

# 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.

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.

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.

HIAS REPRESENTATIVE 2 (CONT'D)  
(Yiddish)

And for those of you of which none of that applies and who are immediately departing for other destinations in the morning, please see us about a \$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:** Mournful 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.

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.

8

**INT. BROTHEL HALLWAY - LATER**

8

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.

9

**INT. BROTHEL BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER**

9

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 peeing 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.

33      **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.

35      **INT. VAN BUREN'S STUDY - EVENING**      35

A SERIES OF ANGLES -

The room is empty. The walls are stripped. The curtains are gone. Alone, LÁSZLÓ 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  
(mutters)  
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  
(mutters)  
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 LÁSZLÓ 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.

59

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

59

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.

60

**INT. FOYER / STUDY - EARLY EVENING**

60

**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:** Mournful 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.)  
*Whoever comes to mind, write to them and explain its urgency. Anything tying she 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.

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.

81

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

81

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.  
 ERZSÉBET 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 forget  
 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 ZSOFIA 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 ERZSÉBET 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?

96

**EXT. VISTA - AFTERNOON**

96

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.

97

**EXT. VISTA - WATERING HOLE - DUSK**

97

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 BÜREN, 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!	

ERZSÉBET  
-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  
*OH NO!*

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 ERZSEBET 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 TRACK 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.

99

**EXT. VISTA - MOMENTS LATER**

99

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.

LÁSZLÓ, ERZSÉBET, ZSÓFIA, GORDON, and WILLIAM sit for a  
peasant's supper that ERZSÉBET's prepared for them.

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  
Zsafia'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.



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-

119

**EXT. CARRARA MARBLE QUARRY - LATER**

119

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, steadying 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.

**CUE:** Mina's "You are my destiny." The lively music blasts  
 through the space, an echo chamber.

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-oth, 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.

White heat. The searing image is overexposed by two stops.

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.



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  
immoveable 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.