to someone off-
screen)
Get us a wheelchair, a gurney,
anything!

He reverts to Hungarian, weeps.

LÁSZLÓ
(Hungarian)
I am sorry.

141

EXT. VISTA - CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAWN

141

The Marble Altarpiece is unwrapped by CREWMEN from Shibari-style knots and canvas. After some time, ERZSÉBET's voice fades in over the transcendent image.

ERZSÉBET (O.S.)
(weak)
Last night, I met God and he
granted me permission to call him
by his name. It is not the first
time we have met.

BEAT.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
What did you do to me, my László?

SILENCE.

LÁSZLÓ (O.S.)
(holds back tears)
It was an accident.

142

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAWN

142

Fans swing on their hinges. The space is a long corridor fit with 12 beds. ERZSÉBET is alive but exhausted.

ERZSÉBET
Do you remember everything you confessed to me at home in our bed?

LÁSZLÓ shakes his head, ashamed.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
You needn't be ashamed, my darling.
The harm done unto us were done only to our physical bodies.

She smiles, laughs.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
You were right. This place is rotten. The landscape. The food we eat. This whole country is rotten.

She strokes his hand.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
I'm going to Israel to be with Zsófia and her child. I want to become the grandmother to her that she will, otherwise, never encounter.

LÁSZLÓ cries.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
Come home with me.

LÁSZLÓ
I will follow you until I die.

HOLD ON LÁSZLÓ... Softer, more beautiful than ever.

CROSS DISSOLVE:

143

EXT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - GATES - EVENING

143

ERZSÉBET arrives by a Philadelphia Taxi Service. The main gates are closed so ERZSÉBET must go on foot. Her driver steps out and helps her arrange herself with a walker.

144

EXT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

144

HANDHELD ON-

ERZSÉBET breathes hard, audibly grievous, makes her way up to the front door with her walker at a fairly steady clip.

145

INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - FOYER - LATER

145

NOTE: The following sequence is in one unbroken take until otherwise noted.

ERZSÉBET waits in the hallway, she dabs her forehead with her handkerchief exhausted from the walk. After a moment, MAGGIE LEE enters to welcome her.

MAGGIE LEE
Mrs. Toth! How lovely to see you!
Do you need a hand?

ERZSÉBET
I'm all right, thank you.

MAGGIE LEE
Is Mr. Toth here, as well?

ERZSÉBET
Just me, I'm afraid.

MAGGIE LEE
To what do we owe the pleasure?

ERZSÉBET
Is your father in?

MAGGIE LEE
We were just sitting down to dinner.

ERZSÉBET
No trouble at all. I'm happy to wait until you're all finished.

MAGGIE LEE furrows her brow.

MAGGIE LEE
Don't be silly! I'll have the kitchen fix you a plate.

ERZSÉBET
You're kind, Maggie, thank you.

MAGGIE LEE
Right this way.

ERZSÉBET turns and follows MAGGIE LEE ten meters to the dining room where she finds...

146

INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

146

VAN BUREN and HARRY LEE are seated at the table. A few UNRECOGNIZABLE ASSOCIATES are present, as well. They all rise to greet her.

ERZSÉBET
Please sit.

HARRY LEE
Mrs. Toth, you're up on your feet!

VAN BUREN regards her.

VAN BUREN
Where is László?

ERZSÉBET
He's caught a flu. He's recovering at home.

HARRY LEE
That explains it! Jim Simpson mentioned he hadn't been on-site since last Friday.

VAN BUREN
Shame.

ERZSÉBET
(cold)
Yes. A terrible shame.

HARRY LEE
It's going around. Please, sit down.

ERZSÉBET refuses to sit.

ERZSÉBET
I'm fine to stand.

HARRY LEE
Fine to stand? Is something wrong, Mrs. Toth?

ERZSÉBET
Yes, something is wrong.

The blood runs cold.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
I've come tonight to tell you something that is going to be very difficult to hear.

VAN BUREN shoots a look at her.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)
And for you people too. I don't
know you but it will be difficult
for you to hear.

HARRY LEE
If this is a professional matter
then perhaps you and I should talk
in the other room.

HARRY stands.

ERZSÉBET
(calm, resolute)
Your father is a rapist.

HARRY LEE
Excuse me - whatever this is
supposed to be, I don't like it.
I'm calling your husband to come
and fetch you.

ERZSÉBET
Your father is an evil rapist.

MAGGIE LEE believes her. HARRY rushes her.

MAGGIE LEE
Don't push her, Harry!

VAN BUREN is silent.

ERZSÉBET
Look at him. He cannot say
anything.

MAGGIE LEE
Daddy, has something happened
between you and Mrs. Toth?

ERZSÉBET
It wasn't me-

HARRY LEE
(shouts)
That's enough. You come in here
making vague, laughable
accusations! I want you out of our
house this instant.

ERZSÉBET
Tell them what you did to my
husband. Tell them what you did.

MAGGIE covers her face, horrified by the accusation.

VAN BUREN
Your husband is sick. He is an
alcoholic and a drug addict. I
don't know why he wishes to hurt
me, humiliate me.
(MORE)

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

I have offered him nothing but kindness. He's a sick, senile old dog and when dogs get sick, they often bite the hand that's fed them before someone mercifully puts them down.

VAN BUREN stands.

VAN BUREN (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me, I've withstood enough abuse for one evening. You can tell your husband he's off the payroll now and forever, as well.

ERZSÉBET explodes.

ERZSÉBET

I WILL NOT EXCUSE YOU!

HARRY starts violently dragging her out of the room.

MAGGIE LEE

(shouts)

Stop it, Harry!

ERZSÉBET

YOU ARE NOT EXCUSED, HARRISON VAN BUREN!

HARRY muscles her all the way to the foyer.

147

INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - FOYER - LATER

147

He drags her all the way to the front door where she falls.

MAGGIE LEE (O.S.)

(shouts)

Stop it, Harry!

ERZSÉBET

SHAME! SHAME ON YOU!

MAGGIE LEE screams from off-screen and comes running to ERZSÉBET's aid.

ERZSÉBET (CONT'D)

I'm fine, Maggie. I'm fine. Can you help me to my car? A taxi's waiting for me at the front.

HARRY LEE opens the door and sets her walker outside.

HARRY LEE

You never come back here, you crazy woman.

MAGGIE gets ERZSÉBET to her feet. They stumble to the front door and exit. HARRY LEE exhales, paces back and forth, then walks back to the dining room. The camera follows...

148

INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

148

The guests are standing to leave.

HARRY LEE

I am so sorry for the bizarre
interruption.

GUEST

It's all right, Harry. We'll leave.

HARRY LEE

Don't leave yet. Please.

GUEST

Your father's gone to bed.

He turns on his shoe.

149

INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

149

HARRY LEE walks back again the way he came.

HARRY LEE

(shouts)

Father! It's over now. She's gone!

HARRY LEE turns a corner-

150

INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

150

-and moves up the stairwell.

151

INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

151

He walks down the hallway to his father's bedroom at the end of the hall. He opens his father's door. The room is empty... He turns back the way he came then stops at his father's study. It's empty, as well.

HARRY LEE

(shouts)

Dad!

He opens every door on the floor. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing.

MAGGIE LEE (O.S.)

Is he not upstairs?

HARRY LEE

(shouts)

Where the hell has he gone? Call
for him outside.

152 INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS 152

He starts back down the stairs, increasingly panicked.

153 INT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - FOYER - CONTINUOUS 153

He crosses to the front door and exits to the driveway.

154 EXT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - DRIVEWAY 154

He calls out with increasing desperation for his father.

HARRY LEE
(shouts)
DAD!

MAGGIE LEE (O.S.)
DADDY?! Can you hear us?!

NOTE: End of continuous take.

155 EXT. VAN BUREN ESTATE - FOREST - DAWN 155

ULTRA-WIDE ON -

Snow falls on a **search team** made up of LOCAL VOLUNTEERS; each individual spread 10 meters apart combs the area for any sign of VAN BUREN.

LOCAL VOLUNTEERS
HARRISON!

156 EXT. VISTA - CONSTRUCTION SITE - DUSK 156

The austere beauty of LÁSZLÓ's design is revealed through the following series of angles...

- TRACK RIGHT with the volunteers as they move across the site navigating these modern ruins.

157 EXT. INSTITUTE CORRIDORS - SAME 157

VARIOUS SHOTS -

The search party use flashlights to investigate the institute...

158 INT. CISTERNS - SAME 158

WE TRACK BEHIND a group of volunteers as they walk the perimeter of the **RAINWATER HARVESTING SYSTEM** below grade.

LOCAL VOLUNTEERS
HARRISON!

159 INT. CHAPEL - SAME 159

WE PUSH IN ON a single volunteer as she walks past the marble altarpiece. It's a thing of extraordinary beauty.

VOLUNTEER (O.S.)
We've got something down here!

The sun forms a sign of the cross as LÁSZLÓ so frequently demonstrated in his model, and WE TILT UP to snow falling from above which has blown in from outside.

INSERT TITLE:

160 160

EPILOGUE
THE FIRST ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE
 VENICE, ITALY 1980

FADE IN:

161 EXT. VENICE, ITALY - EVENING 161

A SERIES OF ANGLES establish the city of Venice in the evening.

162 INT. GIARDINI - ARCHITECTURE BIENNALE - NIGHT 162

A lavish Opening Night Gala event is in full swing. A small crowd is gathering around the Giardini's Israeli Pavilion.

163 INT. CENTRAL PAVILION - MAIN GALLERY - SAME 163

WE TRACK LEFT with a middle-aged woman (ZSÓFIA) pushing an elderly man (LÁSZLÓ) in a wheelchair. They pass row after row of ornate architectural models.

ZSÓFIA
*They look beautiful like this,
 don't you think?*

LÁSZLÓ nods, too frail to speak.

164 INT. CENTRAL PAVILION - SOUTH GALLERY - MOMENTS LATER 164

LÁSZLÓ puts his hand up to stop ZSÓFIA from exiting the room. He observes a projection of a macro-tour of his model work playing large on the gallery wall.

ZSÓFIA

The director would like to speak with you before the ceremony. We should go.

165

INT. ISRAELI PAVILION - LATER

165

ZSÓFIA cries through her speech.

ZSÓFIA

My uncle is, above all, a *principled* artist. His lifelong ambition was not only to define an epoch but to transcend all time.

She smiles.

ZSÓFIA (CONT'D)

In his memoirs, he described his designs as machines with no superfluous parts, that at their best, at *his* best, possessed an immovable core; a "Hard Core of Beauty."

ANGLE ON -

A variety of models for both unrealized and actualized projects. The floor is littered with his life's work.

ZSÓFIA (CONT'D)

A way of directing their inhabitant's perception to the world as it is. The inherent laws of concrete things such as mountains and rock define them. They indicate nothing. They tell nothing. They simply are.

BACK TO -

ZSÓFIA changes course.

ZSÓFIA (CONT'D)

Born in 1911 in a small fishing village in Austria-Hungary, László Toth looked out upon the Adriatic Sea. He was a boy with eyes wide open, full of yearning. New borders would eventually rip this expanse of sea away from him but never did he cease to try and fill its void.

ZSÓFIA refers to her notes.

ZSÓFIA (CONT'D)

Forty years later, he survived the camps at Buchenwald, as did his late wife, and myself, in Dachau. His first American masterpiece, the Van Buren institute outside of Philadelphia, remained unfinished until 1973.

(MORE)

ZSÓFIA (CONT'D)

The building referenced his time at Buchenwald as well as the deeply felt absence of his wife, my Aunt Erzsébet.

ANGLE ON -

Architectural models of Buchenwald, Dachau, and the Van Buren institute, side-by-side. The Biennale exhibit display their similarities and differences.

ZSÓFIA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

For this project, he re-imagined the camp's claustrophobic interior cells with precisely the same dimensions as his own place of imprisonment, save for one electrifying exception; when visitors looked 20 meters upwards, the dramatic heights of the glass above them invited free thought; freedom of identity. He further re-imagined Buchenwald and his wife's venue of imprisonment in Dachau on the same grounds, connected by a myriad of corridors-

PUSH IN ON ZSÓFIA -

ZSÓFIA (CONT'D)

-re-writing their history and transcending space and time so that he and Erzsébet would never be apart again.

ZSÓFIA concludes by looking directly at her uncle in the main row...

ZSÓFIA (CONT'D)

(smiles and weeps)

Uncle, you and Aunt Erzsébet once spoke for me, I speak for you now, and I am honored.

Her voice cracks with heartbreak.

ZSÓFIA (CONT'D)

"Don't let anyone fool you, Zsófia" he would say to me as a struggling young mother during our first years in Jerusalem, "no matter what the others try and sell you, it is the destination, not the journey."

HOLD ON LÁSZLÓ, a man at the end of his life at the beginning of a new epoch.

'THE BRUTALIST'

AN ANACHRONISTIC DIGITAL VIDEO MONTAGE OF MID-CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECES FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD (INCLUDING HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL SITES SUCH AS YAD VASHEM IN ISRAEL AND THE YUGOSLAVIAN *SPOMENIK* WAR MEMORIALS) ROLLS UNDER END CREDITS.

IT CONCLUDES WITH OUR SETS FOR 'THE BRUTALIST' BEING CONSTRUCTED AND ERECTED; A MONUMENT TO THE PAST.